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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined the transfer experiences of students who exited the Community College of Baltimore County (Maryland) and transferred to Towson University during 1999. The research questions addressed the issues of the role of the community college in teacher preparation and how the institutions help or hinder the transfer of prospective teacher education majors who begin their pre-service training at the community college. The researcher interviewed 14 transfer students and six higher education professionals from both the two- and four-year institutions. The study traced the history of the community college movement nationwide and in the state of Maryland, and cited efforts to improve transfer conditions for community college students who express an interest in majoring in teacher education at the baccalaureate level. The findings revealed five dominant themes: transfer tension; the ambiguous role of the community college in teacher preparation; the role of the students in the management of his/her transfer; the erection and maintenance of institutional barriers; and feelings of alienation, especially for non-traditional students. Recommendations included encouraging the college teacher education professionals to conduct substantive dialog about their respective philosophies of preparing teachers, and clarification of the role of the community college in teacher education. Appendices include surveys, consent forms, and interview protocols. (Contains 145 references.) (JA)

# A CASE STUDY OF THE TRANSFER PROCESS OF A SELECTED GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO A FOUR-YEAR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2000



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## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRANSFER PROCESS OF A SELECTED GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO A FOUR-YEAR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Maureen Lucy McDonough, Doctor of Philosophy, 2000

Dissertation directed by: Dr. Richard Hopkins
Department of Education Policy and Leadership

This dissertation examined the transfer experience of a purposefully-selected group of students who exited the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, and transferred to Towson University during 1999. The research questions addressed the issues of the role of the community college in teacher preparation and how the institutions help or hinder the transfer of prospective teacher education majors who begin their pre-service training at the community college. The researcher used the particularistic descriptive case study method, interviewing fourteen transfer students and six higher education professionals from both the two- and four-year institutions.

The study traced the history of the community college movement nationwide and in the state of Maryland, and cited a sample of efforts to improve transfer conditions for

community college students who express an interest in majoring in teacher education at the baccalaureate level.

The narratives of the student interviews were analyzed and interpreted through the lenses of three sociologically-based theoretical perspectives: the conflict theory; the structural-functional theory; and the institutional barriers theory. The findings revealed five dominant themes that emerged from the data. These were: transfer tension, the ambiguous role of the community college in teacher preparation, the role of the student in the management of his/her transfer, the erection and maintenance of institutional barriers, and feelings of alienation, especially for non-traditional students. Analysis of the dialogs with the higher education professional respondents validated the transfer accounts of the students.

The transfer process for this population varied depending upon the students' proaction and planning; nevertheless, transfer tension to some degree was reported by all of the student participants, and all had encountered some institutional barriers precluding a truly seamless transfer. Recommendations from the study were both for policy and practice and for further research. Significant recommendations included encouraging the university and community college teacher education professionals to conduct substantive dialog about their respective philosophies of preparing teachers, clarification of the role of the community college in teacher education, and providing transfer students with more timely and concise information to guide their transition. It was also recommended that the student participants be followed throughout their university years in a longitudinal study and that the research be expanded to include other higher education institutions and transfer students in other disciplines. The study is

significant for teacher education students, education policy makers, and practitioners, especially in light of the shortage of qualified teachers.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated with love and gratitude to my husband, Colonel William A. McDonough.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### The Community College and Its Mission

Educators have been divided about the primary purpose of the community college since the inception of the community college movement almost one hundred years ago. In the earliest stages, the public junior colleges were designed to provide underprivileged high school students an opportunity to explore career options not available or affordable by direct entry into the university or four-year college. This initial priority began to change when the associate of arts degree was created as a kind of "terminal" degree considered adequate to prepare students for non-professional, non-blue collar jobs and careers. The birth of the "community college" in the 1960s and the explosion of new institutions during that decade coincided with the expansion of the mission of these two-year schools into a more comprehensive purpose which included transfer, career programs, and remediation (Boss, 1982; Fields, 1962; Palinchak, 1973).

This change in mission and purpose created tension within community colleges as administration and faculty began to compete for resources to support one part of the mission, sometimes at the expense of the others. The "open door" philosophy and policy of the community college runs counter to the stricter admissions policies of the

four-year institutions, reinforcing the notion of community colleges as lesser partners in the higher education realm (Ignash, 1992).

In Maryland, the mission of the community college system reflects the philosophy of all-inclusiveness and comprehensiveness. The State Board for Community Colleges stated in its 1985 report, "The community college is comprehensive in terms of the wide range of programs and services it offers and in terms of the range of students it serves" (Maryland State Board for Community Colleges, 1985, p. 6). This raises the question of conflicting philosophies between the two- and four-year institutions, whose philosophy of entrance is based upon selectivity.

Yet while these and other debates go on, millions of students enroll in community college classes to meet their individual educational needs, largely unaware that while the open door has welcomed them in, they may not exit with their goals achieved. Of the three quarters of community college students who wish to attain a baccalaureate degree, less than one fifth realize their goal. Thus, critics argue, the open door is a revolving door, or as Dougherty stated, "The community college could be very good at allowing students access to higher education and yet be poor at helping them achieve a baccalaureate degree" (1994, p. 7).

Among this population are students who aspire to be teachers but will not accomplish this for lack of proper credentials. This reality dovetails with the increasingly alarming teacher shortage in this country and in this state. To further exacerbate the predicament, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) continues to raise professional standards for teachers in Maryland.

In Maryland, the Redesign of Teacher Education and the Maryland K-16 Partnerships represent collaborative efforts between the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the Maryland State Department of Education to improve teacher preparation in the state colleges and universities. This collaboration emphasizes the use of a Professional Development School (PDS) model. Eventually, all pre-service teachers will have an extended internship experience in designated PDS settings (Grasmick & Leak, 1997).

As a departure from the traditional one-semester student teaching experience, this design places a burden on colleges and universities with teacher education programs to formulate, staff, and sustain these partnerships. At the same time, it presents an opportunity for community colleges to assert themselves as true partners in the process. Maryland community colleges are especially well represented on the K-16 Partnership task forces.

## The Teacher Shortage and the Community College

There is a teacher shortage in the United States that is expected to become more acute as this new millennium begins. One study predicted that over 500,000 faculty positions in high schools will need to be filled between 1985 and 2010 (Bowen & Shunter, 1986). Boggs (2000) cited current U.S. Department of Education figures that by the 2003-2004 school year, about 40% of all public school teachers will retire or leave the profession. He further made the point that "many future elementary and

middle school teachers are taking most, if not all of their college-level science and mathematics courses at community colleges" (p. 3).

The state of Maryland is far from exempt from this shortage. As recently as November 12, 1998, Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools, decried the projected shortage in an editorial in *The Baltimore Sun* (p. 19a). Grasmick stated, "Maryland schools opened in the fall of 1997 with 5,700 additional teachers. In the fall of 2001, nearly 11,000 additional teachers will be needed, while Maryland colleges will continue to produce 2,500 teachers annually, as they do now." In a November 8, 1999, editorial, *The Baltimore Sun* (p. 10) reported that 52% of Maryland's teachers will be eligible to retire by 2003 ("Education Gap," 1999).

The shortage of minority teachers is especially critical and has been well documented. In 1980, minorities accounted for 12% of elementary and secondary school teachers. By 1990, this number was dropping (Anglin, 1993, p. 8). This decrease occurred at a time when the number of minority students was steadily increasing (Andrews & Marzano, 1991; Franklin, 1987). At the start of the new millennium, "13 percent of all teachers are nonwhite yet minority students make up one-third of the school-going population" (Boggs, 2000, p. 9).

The effects of this deficit are deep and far reaching. Urban schools and isolated rural schools will suffer most. Haberman (1987) suggested that community colleges are a logical place to start to tackle this growing need. In pointing out that over one-half of all minority students who enter higher education do so through the community college system, he stated, "Two-year colleges serve minorities at the point

of entry, provide remediation when necessary and guide students through programs with counseling and support services" (p. 15).

The relationship between the mission of the community college and the teacher shortage may not be readily apparent. After all, community colleges are lower-level institutions of higher education and do not have as part of their mission the granting of baccalaureate or teaching certification credentials. Also, the mission of the community college includes not only a transfer function but also remedial, career program, and continuing education options for students who are not pursuing a baccalaureate degree (Clark & Florestano, 1996). Thus, the role of the community college in pre-service of future educators is not clear from both within and outside the community college system itself.

More than one quarter of all higher education institutions in the United States are public junior or community colleges and enroll more than one third of all college students and, in the early 1990s, almost half of all college freshmen (U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics, 1991a). In sheer size and number alone, it would appear that community colleges could make a difference in providing greater numbers of potential candidates to the teaching pool to help alleviate the increasingly urgent need. What is not so readily apparent is whether community colleges foster or hinder the transition of transfer students to four-year receiving institutions and whether the four-year institutions present barriers to seamless transition from community colleges into those programs.

transfer phenomenon as experienced by future teachers who begin their pre-service preparation at two-year institutions and move on to four-year colleges and universities. What literature does exist tends to be critical, even cynical, about the viability of collaborative arrangements in which the community college role is one of true partnership (Anderson, 1991; Cohen, 1990; Susskind, 1996). As Woods and Williams (1987) observed, "Very little of the literature on the teaching force has addressed the role of the two-year college in increasing the supply of teachers, generally, and minority teachers in particular. In overlooking the role of the two-year college in extending the teacher pool, we have naturally overlooked a primary source of minority students" (p. 5).

Community colleges have been identified as potentially fertile preparation grounds for the beginning years of teacher preparation yet are often disregarded or underutilized. Anglin, Mooradian, and Hamilton (1993) entitled an article in Action in Teacher Education "A Missing Rung of the Teacher Education Ladder: Community Colleges." They made the case that although there have been small-scale and fragmented efforts aimed at improving recruitment of minorities as well as mid-career professionals into the teacher ranks, community colleges have not approached their potential as full partners in pre-service teacher education. While there is no single reason or simple explanation for this underachievement, the authors cited poor articulation of teacher education programs between two- and four-year institutions and "the shift of community college emphasis from prebaccalaureate preparation to a vocational or occupational training orientation in the early 1970s" (p. 9).

In a report for the Florida State Department of Education, Beck (1985) revealed that almost one half of Florida's teachers who received their certification at one of the state's public universities began their preparation at a community college. She stated, "Evidence shows that the primary entry point for Florida's postsecondary students is the community colleges and will remain so for the foreseeable future" (p. 7). Beck also found that while community colleges were prime centers for teacher recruitment, policy makers and administrators had not yet recognized the potential of the two-year institutions for recruiting teachers.

In Maryland, the community college movement began in 1946 with the creation of Hagerstown and Montgomery Junior Colleges. Over the years, the number of community colleges grew to the 16 which exist today, serving 57% of the state's undergraduate students. Tschechtelin (1997) described the community college system in Maryland as a "patchwork quilt" whose service to its respective communities has been highly responsive but whose "unity of purpose and strength of solidarity...has been difficult to achieve" (p. 415). This concern was echoed in a Maryland State Higher Education Commission report in which the transfer issue was cited as an ongoing problem among the state's colleges and universities. "There remains a need to develop better articulation of individual majors among the public colleges and universities" (Clark & Florestano, 1996, p. 9).

On October 1, 1998, the former Catonsville Community College, Dundalk Community College, and Essex Community College merged to form the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). Each campus is expected to retain its identity to

its community, but personnel on all three campuses are expected to become active members of a "Learning First" community in which all policy and practice will be driven by commitment to the learning college. Among the key principles upon which the learning college is based is the mandate to document learning outcomes. Principle VI reads, "The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for its learners" (O'Banion, 1997, p. 20).

All three campuses of the newly reconstituted Community College of Baltimore County offer pre-service 100- and 200- level course work in teacher preparation. As the largest community college in Maryland, CCBC serves a wide range of educational needs to meet the demands of the greater Baltimore area. Its mission is comprehensive, as stated in the college mission statement. The first institutional goal identified in the 1997 Catonsville campus catalog is, "To excel in teaching students in the first years of instruction leading to a bachelor's degree" (p. 5). This goal, combined with the philosophy of the above-cited "Learning First" environment, speaks to the commitment of the college and its three campuses to deliver a comprehensive freshman-and sophomore-level educational experience to its constituents. O'Banion, the philosophical founder of "Learning First," challenged faculty and staff alike to be prepared to answer the question, "How well are we doing what we say we are doing and how do we measure our efforts?" (1997). Pertaining to teacher preparation, accountability is to be measured principally by the transfer experience of the program's graduates.

A computer-generated search through the Catonsville Office of Institutional Research revealed Towson University to be the four-year institution to which the largest number of Catonsville teacher education students transfer. In a snapshot of Spring and Fall 1998 semesters and of Spring 1999, 19 Catonsville teacher education graduates transferred to Towson, 9 transferred to the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), 3 each to Coppin State University and Salisbury University, and 2 to the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP). Therefore, Towson University was identified as the four-year university whose transfer students, faculty, and staff would be interviewed in the data collection for this study.

Towson University was the first institution to train teachers in the state of Maryland. Located in northern Baltimore County, this university is geographically convenient to serve the student body transferring from CCBC, Catonsville, many of whom live in the western and northwestern parts of the county. The College of Education at Towson University offers teaching degrees in early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, instructional technology, reading, library/media instruction, special education, and K-12 teacher education in art, dance, health, physical education, and music (Towson University Undergraduate Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 75).

Currently, no articulation agreements exist between CCBC, Catonsville, and Towson University in teacher education beyond the generic general education courses which are articulated statewide between public two- and four-year institutions. The tool most often used by advisors and program coordinators to guide transfer students from

CCBC, Catonsville, to Towson University is the articulation system maintained by the University System of Maryland (ARTSYS). Appendix A provides an overview of the education courses offered at CCBC, Catonsville, and their transfer status to the teacher education program at Towson University and elsewhere in the state. In a seamless transfer environment, these courses would transfer as equivalencies to specific courses at the receiving institution rather than as non-specific equivalencies or as lower-level electives, luxuries most students do not have in prescriptive programs like teacher education. Included as part of ARTSYS is a "Recommended Transfer Pattern" which applies to all transfer patterns and programs included in the ARTSYS-participating institutions. Appendices B and C represent the Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education recommended courses for a CCBC, Catonsville, student to take if he/she intends to pursue either of these majors at Towson University. Worthy of note is the absence of community college courses in education other than the educational psychology course. The review of literature suggests that this disjuncture is typical of transfer issues pertaining to pre-service education in teacher preparation.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the transfer process was seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university. More specifically, the study sought to determine how one community college serves this population's transfer needs to a selected teacher education baccalaureate program in Maryland. Of particular concern are transfer and articulation

issues, perceptions of students and higher education officials about the role of the community college in teacher preparation, and demographics as they apply to the success of the transfer process.

## Rationale for the Study

The role of the community college in teacher preparation is currently ill defined. In light of a confluence of current issues, this study is timely in its attempt to more clearly scrutinize this role. Foremost among these issues is the concern over the acute shortage of teachers in the nation's schools combined with the widespread criticism about the quality of teachers nationwide and in Maryland as well. The problems associated with recruiting and retaining good teachers were well documented in the Carnegie Study (1986). Other realities which affect teacher preparation include the rising cost of a college education and the extended amount of time needed to acquire teaching credentials as more reading courses, content mastery, and longer practica are imposed (Maryland Higher Education Commission, 1997). Not to be overlooked is the desperate need to diversify the teacher candidate pool as the nation's population becomes increasingly diverse (Boggs, 2000; Haberman, 1988; Mark, 1998; Turner, 1990).

Conscious of these issues, Maryland leaders in education have promoted a teacher education reform initiative by combining the efforts of the Maryland K-16 Partnership and the Redesign of Teacher Education (Grasmick & Leak, 1997). Central to the K-16 Partnership is the dedication to "seamless" transfer between and among the

two- and four-year public institutions in the state. In a truly seamless arrangement, students from the two-year college would transfer into a four-year program with no loss of time and credit, provided they had followed a prescribed curriculum agreed upon by both parties.

The role of the community college in teacher preparation is unclear, partly because community colleges are fragmented, locally responsive institutions which serve a myriad of demands, only one of which is transfer for baccalaureate-seeking students (Dougherty, 1994; Ignash, 1992; Tschechtelin, 1997). In addition, historically, the institutional relationship between the two-year colleges and the university is fraught with misunderstanding, even suspicion. Prager (1991) attributed this to "the absence of formal inquiry into inter-institutional articulation and transfer" (p. 1). It is hoped that this study will illuminate the issues affecting transfer in teacher preparation and provide recommendations for better articulation between two- and four-year institutions of higher learning. By investigating the transfer experience of students who lived it, a research project of this kind humanizes these issues. Also, in order to begin to establish a body of higher education literature which deals specifically with the transfer experience and articulation between teacher preparation programs in two- and four-year institutions, a study of this kind is necessary.

The final contributing factor to the topical selection of this study was a recent merger and philosophical transformation of the community college at which the researcher has responsibility for the Teacher Education Program. During this organizational change, all members of the college community were invited to examine

their approach to teaching and learning in a manner that better ensured accountability for the process and product promised to the college constituency. Therefore, the timing of this study coincided with this organizational shift. Results of this project should not only yield data pertaining to the transfer process from several complementary viewpoints but also lead to informed decisions about the direction teacher education will take on one campus of one community college.

## Methodology

The research design of this study was the case study, further defined as particularistic, descriptive, and issues driven. It was particularistic in that this type of approach recognizes the existence of the researcher's bias, and it "can examine a specific instance but illuminate a general similar situation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). It was descriptive because it does not involve hypothesis testing but will provide a "database for future comparison and theory building" (Merriam, 1988, p. 38). The research was issues driven in that while the issue of transfer provided the focus and conceptual structure, other issues emerged. They will be presented and discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. As Stake (1995) observed, "Issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern" (p. 17).

The choice of the case study grew from the realization that to best understand the transfer process from one community college to its four-year partners, it would be necessary to go beyond the quantitative. Neither the survey nor an analysis of an

institution's statistical research data can yield the depth of information relevant to the transfer phenomenon, with its attendant complexities of inter-institutional interaction, personality of participants, and historical realities. The case study was appropriate in this study also because it allowed the researcher to utilize her unique position to best advantage. As stated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), "...a qualitative researcher requires theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytical distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, astute powers of observation, and good interactional skills" (p. 19). The researcher's personal commitment to this project precluded a more distanced approach, recognizing the list of qualities cited above as a tall order. The case study is the best choice, when, according to Yin (1994), "... the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context" (p. 1).

This study endeavored to shed light on the role of the community college in teacher education by examining the transfer experience of one group of community college teacher education transfer students exiting a Maryland community college and in the process of transferring to a Maryland public four-year teacher education program. A purposefully selected group of students were interviewed about their transfer experiences as were policy makers and practitioners from both the two- and four-year institutions. The student participants were May 1999 graduates of the Catonsville campus of the Community College of Baltimore County as well as exiting non-graduating transfer students from 1999. The policy makers and practitioners were from CCBC, Catonsville, and from Towson University. Towson University was selected

because the majority of teacher education transfer students from CCBC enroll at that institution.

Focusing on particular teacher education students transferring from one community college to a single university provided the opportunity to clarify roles, policy, and practice to perhaps better understand the larger picture without making the project impossible to complete.

The conceptual structure the researcher developed about how to approach the transfer question was issue driven. Relying heavily on Stake (1995), the research questions were framed around the issues currently identified, yet room for the evolution of new ones was allowed as the project progressed. Quoting Stake (1995), "Issues help us expand upon the moment, help us see the instance in a more historical light, help us recognize the pervasive problems in human interaction" (p. 17).

The researcher is the department chair of a teacher preparation program at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus. Advisement of students interested in becoming teachers is an integral part of her job. She also teaches the introductory course in the education program. Anecdotal evidence suggested to her that there was unevenness of transfer from the two-year institution to the four-year college or university. As previously stated, the primary mechanism to determine course transfer in Maryland is the articulation system known as ARTSYS. Yet even those familiar with this tool find it inadequate to answer student transfer questions. The complexities accompanying community college and four-year institution relationships made a case study the most plausible choice to further explore this problem. A

quantitative analysis of data would yield the factual information of numbers of students transferring and how many credits transferred but would not allow for the exploration of the more subtle tensions which affect the transfer process.

With considerable guidance from Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995), it was concluded that a descriptive, issues-driven, particularistic case study was the best choice of research vehicle to travel through the transfer experience of teacher education majors who were in the process of transitioning to four-year institutions. Passengers on the journey included the students themselves, faculty in teacher education programs at two- and four-year institutions, a department chair, transfer advisors, and a dean, all of whom affect policy pertinent to the research topic. The faculty interviewed were also advisors to students interested in becoming teachers.

The researcher recognized at the outset that neither she nor those to be interviewed were uninvolved participants. It was believed that the choice of descriptive rather than critical perspective allowed for the development of a vast array of case study characteristics which Olson presented (in Merriam, 1998). These characteristics include the ability to "illuminate the complexities of a situation—the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it" and have the advantage to "show the importance of personalities on the issue" (p. 30).

## Derived Research Questions

The issues that faced this researcher were embedded in the current as well as the historical relationships among stakeholders in teacher preparation. Issue statements

made more sense to drive the study than a single statement of the problem because as Stake (1995) cited, "Issues are not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical, and especially personal contexts" (p. 17).

Thus, this study explored the case of a teacher preparation program at one community college by posing issue-driven interview questions to a sample of students, faculty, and administrators connected to teacher education transfer students either directly or indirectly.

As this methodology is emergent in nature, the issue questions changed somewhat as the study progressed but remained true to the overarching research question of this study: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

The specific research questions relevant to the overarching question and the research issues were:

**1) What is the role of the teacher education pattern in teacher preparation at The Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, as perceived by students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at that institution and at Towson University, which receives the largest number of CCBC teacher education transfer students?**

**a) Are there competing or conflicting views of the role of the community college in teacher education which impede seamless transfer for students?**

**b) Are there recognized philosophical differences which impact transfer?**

**2) How do the institutions studied help or hinder the transfer of teacher education students from two- to four-year programs?**

**a) Are there identifiable barriers of policy or practice erected at the community college which affect seamless transfer of teacher education students to four-year programs?**

**b) Are there identifiable barriers erected at the four-year institutions which create confusion and difficulty for transfer students into teacher education programs?**

**c) What do each of the institutions studied do to facilitate transfer?**

On the basis of these research questions, there were two research issues underpinning the conceptualization of this project. The first issue pertained to the role of the community college in teacher preparation: How do faculty, transfer advisors, and administrators from two- and four-year institutions as well as teacher education transfer students view the community college's part in teacher education? There may be conflicting or competing views of the community college's role which impede seamless articulation of courses between two- and four-year institutions.

The second research issue addressed the barriers which may be erected and maintained within the community college itself and between two- and four-year institutions. Do the community college and its four-year transfer partners establish institutional barriers in policy and practice which make transfer confusing or difficult to students? Illumination of both of these issues served to clarify the transfer experience

for the teacher education student who begins the pre-service formal preparation at a community college and transfers to the baccalaureate level.

## Theoretical Perspectives

Generally, theories are used to explain phenomena. It was viewed that there was value in applying a variety of theoretical perspectives in a study of this kind, even if juxtaposed, so that a more complete view of the phenomenon under study might emerge. There were three theoretical frameworks which guided this process: structural-functionalist theory and Marxist-based conflict theory as they reflect the complex role of the community college and Cross's (1981) institutional barriers theory. The language inherent in each of these perspectives was used to clarify the data from the respondents' answers to the research questions. Each of these orientations contains terminology specific to its proposition. As Yin (1994) observed, "The original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and new insights" (p. 103).

The Marxian-based conflict view presented the critical perspective of higher education and role played by community colleges. Conflict theorists "see differences in educational attainment as in keeping with what they take to be education's real, although unfortunate, role of preserving inequality in society" (Dougherty & Hammack, 1990, p. 333). Among the more prominent neo-Marxist education critics, Bowles and Gintis (1976) maintained that educators have not made a sincere effort to mitigate educational inequality, although education cannot be held solely accountable for

economic and political inequity in society. Supporters of this position would see the barriers to smooth transition from two- to four-year teacher education programs as part of a larger scheme to maintain a political-economic status quo in which members of the working class continue to struggle (unsuccessfully) to get ahead in a rigged game.

Among those who articulated the functionalist perspective, Meyer (1977) argued that education needs to be viewed from more than a two-class perspective. His view is that education and educators are not passive players in social development but rather that education plays a vital role in the shaping of a society beyond simply providing "job-relevant skills" (p. 61). Perhaps the most succinct statement of the functionalist perspective as it relates to American education is presented by Goslin (1965). He stated, "Every society must make some provision for deciding which of its members shall occupy the various positions in the society and perform the roles necessary for its continuation and development" (p. 35). The functionalists would take the position that the community college serves its own unique purpose, and to disturb the status quo arrangement between two- and four-year institution programs would be to undermine a satisfactory working arrangement.

Much of the debate about the role, purpose, and mission of the community college has taken place between its supporters, who tend to favor a functionalist view, and its detractors, who support a more Marxian-based conflict view. Both of these are macro theories which can be applied to underpin discussion leading to further understanding about almost any phenomenon pertaining to social institutions like education.

Because this was a particularistic case study, it seemed useful to focus on policy and practice in a micro view as well. According to Merriam (1998), *"Particularistic* means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon" (p. 29). This feature of case study research makes this design appropriate as the research yielded information helpful for evaluation of the teacher education program at one community college but may have far-reaching implications for other programs as well. Hence, the institutional barriers perspective provided the conceptual framework to accomplish this. In her study of adult learners, Cross (1981) identified institutional barriers as those particular to the culture and policies of institutions which hamper student progress. Typical barriers might include, but not be limited to, invariate scheduling of classes, confusing program requirements, inadequate advisement, "sticker shock" at university credit price, and inter-institutional suspicion and disrespect. Other citations of barriers to interinstitutional cooperation found in the literature included cultural differences pertaining to mission emphases (community needs vs. knowledge generation) and functional priority (teaching vs. research) (Richardson & Bender, 1987).

