

2017

# Pedagogical Methods Used by Probationary Elementary Teachers

Ronda Scarrow  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Ronda Scarrow

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Walden University

2017

Abstract

Pedagogical Methods Used by Probationary Elementary Teachers

by

Ronda Scarrow

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

April 2017

## Abstract

Heeding current best practice, many teachers prioritize student-centered instruction as the most effective pedagogy to achieve student learning. However, preservice teachers at a small, southeastern U.S. university have expressed reservations in executing student-centered instructional methods when they become lesson facilitators. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine whether probational elementary teachers have the knowledge and skill set to execute student-centered instruction and identify the characteristics of this method based on their preservice experiences. The conceptual framework consisted of constructivist, humanism, and social learning, theories. The four research questions focused on participants' understanding of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods, whether or not their understandings changed in practice, and what factors influenced those changes. Purposeful sampling provided 5 probationary elementary teachers who had graduated from the same university. Data included 3 semistructured interviews, 2 classroom observations, and a review of instructional materials. Data were inductively coded and analyzed throughout the collection process. Findings revealed that each participant practiced and could theoretically identify the characteristics of both student-centered and teacher-centered methods; however, they could not identify these characteristics consistently in their own practices. Findings indicated that preservice teachers needed more exposure to student-centered pedagogy. Teachers who develop proficiency with student-centered pedagogy may be better able to empower students to solve problems, make decisions, advocate, and negotiate relationships with others. These characteristics are the foundation for active citizenship making positive social change possible.

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## Dedication

It is with great pleasure to dedicate my study to future teachers -- those who will teach future doctors, construction workers, grocery clerks, world leaders, custodial workers, and other students who will pass through their classrooms. With great teachers at the helm who offer classroom ownership, put their students first, and encourage engagement, the classroom will always be an exciting place. Teachers can change the world through the students they teach.

## Acknowledgments

These past few years have been an amazing and scary journey. Without the support of family, friends, and my faith in God, I do not think I would have made it. When I first started my journey, there were many who stepped up to help; however, schedules get busy, people move away, change jobs, and new people show up. There are those who stuck it out to the end. My husband was my best cheerleader and sometimes my worst enemy because he pushed when I did not want to be pushed. I am not even sure if I would ever have started this journey if it had not been for him. He has taken very good care of me. My husband is the love of my life and I hope you know how grateful I am that you made this journey with me. Now we are both doctors.

A former student and friend reeducated me on how to write. She edited for me early in the morning and late at night while teaching full time. Finally, one day as the prospectus was on the cusp of being approved, she made the statement to me, "I finally understand what your study is going to be about." I had made it. I was specific enough and scholarly enough (with her help) to get my point across. Sandy, thank you for everything. I will never forget how much you have done for me.

Another former student and good friend was at my every beck and call. She kept me organized and proofread just about everything that I wrote. She questioned me and this made me think and always reminded that I could do this. I would call late in the evening and she would show up first thing in the morning with a Coke Zero, a smile, and a word of encouragement. If I have never said it before please allow me to say it now, thank you.

This brings me to my commander and chief-who was the one who helped me find my true scholarly voice and as I was just about ready to quit she really pushed. She reminded me daily that I could do this and I was going to be great. She actually fussed at me one day and told me that I did not need her. I argued that I did and I do. She really held my hand during the process. Okay, maybe I didn't need her but I wanted her by my side. I wanted her eyes for a final proof. I wanted to brainstorm ideas with her. Sometimes in my sleep I could hear her say and "what does that mean, and why do you want to say that." She always made me laugh when sometimes I wanted to cry. Thank you, not just for being an amazing sounding board and editor but also for being my very good friend.

The final edit fell to my good friend and colleague. She sat with me several days a week sometimes up to 12 hours a day for over a month talking with me about my findings. She offered so much insight on how to "flush out" my findings, what I had recorded, and also how to write it so that it was clear and precise to the reader. Her help was not just editing she really mentored me through the process. She encouraged me to bring my findings to life. When Dr. McClure was appointed as my second chair he made a note in his first reading that my dissertation sounded like a report and I went to work to write a dissertation. I have never written a dissertation before; therefore, every piece of advice I took to heart. When all sections were complete my dissertation had a whole new look, charts were gone, there were connections made to research, to the project, to my home university, to the Walden vision of social change, and it seemed to have come full circle. Thank you. There were many more that stood on the sidelines as cheerleaders urging me on- my children and my dear friends. : My children and my very good friends.



Finally, and most of all not the least my number one cheerleader has been Dr. Claudia Santin. Dr. Santin, although I have never met you face to face, please accept my thank you from the bottom of my heart. I wish I had more appropriate words to say thank you because those two words do not seem to be enough. I will never forget you.

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

Students file into classrooms, take a seat, and open their books. They take out pens, paper, iPads, and laptops for notetaking, and they sit quietly, waiting for the instructor to present the lesson. This scenario illustrates Freire's (1993) theory of banking education. The teacher becomes a banker who makes a deposit into the mind of a student, something which conveys that "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 1993, p. 72). In this approach, a teacher devises specific instructional routines to keep a class orderly so that learning can take place.

Teacher-centered classrooms are an educational tradition (Johnson, Kimball, Melendez, Myers, Rhea, 2009; Kember, 2009; Myers, Rhea, & Travis, 2009; Weimer, 2002). However, educational experts contend that this type of "instructional banking" does not challenge students (Johnson, Kimball, Melendez, Myers, Rhea, & Travis, 2009; Kahl & Venette, 2010). Instead, students are compelled to intellectually memorize content in order to pass tests (Bain, 2004; Beaugrande, 1992; Freire, 2012; Peters, 2009). The teacher-centered approach results in students being passive learners and having their creativity stifled.

Sterile, impersonal lectures and written tests are not representative of every classroom in the United States. Wanting to engage their students in the learning process, many educators encourage students to become problem solvers, critical thinkers, and independent learners (Gasser, 2011; Korkman, 2007; Lee & Sharman, 2008; Threeton, 2007). In these more engaging learning environments, students and teachers develop relationships with one another. The

student-centered classroom is focused on a social contract, a classroom atmosphere where the students have agency, and negotiations are made between teacher and student.

Teachers who use a student-centered approach encourage a deeper understanding of the subject and foster creativity on the part of their students. They provide students with multiple opportunities to evaluate and solve real life problems and to practice higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Doyle, 2008; Gilis, Clement, Laga, & Pauwels, 2008; Lew, 2010). Researchers have also found evidence that students are successful learners in these types of classrooms (Rohaam, Taconis, & Jochems, 2010; Shaikh, & Khoja, 2012).

Teachers have a responsibility to offer a challenging but engaging academic environment (Bain, 2004). The role of the teacher in the classroom contributes to successful learning by students. In a student-centered classroom, a teacher assumes the role of facilitator of student learning (Yilmaz, 2008). As a facilitator, a teacher stimulates discussion by asking open-ended questions and challenging students to clarify and justify their responses (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). He or she uses a variety of learning assessments to accommodate different learning styles. The teacher as facilitator encourages students to learn from one another (Yilmaz, 2008). A collaborative classroom where students share insights with their peers offers a different approach to learning for individual students as opposed to just hearing from the teacher in the traditional classroom.

### **Evidence of the Problem in the Local Setting**

The transition from preservice teacher to probationary teacher is not always an easy one. Preservice teachers at Greentown University (pseudonym) revealed that they had experienced both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods in their education and general

college coursework. In a private discussion I had with a former preservice teacher at Greentown, she shared the benefits of student-centered methods she had learned in her teacher education courses:

When I stepped out into my partnership classroom, I observed a teacher who didn't allow the children to be creative. While coloring pictures, certain portions of the picture had to be specific colors. While I understood she wanted the pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. to be historically accurate, my view on her decision to make them so precise was different. With that project and any other project, I believe children deserve the right to be creative. They should be able to express themselves throughout their learning process. Throughout my time at the university, I was exposed to ways to get children to use their creativity. Such as making rain sticks in one of our classes and having our students make up their own rain dance, or creating a scientific experiment where I made a tornado and having students make their own tornados with the soda bottles. Letting children get involved in this process helps them learn. (personal communication, January 27, 2013)

Another preservice teacher said that, while she was excited when she had the opportunity to learn through student-centered methods, she was uncertain about using this instructional method in her own classroom. She identified college professors of hers who had modeled both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods (personal communication, March 27, 2013). Other preservice teachers described these professors as engaging in shared learning with real-life problem solving, offering the opportunity to learn from mistakes while validating student reflections. They also identified professors of theirs who had emphasized teacher-centered pedagogical methods involving reliance on instructional PowerPoint presentations and

lectures. Preservice teachers confessed to a lack of motivation and a feeling of instructional insecurity on the professors' part in the latter environment.

An alumna of Greentown University, A. Cupper [pseudonym], who, at the time of the study, was a full time teacher in a local school system, shared with me in a private discussion her ideas about her own teacher education experience. She said her professors had primarily used teacher-centered methods. Currently, she supervises preservice teachers in her classroom from her alma mater, where she has observed the preservice teachers using teacher-centered models. The preservice teachers she observes often seem to overwhelm their students with worksheets and busy work rather than encouraging creativity, fostering imagination on the part of students, or giving students a voice in their own learning (personal communication, October 31, 2012). Cupper said that the preservice teachers she supervised often highlighted student-centered classes as the courses from which they believed they learned the most.

According to Wellenriter, Lucey, and Hatch (2010), probationary teachers often seek to engage their students in performance-centered learning practices, which is a student-centered method, because they understand the effectiveness of this method. Probationary teachers profess to want to require collaborative projects connecting to real life problems, promoting the integration of the arts in their classroom and the encouragement of critical thinking (Wellenriter, Lucey, & Hatch, 2010) Wellenriter et al.'s findings suggest that preservice teachers may have the desire to execute student-centered pedagogy but lack the confidence to do so successfully.

At Greentown, where I am the instructor of teacher education courses, I have had discussions and informal conversations with preservice teachers where have expressed a preference for student-centered methods to use in their future classrooms. However, they also

communicated being uncertain about how this method would affect classroom management and meet administrative expectations. In further discussion, Cupper shared that during her first year of teaching, with little exposure to student-centered practices, she gravitated toward teacher-centered instruction (personal communication, November 7, 2012). She claimed teacher-centered was what she knew, felt the most comfortable executing, and supported classroom management based on her own educational experiences. However, now that she is an experienced teacher, she has embraced student-centered methods. She realizes this method did not cause her to lose control of her classroom, as is often a concern about student-centered instruction, rather, she shares the control with her students, giving them ownership in the education. .

One pre-service preservice teacher at Greentown said that she was concerned that her future administrators might have negative perceptions of her student centered methods (personal communication, January 27, 2013). She asked, “what if I am teaching science and I have the students singing a song to the beat of their homemade rain sticks and the principal walks in?” According to this preservice teacher, a principal with a teacher-centered perspective would think that teacher was not meeting her learning objectives.

I subsequently decided, in the preservice course that I teach, to give students an opportunity to practice and visualize that they have the ability to use student-centered methods and still maintain order in their classrooms as well as meet administrator expectations. I designed an assignment that placed preservice students in a local, independent school with the expectation that they would carry out student-centered teaching. They reported that this practice gave them insight into the positive results from this type of teaching; while some preservice

teachers' concerns remained, they were able to visualize themselves teaching through student-centered methods. Hains and Smith (2012) reported that repeated exposure to student-centered methods increased initially hesitant faculty's confidence level with this pedagogy.

Although Greentown University preservice teachers had exposure and a positive attitude toward student-centered pedagogy, they still had reservations about using these methods when they became lesson facilitators. When probationary teachers lack confidence in executing student-centered pedagogical methods, elementary school students are less likely to take ownership of his or her own learning journey (Bain, 2004; Sahin, & Toy, 2009; Witcher et al. 2008). Teacher-centered pedagogies do not offer as many critical thinking opportunities for students (Tamashiro, 2011). Student ownership of course content gives students a more active role in the classroom than the traditional methods of lecturing and providing students with fact-based worksheets (Christsen, 2009; Neito & Bode, 2008). These methods also place little emphasis on creativity, motivation, and academic achievement (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chin, 2007). Student-centered pedagogical methods will offer ownership to the student and encourage creativity in the classroom.

Many educational theorists contend that student-centered pedagogy is more effective in engaging students and helping them achieve learning outcomes than traditional approaches of lecture or test and quiz sequences (Bain, 2004; Freire, 2012; Peters, 2009). Some instructors may try to blend both teacher-centered and student-centered methods to meet student needs or pedagogical goals for their particular courses. But, this blend may not be enough to raise the confidence of probationary teachers to execute student-centered methods once they are the facilitators of their own classrooms. Modeling is an educational tool that has been deemed

successful in the classroom (Wlodkowi, 2008). Teacher educators at Greentown University who choose to model student-centered pedagogical methods are modeling best practices for the preservice teacher. This preservice experience with student-centered pedagogical methods will promote the confidence in the probationary teacher.

### **Evidence of the Problem in the Broader Educational Context**

Student engagement, networking, and active learning involve students in the learning process, according to educational experts. Drawing from his involvement with the National Survey of Student Engagement, Kuh (2007) identified six steps which can be effective pedagogical methods in the classroom. One of the steps is the transformation of classrooms into learning communities, emphasizing the teacher-as-facilitator, equality of voice, respect for individual opinions, and opportunity for individual and group challenges (Kuh (2007)). Teachers using modern pedagogical methods promote students becoming critical thinkers and being able to facilitate discussion, and value new ideas (Tamashiro, 2011).

While the idea of students being engaged in their learning is not a novel concept, it is an integral part of the future. Educators began to develop a theory of student-centered methods starting in the early 1930s. Isaacs, a teacher in London from 1933-1943, presented her method of teaching preservice teachers, in which she advocated putting the student first. Her goal as an administrator and teacher was to offer her students who were preservice teachers an opportunity to have input in the learning process as a model that when they became teachers they would use student-centered methods in their classrooms. In her student-centered methods, Isaacs focused on encouraging imagination, fostering creativity, and giving value to students' personal interests (Willan, 2009). The idea of putting the student first in the educational process is an idea that is

just as relevant today at a small university in Southside Virginia as it was when it began as early as 1933 in London. Teaching and learning is a global issue.

