

From Ryan to 2042: Phase I of the Longitudinal Study Comparing Teacher Preparation Program Models through Teacher Candidate Perceptions Regarding the Instruction of Students, including Typically Performing Students, Students with Special Needs, and English Learners.

A Presentation to the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Diego, 2004.

**Objectives**

Participants in this presentation will receive the results of the first phase of an ongoing longitudinal study concerning the most effective way to prepare teacher candidates to work with English learners and students with disabilities.

In 1999 the California Legislature adopted SB2042, an act requiring the most radical changes in teacher preparation since the initiation of the Ryan Act in the early 1970s. Although addressed in the previous teacher preparation program standards for the Ryan credential, SB 2042 or the Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation (CCTC, 2001), stressed the importance of emphasizing student diversity including ethnicity, socio-economic differences, students with special needs and English language learners.

One of the main goals of this revision process was to better prepare teacher candidates to meet the needs of English learners and students with disabilities in the general P-12 classroom. Data from the California Lutheran University's (CLU) teacher preparation programs is being collected each semester to compare the perceptions of teacher candidates in the 1992 Ryan Teacher Preparation Program with perceptions of teacher candidates in the 2002 SB 2042 Teacher Preparation Program. The data will be used to evaluate coursework and fieldwork to better achieve the goals of educating all students.

**Perspective(s) or Theoretical Framework**

**Description of CLU's 1992 Teacher Preparation Program**

In 1992 the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing approved the CLU Teacher Preparation Program as a Cross Cultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) and a Bilingual Cross Cultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) credential program. Both single subject candidates (secondary) and multiple subject candidates (elementary) obtain subject matter knowledge as a part of their undergraduate degree or by a standardized state examination before moving through three phases of teacher preparation.

The first phase of this program consists of twelve units of coursework in foundational knowledge. These courses include; "Culture and Diversity," "Child and Adolescent Growth and Development," "Foundations of Educational Psychology," and "First and Second Language Acquisition." These courses provide knowledge in learning theories, educational practice and policy. Both address issues of special populations.

While students with special needs are discussed in all the foundational courses, "Foundations of Educational Psychology" is the only course that has a specific objective relating to special needs students. Field work is a requirement in each of the courses and students are encouraged to observe in classrooms with students with special needs, but it is not a requirement.

In addition, each of these courses integrates knowledge about teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students, the course First and Second Language Acquisition is designed to focus specifically on these issues. Course topics include language policy, bilingual education, English Language Development (ELD), program models for English Learners, content area instruction, legislation and assessment. Teacher candidates also spend 10 hours observing in K-12 classrooms that are providing services to diverse learners.

The second phase of the 1992 Teacher Preparation Program includes nine semester units of methods and three units of introductory student teaching. These classes mention issues related to students with special needs; however, the extent and intensity of the issues mentioned or discussed depends on the background and interests of the instructor and the experiences that the teacher candidates have in the introductory student teaching assignment. With greater emphasis, these three methods courses and the introductory student teaching experience focus on the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. A strong attempt is made to place the teacher candidates in classroom settings with high diversity, and teaching methods are developed and practiced with an emphasis on these students.

During the last phase of the 1992 Teacher Preparation Program, teacher candidates are required to take nine units of student teaching and three units of advanced methods. Upon completion of this segment of the program, teacher candidates are recommended to the state for issuance of a Preliminary Credential. During fulltime student teaching the experiences of the teacher candidates have with students with special needs and English Learners may vary, too, depending on their placement and the experience of their cooperating classroom teacher. Some teacher candidates may get extensive exposure to and experience with instructing students with disabilities in the general education classroom, while others may have only a limited experience. The fulltime student teaching experience exposes the teacher candidates further to culturally and linguistically diverse students; however, the experience differs for each student as the students are placed throughout Ventura County in schools with a varying amount of diversity.