What little literature exists and that which was reviewed pertaining to the role of the community college in teacher preparation tends to focus on specific collaborative programs that attempt to overcome institutional barriers. A sample of these will be cited in the literature review. The three theoretical positions will be thoroughly fleshed out in the literature review, as they individually and collectively provide insight into the study problem. The theoretical perspectives will also guide the interpretive section in Chapter 4 as lenses to more clearly understand the meaning of the data collected.

## Significance of the Study

There is at present a limited amount of information about transfer and articulation specific to teacher education students who begin their higher education at community colleges. This study makes a contribution to what little literature exists.

This study is significant to the Community College of Baltimore County as it begins to emerge as a "Learning First" college, with emphasis on accountability to student needs. More generally, the significance of this project extends to those who design and implement teacher education curriculum at all levels of higher education, for to enhance clarity and equity regarding transfer for students of education has wide-ranging benefit, especially in this era of critical teacher shortage.

## Overview of Following Chapters

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature. The literature selections were drawn from the history of the community college, its philosophical underpinnings, and the theoretical perspectives which provide the basis for much of the debate about its purpose. Transfer and articulation issues are examined from general to those specific to teacher preparation and from national concerns to those indigenous to Maryland. Sample programs of efforts to enhance articulation in teacher education elsewhere and in Maryland are cited.

Chapter 3 describes in detail how the researcher proceeded methodologically. The choice of the particularistic, descriptive, issues-driven case study is defended. Case

selection and data collection are explained, and attention is given to dependability factors.

Chapter 4 provides the findings of the dissertation. Synopses of the interviews with the student respondents yielded five major categories or themes and subunits pertaining to each. These themes are analyzed and evaluated for dependability using the data from the college and university professionals' interviews. A section on interpretation uses the theoretical perspectives to explore the deeper meaning of the data.

Chapter 5 includes the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations portions of the study.

Definition of Terms and Acronyms

**ARTSYS**— Articulation System in Maryland providing transfer information between and among participating institutions of higher education

**A.A. Degree**— the Associate of Arts Degree

**Career program**— a curriculum designed for students who wish to go from the community college to employment, rather than to a baccalaureate program

**CCC**— formerly the Catonsville Community College

**CCBC, Catonsville**— Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville

**COMAR**— Code of Maryland regulations governing policy and practice at public institutions of higher education in the state

**General education**— the foundation of the higher education curriculum providing a coherent intellectual experience for all students

**MHEC**— Maryland Higher Education Commission

**MSDE**— Maryland State Department of Education

**Native student**— a student whose initial college enrollment was at a given institution of higher education and who has not transferred to another institution of higher education since that initial enrollment

**Receiving institution**— the institution of higher education at which a transfer student currently desires to enroll

**Recommended transfer pattern**— a planned program of courses, both general education and courses in the major, taken at a community college, which is applicable to a baccalaureate program at a receiving institution, and ordinarily the first two years of a baccalaureate degree

**Seamless transition**— a transfer arrangement between levels of educational institutions in which students move from one level to the next without loss of credit or encountering other barriers that interfere with transfer. There may be loss of credit or barriers which are appropriate or inappropriate when viewed from different theoretical perspectives

**Sending institution**— the institution of higher education of most recent previous enrollment by a transfer student at which transferrable credit was earned

**T.U.**— Towson University

**Transfer student**— for purposes of this study, a student entering Towson University for the first time having successfully completed a minimum of three credits of course work at Catonsville Community College or the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville

**UMBC**— University of Maryland Baltimore County

**UMCP**— University of Maryland College Park

**USM**–University System of Maryland

# CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the transfer process was seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university. The participants represented students in the process of transfer into education programs and professionals connected to these programs either in a policy-making, advising, or practitioner role.

The literature reviewed in this chapter includes the following:

1) history and philosophy of the community college;

2) theoretical underpinnings of the research topic;

3) transfer and articulation issues;

4) the role of the community college in pre-service teacher education and the teacher shortage;

5) samples of cooperative programs nationwide and in Maryland; and

6) teacher preparation and reform in Maryland.

Beginning with the historical foundations of the community college and focusing upon how political and economic realities shape its philosophy and, in turn, its mission, the literature review presents a comprehensive view of the two-year college. The purpose of the community college has changed to become more extensive and inclusive of students besides those who wish to transfer to four-year baccalaureate programs, and this shift in purpose has fragmented the resources within the community colleges themselves. This is important to the study in question, because there are issue

questions pertaining to the project which address how this shift in focus may have impacted the college's priorities vis-a-vis the student who wishes to pursue the baccalaureate. Some of these issues are troubling as they emerge as institutional transfer barriers erected not from outside the two-year institutions but from within.

## The History and Philosophy of the Community College

### History

There is no simple way to describe the history of the community college movement, since the very nature of the institutions themselves reflect a wide range of community profiles. What is known, however, is that from the first community college founded in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois, to the more than one thousand which exist today, policy and practice are affected by academicians and politicians alike.

Early on, the two-year college was viewed as a benign participant in higher education. In 1919, Francis McDowell published his doctoral dissertation on the rationale for the "junior college idea." He concluded that there were a number of benefits for both the university and the small four-year college. First, freshman and sophomore class size would be cut down if many students took their first two years at a junior college. This would allow the four-year institutions to improve instructor/student ratios as well as help in allocation of facilities and resources. Second, the junior college could serve as both an extension of the secondary program and an introduction to higher education, making the transition between the two smoother (McDowell, cited in Thornton, 1919, pp. 51-52).

The relationship between upward mobility and educational opportunity is as old as the Republic itself. In the latter part of the twentieth century, this relationship became even tighter, with education viewed as the "dream maker"; access to some form of higher education came to be perceived as an inalienable right connected to the ideology of equal opportunity. Burton Clark (1960) explained, "Strictly interpreted, equality of opportunity means selection according to ability, without regard to extraneous conditions. Popularly interpreted, however, equal opportunity in obtaining a college education is widely taken to mean unlimited access to some form of college: in California, for example, state educational authorities maintain that high school graduates who cannot qualify for the state university or state college should still have the opportunity of attending a publicly supported institution of higher education" ( p. 363). The obvious alternative to the four-year college or university became the community college.

While Clark wrote these words almost 40 years ago, much of what he said applies to the current community college dilemma: what to do about the conflict between the open-door admission policy and the student who has little hope for attainment of his/her professional goals. Do students of promise and ability who could succeed in the four-year schools (and go on to professional positions in education) get side-tracked into substituting a vocational option for their original transfer plan? It is because of these nagging questions that Dougherty entitled his comprehensive book about community colleges The Contradictory College (1994). This work will be liberally cited in this study.

In attempting to identify their niche in American higher education, community colleges appeared and evolved into separate and unique institutions yet were all included in what came to be known as the community college "movement." Clark (cited in Altbach & Berdahl, 1981, pp. 323-324) rendered grudging respect to the community college leadership who "...developed strong interest groups with political muscle. Today, no one's patsy, they have a turf, the willingness and ability to defend it, and the drive and skill to explore such unoccupied territory as recurrent education and lifelong learning to see how much they can annex."

A recurring theme throughout the history of the development of the community college in post-World War II America is the need for the two-year colleges to take on a major role in the training of mid-level business and industrial workers (Cohen & Brawer, 1989; Medsker, 1960; Monroe, 1972). Proponents of this as a main function of the community college include Clowes and Levin, who stated, "The only viable core function for most community colleges is career education" (1989, p. 353).

Dougherty (1994) found this line of thinking alarming, for to implement curricula which favor this position would divert community colleges from "...mounting academically rigorous transfer or university-parallel courses" (p. 248).

Philosophy

The linkage between the history and philosophy of the community college is evident throughout the nearly one hundred years of the emergence and growth of these institutions in both size and scope. From early on, the philosophy of the community college has been to provide higher educational opportunity to those who could

otherwise not participate, usually for lack of economic resources or academic preparedness. As a means of extending access to higher education, the community college adopted the "open door" philosophy of reduced selectivity criteria for admission. This was viewed as a means to democratize educational opportunity and to ameliorate the effects of elitism in higher education which had existed for decades. Thus, an egalitarian philosophic base provided the foundation upon which community colleges were literally and figuratively built (Cross, 1971).

In addition to its egalitarian philosophy, the community college movement embraced an eclecticism as it claimed to meet the comprehensive educational needs of a wide spectrum of constituency. As Dougherty (1994) observed, "The community college...is a doorway to educational opportunity, a vendor of vocational training, a protector of university selectivity, and a defender of state higher education budgets (by providing an alternative to expanding the costly four-year colleges)" (p. 8).

Finally, the value placed on teaching versus research is at the philosophic core of the community college. In a report of the Commission of the Future of Community Colleges (1988), the recurring theme was "building communities through teaching" (p. 8). The community college is thus often referred to as the teaching college.

## Theoretical Perspectives

From a theoretical perspective, it was useful to apply both the conflict (Marxian) and the functionalist perspectives to more fully understand the tension which has always accompanied the debate over the purpose of the community college as an institution,

collectively and individually. To illuminate specific institutional characteristics which affect relationships between two- and four-year institutions of higher education, the institutional barriers perspective was used. Most of the literature stemming from the conflict perspective has its basis in Marxist theory; thus, a brief overview of the aspects of Marxism as they apply to education is provided.

Marxist Theory: An Overview

Marx's world view stems from the concept of economic determinism; that is, the role of a society's economic structure is pivotal to all human activity within its scope (Marger, 1987). One's relationship to the means of production determines one's quality of life. There is ongoing struggle between the haves (the bourgeoisie) and the have-nots (the proletariat) over the resources which are necessary to live or to live well. In this process, there are winners and losers. Class position, as determined by relationship to the economic structure, is also affected by non-economic institutions such as family, political position, and education.

Basic assumptions underlying conflict theory are:

1) the dialectic--change occurs through conflict and struggle over scarce or desirable resources;

2) social activism--all social analysis begins with social criticism; and

3) revolutionary, not evolutionary, change is preferable to alleviate the immediate suffering of the masses.

The dialectical approach, which Marx learned from Hegel, uses the thesis-antithesis-synthesis concept. The thesis is the current economic structure, the antithesis

is the struggle between the classes to rearrange their positions vis-a-vis the economic structure, and the synthesis is the resolution of this conflict (Chafetz, 1988).

Social criticism leads to social activism which promotes revolution to resolve the tension which naturally exists when there are winners and losers in conflict over resources, be they material or opportunistic. The elite, or bourgeoisie, will resist change as long as they can because, quite simply, life is comparatively good for them. They will occasionally concede small favors to the proletariat to further the notion that life is getting better; but according to Marx, this only fuels the "false consciousness" of the workers.

Social change cannot happen fast enough for the true Marxist. The exploited are viewed as having waited long enough for their fair share of the good life, perceived to be more readily available to the elite. Thus, they foment revolution and the complete restructuring of all social institutions, with the ultimate goal being a Utopian society with no class distinctions or institutional impediments to self-actualization for all (Brinkerhoff & White, 1985).

Generally, the proponents of the Marxist perspective view the community college as a contributor to the false consciousness of the disadvantaged. Providing affordable higher education opportunities does not, according to these critics, begin to eradicate the negative effects of economic or academic handicap; but because they have internalized the values of the dominant or elite group, the proletariat believe that they are better off for even limited opportunity to attend (or to send their children to) junior or community colleges. This particularly impacts upon the transfer hopes for students

intending to utilize the community college as a stepping stone toward a baccalaureate degree (Monk-Turner, 1983). It should be noted, moreover, that while the majority of community college students state that they intend to transfer to a four-year institution, it is estimated that only 15%-20% actually do so (U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics, 1977a, pp. 6-9).

Worse, there is alarming evidence that attendance at a community college actually reduces students' chances at obtaining a bachelor's degree (Brint & Karabell, 1989). Karabell (1998) stated, "...millions of students at community colleges ...slot themselves into a de facto vocational track" (p. 227). When factors such as academic ability and socio-economic status between two- and four-year students are controlled for, there is still a sizeable discrepancy between degrees attained. This prompted Dougherty to write, "The fact that community college entrants get many fewer bachelor's degrees than comparable four-year college entrants means that we can no longer dismiss the baccalaureate gap as due to students' personal traits. We must now also give a sizeable role to the *institutional characteristics* of the college they have entered" (1994, p. 53).

Conflict theorists accuse local political and business interests of interfering in the day-to-day operation of community colleges, largely through applying pressure to expand the vocational training role of the institutions. According to Bowles and Gintis (1976, pp. 211-212), "the connection between the needs of business and the curricula of community colleges is fostered by business representation on advisory boards."

Looking at the community college through the critical lens of the conflict perspective, it appears that students are little more than the educational proletariat manipulated by the educational/political/industrial elite into preparing for non-professional jobs to meet the capitalist needs of local business and industry. Community colleges have been accused of blurring the lines between academic and vocational programs so as to seduce students into choosing the vocational "track" to compete for immediately available jobs while running the risk of loss of transfer credit (Harris & Grede, 1977). Distribution of college resources has been found to strongly favor the marketing of vocational programs, as well as to provide these programs superior facilities (Richardson & Bender, 1987).

The conflict theorists would have as a primary goal that all citizens consciously choose their own values and recognize the ongoing educational exploitation they have been subjected to at the hands of the elite. They would promote a complete restructuring of all educational systems to eliminate inequity in access based on socio-economic status (Marger, 1987).

In reviewing the data gathered for this study, terminological markers on the conflict perspective included references to perceived negative differential treatment of transfer students on the basis of their transfer-student status, allusions to gratitude for being able to receive an opportunity to participate in higher education under any conditions (false consciousness), and impatience with the status quo as an arrangement which deludes students into believing that their entitlement to receipt of a baccalaureate-level education is less than that of their native student counterparts. Repeated

references to the affordability of the community college were cited, reminiscent of the Marxian view of economic determinism.

Functionalist Theory: An Overview

Counterpoint to the conflict perspective is the functionalist (consensus) perspective. This juxtaposition of theory is useful because it allows for examination of social institutions in general and, more specifically, the study topic in question from two very different viewpoints.

The assumptions behind the functionalist perspective include the social imperatives of stability, harmony, and evolutionary change. Functionalist theory is the legacy of the early sociologist Emile Durkheim, whose observations of nineteenth-century European life and change caused him to draw analogies between societal events and biological organisms. In analyzing a living organism, he believed the scientist's chief task was to identify its parts (structures) and how they work (functions). Thus, in studying any society and how it changes, it is imperative to study its parts, its social institutions, and how changes within these institutions affect the larger group. Consequences of change within a given institution (family, education, politics, economics, religion) are viewed as manifest if they are intended from the onset and latent if they are unintended. Also, change is determined to be functional if it contributes to the maintenance, or stability and harmony, of a society and as dysfunctional if its contribution is negative. Determination about the positive and negative aspects of change are usually made by the majority, or the largest group whose interests are best served by the change (Brinkerhoff & White, 1985).

Evolutionary change is always preferable, according to this theory, because slow change allows people to adapt to its consequences, thus increasing the likelihood that it will be positive in the long run. Revolutions are by their very nature extraordinarily disruptive and, according to the functionalists, can produce only dysfunction.

The functionalist perspective takes a more positive view of the community college. It sees these institutions as providing educational opportunity to those who are economically disadvantaged or socially unprepared for the larger four-year colleges and universities or whose high school preparation is weak.

Among the early scholars of the then-proliferating community college movement, Leland Medsker identified one of its principle manifest functions:

> The two-year college...is perhaps the most effective democratizing agent in higher education. It makes higher education available at a low cost to the student and at moderate cost to society. (Medsker, 1960, p. 4)

In addition to this "democratizing" role, the community college meets other societal needs: training middle-level workers, retraining workers, and preserving the academic excellence of state universities by drawing large numbers of students who would otherwise overcrowd the university systems ...(Dougherty, 1994).

Even Burton Clark's critical piece about the role of the community college in higher education benignly treats the "cooling out function" in which educators and students alike enter into an implicit pact. As part of this quietly concealed agreement, many students will spend some time in a community or junior college denying and delaying the inevitable: they are not likely to go on to succeed in higher education, but they can save some face by attending for a while at least (pp. 370-371). Clark would

propose this function as latent, but beneficial, as "an important device for alleviating the stress consequent on failure and so preventing anomic and deviant behavior. The general result of cooling-out processes is that society can continue to encourage maximum effort without major disturbance from unfulfilled promises and expectations" (p. 371).

While the more obvious manifest functions of the community college are generally agreed upon, what about the more subtle latent dysfunctions? In meeting the intended purposes for which they were created, do community colleges subvert the goals of their transfer student population? Functionalists generally focus more on the positive manifest functions of institutions yet recognize that what may be beneficial for society as a whole may not serve well individuals whose goals and aspirations run counter to the projected needs of the larger group (Turner, 1982). Herein lies a great irony pertinent to the current prospectus in education; namely, the teacher shortage. Unlike the underemployment of college graduates in the early 1970s, there will be jobs for graduates of teacher education programs well into the next millennium. There won't be nearly enough qualified candidates for open positions in schools.

If community colleges shift to less comprehensive, more vocational emphases in their curricular design, they may miss the boat on helping to avert the pending teacher shortage by failing to enhance the transfer opportunities for prospective teacher candidates. This could result in great social dysfunction for all.

The linguistic terms relevant to structural-functional theory in the review of the study data include positive commentary from the students for whom the transfer process

appears to be working. Consistent with Durkheim's original work in this theoretical area in which he drew analogies between social realities and biological systems, the extant relationship between the community college and the four-year university was viewed as generally healthy and functioning well. Optimizing the use of tools available in the transfer process such as ARTSYS, advisement, and orientation was cited more frequently by those students who reported a positive transfer experience.

The Institutional Barriers Perspective

Cross's analysis of a study conducted in 1974 by the Commission on Non-Traditional Study (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs) prompted her to group obstacles to adult student success into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. For the purposes of this study, the focus was on the institutional barriers category. Cross referred to institutional barriers as those "policies and practices which exclude or discourage adults from participating in educational activities . . ." (1981, p. 98). Among these obstacles are issues of scheduling, "red tape" in admissions procedures, irrelevance of course work, and lack of information about policy and procedures. Cross maintained that these barriers are not deliberately erected but are a result of the traditionalists in higher education whose mind set remains dominated by teaching full-time students in a resident university setting. Thus, non-traditional students, who are the majority of community college students, are victimized by these types of barriers (1981, pp. 105-106).

Dougherty (1994) further refined this institutional barriers perspective specific to the community college student and overcoming the baccalaureate gap (p. 83). He

wrote, "I conceive of community college students' progress toward the baccalaureate as consisting of a series of clearly predictable crises that students must negotiate in order to continue" (p. 83).

Institutional obstacles are grouped into the following categories: financial, cultural, and academic. Dougherty provided the statistical data which indicate that community college entrants drop out of four-year institutions at a significantly higher rate than their native counterparts, even when controls are applied to socio-economic status, career aspirations, high school performance, and residence on campus. Further analyzing the higher attrition rates for community college transfers, Dougherty indicated that there are specific features to the community college which create obstacles to the achievement of the baccalaureate (1994, p. 86).

Community college transfer students receive less financial aid than native students, despite being needier. When the community college student compares the cost of tuition between the two- and four-year institutions, "sticker shock" often sets in, thus discouraging the transfer process (Dougherty, 1994, p. 84).

Cultural barriers are more subtle. These barriers exist at both the two- and four-year institutions. For their part, faculty at community colleges decry their second-class citizenship in the academic world and the quality of student they are teaching and set a self-fulfilling prophecy into motion. By emphasizing the negative, they diminish the hopes of prospective baccalaureate seekers (Cohen & Brawer, 1987). Bauman (1990) referred to this shared academic stigma as a "spoiled identity" (p. 70).

Dougherty (1994) posited that weak social integration is a factor in transfer from the community college to the university. Because few community colleges provide on-campus housing, it is difficult to create a true sense of community. Social integration is made more difficult by the reality of the life of the "typical" community student, many of whom are part-time students with full-time employment and family responsibilities.

The academic obstacles to successful transition from two- to four-year institutions reflect the weak academic backgrounds of many community college entrants. But more pertinent to this study is the possible discouragement of potential transfer students to pursue more rigorous academic course work in favor of vocational training. Several studies point to community college faculty's hesitation to encourage transfer for their students because of poor reception of these students into four-year institutions. It is inherent in transfer that the four-year institutions control acceptance or rejection of community college credit, except where specific articulation agreements have been negotiated (Brint & Karabel, 1989; Richardson & Bender, 1987; Zwerling, 1976).

The impact of the reduction of emphasis on liberal arts preparation and transfer has affected students in several critical ways. A 1985 study demonstrated that "only 27% of community college faculty hold frequent meetings with students to discuss transfer, and only 33% know their students' transfer intentions (Cohen, Brewer, & Bensimon, 1985, pp. 78-82). In summary, Dougherty (1994) wrote, "...the lower transfer rate of disadvantaged students stems not just from their tendency to be less motivated and prepared academically but also the tendency of four-year colleges and

community colleges to respond to disadvantaged students in ways that interfere with their chances to transfer" (p. 93).

The three theoretical perspectives described above serve to explain the larger phenomenon of the role of the community college in higher education and, more particularly, the transfer process for baccalaureate-seeking students who begin their pre-professional education at a two-year college. Implications for students wishing to pursue teaching credentials are generated by the broader-based research. Like lenses on a camera, the three theoretical approaches picture, each in its own way, the study issue at hand.

## Transfer and Articulation Issues Between Two- and Four-Year Institutions of Higher Education

Community colleges are often dismissed as insignificant in the early preparatory stages of teacher education (Beck, 1985; Clement, 1991). For their part, community colleges have been criticized as being too passive in accepting the manner in which transfer institutions treat transfer students and their credits. Arthur Cohen, Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Community Colleges, faulted community colleges "for not developing stronger relationships with universities and for not creating more transfer agreements within academic disciplines" (1998, p. 6). Furthermore, he continued, "It is a continuous struggle to keep universities apprised of the value of the community college program and the articulation of courses" (Cohen, cited in Manzo, 1998, p. 6).

Despite evidence that community college transfer students perform as well academically as their native counterparts, community colleges and their students are often viewed with some suspicion by administrators and faculty at four-year institutions (Baser, 1992; Clement, 1991; Ignash, 1992; Susskind, 1996). In her keynote address to the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (1991), Dr. Beverly Anderson, Director of the Office of Minority Affairs, the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council, referred to the "lack of respect...especially in academic circles" toward two-year colleges as the "Rodney Dangerfield Syndrome" (Anderson, 1991, p. 4).

Other inhibiting conditions to smooth transfer commonly cited in the literature included curriculum control factors; budgetary constraints; differences in mission emphases; lack of historical relationships between two- and four-year institutions; lack of written articulation agreements; inadequate advisement; lack of administrative support; and absence of a centralized, interinstitutional database (Cohen, 1989; Terzian, 1991; Turner & Sotello, 1990).

Each of these obstacles can be explained by one or more of the theoretical perspectives cited above. The conflict approach would view these barriers as having been erected by the educational elite to make the passage from the two- to four-year institutions as difficult as possible, thus maintaining the distanced status quo of the students in each type of college. The institutional barriers approach informs all of these practices as they are in and of themselves barriers. The functionalist view is more

benign, reminding critics that barriers sometimes serve positive purposes; and when they do not do so, it might be best to remove them slowly to minimize disruption.

In truth, positive efforts do exist, as policy makers and practitioners alike tackle the complexities of inter-institutional cooperation. Three examples include an American Council on Education Transfer program in Texas, the hiring of a transfer specialist in the University of California System, and a Towson University initiative in computer science. In 1990, under the auspices of the American Council on Education, the National Center for Academic Achievement and Transfer instituted a grant program to enhance transfer between 18 pairs of two- and four-year institutions in urban areas which serve large numbers of Black or Hispanic students. One of the partnership grants awarded to Alamo Community College and the University of Texas at San Antonio specifically targeted preparation of elementary education majors who were beginning their pre-service education at the community college (Eaton, 1994).

At Mount San Antonio College in Walnut, California, a transfer center employing a full-time articulation specialist has been in existence since 1989. The specialist deals with many of the above-cited inhibiting conditions in order to facilitate transfer to the University of California and California State University Systems (Cipres & Parish, 1993).

Rajwant Gill (1992) wrote about a collaborative effort between Anne Arundel Community College and Towson University in a computer science program. Citing the need for faculty from both entities to identify agreed-upon competencies as a basis for sound articulation, minor discrepancies as well as more significant differences were

recognized and worked through. The author submitted this negotiated agreement as a possible model for articulation.

Transfer and Teacher Education

While there is a wealth of information pertaining to transfer and articulation in general, there is a scarcity of current literature which pertains specifically to transfer and articulation in teacher education programs. It may be that the complexities inherent in this field may make the transfer process more problematic than in other disciplines.

Pertinent to teacher education, the timeliness of this study is accented by current demographic trends. The number of 18- year-olds tapped out in 1979 and continued to decline until 1992. Now, however, the numbers are on the rise; and the numbers of college freshmen are expected to continue to rise over the next ten years. Spokespersons for the two-year colleges express alarm over weak transfer rates for their students. "The baccalaureate degree remains an important stepping stone to most positions of leadership in this country. Without the transfer function, community college students do not have access to the professions" (Vaughn, cited in Manzo, 1998, p .7).

