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ABSTRACT

An opinionnaire was administered to 122 students in the teacher education program at Western Kentucky University as part of a longitudinal study to determine student attitudes toward their professors, courses, and themselves. Eight biases were tested: (1) Education courses tend to be easier than most other college courses; (2) Education courses tend to have little or no relevance to the needs of a teacher; (3) Teacher education students wish they had chosen some other career program; (4) Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors; (5) Education professors appear less knowledgeable than other college professors; (6) Students in the teacher education program are academically inferior to other college students; (7) Most students in teacher education are not planning a career in teaching; and (8) Teacher education students have a low regard for the teaching profession. The data were analyzed by student's program, curriculum, college level, transfer/non-transfer status, and career plans and were compared to the results of surveys taken in 1969 and 1974. Agreement with the biases ranged from a low of 4.1 percent for Bias 5 to a high of 30.3 percent for Bias 1. The attitudes of the 1981 survey population were more positive than those found in the 1969 and 1974 surveys. A copy of the survey instrument is appended. (FG)

AN INVESTIGATION OF CERTAIN ALLEGED STUDENT BIASES ABOUT TEACHER EDUCATION AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY (SURVEY NUMBER THREE)

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WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Twelve years ago, during the Spring Semester of 1969, a survey of certain selected Teacher Education students at Western Kentucky University was conducted. This survey, with some modification, was conducted again in the Spring Semester of 1974. The main purpose of these surveys was to determine the extent to which these students subscribed to certain biases commonly expressed about Teacher Education--its programs, professors, and students.

Traditionally, there has been what some characterize as a liberal arts bias in American colleges and universities against Teacher Education in general and its professors, courses and students in particular. Frequently, one hears remarks to the effect that Teacher Education courses are too easy, poorly taught, and irrelevant to the training of good teachers. In the same context one hears that Teacher Education students are not as bright or as academically strong as students in other more academic programs. Some critics suggest that many students enter the Teacher Education program not so much to become teachers but, rather, because they have not yet made a career choice and believe that they can

teach until a better opportunity presents itself or that they can teach if things do not work out in a preferred career.

These students, critics say, accord little prestige to the teaching profession; most would rather be physicians, lawyers or engineers if they had the academic ability or drive that such programs would require.

Whether these allegations are justified is debatable. One cannot with a survey either completely disprove or demonstrate their validity, but one can with a survey determine how students respond to these claims. However, it must be recognized that the survey data gathered from the students represent opinion, not necessarily fact. For students to agree that "education courses tend to be easier than other college courses" would not prove it so, nor would their agreement that "education courses tend to have little or no relevance to the needs of a teacher" make this a fact. Nonetheless, student responses are significant; a Teacher Education program in which students have a favorable opinion of Teacher Education--professors, courses and themselves--is more desirable than a program in which students' opinions of their courses and professors are negative and their opinions of the teaching profession and themselves are low.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this current study was to:

(1) determine the number and percentage of certain selected students in the Teacher Education program at Western

Kentucky University that subscribe to eight commonly expressed biases about Teacher Education.

(2) determine what factors are related to the prevalence of such biases in the students, and

(3) compare the results of this survey with the results obtained from the two previous surveys.

The statements of bias being investigated are the following:

Bias 1. Education courses tend to be easier than most other college courses.

Bias 2. Education courses tend to have little or no relevance to the needs of a teacher.

Bias 3. Teacher Education students wish they had chosen some career program other than teaching.

Bias 4. Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors.

Bias 5. Education professors appear to be less knowledgeable in general than other college professors.

Bias 6. Students who are in the Teacher Education program are academically inferior to other college students.

Bias 7. Most students in Teacher Education are not planning a career in teaching.

Bias 8. Teacher Education students have a low regard for the teaching profession.

Importance of the Study

For a Teacher Education program to be successful, it is essential that those who pursue it have a high regard for its quality and a genuine respect for the profession it

leads to. Furthermore, program candidates should have confidence in the extent of knowledge of those from whom instruction is received and a strong conviction that as candidates they have abilities that are deserving of respect.

If there is a prevalence of negative attitudes among the candidates about their Teacher Education program, then a problem exists and a re-evaluation of the program is in order. This study is important because it collects and analyzes data that will shed light on certain aspects of such a problem. Without such feedback as this study provides, it is possible for the people who carry out the program to be unaware that a problem exists and blithely assume that "everything is fine."

Another value of this survey is that it is a longitudinal study and obtains measures that have been gathered on similar populations in 1969 and 1974. Therefore, comparisons of data can be made among the surveys, increases and decreases noted, and possible trends discovered.

Procedure

Population and Instrumentation

All students taking Education 380 (Tests and Measurements) and Education 340 (Evaluation of Learning) were administered the opinionnaire that was used in the 1969 and 1974 surveys.*

*The 1969 opinionnaire had two fewer items than the one used in 1974 and 1981. For a further account of how the instrument was developed and implemented, consult the 1974 Survey, CEB 312, Western Kentucky University.

The basis for the selection of the population used in the 1969 survey, and, subsequently, the 1974 study, was getting a broad cross section of students in the Teacher Education program at a time in their program when they had completed at least one half of their course sequence. Tests and Measurements classes and Evaluation of Learning classes fulfilled this criterion because they are required of all education students and because these courses are generally taken just prior to methods classes and student teaching. The students in these same courses were used in the present study so that proper comparisons could be made.

