

# **VACTE /ATE-VA Spring Conference Proceedings**

*A Call to Action: Charting Our Future*

March 27-28, 2014

Sweet Briar College

Elston Inn and Conference Center

Conference Strands: Teachers as Leaders  
Innovative Practices

## **Social Constructivism and Serendipity**

Brenda M. Davis, Ph.D.  
Randolph-Macon College  
Ashland, VA 23005

### **Social Constructivism in Teacher Preparation**

If asked the most meaningful aspects of teacher preparation, many teachers reply, "...experiences with students." Social constructivism contends these replies are valid because understanding and knowledge are products of active learning in authentic contexts.

Social constructivism is integral in developing future teachers. However, prospects for extending learning in meaningful contexts exist in unexplored areas. In the case of our program, the discovery of prospects came through various paths. Those included:

- Assessing field experiences in elementary science methods course
- Exploring how to engage college students in service learning and literacy
- Serving on community board for preschool education
- Developing grant-writing and leadership skills
- Decorating Education Dept./ recognizing students' art

The diverse routes resulted in unique opportunities for pre-service teachers to learn and lead. To offer more science-specific field work, pre-service teachers directed family science nights. <http://www.rmc.edu/News/12-10-15-Gandy-Elementary.aspx> College students became mentors when they took a college course where they exchanged weekly journals with second graders. <http://www.rmc.edu/News/13-12-19-Education-Dept-REAL-Experiences.aspx> Pre-service teachers wrote and received community grants from the NEA and created interactive books about healthy habits for preschoolers. <http://www.rmc.edu/News/11-12-20-Heather-Brazier.aspx> Children's artwork was displayed in the Education Department. In appreciation, pre-service teachers sponsor an annual reception for artists and families. <http://ashland.nbc12.com/news/community-spirit/193873-artful-connections>

Serendipitously, these experiences generated publicity. They promoted the value and importance of teacher preparation for future teachers and for the community.

## **Transforming School Leaders Understanding of their Identities in Order to Transform Education**

John Hanes  
Glenn Koonce  
Regent University  
John Hatcher

Norfolk Public Schools

We utilize an Educational Leadership Program Logic Model to illustrate the inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts that such a program may have. Hopefully, transformative school leadership stems from the program, but a graduate's vocational identity phases may not be addressed sufficiently in the educational experience. Our Servant-Identity Model proposes three phases based upon service to various superiors, described in the model as the "king." These phases are: Carrying out the king's orders, changing the king's mind, and becoming the next king. These three phases may be subsumed under a higher order of service as well – serving The King.

Deploying both the Program Logic Model and the Servant-Identity Model, we explore the implications that the latter model has for the former. For instance, we believe that often educational leadership programs overly focus attention on "carrying out the king's orders" when the other two phases deserve greater attention if fully transformative school leadership is to be achieved.

Identity development can be thought of as a product of exploration and commitment, and the goal is to move from identity diffusion to identity achievement.

The "Big Idea" is "The King" model. Here king with a little "k" represents individuals or groups at the school, division, state, or federal level. King with a capital "K" represents three possible types: sacred, secular, and self.

### Some Educational Leadership Accreditation Acronyms:

TEAC – Teacher Education Accreditation Council

NCATE – National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

CAEP – Council for Accreditation of Education Programs

ISLLC – Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

VIMCEP – Our shorthand for the six main ISLLC standards: Vision, Instruction, Management, Community (Collaboration), Ethics, and Politics.

SLLA – School Leaders Licensure Assessment

For additional information, contact:

John Hanes

jhanes@regent.edu

Conference Strands: Teachers as Leaders  
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## **Differentiated Instruction in an Inclusive Global Classroom: Students with Cultural, Linguistic Diversity, and Learning Disabilities**

Sunita Sharma  
Virginia Union University

### **Abstract for Conference Program:**

This is an interactive presentation to provide Differentiated Instructional Strategies for Global Inclusive Classroom (Teaching Culturally & Linguistically Diverse and students with Learning Disabilities in a Regular Classroom). Teacher education faculty, pre and in-service teachers, administrators, parents and other professionals will surely benefit and must attend.

### **Objective of the Presentation:**

Research shows that teachers are not adequately prepared professionally to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students and students with varying learning disabilities in an inclusive or separate classrooms. Objective for this presentation is to provide strategies for differentiated instruction for General and Special Education Teachers, teacher education faculty, and pre-service teachers to understand culturally and linguistically diverse students and teach effectively for student success.

### **Presentation:**

This presentation is based on an ongoing research by the presenter on the critical issue of professional preparation of teachers for Global Classrooms. Global classroom for this research includes working with all students including culturally and linguistically diverse, English Language Learners and students with learning disabilities. The research and the findings of the several studies indicate that significant number of teachers are not professionally well prepared in understanding, identifying and working with culturally, linguistically diverse and limited English proficient students and students with learning disabilities and meet the needs of individual students. Researcher visited culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms in England, and India and learned useful strategies to work with above mentioned students. She has applied these teaching and learning strategies in her own classroom and has been conducting professional development workshops and seminars in schools, and at the universities, and conferences.

