FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS'
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AS FUTURE TEACHERS

by

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B.A., Wichita State University, 1988
M.S., Newman University, 1995
M.Ed., Wichita State University, 2000
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2006

ABSTRACT

The goal of this research study was to identify the factors that influence community college students' educational attainment as future teachers. In this naturalistic case study, three forms of data collection were used to answer the research question: 1) documents and reports; 2) student surveys; and 3) student interviews. The case for this study was the teacher preparation program at a mid-sized community college, Butler Community College (Butler), in El Dorado, Kansas. The population of the study included 83 elementary education majors enrolled in the teacher preparation program at the community college.

Document and report analysis provided a detailed description of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College, to include Butler's role in teacher education. Survey analysis provided a demographic profile of the research population, as well as the barrier and support factors that influenced the educational attainment of these elementary education students. Interviews were conducted with a select group from the population (22 students) who had completed all of the education courses at Butler Community College and were ready to transfer to a four-year teacher education program. Interview analysis provided a detailed demographic profile of participants, as well as a more detailed description of the specific barriers and supports elementary education students experienced while attending Butler.

The barriers and support factors were categorized as: 1) institutional barriers or supports; 2) instructional barriers or supports; and 3) personal barriers or supports. The greatest barriers students experienced were personal barriers, such as time management and financial issues. The major institutional barrier was lack of staff support, primarily advising support. Instructional barriers, such as the irrelevance of general education curriculum or problems with a specific course curriculum, were only minor barriers for students. The greatest overall support students

experienced at the community college was in the form of instructional support, both faculty support and practical education coursework with accompanying field experiences. The major institutional support was staff support, namely, advising. Family support was cited as the major personal support.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research project to my husband, Martin, and my children,

Austin, Cameron, and Savana, for their continuous support of my work.

Chapter 1

Introduction

"Teacher quality is a national priority…[and] assuring teacher quality [is] the next frontier for improving the nation's public schools" (p. 1, Moore, 2000). America has a mission— a mission to shape productive, learned citizens through public education. This mission cannot be accomplished without the teacher quality described above. Since research confirms a direct link between teacher competency and student achievement, teacher quality is moving to the top of the education agenda (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005). President George W. Bush stated that "teachers are among the most important people in our children's lives, and a good teacher can literally make a lifelong difference" (as cited in USDE, 2004, p. 15). To prove the national commitment to teacher quality, President Bush signed the Federal No Child Left Behind Act in January of 2002 (Madsen, 2003) with an intended goal to have competent, caring, and qualified teachers in every classroom throughout the nation by June 30, 2006 (Moore, 2000).

The shortage of highly qualified and productive teachers is becoming more and more critical each year (Moore, 2000). As early as 1997, Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, estimated that schools will need to hire 2 million teachers during the next decade (by 2007) to replace retiring teachers and keep pace with growing enrollments (Gerdeman, 2001). Forecasters have considered such vacancies "warning signs of a looming national teacher shortage, which by some projections could reach nearly 2.5 million" (p. 38, Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005) in the very near future.

Teacher shortages vary from place to place and subject to subject, with the greatest shortages occurring in urban and rural areas or in subjects such as mathematics, science, and special education. Some shortages are quantity-related, some shortages relate to both quantity

and quality, while still other shortages relate to quality only issues (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005). Regardless of the specifics, the shortage problem exists, and whether it relates to teacher quality, quantity, or both, the appropriate action must be taken to alleviate these shortages nationwide.

Many experts believe that community colleges are a natural fit in helping to meet the demand for teacher quantity or quality shortages, because they have the students, support services, and articulation mechanisms already in place to recruit and train additional prospective teachers (Allen, 2002). In fact, the community college role in teacher education is becoming more and more significant across America as community colleges attempt to meet the challenge of providing new teachers to their communities through a variety of programs (Allen, 2002). These programs involve collaboration between other educational institutions to effectively recruit and educate potential teachers (Allen, 2002).

"The nation's 1,100 community colleges have the potential to provide more than 25 percent of the teachers needed to staff classrooms over the next decade" (p. 9, Blair, 2002). There is evidence that teachers who participate in community colleges before attending a four-year institution are better prepared and perform better than their classmates at the four-year institution (Blair, 2002). The teacher quality/quantity issues can be greatly impacted, therefore, by the quality of the teacher preparation programs at community colleges. However, the question then becomes, *how* can community colleges improve the quality of their teacher preparation programs to reduce the teacher shortage and improve teacher quality? Furthermore, *what* measures can be taken at community colleges to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers?

First and foremost, community colleges must provide sufficient support mechanisms for prospective teachers from the time they begin their education program at the community college until the time they transfer to a four-year institution. Community colleges must develop

innovative, effective teacher preparation programs that will empower students to reach their educational goals to become teachers. An ideal approach community colleges can take to address the teacher shortage issues is to promote the educational attainment of future teachers. Attainment is synonymous to accomplishment, success, and the realization of goals. Educational attainment of future teachers refers to the process of becoming a teacher, to include the completion of the first two years of coursework in a teacher preparation program at the community college. Retaining students during the first two years of their education in a teacher preparation program is the first step in retaining them as future teachers. It is critical for community colleges to help students feel prepared and even confident to transfer to a four-year teacher education program. Community colleges can become key players in realizing both students' goals, as prospective teachers, and the nation's goal to recruit, prepare, and retain "quality" teachers.

The investigator of this study seeks to determine the factors that influence community college students' educational attainment as future teachers. By identifying the barriers and support factors that education majors experience at the community college, measures can be taken to improve or create quality teacher preparation programs that model effective recruitment and retention practices. In turn, graduates from these quality teacher preparation programs can help curb the teacher shortage, promote teacher quality, and, as the ultimate end result, create productive, learned citizens through public education. Sally Stroup, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, stated that "Innovation in teacher preparation…is essential to our [America's] goal of filling all classrooms with highly qualified teachers so that all students receive a top-notch education. Highly qualified teachers are the key to ensuring that our nation's

students are academically prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce" (as cited in USDE, 2004, p. 37).

This chapter is organized in the following manner: background and rationale for the study; statement of the problem; brief description of Butler Community College; significance of the study; assumptions of the study; limitations and delimitations of the study; definition of terms and acronyms; and the summary.

<div align="center">Background and Rationale for the Study</div>

The community college has enormous potential to provide leadership in recruiting the next generation of elementary and secondary school teachers (Patton, 2005). "The opportunity to make real and lasting improvements in the recruitment, preparation, assignment and support of teachers will require nothing less than a national commitment" (p. 13, United States Department of Education, 2004). Many states, four-year institutions, and community colleges nationwide have made such a commitment. Across the nation, states and institutions of higher education have launched a wide variety of innovative programs to meet the teacher quality challenge (USDE, 2004). These innovative programs stem from six key areas that impact the supply and demand of highly qualified teachers. These areas include the following:

1. Alignment of teacher and student standards

2. State certification requirements for new teachers

3. Numbers of teachers receiving initial state certification

4. State identification of low-performing teacher preparation programs

5. Alternative routes to teaching

6. Numbers of teachers on waivers (p. 16, USDE, 2004).

By 2003, 53 states and territories addressed the first key area by establishing and linking student content standards and teaching standards (USDE, 2004). As a result, many states revamped the certification requirements for new teachers, thus, addressing the second key area listed above. In 2003, the United States Department of Education (USDE) found that 39 states and territories required content-specific bachelor's degrees for initial teacher certification. Further findings report that 47 states and territories require assessments for initial teaching certification or licensure to ensure teacher quality.

These revised certification and licensure requirements had an impact on the third key area—the number of teachers receiving initial state certification or licensure. Between the years 2001 and 2003, states nationwide reported a 4 % increase in the number of teachers receiving initial certification or licensure, and in 2003, alone, more than 310,000 teachers received initial certification or licensure (USDE, 2004). Unfortunately, however, even with the increasing numbers of new teachers, teacher distribution and recruitment remains a national issue of the first order. "Barriers for teachers pursuing traditional routes to certification and licensure still exist" (p. 22, USDE, 2004). Community colleges can help eliminate these barriers by providing alternative routes to certification and licensure or by *effectively* recruiting, preparing, and retaining new teachers during the first two years of preparation.

Effective teacher preparation is critical to the "quality" of future teachers. This leads to the fourth key area impacting the supply and demand of highly qualified teachers—state identification of low-performing teacher preparation programs. In 2003, 48 states and territories reported implementation of criteria for assessing teacher preparation performance (USDE, 2004). "While states are generally using, or adapting, existing program accreditation and review processes…, the teacher preparation program performance should be evaluated on the success of

newly produced teachers at raising student achievement" (p. 23, USDE, 2004). This means evaluating existing teacher preparation programs to determine innovative strategies for promoting the success or educational attainment of future teachers. Several states and institutions are actively involved in such evaluation and development processes.

Some of the new developments occurring in states relate directly to the fifth key area impacting the supply and demand of highly qualified teachers—alternative routes to teaching. Florida is a leader in new pathways to teaching. One of Florida's solutions for filling the gap between the number of students and the number of certified teachers in its state is community college involvement in teacher education (Paul, 2005). Since 55 % of Florida's teachers begin their teaching degree in the state community college system, community colleges seem like the natural choice for improving the teacher shortage in Florida (Paul, 2005). Not only has Florida established four-year teacher preparation programs in a few of its community colleges, namely, St. Petersburg College, Miami-Dade College, and Chipola Junior College (NACCTEP, 2005b), but the Florida Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Development has established Education Preparation Institutes (EPI) throughout the entire Florida community college system (Paul, 2005). Currently, 27 out of 28 of Florida's community colleges have applied for or have received state approval to begin EPIs. An EPI can encompass any or all of the following areas:

- Professional development opportunities to assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certificate requirements
- Instruction to assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties
- Instruction to assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements

- Instruction for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers through competency-based alternative certification programs (Paul, 2005).

Florida is not alone in its recognition of the community college potential for preparing teachers and increasing the teacher supply. In 2003, Coulter and Crowe reported that "changes and expansions in the teacher preparation offerings at the community colleges are one way in which state agencies of higher education are attempting to meet the challenge of increasing the supply of teachers and the quality of teacher education programs" (p. 94-95). According to St. Arnauld (2005), teacher education programs exist at almost every community college in the nation. Most of these community college teacher education programs, unlike Florida's programs, offer only the first two years of teacher education, the traditional role of the community college. For the remaining two years of preparation, future teachers transfer to a four-year teacher education program. St. Arnauld believes that community colleges are an ideal choice for the first two years of teacher preparation or for alternative routes to teacher certification since "community colleges are teaching colleges: their mission is teaching and learning. [Community college] faculty excel in using quality pedagogy to teach future teachers" (p. 5, St. Arnauld, 2005).

Not only can community colleges improve the quality of future teachers by modeling effective pedagogical practices, but community colleges offer greater accessibility for the educational attainment of future teachers. "Community colleges are accessible in terms of location, class times, affordability, and other options—factors particularly important for working adults, low-income individuals and students with families" (p. 4, NACCTEP, 2005a). Community colleges know how to serve their community and respond quickly to changing social and economic needs, as well as the resulting education and workforce needs (NACCTEP,

2005a). In other words, students who begin their teacher preparation programs at the community college can reap the economic and social benefits of lower tuition costs, flexible course scheduling, and location accessibility.

For the above reasons, community colleges can attend to the sixth and final area impacting the supply and demand of highly qualified teachers—the number of teachers on waivers (USDE, 2004). In an attempt to fill teaching gaps in high need areas, many states grant waivers to teachers who are progressing toward state certification or licensure but have not yet met one or two conditions for such certification or licensure. Waivers are defined as "any temporary or emergency permit, license, or other authorization that permits an individual to teach in a public school classroom without having received an initial certificate or license from that state or any other state" (p. 31, USDE, 2004). The USDE (2004) reports that teachers with waivers are those individuals who teach on temporary or emergency licenses or permits, pursue alternative routes to certification, and teach as long-term substitutes.

Teacher candidates on waivers need high-quality, practical training to achieve certification or licensure. In collaboration with four-year institutions, community colleges have the potential to play a vital role in such training. Community colleges can also play a role in teacher professional development, continuing education, and endorsement certification (NACCTEP, 2005a). All of these roles support teacher retention, but it is equally important that the community college support recruitment and preparation of teachers. "Quality programs must be developed that address the recruitment, preparation, and retention of education candidates. This aligns with the mission of community colleges as they respond to the need to educate teachers in new and nontraditional ways" (p. 5, NACCTEP, 2005a).

Community colleges contribute to teacher education through both general education and through specific training programs (Gerdeman, 2001). As part of the national effort to prepare a "quality" teaching force, community colleges should develop programs with the following characteristics: programs that provide quality teacher preparation during the first two years of teacher training; programs that establish well-planned articulation and transfer agreements with four-year teacher education programs; programs that offer baccalaureate degrees in teacher education; programs that provide alternative certification or licensure for teachers; and, finally, programs that provide continuing education or professional development opportunities for existing teachers (NACCTEP, 2005a, 2005b; Coulter & Crowe, 2003; Patton, 2005; Paul, 2005). "In order to prepare the best and most qualified teachers, community colleges must hold the vision for quality teaching and identify measures for program accountability" (p. 4, St. Arnauld, 2005).

For community colleges to "hold the vision for quality teaching," teacher preparation must first become an integral part of the community college function (Gerdeman, 2001). To better serve teacher preparation, community colleges must continue offering and expanding the coursework and services currently in place for prospective teachers. "College leaders should work to establish additional articulation agreements, develop formal programs, and provide the types of experiences valuable for future educators" (p. 72, Gerdeman, 2001). But how can community colleges determine what the most "valuable experiences" are or what services will best support the education of these future teachers? Researchers should gather students' perceptions of their actual experiences in community college teacher preparation programs to reveal the factors that help or hinder students' educational achievement or attainment as future teachers. Once such factors have been determined, community college leaders can work to

improve and expand existing programs and services for future teachers who begin their training at the community college.

Now is the time for community colleges and four-year institutions to work together and share information, speak with a common voice, and, together, be viewed as policy shapers and visionaries in teacher education. In this study, the researcher seeks to identify measures to improve teacher preparation at the community college level. In determining the factors that influence community college students' educational attainment as future teachers, this study will share information and make recommendations related to processes that focus on the recruitment, preparation, and retention of students who enter the community college for their first two years of teacher education.

Statement of the Problem

To ensure that our nation's children have competent teachers, long-range and extensive efforts focusing on teacher education are needed. Many local colleges and universities are trying hard to increase enrollment in teacher education programs and improve the curriculum in these programs. Community colleges are no exception. Because of the increasing role that community colleges have in teacher education, it is critical to develop programs that promote students' educational attainment as future teachers. Little research has been done to determine the specific barriers and support factors that influence a community college student's goal to become a future teacher. Issues of quality curriculum, instruction, advising, and transfer have been explored very little, if at all, by researchers whose focus is on community college education majors.

In this study, the researcher explores the above issues in an effort to identify measures for improving the teacher preparation process at the community college level. To investigate the factors that impacted students directly, she gathered information from education majors in the

teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. Using a naturalistic case study approach, the researcher explored education students' attitudes and perceptions related to their experiences in the teacher preparation program. In an attempt to develop themes or patterns related to students' educational attainment, the researcher focused on three broad categories: institutional support factors and barriers; instructional support factors and barriers; and personal support factors and barriers. Identifying the factors that influence students' educational attainment in each category offers continued guidance to the researcher and her readers in the development of improvement processes for the teacher education programs in the community college.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The researcher used a naturalistic case study approach to answer the following research question: **What factors influence the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college?**

The specific sub-questions related to the above question are as follows:

1. What is the role of Butler Community College in the teacher preparation process?

2. How does Butler Community College impact the educational attainment of future teachers?

<div align="center">Butler Community College</div>

In an effort to become a key player in the national commitment to recruit, prepare, and retain quality teachers, Butler Community College focused attention on its education programs beginning in the fall 2004 semester. Although Butler offered education courses and associate degrees in education prior to that time, there was not an "official" education department established until 2004, the result of Butler's new focus. The researcher joined the Butler faculty

in 1994, and, to date, she is the only full-time faculty member at Butler teaching education courses (ED prefix courses). Beginning in 2004, the researcher was assigned the additional duty of Education Department Chair in an effort to support and promote Butler's education programs. With support from administration, the researcher aims to promote the success of future teachers who begin their academic careers at Butler Community College. To develop innovative quality education programs at Butler, it is essential to first investigate and discover students' needs, to include the factors that directly impact their goal to become future teachers.

Butler Community College (Butler) is located in south central Kansas in the small community of El Dorado, population 12,686 (El Dorado Inc., 2006). Butler is the second largest community college in Kansas, serving an average of 8,000 students each semester. Butler has a traditional campus, with on-campus housing in El Dorado, and several off-campus sites throughout Butler County without on-campus housing. Butler provides educational services to the community through various outreach programs in the high schools, special camps and programs for the elementary and middle schools, and a life enrichment program for more mature members of the community.

Butler is well known in the county for its innovative response to the economic and social needs of the community. Butler provides distance education for place bound students via online courses, vocational and technical education for those not seeking four-year degrees, and certificate programs for those wishing to improve their job skills. Butler provides academic programs for those students transferring to a four-year institution. Of most importance to this study are Butler's education programs for future teachers. Butler Community College offers associate degrees in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education. Most students

majoring in these fields intend to transfer to a teacher preparation program at a four-year college to complete their baccalaureate degree in education.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are intended to be beneficial for the researcher, the faculty, the staff, the administrators, and, most importantly, the students at Butler Community College (Butler). In an effort to create an exceptional teacher preparation program at Butler, it is crucial to know, understand, and respond to students' needs within the education programs. The researcher can determine how to promote students' success by identifying the personal, instructional and institutional factors impacting their educational attainment at the community college.

This study may contribute not only to the body of research in the community college role in teacher education, but also to the body of research related to student success factors, persistence, and educational attainment. The significance of this study may extend to those who design and implement teacher education curriculum and programs at all levels of higher education. Furthermore, this study advocates possibilities for new and improved approaches to learning and teaching.

Assumptions of the Study

There are methodological assumptions inherent in this study. First, the researcher assumes, based upon reflection of the research question, that the naturalistic case study approach provides an answer to the research question. In other words, the case study allows the researcher to provide a detailed view of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College, as well as identify the factors that influence the educational attainment of Butler's education students. A second assumption inherent in this naturalistic study relates to the interpretation of

data. It is assumed that the interpretation of interview data is subjective to some degree. Due to the emergent nature of qualitative research, it is assumed that unexpected outcomes do occur as the case unfolds. These "surprises" or unexpected outcomes allow for the emergence of themes and patterns throughout the study.

The researcher assumes there are specific factors that influence students' educational attainment at Butler Community College, and these factors are unique to students' majoring in education or to their goal of becoming future teachers. It is further assumed that the participants are candid in their survey and interview responses, freely expressing their views of the study issues.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The research is limited to a specific bounded system and its participants. The researcher is not attempting to generalize findings to the educational attainment of all future teachers across all educational institutions, but the details of the case allow readers to transfer the findings where similar program characteristics occur. The findings from the study may provide readers with ideas for improving teacher preparation programs at the community college, as well as innovative strategies for promoting the educational attainment of future teachers.

The population of this study is limited to spring 2006 elementary education students at Butler Community College. Traditionally at Butler, the largest majority of education students major in elementary education. Participants in this study are no exception to this trend. All participants are elementary education majors.

The data collected cannot provide an inexhaustible list of factors that influence students' educational attainment. Data collected from the education students at Butler Community College illustrate only some of the factors that influence future teachers' educational attainment at the

select college. The bounded system, the teacher preparation program at Butler, may impact students' educational attainment differently than other community colleges.

The researcher's active role in the teacher preparation program at Butler may be considered a limitation to some readers. The researcher is a white female in the education field with specific views on such. Thus, the researcher sees the "world" or this research case through a very particular lens. In the researcher's effort to avoid bias, rigorous self-checks are conducted throughout the study during all phases of research. Despite this perceived limitation, the researcher remains open to new discoveries related to factors that may or may not influence the educational attainment of her students. The researcher consistently follows established research protocol.

<div align="center">Definitions of Key Terms and Acronyms</div>

Throughout the study, readers encounter various terms and acronyms, particularly in the chapter two review of literature. Below is a list of the most frequently used acronyms, as well as a definition of key terms in the study. The specific functions of the organizations below are described throughout the study.

ACE – American Council on Education

APQC – American Productivity and Quality Center

Articulation Agreement – A written policy agreement between institutions of higher education to confirm transfer of specific coursework between the institutions

Butler – Butler Community College, El Dorado, Kansas

Community College – An open-access public or private two-year institution of higher education offering technical and/or academic post-secondary training. Community colleges generally offer

certificate programs for technical training and associate degrees for terminal or on-going academic preparation.

CPRE – Consortium for Policy Research in Education

Educational Attainment – The process of becoming a teacher, to include the completion of the first two years of coursework in a teacher preparation program at the community college

INTASC – Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

NACCTEP – National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs

NCATE – National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

NCTAF – National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

NEA – National Education Association

NOCHE – Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education

Nontraditional Student – Any student beyond the age of 22 years

NSF – National Science Foundation

Persistence – To continue despite problems or obstacles; refusing to give up

PDS – Professional Development School

TEA – Teacher Education Alliance

Traditional Student – Any student between the ages of 18 and 22 years

2+2 Program – A partnership or collaboration between a two-year and a four-year institution of higher education. Students in 2+2 programs work to complete a baccalaureate degree by attending the first two years of their program at one institution (usually known as a community college) and the remaining two years at the four-year institution. The 2+2 programs are different from regular articulation agreements because they allow for simultaneous admission and enrollment in both the two-year and four-year colleges (Allen, 2002).

USDE – United States Department of Education

Summary

In this naturalistic case study, the researcher seeks to determine specific factors that influence community college students' educational attainment as future teachers. These factors include the possible supports and barriers students encounter during their first two years of teacher preparation, prior to transfer to a four-year teacher preparation program. The research is limited to Butler Community College (Butler) and elementary education students in the teacher preparation program at Butler.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to this study, including the following: the current status of teaching in America; teacher education reform and quality issues; and the role of the community college in teacher education, to include community college teacher preparation programs and recruitment and retention of teachers at the community college. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and design of the study, to include the case selection, data collection, and data processing. Chapter 4 describes the findings related to the research question and sub-questions. Chapter 5 summarizes the results, discusses the implications, and lists recommendations based on conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

The K-12 Teacher Shortage and the Current Status of Teaching

"The United States is in the midst of a teacher shortage" (p. 2, Durdella, 2003). As four-year colleges and universities scramble to recruit and prepare quality teachers, community colleges have expanded their role in teacher education. In an effort to overcome this projected teacher shortage, many states are turning to community colleges to help identify and train prospective elementary and secondary teachers. Community colleges, along with 4-year colleges and universities, are redefining their roles in teacher education. Community colleges, with their expanded new role in teacher education, can generate huge new pools of educators, providing more than 25% of the estimated 2.5 million new teachers needed over the next decade (Blair, 2003).

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (Darling-Hammond, 1997), the demand for teachers will continue to grow significantly as the student enrollment reaches its highest level ever. "By 2007, student enrollments will grow to 54.3 million, up from about 50 million in 1995" (p. 15). 90% of these students will be educated in public schools (United States Department of Education, 1998). The size of the teaching force is projected to exceed 3.3 million by 2007, up from 2.5 million in 1982. With the growing number of teacher retirements and the high attrition rates for new teachers, America faces a teacher shortage, particularly in the South and West, as well as in the port cities on both coasts where the population boom is most dramatic (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Over half of the 2.5 million teachers needed in the next ten years will be first time teachers (Hussar, 1999).

A closer look at this teacher shortage reveals a problem of distribution rather than absolute numbers. There are some states with surpluses of teachers due to slow enrollment growth or to large numbers of teacher education programs producing significant numbers of teacher education graduates (Darling-Hammond, 1997). One of the problems associated with distribution lies with recruiting and retaining teachers into states and districts with teacher shortages. Most high-need districts serve low-income students and, with less income, these districts tend to pay teachers less. "Few states have equalized school funding or teachers' salaries so that all districts can compete equally in the market for well-prepared teachers" (p. 17, Darling-Hammond, 1997). This results in a serious equity issue for schools with high minority or high poverty enrollments. The teacher shortage in these areas forces districts to hire less qualified teachers. Annually, more than 50,000 people who lack training for the job enter teaching on provisional or emergency certificates. In fact, less than 75% of America's teachers are considered fully qualified (USDE, 1998). As a result, the attrition rate for these inadequately prepared teachers is 50% in the first five years of teaching (USDE, 1998). Of course, such high attrition rates only exasperate the teacher shortage problem in high-need districts.

Another problem that contributes to teacher shortages in various areas of the nation lies in the state licensure programs for teachers. State standards vary drastically from one state to the next, not allowing for teacher crossovers from state to state (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Even more than the state variations, the teacher qualifications and training are dramatically different depending on the location of the serving institution for the teacher education program. Among the nation's 1200 teacher education programs, there are numerous variations in quality and minimum standards (American Council on Education, 1999). These inconsistencies in the preparation and licensure of teachers are reflected in the performance of United States students

on international assessments (Darling-Hammond, 1997). "Without a sustained commitment to teachers' learning and school redesign, the goal of dramatically enhancing school performance for all of America's children will remain unfulfilled" (p. 1, Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Recruitment and retention of well-prepared teachers is another factor involved in the nation's teacher shortage. Large districts tend to have cumbersome hiring procedures which act to "chase away" the best-prepared teacher candidates instead of recruiting them (Darling-Hammond, 1997). "Recruiting and preparing the next generation of teachers presents us [America] with major challenges" (p. 2, USDE, 1998). In the next decade, annual hiring is projected to grow by 20%, from 218,000 positions in 1999-2000 to 261,000 positions requiring filling in 2009-2010 (ACE, 1999). The primary reasons for the hiring shortfall stem from the large amount of teacher retirements, accounting for 28% of hiring needs, and the reduction in class size. The Department of Education may have underestimated the demand for teachers due to declining teacher-student ratios. The underestimates can be traced back to the count of under-qualified persons working in the teaching profession. Districts with severe teacher shortages tend to attract less than fully qualified candidates (ACE, 1999).

Reducing the Teacher Shortage and Increasing Teacher Quality

"The shortage of highly qualified teachers is becoming more critical each year. The goal of having a competent, caring, and qualified teacher in every classroom by 2006 has been set and apparently accepted by the educational community" (p. 3, Moore, 2000). Not only are sheer numbers of teachers needed, but fully qualified teachers are essential to curb the shortage and transform American K-12 education. The larger question related to the quality teacher shortage is how to create conditions in school districts that will attract talented teachers, keep them from leaving the profession, and ensure professional development of teachers (Hurwitz & Hurwitz,

2005). To address the question related to the quality teacher shortage, many new developments are occurring nationwide. These developments include: 1) recruiting talented and diverse people into the teaching profession; 2) improving teacher preparation; 3) raising licensing and certification standards; 4) providing support to beginning teachers; 5) improving professional development practices; and 6) improving teacher accountability and incentives (USDE, 1998).

Various measures have been initiated by the federal government to ensure qualified teachers. One such measure involves the federal No Child Left Behind Act which directs states to certify that all teachers are "highly qualified" by June 30, 2006. Unfortunately, however, the federal government has not given clear direction and enough funding to states to ensure compliance. Furthermore, critics of the No Child Left Behind Act argue that the act discourages good teachers from taking jobs in challenging classrooms where the teacher shortage is greatest. Teachers are afraid that these "challenging" classrooms of students will produce lower standardized test scores, thus reflecting on their own fully qualified status as a teacher (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005).