The administration of the opinionnaire was conducted during the first bi-term of the Fall Semester of 1981. A copy of the instrument used may be found in Appendix A. The opinionnaire was administered to the students by a faculty member or graduate assistant, but in no case was the instrument administered to a class by its instructor.

Treatment of Data

The data were analyzed by program, curriculum, college level, sex, transfer/non-transfer status, and career plans.* Frequencies of responses and percentages were obtained. Chi square was used to determine the significance of difference between the various comparison groups. In certain instances where the data appeared to warrant it, tables comparing the data with the two previous surveys are presented.

*Appendix B contains a further breakdown of these classifications.

Definitions of Terms

Those terms pertaining to the curriculum classification are:

(1) Arts and Science Curriculum. Throughout this report this term refers to those students in the survey population whose major or area of specialization is of a department in either Potter College of Liberal Arts or Ogden College of Science and Technology.

(2) Education Curriculum. Throughout this report this term refers to those students in the study whose major or area of specialization is of a department in the College of Education.

(3) Other Curriculum. This term refers to those students in the study whose major or area of specialization is of a department in a college other than the College of Education, Ogden College of Science and Technology, and Potter College of Liberal Arts.

Those terms pertaining to classification by program are;

(1) Elementary Program. An Elementary program is a four-year program for the preparation and certification of elementary school teachers. This term excludes students in Special Education and Speech and Communication Disorders.

(2) Secondary Program. This term refers to a four-year program for the preparation and certification of secondary school teachers. This term excludes students in Special Education and Speech and Communication Disorders.

(3) Special Education Program. This term refers to the area of concentration dealing with exceptional children and their learning and behavior disorders. This term does not apply to those students in Speech and Communication Disorders.

(4) Other Program. This term refers to students in a program of Speech and Communication Disorders and any other program not applying to the programs listed above.

Another classification consists of:

Transfer/Non-Transfer Status. The word Transfer refers to students who originally started their college work elsewhere but have since transferred to Western Kentucky University. The word Non-Transfer refers to students in the Teacher Education program who started their freshman year at Western and have continued at this institution.

Findings

Bias 1. Education courses tend to be easier than most other college courses.

Although this bias received the highest rate of agreement, the statement is refuted by most of the students surveyed. Only 37 of 182 (30.3%) agree with this bias. The percentage of agreement climbed from 23.0 percent in 1969 to 35.2 percent in 1974 but dropped to 30.3 percent in this survey. Table 13, Appendix B, presents the statistical data pertaining to this bias. Chi square analysis shows that there are no significant differences at the .05 level

among groups in their response to this bias except when the data are analyzed according to curriculum. Students whose curricular programs are characterized as Arts and Science and Other agree with the bias more than students whose curriculum is characterized as Education. Of the 75 students who follow the Education curriculum 16 (21.3%) agree with the bias, whereas, of the 39 who follow the Arts and Science curriculum, 17 (43.6%) agree. Of the 8 whose curricular classification is Other, 4 (50.0%) agree with the bias.

Another point may be noted: Of those students who declare themselves as potentially career teachers, the percentage of agreement with the bias is lower than for those who have other career plans (25.9% as compared to 39.0%). This difference is significant at the .20 level. This finding suggests the possibility that some who claim to find the program easier than other courses may be settling for less than the courses offer. A further positive note was the fact that some who agreed with this bias added a written comment that their education courses had been easier because the teaching was better.

Bias 2. Education courses tend to have little or no relevance to the needs of a teacher.

A large majority of the students disagree with this statement; only 12 of 122, or 9.8 percent, agree with the bias. The responses, however, are quite different from those given in 1974, as Table 1 below indicates.

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE, BY PROGRAM AREA, AGREEING EDUCATION COURSES ARE NOT RELEVANT

Program	1969 Survey	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Secondary	16 of 122 (14.3%)	46 of 120 (38.3%)	7 of 66 (10.6%)
Elementary	15 of 51 (29.4%)	6 of 51 (11.8%)	1 of 24 (4.2%)
Total Survey Population	31 of 163 (19.0%)	58 of 182 (31.9%)	12 of 122 (9.8%)

The data in Table 1 reveal that the percentage in the Elementary group agreeing with the statement showed a significant and steady decline from 1969 to the present. The percentage in the Secondary group showed a slight decline since 1969 but a significant one since the 1974 survey.

Table 13, Appendix B, shows that when the surveyed group (1981) was analyzed according to college level, the results indicated that the seniors are somewhat less in agreement with the bias than the juniors, although the difference was not statistically significant (8.7% as compared to only 9.1% of the juniors). These percentages are quite different from those obtained in 1974 which show that more seniors (35.8%) agreed with the bias than juniors (3.8%). This difference in the 1974 survey was significant at the .05 level. It is a positive note that seniors who have had more experience in the program have increased their regard for the program's relevance a great deal since 1974.

Another noteworthy finding was that among those who plan to become career teachers, only 7 of 81 (8.6%) evidently question the relevance of education courses in preparing them to teach. This is a much lower figure than in the 1974 survey, when 34 of 117 (29.1%) agreed education courses were not relevant to the needs of a teacher.

Chi square revealed no other significant differences when the groups were compared on the basis of program, curriculum, sex, transfer/non-transfer status or by career plan.

Bias 3. Teacher Education students wish they had chosen some career other than teaching.

The assertion that most students in Teacher Education regret their choice of program is not borne out. Only 8 of 122 (6.6%) agree with the statement. Though the percentage of dissatisfaction with career choice is low, it might be noted that it is considerably lower than it was in 1974 when the agreement was 15.4 percent.