### **Contact Information:**

Sunita Sharma, Ed.D, Associate Professor  
Virginia Union University, School of Education,  
1500 North Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA 23220.  
Phone: 804-267-0290, Email: [ssharma@vuu.edu](mailto:ssharma@vuu.edu)

Conference Strands: • Telling Our Story – Leveraging the Power of Community

### ***Crisis in Education: Secondary Burnout***

**Dr. Patricia Reynolds (preynold@umw.edu)  
University of Mary Washington**

**Megan Pratt Struder, M.Ed (struderma@staffordschools.net)  
Colonial Forge High School**

A current study by a student researcher at the University of Mary Washington in the ways that teachers are prepared to deal with the demands of the new job and sustain their enthusiasm for their discipline and teaching uncovered some interesting facts about the preparation of secondary educators in the state of Virginia.

With striking statistics such as 14% leave at the end of their first year and 46% leave by the end of their 5th year (Lambert, 2006). And findings that indicate secondary teachers suffer burnout more than any other public service professional (Kahn et al., 2006), raised questions about what teacher preparation programs were doing to help secondary educators to develop skills and strategies to work in the classroom environment and to sustain their teaching quality in the face of a new demanding career.

What was discovered according to the Virginia Department of Education, selected Colleges of Education have created interdisciplinary models of teacher education for elementary, special education, and middle... yet no secondary model? Many might see that the problem would rest with the external factors such as lack of support from administration and colleagues, overload of “non-instructional” duties labeled as “responsibilities” (Davidson, 2004; Yong and Yue, 2007) or one of the few professions where a first year teacher is expected to function the same as a veteran- Standard 7 doesn’t make allowances for the time in the profession. Consequently, this research went in search of what course work would support pre-service educators’ ability to meet the demands of the attitudinal shifts they will encounter in their first years? As well as, support pre-service and new professional communication strategies that will assist them in continuing to gain knowledge in the early years of their professional life?

Some of the innovative techniques that would make the first years of a teachers profession more realistic were:

More time in Practicums

Full Year student internships                      Education related community service

Collaborative Teaching: Mentors and University Supervisors teach courses together

5 Year paths that also support discipline development

Courses geared toward communication skills – IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, Professional Learning Communities

## Learning from Student Teachers in International Placements

Researchers: Goodwin, M., Ackerman, B., Alcindor, E, and Maddox, A.

Presenters: Goodwin, M., Alcindor, E., Arnold, M., Keith, D.

**SUMMARY OF STUDY:** Liberty University, founded in 1971, is a religiously-oriented, private, coeducational, comprehensive institution and is a Christian academic community in the tradition of evangelical institutions of higher education. Because of its mission to serve and minister to people of all nationalities, the teacher candidates in the School of Education pursue student teaching placements all over the world. The focus of this research targets the perceptions of the student teachers in the following areas: the placement request process, the ease of obtaining the required resources and documents needed to travel abroad, the international school's culture and learning environment, the online communication between the candidate and the LU University Supervisor and the On Site Supervisor, and the reflection of how their teacher training program prepared them to serve in an international school. Finally, the overall perceived value of the international experience is addressed. The participants (student teachers serving in schools outside of the U.S.) were surveyed using online software; their placements were located in countries such as Germany, Peru, China, Spain, Italy, Paraguay, Korea, Afghanistan, Qatar, Japan, Guam, Kenya, Thailand, the Philippines, New Guinea, and Brazil.

### SURVEY QUESTIONS:

**PART 1: At the end of the sentence, please type the number that best signifies your agreement with the statement.**

*Strongly Agree 5, Agree 4, Neither agree or disagree 3, Disagree 2, Strongly Disagree 1*

1. The LU Field Experience placement *application* to student teach in another country was simple to understand and complete.
2. The LU Field Experience international placement request *process* was efficient.
3. The LU Field Experience staff was knowledgeable about the placement process.
4. The LU Field Experience staff was courteous and helpful.
5. The communication between my Cooperating Teacher and myself was satisfactory.
6. The online communication between my LU Blackboard Supervisor and myself was satisfactory.
7. The communication between my ON Site Supervisor and myself was satisfactory.
8. My perception was that my On Site Supervisor and my LU Blackboard Supervisor communicated in a satisfactory manner.
9. I was adequately informed concerning university standards and policies for degree completion.
10. I was adequately informed concerning the LU School of Education standards and policies for program completion.
11. I was adequately informed concerning the LU School of Education standards and policies for the student teaching semester.
12. I was adequately informed concerning the requirements needed for licensure eligibility.
13. Though my student teaching was overseas, I did not feel neglected or forgotten by the LU School of Education.
14. I have had prior experience in international school settings.
15. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **General/professional knowledge.**

16. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Content knowledge.**
17. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Communication.**
18. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Planning.**
19. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Curriculum.**
20. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Diversity.**
21. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Classroom Management.**
22. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Assessment.**
23. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Technology and Resources.**
24. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Candidate's impact on K-12 student learning.**
25. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Human relations.**
26. I was adequately prepared by the LU teacher training program to meet the following competency in my overseas student teaching placement: **Professionalism.**
27. I have fond memories of my international student teaching placement.
28. If given the opportunity, I would again choose an international student teaching placement.