Lastly, the requirements of the 1992 program compel teachers with a Preliminary Credential to take an Introduction to Special Education Class in order to be eligible for a California Clear Credential. This overview class covers all aspects of special education knowledge at an introductory level and is sometimes the teachers' first concentrated experience dealing with special education issues.

#### Description of CLU's 2002 Teacher Preparation Program

In 1999 the California Legislature adopted SB2042. Similar to the 1992 requirements, it defines teacher preparation as a three-phase process. The coursework and student teaching requirements parallel the 1992 Ryan program. Subject matter knowledge is gained as part of the undergraduate major or by a standardized state test. . An Institution of Higher Education is free to design a program combining these components with standard methodology and student teaching experiences in any appropriate way. The only stipulation is that the program must not take longer than one calendar year to complete.

A major change in the 2042 program is that in order to earn a Clear Professional Credential, beginning teachers must complete two additional years in an induction program provided through their local school district. At the completion of that program, the local district, not an IHE, recommends that the teacher be issued a Clear Professional Credential.

SB2042 requires that an approved Teacher Preparation Program demonstrate how teacher candidates are prepared to teach in the diverse classrooms in California. The program document, Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Professional Teacher Preparation Programs (CCTC, 2001) stresses the importance of emphasizing student diversity including ethnicity, socio-economic differences, students with special needs and English language learners. Teacher candidates must have multiple, systematic opportunities throughout the program to consider student diversity including ethnicity, socio-economic differences, students with special needs and English language learners.

Standard 14 of the Standards document specifically addresses students with special needs. It states "through planned prerequisite and/or professional preparation, each candidate learns to select and use appropriate instructional materials and technologies, including assistive technologies, and differentiated teaching strategies to meet the needs of special populations in the general education classroom." (CCTC, 2001, p.26) In addition candidates are to become acquainted with laws regarding the rights of students with special needs and the requirements for implementing Individual Education Programs.

Standard 13 of the Standards document specifically addresses linguistically diverse students, currently labeled in California as "English Learners." The standard requires extensive preparation:

In the professional teacher preparation program all candidates have multiple systematic opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to deliver comprehensive instruction to English learners. Candidates are to learn about state and federal legal requirements for the placement and instruction of English learners. Teacher Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and application of pedagogical theories, principles and practices for English Language Development leading to comprehensive literacy in English, and for the development of academic language, comprehension and knowledge in the subjects of the core curriculum. Teacher Candidates are required to learn how to implement an instructional program that facilitates English language acquisition and development, including receptive and productive language skills, and that logically progresses to the grade level reading/language arts program for English speakers. Teacher Candidates must acquire and demonstrate the ability to utilize assessment information to diagnose students' language abilities, and to develop lessons that promote students' access to and achievement in the state-adopted academic content standards, and learn how cognitive, pedagogical and individual factors affect student's language acquisition (CCTC, 2001, p. 24).

Literature is well-documented regarding the education of minority students including English learners, as well as the important role a well-prepared teacher plays in the educational success of these students and how teacher preparation

programs should be designed toward meeting these needs (Delpit, 1995; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Fillmore & Snow, 2002; Gay, 2000; Grant, 1994; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; Quezada, Wiley, & Ramirez, 2000; TESOL, 2002; Thomas, & Collier, 1997; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Current literature regarding special needs students indicates that infusing knowledge and experience throughout a teacher candidate's program may be effective in preparing teacher candidates to teach special education students (Bensalem, Lovingfoss, Molloy, Harris & Graham, 2001; Coombs-Richardson & Mead, 2001; Eisner, 2003; Hunt, Soto, Maier & Doering, 2003; Kozleski, Mainzer & Deshler, 2000; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002).

### **Research Questions**

How do teacher candidates perceive their level of knowledge regarding the instruction of students, including typically performing students, students with special needs, and English learners?

How do teacher candidate perceptions change as they progress through the program?