Educators around the globe strive to utilize best instructional practices in their classrooms. In a study examining Ugandan teaching methods, researchers found that teachers utilizing teacher-centered pedagogical methods stifled students' creativity and did not encourage students to develop problem-solving skills. Findings from this study prompted educators in many African countries to adopt a child-centered pedagogy (Altinyelken, 2010). A study in Turkey revealed that teacher-centered pedagogical philosophies did not promote student thinking creatively and offered little encouragement to promote problem-solving skills (Elma, Demirdogen, & Geban, 2011). Chu (2010) reported that Hong Kong teachers are expected to produce leaders of tomorrow who think independently and creatively. Educational leaders in Hong Kong's educational system introduced and encouraged student-centered methods, challenging teachers to develop students as productive, problem-solving members of society. The educators behind this method of teaching placed the emphasis of learning on students and the motivation for learning on teachers. Preservice teachers are the educators of tomorrow; they will teach future presidents, executives, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Teacher education programs have a responsibility to produce graduates who can be successful teaching in an increasingly connected world. Wherever they choose to teach, they will need the talent to prepare their students for 21st century skills.

Many educators may claim to be learner-centered and place the student at the forefront of the learning process. In a study of teachers' pedagogical methods in the U.S., researchers revealed that these educators were certain they were student-centered instructors; however, video



recordings of these same instructors showed otherwise by showing the instructors demonstrating teacher-centered methods (Polly & Hannafin, 2011). Teachers with educational expertise may view themselves as being student-centered; however, they continue to practice the traditional style of teaching, which deprives students of the opportunity to learn through a student-centered approach.

Some college and university professors in the U.S. advocate the use of lecturing so that they can provide information to more students at one time (Doyle, 2008). Teachers who provide students with only facts and expect these students to regurgitate those facts are simply encouraging students to memorize sequences rather than learn and engage with the material (Bain, 2004; Beaugrande, 1992; Freire, 2012; Peters, 2009). These researchers reinforce the idea that a traditional teacher-centered classroom that consists of lectures, worksheets, and test reviews may have a purpose. However, it is these teacher-centered pedagogical methods that have limited students' opportunities. The preservice teacher exposed primarily to teacher-centered methods may execute these methods in their classroom, hosting a class in which there is no creativity and no engagement (Christsen, 2009; Neito & Bode, 2008). Based on the research of this study, preservice teachers should have the opportunity to experience both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods.

Preservice teachers, prior to becoming practicing teachers, experience many practicum opportunities, from classroom modules to field experiences. These practice sessions offer preservice teachers opportunities to find the methodology that is the best fit for the students they plan to teach. According to Christsen (2009) and Neito and Bode (2008), many of the modules and field practices were instructionally limited, taking away the creativity, critical thinking, and

collaborative ideas that benefit student learning. These limited methods were not pedagogical strategies that these teachers wanted to take into the classroom. In contrast, Stenhouse and Jarret (2012) conducted a qualitative study involving preservice teachers in a Problem Solution Project (PSP). Stenhouse and Jarret represented a student-centered pedagogy in their project. The result of this study was that preservice teachers preferred methods that challenged them to make decisions, set goals, and problem solve, and they indicated that they wanted to use this method in their classroom.

When preservice teachers were encouraged to practice student-centered methods, it promoted their confidence in this method. One study (Bulunuz, 2012) introduced preservice teachers to the idea of teaching science through play activities, which offered an opportunity for student engagement. The 94 preservice teacher participants went into the study understanding that play qualified as a teaching tool; however, at the end of the study, the participants had a greater understanding and an appreciation for actively involving students in classroom activities to encourage learning. These activities encouraged students to explore and engage. From this study, preservice teachers also learned that allowing students to become involved in their learning could meet required objectives.

Probationary teachers may have the desire to practice student-centered pedagogical methods; however, if there is lack of exposure or encouragement to examine or practice these methods, probationary teachers may not feel confident to do so (Wellenriter, Lucey, & Hatch, 2010). Preparing practicing teachers to meet 21st century educational needs warrants exposure to and experience in student-centered methods. Traditional ideas, such as note taking and

handouts, could play a part in the learning process if connected to discussion, engagement, and encouragement to think critically.

### **Rationale**

This study was grounded in the assumption that Greentown University probationary teachers who experienced both teacher-centered and student-centered instruction still lacked the confidence to execute student-centered pedagogical methods in their own classrooms. This assumption was based on both formal and informal discussion with colleagues and preservice teachers, personal observation of preservice teachers, and the supporting literature.

Based on group discussion in my instructional methods courses and conversations with preservice education majors, I deduced that there is still a conflict between the two methods. The conflict being that preservice educators are taught the theoretical value of student-centered methods, but some of their teacher educators still use teacher-centered methods in this learning process. Though it may be assumed that the preservice teachers were learning a balance between teacher and student-centered methods, concerned colleagues and students suggested otherwise. During an informal discussion, a colleague shared that, with the exception of strides in educational technology, the preservice teachers who entered her classroom seemed to be stuck in the past with their teacher-centered methods, lacking creativity and innovation (J. Smith [pseudonym], personal communication, November 4, 2011). This 25-year classroom veteran described her first impression of the preservice teacher as preferring to teach to the test and displaying an over-reliance on PowerPoint presentations. The PowerPoints and the idea of teaching to the test are a typical example of teacher-centered pedagogy. PowerPoint, as well as other technology, has a place in the classroom; however, technology has limited instructional

potential if the teacher does not simultaneously engage the student in the learning process. According to Maxwell (2007) and Savoy (2009), simply reading from the PowerPoint during class does not keep the attention of students, nor does the practice enhance the learning process. Student-centered instruction suggests there has to be more to classroom instruction than just PowerPoint presentations or a lectured test review.

It is possible to affect these attitudes by modeling student-centered practices in the classroom. For example, when I assign projects on the first day of my classes, many of the preservice teachers immediately want to write a traditional essay or create a PowerPoint. When I model creativity, collaborative projects, and portfolios, the students struggle with the creative freedom they have and still want a model to follow. Often, the number one question is, “Can you give us an example of what you want?” My response is always the same, “No.” My answer is no because if I give them an example, it becomes my project rather than their own. I explain that they have some choices, including the presentation format, style, and whether or not they want to collaborate with classmates or work alone. I encourage them to be creative and to think about their former teachers who made learning fun or the educator that played a role in their choice to become a teacher. As a result, my students were more engaged, took more responsibility for their own learning, and produced commendable work.

As a preservice teacher educator, I encouraged my students to think creatively when planning their lessons. I offered examples of how their students will become critical thinkers and problem-based learners when challenged. I emphasized that, when writing their lesson plans, they should think “outside the box” with alternative projects rather than notes on the board, worksheets, and written tests. I advocated for students to embrace class discussions, provide

choices of assessments, and utilize various methods for analysis and synthesis. At the end of each semester, conversations about and written evaluations of my course demonstrated the preservice teachers' desire to adopt student-centered methods in their own classrooms.

Student-centered pedagogical methods offer opportunities for teachers and students to engage and share ideas (Ahn & Class, 2011; Harris & Cullen, 2008; Ridlon, 2009; Threton, 2007). Student-centered approaches to teaching could be profound learning experiences for the preservice teacher. Student-centered methods have proven more effective than traditional teacher-centered instruction (Johnson, Kimball, Melendez, Myers, Rhea, & Travis, 2009; Kahl & Venette, 2010). The student-centered classroom offers an environment in which an exchange of ideas between teachers and students is encouraged (Boling & Beatty, 2010). Student-centered teaching encourages a safe environment where mistakes are valued and embraced as learning experiences. Teacher educators should foster an environment in which preservice teachers take charge of their own learning. Student-centered pedagogical practices will accomplish this mission.

This study was intended to explore probationary teachers' practices and attitudes of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy in order to inform Greentown University teacher educators.

### **Definition**

*Active learning*: A type of learning in which students are actively involved and engaged in the learning process. This method improves students' skills in collaborative projects and produces higher assessment scores. This type of learning surpasses simply absorbing and repeating information (Pundak, Herscovitz, & Shacham, 2010; Roy, 2012).

*Creativity*: A part of the imagination that help individuals to develop knowledge in all subjects (Lederman, 2007; Eckhoff, 2011).

*Preservice teacher*: A college student enrolled in a university education program who plans to teach upon graduation (Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011; Stockham, & Collins, 2012).

*Pedagogical methods*: Technique of delivering material to students in a teaching unit, including written work consisting of fill in the blank, true false, discussion, classroom activity, test review, and assessment (Edwards, Perry, Janzen, & Menzies, 2012; Pantazis, 2012).

*Practicing teacher*: An experienced teacher currently employed by a school system and teaching in the classroom (Gurgur, 2012; You, 2009).

*Probationary teacher*: A teacher in the Commonwealth of Virginia with three or fewer years of classroom experience, not having received a continuing contract (Virginia General Assembly, 2014).

*Problem-based learning (PBL)*: A method of student-centered teaching offering students an opportunity to learn through true-life activities by solving real problems (Buus, 2012; Echeverri & Sadler, 2011).

*Students*: The individual or individuals the probationary teacher will teach (Staklis & Matthews, 2012; Stockham & Collins, 2012).

*Student-centered, learner-centered, child-centered instruction*: A type of learning/teaching method, which places the student first in the teaching and learning process. This pedagogical method takes students to a higher level of thinking through engagement and active learning (Elen, Clarebout, Leonard, & Lowyck, 2007; Hockings, 2009).

*Student engagement:* The involvement of the learner in classroom activities such as class discussion and commitment to the learning process (You & Sharkey, 2009).

*Student satisfaction:* A feeling of involvement and being successful in the educational setting (Kelsey, McKee, & Brooks, 2011).

*Teacher-centered instruction:* Instruction during which the teacher is in full control of the teaching and learning process. The teacher determines goals and deadlines for learning. This is the traditional style of teaching (Elen, Clarebout, Leonard, & Lowyck, 2007; Hockings, 2009).

*Traditional teaching:* A model of teaching in which the teacher is considered the expert and students passively receive information being given (Smart, Witt, & Scott, 2012; Freire, 1993).

*Zone of proximal development (ZPD):* The student's ability to perform a task with help or guidance as opposed to completing the task on their own (Silver, 2011).

### **Significance of the Study**

Research has shown student-centered teaching can successfully meet teaching objectives, engage students in the learning process, and accurately assess the student beyond written tests, quizzes and worksheets on all levels (Blumberg & Pontiggia, 2011; Chu, 2010; de Jesus & Moreira, 2009; Kaya, 2007; Weimer, 2002). Teitelbaum (2011) reported that it was time for a change in all aspects of education, from the physical environment to the academic challenges offered to students, through student-centered pedagogical methods. Students need to be challenged, engaged, and encouraged to contribute to their learning experiences (Ahn & Class, 2011). Teacher preparation programs need to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to witness student-centered learning practices, to understand these methods, and to practice these

strategies in the classroom so they will develop the confidence to execute them as probationary teachers. This study will enhance teacher preparation programs at Greentown University by providing data about probationary teachers' understanding and practice of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods.

### **Research Questions**

At Greentown University, preservice teachers were exposed to both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods. In order to understand how they applied this knowledge into their classroom during their probationary period, it was important to study how they defined these two methods and to observe what methods they practiced. The following study focused on describing the pedagogical methods used by probationary teachers in their instructional environment. The questions that guided this research study were:

- 1: How do practicing probationary teachers identify both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods based on their preservice experience?
- 2: What defining pedagogical methods do probationary teachers use to identify educators as student-centered or teacher-centered?
- 3: How have probationary teachers' theories of pedagogical methods changed during their professional execution of practice?
- 4: If a change is identified, what factors influenced the change in practice?

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

Instructors who teach to the test, read from a PowerPoint, and place themselves at the pedagogical center will not encourage creativity or promote a higher level of thinking (Rohaam,



Taconis, & Jochems, 2010). The problem addressed in this study was grounded in the assumption that during the probationary period of teachers who have experienced both teacher-centered and student-centered instruction, lack the confidence to execute student-centered pedagogical methods during their probationary years of teaching. The theoretical frameworks of constructivism, humanism, and the social learning theory guided the qualitative case study.

The three conceptual frameworks that guided this study were constructivism, social learning, and humanism. Constructivism theorists, Dewey and Piaget, focused on learning and the environment offered by the teacher to encourage the learning process and student freedom (Yilmaz, 2008). This theory promoted the teacher's role in the "facilitator" position rather than that of the "authority" (Yilmaz, 2008, p. 38). Constructivist theorists Dewey (1929) and Piaget (1954) placed the student at the center of the learning process. They both focused on learners and their environments: what the student already knows, what the student will learn, and how the student will apply new information. Educators who teach using constructivist instruction advocates student empowerment and ownership of learning.

Student-centered pedagogical methods offered more than one way to present a lesson; a variety of classroom activities encouraged students to bring learning to life and share their experiences (Yilmaz, 2008). "Constructivism as a learning theory, therefore, emphasized the role of the learner's existing conceptual structure in making sense of the new learning experience" (Gunel, Fakultesi & Bolumu, 2008, p. 220). Constructivism places the learning responsibility on the student, giving them choices and an opportunity to be creative.

A student-centered environment encourages an exchange of ideas between teachers and peers. In this classroom, students must make the decision to take an active role and become

engaged in their learning (Ahn and Class, 2011; Boling & Beatty, 2010; Chu, 2010; Dewey, 1938). The student-centered classroom environment clearly stated and raised the expectations of student responsibility.

Social learning theorist Bandura (1977) identified modeling as a part of learning behavior. Modeling is a proven pedagogical method, as a part of social learning theory, which increases knowledge and test scores (Wlodkowi, 2008). The design of social learning theory is one that has created changes in attitude, comprehension, and understanding (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). If preservice teachers were being taught to engage, think critically, problem solve, and collaborate, it seems plausible that this was a method of teaching which they might emulate as probationary teachers.