**Part 2: OPEN FEEDBACK QUESTIONS: Please respond with a sentence or paragraph.**

1. What were the best aspects of your overseas student teaching placement?
2. What do you wish would have been different in your overseas student teaching placement?
3. What is your overall perceived value of the international school student teaching experience?
4. Do you have advice for other candidates considering an overseas placement?
5. What information would you most want the LU faculty and staff in the School of Education to know about international student teaching?

**OVERALL SUMMARY:**

- Candidates would like to see the placement request process improved.
- Candidates would like more training in class management and assessment.
- Candidates have fond memories of student teaching in an international placement and would do it again if given the chance.

**VARIOUS OPEN COMMENTS:**

“There is a great need for QUALITY teachers in other cultures. I felt appreciated and valued for the skills and knowledge I brought to the table.”

“International student teaching is wonderful, but there are a couple of drawbacks. In the school I taught in, the most experienced teachers had fewer than five years of experience, or no degree. They were excellent, but it made it hard to go and observe at times because younger teachers were not as comfortable with the thought of someone observing them.”

“There really is nothing that I would change, accept maybe I would have brought more craft supplies over!”

“I felt as if I had to jump through hoops to get where I was placed only because there was a *limited Special Education* program overseas. The requirements were solid, but it was difficult. I would also want faculty and staff to know that the gifts (books and resources) that were sent with me along with quick emails and thoughts meant the world to me when I was so far away!”

“I wish I had gone in with a better idea of how to effectively manage a classroom. I also wish that I could have received a bit more feedback from LU professors about how I was teaching, even if that would mean sending in more videos or different types of lessons.”

“Once you decide it is what you want to do, seek opportunities. There is nothing to fear and nothing to be intimidated by. It may seem ‘crazy,’ but it is well worth it. You will get an experience beyond anything you could have received with a traditional placement. Don't feel like you will be overwhelmed. The experiences will be devoid of the people and places that you are used to. On top of that, it is the first time that you are required to juggle all of the demands of a teacher. Student teaching will show you the true extent of those demands. Be ready for the challenge, but don't let it intimidate you. Don't expect to have endless amounts of supplies and get ready to be creative to teach creative. There usually, depending on the school, aren't as many resources and supplies as we are used to at school (and with Wal-Mart right across the street). So come in ready and willing to give it your all!”

Conference Strands: Telling Our Story and Innovative Practice

***Every Minute Counts: Engaging Instruction for Pre-service Teachers  
Commuting to Off-campus Methods Courses***

Presenters: Susan Barnes, Kristi Peery, Martha Reish, and Diane Foucar-Szocki. Institutional affiliation for all presenters is James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. Kristi Peery, JMU Teacher-in-Residence, is also affiliated with the Augusta County Public Schools (ACPS).

**Synopsis: Every minute counts: Engaging instruction for pre-service teachers commuting to off-campus methods courses**

Presenters told the story of their experiences conducting a pilot program wherein two elementary education methods courses were taught in a rural public elementary school, miles away from campus. Strategies for engaging candidates during the commute and for including public school personnel, in-service teachers, university faculty, and young children, were shared.

The presentation was organized into two parts. The first part described the courses and how they supported the development of future teachers by providing opportunities for them to engage with the kindergarten children and school personnel. This constructivist approach (Brooks & Brooks, 1993) was a key component of the success of the teacher preparation program. The goal of the off-campus course delivery format were to allow candidates more opportunities to explore learning in a real world context. Candidates prepared lessons and other learning activities for kindergarten children in the school. Small groups of candidates interacted with children at learning stations while their classmates served as observers and data collectors. The observers noted the teacher-student interactions and other evidence that determined if the young students had met the objectives of the lesson. Candidates had opportunities to visit several classrooms in addition to their formal practicum placement. Data from the final course evaluations demonstrate that the candidates valued their time at the school. They cited that they understood more about how lessons would work in a classroom with diverse populations.

The second part of the session described how the presenters sought to gain maximum benefit from the off-campus location in an elementary school by creating a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1998) with the school leadership, instructional staff, cooperating in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers in the course. School personnel were guest lecturers in the on-site methods course. The school nurse shared health and safety information, the assistant principal described emergency procedures, and the technology resource teacher reviewed the online resources available to teachers in the district. Candidates shared that they appreciated getting to ask questions of professionals in the field.

Opportunities for building the sense of community among the pre-service teachers were optimized by faculty providing facilitated discussions each week while en route to the school in the motor coach provided by the university pilot program. Candidates expressed that they appreciated having the time while commuting to and from the school to plan group projects and to get to know each other better. With the pilot program successfully implemented, next steps include using the evaluation data to create an expanded, formal off-campus program.

Contact information:

Susan Barnes                    3130A Memorial Hall MSC 6909 540-568-8114    ([barnessk@jmu.edu](mailto:barnessk@jmu.edu))  
Diane Foucar-Szocki        3270G Memorial Hall MSC 6911 540-568-6794    ([foucardl@jmu.edu](mailto:foucardl@jmu.edu))

