The Effectiveness of Marshall University's Master of Arts in Teaching and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Programs as Determined by Graduates' and Completers' Perceptions

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARSHALL UNIVERSITY’S MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING AND POST-BACCALAUREATE TEACHER CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AS DETERMINED BY GRADUATES’ AND COMPLETERS’ PERCEPTIONS

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Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Marshall University Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

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Huntington, West Virginia, 2010

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARSHALL UNIVERSITY’S MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING AND POST-BACCALAUREATE TEACHER CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS AS DETERMINED BY GRADUATES’ AND COMPLETERS’ PERCEPTIONS

This study examined graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of Marshall University’s alternative certification programs, the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC), from 1999-2010. This non-experimental descriptive cross-sectional study used the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness to collect data.

Based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards, this survey used 20 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions to investigate graduates’ and completers’ perceptions. Data indicated that graduates and completers perceived their preparation was moderately prepared based on the mean scores. All median and mode scores indicated graduates and completers perceived themselves to be well prepared. Respondents felt extremely well prepared in their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking, their ability to create appropriate learning environments and their ability to use formal and informal assessment. Respondents indicated that they perceived their ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of the community to be the weakest although the mean still indicated they felt moderately prepared. Results indicated that there was a statistical difference between the perceptions of male respondents compared with female respondents in the area targeting reflective teaching and professional growth.

Based on qualitative data, respondents indicated the following themes to be beneficial aspects of the programs: the instructional strategy courses, the student teaching experience, the faculty, and the ability to take courses online. The following were identified as being areas that might need improvement: more time spent in the field experience placements before student teaching, more instruction concerning classroom management, changes in the logistics of the programs, and a more hands-on practical approach to coursework.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Joe. I could not have completed this degree without your love and encouragement. Your calm presence and your constant support gave me the strength and courage to finish.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my children: J.T., Anna, Leah and her husband, Cory. Thank you for enduring numerous fast food dinners and the constant presence of my laptop. You bring joy and happiness to my life.

This work is dedicated to my father, Dr. Don Flatt. Your example encouraged me to strive for excellence in the midst of adversity.

Finally, I dedicate this to my mother, Carolyn Flatt, who was my first and most influential teacher. Her life taught me what are truly most important, faith, family and friends.
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“With God, all things are possible.” Matthew 19:26
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Through the centuries, great teachers have influenced society. Perhaps no other profession is more important to our society. Most individuals can recall the teacher who was their greatest influence. These are the exceptional teachers. It is important to prepare excellent and effective teachers who can ignite a passion for learning. It is equally important for colleges and universities to recruit and train excellent teachers.

Perhaps more than any other time in history, America has been trying to determine how to educate all students in the most effective way. Creation, implementation and assessment of standards have been of paramount importance in all levels of the education system. Institutions of higher education have not been exempt. Universities have made every effort to ensure that teacher preparation programs are of high quality and that these programs are training highly qualified teachers. To ensure excellence, programs are assessed to examine if they are providing their graduates and completers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to teach all students (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Holme's Group, 1986; Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Wise & Leibbrand, 1993).

As the standards and accountability movements have been increasing, states and universities have been called upon to meet the challenge of imminent teacher shortages. The National Center for Education Information predicted that 2.2 million teachers would need to be hired by 2015 (Feistritzer, Harr, Hobar, & Scullion, 2005). The U.S. Department of Education surmised that 1,000,000 K-12 teachers would retire by 2008 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002a). By 2006, in response to the need for more
teachers in classrooms, 48 states had created some form of alternative certification (Feistritzer, Harr, Henry, & Ulf, 2006; Nagy & Wang, 2007). By 2008, the fastest growing segment of alternate certification programs was directed by higher education institutions that vary from master of arts in teaching (MAT) programs to test-only routes to teacher certification (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008).

In the 21st century, meeting the needs of our society will require excellence in education. All educators play a vital role in preparing a workforce that is ready for the challenges of the future. Schools of education play a critical role as they seek to prepare teachers who are ready to meet the needs of an ever-changing society (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education & The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010). According to U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009, ¶ 13), “Teaching has never been more difficult, it has never been more important, and the desperate need for more student success has never been so urgent. Are we adequately preparing future teachers to win this critical battle?”

**Overview**

**Federal Influences**

Beginning with *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the federal government has attempted to provide the framework needed to transform the American education system. This education policy along with *Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994* and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* set the stage for a drastic overhaul of America’s education system.

In 1983, the Commission on Excellence’s report, *A Nation at Risk*, catapulted the American education system into a period of reformation that is continuing today. Content
standards and curriculum-based assessments were recommended by the commission as well as higher standards in teacher preparation programs (Sewall, 1994). The United States Department of Education (USDE) began publishing literature that focused on teaching and learning such as What Works: Research about Teaching and Learning (1987).

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994) sought to build on the reform efforts of state and local education agencies by providing federal support for development of standards and assessment of these standards (Clinchy, 1998; O'Neil, 1993; Stevenson, 1995). Teacher preparation programs and continuing professional development activities were mandated to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they would need to teach diverse student populations.

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) strengthened the emphasis that was put on the need for standards, assessment and accountability at every level of public education. As part of NCLB, the federal government promised a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by the 2005-2006 school year. One of the requirements of a highly qualified teacher was that the teacher demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects the teacher taught. Data collected under Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) helped to align teacher and student standards and helped to identify low-performing teacher preparation programs (Meeting the highly qualified teachers challenge: The secretary's third annual report on teacher quality, 2004).

Federal legislation over the past two decades made it imperative that higher education increase accountability and assessment of its teacher preparation programs
Institutions of higher education were encouraged to reform and reconnect with elementary and secondary public schools (Clinchy, 1994; Goodlad, 1990). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) stressed the need for restructuring schools of education so their graduates met the needs of all students (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The need for standards to be used for assessment purposes quickly became apparent.

Influences on Teaching Standards

Higher education and specifically teacher preparation programs underwent a major reformation during this time of transformation. In response, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future initiated the development of standards for teachers in 1996. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) helped to write these standards (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Diez, 1998; Elliott, 1996; Kraft, 2001; Holm & Horn, 2003; Sewall, 1994; Weiss & Weiss, 1998). According to the INTASC standards, teacher preparation programs should be producing graduates who possess specific qualities that have been shown to be more effective (Allen, 2003). These qualities include (a) the ability to make content meaningful (Richardson, 2003; Zahorik, 1996), (b) the ability to use knowledge of child development and learning theories (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Snowman & Biehler, 2002), (c) the ability to adapt instruction to differing learning styles and diversity (Burke & Dunn, 2002; Dunn & Dunn, 1993; Gardner, 1995), (d) the ability to use a variety of
instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003), (e) the ability to create a learning environment that is engaging and motivating (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2000; Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley & Vincent, 2003; Wenglinsky, 2002), (f) the ability to communicate effectively (Brown, 2005), (g) the ability to plan for instruction (McTighe & Wiggins, 1999), (h) the ability to use effective assessment (Martin-Kniep, 2000; Stiggins, 2004), (i) the ability to reflect and participate in professional development (Ferraro, 2000; McCaughtry, 2005) and (j) the ability to foster relationships (Miretzky, 2004).

The creation and implementation of professional standards did much to increase the quality of pre-service teachers but it soon became apparent that schools of education had to be held accountable to ensure the effectiveness of every candidate. In 1954, NCATE was created by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Education Association (NEA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). In the following years, many other national organizations became partners with NCATE to fulfill its mission of ensuring high quality teacher preparation programs. In response to the standards movement, NCATE began implementing a performance-based accreditation system in 2001 (“NCATE at 50”, n.d.). This system required accountability and improvement in teacher preparation programs. Each program must show how its curriculum aligns with state and national standards and each must show evidence of using assessment data for continuous improvement of programs and ultimately their pre-service candidates. Marshall University’s teacher education program was no exception.
Teacher Education at Marshall University

Teacher education has been an integral part of Marshall University since its inception. After Marshall College was purchased by the state of West Virginia in 1867, the legislature demonstrated its commitment to teacher education by establishing the West Virginia State Normal School (Lewis, n.d.). The Teachers College began in 1920 with the first college degree granted in 1921. In 1961, Marshall was granted university status by the West Virginia legislature. Initial NCATE accreditation was earned in 1975, and it has continued until the present (History of Marshall University Graduate College, n.d.; Moffat, 1981). The College of Education became the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) in 1995 with the addition of several non-teaching degrees (Tams, 2010).

The West Virginia legislature passed an act in July 1997 that merged Marshall University located in Huntington with the West Virginia Graduate College located in South Charleston. After the merger, the Professional Education Unit consisted of the Graduate School of Education and Professional Development and the School of Education. Both entities voiced their commitment to graduate programs in education and the need to offer the Masters of Arts in Teaching program on both campuses (Institutional Report, 2004; Tams, 2010).

Alternative Routes to Certification

The reformation that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s after the publication of A Nation at Risk resulted in not only the creation of professional standards but also a reformation of teacher preparation. Policy makers, schools of education and state departments of education began rethinking the process by which they train and certify
teachers (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). Not only was quality a consideration but also quantity. Retirement of veteran teachers and retention of new teachers seemed to indicate that teacher shortages would be imminent (Allen, 2005; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2006; Nagy & Wang, 2007; Pyszkowski, 1991). In response to these concerns, alternative routes to certification have grown from eight states offering programs in 1983 to all 50 states and the District of Columbia offering alternative certification programs today. Nearly one-third of new teachers currently being hired came through alternative routes to teacher certification (Feistritzer, 2005a; Feistritzer, 2008; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Stafford & Shaughnessy, 2006). According to Feistritzer, 130 different alternative routes to teacher certification exist and states report that 485 programs are implementing alternative routes to teacher certification.

What is the difference between alternative certification and alternative routes to certification? Perhaps there are as many definitions of alternative certification as there are routes to alternative certification. “With such a variety, it is easier to define what alternative certification is not: it is anything but a four-year undergraduate program housed in a school of education” (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007, p. 7). Walsh and Jacobs defined a true alternative certification program as having four characteristics: academic selectivity, strong subject-matter knowledge, streamlined and practical sequence, and intensive new teacher support. In 1990, the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) developed an intricate system that could be used to classify alternate routes to teacher certification into 10 diverse categories (Feistritzer, 2005a; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). NCEI examined the different definitions for alternative certification and came to the conclusion that alternative teacher certification and alternative routes to teacher
certification are essentially synonymous. Darling-Hammond (1990) defined an alternative route as full preparation for state certification at the graduate level that allows flexible scheduling and courses directed at specific teacher shortage areas. Alternative certification was defined as limited preparation that eliminates some coursework and student teaching requirements. For the purpose of this study as applied to Marshall University’s Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate program (PBTC), the working definition of alternative certification is defined as an alternative means for college graduates with degrees in liberal arts, fine arts, business, and professional fields to attain teacher certification by taking professional education courses and clinical experiences, including student teaching.

**Marshall University’s Response to Alternative Certification**

Although the Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree had previously been granted by Marshall University, the first MAT degree granted by the joined institutions occurred in 2000. The MAT program is an alternative certification program designed to enable college graduates with degrees in liberal arts, fine arts, business, and professional fields to receive teaching certification. By providing professional educational courses and clinical experiences such as student teaching, the MAT program prepares an individual to teach a specific content area in grades PreK-Adult, 5-Adult or 9-Adult. Upon completion of the 39 hour MAT program and meeting the West Virginia Department of Education’s testing requirements graduates receive a MAT degree and are recommended for certification (Tams, 2010).

Realizing the need for an accelerated route for teacher certification, Marshall University created the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) program in 2004.
It currently requires the candidate to complete 24 hours of coursework. The PBTC offers an individual with an undergraduate degree in a content area and/or other professional fields to be recommended to the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) for certification after they have completed and passed all coursework and testing requirements (Dr. Sandra Bailey, personal communication, February 27, 2009; Tams, 2010).

Marshall University’s MAT and PBTC candidates are evaluated using the Standards for Teacher Certification that were developed by the university after reviewing the standards of several state and national organizations such as INTASC, NCATE, NBPTS and WVDE. The Standards of Teaching Certification are essentially the ten INTASC principles that were developed by committees of teachers, teacher educators, school leaders and state department of education staff members. The standards communicate what beginning teachers should know and be able to do. Candidates are assessed using the Standards of Teacher Certification during the three major public school-based clinical experiences at Marshall University (Institutional Report, 2004). Schools of education must collect evidence to determine whether their programs are meeting the standards that have been set for them. By studying this evidence, institutions can learn what programmatic changes need to take place to ensure that their graduates are highly qualified.

**Statement of the Problem**

The future of this country rests on the shoulders of the next generation. If the United States is to remain a world power in the 21st century, its students must receive the best education that can be offered. Perhaps now more than ever before, it is imperative
that every student be taught by a highly qualified teacher. Teachers must possess the skills and knowledge to raise student achievement to the height that is needed for students to be successful in the information age and in a global economy. The quantity of teachers must increase as the quality of teachers increases (Levine, 2006). To increase the number of teachers, schools of education and state departments of education must find alternative ways to educate teachers and at the same time ensure that these teachers are highly qualified.

Accountability in education affects not only the P-12 system but also those who prepare teachers for that system. There has been increased pressure over the past decade for schools of education to be held accountable for the quality of preparation they are providing their candidates. Schools of education must constantly assess their teacher preparation programs and make revisions as needed. Graduates and completers of teacher preparation programs can provide valuable insights during the evaluation process (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to determine graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) programs at Marshall University. A study of the levels of preparedness as perceived by the graduates of Marshall University’s MAT program and PBTC program completers will greatly benefit the school of education as it strives to address strengths and weaknesses of the program.

**Organizational Learning Theory**

The climate of high stakes accountability and continuous evaluation that is prevalent in the field of education today is supported by the theory of organizational
learning. Fiol and Lyles (1985) defined organizational learning as “the process of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding” (p. 803). A learning organization is a group that seeks a common purpose with a collective commitment to systematically evaluating their actions, modifying them if needed and continuously developing more effective ways to meet their purposes (Cousins & Eart, 1995). NCATE Vice President Antoinette Mitchell (n.d.) defined organizational learning “as learning that affects the routines of an organization (forms, rules, procedures, conventions, strategies, and technologies), routines that guide the behavior, norms, and culture of individuals within the organization” (p. 3).

Thorton, Shepperson and Canavero (2007) referred to program evaluation and organizational learning as having a symbiotic relationship because both entities benefit from the other. They felt “that the ubiquitous program evaluations occurring daily in our schools can provide the basis for organizational learning and ultimately continuous improvement” (p. 48). DiObilda, Bolay, Foster, and Addison (2001) indicated that program evaluation is intended to judge the quality of a teacher preparation program, yet the process of program evaluation can also bring together all program stakeholders and strengthen each of them in the process.

Baker (1998) referred to the graduates’ perceptions of their preparation as one of the “richest sources of evaluative data” (p. 7). Evidence of strengths and weaknesses of teacher preparation programs can be provided by graduates of these programs and can provide direction for programmatic change (Ladd, 2000; Sakofs, 2002; Wilcox, Putnam, & Wigle, 2002). Thorton et al. (2007) supported the use of the input of graduates as feedback that would strengthen the learning organization. In this study, data will be
collected using a survey that will be distributed to graduates of Marshall University’s MAT program and completers of Marshall University’s PBTC program from 1999 to 2010.

**Research Questions**

The research questions for this study were derived from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards (Appendix A) and current literature.

1. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful?

2. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use child development and learning theories to support learning?

3. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners?

4. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities?

5. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning environments that are engaging and motivational?
6. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to communicate effectively in the classroom?

7. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use their knowledge of students, community and curriculum goals in their instructional planning?

8. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use formal and informal assessment?

9. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use formal and informal assessment?

10. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities?

11. Based on participants’ perceptions, to what extent did the MAT or PBTC program prepare them to teach?

**Operational Definitions**

1. *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*—researcher-created instrument used to collect data from graduates.

2. Create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful—the participant’s response on survey item 1 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.
3. Use child-development and learning theories—the participant’s responses on survey items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

4. Create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners—the participant’s response on survey item 7 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

5. Use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities—the participant’s responses on survey item 8, 9 and 10 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

6. Create learning environments that are engaging and motivational—the participant’s responses on survey item 11 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

7. Effective communicators—the participant’s responses on survey item 12 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

8. Knowledge of subject matter, students, the community and curriculum goals in their instructional planning—the participant’s responses on survey items 13, 14 and 15 of the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Effectiveness*.

9. Use formal and informal assessment—the participant’s responses on survey item 16 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Effectiveness*.

10. Reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities—the participant’s responses on survey items 17 and 18 on the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Effectiveness*. 
11. Foster relationships to support students’ learning— the participant’s responses on survey items 19 and 20 of the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

12. Marshall University Master of Arts in Teaching graduates and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate program completers — All students graduating from Marshall University with a Master of Arts in Teaching degree or completing the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate programs from Fall 1999 through Spring 2010.

13. Perceptions—The participant’s responses on *The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* using a scale of *unprepared* (1), *somewhat prepared* (2), *moderately prepared* (3), *well prepared* (4), and *extremely well prepared* (5).

**Significance of the Study**

Teacher preparation programs must be assessed to see if they are providing pre-service teachers with the education they need to be highly qualified teachers. D’Aniello (2008) ascertained that “educational reform movements, university teacher education accreditation requirements, and federal laws have increased the emphasis on the need for beginning teacher follow-up studies” (p. 309). The information gleaned from these studies is of vital importance to those entities responsible for preparing and retaining highly qualified teachers. The WVDE requires multiple ways of measuring a pre-service teacher’s performance which could include graduates’ feedback (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). This study would be beneficial to the WVDE as they assess the effectiveness of similar programs. Programs accredited by NCATE (National
Council for Accreditation of Education, 2008) are required to include feedback from graduates and completers. Marshall University’s MAT and PBTC programs need documentation that they have included the input of stakeholders involved in the teacher preparation program as they seek NCATE accreditation. Input of the stakeholders is also valuable for program evaluation. Information obtained from the graduates could be used to help determine how well Marshall University’s MAT and PBTC programs are preparing graduates in reference to the INTASC standards. This information will help to determine if programmatic changes need to occur. This study enabled Marshall University to see if these programs were having an effect on the teacher shortage specifically in the state of West Virginia.

