



Iota Lambda Sigma Journal for Workforce Education

Journal for Workforce Education (JWEEd)

INSIDE

- Not Your Parents' Voc. Ed. . . Parents' Perceptions of Career and Technical Education
- Teacher Recruitment and Career and Technical Education
- Workforce Education Programs: Necessity or Luxury?

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Journal for Workforce Education (JWEEd)

Volume III. Issue I

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Introductory Issue

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Not Your Parents' Voc. Ed. . . Parents Perceptions of Career and Technical Education

by Virginia R. Jones

Abstract

Parents' perceptions of career and technical education (CTE) courses directly affect their students' choices for high school coursework. Research of current literatures showed that parents are a strong influence in their children's career choices yet have limited knowledge of the current offerings of career and technical courses. A study performed in 2009 sought to determine middle school parents' perceptions of career and technical education as related to their children's future educational or workforce plans. Parents' perceptions of CTE and overall influence on their children's course selections were statistically significant related to their children's future educational or workforce plans in this study. Examining this data provides career and technical education educators a strong starting point for promoting the image of CTE . . . the image that embraces 21st century learning and its associated skills.

Not Your Parents' Voc. Ed. . . Parents Perceptions of Career and Technical Education

Parents of secondary school students recall their school experiences and favorite courses when helping their student plan for courses in middle school and high school. Remembering great courses and inspiring teachers is a wonderful endorsement for a course, but unfortunately most parents remember the divide between academic and vocational courses prevalent during their schools days. They recall the perception that vocational education was for those not aspiring to post-secondary education or training. For more than 80 years career and technical education (CTE) was grounded in blue-collar-type jobs and training students for jobs in that economy (Lynch, 2000). Realizing the need to teach the new tech-

nologies, CTE has changed its course foci to meet these needs by providing students with the content and skills necessary in an increasingly complex technological world. Federal legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2001) and the Carl D. Perkins Act (2006) had provided the framework for alignment of career and academic curriculum with rigorous, relevant, and related coursework. New legislation from the national government calls for more emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics workforce education in secondary and postsecondary schools (United States Department of Labor, 2007). Postsecondary educational facilities as well as employers are demanding those who possess collaborative, critical thinking, and workplace readiness skills (applicable to higher education needs). Career and Technical Education embraces all these changes by increasing the rigor, relevance, and real-world applications of their course offerings as well as integrating higher level mathematics and science applications into the content. Educators are aware that students cannot afford to wait until attaining high school status to explore seriously career options. Career education has to begin in middle school or earlier to allow students time to develop the aptitudes, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop an awareness of their chosen career.

A study performed in 2009 sought to determine middle school parents' perceptions of career and technical education as related to their children's future educational or workforce plans. Historically in public school systems, students in the eighth grade are required to make critical academic decisions that ultimately determine their placement in courses, whether academically or career/technical oriented, during high school. Hornak and Gillingham stated in 1980 and Gainor reaffirmed in 2006 that middle school students made these decisions with limited career awareness and information especially concerning how work values and knowledge of higher education would influence their future career and college success. Their data supported the negative outcomes of

these decisions proving that nearly half of college-bound students requested assistance in making career decisions (Gainor, 2006; Hornak & Gillingham, 1980; Simmons, 2008; Usinger, 2005).

Increased parental recognition of the academic content of CTE classes and intentional career planning assists students in planning for a rewarding, relevant career. Research showed that career exploration ensured that all students comprehended the importance of designing their life-long career focus in stages consistent with their educational stages in life (Kinney, 2007). Both students and parents must recognize CTE classes as building blocks for their educational pursuits and future career aspirations. Career and technical education educators need to develop tools to educate parents, students, and the community about the new image of their courses.

Parental Perceptions and Influences

Significant research evidence indicates that parents influence their children's career development and choices. Parents, through their daily modeling, are their child's foremost teacher of career education. Most parents base their

knowledge of career and technical education courses on their own middle and high school experiences. Research showed that parents provide a standard for work values, and they educate their child about life roles, gender roles, and employability skills (Lankard, 1995). Consistent with this role, parents perceive a child's career performance as a direct reflection of their parenting skills. Parents feel that their child's career planning skills increase with age, but also feel that offering career exploration earlier in the child's education is important (Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson, & Witko, 2005).

This 2009 study was conducted at a rural Virginia middle school. It obtained data by means of parent surveys to determine perceptions of career and technical education and its contributions to their child's educational or workforce plans. Analysis of the completed parental surveys provided data regarding their knowledge and perceptions of CTE. This survey distribution was after the parent and child completed the registration process for high school coursework. Questions on the survey about parental perceptions are shown in table 1.

These questions allowed the participants' responses to determine categories of perceptions

Table 1. Excerpt from Parent Survey 2009

Section I. Career and technical education course support

*Please rank what reasons are important for you and your child in deciding whether to take career and technical education classes in high school, where **one (1)** is **very unimportant** and **five (5)** is **very important**. For example, you may decide "school advice" is important and would circle the number 4.*

	Very Important	Important	Neither	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
1. Interesting subjects	5	4	3	2	1
2. Future job opportunities	5	4	3	2	1
3. Parents' wishes	5	4	3	2	1
4. School advice	5	4	3	2	1
5. Industry knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
6. Practical experience	5	4	3	2	1
7. Dual enrollment credits	5	4	3	2	1
8. Friend's recommendations	5	4	3	2	1
9. Please use this section to elaborate on any questions. Your suggestions and recommendations are welcome.					

thereby increasing the validity of the data responses. The average of parent responses on the CTE course support section was 4.18 (on a 5-point Likert scale) and the mode was 4 (important). To examine the factors that contribute to middle school parents' perceptions of contributions of CTE could make to their child's educational or workforce plans, the parent responses elicited comments categorized into three major areas: career future and planning, career interests, and interesting materials and skills learned.

The hierarchical multivariate analysis used 13 predictors or independent variables to assess parental influences on student course selections. They were interesting subjects, future job opportunities, parents' wishes, school advice, industry knowledge, practical experience, dual enrollment credits, friends' recommendations, gender of responding parent, educational level, ethnicity, marital status, and educational level of spouse. Parental gender, ethnicity, marital status and educational were included as research (Prins & Toso, 2008; Manning, 1994) showed that parenting practices and styles differed considerably based on ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), generational status, and socio-cultural setting. The dependent variables were the course

selections. The study assessed two correlational indices: The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) and the multiple correlation coefficient squared value (R^2).

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficients were computed among the parent influences. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I errors across the correlations, a p value less than .001 (.05/78 = .001) was required for statistical significance. Table 2 presented the results of the bivariate correlations analyses. Twelve correlations were statistically significant and were greater than or equal to .24.

The researcher performed computations for partial correlation coefficients controlling for parental demographic variables (gender and ethnicity of respondent, educational level of respondent, marital status, and educational level of spouse). Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I errors across the correlations, a p value of less than .001 (.05/28 = .001) was required for statistical significance. The results of the partial correlational analyses presented in Table 3 shows that 11 of the 32 correlations were statistically significant and were greater than or equal to .25.

Pre-existing data from student course selections were compared to the parental survey results us-

Table 2
The Bivariate Correlations among the Parent Survey Influence Scales on Course Requests (N = 211)

	Future Job	Parents' Wishes	School Advice	Industry Knowledge	Practical Experience	Dual Enroll	Friend's Recommend	Marital Status
Interesting Subject	.39*	.24*	.33	.34*	.28*	.17		
Future Job		.17	.27*	.35*	.32*	.25*		
School Advice				.24*	.35*	.16	.20	
Parents' Wishes			.40*	.19				
Industry Knowledge					.49*	.21		
Practical Experience						.19		
Educ. Level Respondent								.22

* $p < .001$

Table 3

Partial Correlations among the Parent Survey Influence Scales on Course Requests
(N = 199)

	Future Job	Parents' wishes	Ind. Knowledge	School advice	Practical Exp	Dual Enroll
Interesting subject	.41	.25	.35		.29	
Future Job			.35	.26	.31	.25
Parents' wishes				.41		
School advice					.34	
Industry knowledge					.46	

* $p < .001$

ing hierarchical regression analyses to predict how parental perceptions related to the choices students made in their course selections. For course selections, this sample consisted of 435 students who were required to choose three or four elective credit courses for their ninth grade course selections.

lections showed Personal finance accounted for 47% of all course requests while Foundation of Arts (8.9%), JROTC (Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp, 6.8%), and Healthcare (5.4%) represented the other highly requested courses (Figure 1).

