

Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Then and Now

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Presenters:

Mildred Murray-Ward, California State University, Stanislaus

Christopher Roe, California State University, Stanislaus

Jim Burns, University of California, Berkeley

Adrienne Machado, Stockton Unified School District

Rob Williams. Modesto City Schools

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Session Summary:

This paper demonstrates how CSU, Stanislaus (CSUStan) and the partner schools (Fairview Elementary, and others in Modesto Unified School District; Pittman Elementary in Stockton Unified School District; and Riverbank Dual Language Academy, in Riverbank Unified School District) in the CREDE grant developed dialog and collaboration that impacted teacher recruitment, retention and quality. Changes in the recruitment and admissions process at CSU, Stanislaus and the impact of the grant on recruitment and retention of student teachers and teachers are explored. Interview and survey data from principals and teachers in the partner schools revealed impact of grant activities on teacher recruitment, retention, and quality in their schools and districts.

Introduction

The development of teacher candidates and credentialed teachers is an important focus of raising student achievement in schools (Darling-Hammond (2005). Quality instruction, the center-piece for student achievement, is complex and multi-dimensional. Seidel and Shavelson (2007), in a meta analysis of teaching effectiveness studies, describe learning as having the following components: constructive (building learning alone or in groups), domain-specific to content, social in nature, goal directed, evaluative of the achievement of learning goals, and student-regulative (stimulating, monitoring and regulating) learning.

The components of learning described above are elements of the Center for Research on Education Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) learning model that includes CREDE standards and pedagogy. However, no learning model is effective unless instruction on the philosophy, components and pedagogy underlying a learning model is effectively delivered to the teachers who will implement it.

The skills needed for quality instruction are often delivered to teachers through formal campus classrooms and in schools with teaching professionals. Indeed, credentialed teachers and students in many teacher preparation programs usually get additional training beyond traditional “credential work” through professional development. However, most professional development programs seem to lack long term effect on teacher behavior (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen & Garet, 2008). Wayne et al. summarized the characteristics of effective professional development that is intensive, sustained, job-embedded, and focused on content. In addition, Garet et al. (2001) suggests that quality professional development activities involve active learning, coherent, and collective participation. Desimone (2009) proposes a conceptual framework for studying effective professional development that includes many of these features by considering a content focus, active learning, coherence with teacher knowledge and beliefs, duration of training, and collective participation. Interestingly, the model of professional development used in CREDE training incorporates all of the elements mentioned in effective professional development.

In addition to the implementation issues mentioned above, the recruitment and retention of quality teacher candidates and credentialed teachers is a major factor in quality instructional delivery. Ingersoll (2004) noted an overall 14% turnover rate in the profession. In addition, nearly 50% of teachers leave the profession by their fifth year (Ingersoll, 2002). Schools with constantly changing faculty have difficulties maintaining high quality instruction, because of inconsistency in instructional delivery due to frequent personnel changes and the high cost of training new teachers rather than assisting those who have already been trained.

One key to maintaining a teaching force is to address teachers' needs and expectations. Today, many people who enter the teaching profession expect to have differentiated roles, a chance to collaborate with colleagues, and work in supportive organizations (Moore Johnson, 2004). Marilyn Cochran Smith (2004) found that teachers need to be successful and supported, have opportunities to work with other educators in professional learning communities, and engage in leadership and advancement prospects. In addition, Nieto (2003) found that those who stay in the profession do so because they love their students and feel they can make a difference. Finally, Froning (2006) believes that teachers remain happy in the jobs when they feel empowered to control their classrooms, understand the culture and backgrounds of students, are well prepared in their academic fields, and are committed to the success of their students.

The study explored the impact of the training and development of teacher candidates and credentialed teachers in the philosophy, standards and pedagogy of CREDE. The data presented in this paper are part of a larger, multi-faceted research study conducted over the life of the U.S Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement grant titled: "Improving Teacher Quality from Recruitment to Induction: Integrating Subject matter, Language and Diversity Pedagogy."