**Limitations of the Study**

As is the case in every study, there were potential limitations and assumptions. The study was delimited to participants who were graduates of Marshall University’s MAT program and completers of Marshall University’s PBTC program from Fall 1999 to Spring 2010. Although the results were beneficial to the teacher preparation program at that university, it would be unwise to generalize these results to another institution of higher education (Gay & Airasian, 2008).

Another possible limitation is the instrument that was used for the study. Its validity and reliability were presented during the research investigation; however, the survey was researcher-designed and required the subjects to self-report. The researcher assumed that the subjects responded openly and honestly about their perceptions, but there was always the potential risk that the subjects responded in a way that they believed
the researcher would approve or that the subjects might not have understood the questions being asked (Fink, 2003; Patton, 2006).

Summary

Educational reform efforts, teacher preparation accreditation requirements and federal laws have increased the need for graduates’ input into organizational learning through program evaluation (D'Aniello, 2008). By providing feedback about their perceptions concerning their teacher preparation, the graduates of Marshall University’s MAT program and completers of the PBTC program helped to strengthen these programs. Graduates’ and completers’ feedback also provided the Professional Education Unit with information regarding the viability of the use of alternative certification programs.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The importance of preparing teachers is greater today than perhaps in any other time in our nation’s history. Workers in the 21st century must possess not only skill sets that are more complex than in the past but also skill sets that are more adaptable. Industries are no longer focused on manufacturing but on a service economy, and they are looking for workers who are well-educated and highly-skilled. Now more than ever before, teachers must be able to prepare all learners to be problem solvers, creative thinkers and effective communicators (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Houston, 2008; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

After the publication of The Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966), educators were led to believe that what they did in the classroom had little effect on the achievement of their students. Recent studies suggest that schools and specifically teachers affect student achievement (Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Schools of education have a tremendous responsibility to ensure that their graduates and completers have the qualifications that will enable them to be effective teachers. Pre-service educators must consider if the curriculum being taught is the curriculum that will lead their graduates to become the highly qualified teachers in the 21st century who have a positive effect on achievement.

It is the goal of this study to help one university ascertain the effectiveness of its alternative certification programs, the Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Program (PTBC), as determined by its
graduates’ and completers’ perceptions. This study will acquire specific feedback from its graduates and completers on their perceptions of the level of preparedness provided by these programs.

**Overview of Major Initiatives**

**Federal Influences**

Although education is not specifically mentioned in the United States Constitution, the involvement of the federal government in education has been present since and has increased dramatically in the latter half of the 20th century. “Education is, and always has been, a matter of federal concern and responsibility” (Sharpes, 1987, p. 7). Beginning with *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the federal government brought renewed emphasis to teacher preparation, causing schools of education to reevaluate the way in which they prepared teachers (Sikula, 1990).

*A Nation At Risk.* Between 1983 and 1988, numerous educational reports were published by national, regional and state groups. *A Nation at Risk,* with a distribution of over three million copies, created an unprecedented political debate (Sharpes, 1987). This report, published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, provided a sober commentary on the condition of the educational system in the United States. The report kindled national and state task forces to rethink the nation’s educational system, including teacher preparation programs. The report was critical of teacher education, specifically the lack of subject matter courses in the curriculum (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Two recommendations were directed specifically to teacher education:
1. Teacher candidates should be required to meet high standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching and to demonstrate mastery of content knowledge.

2. Schools of education should be judged on how well they meet the criteria.

According to Wise and Leibbrand (2000), three components of the standards movements came together to reform teacher preparation programs as a result of *A Nation at Risk*: professional content standards, state student standards, and finally, teacher preparation standards.

Perhaps one of the most positive results of *A Nation at Risk* was that the quality of schools and of teachers began being measured by the outcomes students achieved rather than the curriculum that was taught; output rather than input (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). Teacher education programs were no different. They began to focus more on the objectives or outcomes that their candidates demonstrated rather than the specific curricular components of their programs.

**Goals 2000.** The 1989 Charlottesville Educational Summit of the nation’s governors was responsible for initially writing the six National Education Goals that later became known as the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994). This legislation provided a framework by which states could base their reform efforts that included three principles: rigorous academic standards, incentives to meet these standards and alignment of curriculum, textbooks, and teacher education (Abdal-Haqq, 1995). The results of this legislation were broad and far reaching. Not only did professional organizations begin to develop standards for their disciplines but states also began to develop standards in specific content areas (“Federal initiatives to support systemic reform”, 1994; *Standards for all: A vision for education in the 21st century. High standards for all students. Goals*
2000: Educate America, 1993). As a result of Goals 2000, NCATE standards began to reflect NBPTS standards and encouraged teacher preparation institutions to link their programs to the content standards that were being developed (“NCATE announces teacher preparation reform project”, 1994; Wise, 1994).

**Higher Education Act of 1998.** After the publication of What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996), Congress felt the need to set in place measures to ensure that schools of education successfully prepared their graduates and that they were guided by professional standards.

Congress addressed the issue of teacher preparation at the national level by reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA) which was part of President Johnson’s “Great Society” programs. Originally designed to provide financial aid for low-income students to attend college, the HEA was reauthorized and signed into law by President Clinton in 1998 (Earley, 2001). The new Teacher Quality section of HEA, known as Title II, instituted new accountability measures in teacher preparation. Institutions receiving funding from the federal government were required to report the passage rate on teacher licensing exams taken by their graduates and completers (Wise & Leibbrand, 2000).

**No Child Left Behind.** In 2002 President Bush signed into law the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was also referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). The purpose of the act was to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education and that all students reach a minimum proficiency on state standards and state assessments (Cochran-Smith, 2006). NCLB required that all students
have a highly qualified teacher in their classroom. According to NCLB, a highly qualified teacher has at least a bachelor’s degree, full state certification or a passing score on a state teacher licensing exam and demonstrated competence in his or her subject area.

State departments of education and accrediting agencies such as NCATE made extensive efforts to ensure that teacher preparation programs were based on standards and that graduates were deemed highly qualified according to NCLB. A climate of assessment and accountability became prevalent in teacher education similar to the climate in the K-12 system. This climate has continued into the 21st century. According to Cochran-Smith and Fries (2005):

By the end of the decade, accountability—rather than higher standards—had become the bottom line. With the implementation of President Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, testing had become not only the means but also seemingly the purpose of accountability (p. 21).

The federal government has influenced teacher preparation for the past three decades from *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) to the *No Child Left Behind Act* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). This legislation provided the impetus that drove teacher preparation reform.

### Influences on Teaching Standards

In the late 1980s, The Holmes Group (1986; 1990) and the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) provided the catalyst to begin a reformation in teacher education. This reformation strengthened the subject matter and pedagogical preparation of pre-service teachers and encouraged the use of more authentic assessment (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Since that time, the
climate of accountability and assessment in education has been pervasive. Teacher education programs increased assessment to ensure excellence (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Holme's Group, 1986; International Society for Technology in Education, 2008; Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Wise & Leibbrand, 1993). It became imperative for schools of education to determine which standards they would follow, assess those standards and make improvements to their programs as needed.

Spurred on by publications such as A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and What Works: Research About Teaching and Learning (U. S. Department of Education, 1987), teacher education institutions sought standards by which they could establish program competencies. The Knowledge Base for the Beginning Teacher (Reynolds, 1989) was one of the first publications that maintained that there were certain competencies that a teacher needed to know and do to be effective. The NBPTS, established in 1987, was the first teaching organization to set standards for advanced certification (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995). During the 1990s, these standards were integrated with content standards developed by professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and later adapted by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). These entities as well as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) were committed to promoting greater professionalism in the teaching profession by defining the knowledge and skills
that teachers should possess, using program accreditation to ensure that programs disseminated these knowledge and skills and certification to ensure that graduates acquired these knowledge and skills (Kirby, McCombs, & Naftel, 2006). In 2001, Cochran-Smith prophesied, “The standards movement—and with it new outcomes-based performance assessments and high-stakes paper-and-pencil tests for teacher and students—will arguably have more influence on teaching and teacher education than any other contemporary agenda or innovation” (p. 179).

The Holmes Group. The Holmes Group, founded in 1983 by a group of deans of education from research universities offering doctoral degrees in education, focused initially on reforming teacher education and reforming the teaching profession itself (Sikula, 1990). The Holmes Group’s report, Tomorrow’s Teachers (1986), voiced concern over the numerous paths to teacher certification prevalent in the 1980s. The report stressed that education course content should be closely linked to field experience components and implemented in professional development schools (Wiggins, 1986). The Holmes Group advised in Tomorrow’s Teachers (1986) that certification should require a four-year baccalaureate degree program and an additional two-year master’s degree program.

Tomorrow’s Teachers recommended five goals: (a) to make the education of teachers more intellectually rigorous, (b) to identify differences in teachers’ commitment, skills and knowledge, (c) to connect schools of education to K-12 schools, (d) to make schools a good place for teachers to learn and work, and (e) to develop entry standards into the teaching profession that will be used exclusively. The report also suggested the
creation of a national standardized test for all beginning teachers culminating in national certification (Teacher Certification, 1986).

*The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.* In 1985, the Carnegie Corporation of New York brought together a group of individuals that excelled in education, business and government to address the concerns of *A Nation at Risk*. This Advisory Council appointed the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession which published the report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy’s Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986) a month after the publication of *Tomorrow’s Teachers* (1986). The report warned that the United States’ ability to compete in the world market was diminishing and success would depend on more stringent standards in education. To achieve these standards, the report called for reformation of teacher preparation.

The Task Force on Teaching as a Profession suggested that schools of education develop a new professional curriculum that focused on teaching knowledge, field experiences and culminated with a Master’s in Teaching degree. Perhaps the most important recommendation of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession was the creation of a national board for professional teaching standards. The Task Force recommended that teachers determine the standards and certify those individuals that met those standards. In 1987, this recommendation became a reality with the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003).

*National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.* Funded by the Carnegie Foundation in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards considered
two important questions: What should an effective teacher know and be able to do and what performance-based assessment process should be used to determine whether teachers have met those standards (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003)? To gain the support of classroom teachers, the majority of the board was practicing teachers. The mission of the NBPTS was to: maintain rigorous standards for what teachers should know and be able to do, to provide a national voluntary system that certifies teachers that meet those standards, and to advocate educational reforms that integrate National Board Certification into the American education system (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989).

In 1989, the National Board published a policy statement, What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do (1989,) that served as the foundation for the standards that were developed for teachers. The publication supported five core propositions of effective teachers: (a) teachers are committed to students and their learning, (b) teachers know the subject that they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, (c) teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, (d) teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and (e) teachers are members of learning communities. “The National Board draws on existing knowledge in developing its standards but also relies on the professional judgment of accomplished teachers and scholars in designing its assessment procedures,” (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989, p. 21).

By the end of the 20th century, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National Board
for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) were working together to develop a clear and consistent set of standards in pre-service preparation, licensing and professional development (Wise & Leibbrand, 2001).

**Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium.** The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) was created in 1987, and its primary audience was state education agencies that were responsible for certification, program approval and professional development. INTASC was guided by the principle that effective teachers must be able to integrate content knowledge with the strengths and weaknesses of students to ensure that all students learn (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.).

The mission of INTASC encouraged members to collaborate in the development of (a) comparable education policy between states, (b) new accountability requirements for teacher preparation programs, (c) new assessment techniques for the performance of teachers for licensing and evaluation, and (d) new programs to improve professional development (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.)

An important aspect of the INTASC standards was that they were performance-based; they described the behaviors that should be demonstrated by pre-service students rather than the coursework that should be taken by them. INTASC standards were model standards and intended to be a resource for states to use when developing their own state standards. Thirty-six state departments of education have since adopted the INTASC standards and ten professional organizations are INTASC members including NCATE, NBPTS and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.).
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Founded in 1954, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) replaced the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) as the agency responsible for accrediting teacher preparation programs. Five groups, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Education Association (NEA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA), were influential in the creation of NCATE (NCATE and the States: Partners in Excellence, n.d.)

Prior to the 1980s, NCATE was not involved in the state review of teacher preparation programs. State program reviews and NCATE reviews were separate. In 1989, NCATE implemented a new state partnership program that has since grown to include 48 states. State program approval and professional accreditation preparation is no longer duplicated by institutions seeking program approval (NCATE at 50, n.d.).

Several states began an initiative to develop model state licensing standards during the 1980s and 1990s. The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), under the guidance of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), developed licensing principles that could be used by state licensing agencies and accreditation agencies. The move to align accreditation with licensing standards began in 1995 when NCATE incorporated these licensing principles into its accreditation standards. States began to match licensing requirements to preparation standards through state/NCATE partnerships. “As states recognized NCATE’s standards through State/NCATE partnerships, they began to match licensing requirements to the preparation
standards (“NCATE at 50”, n.d., p. 7). By the end of the 20th century, NCATE had changed their evaluation system from one that focused on the curriculum to one that focused on candidate performance. NCATE also required their specialty associations to revise program standards to be performance-based. NCATE required institutions to demonstrate that their graduates know their subject matter and how to teach it effectively.

By partnering NCATE and INTASC standards, accreditation and state licensing were both strengthened. Currently, NCATE is now recognized as an integral part of the state review process with 39 states having adopted or adapted NCATE unit standards for purposes of state approval (“NCATE and the States: Partners in Excellence”, n.d.).

**West Virginia Department of Education.** Although the Constitution of the United States does not address public education, the Tenth Amendment is used as the basis for giving states the authority to oversee school systems. The state department of education, under the authority of the state board of education, has been given the responsibility of certifying teachers (Parkay, 2007). During the certification process, states evaluate the credentials of potential teachers to make sure that they meet the standards set by the state. Each state determines its own standards and procedures for certification. Certification confirms the teacher’s competence in subject area knowledge, pedagogy, teaching skills and classroom management (Roth & Mastain, 1984; Teacher Certification, 1986)

The state approval process of teacher preparation programs is closely linked to certification. The purpose of the approval process is to ensure that institutions produce graduates who meet state certification requirements. Accreditation further validates the excellence of teacher preparation programs. All 50 states have an accreditation
partnership with NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008).

Since 1994, the state of West Virginia has had a three-way partnership with NCATE and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC). All public institutions in the state are required to have NCATE accreditation (“Educator preparation in West Virginia”, n.d; NCATE state partnership features, 2009). The goals of the State Partnership Program included (a) to integrate state and national professional educator preparation standards, (b) to increase the rigor of reviews of institutions, (c) and to reduce the expense of conducting two separate reviews. Since 2000, NCATE has expanded the State Partnership Program’s mission to include alignment of state content teacher education standards with NCATE’s national professional standards for teacher preparation and to develop a system by which state partners collect and analyze data on candidate performance (“State partnership program FAQs”, 2008).

Prior to the spring of 2009, West Virginia Department of Education’s Policy 5100: Approval of Educational Personnel Preparation Programs used the INTASC standards as the basis of the “West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards” (West Virginia Department of Education, n.d.). These teaching standards assisted teacher education departments in laying the foundation for their teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs studied these broad standards and implemented them in the way they thought was most congruent with their conceptual frameworks. It was up to accreditation agencies such as NCATE and state departments of education to assess whether each institution was meeting those standards. Schools of education had to
constantly examine and evaluate whether their teacher preparation programs were meeting the standards needed to educate highly qualified teachers.

**Overview of Marshall University’s Alternative Certification Teacher Education Programs**

**History of Teacher Education at Marshall University**

Marshall University has valued the training of teachers since its original founding in 1837. Residents of Guyandotte, VA (present day Huntington, WV) determined to establish a school that would be known as Marshall Academy named after Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall. On March 30, 1838, the Virginia General Assembly incorporated Marshall Academy (*Institutional Report*, 2004). The first school term was held between 1838 and 1839. By 1840, according to Lewis, “Two objects were kept in view. The first of these was that of preparing young men and women to enter College. The second — one they could foresee — was that of preparing young men for teachers in the common schools of the county” (Lewis, n.d., p. 18). This commitment continued in 1841. “It will be observed that the training of teachers was ever uppermost in the minds of the Trustees, even from the day the Academy first opened for the admission of students” (Lewis, n.d., p. 19).

The importance of teacher education increased in 1841. The Educational Convention of Northwest Virginia met in present day Clarksburg, WV. This convention recommended that a law be enacted that would provide teacher training. It stressed that teachers must be taught how to teach if they are to be viewed as competent and qualified. Marshall Academy Trustee’s possessed this same commitment to teacher preparation. By
the end of 1847, Marshall Academy graduates were beginning to enter the teaching profession (Lewis, n.d.).

In the spring of 1858, the General Assembly of Virginia passed an act that would change the name of Marshall Academy to Marshall College (Institutional Report, 2004; Lewis, n.d.). The first term with a college-level faculty and curriculum was held in the fall of 1859. The Civil War, though, caused the school to close for a period of several years.

The Hon. William Ryland White, first State Superintendent of Free Schools, presented in his second report to the West Virginia State Legislature several reasons that Marshall College should be reopened:

1st. They will supply the greatly increasing demand for good teachers. 2d. They will establish a uniformity in the mode of teaching so that pupils, by a change of teacher, will not be embarrassed by a change in the general mode of instruction. 3d. The student in these Normal Schools, by keeping ever in the view the profession in which he proposes to enter, is rendered more thorough in his attainments. 4th. These schools are the laboratories where theory is passed through the crucible of experiment, and that which is new is received only after it is demonstrated to be true (Lewis, n.d., p. 57).

In 1867, the West Virginia Legislature created the State Normal School at Marshall College for the purpose of training teachers (Institutional Report, 2004; Lewis, n.d.).

