

PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS IN A SOUTH CAROLINA ALTERNATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION LICENSURE PROGRAM

JOE P. SUTTON
BOB JONES UNIVERSITY
jpsutton@bju.edu

SUSAN D. DURANT
SC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
sdurant@sc.ed.gov

**2008 CEC CONVENTION & EXPO
BOSTON, MA**

SESSION ABSTRACT

Chronic, severe special education teacher shortages have impelled the growth of alternative routes to certification in numerous states, yet we know little about their nature/efficacy. This session reports a multiple regression/discriminant analysis that identified six teacher attributes which predicted success in 196 add-on certification program completers in South Carolina.

2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

South Carolina's alternative route to certification (ARC) program enrolled 415 teachers in 2003-06, producing 225 completers (54.2%), some of whom had not taken/passed the Praxis II by 2007. A sharp increase in interest in 2006-07 (700+ applications) prompted the need to explore predictor models that would screen for more promising candidates. Researchers in this study sought to identify teacher attributes that would predict licensure success in participants completing add-on coursework.

3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The major shortage of highly qualified special educators is a national concern, and remains a priority for local/state education agencies and a recruiting challenge for teacher educators. With no signs of diminishing, Nougaret et al. (2005) maintain that, for the near future, it may be necessary to "employ unlicensed or nontraditionally licensed teachers...to provide an adequate number of teachers in existing classrooms," (p. 226) suggesting the continued need for

4

alternative pathways to licensure. However, with fewer than a dozen ARC data-based studies to date, we know little about the nature/efficacy of ARC programs (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007). Moreover, “unbridled program development and the scarcity of existing literature...[have]...created a situation that cries out for additional research” (Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2005, p. 126). CEC’s recognition of the issue is apparent in no less than seven ARC/non-traditional teacher preparation presentations featured at its 2007 Convention.

RESEARCH QUESTION

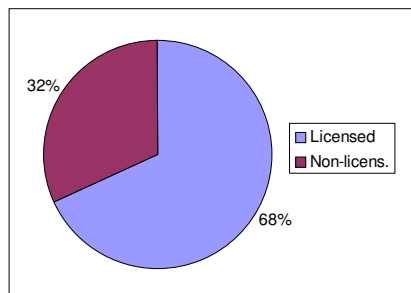
Do personal/professional attributes predict whether completers in an alternative (add-on) special education teacher preparation program successfully obtain state licensure?

NULL HYPOTHESIS

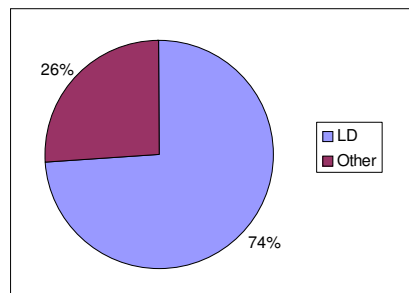
There are no attributes, in isolation or in combination, that significantly predict the success of add-on program completers in obtaining state licensure.

TEACHER SAMPLE

n=196 Program Completers
[Project CREATE of SC, 2003–2006]



Licensure Status



Special Educ. Area

VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

Dependent variable—Special education licensure, obtained by passing Praxis II exam.

Independent variables—15 attributes: gender, race, age, teaching experience, other experience, combined experience, BA/BS in general educ, BA/BS in educ, master’s degree, master’s degree in educ, no. add-on courses completed, licensed in general educ, licensed in special educ, licensed in both general educ and special educ, teaching in high student risk district.

DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS

Eigenvalue (λ): $\lambda = .782$

Canonical Correlation eta (η): $\eta = .662$

Wilks' Lambda (Λ): $\Lambda = .561$

Significance (p): $p \leq .000$

Predictor Variables (6 of 15): General Ed Licensure, High Risk District, Race, Special Education Licensure, Teaching Experience, Total Experience.

9

DISCRIMINANT MODEL (EQUATION)

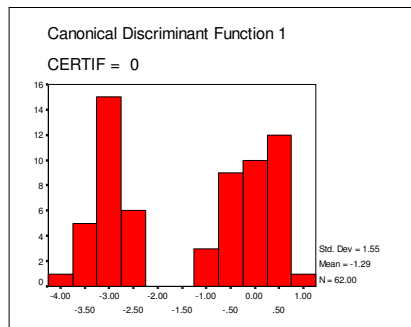
$$\begin{aligned} DA = & -4.191 + .854 (\text{Race}) + .771 (\text{TotExp}) \\ & + -1.132 (\text{TchExp}) + .566 (\text{GenEdLic}) \\ & + 3.434 (\text{SpEdLic}) + .454 (\text{HiRskDst}) \end{aligned}$$

DISCRIMINATORY IMPACT OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES

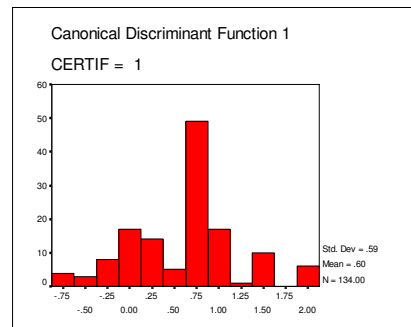
Rank-ordered: (1) SpEdLic; (2) TchExp; (3) Race; (4) TotExp; (5) GenEdLic; (6) HiRskDst.

10

PLOTS OF DISCRIMINANT SCORES



Non-licensed (n=62)



Licensed (n=134)

11

CLASSIFICATION QUALITY OF DISCRIMINANT MODEL

Overall hit ratio = 166/196 cases (84.7%)

Correctly classified (non-licens.) = 39/62 (62.9%)

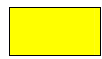
Correctly classified (licensed) = 127/134 (94.8%)

12

APPLICATION OF DISCRIMINANT MODEL

n=193 Teachers Pursuing Add-on Licensure
[Project CREATE of SC, 2006–2008]

Course Work Progress	Model Prediction	
	Successful	Not Successful
Continued	103	21
None/Lapsed	47	22



= hit



= miss

Overall hit ratio = 125/193 cases (64.8%)

13

INFORMING POLICY & PRACTICE

Rather than using the prediction model as a mechanism for determining who will receive tax-funded course scholarships to pursue add-on licensure in special education (i.e., ↑ DA scores get scholarships, while ↓ DA scores do not), perhaps a better application of the model is for intervention purposes. Providing additional monitoring to applicants with lower DA scores will allow the State to realize even greater success in growing a highly qualified special education teacher force.

14

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

Boyd et al. (2006) have argued, “it is useful to know which elements of [ARC] pathways affect selection and the ability to recruit good teachers... and [for] controlling for the entering characteristics of teachers...” (p. 162). Knowing which teacher attributes predict special education licensure success will assist in framing better public policy and in designing more efficient, cost-effective ARC programs in South Carolina and other states.

15

REFERENCES

- Boyd, D. J., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Michelli, N. M., & Wyckoff, J. (2006). Complex by design: Investigating pathways into teaching in New York City schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(2), 155-166.
- Humphrey, D. C., & Wechsler, M. E. (2007). *Insights into alternative certification: Initial findings from a national study*. Retrieved May 30, 2007 from <http://www.tcrecord.org/content.asp?contentid=12145>
- Nougaret, A. A., Scruggs, T. E., & Mastropieri, M. A. (2005). Does teacher education produce better special education teachers? *Exceptional Children*, 71(3), 217-229.
- Rosenberg, M. S., Sindelar, P. T. (2005). The proliferation of alternative routes to certification in special education: A critical review of the literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39(2), 117-127.

16