In 1989, the Association of American Colleges in collaboration with the Mellon Foundation compiled a handbook to "provide practical assistance to four-year institutions in their efforts to facilitate and increase the flow of students from two-year colleges to baccalaureate programs" (Wechsler, 1989, p. 7). While the focus of the project was transfer of liberal education courses, teacher preparation is cited as an example of one of the largest undergraduate majors to which the findings of the project

could appropriately apply. The project was two years in the making and involved 12 four-year colleges and universities and 34 community colleges. The scope and depth of the study provided a useful overview of the transfer issue; but most pertinent to this research effort, "academic and articulation barriers" were identified as the primary source of impediment to smooth continuity from two- to four-year institutions. Lack of updated articulation agreements, suspicion and distrust of the quality of preparation at the community college, and the constantly shifting requirements of the four-year programs all contribute to uneven acceptance rates of credits from two- to four-year colleges. Compatibility of curricula was noted as the area most in need of attention.

More recently, the American Council on Education published its action agenda for college and university presidents entitled To Touch the Future: Transforming the Way Teachers are Taught. Action #8 of this document states that "College and university leaders should strengthen inter-institutional transfer and recruitment processes" (1999, p. 23). Citing the same statistics which appear elsewhere in this review of the literature, this document supports the notion that community colleges could and should be stronger partners in teacher preparation.

Sample Programs Designed to Improve Transfer and Articulation in Teacher Education

Experimental programs designed to improve the transfer situation specifically in teacher education cited in the literature review include: the Sam Houston University and Houston Community College initiative in Texas; Project SELECT between Westchester Community College and Pace University in New York; Project TEACH

(Teacher Education: a Career Headstart) between LaGuardia Community College and the City University of New York; Project STEPE (Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness Through a Partnership of Equals) at Western Carolina University and Tri-County Community College; and the 2+2+2 Programs in several California communities. Efforts to contact project directors/authors to determine the current status of these programs were unsuccessful except in the case of Project Select in Westchester County, New York. Yanofsky (2000) wrote, "Project SELECT was a wonderful collaboration between our district, Pace University, and Westchester Community College. The work continued, even after the federal funding ended."

The Collaborative Urban Teacher Education Program

Implemented in 1991, the Collaborative Urban Teacher Education Program between Sam Houston State University and Houston Community College, both in Texas, cited specific guidelines relating to responsibilities of the two institutions. First, the community college would be responsible for recruiting from feeder high schools; presenting workshops to prospective teachers about goals, study skills, and degree planning; teaching the "Orientation to Education" course; and arranging orientation meetings between successful community college candidates and Sam Houston's Department of Education. Sam Houston University agreed to "guarantee admission to their major departments if students meet teacher education admissions requirements and to provide to the community college any information regarding any program changes" (Craycraft, 1993, p. 2). Cooperatively, both entities agreed to participate in joint counseling and advisement, to promote continuous interaction with selected faculty and

staff, and to present a series of special activities such as campus visits and tutoring (Craycraft, 1993).

Project SELECT

Project SELECT was a ten-year-old venture between Westchester Community College and Pace University. Mirroring the Texas program, these institutions collaborated to "recruit outstanding community college students into teaching, to prepare those recruited in unique ways, and to ease their transition into public school teaching" (Yanofsky, 1988, p. 1). The different spin on the SELECT program was its emphasis on targeting intellectually strong and academically oriented community college students. The collaborators of SELECT concluded their executive summary by stating that "it is possible to dispel some of the key myths and stereotypes about teaching that have traditionally kept the very brightest students from considering teaching careers" (p. 3). Like the Houston Community College Department of Education, Westchester Community College assumed responsibility for the introductory education course for participants. While the title of the course is different, "Introduction to Schools and Teaching," the intent and objectives of the course are similar.

Project TEACH

A grant-funded project between LaGuardia Community College and Queen's College, a member of the City University of New York (CUNY), ran for three years between 1987 and 1990. The objectives and partner responsibilities for Project TEACH (Teacher Education—A Career Headstart) reflect the two above-cited programs; however, the summary report cited mixed results. Even a clever acronym could not

overcome the bureaucratic hurdle posed by CUNY in its refusal to approve pre-education major status for the community college program at LaGuardia. While attempting to identify new sources of talent from the "untapped pool" of the community college constituency, the project's mission remains half completed. "Project TEACH demonstrated that many talented community college students are interested in becoming teachers and could benefit from the development of a pre-education curriculum, *if the relationships between two- and four-year institutions were improved and four-year teacher education programs were more flexible*" (Schulman, 1990, p. 2, [italics mine]).

Project STEPE

Project STEPE in North Carolina has three higher education partners—Western Carolina University, Tri-County Community College, and Southwestern Community College. STEPE is the acronym for "Strengthening Teacher Effectiveness Through a Partnership of Equals." This project was funded by the North Carolina State Department of Education during 1990-1991. Except for its focus on rural education, the collaborative rhetoric of Project STEPE appeared identical to the above-cited programs. What was striking about Chalker's description of the program is that while the two community colleges are identified as "equal partners" who "help schools plan activities for teachers" (p. 5), specific roles and responsibilities are not addressed (Chalker, 1992). The fact that the STEPE office was located in a public school near the campus of Western Carolina University and that the area served is a large, remote rural area, may have disadvantaged the community college partners as major players.

California 2+2 Program

In California, an existing secondary school/community college 2+2 program was expanded from a career program focus to teacher preparation by including the entire University of California system. This project, begun in 1989, was scheduled to enter its final phase in 1999, depending upon financial backing. The daunting task of tracking thousands of students from high schools through community colleges through universities presented problems from the start. Analysis of the 2+2 pilot project yielded much the same conclusions as found in collaborations cited above.

The major strengths of these efforts have been to improve communication among the various educational segments, to produce a "cadre of experts in both the mechanics and the politics of articulation," (Helm & deAnda, 1993, p. 5) and to foster a sense of professional renewal among professionals involved. Among the conclusions noted in the summary of the pilot is the highlighting of the success of the transfer centers which were established on the campuses of the community colleges, seemingly recognizing the potentially pivotal role of the community college in recruitment, data collection and management, and coordination of curriculum policy (Helm & deAnda, 1993).

The above-cited programs of collaboration between secondary schools and two- and four-year institutions illustrate many of the issues addressed earlier in the review of literature for this study. Aspects of all three theoretical perspectives apply. From the critical Marxian-based conflict perspective, the view of these efforts might be seen as too little, too late to genuinely revolutionize the relationship among the various levels of

education and teacher preparation. Additionally, review of these collaboratives reveals the still-existent dominance of the university in curriculum decisions, while the role of the community college in recruitment of prospective teachers is highlighted.

The functionalist perspective is supported by the fact that slow change is better than no change and that the project partners are doing their respective parts to attract and prepare future teachers. Proponents of functionalism emphasize the value of all participants as necessary for the entire process of teacher education to succeed.

Barriers exist throughout the collaboratives, just as they do in transfer pertaining to any community college/university relationship. The issue of barriers is not that they exist but rather, do they exist for good reason. Is the bureaucratic red tape that effectively doomed Project TEACH from the start a necessary barrier, or is it a manifestation of long-standing suspicion and disrespect precluding the possibility of viable partnership between the two institutions? Thus, review of these cooperative programs in teacher preparation between community colleges and four-year institutions revealed features common to most, if not all, of these initiatives.

## Partnerships for Teacher Education in Maryland

In July 1991, the Maryland Higher Education Commission published the findings of a three-year project assessing the state of postsecondary education in the state entitled *Investing in People: The Maryland Plan for Postsecondary Education.* Of the 12 objectives in the "access and choice" section, Number 11 was "Adoption of state-wide policies to improve further articulation between 2-year and 4-year colleges

and universities" (p. 2). The number one statewide need was identified to be "Improving the quality of elementary and secondary education and collegiate undergraduate education" (p. 9). In November 1997, the *Partnerships for Teacher Education: Report of the University System of Maryland Teacher Education Task Force* was published.

The charge issued to the task force was to "develop a plan to strengthen teacher education...and to expand University of Maryland System partnerships with Maryland's community colleges, with K-16, and with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future" (Langenberg , 1997). Throughout the recommendations in this report are allusions to "linkages" and "partnerships" between two- and four-year higher education institutions engaged in preparing future teachers.

The executive summary of the *Statewide Review of Teacher Education Programs* commissioned by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and published in September 1997 notes, however:

> Curricula for teacher education transfer programs are greatly influenced by the transfer requirements of in-state four-year institutions. It is noteworthy that there exists significant inconsistency across the senior publics in the acceptance rate of professional education courses taken at community colleges, especially those with a clinical or field experience component. Montgomery College will recommend to its Board in Fall 1997 that the teacher education transfer program be discontinued (p. 9).

Appendix A is a composite of education course transfers from one two-year institution, the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, to the state's four-year transfer institutions, which clearly underscores this "significant inconsistency."

Maryland Collaborative for Teacher Preparation

In some disciplines, there has been proactive cooperation between two- and four-year college faculty. In the field of mathematics, for example, a 12-year initiative involving representatives from community colleges and universities remains a viable mechanism for ensuring quality in mathematics instruction at community colleges. With the formation of the American Mathematical Association of Two-year Colleges, characteristics of effective mathematics teachers were identified and translated into guiding principles for the formal preparation of two-year college mathematics faculty (Foley, et al., 1992). In the state of Maryland, this initiative was extended to the *Maryland Collaborative for Teacher Preparation (MCTP)*, (Gardner, 1998), funded by the National Science Foundation as a pre-service program for aspiring grades 4-8 mathematics/science teachers. Those community colleges whose faculty are active participants in this effort receive strong credit transfer at the four-year universities and colleges (see Appendix A: Catonsville Community College Transfer Document, Math 121).

PDS Partnership among Towson University, Anne Arundel Community College and Jessup Elementary School

Emerging from a Maryland Department of Education pilot was the collaborative effort among Towson University, Anne Arundel Community College (AACC), and Jessup Elementary School in Anne Arundel County. The possibility of partnership was first explored in 1995 in conversations between the dean of Towson's College of Education and the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Superintendent. As Jessup

Elementary had been selected as a Professional Development School, its vision statement was modified to include the professional development partnership. The Jessup Elementary School philosophy, as articulated in its vision statement, is humanistic and inclusive in referencing the student body it serves. The Towson philosophy reflects its College of Education's commitment to "inspire, educate, and prepare teachers as facilitators of active learning for culturally diverse populations in environments that are technologically advanced" (Berkeley, 1997, p. 4). Teacher preparation of community college transfer students is specifically noted in conjunction with entering freshmen as being the responsibility of the educator leaders at Towson. For its part, Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) "...has adopted the goal to be a premier learning community whose students will be among the best prepared citizens and workers in the world. Responding to the national challenges for colleges and universities to rethink the way we educate students, AACC is committed to higher standards in student success, teaching and learning, and curriculum development" (Berkeley, 1997, p. 5). At the time of Berkeley's presentation of the partnership to the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the project was in its first-year stage. This project is now completed; currently, there is no ongoing formal collaboration (McLaughlin, 2000).

Mount St. Mary's College, Frederick Community College, and Frederick County Public Schools Partnership

The collaborative among Mount St. Mary's College, Frederick Community College, and Frederick County Public Schools also began with Maryland State

Department of Education (MSDE) funding. After the collaboration was forged, representatives from the three entities would provide input to the proposal and implementation of the project, although Frederick Community College (FCC) and Mount St. Mary's had originally applied independently to the MSDE request for grant proposal. Like the Towson University/AACC arrangement, the Mount St. Mary/FCC partnership was driven by the MSDE push toward expansion of the numbers of Professional Development Schools (PDSs). The Mount St. Mary PDS coordinator includes the FCC students with Mount St. Mary teacher education majors in her PDS placements. FCC students take the Introduction to Teaching and Educational Psychology courses at FCC and pay FCC credit. While in these courses, the Mount St. Mary PDS coordinator arranges for their PDS observations. The advantage to the student is evident in cost savings but also guarantees that these two courses will not have to be repeated at the four-year institution. The Mount St. Mary coordinator communicates with teacher education professors at FCC as to time and location of PDS observation, and the FCC faculty determine the nature of the course projects with relation to the PDS experience. The benefit to the four-year college is that it has familiarity with strong students in the FCC teacher education program and can choose to accept the best students into its teacher education program (Palmer, 1998). In a personal communication with this researcher, Palmer (May, 2000), indicated that this partnership is healthy and is expected to continue into the foreseeable future.

Children 1st Initiative

A final example of ongoing collaboration in teacher preparation pertains to early childhood education and the *Children 1st Initiative,* which was a response to a 1997 gubernatorial charge. The charge in turn was a response to the Governor's Workgroup Committee (Project #2), the Articulation Agreements Child Care Project. This project was referred to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). There appears to be widespread interest in articulation among Early Childhood Education programs in the state of Maryland. The Commission was charged with the responsibity for providing the leadership of a task force to investigate Early Childhood Education articulation issues. The task force was comprised of representatives from two- and four-year public institutions of higher education, four-year private universities, the MSDE, MHEC, and community and private organizations. The Interim Task Force Report cited in several instances the problems associated with articulation and transfer in early childhood education. Prevalent among these problems were "inconsistent articulation practices and standards" (p. 4) and lack of articulation between community colleges and four-year early childhood programs, as well as difficulty in "articulation between an Associate's Degree in Applied Science (A.A.S.) and an Associate's Degree in Arts (A.A.) within community colleges" (Maryland Higher Education Commission, 1998, p. 3).

At the time of the writing of this dissertation, four courses have been proposed to articulate between interested two- and four-year institutions sponsoring programs in early childhood education. Not all of Maryland's four-year institutions have agreed to

articulate all four of these courses. While this was touted as a model upon which to base further inter-institution articulation, a statewide task force on teacher articulation (of which the researcher is a member) is working on the possibility of an approved teacher education program at the associate's degree level. This would be a significant departure from the course-by-course articulation model which this review of literature demonstrated has had uneven results.

The proposal of an Associate's Degree in Teaching is provocative, but the committee deemed it worthy to explore in light of the decades-long struggle to create a truly seamless articulation between two- and four-year institutions in teacher education.

Summary

To summarize the review of the literature pertinent to this research study, there was an abundance of education literature that covered the topics tangential to the role of the community college in teacher preparation. The history, mission, and evolution of the two-year college movement was well documented. The three theoretical perspectives were abundantly referenced in existing literature. The general transfer and articulation issues have been studied at length. Teacher education reform is underway and well documented in the state of Maryland, underscoring the consensus that the quantity and quality of teacher candidates is problematic in the state as well as nationwide.

As the community college moves into this new millennium, what will be its mission focus and emphases? Will students in transfer patterns be further disadvantaged or well served by beginning their teacher preparation at a two-year

institution? Are the conflict theorists correct in their assumption that the community college serves mainly to provide lower income workers to perform the jobs the elite don't wish to do? Or does the community college allow students who dream of becoming teachers to fulfill their aspirations? Are there unnecessary barriers erected by two-year as well as four-year institutions which preclude seamless transfer, and do these barriers serve positive functions or promote negative outcomes which impact the potential of the community college to enhance its teacher education programs? These are the kinds of questions that led to this study.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the transfer process was seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university. The research questions were of the "how" and "what" variety. A qualitative approach was chosen also because of the researcher's belief in what Smith (1983) described as the "idealist" position of research as opposed to the "realist" position. People choose to investigate issues about which they are curious because "they believe social research is meaningful only to the extent that it has a value base" (p. 11).

Stake (1995) stated, "The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well..." (p. 8). The design of this kind of case study focused on the unique transfer experience of the study cohort. This study was descriptive in that it included no comparative analysis or evaluative procedures. The research was conceptually organized around issues pertaining to the transfer experience of the student participants as they and higher education professionals perceived that experience. Therefore, the most appropriate methodological approach to exploring the study topic appeared to be the particularistic, descriptive, issues-driven case study which falls under the larger category of qualitative research.

The methodology chapter is organized in the subsequent manner: following the introduction section are the research questions, case selection, an explanation of

procedure, data collection, and data analysis, concluding with a section on assumptions and limitations of the study.

The researcher relied heavily on the work of Merriam (1988 and 1998) for guidance. Her insistence of the researcher's "tolerance for ambiguity" (1998, p. 20) was worrisome at first; but soon into the literature review of the study topic, it became evident that the type of information sought in this project is best found through a less structured approach. As Yin observed, the case study is especially well suited for study when "the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (1994, p. 13). In this study, the phenomenon is transfer and the bounded system is the teacher education preparation program of study at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, and the elementary and early childhood teacher education programs of study at Towson University.

Qualitative research is the study of phenomena and human interaction from a holistic perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Goetz & LeCompte, 1983; Merriam, 1988). As a research design, qualitative study is framed by people's interpretation of meaning based on interaction with other people (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The research proceeds from an original broad base to a narrower focus as themes emerge. Merriam (1998) described data collection as "...determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (p. 70).

The case study is a particular kind of qualitative investigation. It focuses on one context or setting and deals with the interaction of factors and actors in that situation.

According to Merriam (1998), there are four main characteristics of the case study. First, the case study is particularistic in that a single experience or situation is studied which may lead to greater understanding of a more general issue. This relates to the boundaries, or "bounded system," which confines the research to the focus of the study question. Second, it is descriptive. The narrative of the participants is often the major source of data. Third, it is heuristic in that new meaning attached to phenomena may emerge as a result of the case study. Finally, Merriam supported Stake (1981) in his contention that case study knowledge is "more concrete, more contextual, and more developed by reader interpretation" (1998, pp. 31-32).

Using the work of Yin, Merriam, and Stake as guidance, the research design used in this project was the descriptive, particularistic, issues-driven case study. As Merriam stated, this approach "makes it an especially good design for practical problems" (1998, p. 29).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed that all research is value-bound in some manner, regardless of the methodology used. The choice of study topic and the choice of a descriptive research paradigm say something about the researcher and her/his values. This is important to keep in mind in a qualitative case study, as the researcher becomes the primary instrument of data collection (Merriam, 1988). While to the strict positivist this may represent an unacceptable compromise of objectivity, in qualitative research, the richness of the interpretation of the phenomenon is of greater importance. Nevertheless, some distance from the research situation should exist, especially when the perception of possible exploitation of subjects is present. In this study, the

researcher plays multiple roles relevant to teacher education at one campus (Catonsville) of the Community College of Baltimore County. It would be folly to suggest that she could be a strictly neutral collector of information about student experiences which are of more than just passing interest. Thus, the "flyspeck on the wall" approach was not used in this project. Rather, the researcher-participant relationship is presented as one of many other relationships in this research situation (Roman & Apple, 1988).

## Research Questions

The research issues were twofold. The first pertained to the role of the community college in teacher preparation as perceived by transfer students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at the two- and four-year institutions involved in the study. The second reflected the issues of intra- and inter-institutional barriers.

The overarching research question was: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

The specific research questions were:

1) What is the role of the teacher education pattern in teacher preparation at The Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, as perceived by students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at that institution and at Towson University, which receives the largest number of CCBC teacher education transfer students?

a) Are there competing or conflicting views of the role of the community college in teacher education which impede seamless transfer for students?

b) Are there recognized philosophical differences which impact transfer?

2) How do the institutions studied help or hinder the transfer of teacher education students from two- to four-year programs?

a) Are there identifiable barriers erected at the community college which affect seamless transfer of teacher education students to four-year programs?

b) Are there identifiable barriers erected at the four-year institutions which create confusion or difficulty for transfer students into teacher education programs?

c) What do each of the institutions studied do to facilitate transfer?

## Case Selection

Honigmann stated, "...non-probability sampling methods are logical as long as the field worker expects mainly to use his data not to answer questions like 'how much' and 'how often' but to solve *qualitative* problems, such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences" (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84). Immediately upon reading this, the wisdom appeared of selecting the qualitative case study as the appropriate research paradigm for investigating this research topic. Recognizing the value of a purposefully selected cohort was explained by Patton (1990) and Chien (1981) as that which "...is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

The purpose of the study drove the choice of sample and case. To shed light on the transfer experience for community college students wishing to further their education at a four-year institution in order to become teachers, it made sense to follow a cohort of those students through their transfer experience as a unique sample of participants. "A unique sample is based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest. You would be interested in them because they are unique" (Merriam, 1998, p. 62).

Student Participants

The population consisted of May 1999 teacher education graduates of The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), Catonsville Campus, and all 1999 teacher education program exiters who had taken at least one course at CCBC, Catonsville, and who were identified by computer-generated searches obtained from the respective offices of institutional research at both CCBC, Catonsville, and Towson University. The population totaled 27. All had indicated "teacher education" as their desired major. The Catonsville data provided the names of the graduates of the college, while the Towson University data identified the non-graduating transfers as well. All respondents had completed the transfer to Towson University, but not all had been admitted to its teacher education program. Ultimately, 14 of the 27 exiters from 1999 were recruited.

Of the 14 student respondents, 8 have declared elementary education as their desired major, and 6 wish to become certified early education teachers. One of the elementary education students has an additional concentration in Spanish, and 1 of the

early childhood education students is working toward a concentration in special education as well. Seven of the students graduated from the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), 6 from the Catonsville campus (if they graduated before Fall 1998, the name of the institution was Catonsville Community College), and 1 graduated from CCBC, Dundalk, but had taken a course at the Catonsville campus. One student holds a business degree from another four-year college, came to Catonsville to take a combination of teacher education and general education courses, and has been accepted into the Towson Teacher Education Program under their Second Bachelor's Program. One has been attending college both at Catonsville and at Towson exclusively in the evening. Two students attended higher education institutions other than Catonsville and Towson, going through Catonsville to transfer to Towson. One student respondent is a Russian immigrant who was a certified teacher in her native land and is seeking the proper credentials to teach in Maryland. While all are currently students in good standing at Towson University, only 2 have officially been accepted into the teacher education program; their acceptances are pending passage of PRAXIS, improved GPA, or completion of first- or second- year program-required coursework. The average number of credits earned at CCBC, Catonsville, is 46.3; approximately three credits on average (one course equivalent) were not accepted in credit count at Towson.

Demographically, 10 student respondents are white female, 1 of whom is a Russian native and 1 an Iranian-American. Two student respondents are African-

American females, and 2 student respondents are white males. The average age is 27.8 years.

Appendix D is the Towson University Institution Research Board approval document permitting human subjects to be included in this project.

Higher Education Respondents

In the case of the college and university faculty, transfer specialists, and advisors, a network sample was used as well as a form of purposeful sampling. "This strategy involves asking each participant or group of participants to refer you to other participants" (Merriam, 1998, p. 63). Any person in a position to impact on the transfer of credit and/or degree in the chain of persons with whom students come into contact was eligible for selection into the pool of professional informants. The researcher's position as faculty and Department Chair on the Catonsville campus of CCBC clearly facilitated data access.

CCBC, Catonsville, and Towson University professional participants were chosen on the basis of their relationship to teacher education programs and responsibility for policy and practice in advisement and transfer of credit from the community college to the four-year college or university. As previously cited, the four-year university participants represented Towson University, which is the institution to which the largest number of CCBC students transfer.

Three respondents participated from CCBC, Catonsville, including a former academic dean of the division who has responsibility for the teacher education program,

the college transfer coordinator, and one member of the Teacher Education Team who serves as a liaison to academic counseling.

The Towson University participants included one academic counselor who previously worked at CCBC, Catonsville, the department chair of the Early Childhood Education Department, and a faculty member from the Elementary Education Department who serves as student advisor and, in fact, is advisor to several of the student respondents.

## Procedure

To achieve the ends of the chosen methodology and consistent with human subjects regulations, the researcher used the following procedures to recruit participants and to collect data.

First, in June 1999, the Director of the Office of Institutional Research at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, was contacted to secure mailing labels for all exiting students who had self-identified as "teacher education" majors and who had graduated from CCBC, Catonsville, in May 1999. These students had further self-identified as intending to transfer to Towson University.

Next, the Center for Applied Skills in Education (CASE) office at Towson University was contacted to secure names of CCBC, Catonsville, teacher education transfers, both graduating and non-graduating exiters from 1999. The director of the CASE office referred the researcher to the Associate Vice President for Student Academic Services, who agreed to provide the requested data pending Towson

University's Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval. A copy of the dissertation proposal and a Towson IRB application were forwarded to the Towson Office of Institutional Research Services on July 1, 1999, and were approved by Towson University's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants on August 23, 1999 (Appendix D).

Upon receipt of the names and addresses of CCBC, Catonsville, transfers to Towson to pursue teacher education curriculum, a packet was sent to the 27 students on the list, including the 3 CCBC, Catonsville, May 1999 graduates whose names appeared on both the list provided by Towson and by CCBC, Catonsville, institutional research. Included in the packet were the following: a letter explaining the research and requesting student volunteers to provide contact information (Appendix E), a consent form (Appendix F), a copy of the research questions to be posed to student participants (Appendix G), and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the student to return the consent form and the information form. These were mailed in September 1999. Basically, this packet served as a survey to transfer students asking for their willingness to be interviewed using a tape recorder about their plans to continue their pre-service preparation. The same consent form (Appendix F) was used for the higher education professionals, who were also asked to add, next to their signatures, exactly how they wished to be identified in the study report.

Based upon response to the survey and follow-up telephone contact, a cohort of 14 of these students were interviewed in person about their transfer experience (See Appendix G for protocol). All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The

average duration of the initial student respondent interview was 42 minutes. The location of the interviews was determined by convenience to the participants. Seven of the student interviews were conducted in a vacant classroom in the Hawkins Building at Towson University, which is the location of the University's Teacher Education Department. Four student interviews were conducted in the researcher's office on the CCBC, Catonsville campus. One student respondent interview was conducted at the early childhood center where she works; one was conducted at the Owings Mills Center of CCBC; and one was conducted at the Athletic Department at Towson University. This part of the study was conducted during November-December 1999 and followed the interview protocol contained in Appendix G.