Darling-Hammond (1997) and Hurwitz and Hurwitz (2005) agree that simply increasing or equalizing teachers' salaries can aid in retention and curb the teacher shortage. States such as Kentucky and Connecticut have had great success in reducing the teacher shortfall due to such increases in teacher salaries. Raising salaries could certainly increase the teaching pool in other states, as well, by attracting more young college graduates to the profession. A report published by Public Agenda (Farkas, Johnson, Foleno, Duffett, & Foley, 2000) states that 78% of young college graduates believe that teachers are seriously underpaid, and 47% of these college graduates would consider the teaching profession if it paid more.

To address teacher shortages and teacher quality, the Denver Teachers' Association and the Denver School Board agreed in March 2004 to make Denver's teachers eligible for higher pay based upon performance rather than years of service and graduate coursework. Teachers who improve student learning, receive good evaluations, advance their skills, or accept assignments in high-poverty schools or in subjects with teacher shortages will receive bonuses and can earn up to $90,000 annually earlier in their careers—well above the current maximum of $65,000 for Denver teachers with a Ph.D. and 25 years of service (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005). Sandra Feldman, the former president of the American Federation of Teachers urges schools to follow Denver's lead by rewarding teachers who raise student achievement earlier in their career. The National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest teachers' union, opposes the idea of higher pay for performance, however. The NEA believes that poor performing teachers should be supported to increase their skills and become quality teachers (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005).

Many school districts around the nation have experimented with bonuses or salary increments for recruiting teachers in hard-to-staff schools or in shortage fields. As a fringe benefit, free retraining is offered by some districts to prepare teachers to teach in high-need fields like special education, bilingual education, mathematics, science, and computer science. As is the case in other professions, beginning teachers cannot be expected to have mastered all that they will need to know and be able to do when they first begin teaching (National Research Council, 2001). The National Research Council found that teacher preparation and professional development is essential to best serve K-12 students' learning and promote future success as individuals, workers, and citizens. Public Agenda (Farkas et al., 2000) reported that 57% of new teachers agree that funding for professional development opportunities will improve teacher quality, thus improving student learning.

Teachers' salaries, bonuses, and fringe benefits are not the only areas requiring investment of funds. Teacher resources require significant investment of time and money. Unfortunately, only a few schools and organizations such as the New American School Corporation are redesigning schools to focus on such teaching resources. (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Although Public Agenda (Farkas et al., 2000) reported that 52% of new teachers believe increased pay would improve teacher quality, more money is not necessarily the "end-all" solution to teacher quality nor to the teacher shortage, in general. In fact, even though large majorities of administrators and new teachers agree that teachers are underpaid, "new teachers do not believe money is the magic bullet that is guaranteed to improve teacher quality" (p. 18, Farkas et al., 2000). These new teachers believe that other measures such as class size reduction, well-behaved students, motivated colleagues, and supportive administrators can be more effective in improving teacher quality and retention.

Quality Issues and Reform in Teacher Education

America is not likely to have good schools without a continuing supply of excellent teachers (Goodlad, 1994). According to Goodlad (1994), the 1990's brought about a growing realization of "connectedness" in American education. Good teacher preparation programs usher in good teachers; good teachers create good schools; and good schools generate good students. In essence, both teacher and student quality can be encouraged by improving teacher education programs nationwide. In the following paragraph, Goodlad (1994) offers several approaches for improving teacher education across America.

First and foremost, institutions with teacher education programs must view teacher education as a major responsibility to society. Teacher education should be supported and promoted by the institution's top leadership. Teacher education programs must have a clear,

organizational identity, with a sufficient budget and adequate personnel. The education faculty must plan, maintain, evaluate, and improve teacher preparation curriculum to ensure diverse, well-prepared groups of students enter the teaching field. The education programs and faculty must promote cultures of teaching and learning among their graduates so that these future teachers can transcend these cultures into schools and communities. Programs for the education of teachers must model a commitment to the best possible K-12 education for *all* children. These teacher education programs should allow students ample *hands-on* experience in the K-12 classroom prior to graduation from the programs. These hands-on experiences should connect education theory to education practice in the classroom. These teacher education programs should require a regulatory context with respect to state licensure or certification of teacher graduates. Finally, teacher education programs should tolerate no shortcuts in an effort to increase the supply of teachers (Goodlad, 1994).

Only one year after Goodlad (1994) made the above suggestions for reform in teacher education, the Holmes Group (1995) published its report entitled, *Tomorrow's Schools of Education.* The Holmes Group, a consortium of administrators and faculty from over ninety universities, was initiated as the result of a unified vision—to improve teacher education and, thus, promote teacher quality nationwide. The Holmes Group (1995) joined to implement five goals for improving teacher education: 1) make teaching intellectually sound; 2) recognize the difference in teachers' knowledge, skill, and commitment; 3) create relevant and intellectually defensible standards of entry into teaching; 4) connect schools of education to the K-12 schools; and 5) make schools better places for practicing teachers to work and learn. The goals or initiatives proposed by both the Holmes Group (1995) and Goodlad (1994) set the stage for the following reforms in teacher education discussed throughout this literature review.

Perhaps as a direct result of the Holmes Group's goals and Goodlad's recommendations, many states have developed standards for teacher preparation and licensure. The establishment of such standards can increase teacher recruitment and reciprocity of licensure from state to state. In 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) proposed five recommendations, similar to the Holmes Group's goals, to recruit, prepare, and retain quality teachers.

1. Get serious about standards for both students and teachers.

2. Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development.

3. Fix teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom.

4. Encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill.

5. Create schools that are organized for student and teacher success.

Since these recommendations in 1996, professional networks and teacher academies have been launched; school programs have been redesigned; higher standards have been developed for teacher licensure and accreditation of education schools; and teacher mentor programs have been established (NCTAF, 1996).

By 1997, the accreditation of education schools became a national movement. During that year, 41 states entered partnerships with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The initial and continued goal of NCATE is the development of standards to guide teacher preparation programs for initial licensure of teachers and for the advanced professional development of practicing teachers. By 2000, NCATE moved to performance-based accreditation, which focuses standards on evidence of candidate knowledge and demonstrated teaching skill. Several states have also adopted common standards through the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). These standards, like

the NCATE standards, are tied to performance assessment for initial and continuing teacher licensure. The primary goal of INTASC is the initial and continued development of standards for *new* teachers, but standards have been designed for experienced teachers, also. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers rigorous standards for the ongoing professional development of *accomplished* teachers. Today, virtually all states have begun to develop and redefine standards for teaching. Kansas is one such state. In Kansas, the teaching standards for new and practicing teachers are linked directly to student standards for all Kansas public education students. Of course, it is critical that teaching standards are linked to student standards, because "no other intervention can make the difference that a knowledgeable, skillful teacher can make in the learning process" (p. 8, Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) places critical importance on well-prepared teachers and well-designed schools to achieve high standards. The Commission recommends that states continue to develop student standards to promote high-quality professional curriculum for teachers. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and NCTAF, in the CPRE Joint Report Series (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1998), provide guidelines to guarantee "a systematic approach to developing high quality teaching" (p. 13). This systematic approach links directly to the NCTAF recommendations for recruiting, preparing, and retaining quality teachers, as discussed earlier in chapter two.

As part of the teacher reform movement, the American School Board Journal reported nine ways for districts and schools to recruit and retain the "best" teachers (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2005).

1. Teacher quality should be the center of district policies. High standards should be set for both knowledge of subject matter and for teaching practices.

2. Districts should establish open communication and trust between teachers, administrators, and board members. Teachers should be active in decision-making processes.

3. Pay for performance should be considered. Teachers who "go the extra mile," serve in low-income schools, or have outstanding student improvements should be rewarded.

4. Districts should post vacancies in a timely manner to ensure time for a quality hiring process.

5. New teachers should receive ample support through high-quality mentoring programs.

6. Performance assessments should be used to identify and aid weak teachers.

7. Schools need to review placement practices for new teachers to ensure that they do not always get the least desirable classrooms or programs.

8. Schools should be safe and sound with a high degree of student discipline and building repair.

9. Districts should recognize and apply the research confirming small class size and its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning (p. 41).

The challenges to end the teacher shortage, end the subject field shortage, and improve the quality of teaching provide ample opportunities for states and teacher education programs to "make dramatic improvements in the ways we [America] recruit and prepare teachers, support them in the critical first few years and provide for their ongoing learning" (p. 4, USDE, 1998). Several states and educational institutions have met that challenge head-on. Since 1998, there have been several new policies and practices emerging nationwide.

In 1999, the American Council on Education (ACE) published findings and an action agenda for college university presidents to lead the nation's campuses in a major improvement in the quality of education provided to teachers and school leaders (ACE, 1999). The action plan was founded on three premises—1) the quality of American schooling is inadequate for the times; 2) strengthening teacher preparation is the key to improving the nation's schools; and 3) action by college and university presidents is critical for American higher education to fulfill its duties. Findings from the ACE Task Force (ACE, 1999), in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, were as follows:

1. The success of the students depends most of all on the quality of the teacher.

2. The essential competencies of an effective teacher are command of subject, preparation in effective pedagogical practice, and high overall academic performance.

3. Strong and effective teacher education programs share common characteristics.

4. The academic capacity of college graduates who enter teaching is comparable to that of college graduates, overall, for prospective secondary school teachers, but below average for prospective elementary school teachers.

5. Teachers are inadequately prepared to understand and apply technology to teaching.

6. Current mechanisms of academic quality control at colleges and universities, in schools and school systems, and in state laws and regulations are inadequate to ensure that only fully qualified teachers enter the profession.

7. There is an opportunity to transform the quality of teachers in American schools with the hiring of at least 2.5 million teachers in the next decade.

8. Special efforts and further incentives will be needed to address shortages in high-poverty schools, in special needs programs, in the sciences, and among minority teachers.

9. Demand for new teachers can be reduced significantly by reducing teacher attrition.

10. The professional environment in which teachers work is inadequate to attract and retain enough high quality individuals to meet demand.

In response to these findings, the ACE Task Force developed an action agenda for college and university presidents to significantly improve the state of American education. The agenda includes the following:

Action One: College and university presidents must take the lead in moving the education of teachers to the center of the institutional agenda.

Action Two: Presidents need to clarify and articulate the strategic connection of teacher education to the mission of the institution.

Action Three: Presidents should mandate a campus-wide review of the quality of their institutions' teacher education programs.

Action Four: Presidents and governing boards should commission rigorous, periodic, independent appraisals of the quality of their institutions' teacher education programs.

Action Five: Presidents must require that education faculty and courses are coordinated with arts and sciences faculty and courses.

Action Six: Presidents should ensure that their teacher education programs have the equipment, facilities, and personnel necessary to educate future teachers in the uses of technology.

Action Seven: Presidents of graduate and research institutions have a special

responsibility to be advocates for graduate education, scholarship, and research in the

education of teachers.

Action Eight: College and university leaders should strengthen inter-institutional transfer

and recruitment processes.

Action Nine: Presidents should ensure that graduates of their teacher education programs

are supported, monitored, and mentored.

Action Ten: Presidents should speak out on issues associated with teachers and teaching

and should join with other opinion leaders to shape public policy.

With these action agenda items in mind, many colleges and universities began the journey to

improve their teacher education programs and develop effective models for teacher education.

In 2000, McIntyre and Byrd suggested specific models to promote effective teacher

education programs. "From the beginning, teacher education programs should help prospective

teachers understand themselves and their values and drives prior to helping them understand

their students' needs and aspirations and the effectiveness of their own instructional strategies"

(p. 73). Teacher education programs can foster this understanding among pre-service teachers by

incorporating both inquiry and reflection into the teacher education curriculum. Teachers need to

inquire about education, how it functions, how to gather and analyze information, build and test

theories, and share ideas with colleagues in training and in schools. Of course, there must always

be time to reflect on theory and practice, since it is in reflection that we learn to search for the

meaning inherent in events (McIntyre & Byrd, 2000).

Research, case studies, and portfolios are three exceptional ways to encourage inquiry

and reflection among pre-service teachers. Reformation of teacher education requires more than

an emphasis on cognition, teaching skills, and standards (McIntyre & Byrd, 2000). The three practices mentioned above provide a foundation for shaping knowledge and skills and encouraging future teachers to continue to grow and learn in their profession.

McIntyre and Byrd (2000) found that pre-service teachers who participate in cohort groups experience benefits in terms of retention in the teacher education programs. Cohort group bonds are strengthened during extensive field experiences. In fact, "the increased intensity of social interaction and mentoring as a result of more frequent field or lengthened field experiences might be related in further research as providing stronger foundations and overall competencies in teaching" (p. 189). Extended field experience such as student teaching is perceived by teacher education students, teachers, and teacher educators as the most influential component of the teacher education program. (Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986).

Time spent in the field is a vital component in effective teacher education programs. According to Farkas, Johnson, Foleno, Duffett, and Foley (2000), what pre-service teacher preparation lacks most is not content, but the training needed to manage a classroom, bring classes alive and make sure their students actually learn. Shen (2002) agrees that placing student teachers in the company of experienced teachers allows student teachers to rethink the language of teaching, pose problems of practice, construct curriculum, and confront the dilemmas of teaching. Placing pre-service teachers in the classrooms at an early stage in their teacher education program can offer invaluable experience for these future teachers.

In order to offer structured field experiences with well-trained mentor teachers, teacher education programs must establish strong relationships with K-12 schools. In fact, the Teacher Education Alliance (TEA) (Bristor, Kinzer, Lapp, & Ridener, 2002) found that one of the major postulates to come out of the teacher education reform movement was the importance of school-

university partnerships. The TEA was initiated in 1988 as an experimental pre-service program to prepare teachers for the 21st century. In an effort to create a model teacher preparation program, based upon recommendations from NCATE, the Goodlad Consortium, the Holmes Group, the Carnegie Forum, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Teacher Education Alliance was formed as a collaborative effort between a large urban school district, a local community college, and a state university in Broward County, Florida. The partnership allowed for articulation from the high school to the community college to the university, resulting in a "more coherent curriculum and a continuum of experiences for the teacher preparation candidate" (p. 691, Bristor et al., 2002). The TEA restructured the teacher preparation curriculum to provide exemplary teaching models, utilize shared resources, and emphasize curriculum themes such as technology, diversity, and the integration of content knowledge and varied teaching strategies.

More specifically, the TEA set out to improve their elementary education curriculum to incorporate the following conceptions from Ishler, Edens, and Berry (1996): "a fluid continuum of professional development through collaboration by public school and university professionals; suited for preparing elementary school teachers to teach a multitude of subject matter to diverse students; an integrated studies approach to narrow the conceptual and practical gaps between theoretical and practical; an opportunity to develop technological competence; and problem oriented, socially constructed, student centered" (p. 689, Bristor et al., 2002). The TEA curriculum allowed for program candidates to work in cohort groups throughout the teacher preparation program. The cohort groups were found to be beneficial for pre-service teachers and instructors to share and link experiences in the program. The integrated curriculum and extensive field experiences throughout the TEA teacher preparation program allowed pre-service teachers

to make connections between methodology taught by the university and the reality of classroom teaching within the urban school setting. Qualitative evaluation of the TEA program showed TEA graduates better prepared than regular first year teachers (Bristor et al., 2002).

Since the birth of the Teacher Education Alliance in 1988, many institutions with teacher education programs have developed such partnerships or collaborations with K-12 schools; these partnerships are often called Professional Development Schools (PDS). The National Research Council (2001) found that "some PDS models have become living laboratories for observation, experimentation, and extended practice—sites where teachers, students and college and university faculty create new knowledge about effective teaching and experiment with, evaluate, and revise teaching practices" (p. 5-6). The PDS encourages continuous evaluation and improvement of the teacher education program, as well as more systematic teaching experiences for pre-service teachers.

The PDS is not the only beneficial collaboration resulting from the teacher education reform movement. As early as 1990, a report released by the Florida Education Standards Commission stressed the importance of a strong collaboration between colleges of education, colleges of arts and sciences, community colleges, private institutions, state departments of education, and school districts (Bristor et al., 2002). More recently, in 2003, the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education (NOCHE) and the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC) reported key findings for improving teacher education. One such finding is that "best-practice organizations create partnership structures that operationalize their commitment to continuous improvement" (p. 10). The findings from NOCHE and APQC consisted of seven core elements for best practices in teacher education and preparation (p. 4-6).

1. Prospective teachers develop a strong foundation of knowledge in the subjects they are preparing to teach.

2. Teacher candidates learn how to teach their subjects; the science of child development and how children learn are mastered and assessed before candidates are licensed.

3. Teachers understand and know how to use student assessment data to gauge a student's progress in the classroom. Teachers must be able to integrate this information with their content knowledge and teaching skills to develop strategies that respond to individual learning needs.

4. Student teachers need well-designed and extensive clinical experiences to prepare for the issues and challenges of effective teaching, particularly through their acquisition of classroom management skills.

5. The effective integration of technology into curriculum and instructional practices on the university campus and in the school classroom is essential for teachers in their teaching and assessment practices.

6. Successful teaching practices develop over time; new graduates need extensive mentoring and support for the first few years of their careers. Many observers believe that these programs are an investment to reduce high rates of teacher turnover and to promote teacher career development.

7. Program accountability should apply to all parts of the university involved in teacher preparation. Meaningful accountability is based on outcome measures used to determine if and how the program is producing high-quality teachers. A vital

component of program quality and successful self-assessment is the role of senior

university leaders in implementing accountability policies.

These core elements for best practices in teacher education and preparation reflect a

nationwide effort to improve the quality of teachers and curb the teacher shortage. "The

opportunity to make real and lasting improvements in the recruitment, preparation, assignment

and support of teachers will require nothing less than a national commitment" (USDE, 2004, p.

13). To this end, it is essential for states to create multiple corridors into the classroom to reach

individuals who have the desire to teach but cannot attend a traditional teacher preparation

program. The community college can create one such corridor for the recruitment and

preparation of quality teachers.

<center>The Role of Community Colleges in Teacher Education</center>

Community colleges are becoming more and more important in addressing the national

K-12 teacher shortage and in the goal to develop effective teacher education programs

nationwide. Community colleges can answer the national need for mature teachers who can

demand and command respect from students while understanding their backgrounds and their

unique strengths (Study: Community Colleges a Source, 2002). Part of the answer to the teacher

shortage and quality issues in teacher education is to understand and increase the role of the

community college in the preparation of K-12 teachers (Moore, 2000). Community colleges

enroll more than 10 million students or about 44% of all undergraduates in the United States

(Moore, 2000). Furthermore, approximately 40% of the nation's teachers have completed at least

a portion of their undergraduate science and mathematics work at community colleges. In

response to the increasing student enrollments at community colleges, the National Science

Foundation (NSF) began an active leadership role in teacher education that focused on the

community college collaboration in K-12 teacher education. In 1998, NSF released a report calling on community colleges to take a more aggressive role in recruiting teachers, providing pre-teaching experiences for teacher education students and for professional development of practicing teachers, strengthening undergraduate courses for prospective teachers, and coordinating articulation efforts with four-year institutions (Moore, 2000).

Successful articulation of curriculum from the community college to the university is critical for encouraging a multi-ethnic teaching force. "Half of all African American, Hispanic, and Native American students now attending college do so at community colleges" (p. 9, Blair, 2002). Because of this, community colleges are a natural choice for recruiting minorities into the teaching profession (Allen, 2002). Since minority children make up about 30% of all public school students and minority educators make up only 13% of the public school workforce (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997), it is essential to recruit more minorities into the teaching profession. Research suggests that minority teachers are important, because they tend to be more responsive to children's cultural backgrounds, they hold higher standards for minority children, and they incorporate social reform into teaching (Allen, 2002). There are two factors, however, that could prohibit the development of a multi-ethnic teaching force—high student attrition, especially among minority students, and low rates of successful transfer to four-year colleges (Moore, 2000). In order to overcome these challenges, the community college must be supportive, the teacher education curriculum must include some education courses, dual admissions and working articulation agreements must be in place, and adequate financial aid must be available (Moore, 2000).

Since the 1980's community colleges have been involved in teacher preparation (Blair, 2002). However, the structure for such involvement is usually based strictly upon the people

involved—the faculty and administrators at community colleges, rather than any state mandates for community colleges to provide teacher education programs. In any case, the increasing role of the community college in teacher education can have a profound impact on producing quality teachers for our nation. Research conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, a nonprofit organization based in Belmont, Massachusetts, shows that the quality of prospective teachers who graduate from four-year schools after attending community colleges is good. In fact, teachers who participate in community colleges are better prepared and perform better than their classmates who began at four-year colleges (Blair, 2002). Furthermore, community colleges produce high-quality minority teacher candidates who are more likely to work in the country's high-need urban districts, since many of these promising teachers live in the urban communities and understand the culture and language in the so-called "challenging" urban schools (Allen, 2002). "Many two-year colleges are located in the geographic areas with the greatest need for new teachers. Potential teachers can be recruited within these communities, with the goal of returning students to those same communities as teachers, once they have been trained" (p. 2, Allen, 2002).

State agencies of higher education are attempting to increase the teacher supply and the teacher quality by changing and expanding teacher preparation offerings at community colleges (Coulter & Crowe, 2003). Two distinct efforts are underway at community colleges across the nation as their role in teacher preparation evolves—1) formal articulation and transfer policies and 2) the development of baccalaureate programs. Many states are encouraging community colleges to establish well-defined articulation and transfer policies with four-year institutions. These articulation agreements are sometimes referred to as 2+2 programs, where students complete a specific, planned set of required courses at the community college for the first two

years of training and, thereafter, transfer all coursework directly to a four-year institution, where the remaining two years of coursework are completed for a bachelor's degree in education. This allows students who successfully complete their degree to get full credit for work at the community college upon enrolling in a teacher preparation program at a four-year institution (Evelyn, 2002).

The second effort underway in America's community colleges, to provide baccalaureate degrees in education, is an ambitious response to teacher supply and quality concerns. Obtaining approval for such programs, however, can be challenging in some states (Coulter & Crowe, 2003). According to the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP, 2005b), eight states formally offer at least one baccalaureate degree at a community college. The community college baccalaureate was developed in response to increased demands for higher education, combined with cost and capacity concerns associated with four-year institutions. However, this expanding role of the community college does not come without controversy. Critics of the community college baccalaureate are concerned about mission creep, a shift from the community college's original, historical mission to provide vocational education and lower division general education courses to a concentration on baccalaureate education (NACCTEP, 2005b). Advocates of the community college baccalaureate, on the other hand, believe the community college can provide greater accessibility to higher education, particularly in states where there are large regions without adequate service by four-year institutions (NACCTEP, 2005b). Furthermore, "course costs at a community college are usually lower than those at a four-year institution… [and] a community college may be more geographically accessible for students or, in keeping with the colleges' responsiveness to the community, may offer courses at more convenient times" (p. 95, Coulter & Crowe, 2003).

With the community college responsiveness to community and student needs, the community college is profiled as the institution that is highly capable of educating the teachers of tomorrow (Manzo, 2003). Community colleges will continue to impact the preparation of K-12 teachers in the future through innovate recruitment efforts, successful teacher preparation programs, or K-12 school-community college-university partnerships. With leadership that sets aside institutional issues and supports the development of real partnerships among schools, community colleges and four-year teacher preparation institutions can strengthen that impact (Moore, 2000). "Although many two-year institutions have been actively involved with teacher training for years, parents, politicians, and citizens in general have not realized the potential the community colleges have for developing quality teacher preparation programs until now" (p. 622, Woullard & Coats, 2004).

Community College Teacher Preparation Programs

By 2003, community colleges in 22 states offered some teacher preparation. Nineteen of those provided hands-on experience in K-12 classrooms (Blair, 2003). Even more recently in 2005, St. Arnauld stated that "teacher education programs abound at almost every community college in the country" (p. 4). Community colleges nationwide are becoming actively involved in the national effort to curb the teacher shortage and prepare the best and most qualified teachers. Since community colleges are teaching colleges, where the mission is teaching and learning, community college faculty can provide models of quality pedagogy for future teachers (St. Arnauld, 2005). Gerdeman (2001) agrees that community colleges offer future teachers an educational environment focused on "teaching," where the faculty focus nearly their full attention on instruction. In fact, many community college faculty are considered "classroom teachers," modeling the instructional strategies that K-12 teachers use in the classroom.

Community college involvement in teacher education is not a novel concept. "The potential benefits of two-year colleges to the teacher training enterprise were recognized early. Community colleges and junior colleges have played an important role in teacher training for much of their history" (p. 67, Gerdeman, 2001). As early as 1924, Koos predicted that teachers' colleges would expand articulation with two-year colleges to increase recruitment and make the first two years of training more accessible. In 1925, junior colleges were recognized as an economical way to train teachers and reach potential teachers who lacked educational opportunities (Gerdeman, 2001). By 1940, Seashore believed that junior colleges should take up the burden to raise the educational level of teachers during the first two years of training (Gerdeman, 2001).

Well-prepared articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions can take up the burden to better recruit and prepare teachers. Collaboration and partnerships between community colleges and four-year institutions can promote articulation efforts and create a seamless transition for students leaving two-year colleges and entering four-year teacher education programs. Such partnerships are becoming more and more popular as community colleges join K-12 schools and four-year institutions to overcome the challenge to produce quality teachers nationwide.

Project Synergy depicts one such partnership. "Project Synergy is a collaborative joint-use facilities model for success that involves Sweetwater Union High School District, Southwestern Community College District, and San Diego State University" (p. 224, Zasueta & Arellano, 2002). The collaborative begins with students in ninth grade and ends when students complete their baccalaureate degrees. This project offers students opportunities to earn degrees

in not only education, but in many other areas as well. The focus of Project Synergy is to create a seamless transition of learning from grade nine to the baccalaureate degree.

While Project Synergy begins in the *high school*, there are many more collaborations that begin at the *community college* and, like Project Synergy, end at a four-year institution. These partnerships or collaborations are usually referred to as 2+2 programs, where students complete their first two years at the community college and their remaining two years at the four-year institution. The 2+2 programs are different from regular articulation agreements because they allow for simultaneous admission and enrollment in both the two-year and four-year colleges (Allen, 2002). Many 2+2 programs collaborate with local schools to recruit teacher education candidates, to provide field experiences for students, and to promote work placement within the local schools after students graduate from the teacher education programs (Gerdeman, 2001; Allen, 2002). 2+2 programs provide students with opportunities that may not have existed before, because students are able to take advantage of support services, including advising and financial aid, from both the community college and the four-year college. "Many students who transfer from community colleges to four-year institutions give up if they find they must make up expensive coursework" (p. 2, Study: Community Colleges a Source, 2002). The 2+2 programs can significantly reduce students' frustration and retain students in the teacher education program by guaranteeing proper advisement, enrollment, and transfer of coursework from the community college to the partnering university.

In 2003, Central Michigan University (CMU) joined forces with three Michigan community colleges to create a provisional admissions program for teacher education transfer students. The goal of the 2+2 partnership is to ensure that students are advised to take the proper coursework at the community colleges for direct transfer to the university's teacher education

program (Partnership Gives Head Start, 2003). Cerritos College in California established a similar 2+2 partnership with California State University at Long Beach (CSU) called Teacher TRAC (Teacher tRaining ACademy). Teacher TRAC is a teacher training partnership specifically for the preparation of elementary school teachers. Students must apply to Teacher TRAC at Cerritos College in order to complete the necessary coursework to transfer to CSU's Integrated Teacher Education Program at Long Beach. A unique aspect of Teacher TRAC is that students are provided with service-learning field experiences at local schools (Gerdeman, 2001).

Green River Community College (GRCC) in Washington offers its students transferable coursework for teacher credentials and field experiences in its 2+2 Project TEACH program. Project TEACH advises students to take courses that will transfer to a four-year institution for students interested in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education. GRCC students work with local school districts to provide Project TEACH students with valuable field experiences. Project TEACH students are also encouraged to join the Teachers of Tomorrow Club, a professional network of future teachers at GRCC (Gerdeman, 2001).