The frequencies for rising ninth grade course se-

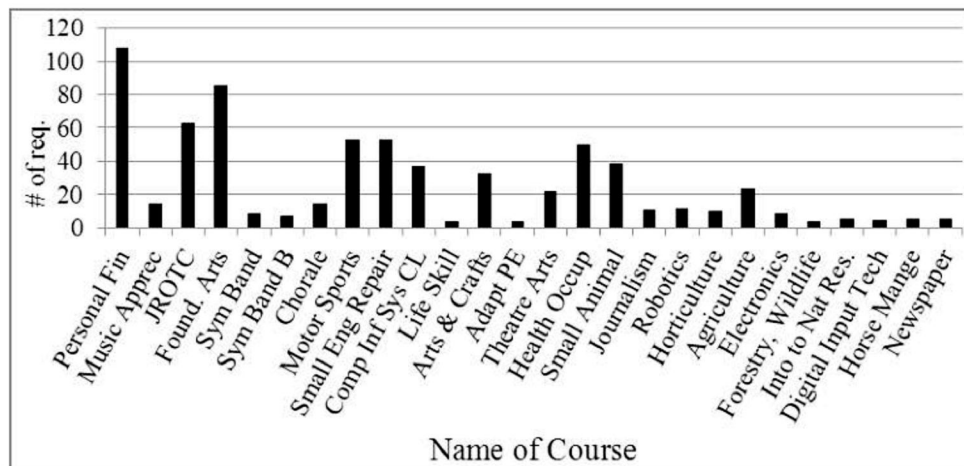


Figure 1. Rising Ninth Grade Course Requests by Course Name

Demographically, African-American students selected Foundation of Arts (40.7%), Personal Finance (20.8%), and JROTC (24.6%). Caucasian students selected Personal Finance (37.1%),

JROTC (20.5%), and Foundation of Arts (18.2%). Figure 2 shows ethnic breakdown of major course selections.

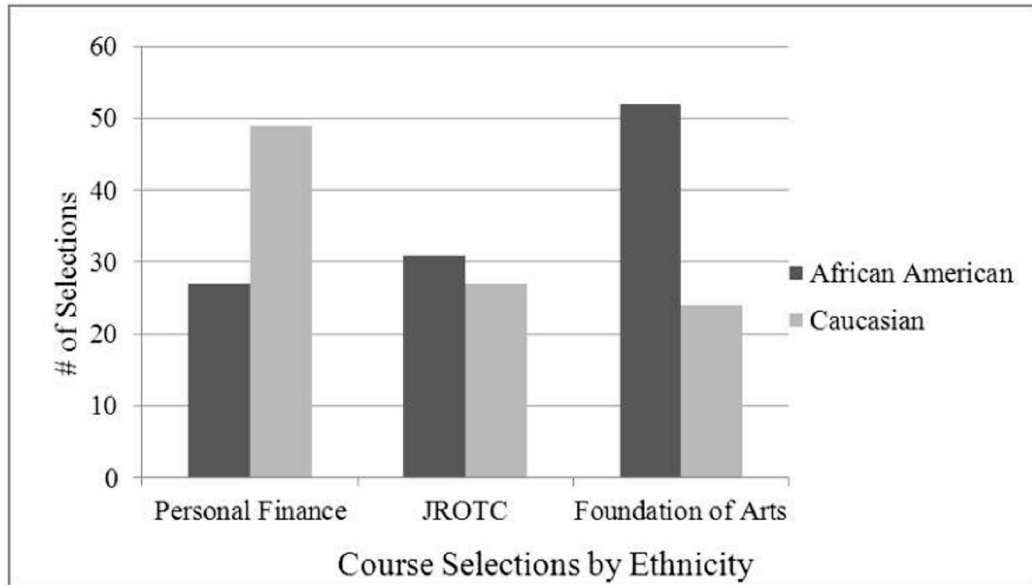


Figure 2. Course Selections by Ethnicity

Males chose Motor Sports (27.5%), Small Engine Repair (27.5%), Foundation of Arts (24.7%), and JROTC (19.1%). Females chose Health Occupations (24.4%), Personal Finance (24.4%), Foun-

ation of Arts (17.9%), and JROTC (13.4%). Figure 3 shows gender distribution of major course selections.

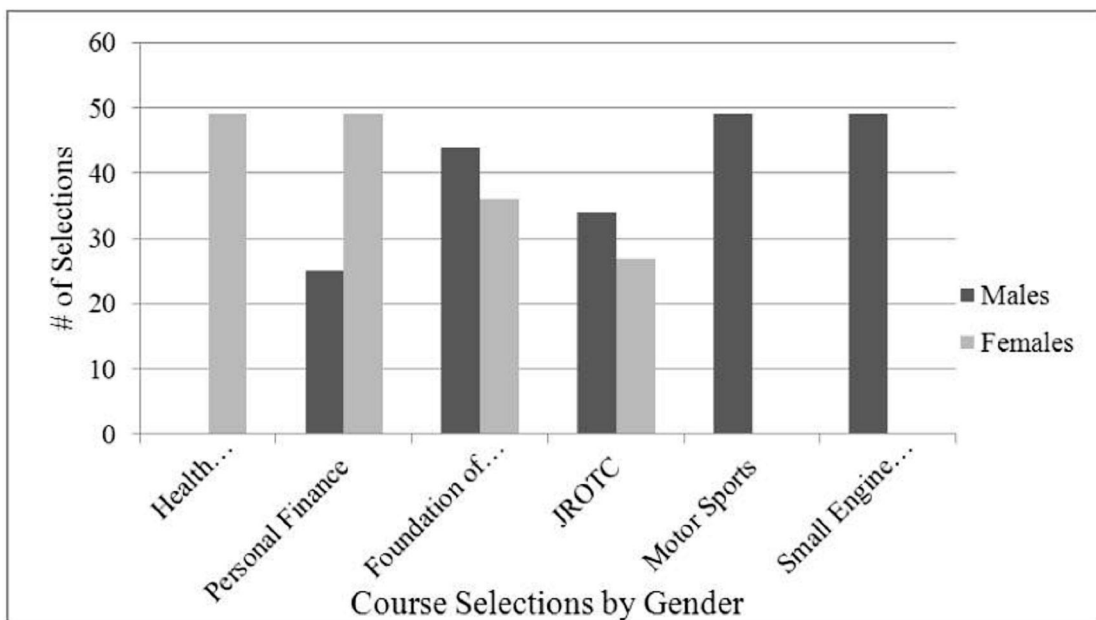


Figure 3. Number of Course Selections by Gender.

This study showed that parental influences were important to all students but especially critical to minority students. Some researchers speculated that African-American parental influences were stronger compared to those of Caucasian students (Constantine, Wallace, & Kindaichi, 2005). African-American students tended to place greater priority on familial goals and community needs (Alliman-Brissett, Turner, & Skovholt, 2004; Constantine et al., 2005)

Overall, this study supported Super's Theory (1957) and Crites and Savickas's Theory (1996) that the amount of parental identification reflected in the interests of their children were influential. Relational and attachment theories with adolescents are also supported through strong parental influences (24.8%) with freedom to explore careers and vocational environments yet still accept parents' values and close family relationship (Ainsworth, 1989; Kerka, 2000; Martin & Martin, 2000; Vignoli, Croity-Belz, Chapeland, de Fillipis, & Garcia, 2005). This study maintained the research that significantly no single parental influence consistently predicted children's career outcomes (Domina, 2005; Schott, 1974).

Based on the elective constraints in the ninth grade schedule students were able to choose two or three selections out of a possible eight-block schedule for the year. The school system mandated one elective for all ninth graders as physical education reducing the number of elective+electives to one or two. Therefore, the data results were consistent with students choosing more conventional+or acceptable+ninth grade career electives and waiting until the following years to branch out into more of a career pathway consistent with their career interests. Research showed a low rating of career decidedness in middle school students with only minor increases as the students mature and complete high school (Lounsbury et al., 2005).