Of the students following the Education curriculum about the same percentage (6.7%) agree with the statement as do those following the curriculum of Arts and Science, of whom 5.1 percent agree. Those who have declared themselves career teachers emphatically refute the bias, having an agreement of only 3.7 percent. The agreement of this group is somewhat lower than the agreement with the bias among those who have other career plans, which is 12.2 percent. One might suppose that a definite commitment to the teaching

profession, to some extent, results in satisfaction with the choice one has made.

Table 2 shows an interesting contrast between the results of the 1974 survey and the 1981 survey when analyzed according to career plans. It is significant that the overall percentage of those who wish they had chosen another career declined, and a similar decline in agreement with the bias is seen in the group who plan to become career teachers. Even more significant is the much larger decline in agreement (15.4% to 6.6%) seen in the group who have career plans which may not include teaching. This suggests that this group of students are still satisfied that they

TABLE 2

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE WISHING THEY HAD CHOSEN OTHER THAN A TEACHING CAREER, ACCORDING TO PRESENT CAREER PLAN

Career Plans	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Teaching	5 of 117 (4.3%)	3 of 81 (3.7%)
Other	23 of 65 (35.4%)	5 of 41 (12.2%)
Combined	28 of 182 (15.4%)	8 of 122 (6.6%)

chose to follow the Teacher Education program even though they may teach only for awhile or may never teach.

When the 1974 survey data were analyzed according to program, curriculum, college level, sex, transfer/non-transfer status and career plans, no significant differences

at the .05 level were observed. However, a difference in agreement to the bias, significant at the .16 level, was noted between those who plan a career in teaching and those who have other career plans. (See Table 14, Appendix B.)

Bias 4. Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors.

The students' responses show little concurrence with the bias. (See Table 15 in Appendix B.) Only 23 of the 122 students (18.9%) agree. The percentage of agreement in the 1974 survey was 24.7 percent, and the 1969 survey was 24.0 percent. When the 1981 survey data were analyzed according to program, curriculum, college level, sex, transfer/non-transfer status and career plans, no significant differences at the .05 level in agreement with the bias were observed.

Table 3 shows a comparison of 1974 survey data with 1981 data.

TABLE 3

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS, BY PROGRAM, WHO AGREE THAT EDUCATION PROFESSORS TEACH LESS EFFECTIVELY

Program Classification	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Secondary	36 of 120 (30.0%)	13 of 66 (19.7%)
Elementary	4 of 51 (7.8%)	2 of 24 (8.3%)
All Four Programs Combined	45 of 182 (24.7%)	23 of 122 (18.9%)

Bias 5. Education professors appear to be less knowledgeable than other college professors.

This statement is rejected by a large majority of the group surveyed: only 5 of the 122 students (4.1%) agreed with the bias. The percentage of the 1974 survey agreeing was 9.3. There was a significant difference of agreement at the .05 level when the 1981 data were analyzed according to program. (See Table 16, Appendix B.) There were no other significant differences in the agreement with the biases when the data of the other group classifications were analyzed.

Table 4 below permits a comparison of the rate of agreement according to program between the 1974 and the 1981 data.

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS, BY PROGRAM, WHO AGREE THAT EDUCATION PROFESSORS ARE LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE THAN OTHER PROFESSORS

Program	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Secondary	12 of 120 (10.0%)	2 of 66 (3.0%)
Elementary	4 of 51 (7.8%)	0 of 24 (0.0%)
Other	1 of 11 (9.1%)	3 of 42 (7.1%)
All Four Programs Combined	17 of 182 (9.3%)	5 of 122 (4.1%)

A decline in agreement in all program classifications from 1974 to 1981 is observed. It would appear that the

bias, which was not widely accepted by the Teacher Education students in 1974, is even less accepted in 1981.

Although these data serve to refute the notion that most students in Western's Teacher Education program subscribe to the bias, they obviously do not prove the superiority of one group of professors over another in terms of their depth of knowledge, since one cannot measure knowledge by an opinionnaire. The data do seem, however, to reflect something essential for the success of any Teacher Education program: confidence in the knowledge of those from whom instruction is received.

Bias 6. Students who are in the Teacher Education program are academically inferior to other college students.

Only 5.7 percent of the surveyed group agreed with the statement above. When the responses to the bias were analyzed according to the various classifications, there were significant differences (.05 level) found in only two group classifications, namely, by program and by college level. When the data were analyzed according to program (see Table 17, Appendix B), it was observed that 3 of 13 students (23.1%) in the Special Education program agreed with the bias. This relatively high percentage of agreement by this one subgroup probably accounts for the significant difference found. When the data were organized according to college level, those who were classified as Juniors and Other showed a high rate of agreement with the

bias (9.1% and 25.0% respectively) than the Seniors. Is it possible that time spent in college is a factor associated with the bias?

During the Fall Semester of 1980 and the Spring Semester of 1981 the California Achievement Test, 1977 edition, was given to a total of 371 students who had applied for admission to the Teacher Education program at Western. The ACT scores, whenever available, were obtained from these students' records. Their cumulative grade point averages were likewise obtained. Table 5 below presents these data arranged according to race.