### **Methods**

This research is descriptive in nature. A forty-item instrument was developed probing teacher candidate's perception of their level of preparation for working with special populations in the general education classroom. Teacher candidates were surveyed using the Flashlight tool developed by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Washington State University (<http://www.ctlt.wsu.edu/>). This tool allows the user to create and send a survey via the Internet. The recipient fills out the survey and the results are stored for later analysis.

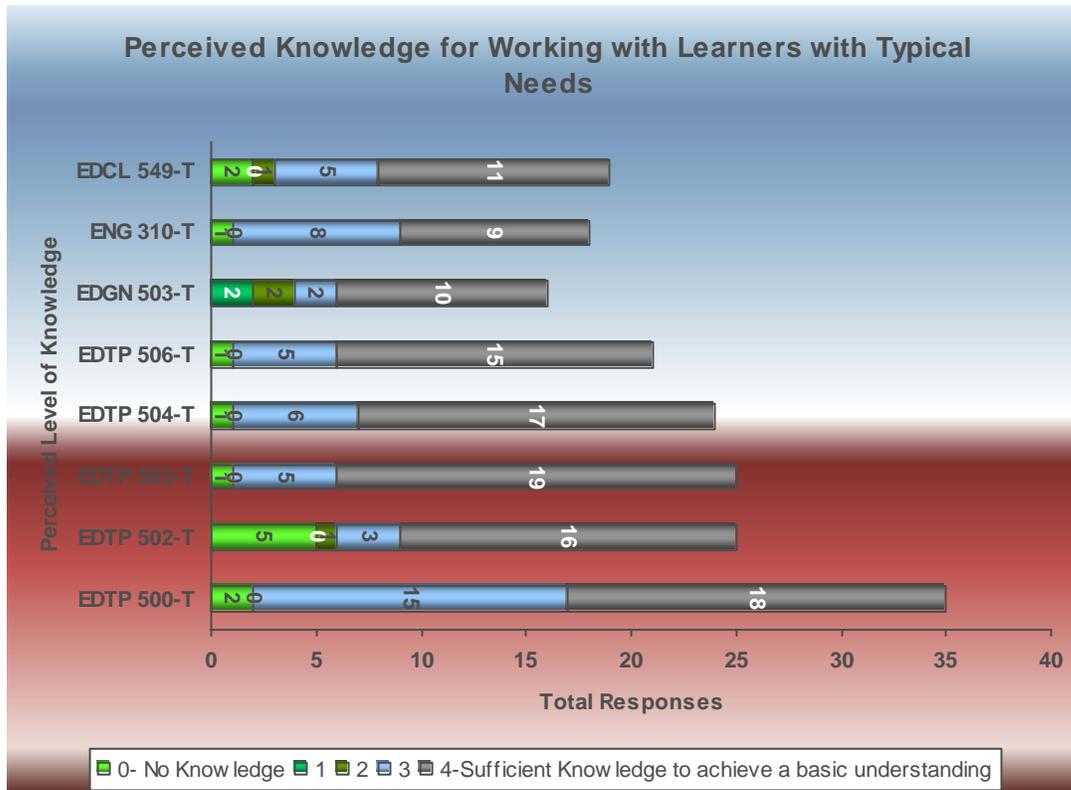
### **Data sources**

Teacher candidates who had completed their program as of Spring 2002 or are currently enrolled in the program were sent an email request to complete the survey. All of these students have been part of the 1992 Teacher Preparation Program. Participants were instructed to access the Flashlight website and complete the 40 question survey. Their responses were automatically submitted, archived, and analyzed recording frequencies and percentages. The findings were analyzed by the researchers to help determine program effectiveness.