In a similar effort to GRCC's Project TEACH, "Virginia's higher education system is joining forces to help ease the projected teacher shortage in the state" (p. 22, Virginia Higher Education System, 2003). The 2+2 collaborations provide seamless transfer articulation agreements between all of Virginia's community colleges and several four-year colleges and universities. The four-year institutions participating include "George Mason, James Madison, Longwood, Old Dominion, Radford, Virginia Commonwealth, Norfolk State, Mary Baldwin and Virginia Union University" (p. 22, Virginia Higher Education System, 2003). Students in the 2+2 programs will be guaranteed admission into one of the above four-year colleges or universities after "passing the PRAXIS I, the teacher licensure test usually taken after about 30

credit hours of coursework" (p. 22, Virginia Higher Education System, 2003), and earning an associate degree at one of Virginia's community colleges. The collaborative programs will lead to baccalaureate degrees or even master's degrees in early childhood, elementary, middle school education, and selected areas of special education.

Pennsylvania College of Technology (PCT) and Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) established a 2+2 program in 1993 to train much needed vocational teachers in the state. The 2+2 program provides students with cooperative experiences and early field experiences in order to meet Pennsylvania's certification requirements of 4000 hours of work experience for vocational education teachers. After students receive their associate degree in a technical field from PCT, students transfer to Penn State where they enroll in the College of Education's Workforce Education and Development program to work toward their Bachelor of Science degree, a vocational teacher certificate, and a cooperative education certificate in the remaining two years of the program (Baker & Walter, 1996).

Although 2+2 programs are gaining popularity in the quest to overcome the national teacher shortage and improve the quality of teacher education, these programs can also be used to bring minorities into the teaching profession. As early as 1989, Cuyahogo Community College and Kent State University in Ohio teamed up to bring minorities into teaching. The two institutions worked together to identify promising minority candidates for careers in education. Many lessons for prospective 2+2 programs can be learned from the Ohio team to ensure success. Some of the important lessons learned from the Cuyahogo/Kent partnership are listed below (Anglin, Mooradian, & Hamilton, 1993).

1. A formal signed agreement between both institutions is important to symbolize commitment to the program.

2. A "boundary spanner" or liaison is critical to act as a "conduit for communication across the institutions" (p. 13).

3. Joint transfer planning and monitoring, along with a dual admissions agreement can enable two- and four-year faculty committees to plan, review, and revise curriculum and procedures for the program.

4. Student support systems at both the community college and the four-year institution provide students invaluable assistance during the transition from the community college environment to the university environment.

5. Development of an appropriate community college pre-teacher education curriculum is needed. Such curriculum should be jointly planned by four-year and community college faculty, and it should include teacher preparation courses and related field-clinical experiences.

6. Local schools should be involved in the entire program to provide pre-service field experiences, student teaching, and possible teaching positions for graduates.

The majority of community colleges in the nation do not have formalized 2+2 agreements such as those discussed in this literature review. However, many community colleges do provide at least some teacher preparation. "A 1999 national survey of community college presidents and deans found that 54% of responding colleges had teacher preparation programs" (p. 69, Gerdeman, 2001). Unfortunately, some of the so-called teacher preparation programs at community colleges are fairly limited in course offerings. Gerdeman (2001) reported that 35% of the community colleges with teacher preparation programs only offer two or fewer pre-professional courses, but 80% offer field experiences for prospective teachers. The primary goal of most community colleges is to prepare students to transfer, after the first two years of general

education, to the remaining two years at an institution with a four-year teacher education program.

Some community colleges are going above and beyond in preparing future teachers by offering their own four-year teacher preparation programs. Students attending such community colleges can earn four-year degrees in education without ever transferring to a "traditional" four-year institution. In 1997, Westark Community College in Arkansas became the first community college in the nation to break the "two year community college mold" of teacher training by offering a baccalaureate degree in education (NACCTEP, 2005b). Shortly, thereafter, in 1999, the Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) was established in Ft. Myers, Florida. The establishment of the CCBA was not a surprising development since two-thirds of community colleges in the United States have considered offering bachelor's degrees in some capacity (NACCTEP, 2005b).

In 2001, following Westark's lead, St. Petersburg College, Florida, began offering Bachelor of Science degrees in elementary education, exceptional student education, secondary education mathematics, and secondary education biology (NACCTEP, 2005b). These four-year programs at St. Petersburg follow effective teacher preparation models (Cruickshank & Armaline, 1986; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000; Farkas et al., 2000; Bristor et al., 2002; Shen, 2002) by requiring extensive K-12 field experiences, with a required minimum of 700 hours spent in classroom observation and student teaching (Blair, 2003).

In 2002, immediately following St. Petersburg's successful attempt to offer four-year degrees in education, the Florida Board of Education approved bachelor degrees at Miami-Dade College and Chipola Junior College (NACCTEP, 2005b). Approval of these programs stemmed from Florida's effort to "grow" their own teachers, rather than "import" teachers from out of

state (Blair, 2003). The baccalaureate programs at Miami-Dade and Chipola Junior College were designed specifically for prospective teachers of the physically and learning disabled (NACCTEP, 2005b). Miami-Dade's baccalaureate program has already received national recognition as one of six institutions studied for best practices in teacher education and preparation (NOCHE & APQC, 2003). One of the most important factors for the success of Miami-Dade's baccalaureate program in education is the collaboration across different disciplines. This collaboration was a critical aspect of the curriculum development for the education program. Miami-Dade also does an exceptional job at keeping in touch with the needs of the students. "The college-wide organizations and the harmony that exists within that structure is another distinguishing factor that separates Miami-Dade College from other institutions" (p. 104, NOCHE & APQC, 2003).

Although Florida takes the lead with their dramatic involvement in teacher education, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah are not far behind. All of these states have at least one or two community colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees in education. Great Basin College in Nevada offers a Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education. Northern New Mexico Community College offers a Bachelor of Art degree in Elementary Education and Teaching. Dixie State College in Utah offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Utah Valley State College offers several degrees in education, namely Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Art degrees in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Biology Education, Chemistry and Physics Education, Earth Science Education, Mathematics Education, English Education, and History Education. (NACCTEP, 2005b)

Recruitment and Retention of Teachers at the Community College

The community college programs discussed above reflect a commitment to quality teacher preparation. Other community colleges across the nation can model that same commitment to quality teacher preparation by reflecting upon and working to improve their own teacher education programs. Recruitment and retention of students are obviously critical components of the improvement process for teacher preparation programs. To recruit and retain exceptional teachers, colleges must identify ways to recruit and retain education majors.

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., in Belmont, Massachusetts, and the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, in Washington, D.C., collaborated on the National Study of Community College Career Corridors for K-12 Teacher Recruitment to investigate the role of community colleges in recruiting and retaining new K-12 teachers (Hudson, 2000). Students at the typical community college are "poorer, older, and less familiar with the higher education system than the student population attending four-year institutions" (p. 15, Hudson, 2000). Because of this difference in the student population, the barriers and needs for recruiting K-12 teachers at the community college differ from those at the four-year institution. The above study found the greatest individual barriers to student success at the community college to be financial pressures, work-related responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, inadequate academic preparation and poor study skills, lack of transportation, and lack of focus or direction. The greatest institutional barriers to student success at the community college were large classes, tuition and fees, faculty availability, transfer counseling, pre-service experience, formal articulation agreements, and scheduling, availability, or location of courses (Hudson, 2000).

The above study found specific program needs related to the recruitment and development of K-12 teachers at the community college. The highest needs were better qualified staff, more program funding, more student financial aid, better recruitment efforts, more cooperation/assistance from partner organization, and better student selection process. Hudson's (2000) recommendations for community colleges in overcoming these barriers and needs are as follows:

1. Articulation agreements and joint admissions policies should be in place to ease transfer from the community college to the four-year institution.

2. Include a formal introduction to a local four-year college or university as part of the community college teacher preparation program.

3. Effective counseling is essential to help students transfer to four-year institutions.

4. Adequate funding is critical to program success, particularly to provide students with a number of course offerings, smaller classes, and scholarships.

As early as 1979 (Horvath), recruitment, retention, and attrition have been studied at the community college. In an effort to reduce the overall attrition rate at a select community college, Horvath studied the recruitment, retention, and attrition process (RRA process) from a student's point of view. For an in-depth investigation of the RRA process, Horvath considered the following four phases: the pre-enrollment phase; the campus enrollment phase; the class attendance phase; and the post-class phase. The pre-enrollment phase investigated aspects related to the RRA process such as the school's image and facilities, public relations and public information, recruiting, and getting people to the campus. The campus enrollment phase investigated such aspects as correspondence with prospective students, student

orientation/assessment, advising, and registration. The class attendance phase included academic policies and procedures, the classroom environment and classroom management, the students, and faculty development. The final phase, the post-class phase, included academic policies and procedures, in addition to research. Horvath found that individual faculty and the institution, as a whole, can have a significant impact on student recruitment and retention. Student/faculty interaction, general classroom management, advising, and student or faculty initiated activities can all improve the RRA process.

Horvath's study did not look at recruitment and retention of specific programs at the community college. In fact, "much of the existing literature on college persistence and completion is focused on baccalaureate students and pays little attention to students in community colleges, and even fewer studies consider differences by students' program of study" (p. 1, Bailey, Alfonso, Scott, & Leinbach, 2004). Most research efforts related to community college attrition or retention are based on theoretical frameworks and factors that characterize four-year institutions (Cofer & Somers, 2001; Wild & Ebbers, 2002). According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), attrition at a community college is a function of the relatively low levels of prestige that community colleges have, as well as the absence of residence facilities for some community colleges. Other studies by Bers and Smith (1991) and Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that students who worked full-time and those who had family responsibilities were less likely to persist at the community college. Bers and Smith also found that students who took courses with a degree purpose were more likely to persist than those who took courses for job-related or personal enrichment reasons.

Many of the studies on persistence at the community college apply the work of Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988). Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988) contends that individual departure from

institutions can be viewed as a longitudinal process of interactions between individuals with given attributes, skills, and dispositions (intentions and commitments) and other members of the academic and social systems of the institution. An individual's academic and social experiences at the institution continually modify the intentions and commitments of the individual. Positive or integrative experiences impact the intentions and commitment of the individual, thus, reinforcing persistence to complete goals at the institution. Negative or non-integrative experiences weaken intentions and commitments, decreasing persistence and increasing the likelihood of an individual leaving the institution. Tinto (1987) recognizes that two individual attributes, intention and commitment, stand out as primary reasons for departure from college. As indicated in the studies discussed previously (Bers & Smith, 1991; Napoli & Wortman, 1998; Hudson, 2000), students begin college with unique backgrounds, personal attributes, and values. These unique student characteristics have a direct impact on the formulation of individual intentions and commitment regarding future education activities (Tinto, 1987). Thus, student persistence in college is affected by the pre-entry attributes of students.

The college or institution can also impact student persistence. Tinto (1987) believes there are four primary institutional situations that influence student persistence in college: 1) adjustment to the institution; 2) difficulty meeting minimum academic standards; 3) incongruence between the needs and interests of the individual and those of the institution; and 4) isolation or the absence of contact between the individual and others in the social and academic institutional community. Both academic and social integration, rather than isolation, appear to have the greatest impact on persistence (Nordquist, 1993). One of the most significant types of integration, in terms of its overall impact on student retention, is student-faculty interaction (Nordquist, 1993). Pascarella (1980) suggests that the development of mentor

relationships between students and faculty is the most important component of social and academic integration/interaction for students. Ferguson (1990) confirms the theory that faculty mentoring positively correlates to student retention. The caring attitude of faculty and staff is considered by institutions as the most important retention factor (Ferguson, 1990). Student-faculty relationships have a greater contribution to the prediction of persistence in or withdrawal from college than do students' peer relationships (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980).

Based upon the research findings discussed above, many institutions have developed programs to increase informal student-faculty interaction and build mentor relationships (Nordquist, 1993). Most of these programs include the importance of academic advising for student development and retention (Young, Backer, & Rogers, 1989). The assumptions related to these institutional programs are: 1) a student who is *socially* integrated to an institution is less likely to experience isolation; and 2) a student who is *academically* integrated to an institution is less likely to experience incongruence (Nordquist, 1993). In other words, faculty mentors can encourage student persistence by reducing isolation and incongruence and improving social and academic integration.

Assigning faculty mentors to students is not the only way to encourage persistence and integration. Hawley and Harris (2005) found that students most likely to persist (successfully integrate) at the community college are active participants in campus-related leadership activities; students who are highly academic and high achievers; students with access to computers; students who plan on attending the community college for several years; and students who expect transportation to be an impediment. On the other hand, attrition or withdrawal from the community college is more likely among students who are not focused on their educational goal; are highly active outside of college (family or extracurricular responsibilities); whose

college entry was delayed from high school; who expect that they will have trouble financing college; and expect to have employment responsibilities during college (Hawley & Harris, 2005).

As noted in the research described throughout this section, there are specific attributing factors that appear to influence student retention and/or persistence in college. In turn, these factors may influence the educational attainment of students. However, while there is a variety of research on student retention and persistence in college, very little research exists on the effect of different *fields of study* on student retention or persistence (Bailey et al., 2004). Furthermore, evidence from four-year institutions suggests that the influence of the field of study on educational attainment is mixed (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). "The impact of the field of study on the educational attainment of community college students remains to be studied" (p. 2, Bailey et al., 2004).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

The literature review suggests that community colleges can positively impact the national teacher shortage by recruiting, educating, and retaining future teachers. Quality programs exist across the nation where community colleges are monitoring student progress and making informed decisions about their teacher preparation programs. With thoughtful program development, high-quality faculty, institutional support, and sound data to support their role in teacher preparation, community colleges can recruit, retain, and train quality teachers.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, introduces the research question related to the above issues, or, more specifically, to the educational attainment of community college students majoring in education. Chapter 3 will convey the specific research methods used for gathering data, as well as a description of Butler Community College and its education programs.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction to Research Methodology

The goal of this study was to determine factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college. In order to study individuals in their *natural setting*, a naturalistic approach to research was used (Creswell, 1998). In this *naturalistic* case study the researcher seeks to answer the research questions based specifically upon the perceptions of students majoring in an education program at a community college. The researcher feels the most important data is obtained directly from those most affected by the research—the students enrolled in the teacher education program.

Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Lincoln, 1994). This means that naturalistic researchers, including this researcher, study issues in their natural settings and attempt to interpret the meanings people bring to them (Lincoln, 1994). Creswell (1998) describes naturalistic research as "an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material" (p. 13). This intricate, interwoven fabric called naturalistic research has various methods of inquiry. For this research question, a case study inquiry approach was used to provide the richest, most meaningful data to determine factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers. According to Stake (1995), a case study focuses on particularization rather than generalization of information. This case study focused on the unique experiences of a particular group of students majoring in elementary education at a mid-size community college. This study was descriptive in that it included no comparative analysis or evaluative procedures. The research was conceptually organized around issues pertaining to the educational attainment of students majoring in

education. The educational attainment of students was based primarily on the students' experiences and their own perceptions of the teacher preparation program at the community college. Therefore, the most appropriate methodological approach to exploring the research question was the particularistic, descriptive, issue-driven case study.

This methodology chapter is organized in the following manner: the introduction to research methodology; the research questions and sub-questions; the case selection; the description of procedures, to include data collection; data processing and data analysis; quality considerations, to include internal validity/credibility, reliability/dependability, and external validity/transferability; and the summary.

Merriam (1988; 1998) offered guidance to the researcher related to the ambiguity of a naturalistic inquiry approach. Such ambiguity was initially unwelcomed by the researcher until refinement of the question made it evident that a case study approach was the best method for gathering information. Yin (1994) observed that a case study is an appropriate research method when "boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). In this study the phenomenon includes the *factors influencing educational attainment* and the bounded system is the *teacher preparation program* at Butler Community College in El Dorado, Kansas.

According to Creswell (1998), naturalistic research occurs "in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language" (p. 14). Naturalistic research is framed by people's interpretation of meaning based on interaction with other people (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The research begins from a broad perspective and narrows as themes emerge from the data analysis. Merriam (1998)

believes that data collection is "determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (p. 70).

There are eight reasons why many researchers, including this researcher, choose naturalistic research (Creswell, 1998). Naturalistic research is most appropriate when the following conditions are present:

1. The question starts with a *how* or *what*. The core outcome of this research was to determine *what* factors influenced the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college as perceived by the students themselves.

2. The topic needs to be explored. The review of literature suggests there is very little research on the educational attainment of future teachers at the community college.

3. The researcher wants to present a detailed view of the topic. To understand more about students' perceptions of the factors that influenced their educational attainment, the teacher preparation program was described in extensive detail. This detailed view of the bounded system offered the researcher directions for narrowing the study's focus for meaningful results.

4. The researcher wishes to study individuals in their natural setting. Since the primary data collection came directly from those individuals involved in the teacher preparation program, the students majoring in education, this researcher gathered data from participants in a natural setting.

5. The researcher is interested in writing in a literary style. The researcher had an active role in the study—a faculty member in the teacher preparation program. As a result, the researcher brought herself into the study, engaging in a storytelling form of narration.

6. There is sufficient time and resources for extensive data collection in the field and detailed data analysis in text form. While time and resources were not perpetual, the researcher's direct role in the teacher preparation program provided greater opportunities for data collection in the field, as well as data analysis in text form.

7. The researcher seeks an audience that is receptive to his/her research. Readers tend to be receptive to qualitative research because of its literary style, and as any researcher would agree, receptiveness to one's study is half the battle for advocating change or future research.

8. The researcher wishes to employ the role of active learner. As a key member of the teacher preparation program studied, the researcher told the story from a participant's view rather than an "expert's" view passing judgment on the program. The researcher actively learned strategies for improving the educational attainment of future teachers at the community college.

The case study examines a specific case, focusing on one context or setting, and exploring the interaction of factors and actors in the context or setting. Merriam (1998) suggests there are four main characteristics of the case study. The case study is particularistic where a single experience or situation is studied for greater understanding of a more general issue. This relates to the bounded system of the teacher preparation program in this study. The case study must be descriptive. The teacher preparation program is described in detail, to include students' perceptions related to their own educational attainment in the program. The case study is heuristic where new meaning of particular phenomena may emerge as a result of in-depth analysis of a particular case. The teacher preparation program at the community college, as well as students' perceptions of such, are studied in depth to answer the research question. Finally,

case study knowledge is "more concrete, more contextual, and more developed by reader interpretation" (p. 31-32). A case study approach to determine the factors influencing the educational attainment of students majoring in elementary education at the community college offers concrete, contextual examples to the readers for developing successful teacher preparation programs or for recruiting, retaining, and preparing future teachers at the community college.

To address the practical issue of educational attainment, the bounded teacher preparation program was studied in its entirety as a case study. This included a detailed program description, as well as information from the direct consumers of the program, students. The researcher plays a vital role in the program's success. Hence, the researcher was not simply a collector of information, but, rather, an active participant in data collection, analysis, and conclusion. The results of the case study provide guidance to the researcher in focused directions to improve the future success of the teacher preparation program at the community college.

Because of the researcher's active involvement in the teacher preparation program, this naturalistic research is value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is an important concept to keep in mind when reading naturalistic research studies, including this study. To some readers this may represent a compromise of objectivity, but the richness of interpretation offered by naturalistic research is of greater importance than pure objectivity. However, the researcher did need to put some distance and objectivity into the perceptions and interpretation of the data. In this study, the researcher plays an active role as a faculty member and as the department chair of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College; thus, it would be foolish to assume her to be a dispassionate collector of data with no interest in students' educational attainment at the community college. Rather, the researcher was an active participant in this naturalistic case study, one with an earnest interest in accurate and reliable findings.

Research Questions

The research issues were twofold. The first pertained to the specific role of a select community college in teacher preparation. The second reflected the issue of educational attainment for students in the teacher preparation program. The overarching research question was: **What factors influence the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college?**

The specific research questions were as follows:

1) What is the role of Butler Community College in the teacher preparation process?

2) How does Butler Community College impact the educational attainment of future teachers?

Case Selection

"The context of the case involves situating the case within its setting, which may be a physical setting or the social, historical, and/or economic setting for the case" (p. 61, Creswell, 1998). The researcher made the decision to study the physical setting of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College, along with its social, historical, and economical factors as related to the students majoring in the education program. The purposefully selected case included all spring 2006 elementary education students who had taken at least one of the three education classes offered at Butler Community College.

The goal of the study drove the choice of sample and case. To determine factors influencing the educational attainment of future teachers at the community college, it made sense to select students who were in a teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. Historical demographic data of education students at Butler Community College was necessary to provide a foundation for the case. Demographic data for current education students was

critical to the timeliness of the case. Student perception data, via surveys and interviews, offered the richest data for the case study.

<p style="text-align:center">Student Participants</p>

The population for this research consisted of elementary education students at Butler Community College during the spring 2006 semester who successfully completed at least one of the three education classes offered at Butler. The total population was 83 students. A detailed description of the students, including demographic factors, is provided in the chapter four findings. Of the 83 elementary education students, a purposeful sample of 22 students was selected for interviews regarding students' perceptions of their own educational attainment at Butler Community College.

The purposeful interview sample was selected based upon two factors. 1) The interview participants included elementary education students in the final semester of their teacher preparation program at Butler and ready for transfer to a four-year institution. 2) The interview participants successfully completed all three of Butler's education classes—ED 206, Introduction to Teaching; ED 222, Instructional Technology; and ED 120, Introduction to the Exceptional Child—by the end of the spring 2006 semester. Choosing students based upon these criteria allowed the researcher to better explore the factors that have influenced participants' educational attainment throughout the complete teacher preparation program experience at Butler. The demographic profile of interview participants will be reported in the chapter four results.

<p style="text-align:center">Description of Institution</p>

Butler Community College (Butler) in El Dorado, Kansas, was chosen as the research location due to the researcher's employment with the college, as well as Butler's growing role in teacher education. "In response to tremendous teacher shortages that persist in high-growth parts

of the country, community colleges are rushing to fill the gap…Two-year colleges are increasingly becoming a viable—and in some ways preferable—entry point into the teaching profession" (p. 3, 2005c, NACCTEP). Butler Community College is one such two-year college rushing to fill the gap in Kansas.

Butler Community College is located only 25 miles from the largest urban area in Kansas—the city of Wichita and its surrounding metropolitan area. According to the Official City of Wichita government website (2006), the metropolitan statistical area (MSA) population is approximately 550,000. Butler Community College is located in Butler County, one of the three counties included in the above MSA. Eleven percent of the total MSA population resides in Butler County. The city of Wichita is located in Sedgwick County, with 83% of the total MSA population residing here, while the remaining 6% of the MSA population reside in Harvey County. Of course, with such a large urban area nearby, Butler has the opportunity to impact the teacher shortage in the Wichita MSA by recruiting, preparing, and retaining future teachers. Butler's historical and current role in teacher education will be discussed in more detail in the following section, as well as in the chapter four findings.

Butler's college mission relates well to the national mission to recruit, prepare, and retain quality teachers. Butler Community College exists to develop responsible, involved lifelong learners and to contribute to the vitality of the communities it serves. This includes the "development" of quality teachers to contribute to the "vitality" of public education in the communities that Butler Community College serves. The vision of Butler to create exceptional student-centered learning environments and cultural opportunities that cultivate principled, productive and dynamic communities is a shared vision across all academic fields and

disciplines. This vision challenges Butler to become a "viable and preferable entry point into the teaching profession."

Butler is a mid-sized community college serving approximately 21,000 full-time and part-time students each calendar year. (This figure reflects a total headcount for all course enrollments during the fall, spring, and summer semesters.) In the spring 2006 semester, Butler served 8170 students, enrolled in 73,670 total credit hours. Butler Community College has one traditional main campus location serving approximately 400 dormitory students and numerous commuter students. Butler also provides educational services for commuter students and high school students in 20 other off-site locations within a 75 mile radius of the main campus. The college was opened in 1927 as a junior college and has since been renamed a community college. Butler is accredited through the Higher Learning Commission, the North Central Association of Colleges, the National League of Nursing, and the Kansas State Board of Nursing.

Butler employs 1200 people, has a 36 million dollar direct economic impact on the community and a 69 million dollar indirect impact on the community. Butler distributes approximately 12 million dollars in student aid. The male/female ratio at Butler is 3.4/5.2 with a faculty/student ratio of 1/17. During the 2005-2006 school year, approximately 5% of Butler's students were under the age of 18, 43% were traditional students between the ages of 18 to 22, while the remaining 52% were nontraditional students over the age of 22. The overall ethnic makeup of Butler's students is shown on the following page in Table 1.

Table 1

Ethnic Profile of Butler Students

Ethnic Category	Percentage
Caucasian	74.8
African American	9.86
Hispanic	4.95
Asian	3.89
Native American	1.77
Other	4.19
Mixed	0.50
Foreign Students	3.47

Education Programs at Butler Community College

Although Butler has offered various certificates and associate degrees in education for some time, an Education Department for the elementary and secondary education programs was not established until the fall of 2004. Without an official department in these areas, it may have been challenging in the past for students to find an "official" point of contact for obtaining information related to these education programs. Today, however, Butler offers its students three official points of contact for the various education programs: 1) the Education Department Chair/Lead Faculty Member; 2) the Early Childhood Education Department Chair/Lead Faculty Member; and 3) the Physical Education Department Chair/Lead Faculty Member. These various departments maintain current websites highlighting Butler's programs in education for prospective students.

Along with the specific general education requirements for future teachers, Butler offers its education majors the option to take up to three education (ED prefix) courses for transfer into a teacher preparation program at a four-year institution. The courses are as follows: Introduction to Teaching, ED 206; Introduction to the Exceptional Child, ED 120; and Instructional Technology, ED 222. All of these courses are intended for students who have a sophomore standing at the college. Butler also offers several courses in early childhood development, as well as Children's Literature and Developmental Psychology. Although these courses do not have an education or "ED" prefix, many education majors take these courses at Butler as part of their teacher preparation program.

The vast majority, roughly 75%, of Butler's education students transferring to four-year institutions are elementary education majors. Only a very small minority, less than 5%, of early childhood education and secondary education majors take all three of the education courses described above, particularly ED222, the Instructional Technology course. The greatest variance among declared education majors is historically seen in ED 206, the Introduction to Teaching course, where students are still undecided about whether they want to teach or what level they plan to teach. The research population in this study reflects the large majority of elementary education majors.

To date, Butler offers the following programs for students majoring in education.

Associate in Arts, Early Childhood Education

Associate in Applied Science, Early Childhood Education

Associate in Arts, Early Childhood Education Special Education

Associate in Applied Science, Early Childhood Education Special Education

Early Childhood Associate Apprenticeship Program

Early Childhood Education One Year Certificate

Child Development Associate Specialty Certificate

Associate in Science, Elementary Education

Associate in Arts, Elementary Education

Associate in Science, Secondary Education

Associate in Arts, Secondary Education

Associate in Science, Physical Education for Elementary Majors

Associate in Arts, Physical Education for Elementary Majors

Associate in Science, Physical Education for Secondary Majors

Associate in Arts, Physical Education for Secondary Majors

Unlike the elementary and secondary education majors, not all students in the early childhood education programs at Butler intend to transfer to a four-year institution. Rather, the career intention of many early childhood majors is to direct a childcare development center or work as a paraprofessional in a public or private early childhood program. A distinct aspect of the early childhood education programs at Butler is the extensive field experiences offered to its students in the Educare Childcare Center located on the Butler Community College traditional campus in El Dorado, Kansas. The Educare Center Lab is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The Educare facility operates as a licensed daycare for children in the El Dorado community, including the children of Butler students, faculty, and staff.

Another distinct program at Butler, developed specifically for elementary education majors, is the BEST Program—Butler and Emporia, from Students to Teachers. Initiated in the fall of 2004, the BEST Program is a 2+2 program that provides students a seamless transition

from Butler Community College to Emporia State University (ESU), Emporia, Kansas, in obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. One of the unique aspects of this 2+2 program is that students take all of their coursework at the Butler Community College main campus in El Dorado, Kansas, for the first three years of their degree program. Students may concurrently enroll in both Butler and ESU courses during the three-year timeframe to meet degree requirements. During the fourth and final year of the 2+2 degree program, students participate in one of the BEST Program's Professional Development Schools in Butler County and its surrounding area. The PDS provides students with learning experiences working directly in an elementary school with young children (K-6) and their teachers.