Three Towson University professional respondents were interviewed in November-December 1999. All three interviews were conducted on the Towson campus in the offices of the interviewees and averaged 1 hour 10 minutes in duration. Each professional was connected to teacher education transfer students in a meaningful way. One was an admissions counselor who was formerly a member of the CCBC, Catonsville, counseling staff. The second higher education respondent was department chair of the Early Childhood Education Program and as such performs administrative, advisement, and faculty roles. The third respondent was a faculty member and advisor in the elementary education area. The interview protocol for these interviews is found in Appendix H.

Two CCBC, Catonsville, professionals were interviewed in December 1999, and one was interviewed in March 2000. Two of these interviews were conducted in the

office of the researcher on the CCBC, Catonsville, campus; and one was held in the respondent's office. These interviews lasted an average of 1 hour. The protocol for these interviews is found in Appendix I.

All student participants were invited by letter (Appendix J) and follow-up phone contact for a group discussion of their transfer experience. The purpose of this meeting was to provide all student respondents an opportunity to speak of their transfer experiences in a setting with others who shared the experience and to provide them with transcripts of their interviews to check for accuracy as part of the validation process. Unfortunately, none of the student respondents attended the session, so the researcher scheduled second interviews with the student respondents. These interviews were conducted during March 2000. All but one of the original respondents were interviewed a second time; 1 of the students was on a semester abroad program. All but 2 of the 14 second interviews were done in person. Two were conducted on the telephone as this was the only way in which follow-up interviews could occur with these students due to time constraints imposed by school and work situations.

All initial interviews were recorded and transcribed. The researcher reviewed the transcripts several times to note emerging themes and patterns. Field notes were written immediately after each initial interview. A journal of the research experience was maintained.

Prior to the second interview, each student was provided a copy of his/her interview transcription. None of the respondents challenged the accuracy of the record. The second interview was not tape recorded; rather, notes were taken while the dialogue

transpired. The decision not to tape record the second interview was based on the interviewer's belief that the tape recorder is an intrusive, albeit necessary, device in the interview process. As part of the member check process, the researcher followed the guidance of Stake (1995), who wrote, "Rather than tape-record or write furiously, it is better to listen, to take a few notes, to ask for clarification" (p. 66). Each of these interviews began with two ice-breaking questions, "On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your transfer experience?" and, "Please identify one word to describe your transfer experience?" The student respondent and the researcher then began the work of exploring further the description of the transfer experience, with a request by the researcher that the student elaborate on the one-word description of his/her transfer. This allowed for a fuller picture to emerge of the language and meaning embedded in the earlier dialogue as well as verification of themes and issues as they emerged. The second interview was clearly less structured than the first, allowing for questions to be posed as information flowed from the interview.

## Data Collection

Data collection for the qualitative researcher involves interviews and document analysis as the most common methods. Both played a part in this study. Merriam allows an appropriate part in qualitative research for the survey, normally the instrument of choice for the quantitative researcher (Merriam, 1998, p. 74).

Survey

The first contact between the student participants and the researcher occurred through the research packet mailed to the 27 Catonsville-to-Towson transfer students indicating teacher education as their chosen field of study during 1999 (See Appendices E, F, and G). Two of the student information forms were voluntarily returned; the researcher attempted to contact the remaining 25 of the population by telephone calls. Eventually, 12 more student respondents, whose recruitment was stimulated by those telephone calls, agreed to participate. Thus, 14 Catonsville-to-Towson 1999 student transfers were interviewed.

Interviews

An interview is described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Webb & Webb, cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 72). The interview was the chosen method of data collection in this study because it allowed participants to provide information about what they think and feel about an issue and also how they personally interpret events. The primary purpose of an interview is to allow the researcher, and subsequently readers of his/her work, access to an individual's perspective (Patton, 1987). The interviews focused on the research issues pertaining to the case.

The interviews in this study varied in structure depending on the respondent. For the individual student respondents, as seen in Appendix G, questions were more structured than for the interviews of the professional informants (Appendices H and I). Generally, the questions to all subjects were semi-structured. While the researcher desired to gather some specific information pertinent to the issue at hand, semi-

structured interview questions were crafted in such a manner that further exploration and explanation were required, and "yes-no" answers were avoided.

Participants were allowed to talk freely, yet the fact that the interviewer had a set of prepared questions kept the interview on task. This was more evident during the course of the first, more structured interview. In the second interview, as themes emerged and interpretive questions surfaced, depending on revelations of the participants, the interviewer took the liberty to ask more detailed questions at times to uncover more and deeper relevant information (Merriam, 1988).

Spradley (1979) identified "structural questions" as those which pertain to an individual's "domain, the basic units in an informant's cultural knowledge" (p. 60). As anticipated, the cultural experience of the professional respondents differed from that of the student participants; thus, how they perceive and organize their knowledge undoubtedly affected their responses.

All human subjects guidelines were observed. Careful attention was given to matters of anonymity; student names were changed. The professional respondents were asked to sign the same consent form as the students and were asked to indicate next to their signatures how they wanted to be identified in the report of the study (Appendix F). Sensitivity and ethical conduct governed the data collection phase of the study.

While the purpose of an interview is "to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" or "to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, cited in Merriam, 1998, pp. 71-72), Weber's presentation of the basic elements of an interview reminds researchers to be mindful of their responsibility to their informants as interviewers enter

into the experience of another. In writing about the essentials of interviewing, which she described as "an invitation to conversation," she pointed out the risk that participants take when agreeing to take part in an interview (Weber, 1986). This caveat was ever on the mind of the researcher as she was privileged to explore the transfer process with students who were living that process and had the courage to share their experience.

Since qualitative research is more about discovery than hypothesis testing, the semi-structured or more open method of data collection allowed for "a vivid, dense, and full description in the natural language of the phenomenon under study" (Eisner, 1991, cited in Hill, et al., 1997, p. 32).

While it was the hope of the researcher to conduct a group interview including all volunteer participants and invitations were sent to all 14 respondents to gather for a general discussion and wrap-up (dinner provided), none of the 14 students was available for the event (Appendix J). Thus, second individual interviews were conducted.

It was also proposed at the onset of this study that due to interest in minority student participation in teacher education programs, students who had transferred from CCBC, Catonsville, to a traditionally Black four-year institution would be interviewed. Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts to obtain the name(s) of any 1999 transfer students from officials at Morgan State University and Coppin State University, this did not happen. The Deans of Education of those institutions respectively, in personal communication with the researcher, expressed interest in participating in the study. A copy of the research proposal was provided to the Morgan State University dean's

designate in October 1999, and a subsequent telephone conversation was held between the designate and the researcher. A follow-up voice mail message was left in January 2000, but there has been no response to date. In the case of Coppin State University, the Dean of Education at that institution indicated to the researcher in a personal communication that despite every effort, their institutional research department was unable to access the names of transfer students in teacher education from CCBC. Written permission was obtained to use the names of Towson University and CCBC, Catonsville, in the report of this study (Appendices K and L).

The initial student interviews were semi-structured, following a 12-question interview schedule (Appendix G). The first three questions attempted to elicit information from the students about the number of semesters attended, courses taken, and credits which transferred to Towson University's teacher education curriculum. The fourth question related to the student's perception of the general role of the community college in teacher preparation. Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 dealt with the transfer experience with an emphasis on orientation and advisement at both the two- and four-year institutions to get a deeper, richer account of possible barriers. The final three questions allowed the student respondent an opportunity to reflect on his/her choice of pathway to becoming a teacher and to offer suggestions for higher education practitioners to consider for improving the transfer process for potential teachers.

The questions in the follow-up interview required that the student more deeply reflect on his/her transfer experience and, together with the researcher, explored deeper meaning behind his or her earlier description.

Appendix H consists of the research protocol for the four-year institution higher education professionals, and Appendix I contains the questions posed to the community college professionals. The questions common to both groups involve the issues of philosophy, the general role of the community college in teacher preparation, barriers identified at either/both institutions, and the professionals' perceptions about the transfer experience for this cohort of students. For the university professionals, Question 2 asks about the level of familiarity the four-year professional has with the CCBC, Catonsville, Teacher Education Program.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothetically, data collection, analysis, and interpretation in a project of this kind could go on forever, with new transfer students as respondents and documentation emanating from state policy change under constant revision for researchers to review. Fortunately, practical limits on time and money are recognized (Merriam, 1988). The data collection becomes adequate when the emerging categories begin to recur and little new information is gleaned from gathering more data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Limiting the study to a specific transfer cohort during a one-year time frame provided a finite number of student respondents and required that documentation relevant to their experience be reviewed.

### Document Analysis

Documents reviewed in this case study consisted of applicable community college and university catalogs, ARTSYS information, Towson University's Education

Department checklist of degree requirements and forms granting transfer credit, and CCBC marketing materials. Reports on teacher education emanating from the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission were also reviewed. There are currently no existing articulation agreements specific to teacher education between the two institutions involved in this study to review. Other sources included documentation from various Maryland task forces on teacher education and articulation.

Data Analysis

According to Stake (1995), "There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). In qualitative research, data are analyzed as an ongoing part of the study process (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). After each interview was completed, field notes were recorded and thematic words or expressions were noted. Following the guidance of Bogdan and Biklen (1982), the researcher attempted to capture a "slice of life" in these descriptive field notes. The field notes include reflections, personal feelings, and impressions and were most useful in the data analysis process.

The researcher conducted ongoing review of the transcription of the interviews; and again, following the guidance of Bogdan and Biklan (1982), key points were highlighted. This process led to the identification of categories. While some may assume that qualitative research is loosely put together, it quickly became evident to this researcher that daily discipline, attention to detail, and concentrated focus on the research topic are all critical to a case study of this kind.

After all the data were collected, a more focused analysis was conducted by rereading the research questions and by repeated readings of the purpose statement (occasionally aloud, as in a mantra). During this phase, the data began to emerge into broad themes or categories. These categories would later be refined and subcategories added as the data analysis continued. This constant comparison of units of information in search of what Merriam (1998) referred to as "recurring regularities" (p. 180) proved challenging yet necessary to control the data.

Tesch (1990) suggested that qualitative researchers develop an organizing system of their data by combining two avenues of data organization, one which is driven by the research questions and one which arises from the data as collected. This proved helpful to avoid theoretical imposition, while allowing the analysis and eventual interpretation to be guided by theory, yet organized sensibly into the themes which emerged. These themes became collections of subunits. As Stake (1995) observed, "Two strategic ways that researchers reach new meanings about cases are through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class. Case study relies on both of these methods" (p. 74). Both were used in this study.

Patton (1987) distinguished between data analysis and interpretation. Analysis is the process of coding the data and organizing it into manageable categories. Interpretation explores deeper meaning of emerging themes or patterns. According to Stake (1995), an internal tug-of-war may occur within the researcher's own thought processes as he/she attempts to distinguish between the "emergence of meaning from

the repetition of phenomena . . . and the emergence of meaning in the single instance" (p. 76). The former represents a more quantitative approach; the latter the qualitative. Because this was a qualitative case study, it was important for the researcher to balance the focus on the meaning of the data with the incidence of phenomena.

According to Merriam (1988 and 1998), when information begins to merge into a theme, data can be displayed in a visual manner facilitating further insight. For example, while analyzing the data from the initial student interviews and before the reinterview process began, the researcher created charts of what appeared to her to be emerging themes relating to the students' transfer experiences. Using these as a visual guide, each student respondent was asked questions during the second interview which were related to these themes.

When the point of saturation has arrived, when redundancy appears, the data collection process ends and the final analysis begins. Thus, the data analysis, organized according to words, phrases, and terminology accompanying the three theoretical frameworks was completed using field notes immediately reviewed after the interview and when the transcriptions were read and reread. Merriam (1998) clarified the coding process as "nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data" (p. 164).

The second interview provided the opportunity for the researcher and respondent to revisit students' transfer experiences, to check for transcription accuracy, and to provide the student participants a less structured opportunity to reflect on the research issues.

Internal Validity

Consistent with Merriam's guidance that internal validity is concerned with the match between findings and the reality of the phenomenon under scrutiny, internal validity was established through the use the aforementioned member checks (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Also, the interviews with the higher education professionals substantiated the student accounts of their transfer experience. Thus, data were subjected to interpretation to test the researcher's representation of perceptions of reality. Member checks were conducted by providing each participant with a transcribed copy of his/her interview, with an invitation to review the tape recording to see if any discrepancies arose. Also, all but one student participant was interviewed a second time, providing the opportunity for each respondent to question the original dialogue.

The researcher was open about her biases from the beginning of the study and reexamined them throughout the research period. Aware of the need to address what Erickson (cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 204) referred to as "disciplined subjectivity," she made every effort to maintain awareness and sensitivity to the perspectives of the various participants. Also, internal validity was strengthened by careful document analysis.

Reliability

Absolute reliability, as the positivist knows it, is not possible in a study of this type. Following the guidance of Lincoln and Guba (1985) *dependability* was established by being straightforward about her assumptions, the reasons for the choice

of cohort, and the context of the study. She sought to show through an accurate record a representation of the transfer experience for a purposefully selected group of students. A trail of evidence is found by examining excerpts from the data.

Since qualitative research is context-bound, it is not possible to replicate a study of this kind; therefore, reliability was determined not by replicability but by consistency between the results and the data collected (Merriam, 1998). Data collection carefully followed the study protocol; the research questions posed to the student and professional participants were formulated by logical progression from the research issues (Appendices G, H, and I).

## Assumptions of the Study

Several methodological assumptions were inherent in this study. First, it was assumed that qualitative research would allow for deeper exploration of the transfer phenomenon than could be obtained by quantitative design. Inherent in case study research is the assumption that there will be surprises as the case unfolds and that the emergent nature of this type of study demands flexibility but not at the expense of careful planning. It was assumed that the interpretation of data would be subjective but not creative.

In addition to these methodological assumptions were those indigenous to this study. There was the assumption that transfer is a viable vehicle which students utilize to complete their pre-service teacher preparation and that transfer policies exist and can be accessed. It was further assumed that there would be sufficient participants to make

the study credible and that they would be forthright in their responses. This was linked to limitations of the study also. It was assumed that informants would freely express their views on the study issues. Finally, it was assumed that responses to interview questions would yield recognizable patterns pertaining to the transfer experience for students and that these responses would reflect the tenets of the three theoretical propositions guiding the research.

There were inherent value assumptions to the study as well. Further clarification of the researcher's biases in light of her professional experience required examination in order to understand the particular perspective brought to the interpretive process. No apologies need be made for this, but the readers of the final report do need to know that the agenda pertinent to the study is not hidden. The researcher believes that as decisions are made about community college curriculum in teacher preparation in this state, clarification about the role of the two-year institution is imperative. If community college courses lack sufficient rigor to be accepted at four-year transfer institutions, they should either be improved or eliminated. If philosophy, policy, and practice between a community college and a university conflict, conversations need to be held to address this. If a community college claims to be a comprehensive institution, it needs to balance its resources between its programs and offerings.

## Limitations of the Study

The research was limited to a narrow scope of case and participants. As has already been observed, although generalizability of findings to the transfer experience

of all teacher education majors who begin their pre-service education at a two-year institution was not the intention of this research, review of the literature suggested that what was learned from this study might be typical in many cases. It was expected that this study would provide a basis for further research. This study's contribution to better understanding of the role of the community college in teacher preparation at this critical time in education was deemed worthwhile.

Some might consider the role of the researcher to be compromised by her immersion in issues pertaining to teacher education students at a community college. She does believe that existing policy and practice between the two institutions represented in this study are inadequate to ensure equitable treatment of teacher education students who transfer from one to the other. Despite this bias, she remained open throughout the study to discovering how students and other professionals view this issue and exactly how the student transfer experience is manifest in real situations. Nevertheless, this bias might be considered a limitation of the study.

A further limitation to the study is the fact that the only student respondents available were early childhood or elementary education majors. However, this may say something about the community college as a "feeder" institution to teacher education baccalaureate programs.

Data were obtained by self reports by student participants as opposed to other sources such as transcripts. This self reporting may have led to students' claims of credits lost even though they had been forewarned in advisement and/or written

materials that courses they took at the community college would not count toward a baccalaureate degree in education.

The number of willing and accessible student respondents totaled 14. While this number might be considered small by those critical of the study, it should be noted that these students represent a range of students in age, ethnicity, background, and traditional/non-traditional characteristics. However, it must be noted as a limitation of the study that only slightly more than one half of the target population for the study were questioned. Also, the research involved one case which might be different from transfer to other four-year institutions.

Finally, the student respondents were interviewed twice and the 6 higher education professionals only once. All were provided copies of the interview transcripts and asked to comment on accuracy, but none of the participants came forward with any concerns.

The following chapter is a report of the findings of the study. It is organized around the overarching research question and the research issues.

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent the transfer process was seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university. The overarching research question, then, was: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

This question and the research sub-questions framed the two research issues underpinning the conceptualization of this project. The first issue pertained to the role of the community college in teacher preparation. How do faculty, transfer advisors, and administrators from two- and four-year institutions as well as teacher education transfer students view the community college's part in teacher education?

The second research issue addressed the barriers which may be erected and maintained within the community college itself and between two- and four-year institutions. Do the community college and its four-year transfer partners establish institutional barriers in policy or practice which makes transfer confusing or difficult to students? Illumination of both of these issues served to clarify the transfer experience for the teacher education student who begins the pre-service formal preparation at a community college and transfers to the baccalaureate level.

The specific research questions relevant to the overarching question and the research issues were:

**1) What is the role of the teacher education pattern in teacher preparation at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, as perceived by students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at that institution and at Towson University, which receives the largest number of CCBC teacher education transfer students?**

**a) Are there competing or conflicting views of the role of the community college in teacher education which impede seamless transfer for students?**

**b) Are there recognized philosophical differences which impact transfer?**

**2) How do the institutions studied help or hinder the transfer of teacher education students from two- to four-year programs?**

**a) Are there identifiable barriers of policy or practice erected at the community college which affect seamless transfer of teacher education students to four-year programs?**

**b) Are there identifiable barriers erected at the four-year institutions which create confusion or difficulty for transfer students into teacher education programs?**

**c) What do each of the institutions studied do to facilitate transfer?**

The predominant means of data collection used in this study was the interview. Fourteen student transfers recruited from 1999 records were interviewed; 13 were interviewed a second time. Their accounts of their transfer experience provided the data

for analysis and interpretation. Six higher education professionals were also interviewed to gain their perspective and to provide verification of policy and practice. Data collection occurred in the fall, winter, and spring of 1999-2000. During this time, the literature review was updated and amended as new information relevant to the research topic appeared. There was (and is) no lack of discussion ongoing in the state of Maryland currently about the teacher shortage and how to address it. Chapter 3 addressed the specifics of data collection, but some general commentary about process and procedure is deemed useful before the findings are presented.

While the initial interviews with student and professional respondents were tape-recorded and expertly transcribed, the field notes and research journal provided a subjective account of the unfolding of this study. This type of study required of the researcher an investment of time and energy as well as a willingness to open up to new information. It also demanded of the researcher that she at all times maintain a respectful attitude and demeanor toward student participants and the staff and faculty of the institutions which were the focus of the project. It takes courage for people to reveal information which might place themselves or the institutions they represent in a negative light, yet the risk in this case proved worthwhile for several reasons. For the student respondents, the interviews allowed them to reflect on their own modus operandi about how they planned their continuing professional development and how to proceed in a manner which will help them to be successful. The interviews with students were advertised to be risk free, and it is believed that this was indeed the case.

For the professional respondents, the candor of their responses might allow for investigation into improvement in transfer between the two institutions. This will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. Only a qualitative study could have allowed them to express their views in a manner which gives depth when answering the overarching research question, which became specifically, "To what extent is the transfer process seamless for a selected group of teacher education students between a selected community college and university?"

This chapter will be organized in the following manner: First, a cultural overview of the teacher education programs at the two institutions involved in the study will be provided. Second, demographic data about students' age, major, race, gender, community college credits earned, and community college credits believed "lost" at this juncture in their academic careers will be provided. Next, excerpts from each of the 14 initial student interviews will be presented, including reference to emergent themes as they appeared in the narratives. This will be followed by a chart containing a readily identifiable view of themes and sub-categories. The themes and sub-categories will be reviewed through the lenses of the three theoretical propositions used in the study. Then, a section on the interpretation of the data will be presented. Finally, the college and university professionals' contributions will be presented as a means of verification and to provide their perspective on the transfer experience of students.

## Cultural Overview

Before detailing the findings of the study, a cultural overview of each of the teacher education programs in the study provides the context of this particular case. Therefore, the next section of this chapter will explain the culture of the teacher education pattern at CCBC, Catonsville, and at Towson University, as well as what each institution's transfer policy looks like.

### Teacher Preparation at CCBC, Catonsville

Teacher preparation is a pattern of study at CCBC, Catonsville, intended to accomplish two things. First, the teacher education pattern is designed to provide students with introductory experience as they explore career options in education. There is a core of required courses in general education and teacher education and an identified group of "electives" from which the student is to select, depending on what level and discipline he/she intends to pursue as a teacher. The second goal of the teacher education pattern at CCBC, Catonsville, is to prepare students who choose this option for transfer to a four-year college or university to complete the baccalaureate degree and achieve the teaching certificate. These two goals may seem reasonable at first read, but upon further scrutiny, there is an aspect of mutual exclusivity to them. The dilemma faced by community college staff, faculty, and students alike is that to provide course work which allows students to explore teaching as a career requires that they offer courses in education which may not transfer to four-year institutions in a predictable fashion.

Community colleges by their very nature offer a variety of supports to students because of the needs of their constituents. Community college students are more likely to be first-generation college students; generally less well prepared academically than the "typical" four-year institution student; have greater need for financial aid; experience more role conflict with demands of school, work, and family; and have less clarity of the viability of their career goals than their four-year counterparts (Dougherty, 1994). Because of their students' higher risk status, CCBC, Catonsville, requires placement testing in reading, writing, and mathematics proficiency for students to enroll in transfer programs like teacher education. Among the supports proffered to the students at CCBC, Catonsville, is an advisement system which includes academic advisors, career counselors, financial aid counselors, program coordinators, and, for teacher education students, advisement available by members of the college's Teacher Education Team. The availability of all of these entities is advertised in the college's schedule of classes each semester. It would appear that the staff and faculty of CCBC, Catonsville, is doing its part to provide more than adequate advisement opportunities to its students who begin their pre-service education in teacher preparation at this level. It will become evident in the data analysis, however, that there are a number of flaws in the advisement of teacher education students at CCBC, Catonsville, and that all students do not take advantage of the advisement which is available.

The makeup of the Teacher Education Team is inclusive of the levels and disciplines teacher education students are likely to elect as their major field of study in preparing to become teachers. However, all of the transfer student respondents recruited

for this study indicated either elementary or early childhood education as their desired major. While it is not within the scope of this study to analyze the choice of major for transfer students in teacher education, this fact will resurface as a possible topic for further study in the recommendation portion of this dissertation.

In the general counseling/advisement area of the college, students are served by appointment as well as on a walk-in basis. Academic advisors are expected to be knowledgeable about the range of course and program choices for which students opt, and ARTSYS is available to both students and advisors at the counseling center as a tool in advisement. All of the members of the Teacher Education Team have been encouraged to become proficient in use of ARTSYS as it is now web accessible and is updated at the University System of Maryland (USM) approximately every two weeks.

Data analysis of the interviews with the community college professionals will detail their perceptions relevant to the topic of this study; but in general, all community college professional respondents indicated a positive view of the community college in teacher preparation and believe its role to be vital to helping prospective teachers achieve their ultimate goal. In my interview with the college's then-transfer coordinator, he indicated, "I don't know if my students have been an anomaly or if they're typical, but I haven't had a lot of students come back to me and say I'm having a lot of difficulty at Towson..." (Interview, 11/11/99).

Teacher Preparation at Towson University

As was previously cited, Towson University is the oldest teacher preparation institution in higher education in Maryland. It graduates more students from its College

of Education than any other department of teacher education in the colleges or universities in this state.

Towson University is well known for its teacher education program. The Russian immigrant who was interviewed for this study, in her limited English stated, "...everybody goes to Towson" (Interview, 12/02/99). In an article for the University's "Recommended Readings," University President Hoke Smith, quoting from the American Council on Education Presidents' Task Force on Teacher Education, stated, "As the leader in Maryland education, Towson University has always considered teacher preparation a campus wide responsibility. All faculty members participate in our mission to 'put the education of teachers front and center on the institutional agenda,' placing us in the forefront of models of excellence in teacher education" (Towson University, 2000).

Perusal of the University catalog provides a wealth of information about the university and its college of education. It also includes a section on "transfer"; Appendix B in the catalog contains Title 13B of the MHEC policy on general education and transfer. Many of the terms in the glossary section of this report come directly from Title 13B (Annotated Code of Maryland, 1995, revised in 1998).

The COMAR regulations pertaining to transfer students spell out the responsibilities for both sending and receiving institutions as well as recommendations for prospective transfer students. In Section .06, "Academic Success and general Well-Being of Transfer Students," it is stated that "Community Colleges shall encourage their students to complete the associate degree or to complete 56 hours in a recommended

transfer program which includes both general education courses and courses applicable toward the program at the receiving institution" (Towson University Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 232).

The receiving institution "shall evaluate the transcript of a degree-seeking transfer student as expeditiously as possible, and notify the student of the results not later than mid-semester of the student's enrollment at the receiving institution, if all official transcripts have been received at least 15 days before mid-semester" (Towson University Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 232). The review of transcript process is explicated as is an explanation of the review/appeals process. There is a specific time line for the review and appeals process; and once a decision on a course under review is made by the Transfer Mediation Committee, it is "final."

COMAR also attempts to protect transfer students in Section 0.7 by clarifying that "Transfer students are not required to repeat equivalent course work successfully completed at the community college" (Towson University Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 233).

The catalog (p. 9) provided an overview of transfer packages effective after Fall 1996 when MHEC reform policy on general education was instituted. Since there are several options from which a student chooses, it is the student's responsibility to contact the transfer specialist at the sending institution to determine which package applies.