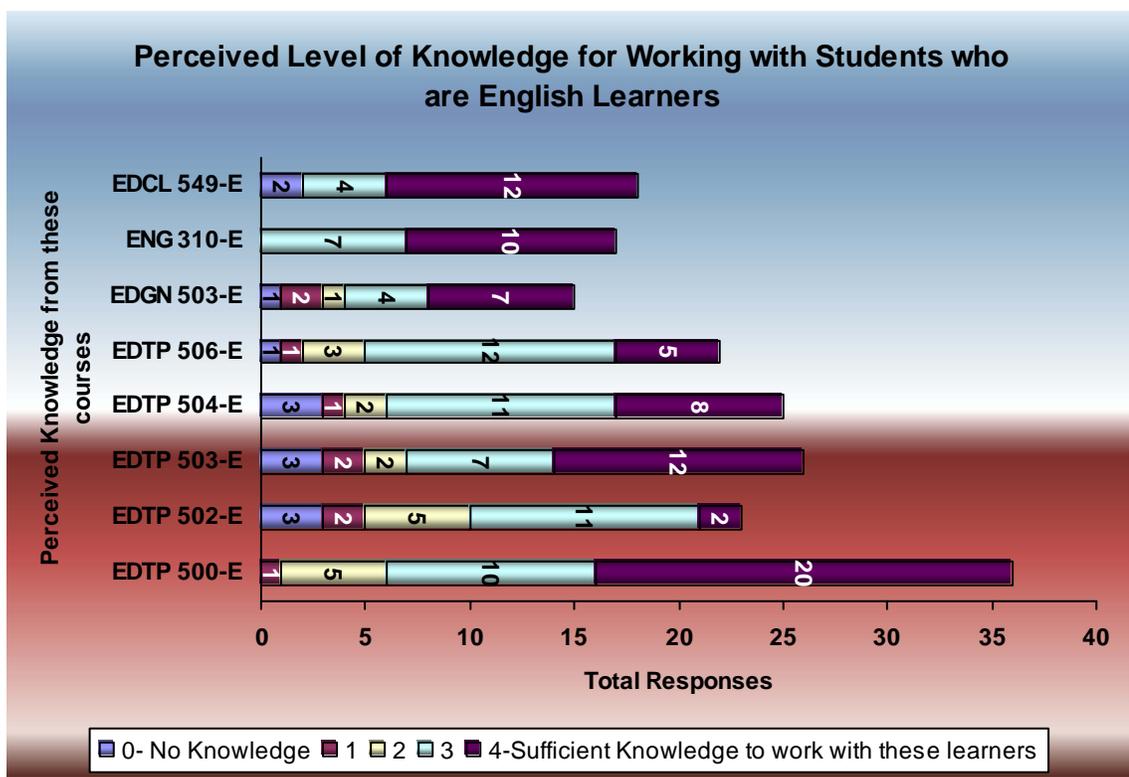
### **Results**

Data is presented in six graphs on the following pages.