Marshall College saw a period of growth during the first part of the twentieth century. In 1920, the Teachers College was established and the first college degree was granted in 1921. In 1938, the West Virginia Board of Education granted Marshall the
ability to grant master’s degrees in six areas: chemistry, education, history, political science, psychology and sociology (Pheister, Himes, Turner, & Teel, 2007).

Marshall became a university in 1961 (Institutional Report, 2004). The decades that followed showed an increase in enrollment, in facilities, in faculty and in academic offerings. As of 2004, Marshall University prepared more educators than any other college or university in the state of West Virginia (Institutional Report, 2004).

One of the oldest units within Marshall University, the College of Education, became the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) in 1995. The unit achieved NCATE accreditation in 1975 that has continued to the present day (“History of Marshall University Graduate College”, n.d.). The unit prepares not only teachers but also school counselors, principals, athletic trainers and superintendents. Continuing education courses and professional development opportunities are offered to professional educators. The COEHS is also responsible for related academic programs in Family and Consumer Sciences, Recreation and Park Resources, Counseling, Adult Fitness, Sports Management and Marketing, and Adult and Technical Education Training and Development. “The College of Education and Human Services provides education and services for programs that are open, complex, demanding, and evolving. It meets the academic needs of educators and other professional personnel” (Tams, 2010, p. 171).

In an effort to offer students more opportunities, Marshall University and the West Virginia Graduate College in South Charleston, WV merged programs in 1997, creating the Marshall University Graduate College. The merger of the two institutions boosted the student enrollment to over 16,000 students and the graduate enrollment increased to nearly 4,000 students with over 500 graduate faculty members (Pheister,
Himes, Turner, & Teel, 2007). Following the merger, the Graduate School of Education and Professional Development and the School of Education composed the Professional Education Unit of Marshall University (Institutional Report, 2004; Tams, 2010). The union of the two institutions furthered West Virginia Graduate College’s mission to take graduate education throughout the state.

Currently, Marshall University offers teacher certification programs: elementary education, secondary education, special education, early childhood education and reading education. Master of Arts degrees are also offered in elementary education, reading, secondary education, special education and teaching (School of Education, n.d.).

In an effort to address teacher shortages, Marshall University and other schools of education were faced with the challenge of preparing teachers through alternative methods. These alternative routes to certification enabled graduates in the liberal arts to receive teaching certification.

**Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification**

In 1983, not only was *A Nation at Risk* published, but also the state of New Jersey innovatively created “an alternative route to certification specifically to attract a new market for teaching—liberal arts graduates—and transition them into elementary and secondary teaching without going through a traditional college teacher education program” (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008, pp. 6-7). New Jersey was the first state to authorize an alternative route to certification by giving certificates to individuals who had a baccalaureate degree with a major in a teaching subject, who had a high grade-point average and who achieved a passing score on a subject area test. The following year, the
state of California passed an alternative route to certification that focused more on
extensive mentoring and induction activities (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

The same concerns that motivated the National Commission on Excellence in
Education to write A Nation at Risk motivated states to create innovative ways to certify
teachers. Some of those concerns were severe shortages in specific teaching areas such as
mathematics, science, foreign languages, English and special education and the growing
number of issued emergency certificates (Adcock & Mahlios, n.d.; Holmes, 2001;
National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Roth, 1986). Not only were
teachers not choosing to be certified in high need areas but retirement of veteran teachers
and retention of new teachers indicated that teacher shortages would occur (Allen, 2005;

These same concerns continue into the 21st century. Elementary and secondary
teachers are older and nearing retirement when compared to the rest of the workforce in
America. There is also an increase in the number of students enrolled in public schools
(Suell & Piotrowski, 2007). Problems with attrition and retention exacerbate the problem
with one-third of teachers leaving the field during the first three years of employment and
one-half leaving after five years. Twenty percent of special education, mathematics and
science teachers leave the field each year (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006). Alternative
certification provides states with a viable way to increase the number of teachers in their
state without having to depend on emergency certificates and temporary certificates.

In the past three decades, the number of states offering alternative routes to
teacher certification has grown from eight states in 1983 to all 50 states and the District
of Columbia today. In 1983, the National Center for Education Information (NCEI)
began collecting information from state licensing personnel about alternative routes to teacher certification offered by their states. Federal legislation influenced the growth of alternative route programs with the Higher Education Act of 1998 that required each state to report descriptions of their alternative programs and provide data on the number of teachers certified through these routes. The number of teaching certificates is rapidly increasing with 35,000 alternative certificates issued in 2003-2004 and 59,000 issued in 2005-2006 (Feistritzer, 2007). Currently, nearly one-third of new teachers being hired came through alternative routes (Feistritzer, 2005b; Feistritzer, 2008; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Stafford & Shaughnessy, 2006).

Prior to 1995, the term “alternative certification” was used to refer to many ways to become licensed to teach from emergency certification to programs for individuals who already hold a bachelor’s degree. Since the mid-1990s, states have made the following adjustments to what they consider alternative certification:

- No state calls emergency certificates alternative certification.
- Most alternative certification programs are designed for individuals who have already earned a bachelor’s degree.
- The differences between programs depend largely on who administers the program such as universities or state agencies.
- Most states issue the same initial teaching certificate to completers of their alternative teaching routes as they issue to traditional program completers (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008).

Although some opponents feel that alternative certification programs will weaken the quality of teachers, Stoddart and Floden (1995) maintain that alternative certification
programs provide a way to strengthen teaching standards that are weakened by emergency certificates. They contend that, when a candidate chooses an alternate route over a traditional route to certification, it is not a choice between some professional preparation and no preparation but a choice based on timing and the knowledge, skills and dispositions the institution deems of value.

McKibbin and Ray (1994) stressed that nontraditional alternative certification programs are not replacements for traditional certification programs but should be offered for students who might not otherwise become teachers if the traditional program was the only mode of delivery. Almost half of those seeking alternative certification stated that they would not be able to become a teacher if it had not been for an alternative certification program (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008).

Over twenty-five years have passed since the first state accepted the use of alternative certification. Initially, traditional teacher education programs felt threatened by the acceptance of alternative certification programs and feared that states could potentially do away with the need for teacher education programs (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Today, pre-service educators realize there was no need to worry. At present, the majority of alternative programs are administered by higher education institutions that collaborate with local school districts, regional education agencies and state education agencies (Feistritzer, 2005a; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Perhaps collaboration occurred because schools of education realized that to survive they would need to adapt to the needs of society. The term “alternative certification” no longer carries a negative connotation as it did three decades ago. Today, “colleges and universities scramble to
claim they offer some form of alternative certification program” (Haberman, 2005, p. ¶ 7).

It is difficult to find one definition for alternative certification or alternative routes. According to Walsh and Jacobs (2007), it is easier to define what it is not than to define what it is. They believe that alternative certification programs contain these characteristics: academic selectivity, strong subject-matter knowledge, streamlined and practical sequence, and intensive new teacher support.

In 1991, the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) developed a system that could be used to classify alternative routes to teacher certification into 10 diverse categories (Feistritzer, 2005a; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). The classification system made distinctions between programs according to who administers it, the reason it was established, entry requirements and restrictions. Over the past two decades, there has been an increase in the alternative routes designed for nontraditional populations that have already earned a baccalaureate degree, and there has been an increase in the number of alternative routes administered by universities and a decrease in the number administered by school districts (Feistritzer & Chester, 1991).

NCEI believes “alternative teacher certification” and “alternative routes to teacher certification” are synonymous. Darling-Hammond (1990) defined an “alternative route” as full preparation for state certification at the graduate level that allows flexible scheduling and courses directed at specific teacher shortage areas and defined “alternative certification” as limited preparation that eliminates some coursework and student teaching requirements. For the purpose of this study as applied to Marshall University’s Master’s of Arts in Teaching (MAT) Program and the Post-Baccalaureate
Teacher Certificate Program (PBTC), the working definition of alternative certification is defined as an alternative means for college graduates with degrees in liberal arts, fine arts, business, and professional fields to attain teacher certification by taking professional education courses and clinical experiences, including student teaching.

**Marshall University’s Response to Alternative Certification**

Marshall University created two pathways to alternative teacher certification: the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC).

**Master of Arts in Teaching.** In 1986, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) wrote a position statement that recommended that schools of education reflect on their current traditional programs and strengthen them by creating alternative models designed for nontraditional students. It was recommended that these routes have admission standards that include a baccalaureate degree, an assessment of subject matter competence, a curriculum that provided students with the knowledge and skills needed as beginning teachers, a student teaching experience in which pedagogical competence is assessed and an examination that ensures subject matter and professional education knowledge (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 1986).

It was not until 1999 that the first MAT degree was awarded by the joined institutions of Marshall University and West Virginia Graduate College. The catalog describes this degree as:

An alternative means for college graduates with degrees in liberal arts, fine arts, business, and professional fields to attain teacher certification. This program provides professional education courses and clinical experiences, including
student teaching, necessary to prepare individuals for teaching a specific content area in grades PreK-Adult, 5-Adult or 9-Adult (Tams, 2010, p. 111).

There are several requirements for an individual to be admitted into the MAT program. Applicants must have completed 50 percent of content specialization courses prior to admission. A GPA of 2.70 must have been achieved overall in their undergraduate program with a GPA of 2.70 in their content area. Applicants must have achieved passing scores on the Praxis I and either the Graduate Records Exam or the Millers Anthology Test. Candidates must maintain a 3.0 GPA after being admitted to the program. All programs of study in the MAT require 15 hours of foundations of education and technology courses and 24 hours of curriculum and instruction courses. The degree culminates with a 15 week, full-time student teaching experience. Candidates must complete the Praxis II content area test before student teaching and must pass a comprehensive examination prior to the completion of student teaching and graduation.

To be certified in West Virginia, candidates must also pass the Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching Exam Grades 7-12. Upon completion of the program and meeting the West Virginia Department of Education’s testing requirements, graduates receive an MAT degree and are recommended for certification (Tams, 2010).

**Post-Baccalaureate Program.** In 2004, the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Program (PBTC) began being offered on the South Charleston campus of Marshall University. In an effort to meet the needs of nontraditional students, Marshall developed a program that allowed individuals who had previously earned an undergraduate degree in a content area to obtain teacher certification. To be admitted, applicants must have completed 90 percent of required content courses. Other admission
requirements include an overall undergraduate GPA of 2.70 and a GPA of 2.70 in the content area. The Praxis I test must be passed before admission. Applicants must maintain a 3.0 GPA after admission to the PBTC. Candidates must complete the Praxis II content area test before they begin a 15 week, full-time student teaching experience. Before applying for certification the candidate must pass the Praxis II, Principles of Learning and Teaching Grades 7-12. After the completion of all PBTC program requirements, the student may apply for licensure awarded by the West Virginia Department of Education. Program requirements for the PBTC include six credit hours of foundation of education courses, twelve credit hours of curriculum and instruction courses, three credit hours of technology and three credit hours of supervised student teaching (Tams, 2010).

The Master of Arts in Teaching and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate have provided two alternative pathways to teacher certification for pre-service candidates at Marshall University. These alternative routes must be evaluated to ensure that they are excellent programs.

**Teacher Education Program Evaluation**

Traditional teacher education programs and alternative certification programs must be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. Teacher education program evaluation has been widely studied for many decades. The American Council on Education’s Commission on Teacher Education was established in 1938 to study teacher education. The three-year study, involving universities and school systems from over 26 states, suggested “the idea that improvement in teacher education is always possible, requiring continuous planning, continuous experimentation, and continuous evaluation”
(Commission on Teacher Education, 1944, p. xii). The Ohio State University, in the above study, reported that the revisions in its program were data driven and based on contributions of stakeholders (Bullough, 2000).

Troyer and Pace (1944) in *Evaluation in Teacher Education* documented methods used to evaluate teacher education programs at several institutions mentioned in the Commission on Teacher Education study. Several decades later, *An Illustrated Model for the Evaluation of Teacher Education Graduates* (Sandefur, 1970) recommended that evaluation be based on data-driven decisions. Following the acceptance of the National Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education prepared a model for evaluating teacher education graduates. Sandefur described a program evaluation protocol very similar to what is currently used in teacher education.

Prior to 1970, evaluation in teacher education was subjective, and decisions regarding the effectiveness of programs were based on intuition. The National Institute on Education (1984) issued the report, *Involvement in Learning*, which recommended that higher education begin holding themselves accountable. Many states began requiring program assessment to determine program effectiveness. Galluzzo and Craig (1990) stated that assessment in teacher education has four purposes: accountability, improvement, understanding and knowledge. Pettus and Smith (1991) began clarifying the process that teacher preparation programs could use that would lead to better programmatic decisions.

For the past several decades, program evaluation in teacher education has become routine. According to Kirkpatrick, Lincoln and Morrow, “Teacher educators gain from
examining the unique features of their own professional programs and from sharing those finding with other programs” (2006, p. 41). For program evaluation and candidate improvement to occur, programs must have ongoing assessment systems in place.

**Standards for Teacher Certification at Marshall University**

Standards must be developed for schools of education to evaluate their teacher preparation programs. After reviewing the standards of numerous state and national organizations such as INTASC, NCATE, NBPTS and WVDE, Marshall University’s College of Education developed the Standards for Teacher Certification. Marshall University’s MAT and PBTC candidates are evaluated using these standards at different times during their matriculation through the program. Candidates are assessed during the three public school-based clinical experiences. The final clinical experience is the student teaching practicum.

The Standards for Teacher Certification are identical to the INTASC principles and delineate the knowledge, skills, and performances of a beginning teacher *(Institutional Report, 2004)*. The Standards for Teacher Certification based on the INTASC principles include: content knowledge, human development and learning, diverse learners, instructional strategies, learning environment, communication, planning, assessment, reflective teaching, and professional relationships.

**Content Knowledge.** Candidates must possess knowledge in the content areas they plan to teach *(Richardson, 2003; Zahorik, 1996)*. Content knowledge should include the central concepts of the discipline, methods of inquiry, connections to the real world and how to effectively teach the content of the subject area *(Darling-Hammond, 2006a)*. Candidates must not only have content knowledge, but they must also possess
pedagogical content knowledge (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008). Pedagogical content knowledge suggests that teachers must not only know their subject matter, but their knowledge must be deep enough to connect what is being learned to the experiences of diverse learners. According to Shulman, “The teacher must have a flexible and multifaceted comprehension, adequate to impart alternative explanations of the same concepts or principles” (1987, p. 9).

**Human Development and Learning.** Candidates must understand how their students develop intellectually, socially and personally. They must also be able to provide appropriate learning opportunities to meet their needs (Snowman & Biehler, 2002; Woolfolk, 2009). Candidates must have a clear understanding of how learning occurs and how the issues concerning child development affect the process of learning. According to Darling-Hammond, “Ensuring that teachers understand who they are teaching and how they learn empowers teachers to organize their practice around the pursuit of learning rather than just covering the curriculum or getting through the textbook” (2006b, p. 85). Thinking about learning needs to be based on knowledge of the learner and the community within which the learning occurs both in and out of the classroom (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999; National Research Council, 2000).

**Diverse Learners.** Candidates must understand how students are different and create learning opportunities that meet the needs of all learners (Banks, 2001; Burke & Dunn, 2002; Dunn & Dunn, 1992; Dunn & Dunn, 1993; Gardner, 1995; Searson & Dunn, 2001). Not only has the number of students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom increased dramatically but also the number of children of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002a; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002b; National
Effective teachers must be able to recognize the abilities and needs of the students in the classroom. They must be able to build upon their students’ strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Knowledge of how to design a classroom that is culturally responsive and inclusive is needed (Gay, 2000). Candidates need to possess what Banks (2003) calls equity pedagogy, which suggests that teachers create curriculum and instruction based on students’ backgrounds and diversities.

**Instructional Strategies.** Candidates should promote critical thinking and problem solving through the use of a variety of instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). *The Art and Science of Teaching*, 41 categories of strategies were identified that represented the major areas of pedagogy (Marzano, 2007). Numerous instructional strategies must be in the candidate’s repertoire, and they must be able to select the most appropriate strategy (Leinhardt, 1990). If a strategy is not working, the candidate must be willing to abandon that strategy and select a more appropriate strategy. According to Marzano (2009), “A specific instructional strategy is effective only when used in the specific situation for which it was designed” (p. 34). The primary criterion should be selecting strategies that produce knowledge gain (Hattie, 2009).

**Learning Environment.** Candidates must use their knowledge of individual and group motivation to create a positive and active learning environment (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2000; Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley & Vincent, 2003). A learning environment in which the learners are actively engaged has been shown to increase achievement (Greenwood, Horton, & Utley, 2002; Greenwood, Terry, Marquis, & Walker, 1994). Candidates must find ways to stimulate all students to develop an intrinsic desire to learn (Harter & Jackson, 1992; Lepper, Corpus, & Iyengar, 2005; Zisimopoulos & Galanaki,
The learning environment must be characterized by positive relationships with the teacher and with the other students in the classroom. Students need to know the teacher cares and that they are valued members of the class (Johnson & Johnson, 2006; Klem & Connell, 2004; Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

**Communication.** Candidates must be able to communicate through verbal and nonverbal techniques, promote inquiry, collaboration and a climate of discourse in the classroom (Brown, 2005; Mottet, Garza, Beebe, Jurrells, & Furler, 2008). They must not only consider what they say but also the body language they use when they say it (Martins, 2000). It is important for candidates to create a communication-based teaching-learning focus (Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, 1978; McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2005). Specific instructional communication behaviors have been shown to increase students’ affective learning including nonverbal immediacy, clarity, and content relevance. Teacher confirmation needs to be used in the classroom (Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006).

**Planning.** Candidates must plan effective instruction founded on the standards and knowledge of subject matter, students and community (Ediger, 2004; McTighe & Wiggins, 1999). If teachers are to address the standards that have been deemed essential and address the diverse learners in the classroom, they must devote time to planning (Clark & Yinger, 1988; Morine-Dershimer, 2006; Tomlinson, 2003). Teachers must be willing to be flexible and adjust their plans according to the events in their classroom (Chavelson, 1987).