TABLE 5

ACADEMIC MEASUREMENTS, ORGANIZED BY RACE, ATTAINED BY TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES IN 1980-1 AT WKU

Academic Measurements	White		Black		All	
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$
CAT:						
Raw Score	351	192.09	19	166.47	371	190.52
GES	351	12.66	19	11.96	371	12.61
ACT:						
English	211	19.00	13	14.77	224	18.29
Mathematics	212	16.37	13	12.92	225	16.17
Composite	278	18.01	18	13.17	296	17.71
Cumulative GPA	351	2.87	19	2.43	371	2.85

The overall cumulative GPA is 2.85 on a 4-point scale, which is somewhat less than a B average. The mean overall Grade Equivalent Score (GES) obtained on the California Achievement Test is 12.61, which may be misleading since the test has a rather low ceiling score for college students.

the highest possible GES being 12.9. On such a test the highest mean possible is 12.9. The mean composite ACT overall score is 17.71, which is lower than a similar group surveyed in 1974 that had a mean composite ACT overall score of 19.82 (see Table 7 following). The Black students on the average were lower than the white students on all measures considered. Likewise, male students on the average scored lower than female students on all measures except on the mathematics section of the ACT. Comparisons on the basis of sex are presented in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6

ACADEMIC MEASUREMENTS, ORGANIZED BY SEX, ATTAINED BY TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES IN 1980-1 AT WKU

Academic Measurements	Female		Male	
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$
CAT:				
Raw Score	255	193.05	116	184.97
GES	255	12.64	116	12.53
ACT:				
English	155	19.18	69	16.30
Mathematics	155	16.14	70	16.26
Composite	203	17.85	93	17.42
Cumulative GPA	255	2.91	116	2.69

A comparison of the 1974 survey group with the 1981 population of Teacher Education candidates is made in Table 7 below. It can be observed that the mean composite ACT score has declined considerably, but the mean cumulative grade point average is about the same, with the 1980-1 mean being slightly lower.

TABLE 7

A COMPARISON OF ACADEMIC MEASUREMENTS BETWEEN TWO SURVEY POPULATIONS

Academic Measurements	1974 Survey Population		1981 Survey Population*	
	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$
Composite ACT	171	19.82	296	17.71
Cumulative GPA	171	2.89	371	2.85

*Population of teacher candidates who were tested during the Fall Semester of 1980 and Spring Semester, 1981.

A further analysis was made of the data obtained on the 1981 Teacher Education candidates. It was the aim of these investigators to determine what percentage of the population would survive certain criteria proposed for admission to the Teacher Education program. The criteria selected were a GPA of 2.5, a GES score of 12.5, and a combination of the two criteria.

TABLE 8

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO WOULD SURVIVE PROPOSED SELECTION CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM, BY SEX AND RACE

Proposed Selection Criteria	Sex				Race			
	Female (N = 255)		Male (N = 116)		White (N = 351)		Black (N = 19)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GPA of 2.5	189	74	73	63	256	73	5	26
GES of 12.5	230	90	101	87	319	91	12	63
Combined Criteria	181	71	68	59	245	70	4	21

A further analysis was made of the data to determine how various departments throughout the University would be affected by the possible application of the criteria. Table 9-a below shows the number and percentage of the students by program areas who would survive the proposed admissions criteria.

It is probable that one cannot determine academic inferiority by opinionnaire. Although the group disagreed with this bias, this high rate of disagreement cannot be considered significant. Conversely, it might reflect rather poorly on the Teacher Education program if these students had expressed a high rate of agreement with the bias.

To what extent can one rely on grade point averages and standardized test scores to indicate academic strength? These measures are probably more valid than opinionnaire data, and, if so, one can say on the basis of such data that Western's Teacher Education program has some academically strong students, most of whom are white and female. On such bases it must be admitted that the program has several who are academically weak. From the data presented previously in Tables 5 and 6, it is apparent that the two sub-groups, males and Black, are not only fewer in number than their comparison groups but have academic measures inferior to them.

It is disturbing to observe that only 68 of 116 males (59.0%) survive the applied admissions criteria and even more disturbing to observe that only 4 of 21 (21.0%) of the Black students survive such admissions standards.

TABLE 9-a

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO WOULD SURVIVE PROPOSED SELECTION CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION INTO THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM BY SELECTED DEPARTMENTS/PROGRAM AREAS*

Proposed Selection Criteria	Secondary								Elementary		Special Education		All Groups	
	History (N = 16)		Art (N = 11)		Agric. (N = 19)		P. E. (N = 38)		(N = 104)		(N = 50)		(N = 371)**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
GPA of 2.5	8	50	6	55	12	63	19	50	71	68	37	74	262	71
GES of 12.5	16	100	10	91	15	79	27	71	90	87	48	96	331	89
Combined Criteria	8	50	6	55	10	53	17	45	66	63	37	74	249	67

*Only those departments and program areas that have a relatively large number and percentage of students failing to attain the proposed admissions criteria are included in the table.

**The data in this column pertain to the entire population which includes all students by departmental major or areas of concentration.

In order to determine the validity of the assertion that Teacher Education students are academically inferior to other students, the investigators made a comparison of the grade point averages of the Teacher Education candidates who were juniors and seniors with those of the population of juniors and seniors at Western. The data in Table 9-b show that the Teacher Education candidates did not have GPAs lower than their comparison groups but had GPAs somewhat higher. No effort was made to determine if the differences in GPAs were significant since variability measures on the University populations were not obtained. One may, however, confidently reject as unwarranted the assertion that education candidates are academically inferior to University students in general.