Significantly, research supports parental influences and availability as decisive factors to minority student success (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999). Self-efficacy of minority students depends upon four essential components: (a) personal accomplishments, (b) vicarious learning (modeling by significant others), (c) emotional support of others and (d) others verbal encouragement+(Alliman-Brissett, Turner, & Skovholt,

2004, p. 3). Career and technical education offers opportunities for all students to achieve in these areas through its contextual, real-world, and hand-on approaches to learning. According to Keller and Whiston (2004) emotional support and interest shown by parents is more conducive to career development than explicit information about specific careers. This study did not support the research that parental demographics of education, income, and marital status are defining factors in student course selections but did show that interest and support by parents is statistically significant as the research asserts.

Parents' perceptions of CTE and overall influence on their children's course selections were statistically significant related their children's future educational or workforce plans in this study. Relational and attachment theories with adolescents are supported through the strong parental influences (24.8%). Parental involvement in school activities was a statistically significant influence in their children's career exploration, career exploration, and course selections (23.8%).

Examining this data provides career and technical education educators a strong starting point for promoting the image of CTE . the image that embraces 21st century learning and its associated skills. By connecting to the increase in the use of social media, electronic learning, and online courses, CTE is able to reach more students, train more to enter the workforce, and expand career pathways to train learners for careers. It also provides the backbone to the very existence of our societal fabric by promoting careers in service, medical, and transportation fields, to name a few career clusters. Career and technical education is not separate or distinct from core academics but embedded with core concepts of science, mathematics, and English. CTE educators need to promote this rigor in their courses by engaging academic educators for cross-curricular projects, integration of CTE concepts into core academics, field trips, and lesson planning. CTE educators need to invite parents and community groups to student organizational meetings and competitions to witness first hand the high quality, rigorous, life-long career skills learned in CTE courses.

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Teacher Recruitment and Career and Technical Education

By Michael F. Kosloski, Jr.

Abstract

While the need for public school teachers continues to grow—particularly career and technical education teachers—the number of students willing to pursue a major in education continues to decline. Students have a tendency to opt for majors that provide them with a greater status and prepare for careers with a potential for higher earnings. As demand grows and supply decreases, elective programs such as career and technical education are in danger of perishing within individual schools. This article explores the rationale behind students' major decisions, as well as providing recruitment suggestions for teacher education programs. While the nature of this writing may focus predominantly on career and technical education majors at Old Dominion University, the model described herein can potentially be adapted to any higher education program. It addresses recruitment techniques for current college students as well as college-bound high school students.

Introduction

In a country faced with economic struggles, unemployment rates make headline news on a regular basis. While minor educational cutbacks have occurred, one industry that has not been overly negatively impacted by unemployment is education. Teacher shortages abound, and alternative and emergency licensure requirements have been implemented to help fill the need for additional secondary teachers. The issue in education has become whether or not we can successfully meet the demand—both present and future—for highly qualified teachers needed to fill our classrooms. Entry into the field is open, but an inadequate number of prospective teachers are walking through the door. As a result, tradi-

tional teacher education programs have been faced with the challenge of recruiting teacher candidates to fill the needs of our educational community, motivating and preparing teachers for the future.

The marketing education programs across the state of Virginia have been impacted. In addition to this phenomenon, Governor Bob McDonnell signed legislation dictating that all high school graduates entering high school in 2011 or later are required to successfully complete a financial literacy course (VSCPA, 2011). Most schools and school systems will provide the offering through either the social studies or business and marketing departments, thereby adding to the demand. While the need for marketing education teachers continues to grow, the number of students preparing for a career in marketing education continues to decline, leading to more alternatively licensed teachers. Often times the lack of highly qualified teachers leads to the complete elimination of programs within high schools (Gray & Walter, 2001). While Old Dominion University's marketing enrollment has declined only slightly, other state universities such as James Madison, Virginia Commonwealth, and Virginia Tech have eliminated their undergraduate programs, thereby leaving Old Dominion University as the sole provider of marketing education graduates in a traditional college preparatory program. Historical enrollments at Old Dominion University can be seen below. The ability to supply marketing education teachers is essential, and the question needs to be asked, how can traditional teacher education programs effectively recruit and build teacher education programs? The purpose of this paper is to outline a recruitment strategy for marketing education students at Old Dominion University.

Teacher shortages

In an ever-changing economy, the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2008) identifies the need for 479,000 additional secondary teachers between 2006 and 2016, creating more jobs than in most

Table 1
Fall Enrollments into Marketing Education at Old Dominion University by Year

Year	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Students	12	10	19	8	9	4	9	10	11	12	14	15	13	9	15

Note that enrollments are for degree-seeking students, and do not include licensure only students.

other employment categories. Some researchers estimate the number of teaching positions needed to be filled as high as 1,000,000 (Dohm, 2000; Gray & Walter, 2001). Several factors have led to the need for such a large number of teaching positions. One such factor is the high school reform movement that began in the late 1980s which called for an increase in the rigor associated with teacher preparation programs (Gray & Walter, 2001). Another is the negative public perception associated with the teaching profession. Teaching is often regarded by prospective candidates as a low-status professional occupation, often resulting in candidates opting for a more desirable profession (Allen, 2000; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Perhaps, however, the greatest reason for the need for teachers in our immediate future is logistics. In a study of the labor force effects of retiring baby-boomers, Dohm (2000) identified secondary school teachers as having the highest number of total employees aged 45 or older in the year 1998. This represents slightly more than one-half of all of the teachers employed at that time. Dohm also identified secondary teachers as the occupation with the fifth greatest replacement need for those retiring, consistent with the Occupational Outlook Handbook findings. As a result, the current supply of incoming teachers through traditional college preparation programs does not currently meet the supply needs for secondary education (Gray & Walter, 2001).

Supply and Demand for CTE teachers

Approximately 25% of all secondary teachers are classified as career and technical education (CTE) teachers (Gray & Walter, 2001), and the demand for CTE teachers continues to grow (Bartlett, 2002). However, there continues to be a critically low supply of career and technical education teachers opting to practice in the profession, which may represent the greatest threat to the discipline (Daugherty, 1998; Gray & Walter, 2001). In the State of Virginia, career and

technical education represents the fourth highest teacher shortage area behind special education, elementary education K-6, and middle education grades 6-8 (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). In addition, many of the CTE teacher preparation program graduates opt to enter private industry rather than the teaching profession (Allen, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Educational systems also find it difficult to place graduates in teaching positions in many rural or other hard to staff schools, thereby perpetuating the teacher deficiency (Allen, 2000; Monk, 2007). As a result, alternative routes to licensure are becoming more prevalent, and more career and technical education teachers are entering the discipline directly from industry without a traditional educational background (Bartlett, 2002; Gray and Walter, 2001).

Traditional versus Alternative Licensure Programs-Industry and Pedagogy

The issue of career and technical education teacher shortages is not a new phenomenon. Erikson and Barr reported in 1985 that the number of provisional teaching certificates at the secondary level were on the rise in an effort to assuage the shortage of career and technical education (CTE) teachers. Bartlett noted in 2002 that the number of schools utilizing alternative certificate programs for CTE teachers continued to rise. The teacher shortage has resulted in a greater number of our CTE teachers coming directly from industry without a traditional teacher preparation background (Darling-Hammon, & Sykes, 2003; Gray & Walter, 2001).

Teachers entering into the CTE teaching profession through a traditional, college preparatory licensure program are more likely to remain in the profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). Attrition is significantly higher for those teachers who enter the profession with expedited preparation (Darling-Hammon, & Sykes, 2003). A recent study found that 49% of provisionally

certified and uncertified teachers left the profession within their first five years, compared to 14% of their certified counterparts (Henke, Chen, Geiss, & Knepper, 2000). In addition, teachers who lacked a clinical student teaching experience left the industry at twice the rate of those who had student teaching (Sanders, 2007; Henke, Chen, Geiss, & Knepper, 2000). While occupational experience is important for those entering teaching through industry, the departure rate is attributed to, in part, the lack of pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective teacher (Darling-Hammon, & Sykes, 2003; Bartlett, 2002; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2002; Gray & Walter, 2001). The unusually rapid departure of teachers being trained via alternative certification procedures are resulting in what Ingersoll (2001) has coined as a "revolving door," whereby teachers are exiting the profession within their first five years and being replaced with others who are often also at great risk of making an expeditious departure.