The BEST Program offers its graduates both an associate degree and a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Butler Community College and Emporia State University, respectively. BEST students have the opportunity for dual advising and dual financial aid with ESU advisors and faculty located on the Butler Community College El Dorado campus. The BEST Program also offers dual curriculum development by Butler and ESU faculty in some of its education coursework.

The BEST Program requires students to maintain high standards throughout the four-year program. To enter the second component of the 2+2 program with Emporia State University (the four-year teacher institution), students must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5. To progress through the final two years of the BEST Program, students must earn a minimum grade of "C" in all coursework.

Another unique aspect of the BEST Program is the training BEST students receive in mathematics and science. Along with math and science methods courses, BEST students participate in a Math/Science Seminar course. This seminar course requires students to develop

numerous hands-on or inquiry learning units in math and science. As part of the seminar course, BEST students work directly with local elementary school students to "practice" their well-developed math and science learning activities.

With such a large number of education programs, as well as the innovative Educare Center Lab and the 2+2 BEST Program discussed above, Butler Community College in El Dorado, Kansas, has taken on a large role in teacher education. Butler can have an impact on the educational attainment of future teachers. Butler's *teacher preparation program* provided the researcher with an ideal *case* to study the factors that influence students' educational attainment as future teachers.

<div align="center">Procedures</div>

Consistent with the case study methodology proposed by Creswell (1998), the researcher used multiple sources of information to gather data in an effort to answer the research questions. Yin (1989) espouses both quantitative and qualitative approaches to case study research. This study included both quantitative and qualitative data sources, consisting of documents, reports, surveys, and interviews. In order to determine the role of Butler Community College in the teacher education process, documents and reports were reviewed for historical and current information regarding Butler's past, current, and proposed future role in teacher education. Surveys were used to gather demographic data from elementary education students at Butler Community College to determine factors that may or may not influence students' educational attainment. Interviews provided a detailed analysis of the factors influencing individual students' educational attainment at the community college.

Using the multiple data sources mentioned above, a detailed description of the case emerged, as did specific, recurring issues and an interpretation about the case by the researcher

(Stake, 1995). The analysis was holistic in nature, in that all data sources were analyzed as part of the complete case. Following Creswell's approach (1998), the researcher narrates the study through techniques such as a chronology of the teacher preparation program followed by an up-close or detailed perspective of the factors influencing students' educational attainment as future teachers.

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher contacted the Dean of the Education Department for approval to conduct research at Butler Community College. Once such approval was granted, the researcher met with the Office of Institutional Research at Butler Community College to establish the proper protocol for the study. In addition to the research protocol guidelines at Butler, the Office of Institutional Research provided the researcher with various avenues for collecting information, to include current student enrollment information, as well as historical documents and reports relating to the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. These documents helped guide the researcher during the first step of data collection discussed below.

<u>Data Collection</u>

A case study involves a wide array of data collection as the researcher attempts to build an in-depth picture of the case (Creswell, 1998). For this researcher, the first step in data collection began with a document review of archival materials related to the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. Documents were synthesized to provide a detailed description of the teacher preparation program, as well as its historical background. Reports from the Institutional Research Office at Butler Community College were reviewed and summarized to establish enrollment and retention patterns in the education program at Butler. Institutional

reports generated from the computerized Banner system, described below, were also reviewed for current enrollment and demographic information of education students at Butler.

During the 1999-2000 school year, Butler Community College adopted a computerized reporting system called Banner. Banner is an all-inclusive operating system that allows administrators, faculty, staff, and students computerized access to specific information relevant to the access level of users. Banner is used for all college functions such as registration, enrollment, certification rosters, student progress and tracking, grade reporting, and college-wide communication. The Banner system enabled the researcher to extract both historical and current demographic data on education students, as well as information related to enrollment patterns in the education programs at Butler since the implementation of the computerized system.

The second step in data collection included a survey for all elementary education students at Butler Community College during the spring 2006 semester. The survey was administered to education students during the last two weeks of the semester—the last week of April and the first week of May, 2006. The total research population consisted of 83 elementary education students enrolled in at least one of the three education courses offered at Butler during the spring 2006 semester. Due to the researcher's role as Education Department Chair and Lead Faculty Member, the survey was administered personally to the elementary education students, with the exception of one online education class. This guaranteed maximum student participation in the study. The researcher could not account for students who were enrolled but no longer attending classes at Butler. However, follow-up attempts were made by the researcher to distribute the survey to students who were simply absent from classes on the initial day the survey was administered.

Based upon recommendations made by the Office of Institutional Research at Butler, the researcher chose to administer the survey as a web survey. In collaboration with the research

office, the researcher created a web link for students to access in order to take the survey online. With the exception of the online class, the researcher visited each of the 12 sections of education classes offered during the spring 2006 semester, took the students to a reserved computer lab, and administered the survey. The 12 sections of education classes were located at various Butler sites, namely, Butler of El Dorado, Butler of Andover, Butler of Marion, and Butler of Council Grove, as well as the one online class section. The 12 sections of education classes included the following: five sections of ED 206, Introduction to Teaching; four sections of ED 120, Introduction to the Exceptional Child; and three sections of ED 222, Instructional Technology.

Student participation in the survey was purely voluntary, with no ill consequences for non-participation. For those students absent (7 of 83 students) on the dates the web surveys were administered, the researcher provided paper copies for students to voluntarily complete during class on their next date of attendance. The paper copies were then entered into the web survey link, along with the other web surveys, for data analysis. The survey is described in more detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

The third and final step in data collection consisted of interviews from a purposeful sample of the 83 student participants described above. The researcher purposefully selected 22 participants to interview regarding students' perceptions of their own educational attainment as future teachers at the community college level. With the purposeful sample of 22 students, the researcher aimed to employ maximum variation and represent diverse student views to fully display multiple perspectives about the case (Creswell, 1998).

The interview participants were selected based on their experience in the teacher preparation program at Butler. Interview participants met the following two criteria: 1) interview participants included students in the final semester of their teacher preparation program at Butler

and ready for transfer to a four-year institution; and 2) interview participants successfully completed all three of Butler's education courses—ED 206, Introduction to Teaching; ED 222, Instructional Technology; and ED 120, Introduction to the Exceptional Child—by the end of the spring 2006 semester. A total of 26 students during the spring 2006 semester met the above criteria for the purposeful interview selection. All 26 students were elementary education majors, which is typical of students who take all three education courses in Butler's teacher preparation program.

The researcher contacted all students personally at Butler to inquire about their willingness to participate in an interview (see Contact Protocol in Appendix E). Of the 26 students, 24 agreed to participate in the semi-structured interview. Upon such agreement, a convenient date, time, and location were chosen by each interviewee to participate in the interview. Follow-up e-mails and phone calls were made by the researcher to remind participants of their scheduled interview. Two of the 24 students who agreed to participate did not show up for the scheduled interview. The researcher attempted a follow-up e-mail and a phone call to reschedule each interview, but the two students did not respond. The interview is described in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

Survey

A survey was developed by the researcher to assess the influence of certain factors on students' educational attainment at the community college. The survey questions were developed by the researcher based upon research from the literature review relating to educational attainment and the role of the community college in teacher education. The survey consisted of 47 questions. The questions were developed and organized into three broad categories that the

literature has shown to influence students' educational attainment: 1) personal factors; 2) instructional factors; and 3) institutional factors.

Survey questions that relate to students' personal factors include demographic questions as well as questions relating to students' responsibilities outside of school such as work, family or extracurricular involvement. Other survey items relating to personal factors include questions regarding students' academic ability, educational background, study habits, persistence, finances, transportation, living arrangements, enrollment status, reasons for choosing Butler, and course load. Survey questions regarding instructional factors include such topics as quality of instruction, quality of education courses and field experiences, quality of general education coursework, student-faculty relationships, and relevance of coursework to educational attainment. Finally, the survey questions relating to the institutional factors collect information regarding the following: facilities/institutional resources; articulation of coursework; advising/counseling support; staff and administrative support; and financial aid.

Survey responses consisted of yes/no, fill-in, checked, or three item likert responses, such as *very relevant, somewhat relevant,* or *not at all relevant*. Greater detail may have been possible for the likert responses with a five item scale; however, this researcher was seeking a broad view from the survey data to compare to the more detailed view from the interview data.

A content check was conducted by the researcher to establish the content validity of the survey questions. After the initial development of the survey questions, the researcher developed a chart of possible factors relating to students' educational attainment based upon related findings from the literature. The chart was compared with the developed survey by the researcher and by an external auditor to assess content validity for the survey questions. The survey content validity chart is included as Appendix D.

Survey results were correlated with interview results to determine themes related to factors that influence students' educational attainment. All 83 elementary education students enrolled during the spring 2006 semester were asked to complete the survey anonymously. Privacy of respondents was maintained. No names or identifying features were used. Names of faculty and staff mentioned by students on the surveys were removed to protect their privacy. The accompanying survey letter and the complete survey are included as Appendices B and C, respectively.

Interview

The interview questions were developed by the researcher to provide a more detailed analysis of the survey results. The interview consisted of 7 questions. The first question asked participants about their educational goals. The second question asked participants why they chose Butler as their educational institution. The remaining 5 questions related to students' educational experiences at Butler Community College, particularly in the teacher preparation program, to include questions regarding the support factors or barriers related to students' educational attainment. Interview results were linked with the survey results to determine specific factors that influence students' educational attainment at Butler Community College. The interview was semi-structured with the researcher asking specific prepared questions. However, if the interview questions led participants to discuss other issues related to their educational attainment in the teacher preparation program at the community college, the researcher encouraged the participants to elaborate.

All interviews were conducted at a Butler Community College campus location that offered the greatest accessibility to student participants. Students were contacted in person on the Butler Community College campus and asked for their participation in the 30-40 minute

interviews scheduled at a time convenient for both the researcher and the interviewee. (See Contact Protocol in Appendix E.) Prior to beginning the interview, participants were asked to sign an interview consent form consistent with human subjects regulations (Appendix F). Privacy was maintained. No names or identifying features were used during the taping or transcription of the interviews. Names of faculty and staff mentioned by students during the interview were removed to protect their privacy. A member check was performed at the end of each interview.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Such transcriptions were returned, via mail or e-mail, to the interviewees in a second member check for review of accuracy. The names of interviewees were not used in the transcription to protect the privacy of participants. Interview participants were referred to as Student 1, Student 2, etc…, in the transcriptions. The interview process guide and the interview questions are included as Appendices G and H, respectively.

Human Subjects Guidelines

All human subjects guidelines were observed during the data collection process. Careful attention was given to matters of anonymity for both the survey and the interview data. Sensitivity and ethical conduct governed the data collection phase of the study. Consent forms were signed prior to data collection. Administrative approval from Butler Community College, via a signed consent form (Appendix A), was obtained prior to data collection from Butler students. The Office of Institutional Research was apprised of all research activities in the study, and such office provided the researcher with the proper data collection procedures at Butler Community College. According to human subjects protocol, prior to data collection, the study was submitted for approval from Kansas State University's Institutional Review Board in Manhattan, Kansas.

Data Processing and Analysis

The primary research question was: What factors influence the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college? Documents and reports, survey responses, and interview responses were reviewed, summarized, and analyzed to answer the research question.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was used to answer the sub-question: What is the role of Butler Community College in the teacher preparation process? A detailed view of aspects or facts related to the case is an important component of case study analysis (Creswell, 1998). Documents and reports were analyzed and summarized to provide a detailed view or description of the bounded system in this case study, the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. The specific documents reviewed in this case study included the following: college catalogs to describe the education courses and the associate degree programs offered in education; computerized Banner system reports to provide historical and current demographic information about education students and the teacher preparation program; transfer checklists for education majors to provide information on transfer articulation; marketing materials to report details regarding specific field experience opportunities for education students; grant submissions to report information regarding Butler's 2+2 Program in Elementary Education; and education department correspondence to describe Butler's role in teacher education.

Survey and Interview Analysis

Survey and interview data were analyzed in the researcher's attempt to answer the sub-question: How does Butler Community College impact the educational attainment of future teachers? More specifically, through survey and interview data analysis, the researcher determined the factors influencing students' educational attainment at Butler Community

College. In naturalistic research, data analysis is an ongoing process. "Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71, Stake, 1995). After surveys were completed and analyzed using descriptive statistics, the researcher searched for similarities in student responses to determine specific factors influencing students' educational attainment at Butler Community College. While analyzing the survey and interview responses, the researcher compared and contrasted such responses to findings in the literature related to students' educational attainment based on personal factors, instructional factors, and institutional factors.

After each interview was completed, field notes were recorded and thematic words or expressions were noted, as well as possible interviewer effects and clarifications. The field notes included the researcher's reflections, feelings, and impressions of each interview. These field notes were useful during data analysis and the establishment of repeated themes in student responses. Ongoing transcript analysis was another key component in establishing themes and identifying the factors that influence students' educational attainment as future teachers. Following the guidance of Bogdan and Biklan (1982), to identify specific categories or factors, the researcher reviewed interview transcripts for key points. The researcher then determined the specific barriers and support factors that influenced students' educational attainment at Butler Community College.

For some naturalistic research such as case studies with multiple types of information, Creswell (1998) suggests "tagging" and "categorizing" of text information. This researcher took Creswell's advice to heart by employing *tags* or *codes* during the survey and interview analysis. Based upon the content validity chart (Appendix D) and the literature review findings, the researcher searched for specific words or strings of words to code and categorize throughout the

data analysis phase. All data was sorted into one of the three major content categories: institutional, instructional, or personal. Coding for the barriers and supports was automatic as a result of the explicit survey and interview questions asking students to list either barriers or supports. Thereafter, the researcher searched for themes or patterns in the text. The researcher then focused on the interpretation of these themes and/or patterns to uncover deeper meaning for such in this case study. This deeper meaning, in turn, enabled the researcher to fully answer the research question, as well as make recommendations for enhancing the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College or at other community colleges. The researcher established specific support factors and barriers that influence students' educational attainment to become future teachers. These findings provide the researcher, as Education Department Chair, and the institution with guidance for improving the support factors and eliminating the barriers students face while enrolled in the teacher preparation program at Butler. Readers may choose to transfer these findings to their own institutions and teacher preparation programs in an effort to improve students' educational attainment.

Quality Considerations

Internal Validity/Credibility

There is a great deal of debate on the appropriate "term" to use in place of *internal validity* for naturalistic research. Many naturalistic researchers feel such term does not appropriately reflect qualitative or naturalistic research; it is merely a term best used in experimental or quasi-experimental research studies (Creswell, 1998). To describe the term *internal validity* in a qualitative sense, researchers have used various descriptive words that may provide insight to researchers who seek such "validity" in a naturalistic study. Creswell (1998) uses the term *verification*, Eisner (1991) prefers *structural corroboration*, and Wolcott (1994)

prefers to use the term *understanding* in place of validity. This researcher chose to use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) term for internal validity, *credibility*, because the researcher's goal was to establish "credible" or believable results for her readers.

Triangulation, the use of multiple data sources, provides such credibility for this case study. The researcher chose to use documents, surveys, and interviews as tools for collecting data. These multiple data sources provide separate lines of evidence to the researcher in establishing themes or patterns to answer the research questions.

Clarifying researcher bias at the onset of any study is another important component of credibility or internal validity (Creswell, 1998). The researcher was open about her personal involvement in the teacher preparation program at Butler from the beginning of this study. She consistently reexamined possible bias throughout the study and made every effort to maintain awareness and sensitivity to participants' perspectives.

Member checks add to the credibility of this case study. Member-checking is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be the most critical technique for establishing credibility to a study. During the interviews, the researcher consistently performed member-checks with participants by summarizing and confirming interview responses. After interviews were completed, each participant was provided a transcribed copy of his/her interview to check the accuracy of the data. Participants were offered the opportunity to listen to the taped interviews if discrepancies were noted in the transcriptions. However, none of the participants chose to listen to the taped interviews after reviewing the transcripts. For added credibility, in the researcher's attempt to avoid personal bias, peer debriefing was performed by the lead instructor/department chair of the chemistry and physics department at Butler Community College. The peer debriefer reviewed samples from the open-ended survey questions and from the interview data to

determine if the researcher's analysis of such data was consistent with the debriefer's data analysis of the samples.

<center>Reliability/Dependability</center>

Like the term validity, the term reliability is most generally used in experimental or quasi-experimental research. Lincoln & Guba's (1985) term for reliability suits this study best—*dependability*. In a case study approach to research, absolute reliability cannot be guaranteed. However, dependability can be found in this study through the researcher's straightforward approach regarding the assumptions, the purposeful choice of participants, and the facts describing Butler's role in teacher preparation. Prolonged engagement of the researcher also improves the dependability of this study since the researcher knows the teacher preparation program, as well as its students, across a significant time span—twelve years.

The data collection procedure can be replicated with a different group of education students at a different community college, but the results may prove to be different from those in this study due to the uniqueness of the group of education students attending Butler Community College during the spring 2006 semester. To establish greater dependability, the researcher compared and contrasted the study's results to existing literature to determine similarities and differences between past research and current findings. The dependability of this study is not determined solely by replicable results, but rather by the consistency between the survey results and the interview results.

Triangulation, the use of multiple data sources, helps establish dependability for this study. Data collection methods followed a pre-determined study protocol. The survey and interview questions were based on past research regarding the role of the community college in teacher education, as well as research regarding students' educational attainment. The documents

and reports used in data collection provided a dependable or reliable description of the teacher

preparation program at Butler Community College.

Finally, dependability of this study is strengthened with an external auditor. Creswell

(1998), Merriam (1988), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) agree that an external consultant, the

auditor, can examine both the process and the product of the account and assess their accuracy.

This study did, indeed, have an external auditor—the researcher's major professor and faculty

member from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. The external auditor provides a

sense of inter-rater reliability to the study (Creswell, 1998) through her review of data analysis

and interpretation of the documents, surveys, and interviews.

<u>External Validity/Transferability</u>

In naturalistic research transferability is in the "eye of the beholder." It is the reader who

chooses whether or not these research findings transfer to his/her own teacher education

program, school, and/or students. The rich, thick description of the case study does allow readers

to make decisions regarding transferability. "With such detailed description, the researcher

enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings

can be transferred 'because of shared characteristics'" (p. 203, Creswell, 1998).

Summary

This chapter described the research methodology and the research procedures related to

this naturalistic study. The research issues were addressed in terms of case selection, data

collection, data analysis, and quality considerations. The following chapter, Chapter 4, reports

the findings of the study, to include a detailed description of the case, as well as the survey and

interview results. The findings are organized around the research question and sub-questions.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions from these findings and makes recommendations based upon such

conclusions.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data and Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data and findings for the following research question: **What factors influence the educational attainment of future teachers at a select community college?**

The specific sub-questions related to the above question are as follows:

- What is the role of Butler Community College in the teacher preparation process?

- How does Butler Community College impact the educational attainment of future teachers?

Findings from the document analysis provide a detailed description of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. This detailed view answers the first sub-question related to Butler's role in the teacher preparation process. Findings from the survey and interview data provide an answer to the second sub-question related to Butler's impact on the educational attainment of future teachers. Finally, a holistic view of the findings from the three data sources above provide the answer to the main research question regarding the specific factors that influence students' educational attainment as future teachers.

This chapter is presented in the following sequence: introduction; detailed description of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College; survey results; interview results; triangulation of data; and the summary.

Butler Community College Teacher Preparation Program

Although Butler Community College has prepared future teachers in general education coursework since its inception in 1927 (Butler Community College Official Website, 2006),

prior to August of 2004, Butler Community College did not have an official education department or a direct point of contact for students interested in elementary or secondary education. Since 2004, however, Butler's involvement in teacher education has grown steadily (Office of Institutional Research Banner Reports, June 2006). This increased involvement in teacher education began in November of 2003 when Butler Community College was chosen as one of 18 colleges nationwide to participate in the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project *Preparing Tomorrow's Science & Mathematics Teachers at Community Colleges*. This project focused on teacher preparation programs at community colleges and was administered by Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), the international honor society of two-year colleges, in cooperation with the American Association of Community Colleges (PTK, 2005).

Prior to participation in the NSF/PTK project, Butler established a team of faculty and administrators to develop an innovative 2+2 program for elementary education students, the majority of Butler's education majors—approximately 75% of Butler's education students. The NSF/PTK grant was just the push the team needed to speed the development of the 2+2 program, now known as the BEST Program (Butler and Emporia, from Students to Teachers). Grant documents describe the BEST Program as a collaboration or partnership between Butler Community College and Emporia State University to provide elementary education students expanded and seamless learning opportunities. The BEST partnership allows Butler elementary education majors to stay at the Butler of El Dorado campus to complete their four-year Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Emporia State University (ESU). The first two years of the BEST Program, consisting mainly of general education coursework, are offered at a Butler campus location that is most convenient or accessible for elementary education students.

Students in the BEST Program are offered dual enrollment, dual financial aid, and dual advising services between Butler and ESU, as well as local student teaching requirements through pre-established professional development schools throughout Butler County and neighboring counties. Prior to the BEST Program, local students seeking degree completion through ESU did not have the opportunity to complete their student teaching experience within Butler County or neighboring counties. The goal of the BEST Program was to continue expanding student teaching opportunities by adding one Butler County professional development school each year in the first four to five years of the program. According to the updated grant action plan, this goal has been met and surpassed.

After six months of planning, the BEST Program officially began in August of 2004 with its first cohort group of students. In May, 2006, the BEST Program graduated its first group of 12 elementary education students. Based on BEST Program advising statistics, the upcoming graduating class has 23 students, and predictions for the 2006/2007 school year show at least 60 new students entering the BEST Program. The BEST Program partnership demonstrates collaboration in teacher education between Butler, ESU, and the various local K-6 schools that act as professional development schools for the program. Grant report submissions reveal that the overarching goal of the BEST Program is to expand and enhance community college teacher preparation programs for future K-12 science and mathematics teachers. Since Butler offers associate degrees in both elementary and secondary education, Butler hopes to establish similar 2+2 programs in the future for students in secondary education, particularly in high need fields such as mathematics, science, and technology.

The BEST Program collaboration between Butler Community College and Emporia State University (ESU) is an important aspect of Butler's growing role in teacher education. According

to grant reports and newsletters, Butler and ESU administrators believe that the time and commitment both colleges have invested in the program will yield a model program. The BEST Program may be replicated by other colleges and unified school districts because the program reduces obstacles in teacher education pathways that prevent community college students from completing degree and licensure requirements due to lack of preparation, loss of transfer coursework, or weak articulation of coursework between the community college and the four-year teacher preparation program. The BEST Program devotes resources to assist prospective teachers and new teachers, and it supports integrated mentoring among the community college, K-12 schools, and four-year institutions to maximize field placement experiences. These characteristics of the BEST Program agree with the literature relating to strong teacher preparation programs (ACE, 1999; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000; Bristor et al., 2002; NOCHE & APQC, 2003).

The BEST Program is not the only viable partnership Butler has for preparing teachers. During the 2005/2006 school year, Butler's education department chair and dean worked to establish strengthened articulation agreements with other neighboring four-year teacher education programs. These future 2+2 programs will offer both elementary and secondary education students even more opportunities for successful transfer into a four-year teacher preparation program.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the 2005/2006 Butler Community College catalogue indicates that the teacher preparation programs include associate degrees in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Physical Education for Elementary Education and Secondary Education. These programs of study are articulated with the major transfer institutions (Wichita State University, Emporia State University, Friends University, and

Newman University). Other than the general education transfer coursework, there are three specific education courses available for transfer into a four-year teacher preparation program. These three courses are as follows: Introduction to Teaching, ED 206; Introduction to the Exceptional Child, ED 120; and Instructional Technology, ED 222. A detailed course description from the course outlines for each class is provided in the following paragraphs.

The Introduction to Teaching course is a three semester credit hour course offered to students with a sophomore standing (over 24 credit hours). According to the course description, this course provides students with insight into the teaching profession by hands-on exploration of current theories in pedagogy. The Introduction to Teaching course is designed to enable pre-service teachers to better understand classroom dynamics by giving them direct, hands-on experience observing and working with teachers and students in elementary, middle, and secondary education. Students are directed to gather, assemble, review and analyze information helpful in choosing career options in the teaching field. Throughout the course students organize leadership tasks and develop the necessary skills to explore or continue their preparation for teaching and demonstrate a professional attitude toward the teaching profession. This required course for all elementary and secondary education majors at Butler must be taken before a student transfers to a four-year teacher preparation program. For successful completion of the course, students must complete ten hours of observation/participation (30 hours total) at each level of education—elementary (grades K-5), middle school (grades 6-8), and high school (grades 9-12).

All students who are interested in teaching as a future profession take the Introduction to Teaching course at Butler. Departmental student reports retrieved from the Banner system show that there are some secondary education majors in this course, but the vast majority of students

are in elementary education, which is consistent with the majority of Butler's education majors (as reported by the Office of Institutional Research). This course is offered only in a face-to-face format with no online options. The Introduction to Teaching course is usually the first of the three education classes students take at Butler. Thereafter, students who wish to continue preparing for the teaching profession will usually enroll in the Introduction to the Exceptional Child course or the Instructional Technology course. Students who enroll in these two courses are generally elementary education majors, although there may be a very small minority of secondary education majors or K-12 art, music or physical education majors.

The Introduction to the Exceptional Child course is also a three semester credit hour course offered to either freshman or sophomore students. The course description states that this course is designed to enable students to assess and determine diversity among learners, from persons with disabilities to those who are gifted. The students review and apply the public laws and mandates pertaining to special education by observing/participating in a K-12 special education field experience. The field experiences (5 total hours) in this course are designed to allow students to directly apply theory to practice (Goodlad, 1994; Holmes Group, 1995). This course focuses on the role of the general education teacher when working with exceptional children. The Introduction to the Exceptional Child course is designed to enable future teachers to develop an understanding and even empathy for children with exceptionalities. Students have the option to take the Introduction to the Exceptional Child course in either a face-to-face class format or as an online course with no face-to-face class meetings.

The Instructional Technology course is a three semester credit hour course for sophomore students. According to the course description, this course is designed to enable students to facilitate learning with technology for elementary and secondary students. By exploring current

theories of computer pedagogy and by participating in a school practicum (20 total hours), the students work with practicing teachers to plan, design, review, analyze, and facilitate specific lesson plans using technology in the elementary or secondary classroom. The Instructional Technology course provides pre-service teachers with direct, hands-on experience developing lesson plans that incorporate technology. The course provides pre-service teachers with knowledge for their own future classrooms by working with practicing teachers and students in elementary and secondary education. The Instructional Technology course is offered as a face-to-face class in a computer lab or as a webcentric course where students meet in the computer lab at pre-scheduled times throughout the semester and work independently online for the duration of the class.

The essential component of each education course described above is the field experience requirement. Like many of the researchers in the literature review (Ishler et al., 1996; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000; Farkas et al., 2000; Shen, 2002; Bristor et al., 2002), the Butler Education Department recognizes the importance of field experiences, and, in Butler's case, "early" field experiences, by requiring all education students to spend time observing and participating in K-12 classrooms. Butler has established relationships with local K-12 schools near all of the Butler campus locations. Students have the opportunity to choose among several K-12 schools for the three field experiences in the education courses described above.