The comparison groups (juniors and seniors) were chosen in order to obtain a valid comparison: juniors with juniors and seniors with seniors. If the entire WKU student body were chosen as a comparison, it is likely that the usually lower grades found among college freshmen would have lowered the mean GPA of the University group and would have resulted in differences even more in favor of the Teacher Education group.

Using juniors and seniors who were merely candidates for admission to the program instead of using students who were already in the program and had taken education courses made it possible to eliminate as an intervening variable grades made in education, which critics allege are inflated. Since

the Teacher Education candidates had not yet received a grade in an education course, the comparison was between juniors and seniors who had opted to become Teacher Education candidates and the entire population of juniors and seniors who finished the Fall Semester of 1981 at Western. Thus, the investigators were able to compare the groups on the bases of their academic achievement, i.e., GPA, uncontaminated by the education course variable.

TABLE 9-b

A COMPARISON OF GPAs OF TEACHER EDUCATION CANDIDATES WITH WKU POPULATIONS BY TWO CLASSIFICATION LEVELS

Classification Levels	Teacher Education Candidates	WKU Student Population
Juniors	N = 150	N = 1679
	$\bar{X}$ = 2.87	$\bar{X}$ = 2.67
Seniors	N = 137	N = 2043
	$\bar{X}$ = 2.81	$\bar{X}$ = 2.79
Juniors and Seniors Combined	N = 287	N = 3722
	$\bar{X}$ = 2.84	$\bar{X}$ = 2.74

Bias 7. Most students in Teacher Education are not planning a career in teaching.

Although a large majority of the group surveyed did declare that they intend to become career teachers (81 of the 122 students surveyed; 66.4%), the results of the opinionnaire did bear out a belief that there are other reasons for students entering the Teacher Education program. The remaining 41 students (of the 122 surveyed) were distributed in the following manner: 16 (13.1% of the 122 total) said they plan to follow a career other than teaching but want to be qualified to teach if "things don't work out"; 17 (13.9%) said they intend to teach until they can find something better; various other reasons for being in the program were specified by the 8 (6.6%) other students surveyed.

Of the 81 students who indicated that they plan to become career teachers, 40 (49.4%) were Secondary students, 23 (28.4%) were Elementary students, 10 (12.3%) were Special Educati n students and 8 (9.9%) were classified Other.

Table 10 shows that in the Secondary Education group the 40 indicating they are planning a career in teaching constitute 60.6 percent of the Secondary group.

TABLE 10

A COMPARISON OF 1981 SURVEY DATA WITH 1969 AND 1974 SURVEY DATA: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS, BY PROGRAM, PLANNING TO BECOME CAREER TEACHERS

Program	1969 Survey	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Secondary	40 of 112 (36.6%)	66 of 120 (55.0%)	40 of 66 (60.6%)
Elementary	23 of 51 (45.1%)	44 of 51 (86.3%)	23 of 24 (95.8%)
Sec. & Elem. Combined	63 of 163 (38.8%)	110 of 171 (64.3%)	63 of 90 (70.0%)

In both the Elementary and Secondary programs, the increase in the percentage of those planning to become career teachers is considerable, especially when compared with 1969 survey data. There is a much larger percentage of the Elementary students who are planning to be career teachers than of the Secondary students with such plans. This difference is significant at the .05 level.

When the survey group was classified by curriculum, a difference of career plans emerged. Of the 39 students in the Arts and Science curriculum, 22 (56.4%) indicated they plan a career in teaching, whereas 55 of the 75 (73.3%) in the Education curriculum indicated such plans. A comparison of 1981 survey data with 1974 data in Table 11-a below shows a considerable increase among students following the Arts and Science curriculum who plan to become career teachers. There is a small increase seen in the other groups also, but not a noteworthy one.

TABLE 11-a

A COMPARISON OF 1981 SURVEY DATA WITH 1974 DATA: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE, BY CURRICULUM, PLANNING TO BECOME CAREER TEACHERS

Curriculum	1974 Survey	1981 Survey
Arts & Science	12 of 33 (36.4%)	22 of 39 (56.4%)
Education	105 of 148 (70.9%)	55 of 75 (73.3%)
Other	0 of 1 (0.0%)	4 of 8 (50.0%)
Total Curriculum	117 of 182 (64.3%)	81 of 122 (66.4%)

When the students were classified by sex, it was found that 22 of the 44 males (50.0%) plan a career in teaching, while 59 of the 78 females (75.6%) do. The percentages for these two groups in 1974 were 42.0 percent for males and 72.7 percent for females.

One noteworthy point that emerged from the analysis of the data was the relative scarcity of male students in the survey population. Of the 122 students, 44 were males, only 22 of whom plan to become career teachers. There were no males in the Elementary group. In the light of recommendations from educators that more male teachers be placed in elementary schools, the situation here deserves some attention.

Bias 8. Teacher Education students have a low regard for the teaching profession.

In the 1969 and 1974 surveys, the survey respondents were asked to rank a list of 12 professional groups, one of which was the teaching profession, relative to the prestige they accorded each. The most prestigious was to receive the rank of 1; the least prestigious, the rank of 12. The 122 students in the 1981 survey were asked to rank, in like manner, the same list of professional groups. Table 11-b presents the results of the ranking by the three survey groups. The 1969 survey group accorded the teaching profession a mean rank of 5.1, the 1974 survey group a mean rank of 6.6 and the 1981 survey group a mean rank of 5.9, which is a better ranking than the previous survey but a poorer ranking than the first survey of 1969. Actually, the differences in the three prestige rankings is quite small and cannot safely be attributed to a real decline in respect for the teaching profession.