The Role of College Recruitment Programs

If the supply of CTE teachers is not currently meeting the demand, and if those teachers taking the alternative licensure track tend to leave the profession at a significantly higher rate, then it stands to reason that one way to bolster the number of qualified CTE teachers is to recruit more students into college preparatory programs. While there are a variety of entry points into teaching, including during middle and high school, during college years, and beyond college years (Bartlett, 2002), the focus of this recruitment program is primarily to attract high school students during their high school careers and college students early in their college careers. While those students returning from industry later in life represent an important pool of potential candidates of career and technical education teachers, strategies to recruit them into the field are not addressed here.

Gray and Daugherty (2004) studied a group of technology education postsecondary students and teachers to determine what factors influenced their decision to become CTE teachers. While several factors were cited, they determined that university recruitment techniques played a limited role in most teachers' decisions to enter the profession, and more than two-thirds were not recruited in any way by a university. Partici-

pants noted that of those techniques that might be most effective, the following strategies led the list: explaining positive job characteristics, sending a recruiter to the high schools, hosting open houses, holding contests, and producing brochures. Nearly half of those students entering the profession identified their high school teacher as the most influential person who influenced their decision. Squires and Case made a similar conclusion in 2007, determining that high school teachers played a significant role in providing experiences for students that made them desire to become a CTE teacher. However, they determined that effective university recruiting techniques are critical in the decision making process, although those techniques may be indirect, such as brochures and recruiting through high school teachers.

Many college students choose to avoid the teaching profession, citing low pay and low prestige as a reason for opting for other career programs (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Allen, 2000; Daugherty, 1998). However, it is important to note that salaries do not play a significant role in a student's decision to become a career and technical education teacher. Teachers who opt to enter the profession are generally motivated by intrinsic rewards (Allen, 2000; Ballou & Podgursky, 1998). Universities in suburban areas are more likely to effectively recruit teachers (Monk, 2007), and those students are also likely to remain in the same state- if not the same region- to become teachers, keeping those teachers local (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Figlio, 2002; Allen, 2000). As a result, suburban areas are prime locations for recruiting teachers and producing teachers for the local community. Old Dominion University fits this profile.

Recruitment Strategies

While the strategies for recruitment outlined below are specific to the marketing education program at Old Dominion University, they may be effectively modeled by other teacher preparation programs, as well as by other suburban universities fitting the profile as described above.

Current students

Attracting current students early in their college careers is one of the goals of this recruitment program. In 2009, Old Dominion University conducted 15 freshman or transfer student orientations for 2477 students (Jeffries, L., personal communication, August 6, 2009). Of those stu-

dents, the targeted areas of recruitment are for the following majors: undecided, marketing, business undecided, and interdisciplinary studies (teacher preparatory programs). Table 2 below identifies the number of orientation students that fall into these categories (Old Dominion University, 2009a; Old Dominion University, 2009b).

The totals in table 2 identify that more than one-quarter of all incoming freshmen and transfer students enter the University without a declared major. Three percent enter knowing that they would like to be public school teachers, and another four percent enter knowing that they are interested in pursuing business or marketing. As a result, approximately one-third of all incoming freshmen and transfer students are prospects for entry into the marketing education program. Gaining exposure to these 815 students is critical.

level of exposure has been provided for these students. The hope is that if no immediate response is elicited that the contact plants the seed for a possible major consideration in the future.

Most universities provide some type of major selection guidance for those students who have not yet declared or decided on a major. At Old Dominion University, undecided students are directed to the University College for such guidance. The University College works with first year incoming students to coordinate the academic services designed to ensure student success and enhance student retention (Old Dominion University, 2009c). Part of the counseling process for these incoming students is to assist them with career interests and capabilities, helping them to discover a college major that suits their career interests, as well as their academic

Table 2
Old Dominion University Freshman and Transfer Orientation Students by Major

Major	Number of Attendees	Percentage of Attendees
Total	2477	100
Undecided	642	25.9
Marketing/Business Undecided	99	4.0
Interdisciplinary Studies	74	3.0

While a personal contact with each student would be ideal, the concept is logistically unsound, as a series of five-minute telephone conversations would take approximately 68 hours to complete. However, each orientation student has been enrolled, and therefore exists in the Old Dominion University e-mail directory. As a result, the first approach with each of these students should be via e-mail, ideally prior to attending their new student orientation. The message should be brief yet detailed enough to highlight the benefits of becoming a marketing education teacher (Gray & Daugherty, 2004; Squires & Case, 2007). An example of such recruitment e-mails can be found in the appendices below. If a response is received and interest sparked in the student, it should be followed by an immediate telephone call to the student. If contact is made prior to their orientation, an effort to schedule a personal meeting is preferred. At the very least, some

abilities (Waters, 2009). As a result, a personal meeting was scheduled to discuss the marketing education program with Waters and her counseling staff.

During the meeting, Waters and the counselors asked questions and the marketing education program was discussed. An effort was made to help them better understand the curriculum requirements, as well as the types of career possibilities for the graduates, so that they could successfully identify students who might have similar interests. Waters and her staff provided three suggestions for effective recruiting through the University College. The first was simply to provide the staff with as much information as possible about the major so that they could intelligently discuss the marketing education program with prospective students. The second was to redesign the program brochure so that they provided

more pizzazz for students, emphasizing program and career benefits for students rather than simply an academic accounting of the program. Waters and her staff felt as though the existing brochures did not necessarily emphasize student benefits. Finally, to gain exposure with students, Waters suggested that the program create posters and post cards that emphasize student benefits. The University College will distribute these items in University dormitories throughout the campus.

Because the meeting was a joint effort between the University College, marketing education, and technology education, a series of post cards and posters will be created, touting the benefits of both marketing and technology education. Once created, they will be produced with existing departmental equipment and delivered to the University College for distribution throughout the University's dormitories.

High School Students

While the literature provides mixed opinions on the role of direct intervention from university recruiters, one factor remains consistent; utilizing existing high school teachers as recruiters is an effective method of providing exposure and motivating students to become career and technical education teachers (Carr, 1979; Allen, 2000; Gray & Daugherty, 2004; Squires & Case, 2007). As a result, reaching marketing education students through their teachers is critical.

Based on proven recruitment techniques conducted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Daugherty (1998) identified 51 effective recruitment strategies for attracting high school students into technology education. These techniques are not exclusive to technology education, and can be used effectively by virtually any teacher education recruitment program. Reaching students through arrangements made between university recruiters and the CTE teacher is a fundamental concept in many of these strategies. Based on these strategies, three have been highlighted for immediate implementation into the Old Dominion University marketing education program.

The first is to generate more face-to-face visits with high school students. While logistics can prove prohibitive in visiting schools—particularly those schools out of the immediate region—

visits can create more exposure for the program. As a result, balancing the time required for visits with the number of qualified students reached is critical. While all marketing education students have shown some level of interest in marketing education by virtue of enrollment, qualified students are defined as those more active within their high school programs. As a result, ideal students may be second, third, or fourth year students, thereby showing a continued interest in their programs. Other signs of engagement may be the level of activity within their local co-curricular student organization (DECA) or taking on the role of a chapter officer or leader. While these students may be identified by their teachers, another operational method of identifying such students is to visit them at a time and place where they are exercising such engagement in marketing education activities.

Individual school visits may be effective in reaching large numbers of students, but will likely include large numbers of unqualified students. Identifying groups of qualified students should increase the likelihood that these students may be interested in considering a career in marketing education, as they exhibit more passion for marketing education based on their current level of engagement. One type of meeting rich with qualified marketing education students is fall leadership conferences through the student organization. Most districts conduct a fall leadership conference on some level, combining student leaders from within schools based on geographical boundaries. Some of these conferences are large, combining student leaders either regionally or statewide, and play host to several hundred qualified students. Interacting with these students, and discussing the benefits and possibilities of becoming a marketing education teacher should increase the likelihood of attracting students into the program. The Old Dominion University marketing education program should also volunteer to host such meetings on campus. Such a meeting would not only bring students onto campus, providing an opportunity to display the University's offerings, but should also alleviate much of the planning required by teachers in implementing these district-wide meetings. The Old Dominion University marketing education program can utilize some of its existing marketing education students in the delivery of leadership programs, thereby enhancing the likelihood of reaching high school students through peer to peer contact (Gray & Daugherty, 2004).