In addition to the field experiences in the education courses, students are encouraged to participate in other community events with K-12 children. Marketing materials indicate that Butler has hosted thousands of area K-12 students through annual learning activities such as the International Exposition, the Walnut River Water Festival, Digi-Kids Camp, Chemistry Camp, and Tech Prep programs. These events reach well over two hundred Butler students as volunteers

and camp instructors. Butler students who volunteer for these events have the opportunity for field experience not only with local school children, but with K-12 teachers, staff, and other national agencies. These projects involve county, state and national agencies such as the Butler County Conservation District, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Geological Society, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Education Department at Butler generally offers 10-12 sections of total education courses each semester, with a maximum of 17-25 students per class, depending on the course. This small class size was established to allow students to develop relationships with their instructors and their peers and to provide students with a more comfortable, relaxed, and personable classroom environment. The total number of education majors from one semester to the next ranges from 200-350 students, with an average of 540 education majors each year. With the new 2+2 BEST Program and the strengthened articulation agreements with neighboring four-year institutions, these numbers are expected to grow.

Butler Community College has increased its role in teacher preparation every semester since the fall of 2004, with the development and increased enrollment in the Instructional Technology course, as well as the revision and increased enrollment in the Introduction to the Exceptional Child course. With an emphasis on building community, Butler offers a venue for improving teacher training and preparation. With its close location to the largest urban area in Kansas and the surrounding rural areas, Butler has the potential to reach into both rural and urban communities where training and preparation are most needed. Kansas schools need an adequate supply of teachers, and the Butler Education Department is prepared to help recruit and prepare future teachers for transfer to a four-year preparation program. According to the Kansas Occupational Outlook (Kansas Department of Labor, 2002), Kansas will require 1,980 more K-

12 teachers by 2008. The teacher preparation program at Butler aims to promote the educational attainment of future teachers to help satisfy this demand for new teachers in Kansas.

Tables 2-7 provide a picture of the education program at Butler. Tables 2 and 3 show the number of education majors from the fall 2001 term through the spring 2006 term. These two tables include the ratio of elementary to secondary education majors as well as the percentage of each of these majors to the total number of education majors for each term. Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the enrollment in the education courses at Butler from the fall 2001 term through the spring 2006 term. Table 7 shows the graduation counts for declared education majors from the 2000/2001 school year through the 2005/2006 school year.

Table 2

Number of Education Majors

Term	Major	Count	Ratio of Elementary to Secondary Majors	Percentage of Total Students
Fall 2001	Elementary Education	255	3/1	75
	Secondary Education	86		25
	Total Students	341		
Spring 2002	Elementary Education	256	2.9/1	74
	Secondary Education	89		26
	Total Students	345		
Fall 2002	Elementary Education	219	3.1/1	76
	Secondary Education	70		24
	Total Students	289		
Spring 2003	Elementary Education	209	3.5/1	78
	Secondary Education	59		22
	Total Students	268		
Fall 2003	Elementary Education	191	3.4/1	77
	Secondary Education	56		23
	Total Students	247		
Spring 2004	Elementary Education	159	3/1	75
	Secondary Education	53		25
	Total Students	212		

Table 3

Number of Education Majors

Term	Major	Count	Ratio of Elementary to Secondary Majors	Percentage of Total Students
Fall 2004	Elementary Education	155	2.4/1	70
	Secondary Education	65		30
	Total Students	220		
Spring 2005	Elementary Education	195	3.1/1	76
	Secondary Education	60		24
	Total Students	255		
Fall 2005	Elementary Education	219	3.3/1	77
	Secondary Education	67		23
	Total Students	286		
Spring 2006	Elementary Education	180	3/1	75
	Secondary Education	61		25
	Total Students	241		

When reviewing the above tables it is important for readers to understand that not all students who intend to pursue an education degree declare themselves education majors at Butler. In fact, many students simply declare liberal arts majors or other majors that might interest them. Some secondary education majors declare a content area major, rather then a secondary education major. On the other hand, some secondary education majors declare such major if they intend to coach a sport, regardless of the content area they will teach.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the enrollment in the education courses from fall 2001 through spring 2006. ED 222, Instructional Technology, was not established until the fall 2004 term, as a result of the BEST Program initiated during that same term.

Table 4

Enrollment in Education Courses

Term	Education Course	Count	Percentage of Total Students
Fall 2001	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	51	89
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	6	11
	Total Education Students for Term	57	
Spring 2002	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	80	100
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	0	0
	Total Education Students for Term	80	
Fall 2002	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	72	100
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	0	0
	Total Education Students for Term	72	
Spring 2003	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	73	91
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	7	9
	Total Education Students for Term	80	

Table 5

Enrollment in Education Courses

Term	Education Course	Count	Percentage of Total Students
Fall 2003	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	60	91
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	6	9
	Total Education Students for Term	66	
Spring 2004	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	92	90
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	10	10
	Total Education Students for Term	102	
Fall 2004	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	58	70
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	16	19
	ED 222-Instructional Technology	9	11
	Total Education Students for Term	83	
Spring 2005	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	82	65
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	28	22
	ED 222-Instructional Technology	16	13
	Total Education Students for Term	126	
Fall 2005	ED 206-Introducation to Teaching	89	75
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	8	7
	ED 222-Instructional Technology	21	18
	Total Education Students for Term	118	

Table 6

Enrollment in Education Courses

Term	Education Course	Count	Percentage of Total Students
Spring 2006	ED 206-Introduction to Teaching	85	50
	ED 120-Introduction to the Exceptional Child	54	32
	ED 222-Instructional Technology	31	18
	Total Education Students for Term	170	

Inspection of Tables 4, 5, and 6 shows that enrollment in the education courses has increased from 57 total students in the fall of 2001 to 170 students in the spring of 2006. The most consistent numbers occurred in the ED 206 – Introduction to Teaching course. ED 120 – Introduction to the Exceptional Child and ED 222 – Instructional Technology have increased course enrollment numbers primarily from the fall 2004 to the spring 2006 semesters, with the exception of the ED 120 fall 2005 enrollment. This increase is most likely a direct result of the BEST Program articulation initiated in the fall 2004 semester. The decrease in the ED 120 course enrollment from the spring 2005 to the fall 2005 terms occurred due to an unexpected class cancellation. The large enrollment in ED 120 for the following term, spring 2006, may likely be due, in part, to the students who were not able to take the day class in the previous term.

Table 7 shows the graduation counts for all students who declared themselves either Elementary Education majors or Secondary Education majors in at least one term between the 2001 and 2006 graduation years. According to information from the Office of Institutional Research at Butler, not all students who transfer into a four-year education program choose to

obtain an associate degree and graduate from Butler Community College. Furthermore, not all students who graduate and/or transfer into a four-year education program declare themselves to be elementary or secondary education majors. The low graduation numbers seen in Table 7 may reflect the above conditions.

Table 7

Graduation Counts of Education Majors

Graduation Year	Number of Graduates
2001	22
2002	68
2003	57
2004	68
2005	51
2006	31

Tables 8, 9, and 10 show the demographic profile for the all education students enrolled in at least one of the three education courses, ED 120, ED 206, or ED 222, during the spring 2006 semester. The research population comes directly from this group of students. The total number of students included in this demographic profile is 143. This total reflects the final headcount, after student drops and withdrawals, of students in the three education courses at the close of the spring 2006 semester.

Table 8

Demographic Profile of Spring 2006 Education Students

Demographic Category	Count	Percentage
Gender of students:		
Male	29	20
Female	114	80
Age of students:		
Traditional students (18-22 years)	69	48
Nontraditional students (Over 22 years)	74	52
Marital status of students:		
Married	28	20
Single	113	79
Not specified	2	1
Ethnicity of students:		
African/American	8	5.6
Caucasian	125	87.4
Hispanic	7	4.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	0.7
Mixed	1	0.7
Not specified	1	0.7

Table 9

Demographic Profile of Spring 2006 Education Students

Demographic Category	Count	Percentage
Degree students seek:		
Associate of Arts	69	48.0
Associate of Applied Science	5	11.6
Associate of General Studies	4	2.8
Associate of Science	20	14.0
Certificate	1	0.7
Job Training	34	23.8
Not specified	10	7.0
Enrollment status of students:		
Full time (12 credit hours or more)	92	64.0
Part time (less than 12 credit hours)	51	36.0
Educational goal of students:		
Enter job market	2	1.4
Improve basic skills	3	2.1
Personal improvement	4	2.8
Preparing for job change	1	0.7
Transfer	101	70.6
Other	32	22.4

Table 10

Demographic Profile of Spring 2006 Education Students

Demographic Category	Count	Percentage
Declared major of students:		
Undeclared	11	7.7
Business Administration	2	1.4
Early Childhood Education	3	2.1
Early Childhood Special Education	1	0.7
Elementary Education	39	27.3
Liberal Arts	38	26.6
Physical Education, Secondary	1	0.7
Pre-nursing	4	2.8
Psychology	2	1.4
Secondary Education	9	6.3
Transfer student	33	23.1
Students residing in Butler County:		
Yes	43	30.0
No	100	70.0

Analysis of the information in Tables 8-10 indicates the typical education student at Butler is a Caucasian, non-traditional female residing outside of Butler County. Males only account for 20% of the spring 2006 education students, which is typical of Butler's education students, particularly since most are female elementary education majors. Records from the

Institutional Research Office at Butler indicate that the majority of these education students reside in the largest Wichita metropolitan county, Sedgwick County. Although these are education students, many of them have not declared education as their major. Regardless of the declared major, the largest majority of these students indicate on their admission forms (per the Banner system report codes provided by the Office of Institutional Research) that they desire to transfer to a four-year institution. Table 11 shows the average number of semester credit hours spring 2006 education students have already completed for each of the declared majors in Table 10.

Table 11

Spring 2006 Education Students' Average Semester Credit Hours Taken by Major

Declared Major	Average Semester Credit Hours
Undeclared	51.9
Business Administration	78.3
Early Childhood Education	60.0
Early Childhood Special Education	15.0
Elementary Education	67.7
Liberal Arts	64.9
Physical Education, Secondary	15.0
Pre-Nursing	75.5
Psychology	64.0
Secondary Education	54.4
Transfer Student	66.5
Average for all Majors	64.1

Table 11 shows that the newest students, according to credit hours taken, are those students with declared majors of Early Childhood Special Education and Secondary Physical Education. Taken together, Tables 8-11 give the demographic profile of the spring 2006 education students at Butler. With the great variety of declared majors among these students, many appear to be either undecided about their transfer major, or they are simply taking an education course to explore an education major.

Survey Results

The research population comes directly from the students profiled in Tables 8-11. The population consisted of 83 elementary education students at Butler Community College during the spring 2006 semester. All 83 students completed the survey (Appendix C) to determine the factors that influence their educational attainment at Butler Community College.

The tables in this section represent the possible factors that have influenced these students' educational attainment while participating in Butler's education program. The personal factors, as well as some of the instructional and institutional factors, can be extracted directly from students' demographic profiles. The following tables, Tables 12-14, represent the demographic profile of the survey participants. The demographic profile of the research population may include information related to some of the personal, instructional, or institutional factors that influence students' educational attainment. Further discussion of these influencing factors, based upon the survey results, as well as the interview results to follow, will occur in the triangulation section of this chapter.

Table 12

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Gender of students:		
Male	8	10
Female	75	90
Age of students:		
Traditional students (18-22 years)	45	54
Nontraditional students (Over 22 years)	38	46
Marital status of students:		
Married	25	30
Divorced	6	7
Single	52	63
Number of students with children:		
Yes	28	34
No	55	66
Number of students first in their immediate family to attend college:		
Yes	22	27
No	61	73
Number of students on financial aid:		
Yes	49	59
No	33	40
Not answered	1	1

Table 13

<u>Demographic Profile of Survey Participants</u>

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Number of hours students work per week:		
Not answered	1	1
1-10 hours	14	17
11-20 hours	15	18
21-39 hours	33	40
40 hours or more	16	19
Unemployed	4	5
Number of semester hours students were enrolled during spring 2006 semester:		
1-11 hours (Part time student)	21	25.3
12 hours or more (Full time student)	61	73.5
No answer	1	1.2
Number of students whose native (first) language is English:		
Yes	81	98
No	2	2

Table 14

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Primary racial identification of students:		
African/American	3	4
Caucasian/White	72	87
Hispanic	5	6
Native American	1	1
Other	1	1
No response	1	1
Number of students who live in Butler County:		
Yes	31	37
No	52	63
Number of students who live on campus or off campus:		
On campus	5	6
Off campus	78	94
Miles students live away from the Butler campus:		
1-10 miles	24	29
11-20 miles	15	18
21-30 miles	21	25
Over 30 miles	14	17
No answer	9	11

Tables 12-14 show that the average student in the research population is similar to the typical education student for the spring 2006 semester, with one exception. The typical student in the research population is a Caucasian single female, working anywhere from 1 to 40+ hours per week while attending Butler as a full time student. The total Butler student population shows a slight majority of non-traditional students, as does the overall demographic profile of all spring 2006 education students. The research population, however, appears to have a slight majority of traditional students (ages 18-22 years). Like the profile of all spring 2006 education students, the research population lives off campus and outside of Butler County. The majority of the research population are not first generation college students, but they are receiving financial aid.

The above profile is somewhat consistent with research by Hudson (2000) on the typical community college student who has limited finances and is a non-traditional student with work responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, transportation issues, and financial pressures. Although the research population has a majority of traditional students, the overall population of spring 2006 education students shows a majority of nontraditional students. Hudson (2000) does indicate that community college students are less familiar with the higher education system. However, the above research population shows a small percentage of first-generation college students, those typically associated with such unfamiliarity.

The demographic profile of elementary education majors in this study is inconsistent with the literature related to the role of the community college in recruiting minority students into teacher education. Blair (2002) found that half of all African American, Hispanic, and Native American students attend college at a community college, and, thus, recruiting minorities into the teaching profession from a community college is a natural choice (Allen, 2002). The lack of minority students in the demographic profile of the research population is similar to the overall

student demographics at Butler Community College. This may indicate a need for improved recruitment measures of minorities in Butler's teacher education programs or at Butler Community College, in general. Further discussion of this topic will occur in Chapter 5.

On the following pages, Tables 15-17 show the demographic information of the survey participants that relate directly to their education program at Butler. All survey participants are elementary education students at Butler although their initial declared major may have been something other than elementary education. This is evident in some of the students' answers to survey question number two: Are you currently enrolled or planning to enroll in the BEST Program (Butler and Emporia, from Students to Teachers) at Butler? All students in the BEST Program are elementary education students. Nine of the 59 total students who answered "yes" to the above question did not have a declared major of elementary education. Three of the nine declared their major as secondary education, three as early childhood education, two listed their major as "other," and one did not give an answer in the declared major field on the survey.

Table 15

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Declared major of students:		
Elementary Education	74	89
Early Childhood Education	3	4
Secondary Education	3	4
Other	2	2
No answer	1	1
Number of students enrolled in the BEST Program:		
Yes	59	71
No	23	28
No answer	1	1
Number of students with continuous or periodic enrollment:		
Continuous enrollment	59	71
Intermittent enrollment	23	28
No answer	1	1
Number of semesters students attended Butler:		
1-4 semesters	40	48
5-10 semesters	39	47
11-16 semesters	3	4
No answer	1	1

Table 16

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Number of students in extracurricular activities:		
Yes	10	12
No	73	88
Number of hours spent per week on extracurricular activities:		
Not Answered/Not applicable	73	88
1-10 hours per week	5	6
11-20 hours per week	3	4
21-30 hours per week	2	2
Number of students seeking a terminal degree (associate degree) at Butler:		
Yes	45	54
No	37	45
Not answered	1	1
Year students plan to graduate if seeking a terminal degree at Butler:		
Not answered	39	47
Spring, Summer or Fall 2006	25	30
Spring, Summer or Fall 2007	10	12
Spring, Summer or Fall 2008	4	5
Spring, Summer or Fall 2009	5	6

Table 17

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Reasons for choosing Butler for the first two years of education:		
Tuition cost	60	72
Close to home	52	63
Small class size	49	59
To enroll in the BEST Program	47	57
To obtain an associate degree	32	39
To transfer to a 4-year institution	31	37
Course offerings	23	28
Scholarship	22	27
For self-improvement	16	19
Referral	7	8
To change careers	7	8
To obtain specific content knowledge	7	8
To obtain job-related skills	5	6
To complete a certificate program	3	4
Other	3	4

It is not surprising that Table 16 shows the majority of the research population not involved in extracurricular activities, especially since the majority attends school full time while working a set number of hours per week. It is interesting that the questions related to

the "number of students in the BEST Program" and the "number of students with continuous or periodic enrollment" had similar responses. This could be a coincidence or it could mean that students with a clear sense of direction, such as their intention to be in the BEST Program, may be more likely to pursue their educational goals on a continuous rather than a periodic basis. This, in turn, could relate to the question regarding students' plans to graduate with a terminal degree from Butler (associate degree). Although 52% of the population has attended Butler for more than two years, 47% did not list graduation dates, and 45% of the students claimed they were not seeking an associate degree. Most likely this means that many students simply plan to transfer directly to a four-year institution.

Since the majority of the population receives financial aid, it is not surprising to find the number one reason students attend Butler is the low tuition cost. Although most of the students in the population live outside of Butler County, it appears that the accessible location ("close to home") of at least one Butler campus is the number two reason students chose Butler. Both of these reasons can be considered as personal factors and institutional factors that may influence students' educational attainment at Butler. The small class size and enrollment in the BEST Program were also found to be important reasons why students chose Butler. These can be considered instructional and institutional factors, respectively. The BEST Program choice relates directly to students' two- and four-year teacher education program since it is a 2+2 elementary education program.

<u>Influencing Factors</u>

Many of the demographic tables shown previously contain factors that may influence students' educational attainment at Butler, specifically students' personal factors, but some instructional and institutional factors, as well. Tables 18 and 19 describe information that

relates specifically to the teacher education program at Butler, as well as students' plans to transfer to a four-year teacher education program. These tables include information corresponding to both personal and institutional factors influencing students' educational attainment.

When viewing the results related to the "number of students transferring to a four-year teacher education program," readers should be aware that all students who answered "No" to this question answered "Yes" to their enrollment in the BEST Program. This may indicate that students do not believe they are actually transferring to Emporia State University (a four-year institution and the second component of the 2+2 elementary education program) since they will remain on the Butler El Dorado campus to complete their final two-years of study for their Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education (from Emporia State University). This confusion regarding transfer to a four-year education program may also indicate students' lack of familiarity with the higher education system, a characteristic that Hudson (2000) believes is common among community college students.

Table 18

Influencing Factors Related to Teacher Education Program

Category	N	Percentage
Number of students transferring to a four-year teacher education program:		
Yes	71	86
No	12	14
Number of students with all Butler coursework transferring to a four-year institution:		
Yes	57	69
No	11	13
Don't know	12	14
Not answered	3	4
Number of Butler credit hours that will not transfer to a four-year institution:		
Not answered/Not applicable	73	88
1-10 credit hours	3	4
11-29 credit hours	3	4
Over 30 credit hours	2	2
Don't know	2	2
Number of students who met with a Butler advisor regarding transfer requirements:		
Yes	66	79.5
No	14	16.9
Not applicable	3	3.6

Table 19

Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Number of students who know what is required for transfer to a four-year teacher education program (such as course and entrance requirements):		
Yes	57	69
No	11	13
Not answered	15	18

It appears that most of the students have met with an advisor and may know what the requirements are for transfer to a four-year teacher education program. However, it is difficult to determine from the above results whether or not some students will experience a loss of coursework when transferring to a four-year institution. Although 69% of the population indicated that all of their Butler coursework will transfer to a four-year institution, 31% of the population either answered "no," "don't know," or gave no answer to the question related to transfer coursework. Furthermore, 88% of the students gave no answer to the question related to the "number of credit hours that will not transfer." This could indicate one of two things: 1) students do not know the number of credits that will not transfer or 2) students may know that all courses will transfer and, thus, they did not find the question applicable to them.

The influential factors listed in Tables 18 and 19 may coincide with the personal factors involving students' persistence in achieving their educational goals at Butler. Since the majority of students reported they met with an advisor, and they understand what is required for transfer to a four-year program, they may be more persistent or confident in achieving their educational

goals. Bers and Smith (1991) found that students who took courses with a degree purpose were more likely to persist than those who took courses for job-related or personal enrichment reasons. Table 20 shows students' perceptions of their confidence or persistence and their study habits.

Table 20

Personal Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Perception	N	Percentage
Students' perception of their confidence or persistence in achieving their educational goals at Butler:		
Very confident or persistent	60	72
Somewhat confident or persistent	23	28
Not at all confident or persistent	0	0
Students' perceptions of their personal study habits:		
I have excellent study habits	20	24
My study habits are OK	62	75
I have poor study habits	1	1

It is interesting to note that all students felt "very" or "somewhat" confident or persistent in achieving their educational goals at Butler, yet most students believe their study habits were only "OK" rather than "excellent." Only one student reported having poor study habits. Closer analysis of the above survey data revealed that the student who reported poor study habits was a male—a minority in the research population.

Survey questions 22 through 32 correspond to both instructional and institutional factors related to students' educational attainment at Butler Community College. These survey questions asked students to rate the quality and relevance of their coursework, the helpfulness of the faculty and staff, as well as their overall experience at Butler. Tables 21-23 show students' responses to these survey questions.

Table 21

Instructional and Institutional Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Item	N	Percentage
Quality of instruction in *education* courses:		
Excellent quality	55	66
Average quality	28	34
Relevance of *education* courses to future plans in teaching:		
Very relevant	59	71
Somewhat relevant	23	28
Not at all relevant	1	1
Quality of PK-12 observation or field experience in education courses:		
Excellent quality	50	60
Average quality	32	39
Not answered	1	1

Table 22

Instructional and Institutional Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Item	N	Percentage
Relevance of PK-12 observation or field experiences to future plans in teaching:		
Very relevant	63	75.9
Somewhat relevant	17	20.5
Not answered	3	3.6
Quality of instruction in *general* education courses:		
Excellent quality	41	49
Average quality	42	51
Relevance of *general* education courses to future plans in teaching:		
Very relevant	45	54.2
Somewhat relevant	36	43.4
Not at all relevant	1	1.2
Not answered	1	1.2
Helpfulness of faculty to students in achieving their educational goals:		
Very helpful	58	70
Somewhat helpful	25	30
Helpfulness of advisors or counselors to students in achieving their educational goals:		
Very helpful	47	57
Somewhat helpful	31	37
Not helpful	5	6

Table 23

Instructional and Institutional Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Item	N	Percentage
Helpfulness of staff and administration to students in achieving their educational goals:		
Very helpful	50	60
Somewhat helpful	33	40
Quality of overall educational experience at Butler:		
Excellent quality	55	66
Average quality	28	34
Number of students who feel their Butler experience prepared them for a successful transfer to a four-year institution:		
Yes	74	89
No	1	1
Not applicable	8	10

Tables 21 and 22 reveal that most students are satisfied with the quality and relevance of the education courses, the observations or field experiences in these courses, and the general education courses. Only one response was reported as "not at all relevant" for each of the two questions regarding the education courses and the general education courses. Upon further analysis of these two questions, the same individual answered with the above response for both questions. This issue of relevancy and quality of the general education and education courses is repeated in the open-ended survey responses and in the interview responses to follow later in this chapter.

Tables 22 and 23 show that all students find the faculty, staff, and administration to be very helpful or somewhat helpful to them in achieving their educational goals. Most students feel the advisors and counselors are helpful, with the exception of 5 students or 6% of the total population. Further analysis of the open-ended questions on the survey, numbers 46 and 47, as well as detailed interview responses may reveal why students believe the advisors and counselors are not helpful. A reporting of these responses will occur later in the chapter; a discussion of such will occur in Chapter 5.

Survey questions 33, 34, and 35 relate specifically to institutional resources that may influence students' educational attainment at Butler. Question 33 and 34 relate to Butler's resources while question 35 relates to the scheduling of classes at Butler. Tables 24 and 25 show student responses to these three survey questions. Note that survey question 34 is an open-ended question asking students if there are additional resources necessary at Butler to support their educational program. There were only six responses to this question with no resources repeated, as shown in Table 25.

Although Tables 24 and 25 show student responses related to *institutional resources*, some of these resources can also be considered *instructional* or *personal support services*. The resources listed below have been categorized according to the specific service or resource offered to students, namely institutional resources or services, instructional resources or services, and personal resources or services.

Table 24

Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Resource	N	Percentage
Butler resources used by students to support their educational program:		
Institutional Support Services:		
Computer labs	54	65
Library	52	63
Financial aid services	49	59
Academic advising/planning services	43	52
Counseling services	19	23
Instructional Support Services:		
Mathematics lab and peer tutoring	10	12
Academic Achievement Center	7	8
Personal Support Services:		
Educare Childcare Center	9	11
Student organizations	6	7
Special needs services	3	4
Other	2	2
Career placement services	1	1

Table 25

Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Resource	N	Percentage
Open-ended responses for additional resources to support students' educational program:		
Institutional Support Services:		
Offer more day classes and Andover classes	1	1
More available grants/financial aid	1	1
Online library	1	1
Information/advising on the PPST test	1	1
Personal Support Services:		
Daycare in Andover	1	1
Other comments:		
Perfect	1	1
Number of students who feel that classes are offered during times and days that work well with their schedules:		
Yes	79	95
No	4	5

Table 24 shows that the institutional support resources/services such as the computer labs, the library, financial aid, and academic advising were of most support for students in their educational program. This is consistent with research from Hawley and Harris (2005) related to student persistence at the community college. Instructional and personal support services appear to offer less support for students than the institutional services offer. Financial aid appears to be a

repeated issue. Since the demographic profile showed the majority of students on financial aid, this could become a major barrier or support for students. This issue will resurface in the interview responses to follow. Advising services appear to be of great importance to students, acting as either a barrier or support factor. Young, Backer, and Rogers (1989) confirm this importance of academic advising for student development and retention. The advising issue will also resurface in the interview responses.

Although one student would like to see more day classes and more classes at the Butler of Andover site, the majority of students, 95%, feel that Butler offers classes at days and times convenient for students. Nine students listed childcare as an important resource to them, while one student is in need of childcare on the Butler of Andover campus. Family responsibilities are known to be significant personal barriers to student success (Hudson, 2000) and persistence (Hawley and Harris, 2005). This issue will become apparent in the interview responses that follow.

Survey questions 36, 37, and 38 relate specifically to students' academic backgrounds. These survey questions correspond to personal factors that may influence students' educational attainment. Although Hudson (2000) found inadequate academic preparation to be a barrier to student success, Table 26 shows that students in this research population appear to be relatively prepared academically, given the student grade point averages reported below as well as the number of students who have prior degrees. The higher grade point averages may be a result of the large number of students enrolled in the BEST Program (71%), which requires students to maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5.

Table 26

Personal Influences in Achieving Educational Goals

Item	N	Percentage
Number of students who have a degree (associates, bachelors, masters):		
Yes	36	43
No	47	57
Types of degrees students possess:		
Not answered	48	58
Associate degree	29	35
Baccalaureate degree	6	7
Grade point average of students:		
4.0 – 3.75	15	18
3.74 – 3.5	15	18
3.49 – 3.25	17	20
3.24 – 3.0	18	22
2.99 – 2.75	5	6
2.74 – 2.5	2	2
2.49 – 2.25	3	4
2.24 – 2.0	2	2
Don't know or not answered	6	8

Table 26 shows that 36 students or 43% of the population already have a degree. Most of

the students who have degrees have earned an associate degree with a small number who have

earned a baccalaureate degree. This may indicate that some students are returning to school for a change in career, particularly for the few who have already earned a baccalaureate degree and perhaps for a few with an earned associate degree. The prior degree may also indicate that some students, particularly those with associate degrees, are ready to transfer to a four-year institution to earn baccalaureate degrees. Table 26 indicates that 78% of the research population has a relatively high grade point average, between 3.0 and 4.0, making it appear that students are academically prepared. While grade point average is not an all-inclusive indicator of success or academic preparation, it can be used to conclude that students do have some academic competence. Hudson (2000) found one of the greatest barriers to student success to be inadequate academic preparation and poor study skills. Most students in this research population reported a fairly high grade point average with adequate ("OK" or "Excellent") self-reported study habits, as shown earlier in Table 20. Because the academic preparation was self-reported by students in this study, it is difficult to accurately compare or contrast these results with Hudson's results.