This paper examines information regarding the recruitment and retention of teacher candidates and teachers in schools in the CSU, Stanislaus service area. The data for this study were collected in spring 2008.

CREDE Grant Activities Relevant to Recruitment and Retention

CSU, Stanislaus (CSUStan) serves the northern San Joaquin Valley of California. The College of Education's Department of Teacher Education annually serve approximately 409 Multiple Subject (elementary education) Credential Program (MSCP) students per year.

During the first year of the grant, the Department of Teacher Education instituted several procedures to speed the application processing time of potential MSCP candidates. The processes were designed to increase student enrollment and, as a result, support the CREDE grant. The recruitment process changes and incentives to enter the CSU, Stanislaus MSCP included the following:

- One-stop admissions sessions in which candidates completed application forms, and brought transcripts, test results and other information required for admission to

MSCP. Orientation and registration for qualified students were completed during these sessions.

- Change in CSET requirements (2 of 3 areas) – Candidates were required to complete the California Subject Examination (CSET) for Teachers in liberal studies for multiple subjects credential. Traditionally, candidates had to pass all three areas to enter the program. An exception was made to speed admission by allowing candidates to enter the program with two of the three test areas passed. Passage of all three areas is required for student teaching.
- CREDE Orientations offered by the Departments of Teacher Education and Liberal Studies conducted several times each year throughout the life of the grant.

Incentives to enter the MSCP CREDE Program included:

- scholarships, including the 100 CREDE grant scholarships
- Field experiences at schools with CREDE-trained master teachers
- Additional CREDE pedagogy training & coaching in schools

Method

This mixed methods design focused on recruitment and retention information collected during the grant period of spring 2008. The data were collected from four groups of participants in three school districts in the CSU, Stanislaus service area: three HR directors, three principals, 34 master teachers, and 10 student teachers. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected using: CSU, Stanislaus records, surveys for student teachers and master teachers, individual interviews with principals and HR directors, and focus groups with master teachers.

Results

The results from the research have been organized into the areas of recruitment and retention activities.

Impact of Recruitment Activities

The impact of recruitment activities was explored through the use of CSUStan records, surveys with master and student teachers, and interviews with HR Directors, principals and master teachers. Table 1 presents the recruitment and retention results obtained from CSUStan records for the general MSCP population and the CREDE MSCP teacher candidates.

Table 1: Impact of Recruitment Activities at CSU, Stanislaus

Academic Terms	Overall MSCP Program			CREDE Scholarship Recipients		
	Applicants	Completers	% of Completers	Applicants	Completers	% of Completers
Fall 04 to Spr 05	407	287	70.5	NA	NA	NA
Fall 05 to Spr 06	419	294	70.2	NA	NA	NA
Fall 06 to Spr 07	413	267	64.6	42	41	97.7
Fall 07 to Spr 08	396	173	43.7	43	42	96.7
Fall 08 to Spr 09			NA*	15	NA	NA
Overall	1,228	734	59.8	100	98	98

* not available

Prior to the grant, records for 2004-05 show 407 applicants for the Multiple Subjects Credential Program. In 2005-06 enrollment increased to 419, and then decreased to 396 in 2008-09, with a mean of 409 students and a completion rate of 59.8%. Discussions with program coordinators revealed that the decrease was attributable to several factors, including the general San Joaquin Valley economic factors, the uncertain job market, incomplete admissions test scores, students' financial inability to leave work a semester to complete student teaching, and introduction of the Teacher Performance Assessment requirement for fall 2008 applicants. In contrast, CREDE credential candidates entered the program and completed it in proportionally far higher numbers. In 2006-07, 98%, or 41 of 42 of CREDE teacher candidates, completed the program. In 2007-08, 42 of the 43 candidates completed program. A total of 85, or 97.6%, of the CREDE student teachers from 2006-07 and 2007-08 completed their credentials.