The College of Education portion of the catalog (pp. 75-86) included general information on the college and its mission and vision statements, as well as directions pertaining to admission and screening. There was a section explaining the role of the

CASE office as a center of assistance for all teacher education students with regard to advisement, coordination, and field placements (p. 77).

Specific to the transfer student who may meet requirements for admission to the university but not all programs of study, there was one brief paragraph in the section pertaining to the Department of Early Childhood Education. Under Transfer Student Policies, it stated, "A minimum of 25 credits in the major must be completed at TU. The Introduction to Special Education course is transferable from certain institutions only. Contact the department chairperson for specifics" (Towson University Catalog, p. 79).

In the section on the Department of Elementary Education, the information provided to transfer students was likewise a single paragraph. "The Elementary Education major is extremely competitive, and the number of seats available each year is limited. Therefore, only transfer students who are eligible for admission to the major and have submitted their transcripts by the priority deadlines established by the department (March 1 for fall registration and November 1 for spring registration) will be included in the rank-ordered pool of applicants. **NOTE: Transfer students are not exempt from meeting above prerequisites**" (Towson University Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 81, the bold as it appears in the catalog).

The above citations from the university catalog served to provide aspiring applicants transferring from other institutions with seemingly ample information for the student to be aware of admissions criteria, deadlines, the need to report to the CASE office, and the level of competition they face in attempting to successfully move from

the two- to the four-year institution. The cited information also sent the clear message that transfer students could not expect preferential treatment simply by having attended an institution of higher learning but that they would be treated the same as the native aspiring teacher education candidate. As COMAR regulation stipulated, the receiving institution will "maintain fair and equal treatment for native and transfer students" (Title 13B, cited in the Towson University Catalog, 1999-2000, p. 230).

## Student Background and Interviews

### Demographic Information

Appendix M contains an overview of the demographic information on the students as well as numbers of credits believed taken and lost in transfer. With a mean age of 27.8 years, 7 students were over 25 years old and were considered non-traditional students. As has been previously cited, all were either elementary or early childhood education majors. Two were white males and 2 were African-American females. The average number of credits earned at the community college was 46.3, and the numbers of credits believed "lost" at this point in their academic careers was 3.14. The students have been identified by pseudonym.

### Student Interviews

Fourteen student respondents were interviewed during November and December 1999 following the interview guide in Appendix G. Thirteen of the original 14 were interviewed a second time in March 2000 in a less structured session. The follow-up interview began with two questions: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your

transfer experience?" and "If you could use just one word to describe your transfer experience, what would that word be?" It was felt that these two questions would provide sufficient focus for the student participant to revisit his or her transfer experience. Also, each had been provided with a copy of their interview transcript beforehand, so they had a document in hand in the event that it was necessary or desirable to refer to the narrative from the first interview. The researcher used the transcript as a means of inquiry into issues emerging from the initial session.

The student interviews are presented individually since each had a unique story to tell, all contributing in his or her own way to a greater understanding of the overall case. There was variation in the interview setting as well; thus, it was decided that presentation of the data in this fashion allowed for fuller description of each situation. As Stake (1995) cited, "...qualitative (research) works with episodes of unique relationship to fashion a story or unique description of the case" (p. 63).

The questions initially posed to student respondents (Appendix G) attempted to elicit specific data pertaining to courses taken, credits earned and possibly lost in transfer, the role of the community college in teacher preparation, advisement, barriers encountered, and other information which might be useful to the student upon reflection and to practitioners in revising policy and practice in teacher education. Responses to these questions forged the category domains (themes) and subcategories which were discussed in the subsequent interview.

The following 14 sections represent the individual accounts of students' transfer experiences.

Margo

The first student, Margo, was interviewed only once, as she is out of the country on a semester abroad. She was one of only two participants who voluntarily responded to the initial recruitment letter. The interview was conducted in an empty classroom in the Hawkins Building at Towson University. Margo received an A.A. degree from CCBC, Dundalk, but entered the recruitment pool for this study because she took one of her courses at CCBC, Catonsville, and then transferred to Towson in January 1999. Although the data provided by this respondent was the first collected, it reflects themes and issues which recur throughout the interview process with the other students and will be presented even though there was no follow-up interview to collaborate on interpretation.

Margo reported that she "thought she had taken more electives than needed, so they might not have all been needed to transfer" (Interview, 11/11/99). She is certain that she lost three credits from an internship she was required to do as part of the requirements from Dundalk, although she received conflicting information about those credits. At her initial advisement session at Towson, she was told that the credits would transfer in as the first level internship, and were, in fact, checked off as credits counted during an assessment of her transcript. But just days before our interview, her advisor informed her that the credits might not transfer after all.

Her response to the question about the role of the community college in teacher preparation was that the community college has a greater role in preparing students to

try to get all of the requirements in general education "out of the way" (Interview, 11/11/99).

Margo vacillated between describing her transfer experience as "easy" and "frustrating." Her answers to interview questions contained numerous "not sures" and "I thinks." She began to describe her transfer as not difficult until she reviewed the chronology of her experience. Recognizing her inconsistency, she described how she had to wait "for months and months" for notification of acceptance to the university, and "just showed up one day" to be told that she was indeed admitted and that her orientation was the next day. This dissonance appeared to cause her some discomfort as she described herself as "the kind of person who likes to find things on their own" yet realized that despite her perceived proaction, her application was not efficiently handled. Somewhat agitated, she then proceeded to criticize in general terms communication between the community college and the university, the administration at Towson, and the uselessness of the general orientation.

Specific to the orientation experience, Margo related what would become a recurring theme about the reception of the transfer student at this early juncture in transfer. The first orientation for transfer students who wish to enter the teacher education program at Towson is a group event in which a faculty advisor meets with a number of students at a time. Because of the timing of transfer students' entry, courses they need and want may already be filled by native students, so students in transfer sign up for what this student referred to as "leftovers."

When we discussed possible barriers between the two institutions and I specifically asked about the PRAXIS I test, Margo again reversed her answer. At first, she said that she did not take the PRAXIS I before graduating from Dundalk, then stated, "Well, actually I did take it in June, and I passed part of it and failed the other two parts, so I have to take that." She criticized her advisor at Dundalk for advising her to take the test, not realizing that it now presents a barrier to her acceptance into the teacher education program at Towson. She had inquired by phone call to the elementary education department chair about her status, hoping to gain admission "on a probationary level" because she understood this to have once been policy; but she was denied. She believes that she was penalized for her honesty because she knows "other people" who also failed PRAXIS I but who chose not to report their failure and were admitted into the first internship and are on track not to lose time to admission and to degree. She estimated that she fell at least a semester behind.

At the end of the interview, as we were walking to the exit, Margo stopped and said, "You know, you asked me back there what I would do over if I could...well, if I could, I would have started at the four-year school" (Field notes, 11/11/99).

Christine

Christine was interviewed in November 1999 and again in January 2000. Both interviews were conducted in the early childhood center where she works. Her face lit up when she spoke of working with young children. The early childhood center where she is employed as an assistant teacher is located in a working-class Baltimore County neighborhood. The center appeared to be busy but well organized. Christine is a student

in Towson University's "Second Bachelor's Degree Program" in which career transfer students are awarded 90 credits and must then take "only the core classes, the education courses" (Interview 11/17/99). She loves her work and has no regrets about leaving the corporate world to become a teacher. Christine would be considered a "nontraditional" student at both the community college and the university because of her age and educational background.

This participant viewed the role of the community college in teacher preparation as one of providing a foundation for prospective students to help them to understand what the classroom experience is really like, "of what's expected of teachers, actually."

Self-identifying as one who "does her own legwork," Christine eschewed advisement at CCBC, Catonsville, during the time she was a student there, eventually earning 18 credits in early childhood education. She believes all will transfer into her early childhood degree program with the possible exception of the course in special education, about which she had yet to receive a definite answer. "It's being examined or it's being reviewed" (Interview, 11/17/99). When we explored the matter of this course further, it was revealed that the instructor of this course also teaches the same course at Towson University.

Christine was most pleased with the quality of instruction she received at CCBC, Catonsville, and expressed appreciation for the "exposure" to educational issues through course work and guest speakers. Because of her proaction in her transfer, we did not dwell on Catonsville's role in preparing her for transfer. She did express a wish that Towson had provided an orientation to the teacher education program, although she did

receive a general orientation as part of the Second Bachelor's Program. She acquired her advisor through contact at the early childhood center at which she is employed and explained that this connection was somewhat serendipitous. "I saw her one day [at the early childhood center] and I said, 'Well you know, I'm going to Towson now'...and she said, 'I'm heading up their program. Come and see me'" (Interview, 11/17/99).

When asked if she would like to provide any other information about her transfer experience, Christine remarked on her good fortune that she had connections in the early childhood field, but that "younger students" might not be so lucky and might give up. She mentioned an acquaintance who "just stopped school altogether" out of frustration due to lack of guidance (Interview, 11/16/99).

Mary

Mary came to the researcher's office on the CCBC, Catonsville, campus for both interviews because it was more convenient for her. She brought her four-year-old son to the second interview, but he played happily in one corner of the office and did not distract from the questioning process. Mary has four children, which is largely, she said, the reason that she is a part-time student.

Mary earned 59 credits at CCBC, Catonsville, (three credits short of the A.A. degree), all of them in general education, which she believed to be the primary role of the community college for teacher education majors. She followed the recommended transfer pattern to the teacher education program at Towson University at the recommendation of her advisor at Catonsville. Mary reported one of the most positive transfer experiences of all the student interviewees, even though she has been attending

classes part-time for over ten years and has yet to be accepted into the early childhood education program at Towson. She has not yet taken the PRAXIS I but anticipated no problems in passing the test. Mary made only laudatory comments about her preparation for transfer, the transfer itself, and her reception at the four-year university, until we more deeply explored her part-time student status. She then expressed concern that she had no idea she needed special permits before registering for certain classes and that she was not aware that the "education program itself is a full-time program. I wasn't aware of that, and when I signed up and talked to them, they knew that I was planning on coming part time, but she [her advisor] is going to work something out for me...she said that they could" (Interview, 11/19/99).

Mary was asked if she believed then that the completion of the degree requirements are harder for a part-time student, and she replied affirmatively. "The availability of courses, the times, it's not as flexible as I thought it would be. There are blocked times, and one class goes with one day. I don't fully understand it yet. My advisor said once I get into it, get to that point and see exactly how it's scheduled, how certain classes go together that I would understand it better. I guess I would have liked to have known that ahead of time" (Interview, 11/19/99).

Shirley

Shirley described her transfer experience in the most negative of terms; in fact, she used the word "nightmare" several times during the two interviews both of which were conducted in the office of the researcher. She described her transfer experience in an animated fashion, eyes flashing with anger at perceived injustices. After two

semesters at UMBC, which she regretted, she went to CCBC, Catonsville, to get her bearings. Following the ARTSYS recommended pattern between CCBC and Towson University, she still lost three credits from a health class in transfer because this course no longer "counted" when she was admitted to Towson. She was admitted to the teacher education program after one semester of attendance there, "which was pretty good. They were telling me two semesters before I would get in" (Interview, 11/18/99). Her "nightmare" focused on general admission procedures and notification from Towson. She, like the first student interviewed, had to follow up her application with telephone calls to the Towson admissions department, where she received verbal confirmation of her acceptance to the University in May, roughly three months after filing her application. Further delay in receipt of her enrollment package put her into a late orientation/registration session, causing her to have to "beg" her teachers to allow her into required classes. "If I had been there since I was a freshman, you build up credits, and you get higher and higher in the chain" (Interview, 11/18/99). Asked if blocked courses presented a problem, Shirley replied, "Well, they told me credits were blocked for transfer students, but once we actually got into it and started looking at it, they were, 'Oh, no, we really don't have blocks. We just have what's available'" (Interview, 11/18/99).

Once this student got into the university and the teacher education program and was assigned an advisor, she reported a pretty "smooth" experience, until she was told she was required to take the PRAXIS I test. When asked how she had been admitted to the teacher education program without having successfully passed this test, she replied,

"They let me in the program, but they really shouldn't have. They also had a cutoff at six credits, which I'm shy of getting, but I promised my professor, my advisor, I will take winter courses, I will take summer courses, I will do anything" (Interview, 11/18/99).

It was during the second interview that Shirley disclosed that in addition to the health course from CCBC, Catonsville, which she lost in transfer, she was in the middle of a "fight" for eight credits obtained at UMBC in Mathematics for Elementary Teachers. She became quite agitated discussing the matter and vowed to do battle with the admissions office at Towson about the courses' acceptance. She had a document signed by her advisor in the education program at Towson indicating equivalency for these two courses, but evidently the admissions officer reversed the faculty member's decision. Shirley's eyes narrowed in anticipation of the resolution of the dispute, determined "to win this one" (Interview, 3/30/00).

Shirley was one of only a few of the student participants to choose his/her own pseudonym, which provided a moment of levity. As the second interview was being terminated, the researcher explained the safeguards in place surrounding student anonymity. She selected the name "Shirley" as her pseudonym because, she emphatically stated, "*surely* I will get these credits accepted!" (Interview, 3/30/00).

Mike

Mike was the first male student to be interviewed, a self-described minority in the elementary education field. He failed to appear for the first scheduled interview, which we then rescheduled and for which he apologized profusely. We met for both

interviews in an available classroom in Hawkins Hall. He saw the role of the community college as one of helping him to crystallize his career goals and described his transfer experience in mostly positive terms. He was advised at Catonsville by a transfer specialist, followed the ARTSYS recommended transfer pattern, sent in his application, and waited to hear about his acceptance. This did not occur until the third week in August. At his general orientation/class registration for fall classes, he found that several courses he needed were already closed but managed to negotiate his way into closed classes, "because I was in Florida the first week in August when I got bit on the face by a dog...And that's pretty much why I got into my classes, because the counselor got bit by a dog as well... otherwise, I think I'd have had a really tough time finding classes that I wanted" (Interview, 12/8/99). Mike had only one negative comment about his transfer experience and that dealt with what he felt was delay in notification of acceptance and lateness of course registration, which he agreed he had compensated for by getting the sympathy of the Towson advisor. During our interviews, Mike appeared uncomfortable talking about how he had managed to get into the classes he needed, especially during the first session. He seemed to want the interviews to end quickly.

Elmer

Elmer also reported mostly positively about his Catonsville-to-Towson experience. The first interview was held in an empty Hawkins Hall classroom during the busy final weeks of fall semester. The second interview occurred during Towson's spring break in March and was a more relaxed meeting. On the margins of the transcript

appear the words "earnest" and "focused," describing this young man's demeanor. Elmer's postsecondary experience appeared to be more positive than his high school career, during which he was informed that it "wasn't realistic" for him to consider getting into a four-year college (Interview, 3/22/00). He lost only three credits in transfer, a sign language class which is recommended at CCBC, Catonsville, but would not fit into his program of study at Towson, despite the fact that Basic Sign Language 205 is a sophomore-level required course in the elementary program at Towson. He was not overly perturbed about this, so we did not pursue it very far.

His view of the role of the community college in teacher preparation is that it gives students an "overall view of what the education program is all about" (Interview, 12/8/99). He felt that he was advantaged by beginning his pre-service preparation at a community college because it was a way to gain credit inexpensively and to prepare him for the four-year experience. He was not impressed with the orientation he attended, describing it as "kind of just a process"; but because he had worked with the Towson University catalog from the beginning of his postsecondary career, he did not feel he had missed out on much important information. Elmer was the only student of the 14 interviewed who seemed genuinely knowledgeable about the university catalog. He had also received support from one of his psychology professors at CCBC, Catonsville, whom he described as "very helpful" (Interview, 12/8/99). He had just met his faculty advisor the week before our first interview, which he felt was a bit late in the semester; and he expressed mild dissatisfaction with not having known this part of the process earlier. "...it's kind of like if you don't know anybody here, it's kind of hard to figure

things out. It'd be really nice to get a piece of paper that had concrete kind of rules for registration and application" (Interview, 12/8/99).

This young man seemed genuinely eager to be helpful with the research. Admitting to a less than sterling high school career, he stated that his high school guidance counselor had dissuaded him from pursuing professional goals; but he had gained much confidence at the community college. He was doing well at Towson and described his transfer experience as "organized" (Interview, 3/22/00).

Marlo

Marlo, first interviewed at the University in an unused computer laboratory in Hawkins Hall, could not find time to meet personally for the second interview which necessitated that it be conducted by telephone. She took a very direct, pragmatic approach to the role of the community college in teacher preparation as "a good way to kind of bang out your general-ed classes and then transfer to the university" (Interview, 12/8/99). Her accounts of her transfer experience might best be described as "mixed." This student had attended St. Mary's College for a year and a half and Salisbury State University for a year, and had not found either satisfactory, so opted to attend the community college to save some money and to re-orient herself to "coming back big time." She expressed that she had taken care with her course selection at the community college for fear that credits would not transfer, so she took education courses thinking that those "would have to transfer...which wasn't necessarily true" (Interview, 12/8/99). Marlo was representative of early childhood students who in the experience of this researcher are unclear about the different career pathways to child

care and to early childhood education. She lost credits for a "Methods and Materials" course because she claimed to have been told that at CCBC, Catonsville, the course is a 100-level course and at Towson it is a 300-level course and that credit cannot be given for the 100-level course. She has been advised that she will have to retake the "Introduction to Special Education" course she took at Catonsville.

The major barrier this student reported encountering had to do with her status as an evening student. "I was intending to continue my degree until student teaching by taking classes at night and taking part-time, but there really aren't that many evening classes offered. The services pretty much stop. All the offices close at 4. It took me a semester of fighting just to get my name in the CASE office to get an advisor so I could get a PIN number to register last semester. So that was pretty bad" (Interview, 12/8/99).

Marlo wasn't much impressed by the support she had received at CCBC, Catonsville, when she began to investigate her transfer options. She attempted to do an ARTSYS search in the academic advisement area but waited "for 45 minutes" without being helped or approached for help, and saw only student volunteers, no professionals. Frustrated, she approached the faculty coordinator for early childhood who sent her back to the counseling center to do an ARTSYS search because, "...the faculty a lot of times isn't 100 percent sure what will transfer and what won't to all the different universities" (Interview, 12/8/99).

Almost passively accepting of the inevitability of credit loss because she experienced non-transfer of credit when she transferred from St. Mary's to Salisbury,

this student acknowledged that she will eventually graduate with "more courses that I will ever need."

PRAXIS I is not a potential barrier for this student to gain admission to Towson's teacher education track because she took the National Teacher Exam while it was still a viable test for students to be admitted into teacher education programs. When pressed to describe her transfer experience in general, Marlo replied, "I felt that I had to kind of bull my way through everything" (Interview, 12/8/99). During the second interview by telephone, she was asked if she were still feeling the need to be so aggressive in managing her academic career. She replied, "Oh, yeah, I don't want to wind up retaking any more classes" (Telephone interview, 3/23/00).

Muriel

Muriel received an Associate's in Arts degree from CCBC, Catonsville, in General Studies and transferred to Towson University in Spring 1999, indicating teacher education as her choice of major. Interviewed first in a vacant classroom at Hawkins Hall, the second interview was conducted by telephone since she was no longer attending the University in spring semester. Her account represents the worst scenario in transfer of prospective teachers encountered in this research. Perhaps because she did not take any teacher preparation courses at Catonsville or because she was not in classes anywhere at the time of the second interview in Spring 2000, her transfer was bungled by both higher education institutions. Her voice and body language both indicated discouragement, even defeat. Muriel described her Catonsville experience as "depressing" because due to family financial constraints, she could not afford to attend a

four-year college out of high school like her friends who all went away to college. She was lonely at Catonsville and lonelier still at Towson. While she had no complaints about the quality of course work she took at the community college, apparently her transcript and financial aid application did not get sent from Catonsville to Towson in a timely fashion, "which delayed everything over at Towson. I had to call, I went up there [Catonsville] twice, and he said they had already sent it but Towson hadn't gotten it yet" (Interview, 12/13/99).

When asked during the second interview to revisit her orientation and advisement at Towson she replied, "I think Towson is a very cheap school. I just didn't like their processing, whatever you call it. I had to go to so many places, and the classes that I took last semester didn't really go towards my major...and it was like no one was helping me and I didn't know what to do" (Telephone interview, 3/20/00).

Muriel has essentially dropped out of college for the moment and won't go back to Towson. When she returns to whatever college, she said she will study business management. Her view of the role of the community college in teacher education was rather vague, "kind of helping you through the first two years in a general studies kind of, and kind of maturing as a student then, too" (Interview, 12/13/99).

Carrie

At 45 years of age, Carrie was the oldest student participant. She was the one transfer student the researcher had had an encounter with before the interviews for the study. The interviews were conducted in the Catonsville office of the researcher where Carrie had come about a year earlier to see if it would be possible to retroactively

change the major designation on her Catonsville transcript from "General Studies" to "Early Childhood Education," not for transfer purposes but "...for my job. I needed to have my degree say it was in Early Childhood Education" (Interview, 12/13/99). This was not possible to do since she had not achieved the degree requirements, and it is possible that the brevity (20 minutes) of the first interview reflected a lingering resentment about this.

A study in persistence, Carrie attended Catonsville for 11 semesters part time, received her A.A. in general education "with a lot of education courses, psychology and all. So when I transferred to Towson, I really didn't have an A.A. degree in early childhood, which was helpful" (Interview, 12/13/99). By her account, she completed her transfer into the university and the teacher education program at the same time by appearing "in person" with her complete transcript. Although she has yet to take the PRAXIS I, she was admitted as a junior and has an advisor in the Early Childhood Department. She was under the impression that all of her Catonsville course work transferred except for the special education course. "They looked at my transcript and accepted what they could, and what they couldn't, we just put aside" (Interview, 12/13/99). When pressed about what "put aside" meant during the reinterview, Carrie became uncomfortable, and repeated that "they must count" since she was admitted as a full-fledged junior. The second interview did not reveal any change in the status of her course work and its transfer.

Rachel

Review of the interviews with Rachel revealed seven "I don't know's" to questions about transfer of credit and courses from Catonsville to Towson. She believed that 58 of her 62 credits transferred, "but I don't know if they transferred as electives or as education classes" (Interview, 12/8/99). Between the first and second interviews, both conducted in a vacant classroom at Hawkins Hall, her description of her transfer experience changed from "scary" in December to "O.K." in March. This was fairly common among all student respondents. By their second semester, they had become, for the most part, better acquainted with the University and the Teacher Education Program. Rachel supplied the expression "in limbo" to describe her first semester at Towson (Interview, 3/8/00).

Rachel had a bad experience getting her transcript from Catonsville to Towson initially. Apparently, her records were sent to Howard Community College. She faulted poor advisement at Catonsville for creating more transfer tension than should be necessary in the process. She never had a teacher education advisor at the community college and saw several advisors during her tenure at Catonsville, none of whom, she claimed, "could tell me what transferred over here. They did a thing on the computer to run off what I needed to take, but nobody really could explain anything to me. I needed more information" (Interview, 12/8/99).

At the Towson end, the acquisition of an advisor was an issue at first. Frustrated by lack of information, Rachel reported that she had no idea that she had to report to the CASE office to declare her major so that she could be assigned an advisor. "I had to

come over here one morning before work and declare my major, and then they gave me an advisor. So I had to go around a couple of steps to get an advisor" (Interview, 12/8/99). By the time of the second interview in March, following the pattern of many of the other student respondents, things were going "pretty smoothly" for this student at the University, except for her concern over her math proficiency. "I was very happy with Catonsville except for the advisors, you know. I'm ready to go back there because I'm struggling [with mathematics] right now" (Interview, 3/8/00). She indicated she would return to the community college to take some math modules to help her get ready for PRAXIS and to take required university math courses.

Janet

Once Janet got rolling, her interviews were almost nonstop litanies of both institutions' lack of coherent advisement for and information provided to transfer students. Her interviews, both held in the researcher's Catonsville office, were among the longest for both the student and professional respondents. Regarding her community college experience at Catonsville, she stated, "I saw an advisor maybe twice the entire time I was here, and I decided after the second time that I would just do this on my own because every time I went to see an advisor, they seemed like I was bothering them, when in fact it's their job. I think there should be somebody whose full-time job it is to sit in an office or somewhere over there that if people have quick questions, they can be answered right away instead of sitting for half an hour waiting for a teacher to come out and then they're like 'ugh!' cause you only talk to them for a minute" (Interview, 12/8/99).

This respondent cited four classes she could have (would have) taken at Catonsville instead of some she did take because in her view, the Catonsville program consists of classes "just to fill up a schedule" (Interview, 3/1/00).

At the receiving university, she expected clearer guidance about what to expect in their teacher education program, "...cause you don't know really what you're looking for, you don't know how to ask for it" (Interview, 12/8/99). She had never done an ARTSYS search; thus, she found that she had lost perhaps more than eight credits of core courses that she needed. In her first semester at Towson, Janet was taking required courses but not necessarily her first choice of courses because, "I pretty much got put into classes that were the only ones left. I got thrown into these classes" (Interview, 12/8/99).

This student could not narrow her transfer experience to a one-word description in the second interview. She did state that, "It wasn't fun. It was a very long, tedious process involving a lot of paper" (Interview, 3/1/00). She did admit that she did not register until July and that she felt disadvantaged by that. "You have people coming in the fall, freshman students, and you have people returning that have already registered way in advance. All the classes I'm taking right now, like African-American Literature, I'd rather not be taking, but I am because that was one of the classes available. The guy I worked with was really nice, but I pretty much got put into classes that they were the only ones left" (Interview, 12/8/99).

During both interviews, Janet complained bitterly about having followed the guidance in the Catonsville catalog, "because I thought that's what worked with every

11/23/99). Her Introduction to Special Education course was accepted as an equivalency, contrary to the experience of other students.