According to Woolfolk (2009):
In order to plan creatively and flexibly, teachers need to have wide-ranging knowledge about students, their interests, and their abilities; the subjects being taught; alternative ways to teach and assess understanding; how to work with groups; the expectations and limitations of the school and community; how to apply and adapt materials and texts; and how to pull all this knowledge together into meaningful activities (p. 457).

Assessment. Candidates must understand and be able to implement a balanced assessment system that evaluates 21st century knowledge and skills. Assessment in the 21st century must include a variety of measures to assess student learning. Teachers must use formative and summative assessment to increase achievement and meet the needs of the learners in their classroom (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Martin-Kniep, 2000; Perie, Marion, Gong, & Wurtzel, 2007; Stiggins, 2005; Stiggins & DuFour, 2009). Teachers need to recognize that assessments must have a clear purpose, address clear targets, communicate effectively, be designed soundly and involve students (Chappuis, 2009; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2006). Assessments using real-world contexts need to be one of the tools used to evaluate learning if today’s children are to be prepared to face tomorrow’s complex challenges in the 21st century (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education & the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2010; DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005; Wiggins, 1990).

style and ultimately, greater effectiveness as a teacher” (¶12). Reflective teachers are effective teachers (Hogan, Rabinowitz, & Craven, 2003).

Teachers should regularly reflect on how their practice compares with best practices and with experts in the field. Reflection should deepen as a teacher moves from a novice to a veteran teacher (Larrivee, 2004; Larrivee, 2008).

**Professional Relationships.** Candidates must be able to cultivate relationships with colleagues, parents and the community to support the students in their classroom. Epstein theorized that the home, the school and the community overlap to form spheres of influence that affect the student (Epstein, 2001; Michael, Dittus, & Epstein, 2007). These relationships encourage teachers to try new ideas, encourage parents to contribute to the school and encourage students to strive toward higher academic achievement (Miretzky, 2004). Parental support and community involvement have been shown to increase student achievement (Marzano, 2003). Teachers need to strengthen their communication with the parents of the students in their classrooms (Korkmaz, 2007; Shirvani, 2007).

Pre-service teachers at Marshall University are evaluated using the Standards for Teacher Certification. These standards, based on the INTASC principles, provide the benchmarks that need to be achieved by all graduates and completers.

**Organizational Learning**

Schools of Education are held accountable to determine whether their standards such as the Standards for Teacher of Certification are being met. Higher education and specifically teacher education have not been immune to the climate of high stakes accountability that has characterized the field of education over the past few decades.
Accreditation requires thorough and ongoing program evaluation based on assessment data. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards require “systemic assessment, which encourages more attention to program design, increased faculty collaboration, and greater alignment within and between programs. They necessitate self-assessment and continuous improvement” (Mitchell, n.d., pp. 1-2).

If this level of introspection is to take place, schools of education must devote themselves to learning as much as they can about their organizations and reflecting systematically on how to improve their current practice. This reflection has been called “organizational learning” (Cousins & Eart, 1995; Fiol & Lyles, 1985). If what is discovered affects the routines of the organization “that guide behavior, norms and cultures of individuals within the organization” then it is organizational learning (Mitchell, n.d., p. 3). Senge (1990) defined a learning organization as “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (p. 11).

Organizational learning is the essence of program evaluation. According to Thorton, Shepperson and Canavero (2007), both program evaluation and organizational learning benefit from each other. As programs evaluate their operations, they can learn useful information that will be beneficial to their growth and success. Nevis, Dibella & Gould (1995) defined organizational learning as using past experiences to improve decisions in the future. Program evaluation often is seen as a daunting endeavor conducted in response to external evaluators, but, if done properly, it can bring together and strengthen all stakeholders (DiObilda, Bolay, Foster, & Addison, 2001). Stakeholders such as program graduates provide a valuable source of evaluative data (Baker, 1998). Their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program can provide direction
for programmatic change and organizational learning (Ladd, 2000; Sakofs, 2002; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007; Wilcox, Putnam, & Wigle, 2002).

**Graduates’ and Completers’ Perceptions**

Teacher preparation programs depend on their graduates and completers to provide them with information on how to improve their programs or to provide organizational learning. The literature indicates that “follow-up studies are required and that it is essential to monitor the quality of teacher preparation programs” (D’Aniello, 2008, p. 311). NCATE has emphasized the need for involving graduates in systematic follow-up studies (Craig, 1989). Graduates and completers are the most qualified in deciding if their programs prepared them for the realities of the classroom, and they are often used for evaluation of teacher preparation programs (Armstrong, 2007; Galluzzo & Craig, 1990).

Survey responses are perceptions rather than actual measures, but the use of surveys and the study of perceptions are important to the understanding of effective teachers (Loadman, Freeman, & Brookhart, 1999). Survey data provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher education programs. Deficiencies in the teacher education program can be identified and addressed during a thorough program review. In this study, graduates’ perceptions will be collected using a survey that will be distributed to all graduates of Marshall University’s MAT program and completers of Marshall University’s PBTC program from 2000 to 2010.

**Summary**

A review of the literature has shown that graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of teacher preparation programs are needed for institutions to evaluate the effectiveness
of their programs (Armstrong, 2007; Baker, 1998; D'Aniello, 2008; DiObilda, Bolay, Foster, & Addison, 2001; Ladd, 2000; Sakofs, 2002; Wilcox, Putnam, & Wigle, 2002). Teacher preparation programs must assess whether their programs are providing their graduates and completers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach all students (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Holme's Group, 1986; Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Wise & Leibbrand, 1993).

Higher education was influenced to increase accountability and assessment of teacher preparation programs by federal legislation such as A Nation at Risk, Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Holmes Group, 1990; The Teaching Commission, 2004). The Title II of the Higher Education Act helped to identify teacher preparation programs that were not producing highly qualified teachers (Meeting the highly qualified teachers challenge: The secretary's third annual report on teacher quality, 2004).

In response to federal legislation, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future began to develop standards for teachers. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) were instrumental in writing the standards (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Diez, 1998; Elliott, 1996; Holm & Horn, 2003; Kraft, 2001; Sewall, 1994; Weiss & Weiss, 1998). According to these standards, teacher preparation programs should produce graduates with the following qualities: (a)
the ability to make content meaningful, (b) the ability to use knowledge of child
development and learning theories, (c) the ability to adapt instruction to differing learning
styles and diversity, (d) the ability to use a variety of instructional strategies, (e) the
ability to create a learning environment that is engaging and motivating, (f) the ability to
communicate effectively, (g) the ability to plan for instruction, (h) the ability to use
effective assessment, and (i) the ability to foster relationships (Interstate New Teachers

_ A Nation at Risk _ not only resulted in the creation of professional standards but
also a reformation of teacher education. Experts began rethinking the process of training
and certifying teachers. Retirement of veteran teachers and retention of new teachers
indicated that teacher shortages might occur (Allen, 2005; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008;
Alternative routes to certification grew from eight states offering programs in 1983 to all
50 states and the District of Columbia offering alternative certification programs today
(Feistritzer, 2005a; Feistritzer, 2008; Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Stafford & Shaughnessy,
2006).

Teacher education has been an essential part of Marshall University since it was
founded. The teacher preparation program received initial NCATE accreditation in 1975.
In 1997, Marshall University located in Huntington, WV merged with West Virginia
Graduate College in South Charleston, WV. After the merger, both entities were
committed to graduate programs in education (_Institutional Report_, 2004; Tams, 2010).
Although previously the Masters of Arts in Teaching had been offered at Huntington
campus, the merged institutions granted their first MAT degree in 2000. In 2004, the
PBTC program was created (Bailey, personal communication, February 27, 2009). Both the MAT and the PBTC candidates are assessed by the Standards of Teacher Certification developed by Marshall University. These standards were based on the INTASC principles and communicate what beginning teachers should know and be able to do. Candidates are assessed during each of the major school-based clinical experiences using these standards (*Institutional Report, 2004*).

The theory of organizational learning supports the atmosphere of accountability and assessment that is present in teacher education. Organizational learning involves improving practice through evaluating actions, modifying them if needed and continually developing more effective ways of practice (Cousins & Eart, 1995; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Mitchell, n.d.). Program stakeholders are brought together in an atmosphere of continuous improvement through program evaluation and organizational learning (DiObilda, Bolay, Foster, & Addison, 2001; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007). Program graduates and completers can provide teacher preparation programs with one important element or measure that they need for programmatic improvement (Baker, 1998; Ladd, 2000; Sakofs, 2002; Thornton, Shepperson, & Canavero, 2007; Wilcox, Putnam, & Wigle, 2002).

An effective teacher preparation program must provide verification that its program is producing candidates that are prepared to teach. Program graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of their preparation can provide the evidence that is needed. By evaluating the graduates’ and completers’ perceptions, programmatic improvement can be systematically made.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

Marshall University (MU)’s teacher education program is dedicated to preparing teacher candidates to become excellent teachers. To ensure excellence, it is essential for candidates to be involved in the evaluation of their programs. According to Patton (2001), program evaluation should review the goals of the program and the effect of the program on participants. Evaluation research involves the methodical investigation to determine the success of a specific program (Royse, Thyer & Padgett, 2010). The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) states that “persons involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed” (p. 25). Stakeholders should not only be identified but they should also be integral in the planning and conducting of the evaluation. The purpose of this study is to determine graduates’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) programs at Marshall University. The perceptions of program graduates and completers provided by data obtained through a survey will help Marshall University’s teacher education program evaluate the effectiveness of its MAT and PBTC programs. This chapter includes descriptions of the study’s research design, population, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and statistical analyses of the data.

Research Design

The research design should ensure that the evidence acquired provides an answer to initial questions as clearly as possible (De Vaus, 2001). Descriptive research methods try to “provide objective, reliable, and scientifically valid descriptions of what people think, say, and do” (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010, p. 204). Cross-sectional studies measure the
perceptions of participants at one point in time (Schutt, 2008). This descriptive, cross-sectional study was designed to determine graduates’ and program completers’ perceptions of their preparation in teacher education. The MAT and the PBTC programs provide an alternative means for college graduates to attain teacher certification at Marshall University.

**Population**

The population for this study included students graduating from Marshall University with a Masters of Arts in Teaching degree or completing the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate from Fall 1999 through Spring 2010. The population was further defined by those for whom an accurate address could be obtained. From the original list of 498 graduates and completers, 167 participants were removed because no address was available for them. From the remaining, 331 participants, 66 surveys were returned because the address was no longer accurate, leaving a population of 265 participants. Surveys were sent to 265 graduates and completers regarding their perceptions of their preparation at Marshall University.

**Instrumentation**

Data were collected through the use of a survey questionnaire that asked MAT graduates and PBTC completers about their perception of their preparation at Marshall University. Each participant was given the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* (Appendix B) that was based on an in-depth literature review, the INTASC principles and the Standards for Teacher Certification at Marshall University. The *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* determined the level of preparedness as perceived by MAT graduates and PBTC completers.
The survey was built around the INTASC standards for teachers and examined the following domains: (a) the ability to make content meaningful, (b) the ability to use knowledge of child development and learning theories, (c) the ability to adapt instruction to differing learning styles and diversity, (d) the ability to use a variety of instructional strategies, (e) the ability to create a learning environment that is engaging and motivational, (f) the ability to communicate effectively, (g) the ability to plan for instruction, (h) the ability to use effective assessment, (i) the ability to reflect and participate in professional development and (j) the ability to foster relationships.

*The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* consisted of three sections. The first section asked participants to rate how well Marshall University prepared them by answering 20 close-ended items with ordered choices. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt prepared by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = unprepared, 2 = somewhat prepared, 3 = moderately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = extremely well prepared). Fink (2003) stated, “Current thinking suggests that 5- to 7-point scales are adequate for the majority of surveys that use ordered responses” (p. 57).

The second section contained two open-ended questions asking (a) what aspects of the program were most beneficial to them and (b) how they would improve the program. The third section was designed to collect demographic data including gender, program completed, year completed, current teaching status, teaching content area, undergraduate major, type of institution and area of certification. These data were collected to inform the preparation program of the status of its graduates and to identify
differences in reports by gender, program completed, year completed, content area and undergraduate major.

Several steps were taken to validate the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*. Doctoral students in a class on survey research in education in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Marshall University helped to establish face validity. The doctoral students in the course were asked to read the survey and make suggestions pertaining to clarity, appropriateness, and content.

Validity can be determined by a panel of experts in the subject area in instruments developed by the researcher (Babbie, 1990; Gay & Airasian, 2008). According to Litwin, “Content validity is a subjective measure of how appropriate items or scales seem to a set of reviewers who have some knowledge of the subject matter” (2003, p. 33). Three professors in the area of curriculum and instruction at Marshall University studied the survey and made suggestions concerning clarity, content and language usage (Appendix C). Adjustments were made to the survey based on the comments given by the doctoral students in a course on survey research in education and the comments given by the panel of experts.

After the suggestions by the doctoral students and professors were made, the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* was piloted for clarity and readability by three MAT graduates and one PBTC completer. Each participant was asked to complete the survey and make suggestions for improvement. Participants provided the researcher with suggestions to clarify instructions and enhance readability.

The comments that were given by the doctoral students, the professors and the program completers and graduates helped to validate the survey. Having participants in a
pilot study critique the completeness of a questionnaire is a way to establish content validity (Gay & Airasian, 2008). According to Bourque and Fielder (2003), “Surveyors should always conduct pretests and pilot tests prior to actual data collection, evaluate the results carefully, and apply what they learn in making changes to the questionnaire and the study design” (p. 93).

The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness survey’s internal consistency was assessed through the use of the Cronbach’s Alpha test. The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is the most commonly used index of reliability in the area of education research and can be used to determine the extent of homogeneity within the survey (Fink, 2003; Gliner & Morgan, 2000). The closer the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients should be greater than .7 (DeVellis, 2003; George & Mallery, 2003). The alpha coefficient for the 20 items in Section I of the survey yielded a .950 in a test of reliability. The Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted approval to conduct the study on July 12, 2010 (Appendix D).

Data Collection Procedures

The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness, a self-reported survey questionnaire, asked participants to report on perceptions of their preparation. Each participant was mailed a packet assembled by the researcher. The packet included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and survey, the importance of the participant’s response, the assurance of confidentiality, the approval of the Office of Research Integrity at Marshall University and the researcher’s contact information (Appendix E). The packet also included a copy of the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC
Program Effectiveness and a stamped, addressed reply envelope. On July 19, 2010, the first packet was sent to participants. They were asked to complete the survey and return it within two weeks.

Each postage-paid return envelope was coded with an identifying number that was used to track for re-mailing purposes only. A return rate chart was constructed to track returned surveys.

Two weeks following the initial mailing, a follow-up letter and second packet was sent to those who had not yet responded. Bourque and Fielder noted that “Conducting follow-ups is the best means of increasing response rate” (2003, p. 162). A week following the second mailing, a postcard was mailed to participants encouraging them to complete the survey (Appendix F). A third packet was mailed to non-respondents, a month after the postcard was sent. By September 23, 2010, a total of 152 responses had been collected and a response rate of 57% was achieved.

**Data Analysis**

After the researcher received the completed surveys, data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. In response to each research question, descriptive statistics were calculated. Ancillary findings were reported based on the demographic information. Open-ended question responses were categorized and analyzed to determine emergent themes concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the MAT and PBTC programs.

**Summary**

This chapter describes the methods that were used to determine the degree to which the participants perceived their preparation in Marshall University’s MAT and
PBTC to be effective as defined by the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Effectiveness.

This self-reported survey questionnaire collected descriptive data from the 152 graduates and completers who returned the survey. The following chapter will present the results of the data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) programs at Marshall University. The research questions for this study were derived from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Principles and current literature. A researcher-designed instrument, *The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*, was used to collect descriptive data to address the following research questions:

1. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful?

2. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use child development and learning theories to support learning?

3. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners?

4. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities?
5. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning environments that are engaging and motivational?

6. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to effectively communicate in the classroom?

7. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use their knowledge of students, community and curriculum goals in their instructional planning?

8. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use formal and informal assessment?

9. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities?

10. What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to foster relationships to support students’ learning?

11. Based on participants’ perceptions, to what extent did the MAT or PBTC program, prepare them to teach?

*The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* consisted of three sections. The first section asked participants to rate how well Marshall University prepared them by answering 20 close-ended items with ordered choices. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt prepared by using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = unprepared, 2 = somewhat prepared, 3 = moderately prepared, 4 = well
prepared, and $5 = \text{extremely well prepared}$). Fink (2003) stated, “Current thinking suggests that 5- to 7-point scales are adequate for the majority of surveys that use ordered responses” (p. 57).

The second section contained two open-ended questions asking (a) what aspects of the program were most beneficial to them and (b) how would they improve the program. The third section was designed to collect demographic data including gender, program completed, year completed, current teaching status, teaching content area, undergraduate major, type of institution and area of certification. Those data were collected to inform the preparation program of the status of its graduates and to identify differences in reports by gender, program completed, year completed, content area and undergraduate major.

**Population and Sample**

The population for this study included students graduating from Marshall University with a Masters of Arts in Teaching degree or completing the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate program from Fall 1999 through Spring 2010. The population was further defined by those for whom an accurate address could be obtained. The original list of graduates and completers was obtained from Marshall University’s directory information. From the original list of 498 graduates and completers, 167 participants were removed because no address was available for them leaving a population size of 331. After the first mailing on July 17, 2010, sixty-six surveys were returned because the address was no longer accurate leaving a population of 265 participants. Surveys were sent to 265 graduates and completers regarding their perceptions of their preparation at Marshall University.
Following a second mailing, a postcard reminder and a third mailing, 152 surveys were returned reaching a 57% return rate on September 23, 2010. Babbie (1990) contended that a return rate of 50% + one will provide a sufficient review of the data without statistical bias. Although the mailings resulted in 152 returned surveys, the number of responses for each statement on the survey varied due to the fact that some respondents chose not to respond to every item.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18 software program was used to calculate the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the 20 Likert scale questions in Section I to determine reliability. *The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* yielded a .950 Cronbach score for reliability.