In addition to the data from University records, surveys from teacher candidates and master teachers show that the opportunity to participate in training in CREDE pedagogy was a factor in recruitment at the University and school level. Table 2 presents the median responses of the two groups concerning the role of CREDE in recruiting teacher

candidates and credentialed teachers. The responses of the master teachers were based on a four-option set of responses – Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The student teachers’ responses were based on a five-point scale of Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Undecided, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree.

The data show that student teachers and master teachers agreed that CREDE training and training opportunities were factors in recruiting student teachers to teacher credential training and to recruit both student teachers and master teachers to schools.

Table 2: Student Teacher & Master Teacher Perceptions of CREDE as a Factor in Teacher Recruitment

Survey Item	Median
Student Teachers - CREDE had enabled collaborations to recruit teacher candidates	Somewhat Agree
Master Teachers – Candidate interest in CREDE pedagogy is important in the selection process at this school.	Agree
Master Teachers – Previous CREDE training would be important in the selection of a new teacher at this school.	Agree
Master Teachers – The project enabled collaborations between CSUS and LEA to <u>recruit</u> teacher candidates to meet LEA short and long term goals.	Somewhat Agree

A third source of recruitment information was obtained from HR directors, principals, and master teachers through individual and focus group interviews. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in late spring 2008 with three school district HR Directors, three principals from the three different school districts, and 34 master teachers who worked at three school sites. The responses of these three groups to questions about CREDE as a recruiting tool to the University and to schools have been summarized in Table 3.

The comments of the HR directors, principals and master teachers all support the survey information. CREDE played a factor in recruiting both student teachers and master teachers to schools. In the case of two schools, CREDE training was a criterion in selecting student teachers and a condition for hiring teachers.

Impact of Retention Activities

The impact of retention activities within the University and the school sites was explored in the previous section through University records. In addition, survey, and interview, and focus group data supplied details about specific impacts.

Table 4 presents the student teachers’ and master teachers’ views of retention activities at the University and schools.

Table 3: HR Directors, Principals and Master Teachers Perceptions of the Role of CREDE in Student Teacher and Teacher Recruitment

Respondents	Summary of Findings
HR Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Director - Mentioned one school hired CREDE teachers and recommended them to others • Two Directors - Got to see student teachers and guest teachers and encouraged them to apply for openings • Would hire CREDE teachers if there were openings
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used pool of student teachers to make selections • At two schools, all teachers are CREDE-trained so it was a criterion for being hired • One principal has hired CREDE teachers and would hire more if he had an opening. Recommended student teachers to others
Master Teachers *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CREDE training was a criterion in selecting STs • CREDE-trained STs fit well with the schools' philosophies: focus on language development, student engagement, collaboration • CREDE-trained STs developed strong working relationships with the CREDE-trained MTs: collaboration, professional conversations • In one case where the ST was not CREDE-trained, the MT had to be clear that CREDE was to be used in her classroom

* MT = Master Teacher; ST = Student Teacher

Table 4: Teacher Candidate & Master Teacher Perceptions of CREDE as a Factor in Teacher Recruitment

Survey Item	Median
Student Teachers – The project provided STs the necessary conditions for <u>modeling, learning, and supporting</u> effective teaching strategies for diverse learners.	Strongly Agree
Master Teachers – The opportunity to receive CREDE training is an incentive to stay at a school.	Agree
Master Teachers – Working with other CREDE trained teachers is an incentive to stay at a school.	Agree
Master Teachers – Having access to STs who have received CREDE training is an incentive to stay at a school.	Strongly Agree
Master Teachers – The project enabled collaborations between CSUS and LEA to <u>support and train</u> teacher candidates to meet LEA short term and long term goals.	Somewhat Agree

Table 4 shows that student teachers and master teachers felt the opportunities to receive CREDE training and work with CREDE-trained student teachers and master teachers were incentives to stay in their teacher training programs or their respective schools. In addition, both groups felt that the program had enabled them to work effectively with diverse learners.

HR Directors, principals, and master teachers showed support for the role of CREDE in the retention of teachers. Summaries of their responses are recorded in Table 5.