The classroom atmosphere was as important to learning as instructional strategies. Rotter (1954) described social learning theory as one in which the environment and the experience were as one; learning took place in a pleasurable environment where there was an exchange of ideas through interaction. Student-centered pedagogical techniques encourage not only interaction between teacher and student, but also an interaction and exchange of ideas among classmates. There was a primitive socialization that took place in the classroom, which promoted self-directed learning by the student.

Vygotsky's social learning theory introduced the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the idea of scaffolding in the classroom, preceding Bandura's idea of modeling. Scaffolding aided students in turning basic knowledge into complex ideas, with the support of both classroom teacher and peers. The ZPD offered collaborative learning experiences (Vygotsky,

1978), as do student-centered pedagogical methods. Both social learning theory and student-centered pedagogical methods encouraged the collaborative process of learning.

The third framework of this study was humanism, an idea associated with Carl Rogers (1969) and Abraham Maslow (1954). Both theorists and their theories had been closely connected to student-centered learning (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartne, 2007). Rogers' theory of humanism applied empathy to teaching, defining it as "the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seem to the student" (Rogers, 1969, p. 111). Rogers' (1969) model found a teacher who trusted the students, offered an atmosphere of teacher-as-facilitator, and presented instruction that offered freedom in the classroom. Additionally, Rogers' theory was the epitome of student-centered learning. The student-centered classroom offered an opportunity for problem solving, fostering of creativity, and a place where the students could take ownership in their learning. This theory of education allowed the learner to take an emotional journey, as well as the expected intellectual one (Walter, 2009). Students could identify whom they were and what direction they wanted to take. The emotional journey connected cognitive and affective learning, which had proved successful (Kasworm, 2008). The humanistic approach to teaching and learning offered a well-rounded, holistic attitude toward learning, providing a classroom atmosphere of encouragement, freedom, and openness.

Equally important in connection to the theory of humanism are Maslow's ideas (1954), connecting the different levels of need that he described for a successful classroom environment. Among those Maslow described is an environment where one feels safe, is able to make choices, has some control, and is validated by accomplishing the task. Both Maslow and Rogers share in

these ideas (Merriam, et al., 2007). These ideas are all practices in the student-centered classroom. Teachers practicing student-centered pedagogical methods offer an environment where students feel safe to express their own ideas, and are mentored by the teacher with feedback that both recognizes accomplishments and uses mistakes as a learning experience.

The theories of constructivism, humanism, and social learning value student agency in the learning process, which echoes student-centered pedagogical methods. Constructivism, in particular, places the student in an active role of learning; the teacher created the phenomenon- a tool to engage the student (Shaikh & Shakeel, 2012). The pivotal tool was the experience of being actively involved in learning. Student-centered pedagogical methods closed the gap between the classroom and the real world by promoting critical thinkers, problem solvers, and creative learners.

### **Engagement and Active Learning**

Involving students in the learning process can enhance student performance. A study of undergraduate science students revealed that involving students in their learning increased overall student achievement (Freeman, O'Connor, Parks, Cunningham, Hurley, Haak, Dirks, & Wenderoth, 2007). This study was conducted to determine why there was a high failure rate in science classes. With science being a required class, it was important to understand why there was such a high failure rate. When students completed class assessments, it was found that students reported they were not encouraged to be active in their learning. The multiple-choice tests offered little opportunity for class discussion.

When students became active participants in class discussion, were involved with peers through study groups, had the opportunity to solve real life science problems, and shared those

problems with classmates, their grades improved. Through hands-on projects and class discussion, students can be actively involved in their learning (Kember, 2009). Engagement is vital to student success and is seen as a “pedagogical approach even for a limited number of course objectives” (Fata-Hartley, 2011, p. 39). A cluster-randomized control trial (Hannum, Irvin, Lei, & Farmer, 2008) revealed engagement in online classes is vital to student success. Analysis of the data from this study also discovered that students were taught with a more student-centered approach, they were more successful in course completion, concluding that when students are engaged and involved with classmates, there is success.

Learning is an exchange and sharing of ideas. Students getting out of their seats, opening their minds, and becoming active in class, embody student-centered learning. In Gardner’s (2011) study, the increase in hands-on projects improved students’ performance. Before the study, students were required to complete only one project during a 12-week course. After the study, students completed one project per week. This change allowed students to stay active and involved in the learning process through a hands-on approach.

Ahn and Class (2011), using Vygotsky’s (1978) model as a guide, studied the student-centered approach and found when students engage with each other and share their ideas, they learn. In this study, students were offered the opportunity to write their own exam questions. In the beginning of the exercise, many of the students expressed how easy the exam would be if they were allowed to write the questions. Students were encouraged to think critically and create thought provoking questions, omitting questions that required simple memorization. Ahn and Class (2011) concluded that students benefitted from taking ownership of their learning. The classroom that is inclusive and encourages students to share ideas is also a classroom where a

higher order of thinking is encouraged—one that promotes “cognitive maturation” (Ahn & Class, 2011, p. 277). These learning experiences offered and encouraged probationary teachers to create a student-centered environment in their classroom.

### **Problem Based Learning (PBL)**

Problem Based Learning is a learning strategy often associated with student-centered pedagogy. PBL has earned its place in the classroom in which preservice teachers are taught to collaborate in order to solve real life problems. This is a life skill that can be taken into the real world, cultivating ideas to solve practical issues (Etherington, 2011). Teachers who enter their classrooms practicing PBL methods will teach problem-solving skills that have real world application.

In a mixed methods study carried out by Etherington (2011), 150 preservice teachers participated in a 13-week study that exposed them to PBL methods through the teaching of science. The preservice teachers were presented with real world problems, such as developing product improvements using inexpensive materials; using PBL methods to solve the problems encouraged the preservice teachers to analyze the information given to them, ask questions, conduct research, and find answers. This study indicated that PBL was a motivator. Preservice teachers who participated were reported to have more confidence in teaching science to their students. The typical PBL student and teacher must give up the passive role and take on the one of getting involved with learning. PBL is a tool in which the students take charge of their learning and the instructors take to the sidelines as guides.

Another PBL study, which was conducted by Williams and Gregory (2010), integrated PBL in a college, freshman Political Science course. Students enrolled in the course were given

an explanation of PBL and information as to how the class would be carried out. Students were placed into random groups and given real life problems, such as allocating funds in a fictional political campaign budget, to solve through collaboration and research. The student-completed surveys offered high praise of the PBL classes where they had an opportunity to become involved and engaged. There was also a comparison of test scores of the PBL students with test scores of students who had previously taken the class through non-PBL methods, showing that PBL students' scores were higher. PBL shifted the responsibility of learning to the student. In this study, students had an opportunity to address government issues that affected them as citizens. This type of classroom offers a practical opportunity for tomorrow's leaders.

### **Creativity and Student Satisfaction**

Elective classes, as well as core classes, may also benefit from the student-centered approach. One study (Andrews, 2010) revealed that an art class fostered creativity by encouraging students and challenging them to plan projects in a new and creative way, as well as fostering their imagination. The focus in art was no longer on the painting or the sculpture, but rather on the student. Andrews (2010) created a classroom in which students made choices, and as a result, reported that they worked harder. For example, students chose literature from different cultures to represent in an artistic form. One of the main goals of the Andrews' student-centered classroom instruction was "these instructional activities offer evidence of learning, allow for expression of each student's thoughts, offer insights into project choices and serve as a communication tool between student and teacher" (Andrews, 2010, p. 42). In short, Andrews' method allowed for teacher and student to have a shared learning experience. Sharing the learning responsibility is one of the characteristics of student-centered learning.

There are other student electives that can benefit from the student-centered approach as well. Computer courses and even online courses can offer students ownership in their learning, an opportunity to think creatively, improvement in problem-solving skills, retention of information, and opportunities for success (Chang & Smith, 2008; Polly & Hannafin, 2010). The student-centered pedagogical methods of teaching benefit both the traditional and virtual classroom.

In Weimer's (2006) qualitative study, graduate students enrolled in a psychology course were taught through student-centered methods. Teachers in the course became "the guide on the side," while students took responsibility for their learning. Also, in this study, assessment became both a learning tool and a tool that measured students' progress. The participants were informed the class would be taught through student-centered methods, they were given the definition of student-centered teaching, and were told that Weimer's (2006) five key practices would be the guide for the study. The results of the study indicated a positive learning experience from the students based on the "supplemental course evaluations" received (Wohlfarth, Sheras, Bennett, Simon, Pimentel, & Gabel, 2008, p. 70). Participants involved in the study reported that the class was more enjoyable, stimulated learning, offered more challenges, and encouraged higher order thinking more so than teacher-centered classrooms (Wohlfarth, et al., 2008). When teachers practice student-centered pedagogy, they encourage creativity, foster critical thinking, and offer students a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

### **The Student-Centered Teacher**

Application of student-centered instruction ultimately depends on the teacher's pedagogical beliefs. Teachers who choose to execute the student-centered method have taken



the opportunity to learn new ways of pedagogical practice and have put them into action (Kayler, 2009). In one particular study (Hannum, Irvin, Lei, & Farmer, 2008), two groups of students were taught with different instructional approaches. One of the groups had teachers who were trained in student-centered pedagogy while the other group's instructors had no training in this method. Results were clear that students who were taught by educators using the student-centered method were the students who "stayed in an online class more weeks and completed the course at a higher rate than a control group who had facilitators without this training" (Hannum et al., 2008, p. 221). According to this study, students' active participation in a class with four walls or in a virtual classroom through collaborative projects or class discussion promoted student engagement and pedagogical ownership.

Fostering the teacher as the facilitator and the learners taking control of learning, student-centered teaching can meet the needs of many disciplines. The student-centered method can enhance the learning process whether in the art room (Andrews, 2010), a science lab (Greenberg, Lester, Evans, Williams, Hacker, & Halic 2009; Lewis, Shaw & Freeman, 2010), or an online course (Ernst, Taylor & Peterson, 2005). The student-centered teacher promotes "honoring of students, adapting to individual and cultural differences, encouraging learning, thinking, and having learner-centered beliefs" (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 115). A classroom offering respect and encouragement fosters development of the individual learner.

One study identified that college students preparing to become teachers (preservice teachers) expected to be taught in a "constructivist environment" or an environment that was positive, encouraging, and that was described by students in the study as "enjoyable, interactive, relevant, practical, and holistic" (Senocak, Taskesenligil, & Sozbiliroffers, 2007, p. 288).

Student-centered teachers would encourage their students to adopt a positive attitude toward studies. They would promote “self-directed learning, cooperative learning, and critical thinking” (Senocak et al., 2007, p. 279). This allows students ownership of their own experiences in the classroom (Bain, 2004; Muofhe, 2008; Senocak et al., 2007). For educators interested in the engagement of student learning and improving the overall educational quality, student-centered learning is a model to be considered (Kember, 2008). The student-centered teacher puts the student first. It is the teacher who looks at the student as an individual with his or her own needs, and the student-centered teacher has a goal of meeting those individual needs.

Student-centered teachers encourage students’ instructional ownership by promoting critical thinking, having enthusiasm, and possessing knowledge about their subject (Bain, 2004; Sahin, & Toy, 2009; Witcher et al.2008). The student-centered teacher issues her own challenges and willingly accepts them. This is the teacher who reflects, thinks critically, and shows enthusiasm for the subject.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

The goal of this literature review was to discuss and identify characteristics and best practices of student-centered teaching. This literature review identified characteristics of the student-centered teacher and discussed the conceptual frameworks of the study. It also examined student engagement, active learning, problem based learning (PBL), and creativity. I conducted an extensive review of literature by using several different sources (ERIC, EBSCO Host, and SAGE), in addition to having studied completed dissertations on the topics of student-centered research and teacher-centered pedagogy. Terms researched to retrieve pertinent information

were student-centered, preservice teachers, teacher-centered, engaged teaching, student teaching, ownership, higher education, active learning, problem based, creativity, and imagination.

Before a teacher takes the lead in the classroom, he or she is first a student-a student taught to be a teacher. Preservice teachers are taught to engage students in discussion, promote critical thinking, and encourage collaborative projects. Passing out worksheets, reading from power points, and teaching to the test is not preparation for the future; it is a teacher-centered approach. It is an approach that has its place; however, the student-centered constructivist approach to teaching is shared by teacher and student (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Garrett, 2008). The student-centered approach offers a shared responsibility of learning and deeper content understanding of what is being taught.

### **Implications**

My study of probationary teachers and their pedagogical methods provided crucial information for teacher educators and informed the project, which was designed to promote student achievement, as well as to serve as a guide for developing future pedagogical methods to meet the needs of the 21st century learner (Ahn & Class, 2011; Gilis, Clement, Laga, Pauwels, 2008; Lew, 2010; Pundak, Herscovitz, Shacham, 2012). In this project, educators are encouraged to reflect upon their current pedagogical methods, ensuring that needs of all of their students are met and that all students are being prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Results of this study will be shared with colleagues at Greentown University and could be shared with the governing body of the probationary teachers' current places of employment. These results could offer guidance for developing professional development plans to incorporate student-centered teaching strategies. The findings from this study could promote critical

examination of pedagogical methods on all levels of education. In addition, findings could be presented at local, state, and national conferences.

### **Summary**

Section 1 includes a description of a local problem, rationale, guiding research questions, review of literature, and this study's potential implications. Both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogies, based on this study's context, were described. The guiding learning theories of constructivism, humanism, and social learning were discussed. The following sections of this study will include detailed information on methodology, setting, sample, data collection and analysis.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The purpose of this case study was to explore probationary elementary teachers' practices and attitudes related to student- and teacher-centered pedagogies. I used a case study design because it allowed me to observe how participants practiced their teaching methods within the context of their classroom or natural environment. As Creswell (2007) noted, a case study design is best for researchers wanting to yield a detailed, rich exploration of individuals within a specific setting during a specific period of time. Merriam (2009) defined a case study as "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). In keeping with this approach, my participants shared homogeneity in that they had earned their degrees from the same undergraduate institution.