One cannot assume that the prestige rankings by these students is a reflection of the prestige that the general public accords these professions. It does, however, indicate something quite important to the Teacher Education programs; that is, relative to various professions, teachers are accorded a considerable level of prestige by those following the program leading to the profession of teaching.

TABLE 11-b

PRESTIGE RANKING OF TWELVE PROFESSIONS

Occupation Group	Mean Rank			Serial Order		
	1969	1974	1981	1969	1974	1981
Physician	1.8	1.9	1.9	1	1	1
Lawyer	3.0	3.3	3.4	2	2	2
Dentist	4.4	4.8	4.8	3	3	3
Teacher	5.1	6.6	5.9	4	5	5
Engineer	5.8	5.5	5.8	5	4	4
Industrial Executive	6.3	7.7	6.9	6	8	7
Accountant	7.9	7.0	6.9	7	6	6
Sales Executive	8.4	9.6	9.2	8	12	11
Nurse	9.0	7.0	6.9	9	7	8
Social Worker	10.0	8.8	9.6	10	10	12
Military Captain	11.3-	8.5	8.2	11	9	10
Police Captain	11.3+	8.8	8.2	12	11	9

Summary of Findings

This study of eight common biases about teacher education, in terms of the degree to which students in the Teacher Education program at Western subscribe to the biases, shows that all the biases are generally refuted. The percentage of agreement with the biases ranges from a low of 4.1 percent to a high of 30.3 percent. (These figures do not include responses to Bias 8, whose percentages cannot be calculated in like manner.)

Thus the biases are not borne out; there are, however, variations of agreement within the survey group, in terms of specific student classification, which are of interest. Furthermore, when this study compares the 1981 responses with those of the 1969 and 1974 surveys, other noteworthy details emerge. Some of the findings may well have implications for future study and perhaps may even signal a need for changes in some aspects of the program.

Bias 1 (Education courses are easier than other college courses) received 30.3 percent agreement, the highest agreement rate and an increase from the 1969 survey but a small decrease from the 1974 survey results. The rate of agreement in the 1981 survey varied significantly depending on the classification of the group. Chi square yielded a difference significant at the .05 level between groups classified by curriculum. Students following the Arts and Science curriculum agree with the bias more than students

following the Education curriculum. Also, students who say they plan to become career teachers agree with the bias less than those who have other career plans.

Bias 2 (Education courses tend to have little relevance to the needs of a teacher) received a low rate of agreement: 9.8 percent of the survey group. The 1974 rate of agreement was 31.9 percent. In 1974, classification by program yielded differences of agreement significant at the .05 level, with Elementary Education students agreeing less often than Secondary students, and juniors agreeing less often than seniors. The 1981 students who indicated they planned to become career teachers reject the notion that education courses are not relevant more frequently than the 1974 students who had such career plans. The 1981 survey showed no significant differences of agreement when the data were classified by program or any other category.

Bias 3 (I wish I had chosen some career other than teaching) received a 6.6 percent agreement which was much lower than the 15.4 percent obtained in 1974. There were no differences of agreement significant at the .05 level in any of the group classifications. These results suggest that this population of students, no matter how analyzed, are satisfied they chose to follow the Teacher Education program. Even those whose plans are indefinite about a teaching career are relatively satisfied with their program choice.

Bias 4 (Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors) is supported by 18.9 percent of the survey group, which is somewhat less than the 24.7 percent obtained in the 1974 survey. Within the classifications analyzed there were no differences in agreement significant at the .05 level.

Bias 5 (Education professors appear to be less knowledgeable in general than other college professors) received very little agreement, only 4.1 percent--which is lower than the 9.3 percent received in the 1974 survey. It appears that the bias which was not widely accepted in 1974 is accepted even less in 1981.

Bias 6 (Students in the Teacher Education program tend to be academically inferior to other college students) is rejected by a very large majority: only 5.7 percent agree with the bias, which is comparable to the result obtained in 1974, 6.0 percent. A comparison of the GPA for Teacher Education candidates with the GPA of a similar university population showed that the mean of the teacher candidates to be slightly higher.

Certain evidence, in the form of grade point averages and standardized test data obtained from Western's Office of Teacher Admissions, is presented to describe the academic quality of students in Teacher Education. This evidence indicates that females place higher than males on most of the academic measures and Whites place higher than Blacks

on all the academic measures. If certain proposed admissions criteria are applied against a population of 371 Teacher Education students concerning whom such data were obtained, only 59 percent of the male candidates and only 21 percent of the Black candidates would pass such criteria.

Bias 7 (Most students in Teacher Education are not planning a career in teaching) is not borne out in the survey. Of the 122 students in the survey group, 81 (66.4%) plan to become career teachers, an increase over the 1969 survey, which showed 38.7 percent, and the 1974 survey, which showed 64.3 percent.

When the survey group is classified by program, the Elementary group has a much higher percentage who plan a career in teaching (98.5%) than the Secondary group with 60.6 percent. This difference is significant at the .05 level. Both programs show a dramatic increase in the percentage who plan to become career teachers since 1969, when the Elementary program had 45.1 percent and the Secondary, 36.6 percent.

When the survey group is compared on the basis of curriculum, it is found that a higher percentage (73.3%) who follow the Education curriculum plan to become career teachers than those who follow the Arts and Science curriculum (56.4%).

When the survey group is classified by sex, it is found that a larger percentage of the females (75.6%) plan

to be career teachers than of the males (50.0%). In the 1974 survey, the percentage for females was 72.7 percent and 42.0 percent for males.