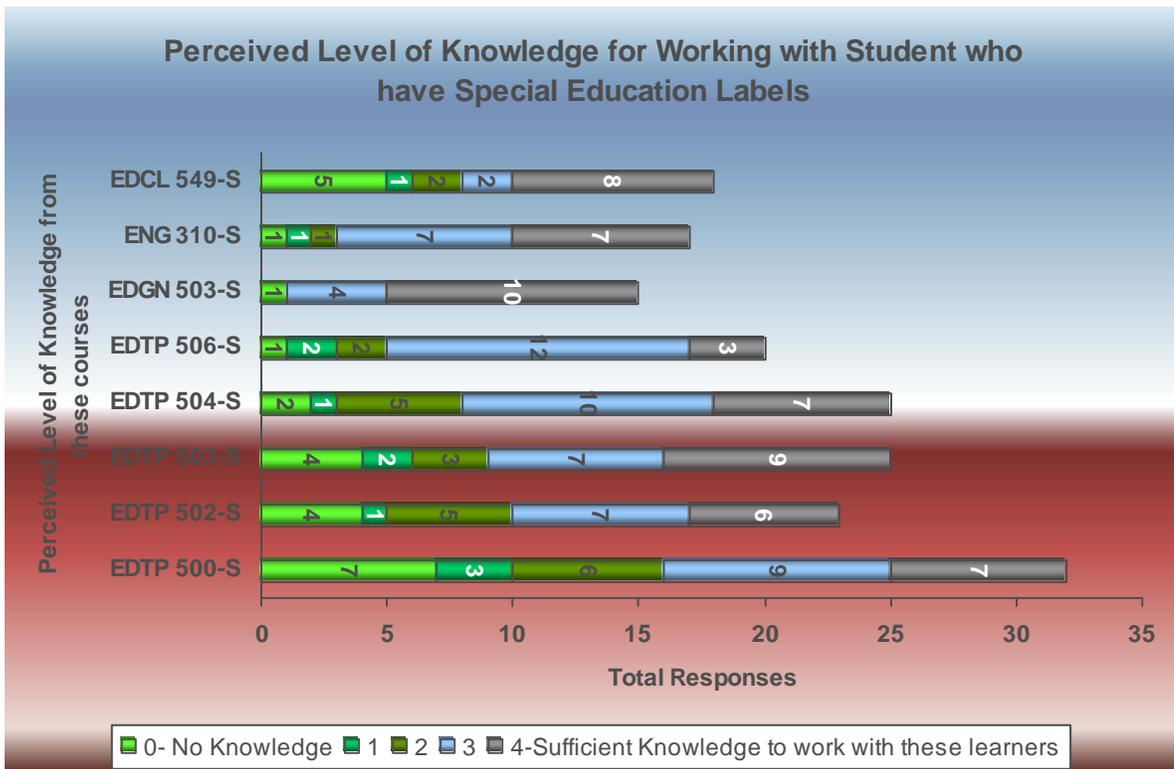
## PERCEPTIONS AFTER FOUNDATIONAL COURSEWORK



This chart displays Teacher Candidates' (TCs') perceived knowledge for working with typically performing students after foundational coursework. TCs perceiving sufficient or fully sufficient knowledge: 89% (mean).