Another way to allow current collegiate students to engage with high school students is through a scholarship program hosted by Collegiate DECA, or the postsecondary level of DECA. The collegiate students will be tasked with raising a minimum of \$1000 to go towards a one-year scholarship given to a Virginian high school student opting to attend Old Dominion University as a marketing education major. Any eligible high school candidate may apply, and prospective winners of the candidate will be interviewed not only by the faculty, but also by the current marketing education majors. This two-way interview permits high school students to learn more about the program through current students. Scholarship recipients will be required to remain in the marketing education program for one full year.

The final strategy for this recruitment program is to provide teachers with an easy to use lesson for use with their students, the topic of the lesson being, a career in marketing education. The lesson will be complete with lesson plans, activities, videos, and other elements geared toward motivating and educating students about the benefits of a career in marketing education.

In the recent past, Virginia DECA used a similar strategy with tremendous success in educating students about DECA. A Web-based lesson was developed and pushed to teachers, touting the benefit to teachers of having a 90-minute turnkey lesson. Of the 425 marketing teachers in Virginia, approximately 190 took part in the lesson annually, reaching thousands of marketing education students each year. Using similar distribution techniques should prove similarly effective.

The distribution of the lesson will be on two fronts. First, the lesson will be promoted through Sharon Acuff, State Director of Marketing Education. In a state update Acuff recently introduced the lesson to more than 250 marketing teachers attending the Virginia Association of Marketing Educators (VAME) conference in Richmond, Virginia. She encouraged teachers to use the lesson as part of the state marketing education curriculum. In addition, Acuff will send the lesson out to teachers in one of her weekly e-mail addresses as a featured product.

Of equal importance, the lesson will be posted and featured on the Old Dominion University Web lessons for Marketing Educators Web site,

located under the self-marketing section at <http://www.lions2.odu.edu/org/deca/weblessons>. This Web site, once hosted by Virginia DECA, received more than 2,000,000 hits, with the lessons pages being the most visited. More than 80% of the visitors were from Virginia. Recently the site was migrated at the request of Acuff to Old Dominion University, and announced at the VAME conference. In addition, Shirlee Kyle, Assistant Executive Director for DECA, Inc., has also asked permission to announce the newly migrated site to state advisors and teachers across the country, as it was a regular destination for marketing teachers everywhere.

The lesson examines career opportunities in marketing and features careers in marketing education. As a part of the lesson, students will be asked to identify which universities offer an undergraduate program in marketing education. Currently Old Dominion University is the only university in Virginia with such an offering. Interested students are provided with contact information, and will necessarily need to inquire about the program at Old Dominion University. The lesson concludes with an online quiz whereby students complete the quiz and can print a certificate of completion, providing teachers with an assessment component that they will not have to prepare for the lesson.

In addition to the Web lesson, incoming students will be acknowledged by placing their picture, high school, and high school teacher affiliation on the Web site, creating a sense of pride in producing marketing education candidates for both students and teachers. All appropriate protocols will be followed with respect to granting permission to place names and photographs on the Web site. This will also be the place where scholarship possibilities are announced, as well as acknowledging scholarship recipients. Teachers will also receive hand-written thank you cards for each student enrolling in the program, thereby reinforcing the relationship between the teacher and the marketing education program at Old Dominion University.

Conclusion

Because of the elimination of programs across Virginia, college preparatory programs continue to produce fewer marketing education graduates than is needed to meet the needs of the state.

While enrollments at Old Dominion University have declined only slightly, the deficits created by the elimination of college preparatory programs has forced more teachers to take the emergency licensure route. Because alternatively licensed teachers are more likely to leave the profession early, tremendous pressure has been placed on filling the needs of our public schools, often times resulting in the elimination of a program in our public schools.

The recruitment program outlined above should help high school students to become more cognizant of marketing education as a career, and thereby resulting in more marketing education teacher candidates at Old Dominion University. In addition, it should also provide teachers with a reasonably effortless method of showing their students what some of their career options are as a result of marketing education in the high schools. It should also help to build relationships between the marketing education program at Old Dominion University and Virginia's marketing education teachers, a critical element in producing our marketing education teachers of tomorrow.

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Appendix A

E-mail Message to incoming ODU Students with Undecided Majors.

Dear New Monarch,

Welcome to the ODU family! I'm confident that you're going to like it here. ODU is a great place to spend your college years.

I noticed from the Preview roster that you are still undecided with respect to your major. While that's perfectly okay, I wanted to give you one major to think about: Marketing Education. There is a shortage of Marketing Education teachers, and if you are interested, I would love to provide you with more information.

If you're not familiar with it, Marketing Education teachers teach marketing, fashion, sports and entertainment, Internet marketing, entrepreneurship, and other marketing related topics. They teach in their high schools in the mornings, visit businesses in the afternoons, and are active with DECA, the student association, providing an opportunity for student competition and travel. It's really a great teaching job if you are interested in the field of marketing.

Marketing teachers also generally work an extended contract, meaning they work an extra 22 days per year and receive an additional 10% in salary. For most starting teachers, that's approximately \$4000 additional income right out of the gate.

If this discipline interests you, be aware that unlike most education programs, Marketing Education is a stand-alone program. In other words, ***you would not be a marketing major, but rather a marketing education major*** through the Darden College of Education, where you would take most of your coursework. If this is something that interests you, please let me know. We would be happy to meet with you, provide more information, and schedule an advising appointment if you opt to take that route.

Whatever major you decide upon, I know that you will make the most of your time as a Monarch. Again, welcome to ODU!

Appendix B

E-mail Message to incoming ODU Students with Marketing or Undecided Business Majors.

Dear New Monarch,

Welcome to the ODU family! I'm confident that you're going to like it here. ODU is a great place to spend your college years.

I noticed from the Preview roster that you are currently a marketing (or undecided business, where appropriate) major. I wanted to give you another potential major to think about that may interest you: Marketing Education. There is a shortage of Marketing Education teachers in our high schools, and if you are interested, I would love to provide you with more information.

If you're not familiar with it, Marketing Education teachers teach marketing, fashion, sports and entertainment, Internet marketing, entrepreneurship, and other marketing related topics. They teach in their high schools in the mornings, visit businesses in the afternoons, and are active with DECA, the student association, providing an opportunity for student competition and travel. It's really a great teaching job if you are interested in the field of marketing.

Marketing teachers also generally work an extended contract, meaning they work an extra 22 days per year and receive an additional 10% in salary. For most starting teachers, that's approximately \$4000 additional income right out of the gate.

If this discipline interests you, be aware that unlike most education programs, Marketing Education is a stand-alone program. In other words, ***you would not be a marketing major, but rather a marketing education major*** through the Darden College of Education, where you would take most of your coursework. If this is something that interests you, please let me know. We would be happy to meet with you, provide more information, and schedule an advising appointment if you opt to take that route.

Whatever major you decide upon, I know that you will make the most of your time as a Monarch. Again, welcome to ODU!

Appendix C

E-mail Message to incoming ODU Students with Interdisciplinary Studies Majors.

Dear New Monarch,

Welcome to the ODU family! I'm confident that you're going to like it here. ODU is a great place to spend your college years.

I noticed from the Preview roster that while you have decided to become a teacher, you are still undecided with respect to which discipline you plan to teach. While that's perfectly okay, I wanted to give you one major to think about: Marketing Education. There is a shortage of Marketing Education teachers, and if you are interested, I would love to provide you with more information.

If you're not familiar with it, Marketing Education teachers teach marketing, fashion, sports and entertainment, Internet marketing, entrepreneurship, and other marketing related topics. They teach in their high schools in the mornings, visit businesses in the afternoons, and are active with DECA, the student association, providing an opportunity for student competition and travel. It's really a great teaching job if you are interested in the field of marketing.

Marketing teachers also generally work an extended contract, meaning they work an extra 22 days per year and receive an additional 10% in salary. For most starting teachers, that's approximately \$4000 additional income right out of the gate.

If this discipline interests you, be aware that unlike most education programs, Marketing Education is a stand-alone program. In other words, ***you would not be a marketing major, but rather a marketing education major*** through the Darden College of Education, where you would take most of your coursework. If this is something that interests you, please let me know. We would be happy to meet with you, provide more information, and schedule an advising appointment if you opt to take that route.

Whatever major you decide upon, I know that you will make the most of your time as a Monarch. Again, welcome to ODU!

Appendix D

Web quest lesson plans.