Case-study researchers typically use a variety of methods in their investigations of phenomena to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). In order to understand and document teaching practices, I utilized qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and text analysis. Triangulation of data allowed me to provide a more valid account of participants' pedagogical practices (Glesne, 2006).

Interviewing and observing participants, as well as reviewing participants' instructional materials offered valuable insight into their experiences. Teaching is an emotional experience; many teachers experience joy when their students do well and sadness when they fail (Olitsky, 2013). Emotions and emotional strategies are a part of the classroom environment and dynamics of teaching (Walter, 2009).

The case study approach allowed me to describe these important elements in rich detail, which provided my participants with agency (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Herreid, Terry, Lemons, Armstrong, Brickman, & Ribbens, 2014; Lee, 2011, 2012). By observing the participants in their natural setting, I gained information needed to study several factors that determine a teacher's proclivity toward student-centered or teacher-centered pedagogy (see Brown, Dotson, & Yontz, 2011; Richards & Skolits, 2009). For example, it was important for me to analyze the pedagogical practices of probationary teachers in their classrooms, such as how they displayed student work, whether or not they included a schedule of the day on the board, to what extent they allowed students to move freely around the room, and whether they allowed students to work in groups. In addition to interviewing and observing participants, I thought it important to examine and evaluate teaching materials such as assignments, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations, as these materials provide evidence of a teacher's pedagogical approach (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

While case study data may not be generalizable beyond the case population, case studies allow for a deep, rich narrative description that can be used for evaluating and creating best practices (Yin, 2009). I did not view quantitative methodology as appropriate due to the fact that I did not seek statistical or numerical data and because there were no theories to test in this study (see Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2012). While quantitative methodologies were deemed unsuitable for this study, I also rejected certain qualitative designs. Ethnographic research requires an extended, long-term study of cultural groups (Creswell, 2007). For my study a 15-week timeframe was a sufficient amount of time to gain understanding. A phenomenological approach, which utilizes only one data collection instrument (Moustakas,

1994), was rejected due to this study's need for the utilization of more than one instrument to ensure data validity (see Glesne, 2006). The three data collection instruments I used were essential in data validity.

## **Participants**

### **Participant Selection**

This study used purposeful sampling, which allowed me to “intentionally seek out individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). In a case study, this type of sampling requires participants to share common experiences (Creswell, 2012). In my study, the five participants were all probationary, elementary grade level teachers who had graduated from the same university with the same concentration. Participants, thus, had potentially similar experiences in their preservice tenure.

I did not include my former students as participants because these students knew that I preferred a student-centered method, based on their experiences as students in my class. I believe that this knowledge might have tainted data that I collected. Participants feeling comfortable during the interview and while I was observing their lessons was important to me as a researcher. I will discuss the following topics which are key to case-study research number of participants and how access would be gained to the participants. I will also discuss how to establish a working relationship, and how best to protect participants' confidentiality.

### **Number of Participants**

Creswell (2002) recommended that case studies have three to five participants. This small number of participants allows for greater depth and specificity in the narrative and a richer and a more in-depth presentation of each participant's knowledge and experiences

(Creswell,2002). By using purposeful sampling, I was able to “intentionally seek out individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). I took an in depth exploration at this case study’s central phenomena.

### **Gaining Access to Participants**

The Teacher Education Office at Greentown University provided me with a list of email addresses of graduates who had a concentration in education and were in their probationary period as elementary educators in the Commonwealth of Virginia. All individuals on this list received contact from me via e-mail, informed of the project, and invited to participate (see Appendix B). The e-mail contained all information about the study including the participant consent form.

Contacts were made to potential participants once both Walden University and Greentown University Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) granted approval. The first five respondents teaching in an elementary school in the Commonwealth of Virginia were the five who were accepted and were contacted with more information. Contact was also made to the institutions in which the probationary teachers were employed in order to gain access to the classrooms. The educational institutions granted me permission to enter their buildings and participants’ classrooms in order to collect data (see Appendices E and F).

### **Establishing a Working Relationship**

Stake (1995) noted that a researcher can assume many different roles while conducting a case study; these roles include being a teacher, observer, artist, and storyteller. I am a teacher by profession. I am a full time lecturer who has taught preservice teachers prior to their final field experience.



Participants were informed of my current connection with Greentown University in my initial contact to them. My connection with Greentown University seemed to create an instant bond of trust and an idea of sharing educational philosophy with each of the participants. These common experiences created a connection with these participants giving me more credibility as a researcher. On the other hand, my role as a teacher educator did seem to make them hesitant and not confident in the initial interview; therefore, it was important that I reassured the participants and expressed my gratitude in their participation.

The most important part of building a relationship with the participants was to communicate the goal of the project. In the first interview, I stated I was not in their classroom to judge their pedagogical methods, but to determine which method was being executed. I explained that all data-collection tools such as the interview questions, the observation guide, and my review of their supplemental materials were being used to identify their pedagogical methods. On each visit, I reminded each of the participants of the purpose of the study. By the end of the first interview, I felt there was a trusting atmosphere due to our common professional and educational experiences. For example, in our second interview, Ms. Toms (pseudonym) wanted to share more about her teaching experiences; her tone was more conversational than a question and answer style. Making a sincere effort to form a relationship of trust with each participant enhanced the relationship between the participants and myself (Hattie, 2009; Jordon, 2006; McNally & Blake, 2009) and led to a more complete understanding of their teaching approach.

## **Measures for Ethical Protection of Participants**

From the onset of this study, I understood that participant protection was paramount. Creswell (2009) noted that researchers need to consider not only the participant, but also the data collection site; therefore, since all of the interviews and observations took place in the schools in which the participants were employed, both participant and school system confidentiality were a priority. During the first interview, participants were informed of their rights and that they would be protected from any “mental, physical and emotional injury” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 40). They were assured that all aspects of the study would be kept confidential. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The participants were told that in order to validate the accuracy of the data collected, they would be doing member checking. Through this process, each participant was allowed to review and suggest changes to data that might have been recorded incorrectly (Creswell, 2012). Ensuring the ethical protection of participants is sensitive, and it is the responsibility of every researcher (Sikes, 2010). Once the participants rendered an affirmative response to the request to participate in the study, a letter and a consent form were sent for them to review. The consent form offered detailed information, which defined both the confidentiality that would be practiced and the study procedures (Walden IRB Approval # 01-16-14-0175602). After reading this information, they had continued interest in the study, and they returned the proper form. The data collected were handled in a confidential manner, and each participant was assigned a randomized number, as well as a pseudonym. These pseudonyms were used throughout this study to allow for a more personal narrative tone in the discussion of findings.

All hard copies of the research journal, interview questions and answers, and field notes were securely kept in a locked file cabinet in my office, and the office door was locked when vacant. Data were also saved as computer files to two USB drives, which were also stored in the locked file cabinet in the office. There was also a copy on the desktop of the computer, that was password protected, and a copy was emailed to me with a password protected email account. Responsibility was taken very seriously to ensure the confidentiality of all participants and the data that was collected (Yin, 2011). If it would be necessary, I made the decision that I would terminate the study if any data were contaminated.

### **Data Collection**

The case study research design of this study included use of more than one type of method for qualitative data collection. The case study included specific research questions to be answered “and an opportunity to investigate: a phenomenon, population or general condition” (Stake, 2000, p. 437). The data in this qualitative study were triangulated, which provided validation for the study by collecting data from multiple sources (Glesne, 2006). The three tools used to determine the pedagogical methods executed in the classroom were interviews, classroom observations, and supplemental materials. These qualitative tools provided data necessary to answer the study’s main research questions.

One of the main research questions that guided this study was: How do practicing probationary elementary teachers perceive implementation of both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods based on their preservice experience? This question investigated the probationary teachers’ individual meanings and understandings of both methods. The interviews and observations were designed to help answer this question. During interviews,

there were structured, open-ended questions designed by the researcher, which allowed the probationary teachers to express “opinions, values, emotions, and so on” of their classroom experience (Merriam, 2009, p. 103) and the related teaching models. Another research question explored if their views on pedagogical methods had changed during their transition from preservice teachers to a probationary teachers. The observational and interview data collected presented an opportunity to clarify the probationary teachers’ perceptions of these two pedagogical methods and to explore how perceptions have changed during the transition from preservice to probationary teachers. For those reasons, it was important to hear the participants’ voices, to see them in action, and to review their materials.

### **Interviews**

Data collection began with an individual, personal interview with each of the five probationary teachers in their own classrooms. All interviews included open-ended questions that I designed (Appendix E). Open-ended questions allowed each participant an opportunity to express themselves in rich, conversational communication rather than completing a limited survey (Yin, 2011; Yin, 2012). Interviews were carried out on an individual basis, were limited to one hour, and were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the participant. This hour was a sufficient amount of time to establish rapport, create a comfortable environment, and to encourage in-depth responses. I audio-recorded the interviews and took notes as well. The audio recordings were transcribed immediately for accuracy by a paid transcriber; however, I was present most of the time when the transcription took place (Stake, 1995). I read the data immediately after the transcription and referenced my interview notes to compare. To ensure accuracy, once interviews had been transcribed, they were emailed to the participants for

member checking to ensure accuracy (Creswell, 2012). In the email, participants were encouraged to read the transcribed interview and contact me with any suggested changes. The participants made no changes to the transcription.

The interviews took place after or during school, when the participants' students were not in class, which ensured a more private setting with each participant. The classroom was chosen for convenience of the participants, offering both a natural setting and genuineness to the interview (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Interviews were conducted during the second and eighth weeks of the study. In dealing with learning and classroom dynamics, routine is often essential. When the routine is disrupted for whatever reason, the dynamics may change (Lacourse, 2011). I was not aware of any disruptions and each observation did not take place at the exact same time of day. Since I had previously served as a supervisor of student teachers at each location, my presence in the school or in teachers' classrooms did not cause undue attention.

Participants were interviewed on three occasions. The initial interview occurred before the first observation and the two remaining interviews with each participant occurred after the classroom observation. The first interview was scheduled prior to the first observation to establish a trusting, positive relationship between the participants and myself, which was vital to the success of the case study (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006). During this interview, participants answered a series of eight open-ended questions that addressed their definitions and perceptions of both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods, classroom practices, and any perceived change of definition (Appendix E). The first interview not only served as an opportunity to form a trusting relationship, but also allowed the participants to express their

views on student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods. The interview focused on how they each saw themselves as teachers and if their ideas and methods had changed since their preservice experience.

After each observation, I interviewed participants in their classrooms. Their students were not present and went either to another classroom or to recess under the supervision of someone else. During these post-observation interviews, I used the researcher produced Follow-Up Interview Questions (Appendix G) Guide. These questions were used to guide the participants' reflection process. As noted by McKinney (2007), reflection is an important part of the research process benefitting both observer and participant. Within the context of this study, I asked them to describe their lesson goals and objectives, if they believed these goals were met, and what method of pedagogy they had used during the observed lesson. This reflection proved to be valuable because it provided more insight and information to help with data interpretation.

Fourteen of the interviews were audio recorded as an effort to report data accurately; the recorded interview was replayed immediately after the interview itself. There was a technical difficulty with one of the interviews. In this instance, I took detailed notes and transcribed these notes immediately after the interview. The interviews were transcribed the same day they were recorded by a paid transcriber, and were then forwarded to the participants. The participants had been previously informed that they would have an opportunity to make any changes they deemed necessary; after their review, no additions or corrections were needed. At this point, the transcribed notes were filed in separate folders, labeled with the participants' randomized numbers and pseudonyms, then placed in a locked file cabinet in my office. All audiotapes were erased after the participants validated data accuracy.

## Observations

In order to create an in-depth qualitative case study, it was imperative to also observe each participant in her natural setting (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2011). Observations, combined with interviews and examinations of instructional materials, offered a rich picture of the pedagogical methods executed by the probationary teachers (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Observations provided a degree of objectivity to the data collection process through recording of events in real time (Merriam, 2009). Observations combined with interviews provided a multi-dimensional research experience.

Observation requires the researcher to consider their role in the study, especially in the space where data is collected. Lodico, et al., (2010) stated “choosing to be an observer as participant removes you a bit from the group membership. Although you certainly still have a connection to the group you will not likely participate in the group’s activities” (p. 117). As a teacher, I am a “member” of the group being studied; therefore, in the research context, I had to remain unbiased and not actively participate in the teaching lesson while observing.

During the observations, I observed a complete lesson. Observations were conducted during both the second and the eighth weeks of the study. This time period was chosen to ensure that all of the probationary teachers would be in the same time period of teaching. Public school classroom doors in Virginia are often locked; therefore, I would knock and either the participants or one of the students, with permission from the probationary teacher, opened the door. I always had a seat at the back of the room; however, in one case, the probationary teacher worked with a small group of students and a seat was made available near the group so I could hear and view the dynamics of what was being taught. Other students who were a part of the observation were

those who worked on computers or in small groups on assigned projects. These students worked with little supervision from the probationary teacher.

I designed and created an observation guide (Appendix F) to collect data. A purposeful decision was made that the observation guide would not be shared with the probationary teachers; this was done in order to decrease researcher influence on the pedagogical methods that might be executed. Although the guide could serve as a check-off system, the guide included a space for comments on the observation. For example, I made notes referring to the atmosphere of the classroom, the location of student seating, or if there were disciplinary disruptions in the lesson. This process was also used to determine codes, which led to generating themes.

During the observation process, I recorded descriptive and reflective field notes of the characteristics of the participants' instructional decisions and communication behaviors. For example, I paid close attention to how the participants addressed the students, whether or not technology was used and how it was to enhance the lesson, and the presence of modeling in the instructional processes. I observed and recorded interactions between students and teachers, as well as details about the physical surroundings of the participants' classrooms. Prior to the observation, I asked each participant to provide instructional materials used in the lesson. These materials included a lesson plan and any supplemental materials used, such as worksheets or quizzes.