Repeating the "big league/minor league" analogy cited by another interviewee, Asha depicted her transfer experience in terms of being a "total new ball game." Unimpressed by the lack of alacrity on the part of admissions at Towson, she cited the timing of her notification of admission as being one day prior to her assigned orientation, "And I totally freaked out because I work in a bank, and Friday is our busy day." Expected to produce her medical records and shot record at short notice, Asha experienced the additional barrier of having to contact her high school for medical information because her medical care provider had lost her records.

Her description of the first part of her orientation would be humorous if it were not such an important piece of the transfer puzzle to the transfer student. Evidently, the student who led her orientation group explained that he was not feeling well as a result of having attended a concert the night before. When she got to the teacher education portion of the orientation, she was dismayed to find out that she would not be eligible for admission to the teacher education program until she could pass the PRAXIS I test, which she had already failed, and both her words and body language indicated that she would probably fail again. Attempting to perhaps put her at ease, her advisor told her that PRAXIS I was "not a big deal"; but she felt this to be misleading. English is not her first language, so this student finds test taking a particular issue.

While Asha could not clarify the value of this option, she indicated that she was pursuing a special education certification to provide her with a credential which would

make her more qualified to work in early childhood education settings. While a desirable credential, taking these courses, she felt, was putting her "behind, behind, and behind semester by semester." She cited the experience of friends in similar situations, including one individual who by credit count is a senior but still fails to make the cut into the teacher education program because of her GPA (Interview, 11/23/99).

The speech and hearing test posed a problem for this student as well. Generally thought of as a simple part of transfer into teacher education, for this student, this was another barrier. She passed the hearing portion but not the speech section because, she was told, her voice was kind of "horsey." Having taken this part of the test twice, she left a voice message on the answering machine of the test administrator, who agreed to sign off on her passage because she apparently sounded fine in the non-testing situation.

Asha describes "hoops and hoops and hoops" she felt she had to go through to capture sound advisement. She has stopped seeing her assigned advisor because she perceives this professor as "disorganized," so she usually gets advisement from the program chair or from friends.

At Catonsville, she felt that she was "set back" by conflicting advisement as well. Using the image of a transfer "path" several times, she indicated in the reinterview that this pathway would be far less cluttered for students like her if more and clearer information were made available by both the sending and the receiving institutions.

Terry

Terry was the first to respond to the initial survey recruiting student respondents. In the telephone conversation to set up the first interview, this student stated that she was most anxious to come forward because she wanted to "fix" the transfer process which she indicated was "terrible." She felt strongly that the community college and the university should both be more explicit about what transfer of an A.A. degree means. Having attended two community colleges and two other universities before coming to Towson, this respondent had, at the time of the first interview, accrued over 100 credits, only 64 of which were accepted by Towson. The fact that she switched majors in addition to changing colleges also resulted in a bad fit between university-accepted credits and those which fit into the teacher education program. She feared that she would have to take, in addition to her core program courses, an additional science and two more English courses. "Then they wonder why there's a teacher shortage" (Interview, 11/23/99). She would be the only interviewee to refer to the shortfall in teacher numbers.

During the first interview, Terry indicated her dissatisfaction with the higher education institutions which stemmed from her view that "the entire time you are at the community college, everybody there from advisors to the catalogs, everything says get an A.A. in any Maryland community college and transfer to a four-year Maryland state school, your gen. ed. requirements will be fulfilled, and I asked them about this, is this 100 per cent, and that is absolutely not the case" (Interview, 11/23/99). This student was livid about the perceived injustices she felt she had experienced. Her body was stiff

and tense during the entire interview. She was not especially amenable to the suggestion that perhaps her loss of general education credits resulted primarily from the fact that she had not followed a recommended teacher education pattern of course selection. She did allow, however, that she had been so perturbed by her transfer experience, that her advisor "sneaked in" credit for an art history class as a "special accommodation" (Interview, 3/20/00).

It should be noted that Terry worked at several offices at CCBC, Catonsville, and currently works at the athletic department at Towson. She admitted to having become more attentive to her academic program since her transfer and that because she found her advisor to be very busy, she had devised a strategy in which she always goes to his office "armed" with a list of specific questions she wants answered. She has become what the Towson academic advisor would call "savvy."

This student also expressed concern over the speech and hearing test, even though there were no apparent difficulties with either during our conversations. English is her first language, so she does not share that as a concern with the Iranian-American interviewee. She claimed that she was "scared to death of the speech and hearing test, and I got myself so worked up, more worked up than by SAT, ACT, any final I've ever had. Towson needs to be more up front about this...I mean if it is a way of weeding people out, let us know" (Interview, 11/23/99).

More powerful than the above-cited information provided by Terry was her insistence that transfer students are "second-class citizens" when compared to the native student population. Transfer students, she said, are "lumped together" and provided

with less orientation; and that which is provided is hurried, while freshmen get a whole weekend and "had all these things planned on getting to know people so you wouldn't drop out and, you know, there are the different organizations on campus and so forth. Transfer orientation is come in, register, and leave. For us, it's kind of fend for yourself" (Interview and field notes, 11/23/99).

In the second interview, Terry had mellowed a bit. She changed her description of transfer to "mediocre," (the second student to use that descriptor). She spoke of herself as cynical but happier now that she was receiving more explicit information from her advisor. Her major concern was passage of PRAXIS I, and she was taking advantage of practice programs for the test. She continued to express discontent with the differential treatment of native and transfer students, however, citing that she would wish that transfers have their "hands held" as much as freshmen. She wished that she were into her major classes so that she might meet other education students and perhaps form support groups and friendships. She was not aware of the need to go through the CASE office and could not explain how she had acquired an advisor without having done so.

Both interviews with Terry were conducted in the athletic offices at Towson in full view of the track and playing fields, prompting a visual image of running a race on an oval track. When I asked her to imagine herself on that track, running toward completion of her academic goals as though it were a race to complete, and where she would place herself on that track, she replied that she was about "one quarter there" (Interview, 3/20/00).

Yuri

The last student interviewee was an unusual addition to this case study. Yuri was technically a Catonsville-to-Towson transfer student for the purposes of this study because she took an English 101 course at CCBC, Catonsville, in Summer 1999 and then transferred to the university; but she was a fully qualified elementary teacher in Russia. She described her transfer experience from two perspectives. From the Catonsville-to-Towson experience, she had no complaints. She had taken the English 101 course in summer and during the winter session took a Sociology 101 course, both at the Owings Mills Center of CCBC, Catonsville. Both courses were recommended to her by her advisor at Towson in the Elementary Education Department. He had also provided her with a list of other courses in general education which she may take at the community college which would be more cost effective and would fit into her elementary education pattern at the university. Her transfer of credit from her Russian university was another story. Because this is not the focus of this study, there is no purpose in dwelling on this student's frustration at what she described as an unsuccessful experience in getting Towson officials to grant her more credit for her professional preparation in her native country. It should be noted that she will receive credit for 64 credits from the Russian university and, at the time of the second interview, eight other general education courses which she will have taken at the community college. By comparison to other transfer students who have accrued more than the allowable number of transfer credits and have "lost" them in transfer, this student might be getting a fair deal.

Also of interest to the research were a review of her transcript using the World Education Services guidance and her answer to a question about choosing Towson as the baccalaureate institution for her U.S. program of study. "Everybody goes to Towson. I don't know whether it's a teacher's school or something" (Interview 12/2/99).

## Qualitative Analysis

Analysis of data will be organized and presented in the following manner in this section: first, there will be a general introduction to the five dominant themes and their accompanying sub-categories; second will be a chart constructed for expeditious review of the thematic results of the study; and finally, each theme will be more closely scrutinized.

The dominant themes and subcategories should be viewed as the major findings of the study.

## Overview of Dominant Themes

The five dominant themes which emerged from the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted for this study are transfer tension, the ambivalent role of the community college in teacher preparation, the self-perceived role of the student as his/her own actor in transfer, institutional barriers, and feelings of alienation.

**Transfer tension** was apparent in virtually every student's experience in varying degrees. Indicators of transfer tension were citations of inequities in course review, uncertainty regarding status in the teacher education program, anxiety over

entry requirements, and anger over perceived class distinctions between native and transfer students.

The **dual role of the community college in teacher preparation** was evidenced by the expressed view of the community college as provider of general education preparation versus providing a reflection of the freshman and sophomore levels of pre-service preparation in teacher education.

The theme of **student as actor in his/her own transfer** prompted the subunit of how informed and involved the student was in the planning and execution of his/her own academic career in general and his/her transfer in particular. There were clear differences between students who actively sought out information about transfer and assertively negotiated maximum acceptance of credit from the community college as opposed to those who naively assume that because they are dealing with two institutions of higher education, their transfer is in the hands of professionals who will take care to ensure a seamless experience.

**Institutional barriers**, some deemed worthy and some perceived as unfair by both students and practitioners alike, constituted a major category. This led to the emergent subcategories of quality and accessability of transfer information, which included poor advisement and lack of advertisement of support for prospective teacher education transfer students. Not one of the students interviewed, for example, was aware of the existence of the community college's Teacher Education Team, an interdisciplinary council of faculty and advisors available to provide guidance to students considering entering the teaching profession regardless of level or discipline.

Scheduling of classes for transfer students and two types of testing also were viewed as institutional barriers, although in some cases viewed differently by student and professional respondents.

Finally, thematic **feelings of alienation** appeared, especially but not exclusively for part-time students and evening students.

Following guidance by Merriam (1998), an overview of categories (themes) and sub-categories follows, providing a "shorthand version of the findings" (p. 233). The broader themes yielded emerging sub-categories which were considered prevalent if they were reported as matters of concern by 12 or more student respondents, typical if they applied to 8 through 11, and atypical if they were reported by 7or fewer student respondents (less than one half). The exception to this structure pertains to differences in feelings of alienation, which were broken down into evening, part-time, and full-time day students. As presented in the summary below, themes and sub-categories were identified and evaluated according to frequency of appearance in the initial 14 student interviews. The second interviews served to clarify and to explore the deeper meaning of the themes and sub-categories. It should be noted that this chart is not an attempt to quantify the data but rather to qualify the presence of indicators pertinent to the emergent themes and sub-themes. The categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, in analyzing the student responses to the role of the community college in teacher preparation, 12 respondents identified "general education" as the principal role. Of this 12, 8 also qualified their response by adding "teacher education" courses as equally important. Again following the guidance of Merriam (1998), this manner of

presenting the themes was chosen after consideration of the target audience for whom the report would be of greatest interest (p. 221). It is probable that those for whom these results would be most useful are community college and university practitioners and policy makers in teacher education. For them, an overview in the following format provides a convenient way to begin to scrutinize results of the study.

Following the thematic overview is further explication and exploration of each of the themes and subunits. This will segue into an interpretation of the themes as they relate to the three theoretical perspectives used as lenses through which to view the data.

Response Rates to Themes and Sub-categories

| Theme | Response Rate |
|---|---|
| Transfer Tension | Prevalent |
| Concern About Student Status | Typical |
| Anxiety Over Transfer Courses | Typical |
| Role of the Community College in Teacher Preparation | |
| General Education | Prevalent |
| Reflect First Two Years at University | Typical |
| Self-perceived Role of Student as Actor in Transfer | |
| Proactive | Typical |
| Passive | Atypical |
| Naive | Atypical |
| Institutional Barriers | |
| Quality and Accessability of Transfer Information | Prevalent |
| Course Disconnect between Teacher Education Programs | Typical |
| PRAXIS I Test | Typical |
| Scheduling of Courses | Typical |
| Speech and Hearing Test | Atypical |
| Feelings of Alienation | |
| Evening student | Prevalent |
| Part-time Student | Prevalent |
| Full-time Day Student | Typical |

## Themes and Sub-categories

### Transfer Tension

The first and most prevalent theme which emerged in the data analysis was that of transfer tension. For purposes of this study, transfer for the student respondents is a two-step process. First, they must achieve acceptance into the university; then, they must gain entry into the teacher education program. It was evident from data analysis that the former presented far fewer problems and concerns than the latter. Even for those students for whom the transfer experience was "smooth," even "simple," there were indicators of uncertainty about their status in the teacher education program. They vacillated between expressing confidence in the success of their having achieved their goal of transfer, but then opened up to the possibility that they were in fact exposed to less information than they might have wanted. Christine stated that she "would have liked an orientation" (Interview, 11/17/99). Several student respondents cited the lack of concrete, written information which they felt would have been useful. To what extent the subsequent categories further explain this phenomenon is difficult and raises questions for further study, which will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation. The transfer tension theme emerged later in the interview for the students who had a relatively problem-free experience, almost as a denial of any negativity attached to their experience. Mary, for example, breezed through four pages of transcription until she cited her lack of information about needed "special permits" but remained optimistic that she could be exempted from them (Interview, 11/19/99).

Transfer tension is readily identifiable for those students who had not yet been accepted into the teacher education program, who encountered difficulties in accessing pertinent transfer information, who played a more passive role in their transfer, who lost credits, and who described their reception at the receiving university in negative, even hostile terms. But the experience related in Shirley's account indicated that transfer tension does not end at the passage of PRAXIS I or even at admission to the teacher education program. Contrary to the COMAR regulations about the timelines of review and appeal of disputed transfer credit, it appeared from Shirley's account that this process is not made clear to students and perhaps is not consistently applied. For Shirley, having to revisit the acceptance of credits from both the community college and the other four-year USM institution was creating anxiety midway into the second semester of her junior year (Interview, 3/30/00).

Dual (Ambivalent?) Role of the Community College in Teacher Preparation

All students interviewed acknowledged in some fashion the role of general education at the community college in the preparation of students to transfer to the Towson University teacher education program. Very few general education credits were reported lost in transfer; and in those cases, there was an extraordinary explanation. Terry was required to take extra general education courses at Towson because she had not, previous to her attendance there, observed or followed any recommended transfer pattern for prospective teacher candidates at the university (Interview, 11/23/99).

Typical but not prevalent in the students' responses was the role of the community college in teacher preparation as reflective of the freshman/sophomore years at the university. Students who followed the prescribed teacher education pattern at the community college ran the risk of losing education course credits in transfer, and several respondents alluded to this. For those students who accessed the ARTSYS recommended transfer pattern to Towson University from CCBC, Catonsville, in elementary or early childhood education, the absence of the community college's course offerings in education, with the exception of the Educational Psychology course, sent them the message that if they wanted to maximize transfer of credit from this community college to Towson, they would be better served NOT to follow the A.A. degree programs in those two areas. This clearly created a dilemma for teacher education students who began their pre-service preparation at the community college. It was understandable that students were confused about the role of the community college in teacher preparation because the printed guidance to them was confusing.

Further, there was a caveat to students in the "additional requirements and information" section of the recommended transfer pattern information available on ARTSYS. Section E stated, "Due to the necessary additional course work for Maryland State Department of Education teaching certification requirements, transfer options (including articulated A.A. degrees) do not apply to Elementary or Early Childhood Education majors" (p. 2).

Self-perceived Role of Student as Actor in Transfer

None of the student respondents referred to himself or herself as passive or naive regarding the part he or she played in managing his/her own transfer. This category emerged, however, early on in the initial interview process and provided a prompt in the second interviews of the student respondents. Several respondents were adamant about their proaction in transfer. Phrases which reflected this included, "doing my own legwork" (Christine); "I would just do this on my own" (Janet); and "I felt that I had to bull my way through everything" (Marlo). A review of the interview transcripts, however, revealed a trust in the two institutions involved in this study and the students' perceptions that because they were dealing with higher education, they could (and some did) allow the transfer process to flow without their having to seek out information or act on their own behalf beyond filling out and submitting the proper forms. Margo stated, "I probably should have looked into that [acceptance of credit for her internship through CCBC, Dundalk], but I don't think I called anybody." "Nobody told me" is a recurring statement in the transcripts.

It should not be surprising that students, even adult students with "real world" experience, put their confidence in higher education institutions to sort out and present the necessary details pertinent to transfer from one level to the next. Students are socialized from early childhood to accept educational authority in this culture; their naivete can be understood not only in terms of personal qualities and characteristics (which is not a dimension of this study) but also in light of inter-institutional relationships. When student respondents became critical of the community college

during the interviews, they frequently preceded their criticism with an apologetic preface, as if they were trying not to insult or appear disrespectful. This is understandable in light of the position held by the interviewer at a community college. In several instances, additional prompts had to be inserted to urge the student to tell his or her story when a negative comment about Catonsville was part of the account.

Institutional Barriers

Since transfer involves both a sending and receiving institution, assessment of both entities was deemed necessary to analyze the quality and accessibility of necessary information by both CCBC, Catonsville, and Towson University. It should be noted that students rated along similar lines the general quality and ease of access of transfer information, the preparation for transfer at the community college, and the reception at the four-year university. When asked about how well they were prepared for transfer by the community college and how well they felt they were received by the university, the typical response was in the mediocre range. In fact, the word "mediocre" appeared several times in the context of describing the overall transfer experience.

Specific examples of poor or absent advisement abound in the students' individual accounts presented earlier. From reports about community college personnel advisement, it was evident that students received mixed messages about course selection and transfer protocol depending on from whom they received advisement. The fact that the existence of a teacher education team was unknown to students was indicative of faulty communication between the community college faculty advisors and the students. The fact that at CCBC, Catonsville, there was not a single identifiable teacher education

transfer advisor indicated that advisement was left up to chance for the students. In truth, general advisors cannot be all things to all students. There are many nuances in the transfer process for students between the two programs of study in teacher education. MSDE certification requirements change and courses transfer on a case-by-case basis. Presentation of his/her transfer case by the individual student appeared to make a difference. In short, without a teacher education transfer specialist reviewing courses and advising students at both the sending and receiving institutions, it is likely that inconsistency will continue to be the rule rather than the exception. Chapter 5 will revisit this issue in the "recommendations" section.

At the receiving institution, despite the specific catalog information pertaining to transfer and the teacher education program, the transfer students interviewed for this study were not well versed about their options and about the university and departmental policies and practices. This undoubtedly flavored their perception of the reception they received at Towson. The fact that Terry had worked at the university in the athletic department for a year and still did not know she had to report to the CASE office to declare her major and coordinate her field work was indicative of the information gap which plagued many of the student participants.

The lack of useful information accessed by the students does not square well with their self reports of being active participants in managing their academic careers. As previously cited, Elmer was the only student respondent who emphasized the use of the Towson catalog from the early stages of his college planning. Worthy of note was

the fact that college catalogs were not readily accessible in the CASE office. Students were expected to go to the admissions department and request college catalogs.

For transfer students, there was not an abundance of practical information in the education section of the catalog, short of caveats about facing stiff competition and the special education course which does not transfer from all institutions. What information did exist, then, might have been interpreted as a turn-off to transfer students, perhaps even a warning that they didn't stand much of a chance to successfully enter the teacher education programs at the university. This interpretation was supported by the Towson University academic advisor, who described the transfer process from beginning to end during our interview. "...it might be that transfer students are not sure that they're as good as students who started at the university" (Interview, 12/15/99). This negative perception of self as viable competitor might be linked to feelings of alienation, which is a theme explored in a later section of this chapter.

Only one of the student respondents found orientation to be very useful; most would go only so far as to credit the experience with providing some connection with university faculty and advisement. Because advisement was done in groups, however, the transfer students interviewed typically expressed dissatisfaction with what they perceived as a lack of individual attention. In fact, Terry's experience with orientation led to heightened feelings of alienation and resentment toward native students, especially freshmen, whom she regarded as receiving better care and attention.

The timing of the orientation/advisement day for transfer students also placed them at serious risk of not being able to access required courses, since native students

have already filled the classes. Mark and Shirley provided vivid examples of having to "beg" instructors for entry into closed sections.

The lack of course-by-course articulation was clearly an identified barrier maintained by the two institutions' failure to agree upon an approved teacher education pattern at the community college for students to attain an Associate's degree. The insistence of the community college in offering courses which students often lose in transfer to Towson (the special education course, for example) conflicted with the university's recommended transfer pattern. There was (and is) currently no way a CCBC, Catonsville, student can achieve the Associate's degree in the teacher education pattern, transfer to Towson University's early childhood or elementary teacher program, and not lose credit. The two programs simply do not fit.

This loss of credit was often not apparent to the student as he/she perceived courses to transfer as "lower level electives" rather than as "equivalencies." To the uninitiated, transfer means transfer. When Carrie described courses being "put aside" at the moment, she was revealing her understanding (hope) that somehow these credits would be made to fit into her program. As several accounts in this report have shown, occasionally this happens, but not on a predictable basis.

PRAXIS I was typically identified by student respondents as a barrier to successful transfer into Towson's Teacher Education Programs. In a classic "where one stands depends on where one sits," Shirley, who had recently received word that she had passed the PRAXIS I exam, applauded its use as a necessary step to becoming a teacher. The student respondents who had not yet passed the test, however, had another view.

Asha was quite certain she would never pass the test, and faulted her advisor for misleading her about its importance. Terry became visibly upset when PRAXIS became the topic of conversation. The two male student respondents dismissed the test as "not a big deal," perhaps indicating a lack of anxiety or perhaps an effort to diffuse any anxiety attached to the upcoming inevitability. For the community college students who self identified as tentative about stressful academic situations like test-taking, however, passage of PRAXIS I posed a very real barrier to their achievement. For those practitioners and policy makers concerned with teacher quality, the test represented a necessary screen to filter out aspirants who do not demonstrate sufficient capability in reading, writing, and computing.

Three of the respondents cited the required speech and hearing test as a barrier. Interestingly, the only interviewee who appeared to be deficient in speaking English was the Russian student, who had difficulty with the language but showed no concern over the test. Again, for students who dread test-taking of any type, a speech and hearing test, while dismissed by most as a necessary but minor nuisance, was a real threat.

The final institutional barrier identified by the students was the block scheduling of courses with practica. This was most problematic for Mary, who remained upbeat about the other aspects of her transfer experience but for whom part-time student status made the inflexible course schedule inconvenient at best. "It's not as flexible as I thought it would be" (Interview, 11/19/99).

Feelings of Alienation

For part-time and evening students, assimilation into the culture of the university was reported to be difficult. Marlo, an evening student, stated, "I was intending to continue my degree until student teaching by taking classes at night and taking part time, but there really aren't that many evening courses offered. The services pretty much stop. All the offices close at 4. There's really almost nothing you can do to accomplish anything. It took me a semester of fighting just to get my name in the CASE office to get an advisor so I could get a PIN number to register last summer" (Interview, 12/8/99).

At the community college, evening students also do not have the same access to support as day students; but it is possible to complete most degree programs and achieve the associate's degree by attending class only at night. Thus, informal cohort groups do emerge, providing evening students with a support group. There is also a full-time evening administrator at CCBC, Catonsville, to provide assistance to evening students.

References to "leftovers" and "second-class citizenship" surfaced during the student interviews. In the interpretation section of this chapter, this theme will be revisited through the lens of the Marxist perspective.

Tinto (1975, 1986, and 1997) did extensive research on what he referred to as "social and academic integration" of students in determining factors pertaining to student dropout. Social integration was defined as "...the degree of congruency between the individual student and the social system of a college or university. Mechanisms of

social integration include informal peer group associations, extracurricular activities, and interactions with faculty and administrators" (Tinto, 1975, p. 107). He posited that "collaborative learning" and out-of-classroom social connections play an important role in the academic experience of college students and their ultimate decision to persist or depart from college (Tinto, 1997).

For the transfer experience scrutinized in this study, it was evident from all of the evening students and most of the part-time day students that they have experienced feelings of alienation from the university in general and in some cases, alienation and resentment vis-a-vis their native student counterparts. For the full-time day students, there were fewer reported struggles with alienation.

## Interpretation of Themes in Relation to Theoretical Perspectives

The metaphor of the journey fits neatly into this interpretive effort. For some of the student respondents, their transfer journey was well prepared, using a reliable (but not brand new) vehicle and clear, concise, accurate directions to reach their destination. They had a reasonable expectation of what awaited them during and after their journey. For others, the trip was not so well planned but more of an ad hoc event with detours and breakdowns along the way. They would have greater difficulty achieving their destination.

While this study was descriptive rather than interpretive by design, a section on interpretation was deemed appropriate for several reasons. First, as Merriam (1998) suggested, "A case study can explain the reasons for a problem, the background of a

situation, what happened, and why. It can explain why an innovation worked or failed to work" (p. 31). For example, several of the themes which emerged in this study might help to explain why the Towson University-Anne Arundel Community College-Jessup Elementary School partnership ended. The lack of clarity about the role of the community college in teacher preparation may have led to a lack of clarity about the role of the community college teacher education student in a school setting and what was expected of administrators, faculty, and the students themselves. The differential treatment by school officials and the lack of collaboration between the students from the two- and four-year institutions may have contributed to feelings of alienation on the part of the community college students. As Berkeley stated, "...our students and their students didn't get on at all. I think part of it had to do with our students coming back and forth between here and there without having any common ground with the students at Anne Arundel" (Interview, 12/15/99). Much can be learned from this experience in forging future partnerships to ensure greater inclusion and success for all participants. Thus, through interpreting the experience, practitioners and policy makers can learn from it and make good use of the interpretation in practice. This represents the value-added effect of this type of study.

Using the three theories previously described as a framework to provide deeper meaning to the findings allowed for a richer heuristic interpretation of the research. The theoretical lenses will be applied to the emergent themes.

**Transfer tension** is best understood through the institutional barriers and conflict perspectives. In many cases, the institutional barriers provided the basis for the

tension experienced by the transfer students. Inadequate advisement at both the sending and receiving institutions and uncertainty about course acceptance, course selection and closed sections all contributed to high levels of anxiety for transfer students. The chairperson of Towson's Early Childhood Education Department made the case for transfer tension being increased by institutional barriers. He stated, "Those transfer students, you know, they don't get their schedule until after everybody else does. If you're a transfer student, you're last in the queue. I think that would be pretty scary. If that's the case, then I'd be damn upset, mad, scared, apprehensive" (Interview 12/15/99).