**Major Findings**

This section presents the major findings for each of the 11 research questions. Results were collected based on self-reported responses to *The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*.

The first section of the survey contained 20 forced-answer statements based on the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards. Each of the ten INTASC standards was represented by one or more survey items. For example, INTASC Standard “Content Knowledge” is represented by survey item number 1 but INTASC Standard “Human Development and Learning” is represented by survey items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Table 1 provides the targeted INTASC standard and the survey item numbers related to each standard.
Table 1 - INTASC Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTASC Standard</th>
<th>Survey Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>Item 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development and Learning</td>
<td>Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td>Item 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>Items 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Item 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Item 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Items 13, 14, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Item 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Teaching/Professional Growth</td>
<td>Items 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Relationships</td>
<td>Items 19, 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness asked respondents to describe their perceptions of their preparation in relation to the ten INTASC standards.

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for each INTASC standard represented by the survey items. Content knowledge, diverse learners, learning environment, communications, and assessment are each represented by an individual survey item. Human development and learning, instructional strategies, planning, reflective teaching and professional relationships are represented by composites as there are more than one survey question addressing each INTASc standard. The mean, median, mode and standard deviation are listed for each standard.

The composite mean scores were calculated from a new variable that contained the mean response for each individual’s responses for each of the survey items represented in the standard. Once the new variable was created, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to determine the composite mean. The same procedure was used to determine the composite median of each INTASC standard that was represented by more than one survey item.
Table 2- Descriptive Statistics for All Survey Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development and Learning</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Learning and Professional Growth</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following sections, the major findings for each research question are discussed.

**RQ 1: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful?**

The first item of the survey explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to make learning meaningful by using the constructs of the discipline or their knowledge of the content. Table 3 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey item targeting content knowledge.

Table 3- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Item 1: Content Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to make learning meaningful by using the structures of the discipline</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first item of the survey had a mean of 3.81 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 146 responses; 105 respondents (71.9%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (53.4%) or *extremely well prepared* (18.5%) in the area of content knowledge. Six respondents did not answer this survey item.
The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful was 3.81 with 3.0 being *moderately prepared* and 4.0 being *well prepared*.

**RQ 2: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use child development and learning theories to support learning?**

The second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth items of the survey explored the respondents’ perceptions of their knowledge of human development and learning. Table 4 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey items targeting human development and learning.

**Table 4- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6: Human Development and Learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze how students learn</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to analyze how students develop</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for intellectual development</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for social development</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for personal development</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second survey item had a mean of 3.91 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 110 respondents (73.3%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (50.7%) or *extremely well prepared* (22.7%) concerning their ability to analyze how students learn. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

The third survey item had a mean of 3.85 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 149 responses; 99 respondents (66.5%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (43.0%) or
extremely well prepared (23.5%) concerning their ability to analyze how students develop. Three respondents did not answer this survey item.

The fourth survey item had a mean of 4.03 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 121 respondents (80.7%) perceived that they were well prepared (54.0%) or extremely well prepared (26.7%) concerning their ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for intellectual development. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

The fifth survey item had a mean of 3.75 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 101 respondents (67.4%) perceived that they were well prepared (48.7%) or extremely well prepared (18.7%) concerning their ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for social development. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

The sixth survey item had a mean of 3.80 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 149 responses; 104 respondents (69.8%) perceived that they were well prepared (49.7%) or extremely well prepared (20.1%) concerning their ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for personal development. Three respondents did not answer this survey item.

Table 5 illustrates composite scores for descriptive data targeting human development and learning. The five survey items that address human development and learning were collapsed into a single mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The composite mean for human development and learning was 3.87. The composite median was 4.0 or well prepared and the composite mode was 4.0 or well prepared.
Table 5- Composite Scores for Descriptive Data: Human Development and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score: Human Development and Learning</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.697</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composite mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to use child development and learning theories to support learning was 3.87 with 3.0 being *moderately prepared* and 4.0 being *well prepared*.

**RQ 3: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners?**

The seventh survey item explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. Table 6 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey item targeting diverse learners.

Table 6- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Item 7: Diverse Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to create instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The seventh survey item had a mean of 3.90 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 149 responses; 105 respondents (70.4%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (40.9%) or *extremely well prepared* (29.5%) in the area of diverse learners. Three respondents did not answer this survey item.

The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners was 3.90 with 3.0 being *moderately prepared* and 4.0 being *well prepared*. 
**RQ 4: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities?**

The eighth, ninth and tenth items of the survey explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to use instructional strategies. Table 7 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey items targeting instructional strategies.

| Table 7- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items 8, 9 and 10: Instructional Strategies |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking | 150 | 4.24 | 4.0 | 5.0 | .841 |
| Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage problems solving | 150 | 4.09 | 4.0 | 4.0 | .777 |
| Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage performance skills | 150 | 4.01 | 4.0 | 4.0 | .879 |

The eighth survey item had a mean of 4.24 (median 4.0, mode 5.0) with 150 responses; 127 respondents (84.7%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (40.7%) or *extremely well prepared* (44.0%) concerning their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

The ninth survey item had a mean of 4.09 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 120 respondents (80.0%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (48.7%) or *extremely well prepared* (31.3%) concerning their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage problem solving. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.
The tenth survey item had a mean of 4.01 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 118 respondents (78.6%) perceived that they were well prepared (49.3%) or extremely well prepared (29.3%) concerning their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage performance skills. Two respondents did not respond to this survey item.

Table 8 illustrates composite scores for descriptive data targeting instructional strategies. The three survey items that address instructional strategies have been collapsed into a single median, mode and standard deviation. The composite mean for instructional strategies was 4.11. The composite median and composite mode were 4.0 or well prepared.

**Table 8- Composite Scores for Descriptive Data: Instructional Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Score: Instructional Strategies</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composite mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking skills and problem solving abilities is 4.11. This score indicates that respondents felt well prepared.

**RQ 5: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning environments that are engaging and motivational?**

Survey item 11 explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to create an appropriate learning environment. Table 9 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey item targeting learning environment.
Table 9- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Item 11: Learning Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to create an appropriate learning environment</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to create an appropriate learning environment</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 11 had a mean of 4.19 (median 4.0, mode 5.0) with 149 responses; 122 participants (81.9%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (38.9%) or *extremely well prepared* (43%) in the area of ability to create appropriate learning environments.

Three respondents did not answer this survey item.

The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to create learning environments that are engaging and motivational was 4.19. This score indicates that respondents felt *well prepared*.

**RQ 6: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to effectively communicate in the classroom?**

Survey item 12 explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to communicate in the classroom. Table 10 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey item targeting communication.

Table 10- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Item 12: Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to use appropriate communication techniques</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use appropriate communication techniques</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 12 had a mean of 4.09 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 148 responses; 119 respondents (80.4%) perceived that they were *well prepared* (48.0%) or *extremely well prepared* (32.4%) in the area of ability to use appropriate communication techniques. Four respondents did not answer this survey item.
The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to effectively communicate in the classroom was 4.09. This score indicates that respondents felt well prepared.

**RQ 7: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use their knowledge of students, community and curriculum goals in their instructional planning?**

Survey items 13, 14 and 15 explored the respondents’ perceptions of ability to plan. Table 11 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey items targeting planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items 13, 14 and 15: Planning</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of students</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of community</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of standards</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 13 had a mean of 3.99 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 110 respondents (73.4%) agreed that they were well prepared (44.7%) or extremely well prepared (28.7%) concerning their ability to plan instruction based on critical understanding of students. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

Survey item 14 had a mean of 3.54 (median 4.0, mode 3.0) with 150 responses; 102 respondents (68.0%) perceived that they were moderately prepared (34.7%) or well prepared (33.3%) concerning their ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of the community. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.
Survey item 15 had a mean of 4.14 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 150 responses; 119 respondents (79.3%) perceived that they were well prepared (40.0%) or extremely well prepared (39.3%) concerning their ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of standards. Two respondents did not answer this survey item.

Table 12 illustrates composite scores for descriptive data targeting planning. The three survey items that address planning have been collapsed into a single mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The composite mean for planning was 3.89. The composite median and composite mode were 4.0 or well prepared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12- Composite Scores for Descriptive Data: Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score: Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composite mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to use their knowledge of students, community and curriculum goals in their instructional planning was 3.89 with 3.0 being moderately prepared and 4.0 being well prepared.

RQ 8: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to use formal and informal assessment?

Item 16 of the survey explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to use a variety of assessment strategies. Table 13 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey item targeting assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Item 16: Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use a variety of assessment strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 16 had a mean of 4.21 (median 4.0, mode 5.0) with 145 responses; 121 respondents (83.5%) perceived that they were well prepared (40.7%) or extremely
well prepared (42.8%) in the area of ability to use a variety of assessment strategies. Seven respondents did not answer this survey item.

The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to use formal and informal assessment was 4.21. This score indicates that respondents felt well prepared.

**RQ 9: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities?**

Survey items 17 and 18 explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities. Table 14 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey items targeting reflective teaching and professional growth.

**Table 14- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items 17 and 18: Reflective Teaching and Professional Growth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to reflect on the effectiveness of personal choices on others</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to understand the role and need to participate in professional development opportunities</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 17 had a mean of 3.74 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 144 responses; 92 respondents (63.9%) perceived that they were well prepared (43.8%) or extremely well prepared (20.1%) concerning their ability to reflect on the effectiveness of personal choices on others. Eight respondents did not answer this survey item.

Survey item 18 had a mean of 3.83 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 145 responses; 100 respondents (68.9%) perceived that they were well prepared (43.4%) or extremely
well prepared (25.5%) concerning their ability to understand the role and need to participate in professional development opportunities. Seven respondents did not answer this survey item.

Table 15 illustrates composite scores for descriptive data targeting reflective teaching and professional development. The two survey items that address reflective teaching and professional development have been collapsed into a single mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The composite mean for reflective teaching and professional development was 3.80. The composite median and mode were 4.0 or well prepared.

**Table 15- Composite Scores for Descriptive Data: Reflective Teaching and Professional Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Score: Reflective Teaching &amp; Professional Development</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The composite mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities was 3.80 with 3.0 being *moderately prepared* and 4.0 being *well prepared.*

**RQ 10: What are Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions regarding their ability to foster relationships to support students’ learning?**

Survey items 19 and 20 explored the respondents’ perceptions of their ability to foster relationships to support students’ learning. Table 16 illustrates the mean, median, mode and the standard deviation for the survey items targeting professional relationships.
Table 16- Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items 19 and 20: Professional Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to foster relationships to support student learning</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to foster relationships to support student well being</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey item 19 had a mean of 3.97 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 145 responses; 109 participants (75.1%) perceived that they were well prepared (44.1%) or extremely well prepared (31.0%) concerning their ability to foster relationships to support student learning. Seven respondents did not answer this survey item.

Survey item 20 had a mean of 3.90 (median 4.0, mode 4.0) with 145 responses; 105 respondents (72.4%) perceived that they were well prepared (45.5%) or extremely well prepared (26.9%) concerning their ability to foster relationships to support student well being. Seven respondents did not answer this survey item.

Table 17 illustrates composite scores for descriptive data targeting professional relationships. The two survey items that address professional relationships have been collapsed into a single mean, median, mode and standard deviation. The composite mean for professional relationships was 3.93 and the composite median and mode were 4.0 or well prepared.

Table 17- Composite Scores for Descriptive Data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score: Professional Relationships</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean score for the respondents’ perceptions regarding their ability to foster professional relationships to support student learning and well-being was 3.93 with 3.0 being moderately prepared and 4.0 being well prepared.
RQ 11: Based on participants’ perceptions, to what extent did their MAT or PBTC program prepare Marshall University’s graduates and completers to teach?

The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness contained 20 forced-answer statements with a Likert rating scale. These items explored the respondents’ perceptions of their pre-service preparation at Marshall University. Table 18 illustrates the mean, median and mode across all forced-answer survey items. The 20 survey items that address preparation have been collapsed into a single variable. Descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the composite mean using this variable. The same procedure was used to determine the composite median.

Table 18- Composite Scores for Preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composite Score: Preparation</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Med</th>
<th>Mod</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Likert scale used in this study generated an overall composite mean for preparation of 3.95 or moderately prepared. The composite median and the composite mode were 4.0 or well prepared on the Likert rating scale.

Analysis of Open Ended Statements from Survey Respondents

Section II of the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness asked respondents to answer two open-ended questions:

1. What aspects of the program were the most beneficial to you?

2. How would you improve the MAT or post-baccalaureate program?

According to Fowler (1995, p. 178), “Narrative answers give researchers a much more direct window into what people are thinking. One hundred thirty-six respondents (89.5%) provided responses to the open-ended questions in Section II."
Beneficial Aspects of Programs

Concerning the question, “What aspects of the program were the most beneficial to you?” One hundred thirty-two respondents answered or 86.8% of the total number of respondents who returned surveys. The following themes emerged from an analysis of the responses to this open-ended question:

- Numerous respondents stated that the instructional strategy courses and the instructional strategies that they were taught were the most beneficial aspects of the program.
- Many respondents stated that the student teaching experience was the most beneficial aspect of the program.
- Several respondents stated that the faculty was the most beneficial aspect of the program.
- Numerous respondents stated the ability to take courses online was the most beneficial aspect of the program.

Improvements to the Programs

Concerning the question, “How would you improve the MAT or post-baccalaureate program,” 112 respondents answered or 73.7% of the total number of respondents who returned surveys. The following themes emerged from an analysis of the responses to the open-ended question:

- Numerous respondents stated that they needed more time spent in the field experiences before student teaching.
- Several respondents stated that they needed more instruction concerning classroom management.
Respondents had suggestions concerning the logistics of the program such as offering more courses online and location of face-to-face classes.

Several respondents felt their coursework should be more “hands-on” and practical in nature.

Demographic Data

Section III of the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness was designed to collect demographic data describing the attributes of the respondents. Questions were designed to extract information regarding the respondents’ gender, type of program completed (MAT or PBTC), year of completion, teaching status and the content area of their certification. Analyses of the demographic data gathered in the survey are provided in the following section.

Demographic: Gender

Respondents were asked to identify their gender. Of the 148 respondents who answered the question, 100 (67.6%) were female and 48 (32.4%) were male. Four respondents did not answer the question. Table 19 provides descriptive data concerning the respondents’ gender.

Table 19- Descriptive Data for Gender  \( n=148 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic: Program Completed

Respondents were asked to identify the program they completed: MAT or PBTC. Of the 146 who responded to the question, 122 (83.6%) completed the MAT and 24
(16.4%) completed the PBTC. Six respondents did not answer the question. Table 20 provides descriptive data concerning the program the respondents completed.

Table 20- Descriptive Data for Program Completed  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAT</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBTC</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic: Year of Program Completion**

Respondents were asked to identify the year of program completion. Of the 143 respondents who answered the question, 8 (5.6%) completed their program between 1999-2001, 30 (21.0%) completed their program between 2002-2004, 45 (31.5%) completed their program between 2005-2007 and the greatest number of respondents, 60 (42.0%), completed their program between 2008-2010. Nine respondents did not answer the question. Table 21 provides descriptive data concerning the year of program completion.
Table 21- Descriptive Data Year of Program Completed  \( n=143 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Completed</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic: Teaching Status**

Respondents were asked to answer several questions concerning their current teaching status. The following section provides descriptive data addressing the following areas: how many years they have taught, whether respondents are currently teaching, the state and county where respondents are teaching, the type of school where they are teaching, the type of position they hold and the level of the current position.

**Years Taught**

Table 22 provides descriptive data concerning how many years the respondents have taught. Of the 144 respondents, 71 (49.4%) had taught two years or less. Thirty-nine of the respondents (27.0%) had taught five years or more. Eight respondents did not answer the question.
Table 22- Descriptive Data for Years Taught  \( n=144 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Taught</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00.0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently Teaching

Table 23 provides descriptive data concerning whether the respondents are currently teaching. Of the 149 respondents who completed the questions, 118 (79.2%) were currently teaching and 31 (20.8%) indicated they were not teaching. Three respondents did not answer the question.

Table 23- Descriptive Data for Currently Teaching  \( n=149 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Teaching</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Currently Teaching</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching in West Virginia

Table 24 provides descriptive data concerning whether the respondents are currently teaching in West Virginia. Of the 128 respondents who answered the question, 109 (85.2%) were currently teaching in West Virginia and 19 (14.8%) indicated they
were not teaching in West Virginia. Twenty-four respondents did not answer the question. In several cases, it was because they were not currently teaching.

Table 24- Descriptive Data for Currently Teaching in West Virginia \( n=128 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently Teaching in WV</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Currently Teaching in WV</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching in Counties of West Virginia**

Of the 89 respondents (85.2\%) who are teaching in WV and who indicated the county in which they are teaching, the majority of the respondents, 22 (24.7\%), teach in Kanawha County or Putnam County. Respondents represented 33 counties. Table 25 provides descriptive data concerning the counties in West Virginia where respondents are teaching.
Table 25 - Descriptive Data for Currently Teaching in Counties in WV  \( n=89 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barbour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkeley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braxton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayette</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbrier</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanawha</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putnam</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritchie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roane</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teaching in Other States**

Of the 19 respondents (14.8%) who are teaching but not in WV, five (38.5%) are teaching in Virginia, four (30.8%) are teaching in Kentucky, two (15.4%) are teaching in Ohio, one (7.7%) is teaching in Illinois and one respondent (7.7%) is teaching in Florida. Six respondents indicated they are teaching in another state but did not indicate which state. Table 26 provides descriptive data concerning other states where respondents currently teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasons for Not Teaching**

Respondents were asked if they were currently teaching and if not, why not.

Twenty-five (16.4%) respondents answered that they were not currently teaching. Table 27 provides data describing why respondents were not teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Not Teaching</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could not find a job</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising family</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became administrator</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with classroom management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became an attorney</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending medical school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not fit personality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got a job paying more money</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Currently Teaching in a Public School**

Table 28 provides descriptive data concerning whether the respondents are currently teaching in public schools or private schools. Of the 121 respondents, 118 (97.5%) are currently teaching in a public school and 3 (2.5%) indicated they are teaching in a private school. Thirty-one respondents did not answer the question.