Web Quest—Exploring Careers in Marketing and Marketing Education

Objective 1: Identify career opportunities in marketing and marketing education.

Objective 2: Identify the requirements and benefits for becoming a marketing education teacher.

Related Standards of Learning; English

11.4 The student will read and analyze a variety of informational materials.

- Use information from texts to clarify or refine understanding of academic concepts.
- Read and follow directions to complete an application for college admission, for a scholarship, or for employment.
- Apply concepts and use vocabulary in informational and technical materials to complete a task.
- Generalize ideas from selections to make predictions about other texts.
- Analyze information from a text to draw conclusions

12.4 The student will read and analyze a variety of informational materials, including electronic resources.

- Identify formats common to new publications and information resources
- Recognize and apply specialized informational vocabulary
- Evaluate a product based on analysis of the accompanying warranty and instruction manual
- Evaluate the quality of informational and technical materials

Background Information: In the state of Virginia, marketing education teachers are in demand. Most of the Commonwealth's traditional undergraduate marketing education programs have been eliminated, and many of today's teachers are becoming licensed through alternate or emergency licensure programs, often times lacking background in the "culture" of marketing education, DECA, and cooperative education.

Research shows that you—the marketing education teacher—are possibly the most influential element in students making the decision to become a marketing teacher. While this lesson touches on all of the categories of marketing careers, there is an emphasis on students becoming a marketing teacher. While it is understood that all of your students will not desire to do so, our hope is to motivate those students who might not have otherwise considered your profession. The goal of this lesson is to help students make an informed decision about marketing education.

CONTENT	ACTIVITIES (Delivery)
<p>Intro:</p> <p>State the performance objective(s)</p> <p>Check for understanding</p> <p>Explain WHY?</p> <p>Check for prior knowledge</p>	<p>Students entering into college should be cognizant of matching their interests with careers, but also with job demand, college requirements, and the workplace environment.</p> <p>Briefly discuss with students their college and career plans.</p>
<p>Marketing Sales and Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Sales and Marketing • Buying and Merchandising • Communication and Promotion • Marketing Information and Research • Distribution and Logistics <p>Business, Management, and Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Human Resources • Business Analysis • Marketing • Administration and Information Support <p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and Investment Planning • Banking and Related Services • Insurance Services <p>Hospitality and Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant and Food/Beverage Services • Lodging • Travel and Tourism • Recreation, Amusements, and Attractions <p>Education</p>	<p>Have students visit www.careerclusters.org. Point out to them the four career clusters that relate to marketing education. Students should visit each of the four clusters to the left and open the "BOOKLET" that describes careers in marketing.</p> <p>Each student should be charged with going to "Pathway Model" and examining the table of careers. Students should list their top two career choices based on their opinions and personal interests. Moderate discussion is encouraged between students.</p> <p>For the sake of brevity, you may wish to categorize your students into four groups, assigning each student in each group a single cluster to research. For a fun way to break your students into groups, consider using the "shapes.doc" activity (located on the Web site). It will only take 2-3 minutes, and your students will enjoy it.</p> <p>What career has been omitted from these four</p>

<p>Benefits of becoming a marketing education teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy the high school environment as a career!• Enjoy partial summers off.• Enjoy an 11-month contract, earning approximately 10% more income than “typical” teachers.• Work with employers in the community/cooperative education.• Enjoy competition and travel through DECA.• Take advantage of excellent fringe benefits.• Enjoy an exciting career working with marketing, fashion, internet marketing, sports and entertainment marketing, travel and tourism, and much more. <p>Educational requirements for your career choice.</p>	<p>clusters? Marketing education!</p> <p>Show video to class. (Video is an informational recruitment video. It must be individualized to the degree granting institution conducting recruitment.)</p> <p>Students should now take their two top marketing career choices and explore them, as well as marketing education. For each they should search the Web and answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the educational requirements to enter into your chosen field?• List three colleges that you are interested in, and determine whether or not that college offers a preparatory program (currently ODU has the only undergraduate marketing education program in Virginia, but let them figure this out).• If college is required for a prospective career, download or copy and paste the curriculum requirements. What are the educational requirements? Two-year degree? Four-year? What classes—both general education and core courses—must be taken? <p>Students should visit the online quiz located at http://www.xxx.com, self-assess, and print the certificate when they meet the minimum</p>
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	requirements. (Again, quiz will be individualized based on the degree granting institution.)
Summary: Marketing and marketing education provides exciting career opportunities. A career in marketing education provides opportunities for employment that provides: A fun environment Partial summers off Extra income for working 11 months Working with community employers Great fringe benefits Travel and competition through DECA Great content to work with (fashion, sports, internet, etc.)	
Evaluation: Students take the online quiz associated with this lesson, located at http://www.xxx.com . (Web site cannot be completed until video is completed.) Print results and turn into teacher.	
Conclusion: Tie this lesson to future career oriented lessons, or wrap up this unit, emphasizing the benefits of a career in marketing or marketing education.	
References: www.careerclusters.org , www.deca.org , shapes.doc. (optional) Attached <u>Powerpoint</u> and video.	
Training Aids/Notes: Students need access to a computer with Internet access. For printing certificates, students also need access to a printer (recommended). If not printer is available, students can call the teacher to visually view the online certificate.	
Other Sources: See references above.	

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Workforce Education Programs: Necessity or Luxury?

by Meredith A. Jones

Abstract

The learning process is open ended and always evolving with the times so why should the workforce stop learning when they start working? Workforce education has become a high priority for workers who are currently employed, but also those who wish to join the workforce. People are looking to make their skills marketable so that they can qualify for the best jobs and be competitive among other candidates; however, many companies do not provide continuing education for their employees because it may not be cost effective or they do not have the trained employees to educate others. By understanding if workforce education programs are effective Stacy's Greenhouses gained prospective on how to implement a new program for employees. Currently the company does not have any training or education programs in place and believed that sales and employee competency is directly affected. The research in this paper studied workforce education programs, how new training programs could be effective for Stacy's Greenhouses, and if there is a need/want for workforce training programs within the company.

Purpose of Research

When evaluating and understanding the need for workforce education programs many key factors need to be studied; these include what goes into making a successful program, the key participants that will be taking the classes, how much the programs will cost to implement, and what benefits will come out of taking classes for the company. The bigger picture, which is directly related to a well trained company, is our workforce as a country and how well we are prepared to compete on a global scale in the workforce. At the start of the 21st century, our nation's economic vitality depends on the knowledge and skills of our workers more than ever before in his-

tory. For the United States to remain competitive in the knowledge-based global economy, it is critical that we create and maintain world-class education system that prepares our workforce with world-class skills+(National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs, 2002).

Stacy's Greenhouses, the company researched in this paper, does not have any workforce education programs in place so an in-depth study researching the benefits and outcomes of programs is necessary. Hesitation to provide workforce education programs is all too common across the United States given the transient nature of today's jobs and workers, many employers are reluctant to invest in training workers who may leave the company. Small firms, in particular, which employ 53 percent of U.S. workers, provide few training opportunities for their employees+(National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs, 2002). Thankfully not all workforce programs are within companies and exist every where through out the community and in educational institutions. These programs are vital to workers in making sure they continue to learn the most efficient ways to do their job and to obtain marketable skills if they do not have a job. Workforce education programs allow workers and students to continue their learning process in our ever changing society.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the use of workforce education programs within a specific company and understand how effective programs are in the workplace. When researching Stacy's Greenhouses, the main question examined what workforce education programs are most effective for workers and people seeking employment. To understand what programs are most effective for Stacy's and other companies, an evaluation of training programs and continuing education classes already in place were the center of the study. After studying programs that are already in place an interview of Stacy's key personal helped in understanding what their perception is on workforce education and if they believe that the company would be more successful with these programs. During the interview there was also discussion about the

cost effectiveness of workforce education programs, how the company may fund any sort of continuing education, and would the employees be willing to participate in training programs. After gathering all of this information, I drew conclusions regarding workforce education programs for Stacy's Greenhouses and how effective they were in other companies.

Literature Review & Company Perspectives

It is hard to talk about workforce education programs without the obstacle of money coming into the equation; which is usually the top reason given for the lack of training programs. When companies are looking for ways to help train their employees they neglect one of the biggest organizations in the country; the United States government. One of the most significant ways that government can help businesses is through workforce development. Although companies may not currently be hiring, they do need to prepare for future expansions or provide additional training to existing staff to increase productivity and keep workers working even in a difficult economy. Workforce development programs are one way for government agencies to provide assistance in these efforts (Lyons, 2010) through federal, state, and local programs.