### **Supplemental Materials**

Public school teachers in the Commonwealth of Virginia are often required to submit daily lesson plans to school administration. These formats vary from school to school. Greentown University's template for classroom use and field placements is an example of a



format of a lesson plan that might be used in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Appendix I). I requested a lesson plan for each lesson observed, as well as three other lesson plans. The three other lesson plans requested gave me an opportunity to see the similarities or differences between the observed and unobserved lessons. Other materials that were requested were worksheets, PowerPoints, or written instructions used during the lessons.

There were a total of 25 lesson plans reviewed; five lesson plans from each participant. There was purposely no tool created to evaluate the lesson plan since each school required their own format. With the exception of one, the participants' lesson plans followed the same format with similar information including the grade level being taught, Standards of Learning (SOL), objectives, and materials being used. Only six of the plans included a worksheet. Worksheets are typically identified with teacher-centered pedagogy (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chin, 2007; Peck, Hewitt, Mullen, Lashley, Eldridge, & Douglas, 2015), but not always because it depends on how the worksheets are used. Four participants used worksheets, which were all evaluated using a researcher produced Observation Guide for Supplemental Materials (Appendix H). Notes about supplemental materials were transcribed into a written journal. I used this journal to detail each source of data collected, as well as a reflection of what I had seen and heard. This reflection helped to ensure the quality of what was being recorded and to develop a true-to-life approach to each piece of data collected (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; Yuan, 2015). The true value of each reflection was the opportunity to review them often as a reminder of the dynamics of each classroom observation, participant interviews, and use of these supplemental materials.

## **Role of the Researcher**

I am currently a full time lecturer at Greentown University. I teach preservice teachers, serve on the staff development committee, and I have presented to faculty and student organizations promoting the pedagogical methods of student-centered teaching. I teach from a student-centered perspective; I engage students in the learning process and encourage them to take ownership in their learning journey (Beavis & Beckmann, 2012; Wang 2011). Often, I am asked to present to preservice teaching organizations on topics such as presentation skills and teaching methods. My job at the university also requires me to observe and supervise preservice teachers during their field experiences. It is obvious that my passion is student-centered pedagogy. According to the Walden University Research Ethics FAQs for Educational Settings (2011), it is ethical to “interview or survey” (p. 1) previous students; however, I was concerned that if I allowed former students to be involved in the study, this decision might have an impact on their comfort level throughout the data collection process. The goal was to be unbiased, to report valid and reliable data at the conclusion of this study, and to present correct and ethical operational standards, which will ensure trustworthiness and believability in the data collected from the study. Researcher-bias must be acknowledged, as it supports researcher credibility. Finally, all researchers conducting a study must be willing to learn from the final data and change their previous assumptions (Yin, 2011).

## **Data Analysis**

In the beginning steps of analysis, I organized the interviews, observational data, and supplemental material data. I reviewed the data and discerned if more data collection was needed prior to beginning the coding process. Merriam (2009) suggested beginning the step-by-

step process of analysis by placing the data into categories- this idea of category being “theme, a pattern, a finding or an answer to a research questions” (p. 178). I developed a coding process to make sense of the data collected and to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Merriam; 2009). Observation and interview data were coded by identifying words or phrases clearly connected to either student-centered or teacher-centered pedagogical methods. Some examples of student-centered pedagogy codes were: giving positive feedback, interactive reading aloud to students, and promoting group work. Examples of codes representative of the theme of teacher-centered were: notes on the board, lecture as primary mode of delivery, worksheets to complete with no active engagement, and very specific instructions. The process of coding data by key words and phrases was also done with the instructional materials to determine if students were offered choices and if the material encouraged critical thinking and creativity (Appendix H). A combination of the Observation Guide (Appendix F), Observation Guide for Supplemental Materials (Appendix H), the interview process, and a review of the format of the lesson plans offered a clear picture of the pedagogy that was being executed in each of the participants’ classrooms. This method of triangulation ensured data validity and reliability by collecting data through at least three different sources.

### **Coding Procedures**

Twenty eight coding categories were used to analyze the initial interview, the first observed lesson, the first post interview, supplemental materials of the first lesson, the second observed lesson, the second post interview and the supplemental materials of the second lesson, which ultimately addressed whether these methods were student-centered or teacher-centered. The initial plan was to reduce the codes to “five to seven themes” (Creswell, 2012, p. 245);

however, due to guidelines of the study, only two themes emerged. These themes were student-centered and teacher-centered. These two themes or “big ideas” were identified in detailed descriptions from the coding and were used to generate the findings (Lodico, et al., 2010, p. 307).

### **Interview Coding**

Based on the initial interview questions, which dealt with the definition of student-centered and teacher-centered, coding revealed that each participant could define and identify each method with 50% of their answers coded into the student-centered theme and 50% coded in the teacher-centered theme, as shown in Table 2.

Once I completed the transcriptions of the interviews and the participants reviewed the data through member checking, I conducted a word search of the transcribed data; I searched for theory relevant words or word phrases such as “in charge,” “student,” “worksheets,” “lack of choice,” “talking,” and “understand.” A review of the word search data revealed similarities across the participant’s answers; I highlighted the more frequent words or phrases. I read the transcriptions several times, which also revealed other phrases, such as “sitting and taking notes,” “teacher doing all of the talking” or “teachers having authority.” In the initial interview, I coded 28 responses and 14 of those responses were of the theme student-centered and 14 were teacher centered, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Initial Interview Coding and Themes**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being in-charge of their own learning</li> <li>• Students led class instruction</li> <li>• Engaging in their learning</li> <li>• Being responsible for their own learning</li> <li>• Making Interactive notebook</li> <li>• Problem solving in groups and independently</li> </ul>	Student-Centered

(table continues)

**Table 1. Initial Interview Coding and Themes**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with a partner to answer questions</li> <li>• Focusing on students' needs</li> <li>• Reflecting on student ability to handle tasks</li> <li>• Acting as a facilitator</li> <li>• Incorporating manipulatives into instruction</li> <li>• Conducting individualized morning meetings</li> <li>• Giving students ownership of their learning</li> <li>• Using scaffolded instruction</li> </ul>	Student-Centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing up and teaching to the students</li> <li>• Conducting a majority of the talking</li> <li>• Leading discussions and instruction</li> <li>• Predominantly conducting the work</li> <li>• Reading aloud to student</li> <li>• Giving students notes to copy</li> <li>• Having authority over the classroom</li> <li>• Setting expectations</li> <li>• Administering progress monitoring</li> <li>• Showing and telling students what, when, and how</li> <li>• Asking students questions</li> <li>• Sitting and listening to the teacher</li> <li>• Having the authority over the whole classroom</li> <li>• You (students) go in and you (students) sit</li> </ul>	Teacher-Centered

Based on the initial interview questions which dealt with the definition of student-centered and teacher-centered, coding revealed that each participant could define and identify each method with 50% of their answers coded into the student-centered theme and 50% were coded in the teacher-centered theme as shown in Table 2. .

**Table 2. Percentages of Initial Interview Codes and Themes**

Method Style	n	% of Responses
Student Centered	28	50
Teacher-Centered	28	50

*Note.* The n represents the total number of codes during the initial interview; both teacher-centered and student-centered combined.

The post interviews were analyzed with the coding scheme used for the initial interviews. The two themes, student-centered and teacher-centered, remained the same. In the post interview, I considered how many times the probationary teachers referred to themselves as compared to the number of times they made reference to their students. I also noted how they described their lesson. For example, if they described the lesson as “modeling,” I coded this a student-centered characteristic; if they described their lesson as the “teacher asking questions and students giving answers,” I marked this a teacher-centered practice. If there were 15 out of 25 codes identified during the interview as student-centered, this resulted in more than half or the majority of the answers from the participants as student-centered, leaving less than half of their answers identified as teacher-centered. From this, I concluded that the participants’ responses indicated a student-centered approach. While I recognized that not all of the techniques practiced or discussed were student-centered, the collective experience was more student-centered than teacher-centered. Table 3 below shows 21 codes of which 11 fell into the theme of student-centered and 10 that were teacher-centered.

**Table 3. Postinterview of First Observation**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I asked open-ended questions</li> <li>• Students took responsibility for their own learning</li> <li>• Encouraged students to make predictions</li> <li>• Working together as a group to accomplish goals (students)</li> <li>• Giving positive peer feedback</li> <li>• Giving students choice and voice</li> <li>• Giving students positive praise</li> <li>• I modeled</li> <li>• I Reiterated correct answers</li> <li>• Allowed students to work in groups</li> <li>• Time for reflection</li> </ul>	Student-Centered

*(table continues)*

**Table 4. Postinterview of First Observation**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the directions given by the teacher</li> <li>• Standing up while talking</li> <li>• Notes on the board</li> <li>• Prompting student response</li> <li>• Introducing new material</li> <li>• Reminding students about aspects of the task at hand</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> <li>• Prompting student answers</li> <li>• Going over test</li> </ul>	Teacher-Centered

Once data were analyzed, the data revealed that 52% of the answers given by the participants were student-centered and 48% were teacher-centered, as shown in the table below.

*Table 5. Percentages of First Observation Interview*

Type of Pedagogy	n	% of Total Codes
Student-Centered	21	52
Teacher-Centered	21	48

*Note:* The n represents the total number of codes during the initial interview; both teacher-centered and student-centered combined.

During the second post interview, there were 25 codes that emerged from the responses of the participants. Both student-centered and teacher-centered codes were similar to those of the first post observation interview, as shown in Table 5. Once the codes were identified and counted from each interview, the answers were identified as either student-centered or teacher-centered.

**Table 6. Postinterview of Second Observation**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Group Work</li> <li>• Modeling</li> </ul>	Student-Centered

*(table continues)*

**Table 7. Postinterview of Second Observation**

Codes	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Repeating instructions</li> <li>• Incorporating a video in the lesson</li> <li>• Centers</li> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• PBL</li> <li>• Students working independently</li> <li>• Game as test review</li> <li>• Students helping each other</li> <li>• Individualized work based on previous testing</li> <li>• Setting expectations</li> <li>• Allowing students to teach</li> </ul>	Student-Centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture</li> <li>• Notes copied from the board</li> <li>• Oral notes</li> <li>• Prompting student response</li> <li>• Setting specific procedures and expectations</li> <li>• Note taking from text-lack of encouragement</li> <li>• Going over previous test questions</li> <li>• Learn from their notes-no reflection</li> <li>• Limited instructional time</li> <li>• Teacher carried the lesson</li> </ul>	Teacher-Centered

Table 6 below shows that 60% of the answers given by the participants during the second interview classified as student-centered.

**Table 8. Postobservation Interview 2 Percentages of Codes and Themes**

Type of Pedagogy	n	% of Total Codes
Student-Centered	25	60
Teacher-Centered	25	40

*Note.* The n represents the total number of codes during the initial interview; both teacher-centered and student-centered combined.

### Observation Coding

Once the first observations were completed and transcribed in the journal, I coded the data either student-centered or teacher-centered. For example, a few codes that emerged for student-centered were encouragement, student presentations, and more than one type of



assessment teachers use to measure student learning. Whereas some of the codes that emerged for that of teacher-centered were lack of reflection and a lack of encouragement from the teacher. In some of the classrooms, I observed several visual and auditory distractions. For example, the walls were lined with posters of behavior expectations, the small group discussions were very loud, and students were constantly moving around. It was difficult, at times, to focus, which led me to question if students were also experiencing difficulties. Similar to the interview coding, if there were more instances of one of the methods observed, I labeled the observation as either student-centered or teacher-centered. The observation sheet had a total of 11 characteristics, and if six or more were met, the lesson being observed was deemed student-centered. For example, if the teacher gave instructions and asked for questions prior to the beginning of the lesson, this behavior was coded as a student-centered teaching method.

### **Supplemental Materials Coding**

When analyzing the data from the worksheets, I used the Observation Guide for Supplemental Materials (Appendix H) to identify if the worksheet promoted student-centered or teacher-centered instruction. I coded the supplemental materials in the same manner as the interviews and the observations. There were a total of nine categories on the researcher produced Observation Guide of Supplemental Materials. For example, this guide included items such as directions, focus on student learning needs, and whether or not the worksheet promotes critical thinking. If I identified five or more characteristics of the worksheets as student-centered, these supplemental materials were deemed student-centered. As mentioned previously, there were also lesson plans collected of the lesson I observed in addition to three lessons I did not observe. There was purposely no tool created to evaluate the lesson plan since each school

required a certain format. Each lesson plan collected listed the targeted (SOL) and also included a bulleted list of the daily assignment instructions, what the students would do for the day, the readings, what type of assessment, and what materials would be used for the lesson such as flash cards, smart board, reading books and/or PowerPoint. The lesson plan did not offer any distinct connection to either student-centered or teacher-centered. What the lesson plans did tell me is that the plan for each day was the same. The lesson plan format was consistent for the days I observed the participants and the days that I did not observe, meaning that my presence in the classroom played no role in dictating the style of the teachers' lesson plans.

### **Limitations**

The purpose of this case study was to explore probationary elementary teachers' practices of and definitions of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy. It was my hope that the data revealed would assist professors of education, recognizing that if preservice teachers were exposed to more student-centered methods, the preservice might be more comfortable executing this method in their classroom during their probationary tenure. It is my assumption as a researcher that each participant answered all interview questions honestly, and that on the day of face-to-face observations, the pedagogy executed and materials used were reflective of each participant's daily instruction. My presence in each of the classrooms was that of an observer, and it was obvious that my presence went unnoticed by the teacher and their students unless the teacher made mention of me. All of the information gathered in the study will assist me as I plan my workshop sponsored by my university's Center for Faculty Enrichment (CAFÉ).

The limitations of this study were unrelated to participants or the researcher. However, inclement weather did present some limitations. When the study was scheduled to begin, I had

difficulty scheduling face-to-face observations due to the weather-related school closings.

However, once the winter months were over, the study moved forward.

### **Findings**

Based on the data collected and analyzed from the pre-observation interviews, the two post-observation interviews, the in-class observations, and a review of supplemental materials, three main findings emerged. These findings include: 1) defining and differentiating student-centered and teacher-centered methods, 2) observing student-centered classroom spaces, and 3) naming their own practice, whether it be student-centered or teacher-centered, and probationary teachers' disconnections. The findings include answers to the following questions that guided this research study:

RQ 1: How do practicing probationary teachers identify both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods based on their preservice experience?