**Table 28- Descriptive Data for Teaching in Public Schools  n=121**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>97.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Position**

Table 29 provides descriptive data concerning the position the respondents currently hold. Of the 119 respondents who answered the question, 94 (79.0%) currently hold the position of teacher. Two (1.7%) respondents are principals or vice principals. Three respondents (2.5%) are teacher’s aides. Ten (8.4%) respondents are substitute teachers. Ten (8.4%) respondents are college faculty. Thirty-three respondents did not answer the question.

**Table 29- Descriptive Data for Position  n=119**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>79.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal/Vice Principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Aide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute Teacher</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Faculty</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Current Level of School Where Participants Work**

Table 30 provides descriptive data concerning the level of school where respondents work. Of the 120 respondents that answered the question, six (5.0%) teach in vocational schools. Nine (7.5%) teach in higher education. Sixty-six (55.0%) teach at the high school level. Twenty-eight (23.3%) teach at the middle school level. Eleven (9.2%) teach at the kindergarten through high school level. Thirty-two did not respond to the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Level</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Current Content Area**

Table 31 provides descriptive data concerning the content area in which respondents are teaching. Of the 118 respondents, 20 (16.9%) reported that they are teaching in the content area of Business. Twenty-three (19.5%) reported that they are teaching in the area of Science. Eighteen (15.3%) reported that they are teaching in a content area not listed. Thirteen (11.0%) reported that they are teaching in the content area of English. Thirteen (11.0%) reported that they are teaching in the content area of Social Studies.
Table 31- Descriptive Data for Teaching Content Area  \( n=118 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (Biology, Chemistry, General Science and Physics)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Major of Undergraduate Degree**

Table 32 provides descriptive data concerning the major of the respondents’ undergraduate degree. Of the 145 respondents, 41 (28.3%) reported that their undergraduate degree was in the area of Business. Twenty-five (17.2%) reported that their undergraduate degree was in the area of Science. Twenty-two (15.2%) reported that their undergraduate degree was not listed. Fifteen (10.3%) reported that their undergraduate degree was in the area of Biology. Thirteen (11.0%) reported that their undergraduate degree was in the area of English.
Table 32- Descriptive Data for Major of Undergraduate Degree  \( n=142 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Health</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (Biology, Chemistry, General Science and Physics)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Area of Certification

Table 33 provides descriptive data concerning the respondents’ area of certification. Of the 148 respondents, 34 (23.0%) reported that they are certified in the content area of Business. Twenty-eight (19.0%) reported that they are certified in the area of Science. Twenty-six (17.6%) reported that they are certified in the content area of Social Studies. Fourteen (9.5%) reported that they are certified in the content area of English.
Table 33- Descriptive Data for Area of Certification  \( n=148 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education &amp; Health</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science (Biology, Chemistry, General Science and Physics)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not become certified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ancillary Findings

Statistical Analysis of Demographics

Statistical analyses were conducted to explore whether any significance could be determined between the demographic areas of data that were collected and perceptions.

Analysis of Perceptions of Preparation and Gender

The Mann-Whitney U test for significance was utilized because it is a test that is used to test for differences between two independent variables on a continuous measure. This test is the non-parametric alternative to the t-test for independent samples. The Mann-Whitney U test compares medians as opposed to means as is the case in the t-test. Based on the Mann-Whitney U test for significance, the data revealed that there was significance between rankings of gender in the composite survey items addressing the INTASC standard- Reflective Teaching and Professional Growth for females \( (Md = 4.0, \ n = 92) \) and males \( (Md = 3.5, \ n = 46) \), \( U = 1628, \ z = -2.252, \ p = .024 \). The remaining nine standards yielded no significance at the \( p. < .05 \) level. Table 34 displays the results of the Mann-Whitney U test comparing perceptions of preparation and gender.
Table 34: Mann-Whitney U Results Comparing Perceptions of Preparation Based on INTASC Standards and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTASC Standard</th>
<th>Significance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Knowledge</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development and Learning</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Learners</td>
<td>.711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Teaching/Professional Growth</td>
<td>.024*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Relationships</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

The Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to determine if there was any statistical significance between respondents in the following areas: year of completion, years of experience and certification area. There were no statistical differences in perceptions in any of the areas mentioned.

Summary

The data that were used to determine graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) programs at Marshall University were analyzed in this chapter. A researcher-designed instrument, The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness, was used to collect descriptive data. This survey contained 20 closed-answer statements with a Likert rating scale. Respondents were asked to report the degree to which they felt prepared using a 5-point scale (1= unprepared, 2= somewhat prepared, 3= moderately prepared, 4= well prepared, and 5= extremely well prepared). The second section asked two open-ended questions addressing what aspects of the program were most beneficial and what improvements could be made to the MAT and PBTC programs. The final section consisted of several demographic questions.
Respondents were MAT graduates and PBTC completers from Fall 1999 through Spring 2010.

Based on the 20 closed-ended statements, an analysis of the results was conducted. Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted on the responses to these questions that addressed the eleven research questions. The individual mean, median, mode and standard deviation were determined for each of the 20 survey items. Composite mean, median, mode and standard deviation scores were determined for each of the 11 research questions. The Likert rating scale used in the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* yielded a composite mean of 3.95, a composite median of 4.0 and a composite mode of 4.0. This result indicates that the graduates of the MAT program and the completers of the PBTC program at Marshall University perceive that they have been well prepared to teach.

Analysis of the 20 individual forced-answer survey items revealed that all survey items had a median score of 4.0 or *well prepared*. Sixteen of the 20 survey items had a mode of 4.0 or *well prepared*. Three survey items, (a) ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking, (b) ability to create an appropriate learning environment and (c) ability to use a variety of assessment strategies, had a mode of 5.0 or *extremely well prepared*. The only survey item to receive a mode less than 4.0 was the ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of the community. The mode of this item was 3.0 or *moderately prepared*.

Analysis of the demographic information indicated that the majority of respondents were female and had completed the Master of Arts in Teaching program. Nearly three-fourths (73.5%) of the respondents completed their program between 2005
and 2010. Nearly 80% of the respondents were teaching and nearly all were teaching in public schools. Of those not teaching, approximately one third were not teaching because they could not find employment. Half of the respondents had taught two years or less. Over 85% of the respondents were currently teaching in West Virginia, and, of those, approximately 25% were teaching in Kanawha or Putnam county. Over half of the respondents were working in high schools. Respondents were teaching in several content areas with the majority being in the areas of Business, Science, English and Social Studies. Respondents had majored in a variety of subjects in their undergraduate degree with the majority being in the areas of Business, Science, and English. Respondents were certified in a numerous subject areas with the majority being in the areas of Business, Science, Social Studies, and English.

The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness provided two open-ended questions addressing the beneficial aspects of the programs and suggested improvements to the programs. Nearly one-third of the respondents stated that the instructional strategy courses and the instructional strategies that they were taught in these courses were the most beneficial. The majority of those who responded suggested that more field experiences before student teaching needed to be provided to improve the programs.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Purpose

Schools of education have not been exempt from the climate of assessment and accountability that has been prevalent since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Universities strive to produce teacher preparation programs that are of high quality and that train highly qualified teachers. To ensure excellence, programs are assessed to examine if they are providing their graduates and completers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to teach all students (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Holme's Group, 1986; Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Wise & Leibbrand, 1993). Program graduates’ perceptions provide a valuable source of evaluative data. These data can provide information to assess whether or not schools of education are preparing their graduates to be highly qualified. Data can also provide direction for programmatic change that will strengthen the teacher preparation program. The purpose of this study was to determine graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate (PBTC) programs.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was students graduating from Marshall University with a Master of Arts in Teaching degree or completing the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate from Fall 1999 through Spring 2010. Of the 498 graduates and completers, 167 participants were removed because an accurate address could not be obtained for them. The *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* was mailed to the
remaining 331 participants. Sixty-six surveys were returned because the address was no longer accurate leaving a sample size of 265 participants. Surveys were returned by 152 graduates and completers yielding a return rate of 57%.

Analysis of the demographic data indicated that 100 respondents (67.6%) indicated they were female and 48 (32.4%) were male. Four respondents did not indicate their gender. A large majority, 122 respondents (83.6%) had completed the Master of Arts in Teaching program. Only 24 respondents (16.4%) had completed the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Program. Six respondents did not indicate which program they had completed.

One-hundred and five of 143 respondents (73.5%) graduated between 2005 and 2010. Sixty respondents (41.0%) completed their program between 2008 and 2010. Forty-five respondents (31.5%) completed their program between 2005 and 2007. Thirty respondents (21.0%) completed their program between 2002 and 2004. Eight respondents (5.6%) completed their program between 1999 and 2001. Nine respondents did not indicate the year they completed their program.

One-hundred eighteen of 149 respondents (79.2%) indicated they were currently teaching. Thirty-one (20.8%) indicated they were not teaching. Three respondents did not indicate whether or not they were teaching. Of those not teaching, eight respondents (32.0%) could not find a job, six respondents (24%) were staying at home with children, three respondents (12%) were administrators, two respondents (8.0%) had left teaching because of classroom management problems, two respondents (8.0%) were attorneys, one respondent (4.0%) was attending medical school, one respondent (4.0%) made more money in another profession, one respondent (4.0%) had retired and one respondent
(4.0%) did not like the profession of teaching. Six respondents who were not teaching did not give a reason.

A large majority of respondents, 109 of 128 respondents (85.2%) indicated they were teaching in West Virginia. Nineteen (14.8%) indicated they were not teaching in West Virginia and 24 respondents did not answer the question. Of those teaching in West Virginia, fourteen of 89 respondents (15.7%) indicated they were teaching in Kanawha County, eight respondents (9.0%) indicated they were teaching in Putnam County, six respondents (6.7%) indicated they were teaching in Jackson County and five respondents (5.6%) indicated they were teaching in Wood County. Fifty-six respondents (62.9%) indicated they were teaching in 29 other counties in West Virginia. Sixty-three respondents did not complete the survey question. Of those 13 respondents teaching in another state, five respondents (38.5%) indicated they were teaching in Virginia, four respondents (30.8%) indicated they were teaching in Kentucky, two respondents (15.4%) indicated they were teaching in Ohio, one respondent (7.7%) indicated they were teaching in Florida and one respondent (7.7%) indicated they were teaching in Illinois.

The mean number of years that respondents taught was 3.07 years. The median number of years was 2.75 and the mode number of years was 2. Out of the 144 respondents who responded to the question, 71 (49.3%) had taught two years or less. Thirty-nine of the respondents (27.0%) had taught five years or more. Eight respondents did not answer the question.

When asked to describe their current position, 94 respondents (79.0%) indicated they were teachers, two respondents (1.7%) indicated they were either a principal or a vice principal, three respondents (2.5%) indicated they were a teacher’s aide, ten
respondents (8.4%) indicated they were substitute teachers and ten respondents (8.4%) indicated they taught in higher education. Thirty-three respondents did not complete this survey question.

When asked what level they taught, 66 respondents (55.0%) indicated they taught at the high school level, 28 respondents (23.3%) indicated they taught at the middle school level, 11 respondents (9.2%) indicated they taught at the Kindergarten through Grade 12 level, six respondents (5.0%) taught in a vocational school and nine respondents (7.5%) taught in higher education. Thirty-two respondents did not complete this survey question. The vast majority, 118 respondents (97.5%) taught in public institutions and only three respondents (2.5%) taught in private institutions. Thirty-one respondents did not answer this survey question.

Respondents indicated they were teaching in several content areas, 23 respondents (19.5%) indicated they taught in the area of the Sciences, 20 respondents (16.9%) indicated they taught in the area of Business, 13 respondents (11.0%) indicated they taught in the areas of English and Social Studies, eight respondents (6.8%) taught in the area of Mathematics and Physical Education, six respondents (3.9%) taught in the area of Art, five respondents (4.2%) taught in the area of Music, and four respondents (3.4%) taught in the area of Foreign Language. Eighteen respondents (15.3%) taught in content areas that were not listed. Thirty-four respondents did not complete the survey question.

Respondents reported a variety of majors in their undergraduate degree, 41 respondents (28.3%) indicated they majored in the area of Business, 25 respondents (17.2%) indicated they majored in the area of Science, 17 respondents (11.7%) indicated they majored in the area of Social Studies, 13 respondents (9.0%) indicted they majored
in the area of English, seven respondents (4.9%) majored in the areas of Physical Education and Health, six respondents (4.1%) majored in the areas of Art and Foreign Language, and five respondents (3.4%) majored in the area of Music, and three respondents (2.1%) majored in the area of Mathematics. Twenty-two respondents (15.2%) indicated they majored in a subject area that was not listed. Seven respondents did not complete this survey question.

Respondents indicated they had several areas of certification, 34 respondents (23.0%) were certified in Business, 28 respondents (19.0%) were certified in the area of Science, 26 respondents (17.6%) were certified in Social Studies, 14 respondents (9.5%) were certified in English, nine respondents (6.1%) were certified in Mathematics and Physical Education and Health, eight respondents (5.4%) were certified in Foreign Language, seven respondents (4.7%) were certified in Art, five respondents (3.4%) were certified in Music, four respondents (2.7%) indicated they were certified in an area not listed. Four respondents (2.7%) indicated they did not become certified. Four respondents did not complete this survey question.

**Methods**

A non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional design was used to examine the perceptions of graduates and completers of Marshall University’s MAT and PBTC programs. Data were collected through the use of a survey questionnaire that asked MAT graduates and PBTC completers about their perception of their preparation at Marshall University. Each respondent was mailed the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* that was based on an in-depth literature review, the INTASC principles and the Standards for Teacher Certification at Marshall University.
The Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness consisted of three sections. The first section asked participants to rate how well the programs at Marshall University prepared them by answering 20 close-ended items with ordered choices. Using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = unprepared, 2 = somewhat prepared, 3 = moderately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = extremely well prepared), respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt prepared.

The second section contained two open-ended questions asking (a) what aspects of the program were most beneficial to them and (b) how they would improve the program. The third section collected demographics to inform the preparation program of the status of its graduates and to identify differences in reports by gender, program completed, year completed, content area and undergraduate major. Content validity for the survey instrument was determined through a review by a panel of experts and doctoral students in the Curriculum and Instruction program at Marshall University. A pilot study was conducted to clarify instructions and readability of the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness. The survey’s internal consistency was assessed through the use of the Cronbach’s Alpha test. The alpha coefficient for the 20 items in Section I of the survey yielded a .950 in a test of reliability.

Following Marshall University Institutional Review Board approval, the researcher mailed a packet to each respondent that included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness and a stamped, addressed reply envelope. Respondents were asked to return their completed survey within two weeks. Two weeks following the first mailing, a follow-up letter and second packet was sent to those who had not yet responded. A week
following the second mailing, a postcard was mailed to participants encouraging them to complete the survey. A third packet was mailed to non-respondents, a month after the postcard was sent. A response rate of 57% (152 responses) had been collected by September 23, 2010. Although the mailings resulted in 152 returned surveys, the number of responses for each statement on the survey varied due to the fact that some respondents chose not to respond to every item.

Data were analyzed and descriptive statistics for measures of central tendency for individual statements and composite groups of statements were used to provide an overall picture of graduates’ and completers’ perceptions of their preparation. Demographic data were analyzed to determine the attributes of the respondents such as gender, type of program completed (MAT or PBTC), year of completion, teaching status and the content area of their certification. Open-ended question responses were categorized and analyzed to determine emergent themes concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the MAT and PBTC programs.

**Discussion of Findings**

Overall, the survey revealed that graduates of the MAT program and completers of the PBTC program felt their preparation fell between 3.0 or *moderately prepared* and 4.0 or *well prepared*. Each of the 20 forced-answer survey items had a median score of 4.0 or *well prepared*. Each survey item had a mode score of 4.0 or *well prepared* with the exception of item number eight that dealt with using a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking, item number 11 that dealt with the ability to create an appropriate learning environment and item number 16 that dealt with the ability to use formal and informal assessments. These three items had a mode score of 5.0 or *extremely*
well prepared. The only survey item to receive a mode score below 4.0 was item number 14 that dealt with the ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of the community. Item number 14 received a mode score of 3.0 or moderately prepared. Mean scores ranged between 3.54 for survey item 14 to 4.24 for survey item number eight.

Data analysis targeting the ability to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, moderately prepared and 4.0, well prepared. The mean score was 3.81; median and mode scores were 4.0. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents agreed that they were well prepared to extremely well prepared in this area.

Data analysis targeting the ability to use child development and learning theories to support learning revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, moderately prepared and 4.0, well prepared. Composite mean score was 3.87; composite median and mode scores were 4.0 or well prepared.

An analysis of the data targeting the ability to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, moderately prepared and 4.0, well prepared. The mean score was 3.90. Median and mode scores were 4.0. Over 70% of the respondents agreed that they were well prepared to extremely well prepared in this area.

The composite mean score of 4.11 indicated that respondents perceived themselves to be well prepared concerning items targeting the ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to develop critical thinking and problem solving. The composite median and mode were 4.0 or well prepared. A mode score of 5.0 or extremely well
prepared indicated that respondents perceived themselves to be able to use instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking.

Further analysis of the data revealed that respondents perceived themselves well prepared concerning the item targeting the ability to create learning environments that are engaging and motivational. The mean score was 4.19 and the median was 4.0. The mode score for this item was 5.0, extremely well prepared. Over 80% of the respondents indicated that they were well prepared to extremely well prepared in this area.

An analysis of the data showed that respondents perceived themselves to be well prepared in the area of effective communication. Respondents’ mean scores were 4.09, and median scores and mode scores were 4.0. Over 80% of respondents agreed that they were well prepared or extremely well prepared.