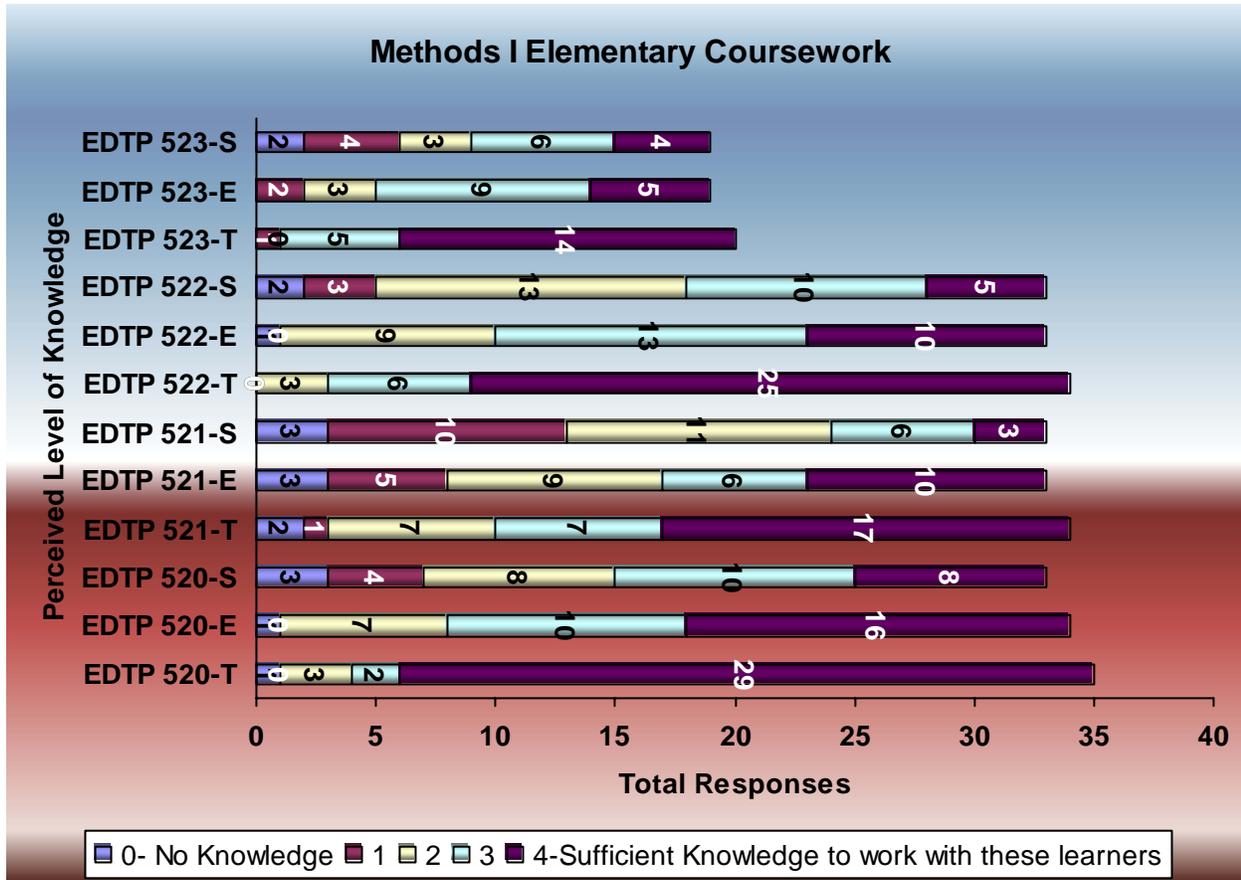


This chart displays the TCs' perceived knowledge for working with English Learners in the general education classroom after foundational coursework. TCs perceiving sufficient or fully sufficient knowledge: 79% (mean).



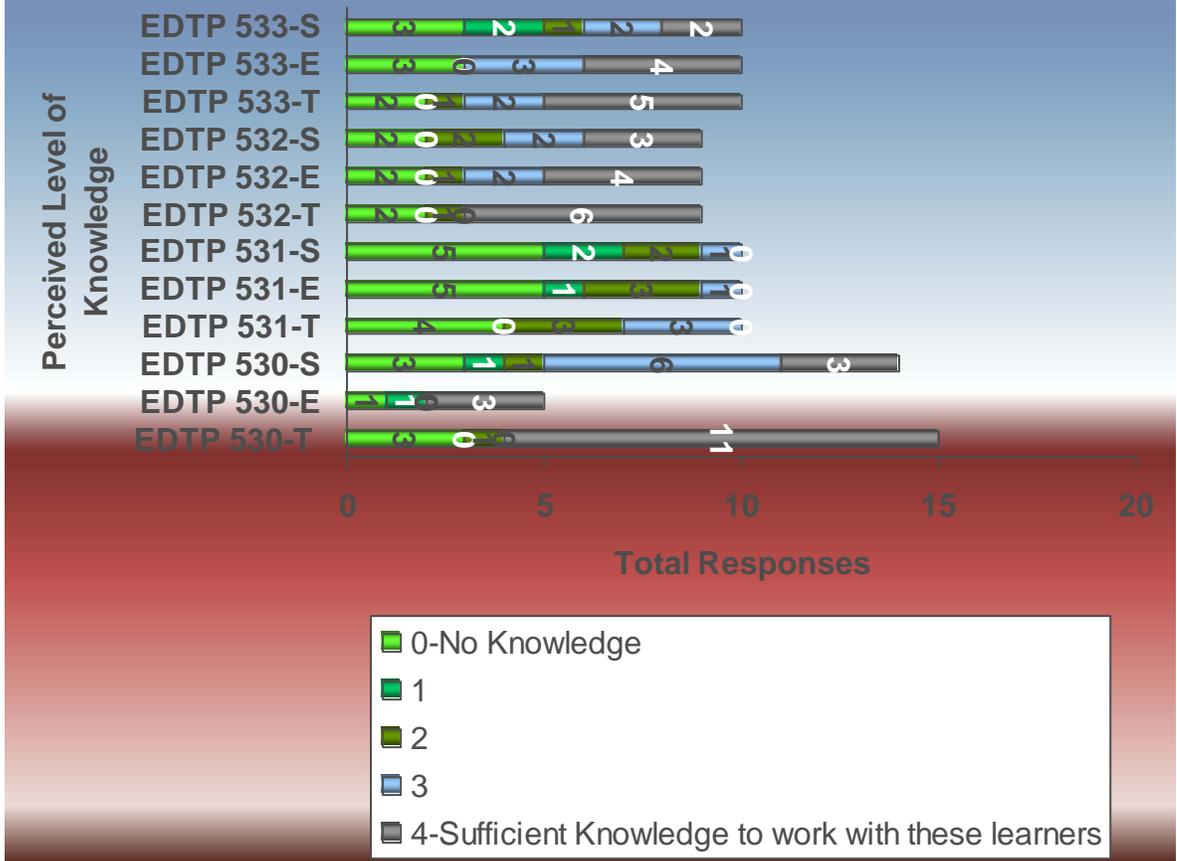
This chart displays TCs' perceived knowledge for working with students with special needs in the general education classroom after foundational coursework. TCs perceiving sufficient or fully sufficient knowledge: 68% (mean).