The last two questions on the survey were open-ended questions asking students to specify the barriers and supports they experienced throughout their educational program at Butler. Tables 27-29 summarize the responses to the first of the two open-ended questions: Of all factors listed on this survey or other factors not included, what is (are) the greatest barrier(s) you have encountered at Butler in an effort to achieve your educational goals? Of the 83 completed surveys, 63 students responded to the above question. The student responses are categorized and summarized in the tables. The expressions have been altered slightly for grammatical correctness; however, the meaning of each expression remains the same. Similar student responses are not repeated, but the frequency of each response is indicated in descending order.

For added credibility, a peer debriefer performed an audit of the researcher's data

analysis for the open-ended survey questions 46 and 47 related to both student barriers and

student supports. All open-ended survey responses were reviewed by the debriefer, as were all

researcher notes categorizing the responses to institutional, instructional, or personal factors. The

peer debriefer initially found 60 of the 63 student responses, 95%, to be appropriately

categorized. After further discussion between the researcher and the peer debriefer, it was agreed

that the remaining three responses were appropriately placed in their proper category. The open-

ended student responses for question 46 are categorized and summarized below.

Table 27

Influential Factors/Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional barriers:	41/39.4
Class scheduling (institutional and personal barrier)	22/21.2
Class scheduling problems (7)	
Need more online classes (6)	
Need classes in other satellite locations (3)	
Not enough evening classes for education program (3)	
BEST Program needs day classes (3)	
Lack of support from Butler staff	13/12.5
Lack of advisor feedback and support; advisors not helpful (8)	
No support from staff and administrators; unfriendly (5)	

Table 28

Influential Factors/Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percentage of Total Responses
Institutional barriers:	
Financial aid; paying for school (institutional and personal barrier)	4/3.8
Not knowing about the BEST Program	1/0.96
Getting into the BEST Program	1/0.96
Instructional barriers:	12/11.5
Teaching issues	6/5.8
Some teachers are not helpful (3)	
Biology in _____'s (name of a specific teacher) class;	
teaching needs to be more accurate (1)	
Some teachers are not motivated to teach (1)	
Boring classes; mostly lecture (1)	
Course requirements and curriculum issues	6/5.8
Homework is overbearing (2)	
General education class requirements are not relevant (1)	
Difficult to get into classrooms for observations, but it was wonderful (1)	
Taking classes that help with education and are worth the money (1)	
Difficult classes (1)	

Table 29

Influential Factors/Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percentage of Total Responses
Personal barriers:	40/38.5
Time management issues	18/17.3
Class scheduling (7)	
Extracurricular activities take too much time out of schedule (5)	
Balancing family and school (2)	
Balancing work and school (2)	
Mostly myself (i.e., study habits, time for school, busy lifestyle) (2)	
Financial issues	11/10.6
Paying for gas (7)	
Financial aid; paying for school (4)	
Difficult to travel to several sites	6/5.8
Childcare issues	2/1.9
Confusion of new classes; the unknown	1/0.96
A knee surgery and math	1/0.96
Getting around campus	1/0.96
Other student responses:	11/10.6
None	7/6.7
None, because teachers work well with students and are helpful	4/3.8

The most frequently mentioned institutional barriers related to class scheduling issues and the lack of support from Butler staff. Since 95% of the population previously answered in the survey that Butler offers classes at times convenient for their schedule, it is surprising that class scheduling was a repeated barrier response. This may indicate that class scheduling is a personal barrier dealing with time management rather than an institutional barrier, since time management was cited as the greatest personal barrier for students in achieving their educational goals. This finding is consistent with research by Hawley and Harris (2005) who found that students who are highly active outside of college (family, work, or extracurricular responsibilities) are less likely to persist.

The "lack of support" issue was cited by students as both an institutional and an instructional barrier with a lack of staff or teacher support. Faculty and staff support, or the lack thereof, appear to be repeated barrier responses, indicating such support to be of importance to students. Pascarella (1980), Ferguson (1990), and Nordquist (1993) confirm that faculty support or faculty mentoring is the most important component related to student integration and student retention. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) found that student-faculty relationships have a greater contribution to persistence than do students' peer relationships. This may be verified in the tables that follow showing student responses for instructional supports.

To further justify the importance students place on "support," readers may want to consider the repeated response on Table 29 under the category of "Other student responses." Four students answered question 46 with "None, because teachers work well with students and are helpful." Although the question asked for barriers, students felt the need to say why they did not have a barrier, namely, teacher support. Seven other students simply answered "none" when asked for specific barriers. However, these students did not state reasons for the lack of barriers.

The issue of "teacher support" occurs as a repeated response in the question related to student supports.

The last open-ended question, number 47, on the survey was: Of all factors listed on this survey or other factors not included, what is (are) the greatest support(s) you have encountered at Butler in an effort to achieve your educational goals? Just like the open-ended question related to barriers, of the total 83 completed surveys, 63 students responded to this question. A detailed analysis of the surveys shows that the same 63 students who responded to the open-ended question related to barriers responded to the open-ended question related to supports. The student responses are categorized and summarized in Tables 30 and 31. The expressions have been altered slightly for grammatical correctness; however, the meaning of each expression remains the same. Similar student responses are not repeated in the tables that follow, but the frequency of each response is indicated in descending order.

Table 30

Influential Factors/Supports in Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Support	Frequency of Response/Percentage of Total Responses
Institutional supports:	45/46.9
Staff support	23/24
Advising/counseling (10)	
BEST Program advising (7)	
Quality staff (5)	
Off campus help (1)	
Financial support	9/9.4
Financial aid and scholarships (6)	
Low tuition (3)	
Butler Resources	5/5.2
Computer labs (2)	
Educare Center (1)	
Online library databases (1)	
Butler Pipeline e-mail (1)	
Program support	3/3.1
BEST Program (2)	
Special Needs Program (1)	
Class scheduling/availability of classes	3/3.1
Online classes (2)	
Evening classes (1)	

Table 31

Influential Factors/Supports in Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Support	Frequency of Response/Percentage of Total Responses
Institutional supports:	
Excellent environment	1/1
Overall Butler experience has been wonderful	1/1
Instructional supports:	42/43.7
Faculty Support	37/38.5
Overall faculty support (31)	
Education faculty support (6)	
Classmates	3/3.1
Classroom field experiences	1/1
Small classes	1/1
Personal supports:	8/8.3
Family	5/5.2
Location/close to home	2/2.1
Friends	1/1
Other student comment:	1/1
Nothing	1/1

Faculty support was the most frequent response with 37 of the 63 students, 59%,

indicating such support. Six of the 37 students who responded with "faculty support" specified

"education faculty support." Staff support comes in second with 23 of the 63 students (36.5%)

indicating such, with 17 of those 23 students (74%) specifically indicating advising support. "BEST advising" was listed as a separate response from "advising/counseling" since the BEST advising office is not operated by Butler advisors. The office is located on the Butler of El Dorado campus, but it is not a part of Butler's general advising office. The BEST Program advising service is operated by employees of Emporia State University.

There are some responses that were listed as both a barrier and a support, namely, faculty, advising, staff, family, financial aid, class location and/or scheduling. These barriers and supports are recurring themes in student interview responses as well. The interviews responses follow in the next section. A discussion of these recurring themes will occur in Chapter 5.

Interview Results

The interview consisted of seven open-ended questions related to students' experiences at Butler. At the end of each interview, students had the option to add additional comments they felt were relevant to the interview discussion. The tables that follow show a summary and categorization of student responses to each of the seven interview questions, as well as student quotes and additional student comments.

For added credibility, a peer debriefer performed an audit of the researcher's data analysis for each of the seven interview questions and for any additional student comments. A sample of three interview transcripts was reviewed by the peer debriefer, as were all researcher notes synthesizing and categorizing student responses to each of the seven interview questions and the additional student comments for those particular transcripts. The audit found 96% accuracy between the peer debriefer's analysis and the researcher's data analysis.

Tables 32 and 33 show a demographic profile of interview participants. Tables 34-55 provide a summary of student responses and select student quotes for each of the interview

questions. Table 56 contains a summary of additional comments students made at the end of the interview.

Twenty-two interview participants were selected directly from the survey population. Each interview participant met the following criteria: 1) ready for transfer to a four-year institution; and 2) completed all three of Butler's education courses. Although the demographic profile of the complete survey population (83 students) includes these 22 interview participants, Tables 32 and 33 provide readers with a more detailed profile of the interview participants only.

Table 32

Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Student gender:		
Male	4	18
Female	18	82
Age of students:		
18-22 years (traditional student)	13	59
23 years or older (nontraditional student)	9	41
Number of students in BEST Program:		
Yes	18	82
No	4	18
Marital status of students:		
Married	7	32
Single	14	64
Divorced	1	4
Number of students with children:		
Yes	8	36
No	14	64
Number of single parents:		
Yes	3	14
No	19	86

Table 33

Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

Demographic Category	N	Percentage
Number of students with degrees:		
Associate Degree	2	9
Masters Degree	1	5
No prior degree	19	86
Number of first generation college students:		
Yes	2	9
No	20	91
Declared major of students:		
Elementary Education	22	100
Number of students with family members who are teachers:		
Yes	6	27
No	16	73

Tables 32 and 33 show the demographic profile of interview participants to be similar to that of the total research population. Interview question number one provides a more detailed picture of the interview participants, particularly in relation to student goals. Question one was: What are your personal goals, your educational goals, and your future goals? Table 34 categorizes and summarizes student responses to this interview question. To provide readers with a more detailed view of student responses to question one, Table 35 shows select student quotes.

Table 34

Student Goals

Type of Goal	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Personal goals:	18/29.5
Be a good mother	7/11.5
Get married and have a family	4/6.5
Travel	3/4.9
Be active in the community and church	2/3.3
Better myself	2/3.3
Educational goals:	34/55.7
Get through school and graduate	22/36.1
Get a master's degree	10/16.4
Get a middle level teaching endorsement	2/3.3
Future goals:	9/14.7
Be a good teacher	5/8.2
Teach at the college level	1/1.6
Write children's books	1/1.6
Own and operate a restaurant in addition to teaching	1/1.6
Go into nursing	1/1.6

Table 35

Student Quotes for Interview Question One

Student Goals
▪ My goal is not just to be a teacher, but to be a good one.
▪ My goal is to be the best I can be in just everything.
▪ To be a teacher that, I don't know, makes learning fun, really.
▪ I want to grow up, get married, have a family, and…stay at home with my kids.
▪ Well, first, I just want to get done with school…It's taking a little longer than I thought…so it's kind of going on a long term plan.
▪ Well, I hope to, you know, be an inspiration to younger generations.
▪ I want to succeed in everything. I want to get married someday, have kids, and I think being a teacher is one of the most important ones [goals].
▪ My educational goal is to become a teacher and inspire young people.
▪ For now, I am just going to school and working. I work at three part-time jobs, and I am going to school for elementary education. But I plan to do a lot of traveling.
▪ My goal is to enrich the lives of children.
▪ I would like to get my Bachelor's in Education in four years, and someday after that I would like to get married, have children, and just be a family oriented person.
▪ I would like to, in two or three years, go back and get my master's degree and, hopefully, be teaching and married.

Some of the female participants stated they would like to get married and have a family, and those females with children stated they would like to be a good mother. These were the most frequently repeated personal goals of female participants, equating to 11 of the 18 participant responses on personal goals (61%). All students indicated their primary educational goal to be "graduation" from the elementary education four-year program, with 12 of the 22 participants indicating goals to further their education *beyond* the baccalaureate degree. Four of the participants appear to have a professional future goal other than or in addition to elementary teaching, as noted by the responses under future goals.

Interview question number two was: Why did you choose Butler as your educational institution? Student responses to this question are categorized and summarized in Table 36 on the following page, with select student quotes in Tables 37 and 38.

Table 36

Reasons for Choosing Butler

Type of Reason	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional:	21/30.9
For the BEST Program	10/14.7
The atmosphere/environment at Butler	7/10.3
Class scheduling	4/5.9
Flexibility of course schedule (3)	
Online classes (1)	
Instructional:	9/13.2
Small class size	4/5.9
Reputation of Butler and its faculty (good faculty)	3/4.4
More personable experience at Butler—teachers know my name	2/2.9
Personal:	38/55.9
Financial reasons	17/25
Cost/low tuition (11)	
Scholarship at Butler (6)	
Location/close to home	15/22
Referral from family and friends	6/8.9

Interview responses were similar to survey responses with regard to why students chose Butler.

Cost, location, and the BEST Program were ranked as some of the top reasons.

Table 37

Student Quotes for Interview Question Two

Why Students Chose Butler

- I tried out for a scholarship…When I got here to enroll, I found out about the BEST Program. I thought, 'this is a God thing,' because I really wasn't planning on Butler at all.

- My sister told me it [Butler] was a great school.

- Because I didn't know I had to attend Butler. I thought it was the BEST Program all four years [with Emporia State University]. I wasn't happy that I was enrolled with Butler because they [advisors] were rude, but I'm really happy I did the two years at Butler. It's really helped me, and I don't see it being any less of an education.

- I heard a lot of good things about Butler and it was closer to home.

- I chose it because it was close to home…When I came here on a visit, I really liked the campus and everything here. I decided to go to a JuCo [junior college] just because of the cost. It's going to be cheaper to go to a JuCo and then transfer.

- My parents met here [at Butler]…My older brother went here, and it's just the closest junior college to my hometown. It's cheap and my grandma lives here in town.

- I've always known that they—Butler has good teachers.

- Small class size…I'm not the smartest person. I have a horrible memory,…and so small class size was a huge thing…So Butler was just the thing to do…And I've just loved it ever since.

- I can do a lot better in small classes. They're a lot more personable. With the BEST Program, it's a lot more family oriented.

Table 38

Student Quotes for Interview Question Two

Why Students Chose Butler

- I started coming here because I was a single mom and paying for my classes myself…I could take one class at a time and not be looked down upon.

- The location was number one, and price was another. I have really enjoyed Butler. It's a good campus. They have good instructors that are—most of the instructors I come in contact with understand you have a life outside of college, which is, I think, very important. I've had a very good experience.

- Butler is a good school. It's real flexible. They have classes in the evening; they have classes during the day. They have great teachers.

- The price, of course.

- You do get your money's worth here [at Butler].

Interview question number three was: In what ways has Butler made you feel prepared to transfer to a teacher preparation program at a four-year institution. Table 39 categorizes and summarizes student responses to this question. Tables 40 and 41 show select student quotes for this interview question.

Table 39

Ways Butler Prepares Students for Transfer

Transfer Preparation	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional:	9/14.3
Advising	4/6.3
BEST Program stays at Butler	2/3.2
Butler is personable	1/1.6
Easy adjustment/transition from high school	1/1.6
Financial aid/cost	1/1.6
Instructional:	53/84.1
Classroom observations and field experiences	15/23.8
Education courses/relevancy of coursework	15/23.8
Faculty support	13/20.6
Support from education faculty (8)	
Support from all faculty (5)	
Some general education courses	5/7.9
Challenging coursework	3/4.8
Teacher and student referrals for classes	1/1.6
Small class size	1/1.6
Personal:	1/1.6
Financial aid/cost	1/1.6

It makes sense that instructional resources rank highest for preparing students. Fifteen (68%) of the 22 students interviewed felt education classes and field experiences prepared them for transfer since these classes and experiences are directly related to students' transfer major in education. As seen from both the survey and interview responses, students find relevancy in the education coursework and classroom field experiences. Many student participants, 59%, feel that teachers are the reason they are ready for transfer, as shown by student quotes in the following table.

Table 40

Student Quotes for Interview Question Three

Ways Butler Prepares Students to Transfer

- Teachers go above and beyond to help.

- Education classes have really prepared me to know what to expect.

- Teaching experience in Instructional Technology and Intro to Teaching classes.

- Introduction to Teaching class helped make my decision to teach.

- The instructors help a lot.

- Well, ever since I started…my education classes, all my education teachers have made me feel comfortable.

- Most of the classes I've taken at Butler were pretty much like the classes I took in high school…So it was just a refresher…Getting the opportunity to go out in the ED 222 class to actually teach made me feel this is exactly what I want to do. It gave me the opportunity to get out and do things directly involved in my field of study.

Table 41

Student Quotes for Interview Question Three

Ways Butler Prepares Students to Transfer

- Honestly, the only classes that have made me feel prepared to become a teacher or to transfer…is the actual, like the Introduction to Teaching course, the course I'm in now, the IT Tech [Instructional Technology], things that are focused to my profession… Children's Lit, things like that, have helped me. And those are all the classes I've enjoyed the most.

- I want to tell you…about how glad I was that I got into the classroom [field experience] because this is really what I needed. You get so bogged down in school…and you forget why you even want to do it. I got into the classroom, like, 'this is why I want to do it.' I loved it; it was so much fun, and…it gave me the boost to get through this next two years…And I learned a lot, too.

- If I didn't have the BEST Program, I wouldn't be able to go to the best school for teaching. When you are a single mom, my family is all I have. I can't even imagine moving away [to go to another school].

- Well, definitely Intro to Teaching… Children's Lit helps prepare you for what you're going to be doing…The technology class [ED 222] helps, like, with the lesson planning and stuff like that.

- The observations were great. I had a lot of fun. That was the best part.

- I think what's prepared me the most are a few select teachers who do far more than what they're required to do as teachers.

The fourth interview question was: In what ways could Butler have made you feel more prepared to transfer to a four-year teacher preparation program? Table 42 categorizes and summarizes student responses to this question. Tables 43 and 44 show specific quotes from students in their responses to interview question four.

Table 42

Ways Butler Could Have Better Prepared Students for Transfer

Transfer Preparation	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional:	15/39.5
Improve advising services (better customer service, complete transfer assistance)	6/15.8
Improve advertising/promotion of BEST Program	4/10.5
BEST Program stays at Butler	2/5.3
Improve class scheduling (some classes are difficult to get into)	1/2.6
Establish scholarships or financial aid for education majors	1/2.6
Establish a "Future Teacher Student Group"	1/2.6
Instructional:	19/50
Improve general education classes	8/21
Improve teacher support in general education classes	5/13.1
Improve ED 206 course in Andover (day) and El Dorado (night)	3/7.9
Improve instructor feedback in online ED 120 class	2/5.3
Ensure classroom observations are more than just sitting/watching	1/2.6
Other student comments:	4/10.5
Nothing—"Butler has done a good job."	4/10.5

It is important that readers understand the comments related to the Introduction to

Teaching course (ED 206) and the Introduction to the Exceptional Child course (ED 120).

Interview participants listed specific teachers for each of those classes. All three teachers are

adjunct instructors for Butler Community College. Although the course outline gives specific

content for all instructors to cover in the course, instructors do have leeway on grading and

assignments for the content. The three students who discussed the possible improvement of the

two specific Introduction to Teaching classes suggested the classes be more "in-depth" and

challenging for students. All three students who suggested this thought each of the classes was

much too easy. The online Introduction to the Exceptional Child course was a first-time offering

in the spring 2006 semester. Students complained of slow feedback on grading and discussion

postings in the course.

Tables 43 and 44 will provide the readers with a more detailed view of student responses

to interview question four. These select quotes are shown below.

Table 43

Student Quotes for Interview Question Four

Ways Butler Could Better Prepare Students for Transfer

- Well, I guess…geography…and then a few more math class preparations…Because I'm kind of nervous about math… I know that my geography was pretty crazy. Had I known what I was getting into, I wouldn't have gotten into it.
- I don't know. I think I feel pretty prepared.
- I think advising sucks, and I don't like to use that word. But here in Andover, they are horrible.

Table 44

Student Quotes for Interview Question Four

Ways Butler Could Better Prepare Students for Transfer

- I think to improve the general education classes, and I think that the counseling and advising center, the main one, needs to improve. Because they don't—they will hand us the sheets that tell us about the BEST Program, or about different colleges we can go to, but they aren't sure about a lot of things—how to answer questions.

- I can't think of anything…You know, you won't really get at everything until you are actually in the classroom doing it.

- Sometimes I felt like I wasn't challenged that much here with, um, my assignments.

- I don't know because everything was so smooth for me…I mean every education class I took at Butler was my favorite… I wouldn't change anything.

- The only thing I would say is maybe there might have been some classes that were maybe too easy—that I just didn't learn enough.

- Really, the only thing I could come up with would possibly be advertising the BEST Program a little better.

Interview question five was: How have your experiences at Butler affected your persistence in achieving your educational goals? Persistence was defined to students as "refusing to give up." Tables 45 and 46 categorize and summarize student responses to this question. Table 47 shows select student quotes in answer to this interview question.

Table 45

Butler Experiences Affecting Student Persistence

Student Experience	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional:	6/11.5
Staying at Butler for the BEST Program	2/3.8
Scholarship/financial aid	2/3.8
Butler staff	1/1.9
BEST Advisor	1/1.9
Instructional:	28/53.8
Faculty support	11/21.1
Support from all faculty (7)	
Support from education faculty (4)	
Classroom observations/field experiences	5/9.6
Small class size	3/5.8
Relevancy of education courses	3/5.8
Challenging coursework	2/3.8
Loved all courses at Butler	1/1.9
Clear course syllabi	1/1.9
Easy classes	1/1.9
Opportunity to be a leader in the classroom	1/1.9

Table 46

Butler Experiences Affecting Student Persistence

Student Experience	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Personal:	18/34.6
Personal goals/self drive/desire to teach	9/17.3
Support from family	3/5.8
Location of Butler/close to home	2/3.8
Scholarship/financial aid	2/3.8
Extracurricular involvement	1/1.9
Lighter course load	1/1.9

Instructional experiences have most affected student persistence, particularly faculty support. Faculty support appears to be a consistent response made by participants throughout this study regarding their educational attainment at Butler. As discussed earlier, research confirms this relationship between faculty support and persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Ferguson, 1990; Nordquist, 1993). Nine of the 22 interview participants (41%) felt that their own personal goals to teach or their self drive affected their persistence at Butler. This is consistent with research by Bers and Smith (1991) on persistence and degree purpose. Those students with a specific goal or degree purpose are more likely to persist in college.

Table 47

Student Quotes for Interview Question Five

Experiences Affecting Student Persistence

- Basically, it just feels right being here [at Butler].

- I'd have to say the instructors I've had in the classes so far…their enthusiasm for their
  subject matter…It just kind of reinforced, at least for me, that teaching is going to be a
  good thing.

- I guess just basically having the BEST Program…I mean that's a big kicker for me. The
  small school, the small class sizes, you know…That really pushed me right back into
  getting my degree.

- I think because I have the option to take classes in my field at any time, and that keeps
  me going. If I was restricted to gen-ed [general education] classes and not education
  classes, I would be getting frustrated by now.

- I always had a class or two, or all of them, where the instructors were awesome. And they
  made you want to come and they made it interesting and fun and worth your time and
  worth your money. I can't express more that good teaching keeps students in the seats.

- I was in love with every one of my education classes.

- It's just the teachers that make you feel comfortable.

- The observations and the Intro to Teaching…and then the technology class [ED 222]—
  how we presented our own unit plan…I think that helped me decide that I for sure want
  to be a teacher.

The last two interview questions asked students about the greatest barriers and supports they experienced while attending Butler. Specifically, question six was: What has been (are) the greatest barrier(s) for you in achieving your educational goals at Butler? In order to better organize the responses to this question, students were prompted, if necessary, to identify specific personal, instructional, or institutional barriers. Tables 48, 49 and 50 show an organized summary of student responses to interview question six. Tables 51 and 52 show select student quotes for question six. Notice in the following two tables that one of the barriers, financial aid/cost, is repeated in more that one category. Financial aid or the cost of school can be considered both a personal and an institutional barrier.

Table 48

Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional barriers:	30/32.6
Lack of support from Butler staff	13/14.1
Advising not helpful and/or uncaring (11)	
Registrar not helpful/supportive (1)	
Financial aid staff unfriendly and unhelpful (1)	
Class scheduling	5/5.4
Problems with class scheduling/availability (3)	
BEST Program only offers night classes in 3rd year (2)	
Lack of financial aid/cost of school	5/5.4
Loss of transfer coursework	3/3.3

Table 49

Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional barriers:	
Parking issues	2/2.2
BEST Program limits number of students in cohort group	1/1.1
Disconnect between El Dorado and Andover campuses	1/1.1
Instructional barriers:	21/22.8
Curriculum	15/16.3
Irrelevance of general education curriculum (6)	
Mathematics (3)	
ED 120-Intro to Exceptional Child online class (2)	
Class workload/too much homework or busywork (2)	
Online courses need more interaction (2)	
Faculty support/some teachers are not supportive	6/6.5
Personal barriers:	41/44.6
Time management issues	25/27.2
Family conflicts (7)	
Conflicts with work (5)	
General time management (5)	
Extracurricular involvement (5)	
Heavy courseload (3)	

Table 50

Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

Type of Barrier	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Personal barriers:	
Financial barriers	12/13
Transportation/travel/cost of gas (7)	
Cost of school/lack of financial aid (5)	
Childcare issues	2/2.2
Lack of self confidence	1/1.1
Being the only male in education courses	1/1.1

Table 51

Student Quotes for Interview Question Six

Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

- I'm a little bit worried. A lot of people have talked about when they transfer some of their classes are not transferring…That's frustrating to know that an advisor told you, 'this class will transfer.'
- I think the toughest thing for me is being the only guy in most of the ED classes.
- The thing I'm worried about most is the class scheduling…If there are any concerns I have on that, it's probably making sure that I don't have to cut back on my hours at work, so I can keep doing this [going to school].

Table 52

Student Quotes for Interview Question Six

Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals

- There's not enough time to get everything done…The workload is sometimes a lot. Sometimes teachers don't realize I have five other classes plus work…In order to pay for the classes you have to work. It's hard to get everything done.

- It's been hard to get into some of the classes. And I know that the nighttime classes are a big pain. And, yeah, it's been kind of a hurdle getting into the BEST Program.

- First of all, I would say cost…What financial aid doesn't cover, we still have to pay the bills. It's tough. And I'm working a lot…It's just—you get so exhausted from doing homework. You never have time to do anything fun.

- Obviously, I'm usually on the teacher's bad side. I think some teachers look down on you for not being married and having kids.

- I think that for, like, the college, the only barrier I would say is, like, advising…I told them I wanted to be in the BEST Program. They really didn't care about it. They didn't help me out much.

- Just that I get so worn out…I'm married with two children.

- Time is not on my side. I have a family. I started school later in life. I just can't take the 15 credit hours that most students take. I just can't do that and juggle the house, the kids, and everything.

It is evident from Tables 48, 49, and 50, that the greatest barriers participants faced were personal barriers, specifically dealing with time management issues. During the interview, many

of the students became quite emotional when discussing personal barriers. These barriers appeared to be the most overwhelming for students. Question seven (to follow) asking students to list personal supports also evoked a strong emotional response for students. The other five interview questions did not evoke the intense emotional response from students as either the barrier or support questions did. It is unknown on the anonymous survey whether students became emotional on the last two questions asking students to indicate their greatest barriers and supports. This strong emotional response from interview participants regarding personal circumstances may relate directly to research findings from Hudson (2000) indicating the greatest individual barriers to student success at the community college to be financial pressures, work-related responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, and lack of transportation. Hudson further indicated a lack of focus or direction and a lack of study skills or academic preparation as individual barriers, but this does not seem to be the case for the interview participants in this study. A large majority of the participants (82%) are enrolled in the BEST Program, which may reflect the focus and academic preparation of these students.

The last interview question asked students for specific supports to their educational goals. Question seven was: What has been (are) the greatest support(s) for you in achieving your educational goals at Butler? Again, students were prompted, if necessary, to distinguish between personal, instructional, and institutional supports. Table 53 provides an organized summary of student responses to question seven. Tables 54 and 55 show select student quotes for question seven.