Data analysis of items targeting the ability to use knowledge of students, community and curriculum goals in instructional planning revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, moderately prepared, and 4.0, well prepared. The composite mean was 3.89. The composite median and mode were 4.0. The item that addressed the ability to plan instruction based on the critical understanding of the community obtained a mode score of 3.0 or moderately prepared.

Findings revealed that respondents perceived themselves to be well prepared concerning targeting the ability to use formal and informal assessment. The mode for this item was 5.0 and revealed that respondents felt extremely well prepared to use a variety of assessments. Respondents’ mean scores were 4.21 and median scores were 4.0. Over 42% of respondents indicated they were extremely well prepared to use a variety of assessment strategies.
An analysis of the items targeting the respondents’ ability to be reflective practitioners who participate in professional development activities revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, *moderately prepared*, and 4.0, *well prepared*. The composite mean was 3.80 while the composite median and mode scores were 4.0.

Findings revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, *moderately prepared*, and 4.0, *well prepared*, concerning items targeting the ability to foster relationships and support students’ learning. The composite mean was 3.93 while the composite median and mode scores were 4.0.

Data collected from the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* revealed that respondents perceived their preparation fell between 3.0, *moderately prepared*, and 4.0, *well prepared*, overall. The 20 Likert scale survey items that addressed preparation were collapsed into a single variable with a composite mean of 3.95, composite median of 4.0 and composite mode of 4.0.

Section II of the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness* asked respondents to answer two open-ended questions:

1. What aspects of the program were the most beneficial to you?
2. How would you improve the MAT or post-baccalaureate program?

One hundred thirty-six respondents provided responses to the open-ended questions in Section II.

Concerning the question, “What aspects of the program were the most beneficial to you,” 132 respondents answered this question or 86.8% of the total number of respondents who returned surveys. The following themes were identified as being
beneficial aspects of the programs: the instructional strategy courses, the student teaching experience, the faculty, and the ability to take courses online.

Concerning the question, “How would you improve the MAT or post-baccalaureate program,” 112 respondents answered this question or 73.7% of the total number of respondents who returned surveys. The following were identified as being areas that might need improvement in the programs: more time spent in field experience placements before student teaching, more instruction concerning classroom management, changes in the logistics of the programs and a more “hands-on” and practical approach to coursework.

Respondents were asked if they were currently teaching and if not, why not. Twenty-five (16.4%) respondents answered that they were not currently teaching. Nearly one-third of those indicated they were not teaching because they could not find a job. One-fourth of the respondents that were not teaching indicated they were staying at home to raise their family. Other reasons that respondents gave for not teaching were becoming administrators, having difficulty with classroom management, becoming an attorney, attending medical school, teaching did not fit personality, obtaining a higher paying job and retiring.

Tests of significance were conducted to determine if there was any statistical significance between the various demographic areas. The Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted to determine if there was any statistical significance between the perceptions of males compared to females. Based on the Mann-Whitney U test for significance, the data revealed that there was significance between rankings of gender in the composite survey items addressing the INTASC standard- Reflective Teaching and Professional
Growth for females ($Md = 4.0, n = 92$) and males ($Md = 3.5, n = 46$), $U = 1628$, $z = -2.252$, $p = .024$. The remaining nine standards yielded no significance at the $p < .05$ significance level.

The Kruskal-Wallis Test was used to determine if there was any statistical significance between respondents in the following areas: year of completion, years of experience and certification area. There were no statistical differences in perceptions in any of the areas mentioned.

**Conclusions**

Conclusions can be drawn from the statistical findings regarding Marshall University’s MAT graduates’ and PBTC completers’ perceptions of their pre-service preparation. These conclusions are supported by the literature review, by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards and by the Standards for Teacher Certification at Marshall University.

The analysis of the data collected in this study provided evidence to support the conclusion that Marshall University’s MAT graduates and PBTC completers perceive their preparation as being between *moderately prepared* and *well prepared*. Mean scores indicated that respondents perceived themselves to be *well prepared* in the areas of instructional strategies, learning environment, communication and planning. Mode scores indicated that respondents perceived themselves to be *extremely well prepared* in the areas of the learning environment and assessment.

**Conclusion: Content Knowledge**

The literature suggests that candidates must possess knowledge in the content areas they plan to teach (Richardson, 2003; Zahorik, 1996). Respondents indicated that
they felt their level of preparation was between *moderately prepared* and *well prepared* to make learning meaningful by using the structures of the discipline. Students in the MAT and PBTC programs have completed a bachelor’s degree in a content area before beginning the programs. This background in the content areas provides a strong foundation in the structures of the discipline. Candidates must also possess pedagogical content knowledge that suggests that teachers must have a deep understanding of the content to enable them to connect to the diverse learners in their classroom (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Shulman, 1987).

Even though respondents indicated they were well prepared in the area of content knowledge, survey comments illustrate the need for courses that address pedagogical content knowledge:

“Add a course that covers specific learning objectives for your chosen subject”
(Comment 1, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“I felt trying to relate my specific field to the course material was difficult at times” (Comment 2, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“I would have liked to have seen a few content specific education classes required” (Comment 3, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“If class numbers allowed, make the classes more content specific” (Comment 4, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

Content knowledge must be firmly rooted in a teacher’s mind, but a teacher must also be able to present content knowledge in a way that students understand. Teachers should know the areas in which students develop misconceptions concerning the subject matter. Teachers should communicate to the student what is essential about the subject,
and their understanding must be flexible enough that they can present the information in numerous ways to meet the needs of all learners in their classroom. Pedagogical content knowledge “represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). An additional strategies course that focused on the pre-service teachers’ content area as opposed to a general strategies course may provide the tools needed to bridge the gap between teaching and learning.

**Conclusion: Human Development and Learning**

Candidates must understand how their students develop intellectually, socially and personally and be able to provide appropriate learning opportunities to meet their needs (Darling-Hammond, 2006b; Snowman & Biehler, 2002; Woolfolk, 2009). Respondents indicated that their preparation lies between *moderately prepared* and *well prepared* concerning their ability to provide learning opportunities based on their knowledge of how children learn and develop. Respondents felt that they could provide learning opportunities that support students’ intellectual, social and personal development.

Survey comments supported this belief:

“I found the class work meaningful. I learned a great deal about how students develop and how they learn” (Comment 5, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)
“The most beneficial aspects of the program were the focus on multiple intelligences and the different approaches to learning” (Comment 6, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“I had one course in Human Development that was quite extraordinary in getting me to look at my own life course and my goals and to make what turned out to be a roadmap for my whole future” (Comment 7, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“The most beneficial aspect was the analysis of differences in student learning styles” (Comment 8, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

For learning to occur, subject matter should be presented in a developmentally appropriate manner that addresses diverse students’ learning styles and multiple intelligences. Candidates must understand the cognitive, social and emotional development of their students and design their instruction based on this knowledge. Respondents indicated that they were prepared in this area and the qualitative comments supported this finding. It is imperative that the MAT and PBTC programs continue to keep courses such as “Advanced Studies in Human Development” and “Educational Psychology” in the curriculum to provide the foundations for the strategy courses.

**Conclusion: Diverse Learners**

Literature has shown that candidates must understand how students are different and create learning opportunities that meet the needs of all learners (Banks, 2001; Burke & Dunn, 2002; Dunn & Dunn, 1992; Dunn & Dunn, 1993; Gardner, 1995; Searson & Dunn, 2001). Effective teachers should be able to build on the strengths of the students in their classrooms. Curriculum should be designed that is responsive and inclusive (Gay,
2000). Even though respondents indicated that they were prepared to meet the needs of the diverse learners in their classrooms, survey comments seemed to indicate that this area could be strengthened:

“Offer more diverse instructional settings” (Comment 9, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“More instruction on how to accommodate inclusion students into regular education classrooms” (Comment 10, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Definitely more time spent on dealing with discipline and inclusive classrooms” (Comment 11, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Actual practice to adapt strategies for diverse learners” (Comment 12, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

It is important to study how to address the needs of diverse learners, but it is of perhaps even greater importance to put that knowledge into practice. Candidates need an even greater number of experiences meeting the needs of children with exceptionalities and diversity. Experiencing the use of equity pedagogy is an invaluable experience for candidates as they see the connections made between curriculum and instruction based on students’ backgrounds and diversities (Banks, 2003).

**Conclusion: Instructional Strategies**

Candidates should promote critical thinking and problem solving through the use of a variety of instructional strategies (Marzano, 2003; Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001). Effective teachers should know when to use and how to use a wide variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning. Respondents perceived themselves to
be well prepared to use a variety of instructional strategies. Numerous respondents felt extremely well prepared to use instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking. Several respondents commented on the practical nature of the advanced strategies course and the ability of the instructors to model strategies that promoted critical thinking and problem solving. Survey comments emphasized the strengths of the instructional strategies courses:

“The classes that focused on strategies were most practical as well as feedback from professors” (Comment 12, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Emphasis on a variety of instructional strategies and learning styles” (Comment 13, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Advanced Instructional Strategies classes — practical and effective lesson designs and great advice from a professor with years in the classroom” (Comment 14, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“The practical classes that actually prepared you for teaching such as CI 624 Advanced Instructional Strategies” (Comment 15, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

Perhaps the hallmark of the MAT and PBTC programs at Marshall University is the advanced instructional strategies course. No other aspect of the programs received more positive comments. The instructors were commended for demonstrating practical strategies and relating coursework to the public school classroom. Frequent use of inductive teaching strategies provided candidates with the tools that they needed to teach learners in the 21st century. Respondents’ perceptions indicated that they felt “Extremely
Well Prepared” to use a variety of instructional strategies to promote critical thinking. The methods that this course provided demonstrated exemplar strategies during course instruction and then connected instruction with the “real world” of the public school classroom. Other courses in the program of study should make sure they are modeling “best practices” and showing “real world” connections in a similar way.

**Conclusion: Learning Environment**

Literature revealed that candidates must use their knowledge of individual and group motivation to create a positive and active learning environment (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2000; Dolezal, Welsh, Pressley & Vincent, 2003). Teachers must construct a learning environment that is engaging and characterized by a climate of care. Respondents’ perceptions indicated that they felt well prepared in their ability to create an appropriate learning environment. Although this was their perception, several respondents indicated that they needed more instruction concerning classroom management:

“Need to strengthen focus on classroom management and 21st century skills and strategies” (Comment 16, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“How to deal with classroom management and behavioral issues” (Comment 17, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Require students to take a course that gives them specific strategies for MANAGING a classroom. All of the content knowledge and strategies in the world are worthless if a teacher cannot manage a classroom and the students in it!” (Comment 17, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)
“I was not prepared to deal with the misbehavior and conduct problems that were a part of every class” (Comment 18, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“I remember that I wasn’t prepared for classroom management problems”

(Comment 19, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

It is imperative that the candidates not only know about motivation theories and management strategies but that they must also be given many opportunities to put into practice these theories and strategies. The respondents seemed to indicate in the closed-ended response questions that they were well prepared to create an appropriate learning environment but their open-ended responses overwhelmingly indicated that they did not feel well prepared to manage the learning environment. Managing the learning environment is a skill that cannot be mastered unless it is practiced in a classroom. More time might be needed in a field experience placement that is designed to give candidates practice in implementation of these skills. Increased use of case studies that focus on classroom management and computer-based simulations could help candidates feel more capable when handling classroom management issues.

**Conclusion: Communication**

Literature supported that candidates must be able to communicate through verbal and nonverbal techniques, promote inquiry, collaboration and a climate of discourse in the classroom (Brown, 2005; Mottet, Garza, Beebe, Jurrells, & Furler, 2008). Communication is essential in every aspect of teaching whether it is the communication that takes place between a teacher and a student on an individual basis, the whole class
communication that is the basis of a direct instruction lesson or communication with colleagues and administrators.

Respondents perceived themselves to be well prepared in the area of communication but the following recommendations were offered in their survey comments:

“Place more emphasis on techniques to manage group work since schools are moving towards problem based learning” (Comment 19, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Your program failed to address how to deal with petty teachers and unsupportive and unprofessional administrators” (Comment 20, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“More real-life situational hypothetical discussions of what would you do during a parent/teacher conference, conflicts with co-workers and conflicts with administrators” (Comment 21, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“More practical teaching scenarios either in schools or among peers” (Comment 22, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

Teachers must be able to communicate with a multitude of people and in numerous ways. They must be able to convey content in a way that all students can learn, but they must also be able to communicate with parents, colleagues, and administrators. Each of these types of communication takes practice and reflection. Although respondents indicated that they felt well prepared to use appropriate communication techniques in Section I of the survey, they mentioned specific situations in Section II in
which they did not feel well prepared to communicate, such as during parent/teacher conferences or when confronted by an angry colleague. Good communication must be maintained between teachers and students, teachers and colleagues, teachers and administrators, and teachers and parents. Candidates need to understand the importance of communication and be given the opportunity to practice communication techniques without having to face the ramifications of making poor choices. These types of issues could be addressed in the pre-service curriculum through the use of case study analysis or role playing. A panel composed of veteran teachers and administrators could address the importance of communication with candidates and suggest ways to avoid lapses in communication.

**Conclusion: Planning**

Candidates must plan effective instruction founded on the standards and knowledge of subject matter, students, and community (Ediger, 2004; McTighe & Wiggins, 1999). If a teacher is to address the standards and meet the needs of the diverse learners in the classroom, he or she must devote time to planning. Respondents indicated that their preparation fell between 3.0, *moderately prepared*, and 4.0, *well prepared*, to plan based on a critical understanding of students and on a critical understanding of standards. More respondents indicated they were *moderately prepared* than any other rank concerning perceptions that dealt with planning based on a critical understanding of community. This survey item received the lowest mean score, 3.54, and the lowest mode score, 3.0, of any of the 20 closed-answer survey items.

Giving candidates opportunities to reflect on the context of the students in their classrooms encourages them to connect instruction to community. Candidates should be
encouraged to learn as much as possible about the community where they will be teaching. Before the student teaching experience, candidates could be given the opportunity to spend time researching and exploring the community where their students live. The implementation of assignments such as the “Teacher Work Sample” would require candidates to reflect on the communities in which their students live and design instruction based on the context of their students.

Respondents’ survey comments illustrate the belief that they felt well prepared to plan instruction although they indicated they felt the plans were too exhaustive and not practical:

“Understanding the purpose of state standards and creating a variety of assessments and clarifying objectives with students” (Comment 23, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Teaching strategies and curriculum development have been extremely helpful” (Comment 24, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Most beneficial would be lesson planning and unit planning” (Comment 25, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Make the curriculum more like how they want us to be teaching, instead of long drawn out lesson plans we will never use” (Comment 26, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

It is difficult for pre-service teachers to see the connection between writing thorough lesson plans and teaching effective lessons in the classroom. The process of writing a successful lesson plan requires candidates to deeply reflect on the process of teaching and learning. Candidates read the block plans that veteran teachers have written
and they forget that they do not have the same level of experience. Schools of education should not eliminate the practice of writing plans, but they should stress the relevance of well written plans and the connections that are made between the standards, the objectives and the assessments.

**Conclusion: Assessment**

Candidates must understand and be able to implement a balanced assessment system that evaluates 21st century knowledge and skills. Teachers must use both formative and summative assessment in a real world context to increase achievement (Black & William, 1998; Chappuis, 2009; Stiggins & DeFour, 2009). The focus of teaching today is on students’ learning. Teachers must be prepared to recognize when students have learned and when they have not. Respondents’ perceptions indicated that they were well prepared to use a variety of assessment strategies. In this study, assessment received the highest mean score of 4.21. More respondents indicated they were *extremely well prepared* than any other rank concerning perceptions that dealt with the ability to use a variety of assessments.

Respondents’ survey comments confirmed that they found preparation that taught how to use a variety of assessments beneficial:

“I found classes that taught how to create effective assessments to be beneficial”

(Comment 27, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Integrating many aspects of assessment into one lesson” (Comment 28, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Learning about different testing strategies was beneficial” (Comment 29, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)
“The program enabled me to make decisions about how to balance tasks designated for mastery, so that I could assess, with interactive activities in the foreign language that are more difficult to assess in any meaningful way”

(Comment 30, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

Quantitative and qualitative data affirmed that respondents felt extremely well prepared in their ability to use a variety of assessment strategies. Knowledge of assessment is more important today than in other time in the history of education. Teachers must be able to evaluate what students know and alter instruction based on assessment results. The school of education should continue to provide candidates instruction and experience creating formative and summative assessments. Instruction concerning authentic assessment is also needed to prepare candidates for the 21st century classroom.

**Conclusions: Reflective Teaching and Professional Growth**

Literature encourages candidates to regularly reflect and seek professional development opportunities to improve practice (Ferraro, 2000; McCaughtry, 2005; Schon, 1996). Effective teachers reflect consistently on their practice and devote themselves to professional development opportunities to improve their practice. Respondents indicated that their preparation fell between *moderately prepared* and *well prepared* concerning their ability to reflect on the effectiveness of their own choices and the ability to understand the role and need to participate in professional development. Several respondents’ comments indicated that the program would be strengthened by increasing the amount of time candidates spent in the public school classroom.
Respondents’ survey comments supported the belief that they found reflection and professional development to be beneficial:

“I had a lot of opportunity in the program to reflect on why traditional teaching methods don’t work, and to think of ways to manipulate the classroom environment to increase the probability that students would actually acquire usable skills” (Comment 31, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Having direct communication with professors that had real world experience and were unafraid to give honest answers and the student teaching experience was very valuable” (Comment 32, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Classes in which I conducted research were effective learning experiences” (Comment 33, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“Feedback from instructors and the hours spent in the classroom were the most beneficial” (Comment 34, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

Numerous survey comments supported the importance of observing and teaching in public school classrooms. Clinical and student teaching experiences provided candidates with opportunities to reflect on best practices and learn from experienced classroom teachers. Statistical analyses determined that male respondents had a lower perception of their ability to reflect than female respondents. Increased opportunities for reflection need to be given to all candidates, particularly male candidates. If candidates are not able to spend more time reflecting on their time in the classroom, they could be
required to reflect using scenarios and case studies. Reflective teachers are effective teachers (Hogan, Rabinowitz, & Cravin, 2003).