From a conflict perspective, the above described a two-class system. The haves were the native students who get first choice of courses, and the transfer students were the have-nots who get what's left over. If the university students were viewed as the elite and the community college students seen (and treated) as an underclass, then the conflict theory frames transfer tension as a struggle between the two different sets of students occupying competing class positions.

Commentary reviewed in the interview with the community college academic advisor poignantly illuminated the inferiority complex visited upon the two-year student and practitioner in this arrangement. "I am actually afraid to advise students in teacher ed, because it is so complex and every college is so different" (Interview, 3/23/00). If one's advisor is "afraid," then it might be assumed that the advisor's fear may be transmitted to the student, serving to heighten transfer tension.

From the institutional barriers perspective, the lack of coordination between the two institutions whose teacher education programs provided the focus for this project indicate that those barriers of advisement, scheduling, and difficulty in accessing relevant information all played a role in creating and maintaining high levels of transfer tension. While this was evident for all the transfer students who provided the data for this study, it is, as Cross (1981) posited, especially problematic for non-traditional students.

In interpreting the second emerging theme in the study, **the duality of the role of the community college in teacher preparation**, structural functionalism and conflict theory provided insight into this phenomenon.

From a structural functionalist perspective, the role of the community college as provider of general education to all eligible students was viewed as a positive function of the two-year college. This was a prevalent response by the student respondents. However, the community college's role in providing course work specific to teacher education was not unanimously embraced, neither by students nor professional practitioners. Structural functionalists might say that the community college should review its place in teacher education and stick to what is commonly accepted as its role as provider of general education. They might also say that the community college's striving to occupy a more prominent position in teacher preparation may be viewed by university officials and others as impertinent and disruptive to the status quo, which leaves education course work in the hands of the four-year colleges and universities

whose traditions and years of expertise in teacher preparation have served the profession well.

Conflict theory framed the dual role in competitive terms. General education courses compete with teacher education courses for inclusion in teacher preparation patterns at community colleges. Community colleges strive to gain increased stature and respect from four-year college officials and state-wide agencies who certify teachers and approve course offerings and programs. The Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland Higher Education Commission serve the needs of the four-year institution at the expense of allowing community colleges to more fairly compete in the business of teacher education. Thus, the dual role becomes increasingly ambivalent and contradictory. Clearly, Dougherty's (1994) book The Contradictory College, was well-titled in light of this ongoing struggle.

The **self-perceived role of the student as actor in his/her own transfer experience** was more difficult to explain through the three theoretical perspectives. The tendency might be to interpret this theme through a psychologically based theory, since this theme appears to be consistent with what Cross (1981) described as "dispositional" barriers. For purposes of this study, however, the incongruence on the part of student respondents between their view of self and actions may best be explored through the conflict theory.

Conflict theorists would argue that the community college transfer student has been led (or misled) to a position of false consciousness by the educational establishment or elite. Believing that he or she has begun to gain socio-economic

ground by gaining admission to a prestigious university to pursue a professional degree, the community college transfer student views himself or herself as proactor in controlling his/her academic and career destiny. Conflict theorists would point out that admission to the university does not guarantee admission to the teacher education program, which was not generally understood by the community college transfer students interviewed for this study, but that admission to the university represents a small concession to the educational proletariat by the more powerful elite (Brinkerhoff & White, 1985). This, then, illuminates the inconsistency between the student's belief that he or she has sought out relevant information and is "on top" of his or her academic pathway and the student's naivete at having been selectively informed or misinformed about his or her actual student status.

Institutional barriers theory obviously framed the **institutional barriers** category and subunits, but the functionalist perspective merits attention as well. Some barriers, it should be noted, serve a necessary and good purpose. The above-cited course disconnect, lack or absence of advisement, inconvenient scheduling of classes for non-traditional students, economic hardship for students who must work and go to school at the same time, and tests of speech and hearing as well as PRAXIS I were all presented by the student respondents in varying degrees of concern. While not all students identified all of these as institutional barriers, as a general emergent theme, institutional barriers persist. In support of this theory and its implications for transfer students, all of the professional respondents from both the two- and the four-year institutions referred to these barriers in some combination.

The former academic dean at the community college stated, "Our kids are getting a raw deal. Someone needs to step in and tear down the barriers like rigid schedules, loss of credit, and the like. This just makes it more difficult for community college students to break through and graduate on time" (Interview, 1/10/00).

The Towson University academic advisor alluded to quality of course work at two-year institutions when compared to that taken at a university. He admitted that this is a difficult barrier to identify and "support with evidence at this point...but, even though things have been articulated and ARTSYS says that PSYC 101 at Catonsville Community College is equal to PSYCH 101 at Towson University, I'm not sure everybody buys into it" (Interview, 12/15/99). This mindset, then, logically leads to transfer students' having to repeat course work in some form, increasing time to completion, creating economic hardship for less-advantaged students, and arguably creating for some an insurmountable barrier.

The functionalist perspective would maintain that there need to be standards and criteria identified and institutionalized to ensure that future educators are prepared to teach. Proponents of this view would support, even applaud, standardized tests and strict entrance requirements as central to the pre-service of teacher education students. They might even add that if a student is truly serious about entering the teaching profession, he or she needs to demonstrate a high level of commitment, dedication, and persistence to succeed. The overcoming of barriers, institutional or otherwise, would indicate a student's possession of these qualities.

Finally, **feelings of alienation** as a prominent theme were also best explained by both conflict and institutional barriers theories. Students who are sent messages in a variety of ways that they are somehow inferior may logically internalize these messages as part of the "spoiled identity" phenomenon (Bauman, 1990). Transfer students enter the four-year institution too late to relate to the university freshman/sophomore social experience, a time during which many cohort ties are established. To the conflict theorist, this late entry alone disadvantages the transfer student and reflects a socio-economic differential which may stigmatize him or her. Feelings of alienation were more typical of the part-time and evening students who expressed concerns about having to work while attempting to complete the baccalaureate requirements for a teaching degree. Conflict theorists would hone in on this as a clear example of economic determinism and class distinction.

From the institutional barriers view, adding to the conflict perspective were the scheduling inconveniences and inaccessibility of important information. As Dougherty wrote, "I conceive of community college students' progress toward the baccalaureate as consisting of a series of clearly predictable crises that students must negotiate in order to continue" (1994, p. 83).

## Comparison of Data Obtained from University and Community College Professionals

Analysis of the data from the interviews with the community college and university personnel revealed several similarities and differences in perspective toward the role of the community college and the transfer experience for teacher education

majors moving from CCBC, Catonsville, to Towson University to pursue the baccalaureate in teacher education. This analysis served to enhance the dependability of the data obtained from the student interviews. It was a way to verify that the accounts of the students' transfer experience, while given individual intricacies, were probably an accurate portrayal. It was deemed appropriate to utilize the professionals' accounts in this manner, as the focus of this case study was the overall transfer experience of the students. This should not be interpreted as minimizing the accounts of the professionals; however, as each of them to varying degrees has had an impact on policy, protocol, and practice affecting the transfer student from the community college to Towson University in teacher preparation, each also represented a department or area of responsibility relevant to the study.

One of the university professionals interviewed indicated the community college as having a preeminent role in teacher education reflective of the freshman/sophomore levels at the university: "...community colleges can now have a role in teacher preparation, at least in our perspective, by offering a series of courses that can transfer into our program which are not just introductory but could be a couple of courses at the upper level which are required in our program" (Interview, 12/15/99). This respondent was referring to the previously cited *Children 1st Initiative,* which produced an articulation agreement between two- and four-year institutions in Maryland specific to early childhood education. Towson officials signed off on all four courses proposed as education courses as an indication that they would accept these as equivalencies. Primary among the university respondents' views were the importance of the

community college in general education, to identify potential future teachers, to help students "find themselves," to help build students' self-confidence, and to recruit prospective teachers from the increasingly diverse pool of community college students.

The community college personnel interviewed insisted that the role of the community college in teacher preparation is both in general education and teacher education. While this may appear to be a fundamental philosophical difference, when the question about specific philosophical differences was posed, not one of the professionals cited any major distinctions between the two institutions in their teaching and preparing future teachers. In fact, mutual respect was cited by 2 of the 3 university professional interviewees and by all of the community college respondents. The chair of the Towson Early Childhood Department explicitly stated, "If there's a level of respect then there's no problem. My feeling about it is, having reviewed countless syllabi, talked to countless faculty from the community college, their interest in the care for children, young children in this case, and their families, trying to get the students that we both teach to assimilate that and take that on for themselves, and so, no, I see no philosophical differences" (Interview, 12/15/99).

A perceived discrepancy in analyzing the data collected in the interviews with the professionals at both the community college and the university was their level of understanding of the difficulties experienced by the transfer student moving from one institution to the other. While Berkeley was most eloquent in citing these difficulties, all seemed to appreciate the factors which emerged from the students' accounts of transfer tension, barriers, and alienation. A case could be made, however, that the

university personnel were more emphatic about existent barriers, while community college respondents were more vague. The academic advisor from Towson discussed the differences in transfer experience for the "savvy" versus the "non-savvy" student. The elementary education faculty advisor spoke of the PRAXIS I as a new barrier for incoming students.

From the community college perspective, there was a more generalized sense that once the transfer students leave, "hopefully, they do ok" (Interview, 11/11/99). Because the average advisor and faculty member at a community college do not have to deal with the transfer aftermath as the university assumes its role as evaluator, it may be that community college personnel, unless they are a member of a transcript mediation committee, rarely see or understand the challenges faced by the transfer student. The community college coordinator, USM for CCBC, Catonsville, took a very positive stance on the prospects of successful transfer for students in teacher education going to Towson. "What I would say in the first two years, what they will send to me as a transfer coordinator is an articulated program which, in essence, parallels coursewise and every other way with what their students are doing the first two years" (Interview, 11/11/99).

Faculty at the university did not seem as proficient with ARTSYS as faculty at the community college. Neither the elementary faculty advisor nor the early childhood chairperson indicated that he used the USM articulation program. The early childhood chair stated, "I don't use ARTSYS. Our students use ARTSYS. We use ARTSYS here at the university. I don't personally use it, but I know what it is" (Interview 12/15/99).

University faculty placed greater responsibility for articulation on the coordinator of transfer; community college faculty at CCBC are expected to know and use the system. Changes in articulation of math and science courses, for instance, are as likely to be first handled through the math and science teacher education team members at CCBC, Catonsville, then passed to the transfer coordinator's office. The result, then, might be interpreted as the university personnel, who have some authority granting credit in transfer on a case-by-case basis, placing transfer students at risk for overturn by the admissions office transfer coordinator of the faculty decision. This would explain students' accounts of credits being put "on hold" or "under review" well into their junior year.

Summary

The experience of the community college transfer student as interpreted through the students' reports and three theoretical perspectives used in this study may be summarized through the five emergent themes noted in the report.

The data collected from the 1999 community college transfer students beginning pre-service preparation at CCBC, Catonsville, and then transferring to the teacher education program at Towson University indicated an experience characterized by transfer tension, reflected in uncertainty about student and transfer course status; ambivalence about the role of the community college in teacher preparation; incongruence of the role of the student as actor in his/her own transfer; institutional barriers, both obvious and subtle, which impeded the students' progress to goal

achievement; and, finally, feelings of alienation, which were greater for non-traditional students.

Further discussion of the findings as well as conclusions, recommendations and reflections comprise the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER ON THE RESEARCH

The discussion section of this chapter will address the research questions pertaining to the study issues which were the **role of the community college in teacher preparation and institutional barriers** impeding seamless transfer for teacher education majors who began their pre-service education at a community college. The three theoretical perspectives will be applied to each issue. The following section on conclusions will address the overarching research question: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

Also addressed were the two main research questions:

1) **What is the role of the teacher education pattern in teacher preparation at The Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, as perceived by students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at that institution and at Towson University, which receives the largest number of CCBC teacher education transfer students?**

2) **How do the institutions studied help or hinder the transfer of teacher education students from two- to four-year programs?**

Finally, there is a portion devoted to recommendations followed by a reflective section on the effects of the research on the researcher.

## Discussion

This case study examined the transfer experience for 14 teacher education students who began their pre-service preparation at a community college and transferred to a four-year university. The research design of the study was particularistic, descriptive, and issues driven. The particulatistic approach to data collection allowed for focus on a cohort of community college exiters during a specific time frame. While no two cohort experiences will ever be identical, it is maintained that the report of transfer experiences of the student participants in this particular study informs policy makers and practitioners about more general concerns applicable to the teacher education transfer student in other situations. The descriptive aspect of the study allowed the narrative accounts to provide a rich source of data. The narratives yielded themes and sub-categories which were analyzed through the use of the three theoretical perspectives identified as most appropriate to providing clarity of interpretation.

Methodologically, both student participants and higher education professionals were interviewed to determine how the two research issues affected the transfer of the student participants. Relevant documents pertaining to curricular issues and transfer policy were examined. In general, professionals from both the two- and four-year institutions were more accessible than the student respondents; but all who agreed to be interviewed cooperated fully in answering the research questions.

The two research issues were the perceived role of the community college in teacher preparation and the institutional barriers erected and maintained by both two-

and four-year institutions which may impede the smooth or "seamless" transfer of teacher education candidates from one institution to the other.

The first issue pertaining to the **role of the community college in teacher education** was given significant attention in the interviews with both students and professionals. It was the duality of the role of the community college in teacher preparation which yielded one of the five dominant themes of the study and which is connected to the themes of transfer tension and institutional barriers. Students and practitioners alike vacillated between emphasizing the role of the community college as being one of providing general education and/or of providing pre-professional teacher education preparation. This duality begs further question: When does duality lead to ambiguity which creates confusion for student transfers and those who advise them? It would appear from the data collected from this study that unless and until greater clarity is given to the role issue, transfer tension will continue to remain high for students who begin their academic preparation for teaching at community colleges. It also appears that unnecessary transfer barriers will persist if the role issue is not resolved.

It is not fair to students to put them in the middle of a philosophical debate about the role of the community college in teacher preparation. Many of the students entering these institutions have enough situational and dispositional challenges to overcome, and to place them at risk for loss of credit, extended time to degree, and negative differential treatment may very well discourage them from persisting with their academic and career goals. It does not matter whether it is indifference, ignorance, or arrogance on the part of the policy makers and practitioners at either or both the community college and

university which contributes to the continual blurring of role responsibilities. The result is a transfer experience fraught with unnecessary difficulties for potential teacher candidates. Both the student and higher education respondents interviewed for this study spoke of their personal struggle to sort out when and where it is appropriate for students to earn teacher education credits to complement the general education courses, which all agreed are an important part of the community college mission.

If it is agreed by officials at the community college and the university that the role of the community college in teacher preparation should be exclusively that of providing general education, that would clarify the role responsibilities for the community college. At the same time, such an agreement would essentially preclude the community college from providing a balanced curriculum including courses that help students in their freshman and sophomore levels explore career options in education. If it is agreed that the community college does have a role to play in teacher preparation, then some accommodation would have to be made by the university to share responsibility for providing teacher education courses appropriate to the lower division.

The conflict theoretical position appears to be an appropriate lens through which to view the ambiguous role of the community college in teacher education. Conflict theorists might point to "lower division" and "upper division" as parallels to lower class and upper class distinctions. The socio-economic realities which force large segments of students to attempt to attain professional positions by entering community college pre-professional programs place these already at-risk students in the tenuous position of

being further discriminated against by the educational elite. As yet another example of false consciousness, the case of the community college student transfer demonstrated that the educational playing field is not level but that many of these students have been duped into believing that it is. While the intellectual elite debate the role of the two-year college in teacher education, transfer students are left to fathom their academic and career options. Conflict theorists might wonder if, at some level of consciousness, the community college officials recognize that they have become complicitous in perpetuating false hope for their students.

This research has demonstrated that there are competing and conflicting views of the role of the community college in teacher education which impede seamless transfer for students. This came as no surprise to the researcher, but perhaps shedding more light on the importance of sorting out this fundamental issue will help guide her and other higher education policy makers and practitioners as they struggle to find a sensible solution. If such a resolution could be achieved, then perhaps students would struggle less with their decisions about course and career options.

With regard to the question about **philosophical differences** between two- and four-year institutions and how this might impact transfer, there were no apparent differences noted by any of the study participants. In fact, four-year professional respondents seemed to go out of their way to emphasize the similarity in mission in teacher preparation between the two types of institutions. It should be noted that the philosophical differences discussed for this study did not include the differences in admissions philosophy but rather those related to teacher preparation.

It is assumed (and hoped) that the complimentary observations by the university officials toward the philosophical position of the community college regarding student preparation were sincere. Perhaps it is cynical, but this raises the question that if there are no fundamental philosophical differences between the two institutions in teacher preparation, why is there such difficulty sorting out the issue of the role of the community college in teacher preparation? If there is inter-institutional agreement about the philosophical position on teacher preparation, why is the university reluctant to share responsibility for course offerings other than in the area of general education? One wonders if there have ever been substantive conversations among university and community college professionals about shared philosophy. Might these discussions foster greater confidence on the part of the university officials to encourage and support a larger role for community colleges in teacher preparation?

Again, according to the precepts of conflict theory, community college officials are kidding themselves if they truly believe the university's position of philosophical parity in preparing professional educators. Look instead, they might say, to the language in the university catalog which (in bold) contains caveats and warnings ("Do Not Enter" signs?) that transfer students must heed if they are to join the native student who has been steeped in the "Towson philosophy" from day one of his/her post-secondary career.

The second research issue dealt with **institutional barriers**. It addressed how the institutions in the study helped or hindered transfer students in their transition from CCBC, Catonsville, to Towson University. In light of the findings of the study, it is

apparent that there are identifiable barriers at both institutions which impede seamless transfer for teacher education candidates. Cross's institutional barriers perspective provides the best theoretical lens through which to view these issues, but the conflict and structural-functional approaches merit consideration as well.

Clearly, the inarticulation of courses presented a barrier which resulted in confusion and loss of credit for transfer students. The biggest surprise in the study, however, was the small number of credits lost in transfer by the student participants. Only 3.14 credits on average were reported lost by transfer students at this juncture in their academic career. From a structural-functional position, it would appear that despite students' accounts of unfair treatment in transfer, the arrangement worked satisfactorily for many. Of the 14 student participants, 7 rated their transfer experience in generally positive terms. This may be reflective of the community college and the university attempting to compensate for the lack of articulation by accommodating students' credits on a case-by case basis as accepted lower level electives. Whether this means that these students will graduate with more than the minimum number of required credits remains to be seen. One of the recommendations for further study in the third section of this chapter addresses this concern and the need to follow these students through their upper-division years at the university. Do these and other transfer students graduate from the university with more credits than their native counterparts? Is this a bias that this researcher cannot give up? It is also disturbing to think that the more assertive student may negotiate a more favorable transfer package than the less assuming student, but that is a reality which is invited in the absence of a clear

articulation agreement consistently referred to and applied by admissions and teacher education advisors.

Student complaint of the lack of available, user-friendly, concrete information (other than an ARTSYS printout) surfaced frequently in the data. It could be debated that the information is available but that the students failed to access it. Again, the structural-functional position might be that it is not the system which is flawed but that the users of the system are inept. In fairness to the students, however, there did appear to be communication gaps at both the two- and four-year institution.

Conflicting information about credit acceptance among personnel at Towson represented one example of poor communication to students. At the community college, the fact that none of the student participants was aware of a teacher education team to assist them in advisement was a startling failure on the part of the two-year personnel to communicate support to students. Conflict theory might look to the way the community college allocates its resources here. Don't the career programs, whose graduates fill the entry-level needs of the local business, industrial, and service base, have clear identities and individual coordinators whose time is compensated for? Meanwhile, at CCBC, Catonsville, the teacher education pattern has been added to a department in the "Business and Social Sciences Division." Teacher education team members receive no additional compensation for their contribution.

Late notification of acceptance to the university coupled with the transfer student's uncertainty about status in the teacher education program were cited as barriers to seamless transfer. The quality of transfer student orientation was identified

as problematic by several students. Conflict theorists might identify timing of acceptance notification and quality of orientation as strategies to discourage transfer students from entering the university and/or from being successful.

Transfer students appeared to spend their first semester at the university in, as one student stated, a kind of "limbo," unsure about their roles and responsibilities in continued management of their academic lives. Until they registered at the CASE office, for example, many of the transfer students had not been assigned academic advisors in their major. This accounted for concern on the part of the students and increased transfer tension.

The barriers presenting the most difficulty to transfer students appeared to be the PRAXIS I test and the lack of space in required courses because of the timing of transfer students' registration. The PRAXIS test as a measure of reading, writing, and computing skills could be considered a necessary and good barrier. Students who struggle with standardized tests for whom this exam creates anxiety might argue that the PRAXIS is unnecessary or unfair; the policy makers and practitioners interviewed for this study maintained the belief that in order to elevate standards of teacher quality, measurement of this type is necessary. Thus, the PRAXIS could serve as a gatekeeper. Structural-functionalists might argue that this is a fair and viable measure serving a positive purpose (function).

Students did seem to have a legitimate grievance about having to seek out individual professors to secure a seat in classes already filled by native students. To have to approach an unknown person in a new institution to prevail upon him or her for

permission to enter his/her class created an unfair and difficult circumstance for the transfer students interviewed. While it was apparent that none of the four-year personnel interviewed overtly viewed the community college and its students with any disrespect, practice of this kind sends a message that there is indeed a difference in treatment between transfer and native student. For the community college transfer student, this could readily be interpreted as second-class citizenship. Conflict theorists would say this is probably the case.

It is important to note that both institutions do make an effort to smooth out the transfer experience for students and that the student respondents interviewed for this study benefited from those efforts. While advisement was inconsistent, even tentative in some cases, there was usually an advisor available for the transfer students at the community college and university. Both institutions provide catalogs with detailed information on what to expect in transfer. Every semester the community college schedule of classes lists the names of the teacher education team members and the discipline they represent every semester. As imperfect as it is, ARTSYS does provide relatively accurate information, is updated regularly, and appears on the world wide web. Orientation sessions did serve a number of important purposes, especially beginning the linkage between the transfer student and the respective education departments at Towson.

Finally, it should be noted that virtually every higher education professional interviewed for this study communicated to the researcher both verbally and non-verbally that they cared about what happens to the transfer student and his or her

experience in higher education. They appeared at all times to be sincere that they were interested in helping students to achieve their academic and career goals.

Each of the theoretical perspectives viewed the research issues differently, and each has contributed in its own way to allow the researcher to clarify and reflect upon the questions and issues underpinning the overarching research question which will be addressed in the next section of this chapter.

## Conclusions

The overarching research question which drove this study was: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

Using themes as findings, each of the research questions will be answered individually in order to draw conclusions from the case study. They are correspondently numbered as they appear in the methodology chapter of this dissertation.

The specific research questions relevant to the overarching question and research issues were:

1) What is the role of the teacher education pattern in teacher preparation at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville Campus, as perceived by students, faculty, transfer coordinators, and administrators at that institution and at Towson University? Specifically, are there competing or conflicting views of the community college in teacher education which impede seamless transfer for students?

Based on the data found in the narratives of student and professional respondents, it appears that there is confusion about the role of the community college in teacher preparation. While most respondents alluded to the role of the community college in providing general education, many also spoke to the community college's place in teacher preparation by offering education courses at the freshman and sophomore year levels. The problem remains, which courses are appropriate at the lower levels of pre-service teacher education? The only courses which appear to gain unchallenged acceptance for CCBC, Catonsville, transfer students at Towson University are the Educational Psychology course and the Mathematics for Elementary Education Teachers courses. The other CCBC courses are subject to individual advisor rejection or acceptance, which may be overturned in subsequent audit. Thus it may be concluded on the basis of the results of this study that there is indeed a lack of clarity about the role of the community college in teacher preparation, at least on the part of the students and professionals interviewed for the study, and perhaps beyond this population. This lack of clarity may lead students to select courses which might or might not transfer.

Specific to the subquestion about recognized philosophical differences between professionals at the two- and four-year institutions in teacher preparation, a more basic question might be to inquire of the professionals to explain their own institutions' philosophy and that of the other institution as they understand it. This is recommended in the "recommendation" portion of this chapter as a possible topic for further research. While there was no response to the question about philosophy to indicate any difference

between the two institutions' philosophical positions, there remains concern about whether this question has been adequately answered.

2) How do the institutions studied help or hinder the transfer of teacher education students from two- to four-year programs? Specific to identifiable barriers of policy and practice erected at the community college, it appears that to date CCBC, Catonsville, faculty and administration have not established an effective articulation policy with Towson University, the transfer institution which draws the largest number of CCBC, Catonsville, students in teacher education. There also appear to be problems associated with students' ability to access clear and accurate guidance as to how to reduce transfer problems and how to confidently move from the two- to the four-year institution in pursuit of the baccalaureate in teaching.

At Towson University, community college transfer students appear to encounter barriers which may be perceived as necessary to maintaining high standards of teacher education candidate quality or as policy and practice creating unnecessary and unfair impediments to seamless transfer for students. Barriers identified from the study data included: the PRAXIS I exam which is a state-mandated test of reading, writing, and mathematics competency which Towson University uses as an entrance requirement to their teacher education program; lack of useful information at transfer student orientation; unavailable space for transfer students in required courses because of timing of registration; inadequate advisement by assigned teacher education advisors; and lack of student support services especially after hours and for part-time students.

It can then be concluded from the results of this study that there are existing intra- and inter-institutional barriers encountered by transfer students who begin their pre-service education in teacher preparation at CCBC, Catonsville, and then move on to Towson University.

In addressing the question pertaining to what each of these institutions do to facilitate transfer, it can be concluded on the basis of this study that each institution has assigned professional staff and faculty to assist students throughout their transfer experience, and that these professionals attempt to accommodate students transfer needs whenever possible. The two institutions involved in the study provide written instructions to the student in order to help avoid problems in transfer. The community college has an interdisciplinary Teacher Education Team to further advise teacher education transfer students and the university holds orientation sessions for transfer students. Some concluding statements relevant to the overarching dissertation research question follow.