An example of a government sponsored program is ReadySC which is one of the largest workforce training programs in the United States; their goal is to work with technical colleges or established companies and help implement training programs for those who are currently employed and individuals who are trying to obtain a job. They achieve this by providing customized training for new and expanding business and industry in the state of South Carolina; the training is provided at little or no cost to qualifying companies. In order for a company to qualify for customized training design they must meet the following qualifications:

1. Jobs projected must be permanent.
2. Pay represents a competitive wage for the area.
3. Benefit package must include health insurance.
4. Number of jobs created must be sufficient enough to allow ReadySC to provide training in a cost-effective manner.

(ReadySC, 2010)

The mission of ReadySC allows for a customized training design for each company they work for to help train employees and individuals. ReadySC's main mission is to help you start production with employees who are already immersed in your culture and processes. We develop our curriculum based on your time-frame. Whether your schedule allows for in-depth task analysis and comprehensive training solutions or just-in-time development and delivery, we provide the training solution that is right for you (ReadySC, 2010).

While researching workforce education programs through published articles and companies, the information that is most significant are discussions with other District Managers (DM) within Stacy's Greenhouses. After a group meeting at the farm in York, SC a round table discussion was held about what sorts of programs the District Managers would like to see implemented and what about their jobs could be changed with the help of training programs. A summary of their responses are found below.

When asked "What would you change about your training for the District Manager position?" the response was an overwhelming want of more training, better communication, and professionalism from upper level management; meaning that the four days of training that each DM receives was not enough to feel prepared to work on their own. Each DM went around and elaborated on what kind of training would have been helpful concluding that management skills training and human resource knowledge would have been the most useful. According to a study done by J. Casner-Lotto (2006) employers rank professionalism/work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork/collaboration, and critical thinking/problem solving skills as the top qualifications for any potential new hire; however Stacy's Greenhouses was lacking in all of those areas within their company which could be a strong indication of a bigger problem.

Companies that are willing to invest in their workers are statistically proven to have a stronger working environment, more knowledgeable workforce, and overall feeling of satisfac-

tion in their jobs. Some examples of companies who understand the importance of investing in their workers are Motorola [who] spends \$120 million or 3.6 percent of its payroll annually on employee education. Saturn requires 100 hours per year in formal learning. AT&T directly teaches 75 credit courses through its School of Business (Spanier, 1997). In the current training curriculum at Stacy's Greenhouses there was no management training or human resource training; in fact there are no incentives for education, continuing education, or formal learning. As a side note, the backgrounds of each DM around the country vary quite a bit and having management skills is not required to obtain the job. Since management and human resources is not a requirement I asked the DMs how they learned those skills in order to carry out their duties on a day to day basis. Again each DM said the same thing, they either taught themselves or they asked other colleagues for advice. When experts say workplace education programs offer considerable promise in enhancing on-the-job skills (Szabo, 1992) they are assuming that the company will assist in advancing skills not the employees teaching themselves. From just one question about training, it was very apparent that there was a want for workforce education programs and if used correctly, they could be quite beneficial to not only the DMs but the company.

After having a round table discussion, I spoke with the District Manager Sarah Westwood* (S. Westwood, personal communication, October 8, 2010) in hopes of gaining perspective from a veteran in the business. The first question I asked her was "What are your biggest frustrations on a day to day basis in regards to the way our company is run?" Her response was one that I shared as well, the way our upper level management handled problems and how each of them was addressed. She went on to say that over the years she has noticed that the company has not kept up with the new age of technology, which in her opinion, is holding them back from really embarking on a level of success. Stacy's has switched over to paperless documents and the transition which has been quite an adjustment for the office workers. It was also a challenge, as she mentioned, for the management to keep up with the new ways of working and she has found that they become more frustrated because they have to learn just like the rest of us without any formal training.

Following our discussion, I concluded that not only do the DMs need workforce education programs in the form of management and human resource, but the upper level management could certainly benefit from technology training and management skill classes. To understand the upper level management perspective I interviewed Tim Brindley (Vice President of Stacy's Greenhouses). Talking with Brindley helped to provide answers to the research problem and questions. It also provided the answer to implementing workforce education programs since he oversees the budget and execution for the District Managers.

Interview with the Vice President of Stacy's Greenhouses

Serving as Vice President of Stacy's Greenhouses for over 15 years Tim Brindley has a vast understanding of the company and what is needed to make it successful. On a day to day basis his job includes identifying issues, possible problems, helping in developing solutions, keeping the farm workers and sales field focused, developing programs to improve/grow the company, and doing all of this while keeping the customers needs in mind. The following are questions that I asked Tim Brindley during our interview:

1. Please describe your role as Vice President/Regional Manager of Stacy's Greenhouses and your day to day job.
2. Since starting with the company what, if any, changes have been made over the years to train each District Managers?
3. If funding were not a problem, what training would you add for all the District Managers so that they can be the best in the field?
4. Is it important for our District Managers to have continuing education in the field or do you believe that their level of training should be done when hired?
5. During your time working at Stacy's and observing the District Managers, what do you believe are their greatest strengths and weaknesses concerning their ability to manage others and follow human resource guidelines?

6. The farm workers, those workers who work in the field, are not proficient in English and struggle understanding tasks at times. What programs or training do you believe would be helpful to bridge the language barrier gap?
7. What programs, would you like to see implemented to make your job smoother and more successful?
8. Who else should I talk to find out more about funding for programs and the desire to implement them?

Brindley said when he first began in the business we [Stacy's Greenhouses] were the pioneers in the service area for plants. We learned and set precedents as we went on. Now we have a more definitive structure of our merchandising/service division and training has become the most important part of the program+(T. Brindley, personal communication, October 20, 2010). Since he understood there is a need for training, it is the forefront of the companies structure, the programs that he would like to put in place for that division are training programs in conflict resolution and how to communicate better on every level. When asked if the District Manager team, who make up the sales field, should have continuing education programs as part of their curriculum he without hesitation said yes.

With the want to implement new programs for the District Managers comes the issue of funding and how to start. Over the past year, Stacy's Greenhouses has had a team of consultants come in to identify problems of efficiency in their shipping department and farm productivity. Brindley said that over the six months the "power rangers" (the name given to the consultants) were working with the two departments, over 25,000 hours were saved in labor and shipping. Each hour saved the company nine dollars or \$225,000 over the course of the year; it is projected that next year that number will be doubled. To better illustrate the need for a more efficient shipping department and use of labor hours the following pictures (Figure 1-3) are an example of what gets shipped out to the individual Home Depots across the country. Photos courtesy from Stacy's Greenhouses Facebook fan page.

It was clear that Brindley saw the need for change and a restructuring of most of the departments into newer more efficient ways of training and manag-



Figure 1- Carts lined up to be shipped to the Home Depot



Figure 2- Lantana on carts, ready to be shipped to the Home Depot



Figure 3- Aerial view of carts waiting to be put on trucks

ing; moreover, he was planning on putting the financial means necessary for the District Managers to receive the same training. When asked what the strengths of the District Managers were he said %as a whole, they are hardworking, dedicated, creative, and know how to execute directions++(T. Brindley, personal communication, October 20, 2010) all of which are attributes of an individual's personality not of their skills. But, when I asked him what were the weaknesses he said %every district manager struggles with hiring paper work, training the people they hire, not having a big picture outlook, and communication++(T. Brindley, personal communication, October 20, 2010). In response to the concerns he going to have Human Recourses conduct more training classes at the annual District Managers meeting in February and also have a few webinars through out the year to keep up with best management practices.

After taking time to interview Brindley and reflect on our conversation I have concluded that workforce education programs, while Stacy's Greenhouses understands the importance, is willing to take the steps necessary to really put into place the essential programs. The company seems to understand how to create the big picture but their biggest struggle was how to make all of the departments more efficient and better trained so they come together as a whole.