RQ 2: What defining pedagogical methods do probationary teachers use to identify educators as student-centered or teacher-centered?

RQ 3: How have probationary teachers' theories of pedagogical methods changed during their professional execution of practice?

RQ 4: If a change is identified, what factors influenced the change in practice.

In the next section, I discuss all findings and answer these research questions using rich narrative to present the probationary teachers methods. I will also explain the two themes, student-centered and teacher-centered, which emerged through the data analysis process. I will discuss the thematic findings generated from the data.

**Finding 1: Defining and Differentiating Student-Centered and Teacher-Centered Methods**

One of the key motivations for conducting this research was to explore how practicing probationary teachers identify both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods based on their preservice experience. Overall, these probationary teachers had a clear understanding of the differences between these two pedagogical approaches. The data revealed that each participant could identify the characteristics of the method in practice, the role of the teacher, and the level of student responsibility for learning. In the following section, I first discussed their experiences with both methods as preservice teachers. Then, I outlined how the participants defined the characteristics of each method and differentiated the two approaches.

**Preservice Experiences.** Participants easily reflected on their experiences as preservice teachers, claiming that while at Greentown University, their professors modeled both pedagogical methods in the classroom and provided clear definitions of each method. Three of the participants felt they witnessed more student-centered techniques, one participant felt that she observed more teacher-centered practices, and the final participant believed she saw both methods equally. At Greentown University, student-centered classrooms were spaces where students were engaged, were invited to participate in class discussion, and where were encouraged to learn from each other. For example, Ms. Toms (pseudonym) described one of her professors at Greentown as a student-centered teacher because the students were given different topics that they researched on their own and informed their peers by reporting their findings back to the class. She described this particular professor as a facilitator because all students were encouraged to find their own way. The pedagogical idea of teacher as facilitator is shared by constructivists who advocate for students to have a choice in their learning, and to be engaged in

the lesson (Dewey, 1929; Piaget, 1954). Ms. Toms was clear she did not want to leave me with the impression that this professor sat back and did nothing. This participant described her professor as one who encouraged the class to find their own way and to be proactive learners with her guidance. In her explanation about student-centered teaching at Greentown University, Ms. Taylor (pseudonym) discussed how she participated in peer learning. She said,

...student teaching (there) would be a lot of peer review, a lot of small group discussion, a lot of the students coming up and helping teach the class. I feel like the experiences through Greentown were in our classrooms, we had to put those (student-centered practices) into effect in our lesson plans that were observed.

In contrast, during this preservice period, they reported also witnessing teacher-centered methods. When asked what teacher-centered methods were observed, Ms. Toms (pseudonym) described a classroom where “the teacher did all of the work.” Ms. Lee (pseudonym) described a classroom where “the students were to focus on the teacher.” They recognized these learning experiences as those times when the instructors assigned worksheets that the students had to complete and submit back to the teacher for evaluation; furthermore, the teachers were “in charge” and “lectured”- conveying information while students were passive learners who took notes and showed up for tests.

It was clear that participants’ preservice experiences helped to frame their definitions of both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogies. As they entered into their probationary years as teachers, these experiences provided a foundation for their practices in their own classrooms. As will be demonstrated in the sections to follow, this foundational knowledge was evident in their definitions, reflections, and during my observations.

**Defining teacher-centered: “The teacher is doing a lot of talking and all the work.”**

Each probationary teacher had the opportunity to describe what the teacher-centered classroom looked like and their answers were similar. They described the teacher-centered learning environments in terms of style, teaching focus, and whether or not the teacher or the student was the center of the learning experience.

When they discussed the style of teacher-centered pedagogy, they emphasized teacher overuse of lecturing and reliance on the rote following of the textbook. In this classroom, students sit, listen, and according to Ms. Lee (pseudonym), “students are filling in or copying down notes.” Students are also expected to read the text on their own with little or no discussion (Christsen, 2009; Neito & Bode, 2008). Teacher-centered classrooms are also content focused. Ms. Harris (pseudonym) noted that in a teacher-centered classroom, when students were struggling with the course content, it did not matter if the teacher had a schedule, there was no turning back, and she or he proceeded forward. This is a classroom that may not identify the needs of the learner, instead prioritizing the coverage of content students (Elen, Clarebout, Leonard, & Lowyck, 2007; Hockings, 2009). For these educators, this rigid style and content focused pedagogy was not student-centered.

Each probationary teacher seemed to echo the other declaring that teacher-centered pedagogy placed the teacher at the center of the learning stage. In these learning spaces, the teacher leads the discussion with little input from the students. Ms. Harris expressed that she saw a teacher-centered classroom as being all about the teacher, almost a “self-centered” approach to teaching. When Ms. Taylor was asked to describe teacher-centered pedagogical methods, her answer was short and to the point, “the teacher is doing a lot of talking” and

followed with “the teacher is doing all of the work.” These probationary teachers’ definitions fit with scholarship about teacher-centered pedagogy. Several scholars argued that when there is a lack of creativity during the lesson, or if the teacher takes center stage during the learning process, this type of pedagogy is deemed as teacher-centered (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chin, 2007).

All probationary teachers were confident in their definitions of teacher-centered pedagogical methods. They also clearly had a vision of what a typical teacher-centered classroom would look like. During all interviews with the probationary teachers, it was clear while at Greentown University, their professors modeled this style. In addition, in their course readings and discussions, they were provided with a clear definition.

**Defining student-centered: “Students are in-charge of their own learning.”** Based on the participants’ preservice experiences at Greentown, the probationary teachers identified student-centered learning environments as experiences where the teacher promoted collaborative student learning, where the instructor put the student at the center, and where the instructor sought to teach the content in a variety of different ways (Ahn & Class, 2011; Boling & Beatty, 2010; Chu, 2010). Ms. Taylor described student-centered teaching as a classroom where there “would be a lot of peer review, a lot of small group discussion, and students coming up and helping teach the class.” Ms. Toms noted that a “student-lead class” is an example of student-centered pedagogy as follows:

The students come-in and they lead the class and the teacher just...points out what’s important that everybody else may have missed...help if the discussion is kind of at a lull...might...raise a question and have people (students)...offer up information that

way...as far as her (the teacher) giving the information, she was more hands-off in kind of letting us figure it out for ourselves.

Ms. Taylor deemed student-centered to be where the teacher models expectations, instructions are clear, and the students do the work in order to demonstrate knowledge. She stated that student-centered instructors

...do a lot of modeling... (they) try to show (students) what it is that is expect(ed) from them...give ample opportunity for them to have small group discussion, for them to ask a friend before they ask (the teacher) a question.

Student-centered teachers are actively engaged in problem solving with their students.

Ms. Rhodes (pseudonym) stated:

(in) student-centered lesson(s)...students are engaged in their own learning and responsible for their own learning...where the teacher gives an engaging question and poses (it)...(and) gives the students a bit of information...the students really have to go and be responsible for their own learning and figure out the answers to the questions as they see it.

Ms. Toms reinforced this idea when she described a learning experience during her preservice years. Her professor gave out-of-classroom assignments and the preservice teachers had to prepare a lesson for their colleagues. This practice provided these preservice teachers with the opportunity to hone their skills as teachers and to witness different methods with guidance from the professor.

Shifting attention to their experiences as probationary teachers, according to the participants, in student-centered classrooms, teachers use a variety of teaching techniques to help



students learn content. More specifically, probationary teachers called attention to group work, and presentations, peer teaching, guided independent work, interactive technology activities, interactive learning games, and problem-based learning.

When I asked Ms. Lee about student-centered pedagogy during our first interview prior to the observation, she talked about a lesson she had taught earlier in the week. “I had the students working on their own, they’re working independently and they’re doing their own work. It’s more student-centered-they’re figuring out the problem.” During a follow-up interview with Ms. Rhodes, we discussed the lesson I had observed and she talked about her students working independently saying, “they do a great job working independently... reading silently, and then the computer system- we have the i-Ready testing- so that’s individualized based on their diagnostic, so it works on their vocabulary and phonics and comprehension.” Ms. Taylor, when asked about her definition of teacher-centered, stated “the teacher working out things, and the teacher showing them (students) how to, ... work problems and answer questions.” These findings about probationary teachers’ definitions and differentiation of student-centered and teacher-centered methods helped to answer the first and second research questions. More specifically, they were able to define and identify both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods, and as they reflected on what they observed as preservice teachers, they differentiated the two different methods.

**Understanding theory through practice: “I can see where I understand it better now when I’m actually doing it.”** Research question 3 was: “How have probationary teachers’ theories of pedagogical methods changed during their professional execution of practice?” Based on my experiences, I understood the differences between these methods, but I did not

believe that I practiced student-centered teaching during my probationary years because I lacked exposure to and confidence in using this particular method; however, I graduated from Greentown 20 years before these probationary teachers. I was careful not to assume that they had the same experiences that I did; therefore, I asked this question because I wanted to understand what their thoughts were about how they practiced the theories that they learned.

When asked if their definitions of each method had changed from their preservice days to their current experiences as probationary teachers, four out of the five participants offered a resounding “no.” These four participants were confident in their answers by stating, “nothing has changed,” “I don’t think so,” “no”, and “the same.” When asked to explain, all four were in agreement that during their tenure as preservice teachers they were given clear definitions of each method and those definitions are the same today. Ms. Rhodes stated; “I don’t really believe it has. I had a great understanding (of student-centered learning and teacher-centered learning) when I came out of Greentown, and it has just really carried on through what I’m doing now.”

Ms. Harris, another probationary teacher, offered a different perspective. She believed her ideas and attitudes had changed since her preservice experience. She explained:

I’d say they’ve changed...(from Greentown) you see all those cutesy crafts and the cute things you can do and they teach you all the different ways you can apply things, but once you have your own classroom, some of those things that you’ve been taught aren’t going to work with your grade level or their skill level...and all those cutesy crafts and things, I’ve tried to tie them in with something.

In her reflection of her preservice experiences, she seemed to view student-centered techniques as play only and that these “cutesy crafts” would not work in practice. Now, during the second

year of her probationary period, her understanding of student-centered methods has deepened.

During her second probationary year, she started to ask herself reflection questions such as “was this lesson geared towards the students’ needs,” “were the goals and objectives set realistic” or “was the lesson taught one of choice because it was an easy lesson to teach?” She believed that with more experience in the classroom her definition changed because she became more confident in her teaching and she experienced positive outcomes. She explained:

...you don’t really see it until you’re doing it by yourself. You’re not having to do something through a textbook. There is definitely difference. I can see where I understand it better now when I’m actually doing it and I’m able to kind of see what my kids need and I can pull resources so I’m not as much focused on myself this year as I am my kids.

Ms. Harris recognized that she had gained more confidence in the application of the theory and was able to identify student-centered approaches more clearly. When she became more confident as a teacher, she became more comfortable practicing student-centered methods and had a deeper understanding of the value of the method.

All probationary teachers provided their definitions of student-centered pedagogical methods. Four of the participants believed that their understanding of this method remained constant over time; however, Ms. Harris explained that through her practice, her appreciation for this method increased.

During all interviews, all five probationary teachers, preservice teachers at the same university, reported that while they were exposed to some student-centered pedagogy, they seemed to be taught mostly through teacher-centered methods. Ms. Toms, one of the

participants of the study, stated, “Let’s see. Most of my classes at Greentown were teacher-centered. You go in and you sit, and the teacher teaches, and you listen.” I went on to ask her how she saw herself, and she replied,

I am more of a teacher-centered teacher. I would like to be more of a student-centered facilitator, but these children, especially at the beginning of the year- they can’t do it by themselves. Even my higher-level kids would rather you give them, you ask them a question and you give them the answer than try to figure it out for themselves. They are not critical thinkers, they’re not problem solvers, and I don’t know if it’s from school, I don’t know if it’s from home, but it’s almost like they learned helplessness. They just, “Oh, well if I ask a question, somebody’s going to tell me what I need to know.”

Ms. Rhodes stated that although she was exposed to student-centered teaching, there was more teacher-centered teaching during her tenure as a student at Greentown. In their post observation interviews, there were disconnections and inconsistencies between their theoretical knowledge of these pedagogies and their ability to identify these methods in their own teaching. In one or more of their lessons, these probationary teachers did not recognize their use of student-centered methods. During my observations, I witnessed student-centered instruction; however, during the interview process, three out of the five participants identified themselves as teacher-centered teachers.

Ms. Taylor stated,

I try to be 50/50, because I try to do a lot of modeling. I try to show them what it is that I expect from them, but I also try to give ample opportunity for them to have small group discussion for them to ask a friend before they ask me a question.

**Finding 2: Observing Student-Centered Classroom Spaces**

During the observations, it was evident the probationary teachers practiced student-centered pedagogical methods. As noted in the data analysis section, if a majority of the teaching techniques observed were coded as student-centered, I declared the probationary teachers to be practicing student-centered pedagogical methods. For example, during one observation, Ms. Taylor used part of her class time to review for a quiz that would be a part of an upcoming test. There was no instruction offered at the beginning of the lesson; although, there were positive comments made to the students as to how well they had done on the quiz. The quiz questions were made up of map identification, true or false, and multiple-choice questions. During the review, she read the questions to the students and asked for the correct answers. Once given the correct answers, the class was asked to repeat the correct answers. I coded these practices as teacher-centered; however, later in the same lesson, the probationary teacher used the interactive board to continue the review with a jeopardy game hosting more review questions for the upcoming test. This activity allowed the students to work in groups, engage in short discussion and work together in order to be successful in the activity, which is a student-centered practice (Bain, 2004; Sahin, & Toy, 2009; Witcher et al.2008). The majority of the lesson was student-centered; therefore, I coded that lesson as student-centered. In this section, I discussed my observations of these student-centered classrooms.