The overarching research question underpinning this case study was: **To what extent is the transfer process seamless for teacher education students between a selected community college and university?**

As long as the role of the community college in teacher preparation remains unclear to students and higher education practitioners alike a truly seamless transfer experience will likely be elusive for transfer students. A strong case could be made for transfer tension to be an outgrowth of the more global tension between two- and four-year institutions in the ongoing efforts to determine this role. Without a mutually

agreed-upon articulation arrangement between the community college and the university, seamless transfer will not likely happen for teacher education candidates who begin their preservice preparation at the community college.

In general, the transfer process worked best for students who mapped their academic careers early and carefully and who were proactive in managing their course selection and transition strategy. However, even for these students, there were unanticipated glitches in their progress, prompting reports of transfer tension and interfering with seamless transfer. For those students who more passively waited for transfer problems to correct themselves or who lived in denial of their probable failure to successfully enter and complete the teacher education curriculum at the university, the transfer process was even less successful. One of these students has already left the university; at least two others are expecting not to pass PRAXIS and are contemplating other career plans.

There was no indication of any malicious or nefarious policy or practice at either the community college or university to preclude transfer student success, yet a case could be made for the maintenance of unequal access to information and support vital to student success. Unequal access to these entities leads to unequal outcomes. This indicates a stratified model of access which uses admissions policy and practices against the transfer student. In light of current data which indicates that over 60% of Towson University teacher education graduates come through the community colleges, these policies and practices certainly appear anachronistic and do not foster a seamless transfer model for students.

As has been attempted to communicate to the readers of this report, the transfer experience for teacher education students who begin their preservice education at a community college is a complex process, with philosophical, historical, socio-economic, political, and personal implications. Giving voice to the student respondents to describe their experiences yielded a case of a shared experience with common threads running through it. There were at least two "nightmare" accounts, and there were several student respondents who described their transfer experience in "mediocre" terms. There were seven students whose recollections of the transfer from CCBC, Catonsville, to Towson University were mostly positive. Yet all students interviewed made observations about how the process could be improved, indicating that while the transfer process was well-working, it was not seamless, and it could be made better.

## Recommendations

There are recommendations for policy and practice as well as for further research as a result of this study. Both are viewed as feasible and important to contributing to transfer student success and ultimately to increasing the numbers and quality of teachers in this era of critical shortage.

First, the substantitive recommendations having to do with transfer policy and practice will be presented, followed by the recommendations for further research.

### Recommendations for Policy and Practice

While a tension-free transfer experience for students like those who participated in the study is probably not possible, significant tension could be reduced by

reevaluating and aligning courses between the community college and the university. As Wood (1988) suggested, however, curriculum decisions are political decisions. There are political considerations surrounding the distribution of lower- and upper-level course work in teacher preparation. Traditionally, the university has reserved the methodology courses for itself and has allocated many of the general education courses to the community college. A recommendation stemming from the results of this study would be to rethink and rework the curriculum in teacher education at the two institutions involved to create that elusive "seamless" transfer for students. Obviously, this necessitates a hard look at the role of both the community college and that of the university in teacher preparation. It might be worthwhile for officials from both institutions' teacher education departments to begin some discussions about philosophy. At this fundamental level, it may very well be that there are philosophical differences about what is important in preparing teachers that have not been adequately addressed.

Another recommendation is to review university policy and practice about admissions, orientation, and course selection for transfer students. The current model at Towson in which transfer students must select courses from a limited menu later than the native students only serves to buttress educational inequality between the two populations. Perhaps a survey of transfer students asking them what was most beneficial and what was lacking from their orientation sessions would help to improve that process.

The community college staff and faculty need to revisit their role in teacher preparation, perhaps with the goal of becoming proactive partners in higher education

policy and practice. The "spoiled identity" in which community college faculty and staff consider their institutions as inferior to four-year schools serves no one well. With role responsibilities more clearly spelled out, it would be reasonable to assume that the community college would be better able to meet those responsibilities, whether they are in general education or teacher education. However, if committed to a larger role in teacher preparation, the community college must also commit resources to achieve that goal.

Both levels of institutions should provide clearer guidance to students about what those options are. Several student participants suggested bulleted-types of information sheets, giving them user-friendly material to review.

It is also recommended that students be provided with information about what is expected of them in managing their own academic careers. Given significant variation between the aggressive and the shy persona, it would still be possible to create a list of questions students should be prepared to ask on their own behalf in seeking advisement from higher education faculty and staff.

Within reason, student support for part-time, evening, and nontraditional students should be improved. The demographic information obtained from the student respondents in this study indicate that fewer than half would be considered "traditional" students at the university.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study also prompts several recommendations for further research into the transfer phenomenon. First, it would be interesting to qualitatively examine other

transfer students in teacher education, both to and from different institutions, to compare their experiences with those reported here. It is noted in the limitations section of the study that only two transfer institutions were involved.

A study on why students choose one university over another in making decisions about their academic careers might be valuable. A study of this kind might unveil useful information about students' preconceived notions of transfer reality.

There remain questions about philosophical differences between faculty and administrators at two- and four-year institutions pertaining to pre-service preparation of teachers. Perhaps this could be further investigated to compare and contrast program documentation beyond catalogs (i.e. course syllabi), because there may indeed be subtle yet important differences.

It would also be interesting to compare transfer students in teacher education programs with transfer students in other disciplines. What do the results of this study say about education that might be different in other major programs of study?

Another research recommendation would be to refine and operationalize several of the themes which emerged from the study. "Transfer tension" and "role of the student as actor" are two concepts which could be further studied either qualitatively or quantitatively. A quantitative study could apply an ANOVA (analysis of variance) model to determine how one variable is affected by the other. The same could be applied to student perceptions of the role of the community college in teacher preparation and how that perceived role affects course selection and credit loss in transfer.

Qualitatively, it might be interesting to study transfer tension through a participant observation study, with the researcher joining a group of transfer students to live the experience as they do. This type of study could be phenomenological, getting at the essence of being a transfer student at a large university. While this report gives voice to transfer students and professionals who guide and teach them, it does not have the depth that a phenomenological study would.

A longitudinal study should be done to follow up the student respondents involved in this project. It would be valuable to know how many actually succeed in obtaining the teaching degree and certificate. It is the hope of the researcher to participate in such a study. The longitudinal study could determine if, in fact, the transfer students do take extra time to earn the teaching degree, what the pass/fail rates are for PRAXIS tests, and whether transfer students are required to take more credits to earn the baccalaureate when compared to the native student.

## Reflections of the Researcher on the Research

In the first person, I would like to reflect upon and convey to the reader some of the reflections and transformational experiences I have identified as a result of having done this case study. There were moments of surprise and moments of frustration as I delved deeper into the transfer experience of the student participants. For example, I was pleased to discover that credit loss for transfer students exiting the Teacher Education Program at CCBC, Catonsville, and entering Towson University was only slightly over three credits, or the equivalent of one course. While loss of even one

credit due to college or university incompetence or intrangience is not acceptable, the reality is that transfer students will probably always lose some credits. In a well-working transfer arrangement between institutions, this loss is minimized somehow. Between the academic and faculty advisors at the two institutions scrutinized for this study, there appeared to be a genuine effort to contain credit loss. I had fully anticipated transfer students to be penalized by larger numbers of community college courses not being accepted, and I must give full credit to colleagues at both institutions for their care and concern that this not be the case.

In my review of the students' comments about the overall quality of their transfer experience, however, I must remark on the university policies and practices which contribute most to raise transfer tension for community college students. Late notification of acceptance to the university, blocked schedules, required courses filled before transfer students have an opportunity to register, and lack of clear information about teacher education all strike me as thoughtless and cavalier treatment of transfer students. To me, these are not the hallmarks of a well-working transfer arrangement.

From the community college perspective, if community colleges wish to assume a viable position in teacher preparation, officials at those institutions need to take a hard look at their priorities and staff development. Timid advisement, lack of support for a stand-alone teacher education department, and failure to insist on clear articulation with transfer institutions do not contribute to a well-working transfer experience for their students.

As I reflect upon concluding statements about these research issues, I would also share some observations about the transforming effect of this research and what I learned about case study methodology and myself in the process. This may be the most difficult and delicate portion of the study to write.

I am amazed at how humbling for me this experience has been. Aside from the constant critiquing and revising, doing this research allowed me to appreciate one facet of the academic experience of a community college student. While I have always maintained that I respect students and their efforts to succeed despite some significant obstacles, and have told them so, I don't think I fully understood how difficult it must be for them to grasp all the information about and nuances of transfer in a pre-professional track. Their persistence in the face of lack of clarity of role responsibilities and institutional barriers which have been amply discussed in this report is remarkable. If empathy is defined as accurate understanding, then doing this dissertation has provided me with a much-enhanced level of empathy for community college students. I also learned a great deal about the problems faced by academic advisors, administrators, and faculty at both the community college where I work and at the university.

I have come to respect qualitative research and, specifically, the case study approach. While all the literature written by qualitative research experts warns about the need for discipline when undertaking a study of this kind, nothing I read or heard prepared me for the enormity of the workload and need for focus and order in doing the study from the idea stage through the proposal acceptance, data collection, transcription review, reporting, rewriting, analyzing, interpreting, rewriting, thinking, reflecting, and

rewriting. The project has become not so much a matter of my obtaining a degree, but of producing a product that everyone associated with it be proud.

I have also achieved a confidence in my research ability which I could not have done otherwise. I feel that I could share my experience with other students and help them to strategize their work and avoid pitfalls I fell into. I would begin by suggesting that there is no substitute for a good mentor and that attention to detail cannot be overemphasized.

Stake (1995) wrote, "Finishing a case study is the consummation of a work of art. A few of us will find a case study, excepting our family business, the finest work of our lifetime. Because it is an exercise in such depth, the study is an opportunity to see what others have not yet seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our own lives, to engage the best of our interpretive powers, and to make, even by its integrity alone, an advocacy for those things we cherish" (p. 136).

# Appendix A

## ARTSYS Composite of Education Course Transfer from CCBC, Catonsville, to Maryland Four-year Colleges and Universities

| | EDUE 101 Intro. to Ed. | EDUE 215 Ed. Psych. | EDUX 107 Intro.to Spec.Ed. | MATH 131 Math for Elem. Ed Majors |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| UM at B | Eq EDU 250 | Eq EDUC 340 "24" | Eq EDUC 487 "24" | Eq MAT 131 |
| UMBC | Eq EDUC 250 | Eq EDUC 340 "24" | Eq EDUC 487 "24" | Eq MAT 131 |
| Bowie | Eq EDUC 101 | LLE | LLE | Eq MAT 112 |
| UMCP | LLE | LLE | LLE | Eq Mat 210 "17" |
| Coppin | LLE | LLE | LLE | Eq MAT 103 |
| UMES | NT | NT | NT | LLE |
| Frostberg | Eq EDUC 201 | LLE | LLE | Eq MAT 206 |
| Hood | LLE | Eq EDUC 308 | LLE | See MAT 122 |
| Sch. of Con. Ed. JHU | NT | | NT | |
| Morgan | Eq ELED 199 | LLE | LLE | LLE |
| St. Marys | Eq EDUC | Eq EDUC 358 "14" | Eq SPED 380 "14" | Eq MAT 131 |
| Salisbury | LLE | LLE | LLE | Eq MAT 103 |
| Towson | Eq EDUC | Eq PSYC 201 | Eq EDUC | Eq MAT 204 |
| UB | LLE | LLE | LLE | LLE |
| UMUC | Eq EDUC "10" | Eq EDUC "10" | Eq EDUC "10" | LLE |
| Villa Julie | Eq ED 100 | Eq PSY 330 | Eq ED 325 | Eq MAT 131 |
| Wash. College | NT | LLE | NT | NT |
| Western MD | LLE | LLE | LLE | NT |

LLE Lower Level Elective
NT Not transferable
Eq Equivalency
TBD To Be Determined

Appendix B

ARTSYS Recommended Transfer Pattern for Early Childhood Education Students

Transferring from CCBC, Catonsville, to Towson University

ARTSYS ® - The Articulation System



**Recommended Transfer Program**

Major:Early Childhood Ed, Revised F96
Sender:CC Baltimore County-Catonsville
Receiver:Towson University
Data Currency: March 10, 2000

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 Credits | COM101 or ENG101 or ENGL101 or SPCM120 |
| 3 Credits | *ENGL233 or *ENGL235 |
| 3 Credits | *GEOG102 or *GEOG105 |
| 6 Credits | HIS111 or HIST111 or HIS112 or HIST112 |
| 3 Credits | POLS101 or POS101 |
| 4 Credits | BIO121 or BIOL101 or BIOL111 |
| 4 Credits | *PHSC101 |
| 8 Credits | MAT121 or MATH131 and MAT122 or MATH132 |
| 3 Credits | ART101 or ARTS101 or *ART106 or *ART107 or *ART109 or *ART113 or AAD141 or *THEA101 |
| 3 Credits | MUS101 or MUS131 or MUSC102 or MUSC124 |
| 3 Credits | PSY101 or PSYC101 |
| 3 Credits | EDU161 or EDUC215 or EDUE204 or EDUE205 or EDUE215 or PSY161 or PSYC215 |
| 3 Credits | SPCM102 or SPE101 |
| 3 Credits | HEA101 or HLTH101 |
| 3 Credits | *ECED101 |
| 3 Credits | *ECED121 |
| 3 Credits | *ECEDT01 |
| 3 Credits | *SPEDT01 |

Competitive Admissions GPA: 2.75
Contact Person: Dr. Terry Berkeley
Minimum Program Grade: C

Last Updated: 961030

*** This Towson University course has no Equivalency at CC Baltimore County-Catonsville; Check with your Advisor for an alternate course.**

Additional Requirements & Information

Appendix C

ARTSYS Recommended Transfer Pattern for Elementary Education Students

Transferring from CCBC, Catonsville to Towson University

ARTSYS ® - The Articulation System



**Recommended Transfer Program**

Major:Elemtary Education, Revised F96
Sender:CC Baltimore County-Catonsville
Receiver:Towson University
Data Currency: March 10, 2000

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 Credits | MUS101 or MUS131 or MUSC102 or MUSC124 |
| 3 Credits | COM101 or ENG101 or ENGL101 or SPCM120 |
| 3 Credits | *ENGL233 or *ENGL235 |
| 6 Credits | ENGL |
| 3 Credits | HIS111 or HIST111 or HIS112 or HIST112 |
| 6 Credits | HIST |
| 4 Credits | BIO121 or BIOL101 or BIOL111 |
| 4 Credits | *PHSC101 |
| 4 Credits | MAT121 or MATH131 |
| 4 Credits | MAT122 or MATH132 |
| 3 Credits | *GEOG102 or *GEOG105 |
| 3 Credits | PSY101 or PSYC101 |
| 3 Credits | EDU161 or EDUC215 or EDUE204 or EDUE205 or EDUE215 or PSY161 or PSYC215 |
| 3 Credits | HEA101 or HLTH101 or SPCM102 or SPE101 or INTR101 or INTR226 or INTR227 or ITR101 or ITR226 or ITR227 |
| 3 Credits | POLS101 or POS101 or SOC101 or SOCL101 |
| 3 Credits | ART101 or ARTS101 or *ART106 |

Competitive Admissions GPA: 2.75
Contact Person: Dr. Edward Holmes
Minimum Program Grade: C

Last Updated: 961126

*** This Towson University course has no Equivalency at CC Baltimore County-Catonsville: Check with your Advisor for an alternate course.**

Additional Requirements & Information

Appendix D

Institution Review Board Permit from Towson University

TOWSON
UNIVERSITY

**APPROVAL NUMBER 00-A008**

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Maureen McDonough
FROM: Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, Deborah Gartland, Member DG/sb
DATE: August 23, 1999
RE: Approval of Research Involving the Use of Human Participants, Approval Number 00-A008

Office of University
Research Services

Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001

t. 410 830-2236
f. 410 830-4494

Thank you for your "Application for Approval of Research Involving the Use of Human Participants" which was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRB) at Towson University. The IRB hereby approves your proposal titled "The Effects of Transfer from a Community College to a University on a Cohort of Pre-Service Teacher Education Students: A Case Study."

If you should encounter any new risks, reactions, or injuries while conducting your research, would you please notify the IRB. Should your research extend past one year in duration, or should there be substantive changes in your research protocol, you would need to submit another application for approval at that time.

We wish you every success in your research project. If you have any questions, please call me at (410) 830-2236.

xc: File # 00-A008
H.P. Notebook

Appendix E

Initial Student Contact Letter/Survey

To: All May, 1999 CCBC, Catonsville Campus Teacher Education Graduates and Summer/Fall Teacher Education Transfer Students

From: Maureen McDonough, Human Services/Teacher Education Department Chair

Subject: Volunteer Interviews for Transfer Students

Date:

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on the transfer process for teacher education students who begin their pre-service preparation at the Community College of Baltimore County, Catonsville, then transfer to Towson University or an historically Black University. I am asking for your help. My research project is a case study on the transfer experience of a selected group of transfer students in teacher education of which you are a member. I would like to ask you several questions about your perceptions of credit transfer, advisement, and the role of the community college in teacher education at the community college.

If you are in the process of transferring to a four-year institution Teacher Education Program, would you be willing to be interviewed about your transfer experience?

Please note that this interview is strictly voluntary and has no bearing whatsoever upon your course work or graduation here at CCBC, Catonsville.

Privacy and anonymity will be carefully protected.

If you are willing to participate, please complete the following survey questions and return your responses to me in the addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Name_____

Address_____

Telephone number(s)_____

E-Mail address_____

Four-year college or university to which you hope to transfer_____

Teacher Education Major (e.g. Elementary, Secondary Education)_____

Best times to be reached_____

# Appendix F

## Consent Form

CCBC Catonsville | The Community College of Baltimore County | 800 South Rolling Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21228-5381 | Telephone: 410-455-6050

### Consent Form

Project Title: The Effects of Transfer from a Community College to a University on a Cohort of Pre-Service Teacher Education Students: A Case Study

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent the transfer process is working for a purposefully-selected group of participants transitioning from one community college to university teacher education programs at Towson University and at a historically Black four-year institution.

Procedures: As a participant I understand that I will be interviewed at least once about my perceptions of the community college's role in teacher preparation as well as the transfer process insofar as I am involved in or have been affected by that process. I understand that the interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed.

Confidentiality: (Pertaining to student participants) I understand that all information collected for the study is confidential, and that I will be identified only by pseudonym.

Confidentiality: (Pertaining to higher education participants) I understand that all information collected for the study is confidential, and that I will be identified by title and/or name only with my written permission.

Freedom: I understand that I have the right to ask questions at any time and to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty. I understand that the interviews will be tape recorded, and that I have the right to request that the recorders be turned off at any time.

Name/Address Phone of Faculty Adviser _____

Name/Address Phone of Graduate Researcher _____

If you have any questions about this project, contact:
Maureen L. McDonough Phone: 410-730-3950
Dr. Patricia Alt 410-830-4494

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

# Appendix G

## Interview Protocol for Student Respondents

Questions for Student Respondents (first interview)

The following questions were asked of student informants during the first (individual) interview.

1. How many semesters did you attend at CCBC, Catonsville?

2. How many credits have you earned?

3. Do you know how many of these credits will transfer into the teacher education program at Towson University?

4. What is your view of the role of CCBC, Catonsville in teacher preparation?

5. Describe the transfer process as you have experienced it, including your participation in any orientation sessions at the receiving university.

6. Have you experienced any institutional barriers either at the community college or between the community college and the university? Please expand.

7. With whom have you met to discuss your future plans as a teacher? At CCBC? At Towson?

8. When were you advised about course selection? Did you seek this advisement?

9. Have you met with an advisor at your receiving institution?

10. Is there anything you would do differently in choosing this pathway to your career as a teacher?

11. Is there anything you would recommend the community college change in preparing students in transfer to four-year schools of teacher education?

12. Is there anything you wish the four-year institution would do differently to assist transfer students?

Questions for Student Respondents (second interview)

1. On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your transfer experience?
2. Identify one word that describes your transfer experience?
3. Tell me more...
4. What did you mean by...?

# Appendix H

## Interview Protocol for University Respondents

Questions for University Professionals

The following questions were asked of university transfer specialists, department chairs, deans, and any faculty directly associated with transfer students in teacher education.

1. What is your view of the role of the community college in teacher preparation?

2. Are you familiar with the community colleges which comprise the majority of the transfer students into this program? What do you know about CCBC, Catonsville, and its teacher education pattern?

3. How would you compare the philosophy of teacher education between this university and the community college?

4. How do you perceive the transfer process for students who begin their teacher education at a community college?

5. Are you aware of any barriers which might impede smooth transfer for these students?

6. If barriers exist, how would you characterize them?

7. What does your institution do to facilitate transfer for teacher education students?

8. In general, what would you identify as important characteristics of a well-working transfer arrangement between a community college and university in teacher education?

# Appendix I

## Interview Protocol for Community College Respondents

Questions for Community College Professionals

1. What is your view of the community college in teacher preparation?

2. Specifically, how do you perceive the role of CCBC, Catonsville in teacher preparation?

3. How would you compare/contrast the community college philosophical position of education with that of Towson University?

4. Do you advise students who are interested in becoming teachers? When do they usually seek advisement from you?

5. How do you perceive the transfer process for students who transfer from CCBC, Catonsville Campus to Towson University?

6. Are you aware of any barriers which might impede smooth transfer for these students?

7. If barriers exist, how would you characterize them?

8. What does CCBC, Catonsville do to facilitate transfer for teacher education students?

9. In general what would you identify as important characteristics in a well-working transfer arrangement between a community college and university in teacher education?

Appendix J

Invitation to Follow-up Student Group Meeting

Maureen L. McDonough
Chair, Social Sciences and Teacher Education
CCBC Catonsville
800 S. Rolling Road
Catonsville, MD. 21228
410-455-4154

Dear _____,

Thank you for meeting with me for the interview about your transfer experience from Catonsville to Towson University. Your responses were very helpful as I compose my dissertation about transfer and teacher education students. Thanks to you, we may be able to better serve transfer students in the near future.

The final part of this project is a discussion meeting with all the transfer students whom I interviewed. This meeting will allow you to meet with other Catonsville-to-Towson transfer students and share your experiences. Also, at this meeting you may review a transcript of our interview for accuracy.

Please try to attend this group meeting of teacher education transfer students!!

**DATE:** **FEBRUARY 9, 2000**

**PLACE:** **WILMER ROOM, CATONSVILLE CAMPUS LIBRARY (3RD FLOOR)**

**TIME:** **5:00-7:00 PM**

**RSVP:** **MAUREEN MCDONOUGH**
**410-455-4153 (please call by Feb 7th)**
**or 410-730-3950**

**DINNER PROVIDED!!!**

**THANK YOU AGAIN!!**

Appendix K

Letter of Permission to Use Towson University Name


May 23, 2000

Ms. Maureen McDonough
5037 Ten Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21044

RE: IRB Approval and Use of Towson University's Name

Office of University
Research Services

Towson University
8000 York Road
Towson, MD 21252-0001

t. 410 830-2236
f. 410 830-4494

Dear Ms. McDonough:

This is written to confirm that, as you have received permission from the Towson University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants (IRB) to conduct your study titled "The Effects of Transfer from a Community College to a University on a Cohort of Pre-Service Teacher Education Students: A Case Study" on campus, and as the Provost's office has agreed, you have the University's permission to use its name in your dissertation.

Should you need anything further from this office, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 830-2236. The IRB wishes you success.

Very truly yours,

Mary Louise Healy
Director, Office of University Research Services
Administrator, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants

cc: Dr. Faulkner
Dr. Alt
IRB file

# Appendix L

## Letter of permission to Use CCBC, Catonsville, Name

CCBC Catonsville
Office of the President

The Community College
of Baltimore County

800 South Rolling Road
Baltimore
Maryland 21228-5381

Telephone: 410-455-4100
Facsimile: 410-455-4300

May 26, 2000

Ms. Maureen McDonough
5037 Ten Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21044

Dear Ms. McDonough:

This is written to confirm that you have received permission from CCBC Catonsville to conduct your study titled "The Effects of Transfer from a Community College to a University on a Cohort of Pre-Service Teacher Education Students: A Case Study." You have also been granted permission to use the College's name in your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Andrew C. Jones
President

:mh

Appendix M

Student Demographic Information

(Presented in order of first-to-last initial interview)

| Student Id | Age | Major | Race/Gen | #Credits | #Cr lost from CCBC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Margo | 23 | ElemEd | W/F | 64+ | 3(Intship) |
| Christine | 40 | EarlyChEd | B/F | 18 | 3? (EdPsyc) |
| Mary | 37 | EarlyChEd | W/F | 59 | 0 |
| Shirley | 21 | ElemEd | W/F | 24 | 3+ (Hlth) |
| Mike | 22 | ElemEd | W/M | 45-50 | 6 |
| Elmer | 21 | ElemEd | W/M | 30 | 0 |
| Marlo | 25 | EarlyChEd | W/F | 15 | 9 |
| Muriel | n/a | ElemEd | W/F | 62 | ? (quit) |
| Caren | 45 | EarlyChEd | B/F | 62 | 3 (SpEd) |
| Rachel | 30 | EarlyChEd | W/F | 62 | 3-6? |
| Janet | 20 | ElemEd | W/F | 70 | 8 |
| Asha | 22 | EarlyChEd | W/F | 70+ | 9 |
| Terry | 26 | ElemEd | W/F | 62+ | not sure |
| Yolanda | 30 | ElemEd | W/F | Degree from USSR | none from CCBC |
| Average | 27.8 | | | 46.3 | 3.14 |

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