**Conclusion: Professional Relationships**

Literature supports that candidates must be able to cultivate relationships with colleagues, parents and the community to support the students in their classroom (Epstein, 2001; Michael, Dittus, & Epstein, 2007; Miretzky, 2004). It is imperative that teachers foster all relationships that support student learning and well-being. Parental support, professional support and community involvement can increase student achievement. Respondents indicated that their preparation fell between *moderately prepared* and *well prepared* concerning their ability to foster relationships to support student learning and well-being.

Although there were fewer survey comments that addressed professional relationships, some survey responses indicated that respondents were aware that there are many relationships that cultivate and support learning:

“Becoming aware of the hidden curriculum in the school environment and the impact of background on student learning was the most beneficial” (Comment 35, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)

“You could add a class that dealt with current events regarding the education environment in regards to local/county/state government, since it is so dependent on state budgets and who is in the White House” (Comment 36, *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*)
It is a bit alarming that a few respondents did not see the need or importance of classes that focus on other relationships that support student learning. These attitudes became evident through the following comments:

“Reduce the number of classes. Courses such as sociology of education and educational psychology were unnecessary for the classroom” (Comment 37, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Increase the amount of practicum experiences while removing course requirements such as educational psychology or philosophy of education”

(Comment 38, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

Schools of education need to find ways to assist candidates in making connections between students, families, and instruction. Pre-service teachers need to also see the importance of foundational coursework that explains the importance of these connections. Perhaps more relevant assignments in foundational courses that focus on the relationships surrounding the students would help to make these connections.

Conclusions: Ancillary Findings

Tests of significance were conducted to determine if there were differences between various demographic groups. The Mann-Whitney U Test did reveal that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females concerning reflective teaching and professional growth. Females median score was 4.0 compared to the males median score of 3.5.

The Kruskal-Wallis tests showed that there was no statistical difference between any demographic groups: gender, year of completion, years of experience and certification areas. This result can be viewed as a positive finding for the programs. All
demographic groups perceived themselves to be well prepared and there was not a
difference between groups’ perceptions. Marshall University seems to have consistently
prepared their pre-service teachers well in the MAT and PBTC programs.

Marshall University’s graduates are employed. Nearly 80% of the respondents
indicated they were currently teaching or working in the field of education. Survey
comments indicated that respondents were pleased to have found employment. A few
commented that they have been unable to find employment and would like to have had
job placement assistance. Schools of education should work closely with career
placement services to assist graduates and completers in securing employment.
Placement packets for each teacher candidate should be kept on file in the career service
center. Personnel directors from local school boards of education should be invited to
speak to candidates. Mock job interviews could be conducted to further prepare
candidates.

Survey results indicated that the alternative certification format was beneficial to
respondents. Respondents agreed that the online format of course delivery was helpful to
them. Several respondents favored the use of cohorts with the ability to take courses in
several locations such as South Charleston, Huntington, Beckley, Martinsburg, Fairmont
and Shepherdstown.

The convenience of taking courses online and over weekends allowed respondents
to continue to work, which was a tremendous benefit to them. Respondents found it
beneficial that they were able to obtain their teaching certificate and a master’s degree.
This finding supports literature that stresses the need to offer alternative means for
certification to those individuals who would not be able to obtain certification through traditional programs (McKibbin & Ray, 1994).

Respondents’ survey comments found the use of alternative means to certification and course delivery to be beneficial:

“Being able to use my BA and continue to get my MAT without having an education background” (Comment 39, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“The assurance of a teaching certificate” (Comment 40, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Most classes were online which allowed me to work. Also I was able to work while doing my student teaching” (Comment 41, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

“Having the opportunity to go into teaching after already having the core classes in my undergraduate degree and being able to obtain teaching courses” (Comment 42, Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness)

The school of education needs to review the curriculum to determine if there are any other courses that could be effectively offered online. It might survey different regions across the state to establish if there are any other areas where cohorts could be successfully started in the MAT or PBTC programs.

Implications

The results of this study support the belief that institutions of higher education and more specifically schools of education must make every effort to ensure that their teacher preparation programs are of high quality and that these programs are training
highly qualified teachers. This study also supports the use of alternative routes to teacher certification. To ensure excellence, programs must be assessed to examine if they are providing their graduates and completers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to teach all students (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1995; Holme's Group, 1986; Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium, 1992; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008; Wise & Leibbrand, 1993).

Graduates and completers of teacher preparation programs can provide insights into the evaluation process and are the most qualified in deciding if their programs prepared them for the realities of the classroom (Armstrong, 2007; Galluzzo & Craig, 1990; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2008).

A large majority of respondents indicated they were teaching in West Virginia. Marshall University’s alternative certification programs, the Master’s of Arts in Teaching and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate programs, are providing the state of West Virginia with a significant number of teachers. These programs strengthen the workforce that is available in the event of teacher shortages and provide a viable way to increase the number of teachers in West Virginia without having to depend on emergency certificates and temporary certificates (Piotrowski & Plash, 2006).

Nearly 75% of the respondents graduated between 2005 and 2010. It appears that the majority of the respondents were recent graduates and completers of the programs. This might be attributed to outdated addresses for some graduates and completers. The longer it has been since a student has completed a program the less likely their address would still be current. Completers between 2005 and 2010 might also be more motivated
to reflect on their coursework because it is more recent and associated memories might be clearer in their minds.

Implications of this research study indicate that the ten standards identified by literature and by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium as being model standards for beginning teachers are confirmed by graduates and completers of Marshall University’s Master of Arts in Teaching Program and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Program. Although descriptive statistics indicate that graduates and completers felt their preparation fell between moderately prepared and well prepared in many of the areas documented in the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*, qualitative data collected suggest areas in which Marshall University’s School of Education could strengthen its programs.

Although respondents have a strong foundation in their content areas, qualitative feedback revealed a need for a strategy course that specifically addresses their content area. The need for strengthening the respondents’ pedagogical content knowledge was evident. Resources, strategies, and technologies in the specific content areas appear to be areas that respondents felt needed to be addressed.

Respondents’ perceptions of their abilities to address the needs of diverse learners were rated high yet qualitative comments seemed to suggest that respondents would like more experiences studying about diverse learners and working in diverse settings. Currently, two courses are required that address the needs of exceptional learners. It would be beneficial for all courses to integrate differentiated instruction and tiered instruction into classroom assignments. More opportunities to observe classrooms that
are implementing these strategies and that have inclusion of students with exceptionalities would be valuable.

Respondents agreed that they were well prepared to design and implement numerous instructional strategies. Current courses that focus on instructional strategies are viewed as practical and provide a wealth of information for candidates in the program. Qualitative comments suggest that more emphasis could be given to problem-based learning and strategies that incorporate 21st century learning.

Respondents indicated they felt extremely well prepared in their ability to create an appropriate learning environment yet qualitative data overwhelmingly voiced the need for more instruction on classroom management. Classroom management is an integral part of the learning environment. Students must feel secure and distractions must be kept to a minimum if learning is to occur. All candidates should be required to take coursework focusing on classroom management. Candidates need to be given opportunities to manage classrooms as often as possible before the student teaching experience.

Quantitative data revealed that respondents felt prepared in the area of communication. Qualitative comments suggested a need to provide instruction on dealing with communication with parents, colleagues, and administrators. More opportunities to role play and participation in case studies that focus on practical day-to-day issues in the school system might be beneficial to candidates. Encouraging participation in parent-teacher conferences during the student teaching experience might give candidates invaluable real-world experience in dealing with parents.
Respondents’ perceptions were that they were prepared to reflect on the effectiveness of their choices. Quantitative data revealed that male candidates might not feel as well prepared to reflect as female candidates. “Some males may need additional training to feel comfortable with journal writing as a reflective technique. Positive, constructive feedback from educators may influence how males perceive their journals and may lead to a more powerful reflective experience” (Dyment & O’Connell, 2003, ¶ 14).

Numerous opportunities need to be given to all participants to reflect on their instructional choices. Field experience logs and student teaching journals should continue to be expected for all clinical experiences. Instructors should encourage male candidates to deeply reflect upon and analyze the decisions they are making in the classroom. Qualitative data showed that respondents felt the need to experience more field experience placements before the student teaching experience. If at all possible, clinical experiences should be increased, which would increase the candidates’ opportunities to plan, teach, assess, manage, and reflect in a real-world setting.

Quantitative data indicated that respondents felt prepared to cultivate relationships to support student learning and well being yet qualitative data revealed that candidates were not seeing the connections between courses that teach these concepts and application in the real world. In the 21st century, teachers and families must form partnerships to create a system in which students are encouraged to learn. It would be beneficial to integrate real-world projects into theoretical classes to help candidates make the connections between theory and practice. Assignments grounded in the work of Brofenbrenner (1979) that requires the candidate to research student’s backgrounds and
make recommendations on how to improve the student’s support systems might be helpful.

Alternative means to certification and course delivery proved to be invaluable to respondents. The use of online classes and alternative course delivery formats such as week-end courses allowed respondents to complete their degrees. Qualitative data revealed the need for more online courses and cohorts throughout the state.

The results of this study can inform Marshall University’s School of Education concerning the candidates’ perceived strengths and weaknesses concerning the MAT and PBTC programs. By evaluating the graduates’ and candidates’ perceptions, programmatic improvements can be systematically made.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

This study provided insight into the perceptions of Marshall University’s MAT graduates and PBTC completers from the fall of 1999 to the spring of 2010 regarding their pre-service preparation. Recommendations for further studies include:

1. Structured interviews with MAT graduates and PTBC completers at Marshall University would allow the School of Education to gather more in-depth information and a greater understanding concerning the perceptions of those who complete their programs.

2. A similar study could be conducted with school administrators that have employed Marshall University’s MAT graduates and PBTC completers to see if their perceptions of Marshall’s program are comparable to the completers’ and graduates’ perceptions.
3. Further research could be conducted to investigate if particular demographic variables could affect a completer’s perception of their preparation. This study briefly looked at the affect of demographics but future researchers could conduct a more thorough study in this area.

4. An analysis of alternative course delivery systems could be conducted. Research could be done to determine if it would be advantageous to start new cohorts in other parts of the state and if other alternate forms of delivery of coursework would be beneficial.

5. Finally, all teacher preparation programs in the state of West Virginia could conduct similar studies to determine the level of preparedness in the state system. Information gained from this research could guide the West Virginia Department of Education as they lead the review process of education programs across the state.
REFERENCES


http://wvde.state.wv.us/certification/educator/accreditation/ncate.html


http://ncate.org/states/partnershipFAQ.asp?ch=105#stfaqs1


APPENDICES
Appendix A: Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

Standards
INTERSTATE NEW TEACHER ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT CONSORTIUM (INTASC)

Model Standards for Beginning Teachers Licensing and Development

Principle #1: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and the structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

Principle #2: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

Principle #3: The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

Principle #4: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

Principle #5: The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.

Principle #6: The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Principle #7: The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, the community, and curriculum goals.

Principle #8: The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.

Principle #9: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

Principle #10: The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.
Appendix B: Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness
Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness

Please reflect on the preparation that you received at Marshall University and complete the following survey. Your answers will help in the evaluation of the alternative certification programs.

Number values rating preparedness

1 = Unprepared  2 = Somewhat prepared  3 = Moderately prepared  4 = Well prepared  5 = Extremely well prepared

Section I Please circle the number that corresponds with how well the program at MU prepared you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unprepared</th>
<th>Somewhat Prepared</th>
<th>Moderately Prepared</th>
<th>Well Prepared</th>
<th>Extremely Well Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to make learning meaningful by using the structures of the discipline</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ability to analyze how students learn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ability to analyze how students develop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for intellectual development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for social development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ability to provide appropriate learning opportunities for personal development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ability to create instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>8. Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage critical thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>9. Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage problem solving</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Ability to use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage performance skills</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Ability to create an appropriate learning environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Ability to use appropriate communication techniques</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ability to plan instruction based on a critical understanding of standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Ability to use a variety of assessment strategies
1 2 3 4 5
17. Ability to reflect on the effectiveness of personal choices on others
1 2 3 4 5
18. Ability to understand the role and need to participate in professional development opportunities
1 2 3 4 5
19. Ability to foster relationships to support student learning
1 2 3 4 5
20. Ability to foster relationships to support student well being
1 2 3 4 5

Section II
1. What aspects of the program were the most beneficial to you?

2. How would you improve the MAT or post-baccalaureate program?

Section III. Please complete the information below.
1. Gender:
   □ Female □ Male

2. Which program did you complete?
   □ Master’s of Arts in Teaching □ Post Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate

3. What year did you complete your program? _________

4. How many years have you taught since your program completion? _________

5. Are you currently teaching?
   □ Yes □ No if no, why not? ____________________________
   If yes, are you teaching in WV? □ Yes □ No
   If yes, what county? ____________________________
   If no, what state do you teach in? ____________________________

If you are currently not teaching, skip to question 10.

6. I am a (select the option that best depicts your current position):
   □ Teacher □ Principal/Vice Principal □ Dean
   □ Teacher’s Aide □ Substitute Teacher □ College Faculty

7. I teach at the following level (select the option that best depicts your current position):
   □ Vocational □ Higher Education
   □ High School □ Middle School
   □ K-12
8. What best describes the institution where you teach?
- Public
- Private

9. What best describes the content area in which you are currently teaching?
- Art
- Business
- English
- Foreign Language
- Mathematics
- Chemistry
- Music
- Physical Education
- General Science
- Social Studies
- Physics
- Health
- Physical Education/Health
- Biology
- Other

10. What best describes the major of your undergraduate degree?
- Art
- Business
- English
- Foreign Language
- Mathematics
- Chemistry
- Music
- Physical Education
- General Science
- Social Studies
- Physics
- Health
- Physical Education/Health
- Biology
- Other

11. In what areas are you certified?
- Art
- Business
- English
- Foreign Language
- Mathematics
- Chemistry
- Music
- Physical Education
- General Science
- Social Studies
- Physics
- Health
- Physical Education/Health
- Biology
- Other
- Did not become certified

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey
Appendix C: Panel of Experts
Panel of Experts

The following individuals served as a panel of experts to establish readability and content validity for the *Spivy Survey of MAT and PBTC Program Effectiveness*:

Dr. Sandra S. Bailey
Marshall University Graduate College
Erma Byrd Higher Education Center
300 University Drive
Beaver, WV 25813

Dr. Ron Childress
Graduate School of Education and Professional Development
Marshall University
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
South Charleston, West Virginia 25303

Dr. Rudy Pauley
Graduate School of Education and Professional Development
Marshall University
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
South Charleston, West Virginia 25303
Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter
July 12, 2010

Rudy Pauley, Ed.D.
Associate Vice President of Outreach & Continuing Studies

RE: IRBNet ID# 178713-1
At: Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral)

Dear Dr. Pauley:

Protocol Title: [178713-1] The Effectiveness of Marshall University's Master of Arts in Teaching and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Programs As Determined by Graduates' and Completers' Perceptions

Expiration Date: July 12, 2011
Site Location: MUGC
Type of Change: New Project
Review Type: Exempt Review

In accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2), the above study and informed consent were granted Exempted approval today by the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire July 12, 2011. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date.

This study is for student Missy Spvy.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marshall University Institutional Review Board #2 (Social/Behavioral) Coordinator Bruce Day, CIP at (304) 696-4203 or day50@marshall.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.
Appendix E: Cover Letter
Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *The Effectiveness of Marshall University’s Master of Arts in Teaching and Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Programs as Determined by Graduates’ and Completers’ Perceptions* designed to analyze the degree to which the education program prepared you for teaching and to determine if you have been successful in pursuing a teaching career. This study is being conducted by Melissa Spivy to fulfill the requirements of the Ed.D. under the direction of Dr. Rudy Pauley from Marshall University.

Benefits of this study include the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the Master’s of Arts in Teaching program and the Post Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate program at Marshall University. Identification of these areas may result in changes in program development and enhancements to the program. In addition, this research will add to the body of knowledge about perception of the necessary components for a good teacher preparation program and specifically alternative certification programs.

I know that your time is precious. The attached survey will only take a few minutes of your time to complete. Your replies will be anonymous, so do not put your name anywhere on the form. There are no known risks involved with this study. Participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits if you choose to not participate in this research study or to withdraw. You may choose to not answer any question by simply leaving it blank.

Returning the survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. I am requesting that all responses be returned in the next two weeks. Enclosed you will find a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your mailing convenience. Please keep this letter for your records. If you have any questions about the study you may contact me at 304-481-6894.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research participant you may contact the Marshall University Office of Research Integrity at (304) 696-4303. By completing this survey and returning it you are also confirming that you are 18 years of age or older.

Your participation is very important to this study and your timely completion of this survey will strengthen my research.

Sincerely,

Melissa Spivy
4614 8th Ave
Vienna, WV 26105
Appendix F: Postcard
Dear Participant:

Recently you received a packet requesting your participation in a study that will help to evaluate the Master of Arts in Teaching and the Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Certificate Program at Marshall University. If you have returned your survey, I would like to offer my earnest gratitude for your time and contribution to my study.

If you have not returned your survey, I respectfully request that you would consider participating in the study. The survey will take only a few minutes to complete and your input is exceedingly valuable in determining strengths and weaknesses of these programs. Thank you again for taking a few minutes of your time to fill out and return the survey. If you have decided not to participate, I respect your decision.

Appreciatively,
Melissa Spivy
Marshall University
4614 8th Avenue
Vienna, WV 26105
EDUCATION

Marshall University
Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, 2010

Morehead State University
Master of Arts, Elementary Education, 1988

Freed-Hardeman University
Bachelor of Science, Early Childhood/Elementary Education, 1983

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2009-Present Instructor, West Virginia University at Parkersburg
1997-2009 Associate Professor, Ohio Valley University
1989-1997 Teacher, Whitehall Nursery School
1986-1988 Substitute Teacher, Magoffin County Board of Education
1983-1985 Elementary School Teacher, Shreve Christian School