Evidently the percentage who actually plan to become career teachers is increasing somewhat, especially noted when one compares the 1981 data showing 66.4 percent planning to be career teachers with the 1969 data having 38.7 percent with such plans.

Bias 8 (Teacher Education students have a low regard for the teaching profession) is not borne out. The survey group ranked teaching fifth in a list of twelve professions which are generally accorded fairly high prestige. The prestige ranking of teachers has declined slightly since the 1969 survey but has improved somewhat since the 1974 survey.

Conclusions

1. The attitude of the survey population toward all aspects of the Teacher Education program is much more positive than critics had supposed.

2. The attitude of the population surveyed has become increasingly positive since the first survey in 1969. The greatest increase in positiveness of attitude toward Teacher Education occurred among students in the Secondary Education program and, in particular, among those following the Arts and Science curriculum. However, these two group classifications are still less positive than their major

comparison groups, Elementary Education program and Education curriculum, respectively.

3. Bias 4 (Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors) and Bias 5 (Education professors appear to be less knowledgeable in general than other college professors) would appear to be somewhat related and might be expected to produce comparable results. The 18.9 percent and 4.1 percent findings, however, vary markedly and would appear to deserve further investigation. (A question: How could it be possible that so called "educationist" professors, whose penchant for methodology and disdain for knowledge are widely accepted, are rated by their students higher on their knowledge than their teaching effectiveness?)

4. Although the attitude of the population is more positive than it was in 1969 and 1974, the indices of academic ability are declining. Since the data indicated that the academic ability of males and Blacks is lower on the average than their comparison groups, females and Whites, it is likely that there will be a shortage of male and Black teachers who have high academic qualifications. In fact, there already is a shortage of males in the program (only 36.1%). Compounding this problem is the fact that only half of those male students reported their intention to become career teachers.

5. The new standards imposed recently by the State Board of Education will present a dilemma to the College of Education. The Kentucky State Board of Education in the Spring of 1981 mandated that by the Fall of 1982 all Teacher Education students must have an overall GPA of 2.5 before they will be permitted to do student teaching. On the basis of the data obtained on the population of 371 Teacher Education candidates in the Fall Semester of 1980 and the Spring Semester of 1981, a rather large percentage of certain subgroups, identified previously in this study, will not meet this requirement. Western Kentucky University, in particular the College of Education, must address itself to this forthcoming problem by every appropriate means possible. The solution to this problem might possibly be one or more of the following: early diagnosis and remedial efforts, aggressive recruitment of the more academically talented, and a revision of the standards for admission to Teacher Education.

APPENDIX A

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

STUDENT SURVEY

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
FALL SEMESTER, 1981

To the Student:

A study of various student opinions was made during the Spring Semester of 1969 and the Spring Semester of 1974. Now, we wish to obtain information about present student opinions so that a comparison study can be made with the previous ones. Will you please help by supplying the information requested and responding to the brief list of items in the manner explained below. You need not sign the survey form. Your information will be held in strict confidence.

Part I: General Information

Directions: Please check the items below as they apply to you.

1. Program Type:

____(1) Secondary

____(2) Elementary

____(3) K-12

____(4) Other: _____
Specify

2. Curriculum:

____(1) Arts and Science

____(2) Education

____(3) Other: _____
Specify

3. Level (Classification):

___(1) Senior

___(2) Junior

___(3) Other: _____
Specify

4. Sex:

___(1) Male

___(2) Female

5. Transfer - Non-Transfer:

___(1) Transfer

___(2) Non-Transfer

Part II: Career Plans

Directions: Below are some reasons why students choose the Teacher Education program. Read each one carefully and check the one that applies best to you.

(1)___I plan to become a career teacher.

(2)___I plan to teach until I can find something better.

(3)___I plan to follow some career other than teaching, but I want to be able to teach if things don't work out.

(4)___I don't intend to teach but want to be qualified should it become necessary to supplement my spouse's income.

(5)___I want a college degree. Teacher Education seems the most feasible way of getting it.

(6)___Other: (Specify)_____

_____

_____

Part III: Opinions about Teacher Education

Directions: Below are some statements about Teacher Education courses, faculty, and students. Please read each one carefully. If you agree with the statement as a general rule, place a check mark before "agree"; if you disagree with the statement as a general rule, place a check mark before "disagree."

7. Education courses tend be easier than other college courses.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

8. Education courses tend to have little or no relevance to the needs of a teacher.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

9. I wish I had chosen some career program other than teaching.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

10. Education professors teach less effectively than other college professors.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

11. Education professors appear to be less knowledgeable in general than other college professors.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

12. Students who are in the Teacher Education program tend to be academically inferior to other college students.

____agree (1) ____disagree (2)

Part IV: Prestige Ranking of Professions

Directions: Below is a list of twelve professional groups. Read over the entire list, and then rank them according to the prestige you accord each. The highest rank is 1 and the lowest rank is 12.