During each observation period, I took notice of both instructional and non-instructional classroom dynamics. More specifically, I paid attention to the physical arrangement and appearance of the classroom (e.g., wall decorations, how desks were arranged), the teacher's behavioral management style (e.g., level of student freedom to choose, student and teacher

interactions), and the execution of instruction (e.g., use of instructional tools, use of assessment). During all 10 of the observations, I never felt that my presence made any kind of difference to the students nor to the participants. They all taught their lessons with ease and the students made no reference to me.

**Physical space arrangement.** Each of the participants' classrooms featured student work on the walls, motivational statements, and class rules for a supportive learning environment. Most of the teachers had some sort of schedule of the day on the board and used the interactive whiteboard in at least one of the lessons observed. In the classrooms of Ms. Taylor, Ms. Toms, and Ms. Rhodes, the desks were arranged in groups. In Ms. Lee and Ms. Harris' classes, the desks were in the more traditional row arrangement. I witnessed more group work in the classrooms in which the desks were grouped. In the classrooms with rows of desks, I observed more of a lecture style approach to the lesson; however, these students did often leave their desks, worked in groups, or came to the carpet for circle time with the teacher during the lesson. Although the students' desks were situated into groups in Ms. Rhodes' classroom, she lectured to the entire class during the first part of the lesson. She then broke the students into groups, other than their regular classroom seating arrangements. She modeled best practices when she walked around the room, observed student work, asked questions and offered positive feedback and more instruction as needed (Witcher et al. 2008). In each class, all students seemed to know what their jobs were and took responsibility for them. Ms. Taylor, Ms. Toms, and Ms. Rhodes circulated throughout the groups ensuring each was on-task or asking if they had questions. This concluded that the desk arrangement did not determine the type of interaction that took place, rather, the teacher and her student-centered approach did.

During each observation and in every classroom observed, the probationary teachers' desks were located in what was considered to be the back of the classroom. During each observation, I also never saw the participants sit at their desks. For example, Ms. Lee never left the front of the room; there were notes on the Smartboard, distribution of worksheets, and a primarily lecture-based environment; however, the students were engaged with what was on the Smartboard and the worksheets.

**Behavior management.** In every classroom, students had the freedom to leave their seats to sharpen pencils, get a tissue, or get something out of their book bag. This sense of autonomy to move about the room when necessary was in every classroom observed, and since no reference was made of this aspect by any of the five participants, it appeared to be the acceptable behavior of the classroom. There did seem to be a sense of trust between student and teacher. When Ms. Taylor reviewed the quiz answers for an upcoming test, there was noise in the hallway and one student left his seat to close the door. He made the decision that it was too loud for him to hear the teacher and felt comfortable to make the choice to leave his seat and close the door. Ms. Taylor acknowledged his independence with a “thank you.”

In Ms. Harris' classroom, the students were given choices of how to use the information that they learned. For example, they could choose the best method to count down the remainder of the days of the week by ones, twos, or fours. In addition, during the second observation, Ms. Harris began her lesson with a circle time. She offered the students a choice on how volunteers would be chosen to help with the lesson. She went on to remind the students to “be honest” if they had already had the opportunity to be helpers.

In Ms. Lee's classroom, she trusted students to work independently in centers. When students have an opportunity to make choices, it supports their own individuality, as well as creating positive relationships, as well as learning to play well and interact with others to form friendships (Jensen 2009; Nguyen, 2008). Ms. Lee balanced encouraging students to ask questions with positive feedback and reminders to stay on-task. During this lesson, one student spoke loudly to the teacher. This was immediately addressed with a firm, yet pleasant reminder to the student to "speak with your inside voice." The student repeated the questions in a softer tone, modeling the behavior the probationary teacher had requested. While watching a video in Ms. Rhodes' class, the students found the video funny and laughed aloud. The teacher was fine with them doing that; however, she did remind them periodically to focus. Ms. Lee also showed a video to the students. The students were encouraged to pay attention, and they did watch; however, she had to remind the students to stay in their seats, as they needed to know the information on the video.

In the student-centered classroom, there is a sense of respect between the student and the teacher. The teacher models this respect, and the students follow that model (Gordon, Henry & Dempster, 2013). Early in my study, I asked a seven-year veteran of education, who also graduated from Greentown University, about her classroom pedagogy. She told me that during her probationary period, she wanted to be a student-centered teacher but was afraid of losing control. She went on to tell me that the more experienced she became she realized that "control" was not an issue. In student-centered classrooms, instructions and expectations are made clear and practiced daily; therefore, it is a shared control between teacher and student (Ahn & Class,



2011; Boling & Beatty, 2010; Chu, 2010; Hains & Smith 2012). Through my observations of their teaching practices, these probationary teachers seem to understand this idea.

In student-centered classrooms, instructions and expectations are made clear and practiced daily. In addition, teachers take the time to remind their students of their commitment to their learning (You & Sharkey, 2009). These instructions might be as simple as “do this, then that” or as complex as offering the students an explanation about why this activity or content is important and what their responsibilities are. For example, Ms. Toms and Ms. Lee gave detailed instructions to the students in both observed lessons. Ms. Toms encouraged students to ask questions. Ms. Lee did not make this offer; however, this did not seem to be an issue since students felt confident in asking questions after the instructions were given. Ms. Lee reminded the students that their group work would help them individually determine the famous person their project would be about next week. During “circle time,” Ms. Harris gave excellent step-by-step instructions of what the students would be responsible for in the lesson, and she asked open-ended questions, which promoted critical thinking. During group work in her class, Ms. Rhodes reinforced the importance student commitment to learning by reminding them to work together and help each other in seeking out the correct answer.

Often, the teachers demonstrated that they were aware of the learning environments and that each moment with their students was a possible teaching moment. For example, they would make personal comments to the students such as, “Pick up your book bag before you trip on it,” “Did you get your pictures taken this morning?,” and “Make sure we are all having an opportunity to be a part of the group.” In Ms. Toms’ room, one student started to tell the teacher a story about a family event. She listened attentively, acknowledging the story, and then

encouraged everyone to go back to work. Student-centered classrooms often find the teacher modeling the behavior they want their students to exhibit (Gordon, Henry & Dempster, 2013). During the lesson, each teacher made a sincere effort to teach life skills. Ms. Rhodes modeled positive behavior by using “please and thank you” as opposed to giving specific instruction of manners or life skills when talking to her students (Gordon, Henry & Dempster, 2013). Ms. Lee carried out this modeling as well.

Ms. Harris used every part of the lesson as a teachable moment. The circle time was a designated time for Ms. Harris to read aloud to the students; however, there was much more going on in this lesson than just a teacher reading aloud to the students. These students were engaged in the story. During the story when she read about a sunflower, she stopped and asked the students, “Have you ever seen a sunflower before?” She always validated their answers and used the story time to reflect on past vocabulary words. For example, in the story, if there was a vocabulary word they had studied, she brought their attention to it and asked for the meaning (Pedro, 2006; Wittman, Velde, Carawn, Pokomy, & Knight, 2008). The students moved from their seats to a circle area where the calendar was located in order to go over the days of the week and month. There, she asked questions, which promoted critical thinking skills of her students. For example, when the students were asked what the date was and the answer was the 10th, the questions did not stop there. She went on to ask; “Is this an odd number or an even number?” There was also a quick review of shapes where the probationary teacher used this lesson on shapes to teach sequence as well. Critical thinking, open ended questions, and reflection were major parts of this lesson, acting as tools used in student-centered teaching (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012).

In student-centered teaching, peer teaching and learning is valued (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Garrett, 2008) through interactive discussions and group work. All of the probationary teachers encouraged students to become involved in classroom discussion and/or group work. Ms. Harris stood at the front of the room; however, as she worked through her reading lesson, she moved around the room, showed pictures and reminded the students of what they had already learned. The students sat quietly at their desks while she encouraged them to ask questions, which some students did. As the lesson progressed, she asked some of the students to read aloud from the textbook. When the readings concluded, she asked the students to describe the events of the story. The teacher prompted the students with open-ended questions and asked them to make predictions of what might happen in the story (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). Although the classroom was very orderly and quiet, the students were engaged in their learning. Ms. Lee used the video as a time of reflection to connect the current lesson to that of the previous lessons. Reflection is a powerful teaching tool and is connected with student-centered pedagogical methods (Pedro, 2006; Wittman, Velde, Carawn, Pokomy, & Knight, 2008).

One way to achieve peer learning is through group work. Ms. Rhodes, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Toms and Ms. Lee encouraged peer learning through group work. Ms. Harris taught both lessons to the entire class; students were not divided into small groups. In Ms. Toms' class, the students were given time to work together to prepare a presentation of their worksheet responses for their peers. This approach offered the students an opportunity to collaborate and to improve their individual presentation skills. Ms. Lee reminded the students that their group work would help them determine the famous person they would study in their individual projects. Although

both Ms. Lee and Ms. Toms used worksheets, these instructional materials became interactive with group work. In Ms. Lee's class, group work was used to promote larger class discussion and to reflect on their group work. For example, after they completed their group work, the class came back together to reflect on what they had completed in their groups, as well as in their centers, in order to help them with the next project. Although Ms. Harris did not create small groups, peer learning still occurred. In one lesson observed, she had the entire class involved in a group reading. If a student was struggling, she offered assistance or sometimes asked classmates to help. In some cases, Ms. Harris would ask the entire group to respond to questions she posed about the reading.

Ms. Taylor used peer learning through a "mock" jeopardy game as a test review. The students were put into groups and allowed to choose a spokesperson who would speak for the group when it was their turn. During this test review, the students collaborated and developed answers; the spokesperson spoke on behalf of the group.

Worksheets are often seen as a traditional teacher-centered pedagogical learning tool. In fact, these methods have little impact on creativity, motivation, retention and comprehension of material, or test scores (Duncan & Buskirk-Cohen, 2011; Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chin, 2007). Although worksheets and other instructional tools were part of each of the lessons, I observed that they were used in an interactive manner. In Ms. Rhodes' class, the students watched a video to help them complete a worksheet, and they used their fine motor skills to cut and paste part of the worksheet. In Ms. Toms' class, the probationary teacher's worksheet was also interactive by engaging students in discussion within their learning groups. In both of these classes, the assessment was ongoing with prompts such as; "If you have got this, let me see a thumbs up." or

“Good answer, are you sure?” There was positive feedback throughout the lesson such as; “awesome, lovely, and good job.”

I once worked with a science teacher who made the claim “I don’t teach science, we do science” implying that our role as teachers is to go beyond giving information indicative of traditional teaching techniques. Instead, we need to practice 21st century teaching methods, such as student-centered pedagogy to enhance the learning process for students (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). By allowing students to work in groups and learn from each other, offering detailed instruction in their lessons, and using a variety of teaching techniques, the probationary teachers placed the student at the center of the learning journey.

### **Finding 3: Naming Their Own Practice: Probationary Teachers’ Disconnections**

As noted earlier, it was clear that each probationary teacher could define and identify both student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods; however, when asked to classify their strategies, they could not identify those characteristics and definitions to their own practice. I struggled to understand why this was an issue until my final interview with Ms. Harris. During this interview, it became clear that they were using rigid textbook definitions of each method, and they did not see their own method fitting into these paradigms. As she described her own pedagogy, Ms. Harris explained that the distinct textbook definitions were different when put into practice. She stated ...”you don’t really see it (student-centered or teacher-centered method) until you’re doing it by yourself...you’re not having to do something through a textbook.” I observed a total of 10 lessons, two lessons per participant, and based on the observational tool used, I deemed every lesson to be student-centered. In every classroom, I observed group work, peer teaching, and students working independently. While I observed

typical teacher-centered practices such as the use of worksheets and lecturing, these instructional tools were often used to engage students in the learning process. Teachers combined lecturing with facilitation; however, according to the participants, with the exception of Ms. Harris and Ms. Rhodes, all believed their lessons to be teacher-centered. Ms. Harris and Ms. Rhodes believed only one of their lessons to be student-centered. The disconnection or gap identified is that while the probationary teachers they could theoretically differentiate these two approaches; in practice, they could not consistently identify the pedagogical methods they executed in their own classrooms or why these lessons were student-centered. In this next section, I elaborated on the apparent disconnections between their knowledge about student-centered teaching and how they labeled their own practices.

In their post observation interviews, there were disconnections and inconsistencies between teachers' theoretical knowledge of student-centered versus teacher-centered pedagogies and their ability to identify these methods in their own teaching. In one or more of their lessons, these probationary teachers did not recognize their use of student-centered methods. Ms. Toms identified student-centered pedagogical practices as methods that encourage learning inside and outside the classroom. She explained that this type of pedagogy necessitates independent work. She added that, students "do things outside of class and then come in and teach them." When Ms. Toms described teacher-centered methods she said, ... "the teacher is giving the information and the students are retaining it." During Ms. Toms' second observation, I observed group work, class discussion, and student presentations of learning, and I coded these observations as student-centered. During the first post interview, when Ms. Toms was asked how she would describe the lesson, she stated that it was "teacher-centered." I asked her why teacher-centered and she

stated, “Students didn’t talk as much as I wanted them to.” The students may not have talked as much as she wanted them to, but they did respond to open-ended questions. Students were allowed to move freely around the room as needed, and I observed students actively involved in the lesson.

During the second post-observational interview, only two of the probationary teachers identified their techniques as student-centered. All of the other participants identified their techniques as either teacher-centered or a combination of both methods. It is important to note that I coded for either student-centered or teacher-centered, not a combination of both. While I understood why they characterized their teaching as a combination of methods, I was concerned that they did not recognize their student-centered techniques at all in one or more of their lessons. During the second post interview, Ms. Toms believed her lesson to be a combination. I coded her second observation as student-centered because students were teaching other students, engaging in meaningful group work, and were demonstrating ownership by taking initiative in completing their assignment. The students worked in groups and presented their findings to the class as a group presentation. These teachers facilitated the learning in all lessons observed.