Table 53

<u>Supports to Achieving Educational Goals</u>

Type of Support	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional supports:	36/36.7
Staff support	16/16.3
BEST Program advising (11)	
General advising (5)	
Financial aid	8/8.2
Butler resources (library, computer labs, Butler Pipeline)	6/6.1
Butler atmosphere (welcoming and personable)	3/3.1
Flexible course scheduling	3/3.1
Instructional supports:	34/34.7
Faculty support	23/23.5
Support from education faculty (15)	
Support from all faculty (8)	
Field experiences/classroom observations	5/5.1
Education classes	4/4.1
Meaningful and challenging classes	1/1
Small class sizes	1/1
Personal supports:	28/28.6
Family	17/17.3
Friends	7/7.1
Self determination	4/4.1

Under supports, financial aid is considered only an institutional factor, rather than both a personal and institutional factor as it is when related to barriers. Table 53 shows that the greatest support listed by students is in the form of emotional support, such as family and faculty support. Advising is ranked high as an institutional support, just as it was ranked high as an institutional barrier. Contrary to the barriers, students list only a very small range of personal supports.

Tables 54 and 55 show select student quotes in response to question seven. As with the barriers, many students became emotional when discussing the supports to achieving their educational goals. However, students were much quicker to respond to question seven, support factors, than they were to respond to question six, barriers.

Table 54

Student Quotes for Interview Question Seven

Supports to Achieving Educational Goals
▪ Some really good instructors.
▪ Well, of course, personal supports are going to be my family and community. Instructional supports—I get a lot of that from my instructors. I would say more of the ED [education] instructors.
▪ If I didn't have my family, I wouldn't be able to do half as much…I feel like I've been supported by all of my teachers.
▪ Well, teachers, obviously I loved… It's encouraging just because when I have a class with _____ [a specific education teacher], it's like, 'Wow, I hope I have as much energy as she does.' And, I'm like, 'she loves to teach.'

Table 55

Student Quotes for Interview Question Seven

Supports to Achieving Educational Goals

- My family is really supportive. Because my dad has no college, so he's working at a factory for the rest of his life…Just all my family is—they want me to do the best I can. And I have two aunts that are teachers so they really like the idea of me wanting to become a teacher.

- I think the biggest support, of course, is a few select teachers—especially _____ [a specific education teacher].

- My greatest support didn't come from the institution itself, it came from a certain instructor that I could talk to…I had most of my advising through my instructors.

- Good things have been the education classes especially _____ [a specific education teacher] and _____ [a specific BEST Program advisor] have been the best people. _____ [a BEST Program advisor] remembered my name after I visited with him one time…The educational teachers have been so cooperative. They give me the encouragement I want or that I need to go on teaching.

To protect the anonymity of faculty and staff, specific names were left out of some of the student quotes above, but their position titles are noted in brackets.

Before the conclusion of each interview, participants had the opportunity to make any additional comments they thought relevant to the interview discussion. Table 56 categorizes and summarizes these additional student comments. Many of these comments were repeated by students as shown by the frequency of responses in the table below.

Table 56

<u>Post-Interview Comments of Participants</u>

Comment	Frequency of Response/Percent of Total Responses
Institutional:	25/80.6
Overall Butler experience was positive	7/22.6
Advertise the BEST Program more	5/16.1
BEST Program needs day classes in the 3rd year cohort group	4/12.9
BEST Program advisor is great	2/6.4
I love the Butler atmosphere	2/6.4
Best college experience I've ever had	1/3.2
I feel prepared	1/3.2
There's always someone to handle my problems at Butler	1/3.2
Students need to get involved to have a true college experience	1/3.2
Butler needs a Future Teacher's Club and more social groups	1/3.2
Instructional:	6/19.3
Teachers care at Butler	2/6.4
Small class sizes are more supportive with more student/teacher interaction	2/6.4
Field experiences are my favorite part	2/6.4

Many of the above comments were repeated by students throughout the interview when discussing the various interview questions. These additional comments provided the researcher with guidance in the organization of themes throughout the study. Such repeated comments

appear to be of some importance to students. These themes will be presented and discussed in the following section and in Chapter 5.

Triangulation of Data

Chapter 4 provided the reader with a detailed view of the case by presenting the research findings in three main sections: 1) a detailed description of the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College; 2) the survey results; and 3) the interview results. The document and report data included in the description of the teacher preparation program shows that Butler Community College does, indeed, have a growing role in teacher education. The survey and interview data show that specific factors influence students' educational attainment at Butler Community College. These factors can be categorized into personal, instructional, and institutional barriers and supports students experienced throughout their education program at Butler.

Student Demographics

When comparing the three data sources described above, many connections between the data can be found. Furthermore, many questions arise when comparing the three data sources, specifically related to student demographics. Document analysis results in Tables 5 and 6 show increasing enrollment in the education courses at Butler, with the greatest fluctuations in enrollment patterns beginning in the fall 2004 semester. This may be a result of the newly developed 2+2 BEST Program or it may be a result of the increased national emphasis on teachers, the teacher quality/quantity shortage, or the publicity associated with the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. A review of the survey and interview data indicates the BEST Program as the key factor for the increased enrollment in education courses at Butler. Table 17 shows that 47 of the 83 survey participants chose Butler to enroll in the BEST Program. That is over half

(57%) of all elementary education students at Butler during the spring 2006 semester. Table 15 shows that 71% of the survey participants are enrolled in the BEST Program. Table 32 shows that 18 of the 22 interview participants (82%) who took all three education classes at Butler were enrolled in the BEST Program. These three data sources viewed together indicate the primary reason for growth in the education courses at Butler to be the 2+2 BEST Program.

Document analysis results in Table 7 appear to contradict the aforementioned growth in the education program with the low graduation rates of education majors at Butler. However, these low graduation numbers may not accurately represent what is really happening with education students who transfer from Butler into a four-year education program. Survey results in Table 16 show that 45% of the participants are not seeking a terminal (associate) degree at Butler. Table 17 indicates that only 39% of the survey participants chose Butler to obtain an associate degree. It appears that not all students who intend to transfer to a four-year teacher education program graduate from Butler with an associate degree in education. In fact, when looking at the larger spring 2006 population of all education students, Table 9 shows the primary goal for 71% of these students to be "transfer" to a four-year program. Some may choose to graduate from Butler prior to transfer, while others will simply transfer without an associate degree from Butler. Furthermore, Table 10 shows that not all education students who graduate from Butler declare a major in education. Only 37% of all spring 2006 education students declared a major in education.

The demographic profiles of all Butler students in Table 1, of all spring 2006 education students in Table 8, and of all survey participants in Table 14 show that the majority of Butler students are Caucasian with very few minority students. This data contradicts with research findings regarding the role of the community college in recruiting minorities into teacher

education (Blair, 2002; Allen, 2002; Moore, 2000). This lack of minority students at Butler may be related to the overall demographic profile of the surrounding population, or it may indicate a need for recruitment of minorities at the college, in general, and into the education program, more specifically.

Other demographic indicators found in the research findings are consistent with the demographic profile of the typical community college student (Hudson, 2000). Both the overall Butler student population and the spring 2006 population of education students indicate a slight majority of nontraditional students, a typical characteristic of the community college student. However, the demographic profile of survey and interview participants (all elementary education students) showed a slight majority of traditional students. Hudson (2000) further indicated the typical community college student to be "poorer" than the typical student at a four-year institution. Findings from document and survey analysis do, indeed, show the majority of students at Butler to be on financial aid or scholarship. Survey results in Table 17 show that 72% of the participants chose Butler for its low tuition cost, and 27% of the participants chose Butler as a result of a scholarship awarded to them. Of the 22 interview participants, 17 or 77% chose Butler as a result of either the low tuition or an awarded scholarship. The issue of "financial support" will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

<center>Reasons for Choosing Butler</center>

According to the survey results, the top reasons why students chose Butler were: 1) low tuition cost; 2) location/close to home; 3) small class size; and 4) to enroll in the BEST Program. According to the interview results, the top reasons why students chose Butler were: 1) financial reasons such as low tuition or scholarship; 2) location/close to home; and 3) to enroll in the BEST Program.

The interview and survey results are comparable with the exception of the small class size. While 59% of the survey participants chose Butler for its small class size, only 18% of the interview participants chose Butler specifically for its small classes. However, 32% of the interview participants indicated they chose Butler for its atmosphere or environment. The small class size may be part of the Butler atmosphere/environment, but interview participants did not specifically indicate this characteristic in their responses. Thus, this supposition cannot be substantiated. Small class size does seem to be of some importance, however, to interview participants, if not of primary importance. Small class size was a repeated response by some students throughout the interview, as seen in the interview findings to questions 2, 3, 5, and 7, as well as the additional comments made by students at the close of the interviews.

Since most students in the population receive financial aid, it makes sense that the number one reason students chose Butler related to financial issues such as low tuition or scholarship. The second reason why students chose Butler—close to home/location—may correlate to the results from the document analysis. Only 30% of all spring 2006 education students live in Butler County. As with the total Butler student population, most education students reside in the largest county in the Wichita Metropolitan Area, Sedgwick County. The survey participants are no exception to this, with 63% living outside of Butler County. Although most of the research population lives off campus (94%) and outside of Butler County, the majority, 72%, still live within reasonable driving distance or "close to home" (under 30 miles) to at least one Butler Community College campus location. Only 17% of the population live over 30 miles from campus, which may still be considered a reasonable distance to drive or "close to home" for some students.

Both survey and interview participants chose the BEST Program as a primary reason for coming to Butler. This most likely corresponds to the fact that a large majority (71%) of the total research population (survey participants) indicated they were enrolled or planning to enroll in the BEST Program. Eighteen of the 22 (82%) interview participants were enrolled or planning to enroll in the BEST Program.

<div align="center">Preparation for Transfer</div>

Document analysis, survey analysis, and interview analysis showed the primary goal of education students to be "transfer" to a four-year institution. This is seen in Table 9, Table 15, Table 18, Table 32, and Table 34. Table 9 shows 71% of all spring 2006 education students with such goal. Tables 15 and 32, respectively, show that 71% of all survey participants and 82% of all interview participants were enrolled or planning to enroll in the BEST Program, which requires transfer to the four-year teacher education program at Emporia State University. Table 18 shows 86% of survey participants with an intention to transfer to a four-year teacher education program. Table 34 shows that all 22 of the interview participants have an educational goal to "get through school and graduate." This includes transfer to a four-year teacher education program. Keeping this in mind, it is important to understand how Butler prepares students for transfer and how Butler could better prepare students for transfer to a four-year teacher education program.

Table 23 shows that 89% of the survey participants feel their Butler experience prepared them for a successful transfer to a four-year institution. Furthermore, many of these students listed institutional and instructional supports in achieving their educational goals at Butler, as seen in the survey and interview results. These supports may or may not be directly related to the reasons why students feel prepared to transfer. Such supports will be discussed later and

correlated with the interview results to question three (Table 39) on the specific ways Butler prepares students for transfer. Table 39 shows instructional factors to be the primary influences for transfer preparation. Classroom observations and field experiences, the relevancy of education coursework, and the faculty support received by students were listed by students as the best preparation for transfer.

While the above preparations for transfer may relate to instructional supports, areas for improvement in the transfer preparation may relate to either institutional or instructional barriers. Such barriers will be discussed later in this section and correlated to the interview results from question four (Table 42). Table 42 shows that instructional factors are of slightly greater importance than are institutional factors to improved transfer preparation. Improved relevancy of general education classes and improved advising services are the primary ways Butler can better prepare students for transfer.

<p style="text-align:center">Student Persistence</p>

Student persistence may have a direct impact on student transfer rates or on student graduation rates (Table 9), but this researcher's primary focus was not student persistence. Rather, the focus of this study was the educational attainment of students. While the impact of student persistence on transfer rates cannot be determined with triangulation of the data in the findings, student persistence does play a role in the educational attainment of future teachers who attend the community college. For this reason, student persistence was viewed in relationship to student experiences at Butler, to include the ways that Butler affects such persistence. The survey results in Table 20 show that 72% of the participants felt very confident or persistent in achieving their educational goals at Butler, with the remaining 28% at least somewhat confident or persistent in achieving their educational goals. This "persistent" attitude may correlate with

student responses on their study habits. All survey participants but one felt their study habits were OK (75%) or excellent (24%). This persistence may be affected by Butler experiences, as expressed by interview participants on question five. Tables 45 and 46 show that instructional and personal factors had the greatest impact on student persistence. Faculty support and students' personal goals or self drive were the primary influencing factors on such persistence. These factors were listed as student supports in the interview responses to question seven, with faculty support also listed as a support in the survey responses.

<div align="center">Barriers to Achieving Educational Goals</div>

Persistence may be adversely affected by the barriers students face at Butler. Although the lack of faculty support was not a major barrier for survey and interview participants, the lack of staff support was a major barrier. Survey responses showed the major student barriers to be: 1) class scheduling; 2) time management issues; 3) the lack of support from Butler staff; and 4) financial issues. Interview results showed the highest ranked student barriers to be: 1) time management issues; 2) curricular concerns; 3) the lack of support from Butler staff; and 4) financial issues.

The time management barrier in the interview responses may relate directly to the class scheduling barrier in the survey responses. Although class scheduling appears to be an institutional barrier, it may be a personal barrier related to time. This is indicated in the student responses to the survey question related to class scheduling, where 95% of the survey participants felt that Butler offered classes during times and days convenient for their schedule. Interview responses provided greater insight in the time management barriers. The number one time management barrier was family conflicts, with a tie for second place among work conflicts, general time management, and extracurricular involvement. This is consistent with research by

Napoli and Wortman (1998) and Hawley and Harris (2005) who found that students who worked full time and those who had family responsibilities were less likely to persist in college.

Since the lack of support from Butler staff was ranked as the third greatest barrier by survey and interview participants, it is essential to understand the related details by taking a closer look at the interview and survey results. Both survey and interview results show the lack of Butler support primarily includes the lack of advisor feedback and support, with only a handful of students noting the lack of support from other Butler staff such as financial aid staff, staff from the registrar, or administrative staff.

Survey participants did not rank instructional barriers as highly as did the interview participants. However, there were a few common responses between the two data sets with respect to instructional barriers, in general, to include the curricular concerns listed as a major barrier by interview participants. Irrelevance of general education curriculum, overbearing or too much homework, and lack of faculty support were sited as barriers in both the survey and interview responses.

As research indicates, financial issues/concerns are quite common to the typical community college population (Hudson, 2000). This research population is no exception. Concern with financial aid and cost has been a recurring theme throughout the study, beginning with the student demographics and the number of students on financial aid, moving on to one of the top reasons students chose Butler, and continuing as one of the major barriers to students' educational attainment. This theme, however, did not continue as a major support for students, but it was listed as a minor support by both survey and interview participants.

<u>Supports to Achieving Educational Goals</u>

Survey results show the major supports to come from 1) faculty support and 2) staff support. Staff support includes general advising and BEST Program advising. Other minor supports were financial aid, Butler resources, and family. The interview results show the major supports to be: 1) faculty support; 2) family support; and 3) staff support. Other minor supports were financial aid, friends, and Butler resources. Faculty support was ranked as the single greatest support experienced by the survey and interview participants. The interview respondents primarily specified education faculty support (68%), with 27% of the respondents indicating overall faculty support. The survey respondents, on the other hand, indicated primarily overall faculty support (37%), with 7% indicating education faculty support.

Both the survey and interview results show consistencies in the major instructional support, faculty, and in the major institutional support, advising. Financial aid, Butler resources, and family were also consistent minor supports to both the survey and interview results. Interview respondents did rank "friends" higher as a minor personal support than did the survey respondents.

Faculty support, along with classroom observations or field experiences and relevancy of education coursework, were listed by interview participants as the best preparation for transfer. These factors were also listed by interview participants, in particular, as major or minor supports. Faculty support also ties directly to student persistence, since such support, along with students' own self drive, were the major factors affecting student persistence.

Summary

In the following chapter, Chapter 5, discussion of the above findings will continue, emphasizing the types of barriers and supports (personal, instructional, or institutional) hindering

or promoting students' educational attainment. The data will be organized into specific themes for readers, and from these themes research conclusions will be drawn. Finally, as a result of such conclusions, recommendations will be made.

Chapter 5

Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

Introduction

The goal of this descriptive case study was to identify factors that influence community college students' educational attainment as future teachers. The findings of this study will be useful to administrators, faculty, and staff at Butler Community College in addressing ways to improve the educational attainment of students in the teacher education program on all Butler campuses. By improving the educational attainment of future teachers during their first two years of training, Butler Community College can enhance their growing role in teacher education. This chapter provides readers with the following: introduction; summary of the research project; major findings; implications of the research; comments and recommendations; and topics for further research and consideration.

Summary of the Research Project

Butler Community College has been preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution since 1927. Although it was only considered a small, local junior college at that time, today Butler has become the second largest community college in Kansas, serving students from the largest metropolitan area of Kansas, as well as the surrounding rural areas. Along with this increasing role in higher education comes Butler's increasing role in teacher preparation. With the national emphasis placed on teacher preparation and high quality teachers, Butler has joined the leagues of community colleges and universities across America to improve teacher preparation and encourage high quality teaching.

The goal of this research project was to determine the factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers at Butler Community College. The specific sub-questions related to the research goal were:

- What is the role of Butler Community College in the teacher preparation process?

- How does Butler Community College impact the educational attainment of future teachers?

To determine answers to the above questions, the researcher collected and analyzed information from three sources: historical and current documents and reports, education student surveys, and selected education student interviews.

The documents and reports provided readers with a clear view or "picture" of the teacher education program at Butler Community College. Documents such as the Butler catalogue, news releases, and marketing brochures allowed the researcher to convey a detailed description of the teacher preparation program, to include a description of special programs such as the BEST 2+2 Program, as well as detailed descriptions of the education courses. Reports from the Office of Institutional Research portrayed trends or patterns in the number of elementary and secondary education majors at Butler, the enrollment in the education courses, and the graduation counts of education majors. Reports also provided a complete demographic profile of all spring 2006 education students—the group from which the research population was chosen.

Close analysis of the above reports showed that many students do not declare education as their major, but they do enroll in Butler's education courses with the intention of transferring to a four-year teacher education program. It appears that trends in the total number of education majors may not be the best indicator of students' future inclination to become teachers. Rather, a better indication of students' intentions may be found in the enrollment patterns in the education

courses offered at Butler, as well as the transfer rate of students into a four-year teacher

education program.

The document analysis showed that Butler does, indeed, have a growing role in the

teacher preparation process. This role has become more significant since the inception of the

BEST 2+2 Program in 2004 developed for elementary education students at the Butler of El

Dorado campus. Although the majority of Butler's education students are elementary education

majors, Butler officials hope to use the research findings to improve the educational attainment

of secondary education majors as well, specifically those students majoring in high need fields

such as mathematics, science and technology.

To determine specific ways that Butler can better serve future teachers and, thus, promote

their educational attainment, the researcher collected survey and interview data directly from the

majority of Butler's education majors—elementary education students. Surveys were distributed,

collected, and analyzed to provide a detailed demographic description of all spring 2006

elementary education students, as well as the factors that influenced their educational attainment

while attending Butler. To provide more depth to the demographic description of students and to

acquire a more detailed understanding of the specific factors that influenced students'

educational attainment, 22 of the 83 spring 2006 elementary education students were

interviewed. These 22 students were in their final semester of Butler's teacher preparation

program and were ready to transfer to a four-year institution.

The survey and interview data were analyzed and compared to determine specific factors,

both barriers and supports, that impacted students' ability to achieve their educational goals at

Butler. As the literature suggests, findings showed the barriers and support factors to fall into one

of three categories: personal; instructional; and institutional. Major findings in each of these categories are discussed in the following section.

<center>Major Findings</center>

<center>Influential Factors – Barriers</center>

Survey and interview results showed the greatest number of barriers students faced in achieving their educational goals related to personal barriers, in particular, time management and financial issues. Financial issues such as financial aid, scholarships, cost of school, and cost of travel to school recurred throughout the study as both barriers and supports. Although Butler has little control over students' personal circumstances, the findings can be used to identify the necessary support services for students experiencing personal barriers to achieving their educational goals.

Institutional barriers ranked a close second to personal barriers. The greatest institutional barrier reported by survey participants was "class scheduling," with "lack of support from Butler staff" coming in second place. The class scheduling barrier may relate directly to the personal time management barriers students experienced while attending Butler. Interview participants ranked "class scheduling" as a minor barrier, tying for second place with financial issues. Their highest ranked institutional barrier was "lack of support from Butler staff." The issue surrounding various forms of support, or the lack thereof, at Butler was a consistent recurring theme throughout the study. However, class scheduling was not a consistent institutional barrier due to three specific contradictions: 1) 95% of the survey respondents felt that Butler offered classes during times and days that work well with their schedule; 2) flexible class scheduling/ availability of classes was cited by survey and interview participants as a minor support; and 3) course offerings and class scheduling were cited by survey and interview participants,

respectively, as one of the reasons for choosing Butler. Because of the above contradictions, the

barrier of class scheduling is most likely a personal barrier associated with time management.

Instructional barriers were not as important to students as either the personal or

institutional barriers. The major instructional barrier reported by interview participants related to

curriculum, primarily the irrelevance of the general education curriculum. The "irrelevance" of

such curriculum was also the most frequently repeated response for interview participants related

to the ways Butler can better prepare students for transfer. The lack of faculty support was cited

as a minor instructional barrier by interview participants, and "improvement of teacher support in

general education classes" was also cited by participants as a way to better prepare them for

transfer. While "teaching issues" appear to act as a major instructional barrier to survey

respondents, a closer look at Table 29 reveals the contrary. Only a handful of the 83 survey

respondents indicated specific instructional barriers. Rather, the most frequent response (4 of 63

responses) to the question of instructional barriers for survey participants was "none, because

teachers work well with students." These major findings suggest that instructional factors are less

important barriers for Butler elementary education students than are personal and institutional

factors. This statement may be confirmed in Tables 21 and 22 with student ratings of excellent or

average instructional quality in Butler courses. Further justification is presented in the following

discussion of the major supports for Butler elementary education students.

<p align="center">Influential Factors – Supports</p>

Overall, the findings suggest that the greatest supports students experienced at Butler

were institutional supports, with instructional supports ranked a very close second by survey and

interview participants. However, closer analysis of the findings presented in Tables 31 and 53, as

well as Tables 39 and 45, indicate the most influential support to be instructional support. The

single most frequently repeated response in Tables 31 and 53 was "faculty support," the greatest instructional support. Furthermore, instructional factors accounted for the most frequently repeated responses in Table 39 for the ways Butler prepares students for transfer. This instructional preparation included not only faculty support, but education curriculum support and the accompanying field experiences. Table 45 shows instructional support, namely faculty support, to have the greatest impact on students' persistence.

Faculty support is not the only "people" support influencing elementary students' educational attainment at Butler. The greatest institutional support came from staff support, namely, advising, both general advising and BEST Program advising. The greatest personal support came from students' families. While personal support factors were not ranked as highly as the institutional and instructional support factors, overall, interview participants did have a slightly higher frequency of responses for "family support" over Butler "staff support."

Implications of the Research

Findings of this research project support some of the existing research related to quality issues and reform in teacher education, the role of community colleges in teacher education, and recruitment and retention of teachers at the community college. The United States Department of Education (1998) and the American Council on Education (ACE, 1999) believe that improving or strengthening teacher preparation is one way to address the quality teacher shortage. In determining the factors that support and hinder students' progress during the first two years of teacher preparation, this research encourages such improvement practices, specifically at Butler Community College.

Field experiences and relevancy of education coursework were cited as major ways to prepare students for transfer, and, thus, promote students' educational attainment as future

teachers. This finding agrees with many researchers' (Ishler et al., 1996; McIntyre & Byrd, 2000; Farkas et al., 2000; Shen, 2002; Bristor et al., 2002) contentions that combining field experiences with curriculum or "connecting theory to practice" is one of the best ways to effectively prepare future teachers and improve teacher quality. By incorporating early field experiences into all of the education courses at Butler, students can be more prepared for what lies ahead in the student teaching component of the transfer four-year teacher preparation program. The vast majority, 89%, of students surveyed stated that their Butler experience prepared them for a successful transfer to a four-year institution. Only 1% of the population felt they were not ready to transfer; the remaining 10% did not believe they were transferring to a four-year program since they were enrolled in the BEST 2+2 Program on the Butler of El Dorado campus.

While Butler may be effectively connecting theory to practice in its education courses, many students felt that the general education curriculum was not relevant to their future profession in teaching. Irrelevance of the general education curriculum was reported as a major barrier for Butler education students, and the improvement of such was cited as a way to better prepare students for transfer. Findings from the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education and the American Productivity and Quality Center (2003) found that best practice teacher preparation programs provide future teachers with a strong foundation of knowledge in the subjects they are preparing to teach. Unfortunately, many students in the research population, elementary education majors, felt they were not receiving such a foundation in their general education courses. Since elementary teachers are required to teach several subjects, the general education curriculum is or should be very relevant to their future teaching profession. Research from the ACE Task Force (1999) indicates that education faculty and courses should be coordinated with

arts and sciences (general education) faculty and courses to provide a relevant, cohesive preparation program for future teachers.

Quality teacher preparation programs occur not only as a result of field experiences and relevant, integrated instruction in education and general education courses, but from a comprehensive institutional commitment to teacher training. Findings from the ACE Task Force (1999) indicate that college presidents mandate campus-wide reviews of the quality of their teacher preparation programs and articulate strategic connections between the teacher education programs and the college mission. The vision of Butler Community College is to create exceptional student-centered learning environments across all academic fields and disciplines, including the field of education. To maintain this vision a review of institutional quality is necessary. This means that institutional barriers to student learning must be identified and eliminated to provide quality teacher preparation for Butler students.

One of the major institutional barriers reported by students was "lack of support from Butler staff," primarily from advising staff. In fact, some students reported that advising services were inconsistent across the various campus locations. On the other hand, "advising support" was listed as a major institutional support by students. Obviously, whether it was reported as a barrier or a support, effective advising is of considerable importance to future teachers transferring to a four-year teacher preparation program (Hudson, 2000). Advising support also has a critical impact on student development and retention (Young, Backer, & Rogers, 1989). This, along with the other minor institutional barriers reported by research participants, financial aid and class scheduling, mandates a careful review of institutional processes for not only education students, but for all Butler students.

Effective advising services, financial aid support, and flexible class scheduling are all institutional measures that can be taken to recruit and retain students, specifically education majors. However, there is another vital component in the retention of students—faculty support. A key finding from this research project indicates that faculty support is one of the greatest influencing factors for students' educational attainment. Faculty support, or the lack thereof, was reported as both a major support and a minor barrier, respectively, to students in achieving their educational goals. The above findings confirm Horvath's earlier study in 1979 that individual faculty and the institution, as a whole, can have a significant impact on student recruitment and retention. One of the most significant types of student integration to the institution is the interaction between faculty and students (Nordquist, 1993). Faculty-student interaction or faculty support appears to have the greatest overall impact on student retention (Nordquist, 1993).

Persistence is yet another factor that can impact student retention or attrition (Bers & Smith, 1991). Research on the effect of different fields of study on student persistence has been scarce (Bailey et al., 2004), but this research project did find factors influencing student persistence, particularly students in the field of education. While faculty support was the single most frequently reported factor affecting elementary education students' persistence, students' self drive or the determination to achieve their personal goals came in a close second. Self determination was also listed as a minor personal support for students in achieving their educational goals. These findings agree, to some extent, with the conclusion from Bers and Smith (1991) that students who took courses with a degree purpose, in this case elementary education, were more likely to persist in school.