Table 5: HR Directors, Principals and Masters Teachers Perception of CREDE Activities on Retention

Respondents	Summary of Findings
HR Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CREDE does <u>not</u> seem to play a role in teacher departures: factors include changes in person circumstances, budgetary constraints, few vacancies
Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two schools - being CREDE-trained or being willing to be trained was a condition for employment • Principals encouraged CREDE STs to apply for positions • CREDE-trained STs fit well with the schools' philosophies: focus on language development, student engagement, collaboration • Principals observed teachers (& STs) more engaged in professional conversations in meetings & causal interactions
Master Teachers *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two schools – CREDE-trained STs deliberately matched to CREDE MTs • In deliberate CREDE STs and MTs matches, the focus was on working relationships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Matched philosophy of school and teacher ○ Had common vocabulary and conceptual base ○ Collaborated & shared ideas, planning • Beginning Teachers (BT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New BTs trained & coached by veteran CREDE MTs ○ BT's learned more about doing CREDE centers MTs ○ Coaches helped BTs focus improvement ○ Some BT's had no CREDE coaches, but had BTSA coaches

* MT = Master Teacher; ST = Student Teacher

The HR directors did not specifically name CREDE as a factor in retention. However, they did make it clear that teachers' departures were not attributable to CREDE. In fact, other factors such as retirements, budget cuts, and changes in family and personal conditions were responsible for most departures.

Principals and master teachers at the three school sites clearly indicated in their comments that CREDE was a factor in retention. The principals indicated that CREDE was tied to the schools' philosophies and that student teachers and master teachers were deliberately matched because they were CREDE-trained. In addition, the master teachers stated that because they were so matched to student teachers, they shared philosophical views and common vocabulary and conceptual bases and collaborated on ideas and planning. Beginning teachers in the focus groups or who were referred to in the focus groups, were CREDE-trained at the University or by CREDE coaches, were coached by veteran CREDE-trained teachers or BTSA coaches.

An interesting additional point of information is the change in master teacher teaching characteristics reports through surveys before and after exposure to CREDE. Table 6 presents teachers reported frequency of use of teaching activities associated with CREDE pedagogy.

Table 6: Impact of CREDE Activities in Schools

Teaching Characteristic	Median Usage Times per week	
	Before CREDE	After CREDE
I have students work with others.	2-3	4-5
I implement activities which allow small groups of students and the teacher to produce products or new knowledge.	Once to 2-3	2-3
I engage students through dialog.	2-3	4-5
I plan and implement activities which engage students in sustained conversation, reading or writing.	Once	2-3 to 4-5
I focus on developing content appropriate vocabulary and language.	2-3	4-5
I plan and implement activities which draw form students' community and home experiences to help them apply new skills.	2-3	2-3
I engage students in challenging activities that require complex thinking.	2-3	2-3
I engage in conversations with students in which we relate students' formal, school knowledge to students' individual, community, and family knowledge.	Once	2-3

The table shows that teachers reported increases in allowing students to work together, using small groups, providing activities that require sustained conversation, reading and writing, developing vocabulary and language, and engaging students in conversations that relate formal schooling to their homes and communities.

Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that CSU, Stanislaus and the partner schools and districts were able to create collaborations that supported teacher recruitment, retention and helped teachers to increase the quality of their instruction.

Schools where CREDE matched the school philosophy and where districts support this type of teaching approach were able to attract and retain CREDE teachers. Being CREDE-trained was not associated with teacher departures. Interestingly, the lack of changes in CSU, Stanislaus recruitment rates were attributable to causes beyond the scope of the MCSP Program or grant.

Comments from principals indicated that it was easier to recruit teachers through CREDE and retain them. They want to be part of this exciting project. Principals also stated that they used the pool of CREDE-trained teachers to make student teacher selections. In two schools, all teachers were CREDE trained, as it was a criterion for being hired. In addition, one principal felt that teachers appreciated the retention activities, and that they felt they had become better teachers. One principal would hire a CREDE teacher if he had an opening, and had recommended ST to others for hiring. HR directors supported these comments.

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