PERCEPTIONS AFTER METHODS COURSEWORK AND INTRODUCTION TO STUDENT TEACHING



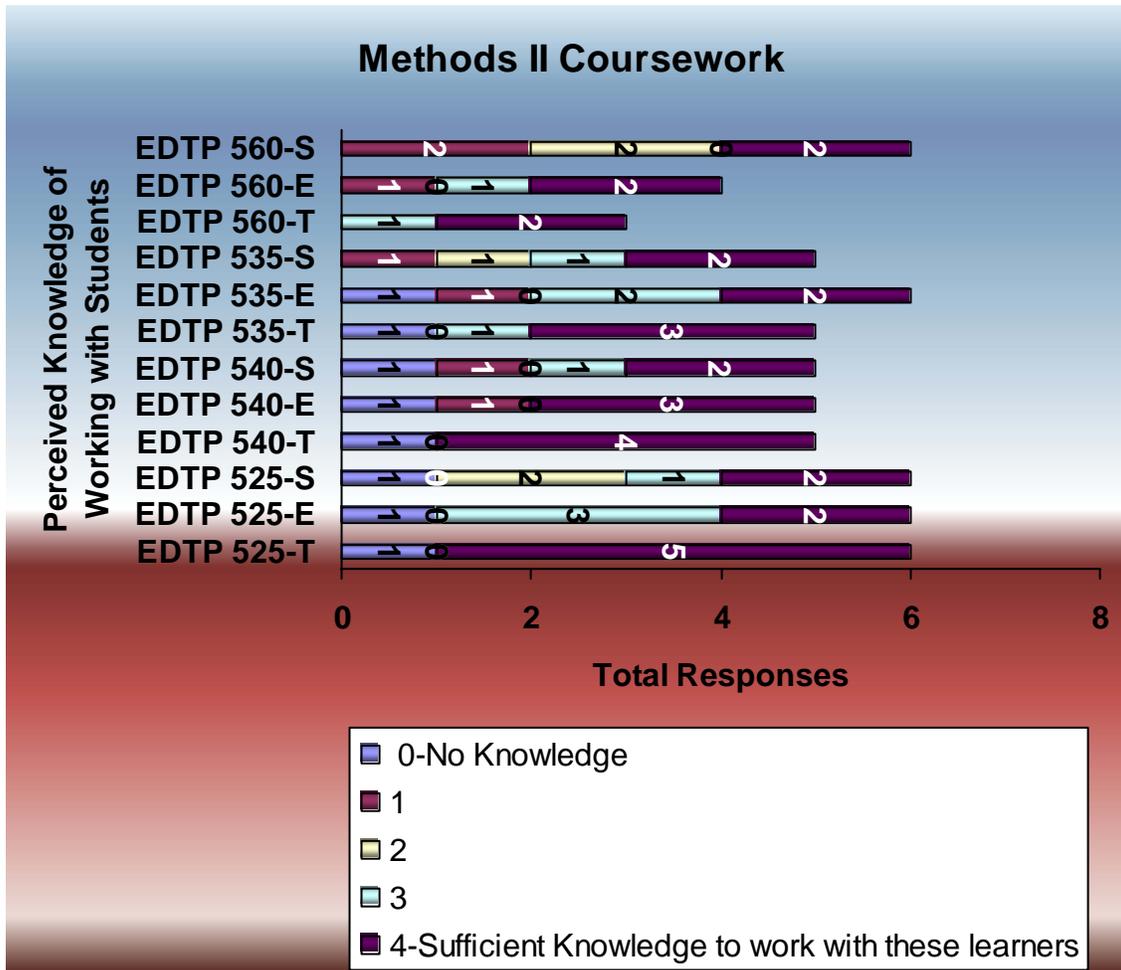
Results indicate TCs perceived knowledge for working with S=students with special needs, E= English Learners, T= students who perform typically. Data indicates the TCs' perceived knowledge is highest regarding students who perform typically (84%). Perceived knowledge for English Learners is 67% and students with special needs is 49%.