____accountant (13-14)

____dentist (15-16)

____engineer (17-18)

____industrial executive (19-20)

____lawyer (21-22)

____military (Captain) (23-24)

____nurse (R.N.) (25-26)

____physician (27-28)

____police officer (Captain) (29-30)

____sales executive (31-32)

____social worker (33-34)

____teacher (35-36)

APPENDIX B

PRESENTATION OF STATISTICAL DATA RELATIVE TO BIASES 1-6

TABLE 12

BIAS 1: EDUCATION COURSES TEND TO BE EASIER THAN OTHER COLLEGE COURSES

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				.9388
Secondary	66	21	31.8	
Elementary	24	6	25.0	
Special Ed.	13	4	30.8	
Other	19	6	31.6	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	
By Curriculum:				.0226
Arts & Science	39	17	43.6	
Education	75	16	21.3	
Other	8	4	50.0	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	
By Level:				.2162
Junior	22	4	18.2	
Senior	92	29	31.5	
Other	8	4	50.0	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	
By Sex:				.2434
Male	44	10	22.7	
Female	78	27	34.6	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	
By:				.2436
Transfer	37	8	21.6	
Non-Transfer	85	29	34.1	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	
By Career Plans:				.2012
Teaching	81	21	25.9	
Other	41	16	39.0	
Group Total	122	37	30.3	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

TABLE 13

BIAS 2: EDUCATION COURSES TEND TO HAVE LITTLE OR NO RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS OF A TEACHER

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				
Secondary	66	7	10.6	.6279
Elementary	24	1	4.2	
Special Ed.	13	1	7.7	
Other	19	3	15.8	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	
By Curriculum:				
Arts & Science	39	6	15.4	.3218
Education	75	5	6.7	
Other	8	1	12.5	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	
By Level:				
Junior	22	2	9.1	.3291
Senior	92	8	8.7	
Other	8	2	25.0	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	
By Sex:				
Male	44	5	11.4	.9132
Female	78	7	9.0	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	
By:				
Transfer	37	3	8.1	.9266
Non-Transfer	85	9	10.6	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	
By Career Plans:				
Teaching	81	7	8.6	.7636
Other	41	5	12.2	
Group Total	122	12	9.8	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

TABLE 14

BIAS 3: I WISH I HAD CHOSEN SOME CAREER OTHER THAN TEACHING.

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				
Secondary	66	4	6.1	.6706
Elementary	24	2	8.3	
Special Ed.	13	0	0.0	
Other	19	2	10.5	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	
By Curriculum:				
Arts & Science	39	2	5.1	.7436
Education	75	5	6.7	
Other	8	1	12.5	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	
By Level:				
Junior	22	2	9.1	.6730
Senior	92	6	6.5	
Other	8	0	0.0	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	
By Sex:				
Male	44	3	6.8	1.0000
Female	78	5	6.4	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	
By:				
Transfer	37	1	2.7	.4611
Non-Transfer	85	7	8.2	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	
By Career Plans:				
Teaching	81	3	3.7	.1607
Other	41	5	12.2	
Group Total	122	8	6.6	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

TABLE 15

BIAS 4: EDUCATION PROFESSORS TEACH LESS EFFECTIVELY THAN OTHER COLLEGE PROFESSORS.

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				
Secondary	66	13	19.7	.4557
Elementary	24	2	8.3	
Special Ed.	13	3	23.1	
Other	19	5	26.3	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	—
By Curriculum:				
Arts & Science	39	10	25.6	.4097
Education	75	12	16.0	
Other	8	1	12.5	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	
By Level:				
Junior	22	2	9.1	.4142
Senior	92	19	20.7	
Other	8	2	25.0	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	
By Sex:				
Male	44	6	13.6	.3869
Female	78	17	21.8	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	
By:				
Transfer	37	4	10.8	.2124
Non-Transfer	85	19	22.4	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	
By Career Plans:				
Teaching	81	14	17.3	.7058
Other	41	9	22.0	
Group Total	122	23	18.9	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

TABLE 16

BIAS 5: EDUCATION PROFESSORS APPEAR TO BE LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE IN GENERAL THAN OTHER COLLEGE PROFESSORS.

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				.0388
Secondary	66	2	3.0	
Elementary	24	0	0.0	
Special Ed.	13	0	0.0	
Other	19	3	15.8	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	
By Curriculum:				.7989
Arts & Science	39	2	5.1	
Education	75	3	4.0	
Other	8	0	0.0	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	
By Level:				.4274
Junior	22	0	0.0	
Senior	92	5	5.4	
Other	8	0	0.0	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	
By Sex:				.7730
Male	44	1	2.3	
Female	78	4	5.1	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	
By:				.9870
Transfer	37	1	2.7	
Non-Transfer	85	4	4.7	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	
By Career Plans:				.4281
Teaching	81	2	2.5	
Other	41	3	7.3	
Group Total	122	5	4.1	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

TABLE 17

BIAS 6: STUDENTS WHO ARE IN THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM TEND TO BE ACADEMICALLY INFERIOR TO OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS.

Group Classification	Group Size (N)	Students Agreeing		Significance Chi Square*
		Number	Percent	
By Program:				.0155
Secondary	66	2	3.0	
Elementary	24	0	0.0	
Special Ed.	13	3	23.1	
Other	19	2	10.5	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	
By Curriculum:				.7285
Arts & Science	39	2	5.1	
Education	75	5	6.7	
Other	8	0	0.0	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	
By Level:				.0304
Junior	22	2	9.1	
Senior	92	3	3.3	
Other	8	2	25.0	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	
By Sex:				.9841
Male	44	2	4.5	
Female	78	5	6.4	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	
By:				1.0000
Transfer	37	2	5.4	
Non-Transfer	85	5	5.9	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	
By Career Plans:				1.0000
Teaching	81	5	6.2	
Other	41	2	4.9	
Group Total	122	7	5.7	

*Frequencies of fewer than five in a cell were not used in computing the index of significance.

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