On the other hand, Napoli and Wortman (1998) found that students who worked full-time and had family responsibilities were less likely to persist at the community college. Hawley and

Harris (2005) indicate that students who are highly active outside of school (family, work, or extracurricular activities) are more likely to withdraw from the community college. This confirms Tinto's (1987) research claiming that the unique characteristics of students have a direct impact on students' intentions and commitment regarding future education activities. Results from this research project corroborate these findings. The number one personal barrier reported by the research population related directly to time management issues such as family or work conflicts and extra-curricular involvement. Financial concerns were also cited as major personal barriers for students in this research population, to include the cost of gas or travel to school and the cost of tuition. Hudson (2000) found some of the greatest individual barriers to student success at the community college to be financial pressures, work-related responsibilities, family-related responsibilities, lack of transportation, inadequate academic preparation, and lack of focus or direction. Many of these barriers are consistent with the personal barriers elementary education students experience while attending Butler Community College, with the exception of the latter two. Students in this research population appeared to have adequate academic preparation and a sense of focus, according to self-reported grade point averages and self reports of confidence or persistence in achieving their educational goals. However, this researcher cannot predict, from the results, how many students actually will persist in their educational goals to become future teachers once they leave Butler.

The barriers and supports discussed in the previous section and in the above paragraphs did influence the educational attainment of students at Butler Community College in their goal to become future teachers. These barriers and supports provide the researcher with guidance in developing a quality teacher preparation program at Butler, as well as effective recruitment and retention measures for teachers who begin their teacher preparation at the community college.

Many authorities in the field of education agree that community colleges should increase their role in teacher education and take a more aggressive role in recruiting teachers, thus, increasing the supply of quality teachers (Moore, 2000; Allen, 2002; Blair, 2002; Coulter & Crowe, 2003). Butler Community College has actively pursued this role in teacher education during the past few years and hopes to significantly impact the education of teachers during their first two years of preparation. Manzo (2003) believes the community college is highly capable of educating teachers of tomorrow. This research project identified Butler's role in teacher education, as well as the factors that most influenced future elementary teachers' educational attainment at Butler. Findings from this research will be used to enhance Butler's role in teacher education by diminishing barriers, improving supports, and establishing innovative practices for student recruitment, preparation, retention, and transfer to a four-year teacher education program.

<div align="center">Recommendations and Comments</div>

Through this research and the resulting development of improved teacher preparation practices, Butler Community College hopes to become a leader among community colleges for its dynamic involvement in teacher education. This research may also provide readers with insight for developing their own improvement practices or for creating model teacher preparation programs at either the community college or at the four-year institution. However, as with any naturalistic study, it is up to the reader to determine if or how the following recommendations apply or transfer to their own context. The recommendations that follow are not intended to act as an all-encompassing list of "to-do's" for faculty, staff, and administrators in the higher education community. Rather, these recommendations may serve as a starting point for further research or action in any or all of the following areas: improved teacher preparation practices; increasing or enhancing the role of the community college in teacher education; understanding or

identifying factors related to student persistence; strategies for promoting the educational attainment of students in a particular field of study; and/or recruitment and retention measures for specific fields of study or for all fields of study.

1. Ensure consistent advising for transfer students. Regardless of the location, for colleges with multiple campuses, all students should receive the same advising information. Advisors should be trained with extensive knowledge of the requirements for transfer to the most common four-year institutions. Advisors should also be prepared to help students develop a plan of study so that no loss of coursework occurs when transferring from the community college to the four-year college. A relaxed, friendly atmosphere in the advising office can support students who are already nervous about the higher education environment. The first impression of the college sets the stage for students' overall college experience. Since advisors are usually one of the first contacts for students, it is essential they are friendly, helpful and supportive of students. Advisors who are knowledgeable and care about their advisees can make all the difference to the future success of students.

2. Strengthen relationships between students and faculty. Supportive, caring faculty can have an even greater impact on student achievement than good advisors can have on such achievement. Once students are actually in the classroom, the real work begins for these students. General education course requirements can become overwhelming to students who want to begin coursework in their intended major. Without the proper faculty support, some students may simply give up or drop out of the classes, never getting to the coursework in their field of study. Persistence of students can be greatly increased by faculty support, just as it can be shattered by the lack of faculty support. Students tend to experience or "feel" more support from faculty in their intended major, and this makes it all the more important for faculty,

particularly general education faculty, to show solid support to all students regardless of their field of study.

3. Establish relationships and cooperation between arts and science faculty and education faculty. Many students feel their general education curriculum is irrelevant to their future profession in teaching. Many general education faculty members may perceive education majors as just passing through their class to check off a degree requirement. Coordination between the education faculty and the arts and science faculty can encourage joint curriculum development and promote the relevance of general education courses to the field of education.

4. Provide ample field experiences for students early in their education program. Early field experiences in the education courses can promote student persistence and help students develop a clear sense of direction. Early education courses (freshman and sophomore classes) such as Introduction to Teaching, Instructional Technology, and Introduction to the Exceptional Child can act as pivotal courses for students in choosing the right field of study. The more a student knows about the real K-12 classroom, the better able they are to determine whether or not they really want to be teachers. This, in turn, reduces the number of non-committed students and retains those who wish to become quality teachers.

Students can also gain valuable field experiences in some or all of the general education courses. If students are put into "real-world" field experiences in the liberal arts and science courses, perhaps they will see the relevance of this experience to the field of education. For instance, the children's literature class is a required course for elementary education students in many teacher preparation programs; therefore, this course should require some field experience reading to and reading with elementary school children. Perhaps if other required classes such as

college algebra and economics offered field experiences for education students, these students would understand why it is important to their future profession to have knowledge in these areas.

5. Develop strong articulation agreements with all major transfer colleges for education students. If possible, go one step beyond articulation to create formal 2+2 agreements with these transfer institutions. This will prevent a loss of coursework for students and promote student persistence. All advising staff should be aware of such articulation agreements or 2+2 programs and have the proper paperwork or "checklists" developed for students to create their own plan of study for the complete four years of study—the first two years at the community college and the remaining two years at the four-year institution (if students plan to finish in four years).

6. Advertise special programs to students. Many students are unaware of special opportunities such as the BEST 2+2 Program described in this research. It is essential to get such information out to students early in their education program to prevent loss of coursework (if students change programs or transfer institutions) and provide ample opportunities for student success. These special programs should be advertised to students via the web or other electronic communication tools, admissions, advising, early education courses, campus flyers, and student groups. Many students are quite mobile at the community college; they are not actively involved in traditional campus experiences. These students usually work, have families, or other life responsibilities that prevent them from getting involved in campus life. That is why many students do not know what options they have for choosing the education plan or program that best meets their individual needs.

7. Provide more scholarships or greater financial aid opportunities for education majors, especially in urban, rural, or high need teaching fields. Financial aid is the only reason many students are able to continue their education program. Without it, many students drop out of

school, never to achieve their educational and professional goals. Of course, finding funds is much easier said than done, but financial aid offices and education departments should do the research to determine possible scholarships, grants, and local, state, or federal funding sources for students majoring in education.

8. Provide flexible course schedules for students. Administrators should consistently review fall, spring, and summer course schedules to determine the changing needs of students. If a particular required class is offered only once each semester or once each year, students have little opportunity to enroll. The class may fill too quickly, leaving many students waiting for the next semester or the next year to enroll, or the class may be offered at an inconvenient time for students who work or have families, leaving students with no options for taking the required course. Many of these students, especially at the community college, will simply stop trying to take the class, or some may even decide to change majors as a result. Worse yet, some of these students may decide that college is not worth the trouble. First generation college students and minorities may be at a greater risk for this, since they are already unsure of their ability to achieve their educational goals. To promote the educational attainment of all students, classes need to be accessible for students. This means that administrators should consider offering classes at various locations (for multiple campus sites), during multiple times and/or days to best meet the needs of the student population.

Another option to consider for multiple course offerings is the development of online courses. Many place bound students simply cannot attend school due to the lack of or the cost of transportation, a major barrier for students in achieving their educational goals. Offering online courses in place of or in addition to the traditional face-to-face course can provide students with more opportunities to fulfill degree requirements. Online courses can also provide a solution to

institutional concerns related to facilities and resources. Many large community colleges such as Butler Community College simply run out of classroom space to provide multiple course offerings. The development of online courses is one way to overcome such problem.

9. Provide "time-management" training and ongoing support for students throughout their education program. Some of the barriers education students experience (as do other students) relate to the lack of time or energy to complete required coursework. Students simply do not know how to balance a full course load with involvement in extracurricular activities, family responsibilities, work, or other non-school activities. Offering "time-management" training during the student orientation class is one way to help students succeed. Such training should not end with the orientation course, but continue throughout the college experience. Assigning students to specific faculty members, advisors, counselors, or even staff and administrators throughout the duration of students' education programs would be an ideal way to support and encourage students to continue in their educational goals. These faculty and staff mentors can encourage students to practice effective time management techniques.

10. Research, explore, and establish measures for recruiting minority students into the field of education at the community college. The low number of minority education students at Butler Community College suggests that some community colleges may not be filling the minority gap for future teachers as some researchers had hoped (Blair, 2002; Allen, 2002). Administrators at the community college must be made aware of the aforementioned "minority gap" at their own institution so that specific funding may be allocated for research and development of successful recruitment and retention practices for minorities into the field of education.

11. Establish field specific student groups. The establishment of groups such as a "future teachers club" or a "teachers of tomorrow club" can provide additional "people" support for students in achieving their educational and professional goals. These groups can allow students to meet others with similar goals and encourage them to establish lasting relationships throughout the education program and throughout the first years of teaching or even longer. Knowing that others are struggling to meet their goals or that others are succeeding in their educational and professional goals urges students to persist in their own goals. These groups can also provide members with valuable information and current research in their specific field, keeping students up-to-date and actively involved in their future profession.

12. Provide a warm, welcoming, and personable college environment. This may be the most difficult recommendation to follow, but it is probably the most important. The primary supports for students' educational attainment are, quite simply, other people, whether those people are advisors, faculty members, staff, administrators, classmates, or family members. It is other people that encourage students to keep going, to help them understand that the end result is worth the current struggle. Sensitivity training may not occur too often in higher education, but perhaps it would be of utmost value for all who are a part of the higher education community. Students need to know that someone cares for them and their future success, especially those students majoring in education. Many of the reasons students chose Butler relate to the personal element such as small class size, a welcoming atmosphere, or faculty and staff support. These, too, are reasons students persist in their educational goals. If colleges really want to make a difference in the success of students, "caring" is the key.

Topics for Future Research

The aim of this research project was to determine the factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers who attend the community college. Hence, the population included elementary education majors, the majority of education students at Butler Community College. It would be both interesting and of value to expand this research to include all education majors or students majoring in other fields to determine the similarities or differences in such influencing factors. Since this study occurred at a specific mid-sized community college in Kansas, further research is needed to determine the specific barriers and supports students experience at four-year colleges or universities or even at other small or large community colleges throughout the nation.

Student persistence should be explored further in a naturalistic manner to develop a deeper understanding of such persistence, as well as the specific reasons students persist in education and other fields of study. Further research is also needed to determine the link, if any, between students' plans to persist and their actual persistence. Follow-up research to this study may seek to determine how many students actually do persist in their educational goals to become teachers after leaving Butler. The phenomenon of persistence among college students would add to the body of research not only in higher education, but in psychology as well.

A similar study on student success in particular fields of study will also benefit both the educational and psychological research community. Student success in college could be examined to determine the specific characteristics that successful students possess, depending on their particular field of study. When such characteristics are ascertained, educators and psychologists can research methods to foster such traits in unsuccessful students in a particular field of study, particularly in high need fields such as mathematics, science, and technology.

Many of the recommendations in the previous section suggest topics for further research and exploration. Creating a strong student support system in higher education is of critical importance to the success of students. It is suggested that researchers continue to explore the best ways to support students at all levels in education, ranging from primary through post-secondary education. Following, or along with, this exploration of educational support systems should come creative exploration and research on specific resources to provide such supports.

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Appendix A

Administrator Consent Form to Conduct Research

To: Lori Winningham
       Dean, Behavioral Science, Math, Science, and Physical Education

From: Shellie Gutierrez
       Education Lead

I am currently engaged in research as part of my doctorate program at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. The research seeks to determine factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers at Butler Community College (Butler). As part of the research process, I will be collecting data from our Institutional Research Office, from past and current Butler documents or reports through the Banner system, as well as survey and interview data from current education students at Butler.

Student participation in this research will be voluntary. If students decide not to fill out the survey or engage in an interview, it will not affect their academic standing in any way. At no time will any identifying material be used in such a way as to identify students personally. At no time will any specific information be used without students' express written consent.

For questions regarding the use of human subjects in research, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the following address and phone number: Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224.

If you agree to give your permission, as the administrator, for such research to be conducted at Butler Community College, please sign below.

I give Shellie Gutierrez permission to conduct research regarding the factors influencing the educational attainment of future teachers at Butler Community College.

_____
Administrator Signature

_____
Date

_____
Witness

_____
Date

Appendix B

Accompanying Web Survey Letter to the Student

Dear Education Student:

I am currently engaged in research as part of my doctorate program at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. In an effort to determine and develop exceptional education programs and accompanying support services for students just like you, this research seeks to determine factors that influence the educational attainment of future teachers at Butler Community College (Butler). As part of the research process, I will be collecting survey data from all education students during the spring 2006 semester. The survey contains demographic questions as well as questions regarding your experience in the education program at Butler.

Your participation in this research is purely voluntary. If you decide not to fill out the survey, it will not affect your academic standing at Butler in any way. The survey is anonymous. At no time will any identifying material be used in such a way as to identify you personally.

If you have questions regarding this research, you are welcome to meet with me personally in office 253, 1500 building, the Butler of El Dorado campus, call me at 316-733-3291, or e-mail me at sgutier@butlercc.edu. For questions regarding the use of human subjects in research, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the following address and phone number: Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224.

Your time in completing the survey is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation and help in improving our teacher preparation program at Butler Community College.

Sincerely,

Shellie Gutierrez, Ed.D.
Department Chair/Lead Instructor, Education
Butler Community College

Appendix C

Web Survey for Education Students at Butler Community College

Please respond to the questions below by placing an "X" in front of the appropriate area or by filling in the blank, when necessary.

1. What is your declared major at Butler Community College?

_____Early Childhood Education   _____Elementary Education   _____Secondary Education

_____Other: _____

2. Are you currently enrolled or planning to enroll in the BEST (Butler and Emporia, from Students to Teachers) Program at Butler?

_____Yes   _____No

3. In how many credit hours are you enrolled this semester?

_____Credit hours

4. How long have you been attending Butler, including this semester? (Please answer in total number of semesters.)

_____Semesters

5. Has your enrollment at Butler been continuous or periodic?

_____Continuous enrollment   _____Periodic enrollment

6. Do you live in Butler County?

_____Yes   _____No

7. Do you live on or off campus?

_____On campus   _____Off campus

8. If you live off campus, approximately how many miles do you live from the Butler campus where you most frequently attend classes?

_____Miles

9. Do you receive financial aid?

_____Yes   _____No

10. If you are involved in extracurricular activities at Butler, approximately how many hours do you spend out of class each week, on the average, as a result of such activities?

_____Hours per week   _____Not applicable

11. Are you the first person in your immediate family to attend college?

_____Yes   _____No

12. Why did you choose Butler as your educational institution? (Check all that apply.)

_____Tuition cost   _____Close to home   _____Small class size   _____Course offerings

_____Referral   _____Scholarship   _____To complete a certificate program

_____To obtain an Associate degree   _____To transfer to a 4-year institution

_____To enroll in the BEST Program _____To obtain job-related skills

_____For self-improvement   _____To change careers   _____To obtain specific content knowledge

_____Other:_____

13. Are you seeking a terminal degree at Butler such as an associate degree?

_____Yes   _____No

14. If you are seeking a terminal degree at Butler, when do you plan to graduate? (Please fill in the remainder of the year for the semester you plan to graduate.)

Fall 20____   Spring 20____   Summer 20____

15. Do you plan to transfer to a teacher education program at a four-year institution?

_____Yes   _____No

16. If you answered "Yes" to the above question, do you know what is required for transfer to a teacher preparation program at a four-year institution (such as course requirements or entrance requirements into the four-year teacher preparation program)?

_____Yes   _____No

17. Have you met with a Butler advisor for guidance regarding degree requirements or for guidance on transfer requirements into a teacher preparation program?

_____Yes   _____No   _____Not applicable

18. If you plan to transfer to a teacher education program at a four-year institution, will all of your coursework at Butler transfer to that institution?

_____Yes   _____No   _____Don't know

19. If you answered "No" to the above question, how many credits will not transfer?

_____semester hours

20. Please check one of the following statements that best describes your study habits.

_____I have excellent study habits.   _____My study habits are OK.   _____I have poor study habits.

21. Please check one of the following phrases that best describes your level of confidence or persistence in achieving your educational goals at Butler.

_____Very confident/persistent _____Somewhat confident/persistent _____Not at all confident/persistent

22. Please rate the quality of instruction you have received in your *education* course(s) at Butler.

_____Excellent Quality   _____Average Quality   _____Poor Quality

23. Please rate the *relevance* of your *education* courses to your future plans in teaching.

_____Very Relevant   _____Somewhat Relevant   _____Not at all Relevant

24. Please rate the *quality* of your PK-12 *observation or field experiences* in your *education* course(s) at Butler.

_____Excellent Quality   _____Average Quality   _____Poor Quality

25. Please rate the *relevance* of your PK-12 *observation or field experiences* in your *education* course(s) at Butler.

_____Very Relevant   _____Somewhat Relevant   _____Not at all Relevant

26. Please rate the *quality* of instruction you have received in your *general* education course(s) at Butler.

_____Excellent Quality   _____Average Quality   _____Poor Quality

27. Please rate the *relevance* of your *general* education courses to your future plans in teaching.

_____Very Relevant   _____Somewhat Relevant   _____Not at all Relevant

28. Please rate the *helpfulness* of the *faculty* to you in achieving your educational goals at Butler.

_____Very Helpful   _____Somewhat Helpful   _____Not Helpful

29. Please rate the *helpfulness* of the *advisors or counselors* to you in achieving your educational goals at Butler.

_____Very Helpful   _____Somewhat Helpful   _____Not Helpful

30. Please rate the *helpfulness* of the *staff and administrators* to you in achieving your educational goals at Butler.

_____Very Helpful   _____Somewhat Helpful   _____Not Helpful

31. Please rate the *quality* of your *overall* educational experience at Butler.

_____Excellent Quality   _____Average Quality   _____Poor Quality

32. Do you feel your Butler experience will prepare you to make a successful transition to a four-year institution?

_____Yes   _____No   _____Not Applicable

33. What resources do you or have you used at Butler to support your education program? (Please check all that apply.)

_____Academic Achievement Center   _____Library   _____Mathematics Lab and Peer Tutoring

_____Computer Labs   _____Academic Advising/Planning Services   _____Counseling Services

_____Financial Aid Services   _____Career Placement Services   _____Educare Center

_____Special Needs Services   _____Student Organizations

_____Other:_____

34. Please list any additional resources that you think would support your education program at Butler.

35. Do you feel that Butler offers classes during times and days that work well for your schedule?

_____Yes   _____No

36. Do you have a terminal degree such as an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, or a master's degree?

_____Yes   _____No

37. If applicable, what is your degree?

_____Associate degree   _____Bachelor's Degree   _____Master's degree   _____Doctorate

38. What is your current grade point average at Butler?   _____GPA

39. What is your year of birth?   19_____

40. Are you male or female?

_____Male   _____Female

41. What is your marital status?

_____Married   _____Single   _____Divorced

42. Do you have children?

_____Yes   _____No

43. If you are employed, how many hours per week do you work?

_____0-10 hours   _____11-20 hours   _____21-39 hours   _____40 hours or more   _____Not applicable

44. Is English your native (first) language?

_____Yes   _____No

45. What is your primary racial identification?

_____Asian/American   _____African/American   _____Caucasian   _____Hispanic

_____Multi Racial   _____Native American   _____Other:_____

46. Of all factors listed on this survey or other factors not included, what is (are) the greatest barrier(s) you have encountered at Butler in an effort to achieve your educational goals? (Use the back of this page if additional space is needed.)

47. Of all factors listed on this survey or other factors not included, what is (are) the greatest support(s) or aid(s) you have encountered at Butler in an effort to achieve your educational goals? (Use the back of this page if additional space is needed.)

Appendix D

Survey Content Validity Chart

Personal Factors Influencing Educational Attainment	Survey Question(s) to Assess This Factor
Family (married/single parent/divorced/living at home, etc...)	41, 42
Work	43
Children-daycare issues	33, 42
Transportation	6, 7, 8
Academic background/GPA/academic standing	4, 5, 36, 37, 38
First generation college student	11
FT or PT status (12 hours or more = FT; less than 12 hours = PT)	3
Intermittent enrollment	4, 5
Non-traditional vs. traditional student/age/delayed college enrollment	39
Male vs. female	40
Minority	45
Language barrier	44
Finances/SES	9, 33
Lack of focus/direction or well defined goals	1, 2, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21
Poor study skills	21
Unfamiliar/inexperienced with higher education system	11, 36, 37
On-campus/off-campus living	7, 8
Extra-curricular activities/time spent out of class for such	10
Degree seeking or not	13, 14
Prior degrees	36, 37
Lack of confidence or persistence	1, 2, 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21
Heavy courseload	3

Classroom/Instructional Factors Influencing Educational Attainment	
Instructional methodology by faculty/quality of teaching	22, 26
Faculty support/advising/availability	28
Student-faculty relationships	28
Preparation/coursework/curriculum	1, 2, 31, 32
Relevance of coursework to student and/or field of study	23, 25, 27, 31, 32
Large vs. small classes	12
Pre-service field experiences in education courses	24, 25

Institutional Factors Influencing Educational Attainment	
Facilities/institutional resources	7, 33, 34
Articulation agreements or not	2, 16, 17, 18, 19
Advising and/or counseling services/support	17, 29, 33
Academic supports (study or tutor labs for improving academic/study skills)	33, 34
Orientation to campus and higher education	32, 33, 34
Scholarships and/or financial aid services	12, 33
Tuition and fees	12
Course scheduling/availability/location	12, 35
Transfer advising	16, 17, 18, 19
Enrollment/admissions process/registration process	30
Level of prestige for the institution (particularly for community colleges)	12
Residence facilities	7
Flexibility in general education course selection	26, 27

Any of the above factors or additional factors not listed	46, 47

Appendix E

Protocol for Asking Education Students to Participate in the Interview

Protocol Note: After purposeful selection of interview participants, determine selected students' class schedule and approach students personally before or after their classes at Butler Community College. Students who are not accessible for personal contact on campus at Butler Community College will be telephoned at home. The following protocol will be used for either form of contact.

Researcher Protocol:
Hello, I am Shellie Gutierrez, Education Lead for Butler Community College. I am currently conducting research to determine the factors, both barriers and support factors, that influence the educational attainment of students in the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. As part of the research process, I will be conducting personal interviews with students who are ready to transfer and have taken all three of our education courses at Butler, namely, ED 120 – Introduction to the Exceptional Child; ED 206 – Introduction to Teaching; and ED 222 – Instructional Technology. I believe students' personal experiences in the program can provide valuable insight for my research. The goal of this research study is to develop improvement processes for our education programs based upon students' personal perceptions and experiences in such programs.

Your name, *(Student's Name)*, has been purposefully selected to act as an interview participant in the study, if you agree to do so. The interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes of your time, and we can arrange a date, time, and location most convenient for you. Will you agree to participate in an interview? *(Await student's response. If student agrees, proceed with the following protocol. If student does not agree, thank him/her for his/her time and say goodbye.)*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. I would like to conduct your interview between these dates *(list dates here)* at either the Butler of El Dorado campus or the Butler of Andover campus. *(Provide a list of dates and times for student to choose from. If student cannot make any dates and times listed, ask for student input for open dates and times. Once date and time is set, determine which campus location works best for students. If neither location works well for students, ask student for possible location options.)*

(Confirm date, time, and location, and ask if students would like a reminder phone call or e-mail. Continue with the below protocol to conclude the conversation.)

I appreciate the time you have set aside for a personal interview. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form for release of the interview information to be used for the research purposes described above. I look forward to seeing you on *(list date, time, and location)*. Here is my contact information in case you need to contact me prior to the interview. *(Either provide students with my business card, if approached in person, or provide my contact information over the phone, if contacted via telephone.)* I'll see you soon.

Appendix F

Consent Form for the Interview

I, _____ give permission to Shellie Gutierrez, a graduate student at Kansas State University, to conduct an interview with me to collect information about my personal experiences in the teacher preparation program at Butler Community College. I understand the goal of this interview is to determine the factors that influence my educational attainment as a future teacher in relation to my experiences at Butler Community College. The benefits of this semester-long study will be to identify measures to improve the teacher preparation program at Butler, as well as measures to best promote students' educational goal to become teachers.

I understand that all interview data will remain anonymous, with no identifying factors used; my identity will be protected through the use of fictional names and places. I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled. By agreeing to participate in this interview, I give Shellie Gutierrez permission to share this information with Kansas State University faculty or with any other interested parties. Furthermore, I voluntarily release Kansas State University of any liability connected with this research project.

If I have any questions regarding this project, I know that I may contact the principal investigator, Dr. Gail Shroyer, at Kansas State University, 222 Bluemont Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-6737, gshroyer@ksu.edu, or the co-investigator, Shellie Gutierrez, at Butler Community College, 901 S. Haverhill, El Dorado, KS 67042, 316-322-3291, sgutier@butlercc.edu. For questions regarding the use of human subjects in research, I may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at the following address and phone number: Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature: _____   Date: _____

Witness to Signature: (project staff) _____   Date: _____

Appendix G

Interview Process Guide

1. Purposefully select education students, based upon preset criteria, from the spring 2006 enrollment roster to contact for a personal interview.

2. After acquiring course enrollment information for selected students, begin contacting them in person to request an interview.

   a) When approaching students, be sure to include my name, the name of the institution, the purpose of the research, and the importance of their participation (Follow Contact Protocol, Appendix E.)

3. After student agrees to an interview, immediately set up a time, date, and location for the interview. Also, inform each student that a consent form will need to be signed before the interview.

4. When each student arrives for the interview, give the consent form to sign.

5. Before proceeding with the interview, follow the guidelines for interviews proposed by Frey and Oishi (1995).

   a) Use participants full name.
   b) Identify myself and the institution.
   c) Explain the research purpose.
   d) State or re-state the important interview conditions such as confidentiality, approximate length, and the necessity of tape-recording the interview.
   e) Describe the benefits to participation.
   f) Ask for permission to proceed with the interview.

6. Be sure the student is comfortable, ask if they have any questions regarding the interview or the interview process, and then begin the interview.

7. During the interview, do not copiously write respondents' answers, but, rather, listen intently and take only minimal notes.

8. After the interview, thank the student for his/her time and ask if he/she has any questions for me.

Appendix H

Interview Questions for Education Students at Butler Community College

Protocol Note: Before beginning the interview, introduce myself as the researcher, tell a bit about the study, and ask the interviewee if he/she has questions before beginning the interview.

Interview Note: Use prompts when necessary to encourage participants to elaborate on responses.

1. What are your personal goals, your educational goals, and your future goals?

2. Why did you choose Butler as your educational institution?

3. In what ways has Butler made you feel prepared to transfer to a teacher preparation program at a four-year institution?

4. In what ways could Butler have made you feel more prepared to transfer to a four-year teacher preparation program?

5. How have your experiences at Butler affected your persistence in achieving your educational goals? (Interview Note: Define the term *persistence* as "refusing to give up.")

6. What has been (are) the greatest barrier(s) for you in achieving your educational goals at Butler? (Note: Use prompts, if necessary, to determine students' *personal*, *instructional*, or *institutional* factors without leading the participant's ideas/responses.)

7. What has been (are) the greatest support(s) for you in achieving your educational goals at Butler? (Note: Use prompts, if necessary, to determine students' *personal*, *instructional*, or *institutional* factors without leading the participant's ideas/responses.)

Note: Before concluding the interview, ask students if they wish to add any further comments.