Methods of Research

Most of the onsite research was done at Stacy's Greenhouse located in York, SC. To gain a better perspective about the headquarters and the size of our company I supplied some photographs of Stacy's Greenhouses (Figures 1-5) farm in York, SC courtesy of Stacy's Greenhouses Facebook fan



Figure 4- Greenhouses



Figure 5- Liriope growing in greenhouses



Figure 6- Outdoor growing



Figure 7 . Perennials and groundcover growing outdoors



Figure 8- Arial view of Stacy's Greenhouses

For two and half years I was a District Manager for the company overseeing seven Home Depot stores, hiring and managing for their garden centers, merchandising product, as well as ordering product through out the year. One of the main reasons this research was so beneficial was because it directly affect my work load and managing skills. Because I was in the field every day I saw what the lack of training does for my job and know the first hand effects it can have. I also hoped that this research would open the eyes of my immediate managers so that they could understand what was lacking in the sales field and use my findings to help benefit the DMs.

There are 28 District Managers (DM) that work across the United States ranging from West Virginia, down to Florida, over to Alabama, up to Indiana. I created a survey for each DM to take which was anonymous so that any answers they gave will not affect their jobs in anyway. The survey focused on questions regarding workforce education programs and if implemented, would the DMs be willing to participate and what programs would they believe best benefit them on a day to day basis.

Since the DMs are spread out across the country I distributed the survey through email and their response back was kept confidential.

After receiving the surveys compiled the data in hopes of finding out if my research question was answered; are workforce education programs wanted at Stacy's Greenhouses and what programs should be implemented. Some of the questions were in the form of open ended questions so their feedback would be in sentences and opinions. I used the open method coding to condense the answers and compile the feedback. I also posed some yes or no questions so that the survey did not take too much of their time and the responses could be compiled into percentages to help make the research stronger.

Questionnaire/Survey for Stacy's Greenhouses District Managers

The following are questions to be answered truthfully and in your opinion. All parts of this survey will be used for research and all answers used in the research will be anonymous. Thank you for your time and opinions.

1. During your time at Stacy's Greenhouses as a District Manager, have you been frustrated with the lack of training you received? Yes or No

2. As a District Manager, when you first began your position, did you feel prepared for the job? Yes or No
3. Do you feel that Stacy's does an adequate job of keeping you up to date with skills needed for your job? Yes or No
4. Would you participate in continuing education programs (i.e. human resource training, management skill training, marketing workshops) if they were available? Yes or No
5. Is it important to you, as a District Manager, to learn new skills in management, marketing, and human resource to be the best at your job? Yes or No
6. Should District Managers and upper level management be required to have previous management experience? Yes or No
7. Should District Managers and upper level management be required to participate in training programs to sharpen their skills quarterly (if offered by the company)? Yes or No

Please answer the following questions in a sentence format and in your opinion. All responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

1. How many years have you been a District Manager with Stacy's Greenhouses?
2. What types of training programs do you believe would be helpful to you as a District Manager?
3. What are your biggest frustrations on a day to day basis with your job as a District Manager?
4. Do you believe frustrations in your job could be fixed with training programs and/or better direction from upper level management?

Results from Surveys

Initially, the thought of having all 28 District Managers fill out a survey that was 100% anonymous to help answer questions about

workforce development classes being implemented in the company seemed simple and a quick way to do my research; I quickly found out I was wrong. The survey I assembled was simple, straightforward, and not time consuming, so my thought was that at least half of the District Managers would be more than willing to help me in my quest to better jobs and research for my studies; again found out I was wrong. Once the surveys were sent out within the first few days I got four back and the information on them were exactly what I hoped to find out. Across the board there was a need for more training and a willingness to participate in programs was apparent; however, I did not want to draw any conclusions without more responses.

At the end of October I had to go to the farm headquarters for an end of the year meeting and many of the District Managers attended. When I got to the farm and was able to speak to my peers, I got a

pretty good understanding as to why no one had turned in the surveys. The questions on the surveys worried the District Managers because they thought that even if it was 100% anonymous that this was a trick from the upper level management to get answers about how they feel about the company. Many of them were worried that if they filled out the survey that some how it would get in the wrong hands and they would be in jeopardy of losing their jobs. To my utter surprise and astonishment hearing this news I assured all of them that it was for my graduate school class and no names or surveys would be given to anyone else but myself. I received three additional surveys using after our conversations, so total I had 7 out of 28 District Managers respond. The following were the results (in percentages) from the Yes or No section:

During your time at Stacy's Greenhouses, have you been frustrated with the lack of training you received?	42% Yes	57% No
When you first began the position, did you feel prepared for the job?	14% Yes	85% No
Do you feel Stacy's does an adequate job of keeping you up to date with skills need for the job?	28 % Yes	71% No
Would you participate in continuing education programs?	100% Yes	0% No
Is it important to you to learn new skills in management, marketing, and human resources to be the best at your job?	100% Yes	0% No
Should District Managers and upper level management be required to have previous management experience?	0% Yes	100% No
Should District Managers and upper level management be required to participate in training programs to sharpen their skills?	14% Yes	85% No

After reviewing the responses from this portion of the survey I concluded the following:

- There is an overwhelming need for more training in the beginning stages of the job, preferable during the actual training week when initially hired. The District Managers are not feeling prepared to manage their territory due to the lack of understanding from upper level management during the first few weeks.
- At this time, Stacy's does not do an adequate job of keeping up to date skills needed to be successful in the District Manager roll and if given the opportunity, the District Managers would be willing to participate in any programs to help better these skills
- Oddly, it is not important for District Managers or upper level management to have experience managing before

working for Stacy's Greenhouses, but there is a clear dissatisfaction from District Managers concerning upper level management and the Vice President of the company is dissatisfied with the skills of the District Managers when it comes to human resources, management skills, and communication.

Open Coding

The open ended question portion of the survey was analyzed by using open coding to help show the main ideas and major categories. The following is a chart of questions that were asked and the main categories that emerged in the open coding process.

Question	Main ideas from responses
How many years have you been a District Manager with Stacy's Greenhouses?	Average 6 years
What types of training programs do you believe would be helpful to you as a District Manager?	Management classes, human resource training, master gardener training classes
What are your biggest frustrations on a day to day basis with your job as a District Manager?	Lack of communication, micromanagement, too many directions from different outlets
Do you believe frustrations in your job could be fixed with training programs and/or better direction from upper level management?	No- upper level management needs more than training programs Yes-would help with management skills

Conclusion from Research

After spending many weeks researching and studying Stacy's Greenhouses through interviews, surveys, and personal experiences the research shows that although Stacy's Greenhouses was in need of workforce training programs they will not be implementing them anytime soon. There was a lack of communication between the District Managers and the upper level management that was having a huge impact on the efficiency of the day to day operations of the company; which in turn was causing frustration and lack of willingness to succeed. The problem of communication and frustration could be fixed with some small training programs about management techniques and communication methods but the company does not see the immediate need for them. Overall, the District Managers' dissatisfaction with their jobs was made quite clear through their surveys and open ended responses. The research suggests that these problems are fixable if Stacy's was to implement training programs or boost the company moral through incentive programs; however, none of these will be implemented in the foreseeable future.

able future.

Within the last month of research many of the 28 District Managers were laid off due to lack of funding from the past years sales. They were laid off November 26, 2010 with no assurance of being hired back in the spring which is the start of the busy season. Many of the questions that I asked in the survey and interview were indicative of what was taking place within the company; while they were getting ready to lay us off I was hoping to find a way to boost the District Managers moral and ensure that we were all well trained so that we could be even more successful at our jobs. The lay off came as a total shock to all of the District Managers because we had no idea that the company was in enough financial trouble that they would lay off their entire sales team. The week of our lay off we were informed that Stacy's Greenhouses would be expanding to another part of South Carolina because they bought 50 acres of land with three greenhouses on it so that next year they could double production and hopefully improve on sales; but while they are expanding their com-

pany, most of the District Managers will be unemployed.

Researching Stacy's Greenhouses and their need for workforce education programs helped me to understand that there can be solutions to fix problems on the outside of a company but it does not solve the problems in the inner workings of the company. Making sure that a company's workforce is trained to the best of their ability seems to be, for lack of better words, a no brainer; especially when there are government sponsored programs and training tools that come to little or no cost to the company. This paper focused on workforce education programs and proved how effective they can be when implemented and used correctly and it researched programs for Stacy's Greenhouses and concluded that while programs would be helpful they will not be implemented because of cost and understanding of what is needed.

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Iota Lambda Sigma Journal for Workforce Education

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