## Methods I Secondary Coursework



Results indicate TCs perceived knowledge for working with S=students with special needs, E=English Learners, T= students who perform typically at the secondary level. Data indicates the TCs' perceived knowledge is highest regarding students who perform typically (60%). Perceived knowledge for English Learners is 52% and students with special needs is 43%.

PERCEPTIONS AFTER ADVANCED METHODS COURSEWORK AND FULLTIME STUDENT TEACHING:



Results indicate TCs perceived knowledge for working with S=students with special needs, E=English Learners, T= students who perform typically

At the end of the preliminary credential program, elementary TCs perceived sufficient knowledge S=55%, E=72%, T=82% (see courses EDTP 525 and 540).

At the end of the preliminary credential program, secondary TCs perceived sufficient knowledge S=68%, E=71%, T=88% (see courses EDTP 535 and 560).

**Conclusions**

Teacher candidates feel sufficient or fully sufficient in their knowledge regarding the instruction of typically performing students throughout all phases of their preparation program. Teacher candidates feel their knowledge is sufficient regarding the instruction of English Learners after foundational

coursework (79%), feel less so after Methods I (60%), and feel their knowledge is more sufficient after Methods II (72%), however, not as high as they did after foundations. This same trend was identified for students with special needs, foundations coursework (68%), Methods I (46%), Methods II (62%). Teacher candidates perceive the least sufficient knowledge for instructing students with special needs in all phases of their preparation program. Once teacher candidates engage in practice, they continue to perceive that their knowledge is sufficient in instructing typically performing students; however, they feel much less sufficient in instructing English Learners and students with special needs.

### **Future Implications**

The current data provides information on our current program which is being phased out. This data will serve as a baseline data for phase two of the study focusing on our new program which infuses more knowledge and skills for instructing students with special needs and English learners. Further analysis as to the finding that teacher candidates perceived diminishing levels of sufficiency rather than increasing levels as they progressed through their program will be conducted. Further analysis of the current data showed that specific courses within each level of the program had significantly lower scores in teacher candidate ratings. This data will be shared with faculty as a basis for curriculum development and improvement.

All Institutions of Higher Education are struggling with program effectiveness in regards to teacher preparation for diverse learners. Rather than a top down mandated approach to program reform this study hopes to allow teacher candidates to express their specific needs in this area.

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