In both of their post observation interviews, each participant was asked, based on their definition of both student-centered and teacher-centered learning, how they would characterize their own teaching. In the initial pre-observation interview, Ms. Taylor stated her pedagogical methods were a combination of the methods; however, during the first post observation interview, she said her techniques were “definitely teacher-centered... because I did most of the talking.” During her second post observation interview she identified the lesson as a combination of both methods. Ms. Rhodes and Ms. Harris believed that their first lesson was

teacher-centered. When I asked Ms. Rhodes why, she said; "...I am giving the instruction to them...it was very teacher-directed and I told them, this is exactly how I want you to do it... definitely teacher-directed lesson." Ms. Lee labeled both of her lessons to be teacher-centered because; "I was the one talking, I was the one giving them the information. I had the students taking notes and filling in the blanks." I observed these same practices, but I also observed group work and students working together to understand the material. I witnessed that she offered positive feedback and encouraged students to ask questions throughout the entire lesson. When she asked questions, they were open-ended. I coded both of Ms. Lee's lessons as student-centered. The original plan for the lesson, according to her, was to give the students time to complete the study guide, then go over the answers with the students once it was completed. Unfortunately, the students did not complete the worksheet in time for Ms. Lee to go over the study guide orally; therefore, she named her execution of this lesson as teacher-centered.

The five participants provided textbook definitions of both student-centered and teacher-centered methods; they could identify these methods in their preservice experiences. In adhering to these rigid definitions, these probationary teachers were unable to identify the complexities of student-centered pedagogy in their own practices. Based on observational data, each practiced student-centered techniques consistently in their classrooms; they could not identify the method in their own teaching.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Discrepant cases represent data that stand out because it is outside of the research scope or because it represents thoughts and behaviors of only one or two participants. It is the gap that might exist in all research (Fox, 2011). Discrepant cases would be acknowledged and examined.



Discrepant cases could add to this study's discussion on needs for further research. In terms of data collection, the same procedures for all participants were followed. In terms of findings, for the most part, they were consistent across participants. There were two instances where Ms. Harris deviated from the other participants in her pedagogy and definition of student-centered teaching. As noted earlier, she did not practice typical student-centered small group methods, and her definition of student-centered pedagogy changed over time. Nevertheless, she still engaged her students and peer learning occurred. While her practice was different, the desired outcomes were still student centered; therefore, she is not a discrepant case.

### **Ensuring Accuracy and Credibility of Findings**

To ensure valid and reliable data, researchers need to attend to how they collect, interpret, and report data as research findings (Creswell, 2012). In order to report valid and reliable data at the conclusion of this study, and to present correct and ethical operational standards, which would ensure trustworthiness and believability in the data collected, I had to be unbiased as a researcher. To be unbiased meant my role as a researcher needed to be clear not just to the participants but me; I wanted to learn from the data (Yin, 2011). In addition, the triangulation of data allowed for a more valid account of the participants' pedagogical practices. This qualitative study included triangulated data, which provided validation for the study by collecting data from multiple sources (Glesne, 2006). I chose to use three different data collection methods: interview, observations, and a review of supplemental materials. Each source of data validated the other.

Member checking, allowing participants to check their interview, is another way to validate the data (Creswell, 2012). Once the interviews were transcribed, I emailed copies to

each of the participants to allow them the opportunity to check for discrepancies. Participants did not request any changes to the findings. Member checking also offered the participants an opportunity to reflect on their lessons. Reflection is a powerful education tool because it allows educators to observe their own practices in order to see where they can improve, change, and where they have grown as teachers (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). Member checking can also help the researcher remain unbiased. I sent the transcriptions to each participant via email. Knowing that the participants were going to read the transcriptions, I was careful to review the collected data several times before coming to a conclusion.

### **Discussion and Interpretation**

The goal of this study was to explore how probationary teachers transferred knowledge learned in their preservice education to their current pedagogical practices. In particular, I wanted to know how they used and understood student-centered and teacher-centered methods. The four research questions focused on the participants' understanding of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods, whether or not their understandings changed in practice, and what factors influenced those changes. The entire study was grounded in the conceptual frameworks of constructivism (Dewey, 1929; Piaget, 1954), social learning (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978), and humanism (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1954). All of which advocated for students to have a choice in their learning, to become engaged in the lesson, and to be an active learner. As noted by several scholars, student-centered methods are best practices for engaging students and encouraging ownership of their learning process (Brookfield, 2006; Gallavan & Kottler, 2012; Gunel, 2008; Sands, 2011). Teachers are facilitators who guide student learning, helping them to interpret course materials and to engage in discussion with other students

(Christsen, 2009; Neito & Bode, 2008). Therefore, it is important that these probationary teachers understand and practice this important method consistently. Data revealed three findings. The probationary teachers could define and identify theoretical characteristics of both methods; however, when asked to consider their own pedagogy, they could not consistently identify student-centered practices recognized by the researcher. It was also evident that they were capable of executing the method. There was a clear disconnect between their theoretical knowledge and their recognition of this method in their own teaching. It was also clear that these probationary teachers desired to do more to engage their students in the learning process and wanted to encourage their students to become problem solvers, critical thinkers, and independent learners (Gasser, 2011; Korkman, 2007; Lee & Sharman, 2008; Threton, 2007). Their desire to be more student-centered was evident in their enthusiasm when they responded to interview questions focused on their understanding of and interest in student-centered teaching.

Education is constantly changing, making it necessary for teachers to reflect on their pedagogical methods and practices. Change not only occurs with experience; but teachers also may change based on the students they teach and this change may come in the form of classroom management, presentation of lessons, and possibly how the student is assessed (Ersozlu, & Cayci, 2016). Change in education is necessary in education in order to meet the ever-changing needs of students at all levels (Joseph, 2015; Teitelbaum (2011). Student-centered pedagogy is an adaptive method whose impact can extend beyond the classroom. Student-centered pedagogical methods encourage creativity and problem solving. These are life skills that can be taken into the world that can promote social change (Cho, 2011, Elma, Demirdogen, & Geban, 2011). Change in the learning process can also affect social change by preparing students to be

effective citizens with sound decision making skills and the ability to listen to others. The participants' alma mater strives "to the development of citizen leaders who are prepared to make positive contributions to the common good of society" (Greentown University, 2015). A viable presence of student-centered pedagogical methods can bring about social change. Based on these findings, I concluded that preservice teacher education at Greentown University needed to be more consistent in terms of modeling and teaching student-centered methods. The proposed project represents an attempt to close this gap.

### **Project Description**

The proposed project is a three-day professional development workshop for Greentown University teacher educators. This workshop offers faculty the opportunity to reflect, participate, and consider changes in how to best model and teach student-centered methods (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Olitsky, 2013). This workshop will provide teacher educators with support and up-to-date information about student-centered methods for their preservice teacher programs (Edwards & Burns, 2015;). During the workshop, participants will engage in small group discussions focusing on relevant topics such as defining student-centered pedagogy and the role of creativity in the classroom. In essence, the three-day professional workshop will be a model of student-centered pedagogical methods, which will be a validation to both the study and the workshop.

### **Conclusion**

I believed each lesson I observed to be student-centered. In each class, the students were engaged and active. Yes, the teachers did present information at the front of the classroom; however, I found that they used this time to give clear instruction and encourage the students to

work together and complete their assignments. Yes, there was a teacher who sat in front of her students and read aloud; however, it was a lesson of engagement, one that promoted critical thinking. If the lesson involved filling in the blanks and taking notes, peer teaching took place and the students were engaged with the teacher by asking open-ended questions.

Using triangulation by collecting data through pre and post observation interviews, observations and supplemental materials offered valid answers to the four research questions. Using member checking with participants and engaging in conversations with colleagues about the data led to rich findings. These findings informed the development of the project, which is discussed in Section 3.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

The project (see Appendix A) for this qualitative case study involved the creation of a 3-day workshop in fall 2017. This workshop will be repeated in spring 2018 and fall 2018; it will be hosted by the Greentown University Center for Faculty Enrichment (CAFE). I chose a staff development workshop over other projects, such as a manual, a hybrid, or online course so that colleagues would have the opportunity to share and interact with one another. At Greentown University, collaboration is encouraged, especially through CAFE. Knight, Emm, and Wade (2007) reported that using colleagues as peer educators promotes shared interests and discussion because teachers often find that they share the same students. This workshop will be open to Greentown University faculty with priority registration reserved for Greentown faculty who teach preservice teachers. If space allows, preservice teacher educators from other local colleges and universities will be invited.

I will lead the workshop, offering a maximum of 20 participants the opportunity to experience both student-centered and teacher-centered instruction. I have limited enrollment based on Pollock's (2011) observation that fewer participants allows for greater participation in the workshop. An hour-by-hour agenda will be available to attendees in order for them to be informed of the workshops' activities and to help them plan for what is to come, and I will address the course objectives, workshop curriculum, and methodology of the workshop in the course syllabus (see Appendix A). Detailed descriptions of the sessions will be available for attendees to read in the agenda (see Appendix A and Table 7).

**Table 9. Time Table for a 3-Day Workshop***Day 1*

Time	Activity
8:00am-8:30	Registration and continental breakfast
8:30am-9:00	First Session Welcome and overview of the goals and objectives of the workshop, Syllabus- Warm-Up: (Interactive Activity)-Introductions Introductions of Attendees and what they teach Warm-up, What Are You Doing (Interactive Activity)
10:15am-10:30	15 minute break-coffee and a chat
10:30am-12:30	Second Session: What Will Make a Great Teacher and University of Tomorrow (Interactive lecture and video) Let's Talk Bain-what do the best college professors do?
12:30pm-1:30	Lunch
1:30pm-3:30	Third Session Role playing-teaching – a history lesson for third graders, Interactive Lesson where participants become third graders Group Discussion
3:30pm- 4:00 pm	Final Session Reflection and what is to come Homework- each group will be assigned an article Return tomorrow prepared to discuss the article within your group and then share with all participants (Interactive) Day 1 Evaluation,

*Day 2*

Time	Activity
8:30am-10:30	First Session Warm-ups-Interactive Activity-Choices Group Work Q and A with the entire group

(table continues)

Table 10. Time Table for a 3-Day Workshop

*Day 2*


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10:30am-10:45	Coffee and a chat
10:45am-noon	Second Session Panel of alumni who are teachers, Q and A (Interactive)
12:00pm-1:00	Lunch
1:00pm-1:15	Third Session Group Activity: - If This Was All You Had (Interactive)
1:15 pm-2:15	Group presentations (all one session)
2:15 pm-3:15	Final Session Dramatic Interpretation of the student-centered and the teacher-centered classroom-preservice education majors of Greentown University (Round table discussion on dramatic interpretation- can you see the difference, can you see the impact on the 21 <sup>st</sup> century learner)
3:15-3:45	Lets Play Jeopardy, (Interactive)
3:45 pm to 4:00	Day 2 Evaluation, Appendix.6.2 and Closing Remarks

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*Day 3*

Time	Activity
8:30am-9:00	Welcome Recap of the workshop thus far Creativity warm-up, What is Your Definition? Interactive Activity
9:00am -10:00	First Session Guest Speaker-Mrs. Lynn Morris (pseudonym)-Greentown Alumni- a teacher who was honored with the “Teacher of the Year Award” in her elementary school-by her peers Title of presentation: <i>An Interactive Talk on the Obligation of the Teacher Educator and Their Commitment to Social Change</i>
10:00am	Coffee and a chat
10:15am-1:15	Second Session Video and Round Table Social Change
11:15 am-12:15	Lunch
12:15 pm-1:15	Third Session What Would You Do-Activity: Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered, Round Table: Where is the social change, how, why, when

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(table continues)



Table 11. Time Table for a 3-Day Workshop

*Day 3*

Time	Activity
1:15 pm-1:30	Coffee and a Chat
1:30 pm-3:00	Final Session University Supervisors Panel-what do they see in the field when they observe student teachers. Is it student-centered or teacher-centered? Q and A (Interactive)
3:00 pm-3:30	Group reflection and networking
3:30 pm-4:00	Bring up the lights...Let's hear from the audience- what worked, what changes would you recommend, would you recommend this workshop to your peers, why or why not Closing remarks from the presenter on social change Day 3 Evaluation, Overall Course Evaluation

During the workshop, participants will engage in small group discussions focusing on relevant topics such as defining student-centered pedagogy and the role of creativity in the classroom (Appendix A). In addition, I will model student-centered activities, and teacher educators will engage in activities such as daily warm-ups, creativity implementation exercises, and interactive discussions about impromptu skits of both student-centered and teacher-centered methods presented by theater education majors of Greentown. This will allow the attendees to get a true feel of both pedagogical methods (Appendix A). The reflective component will consist of focused reflections on observed student-centered pedagogical methods, on guest panels of alumni, and teacher educators who supervise student teachers during their field experience (Appendix A). Workshops focused on teaching strategies and putting theory into practice can benefit both the experienced and novice teacher, as well as the students they serve. A study determined that 89% of educators participating in staff development made changes in their pedagogical methods (Bauer, Libby, Scharberg, & Reider, 2013). This workshop will provide teacher educators with support, modeling, and actual practice of student-centered methods for

educating preservice teachers. Data indicated that probationary teachers learned teaching methods through their professors' modeling behaviors; however, the modeling of student-centered teaching at Greentown was inconsistent. I will bridge the gap by emphasizing the importance of using student-centered teaching as a way to reinforce this practice for preservice teachers.

### **Goals of the Project**

There are three main goals of the proposed project. The first goal is to engage attendees in interactive discussions of student-centered pedagogical methods, building on their knowledge and familiarity with the topic. The second goal is to model student-centered activities for the college classroom. This aspect of actual involvement in student-centered practices is important for attendees to see so that they will know what student-centered teaching looks like when they see it firsthand. For example, on the first day of the three day workshop, the attendees will role play with a 3rd grade history lesson in order for attendees of the workshop to experience firsthand being taught from both pedagogical methods. The third and final goal of this proposed project is to offer a time of reflection on how the teacher educators might use the information in their own preservice classrooms.

Interactive, guided discussion is an effective teaching tool that provides an opportunity for teacher educators to reflect on their current method, to consider improvements, and to adopt more effective practices (Curran, Carlson, & Celotta, 2013). This discussion period will be a major part of the workshop. During the workshop, attendees will have access to the PowerPoint materials provided in both hard and electronic copies on a website created to house all supplemental materials and instruction (Appendix A). The address for the website will be

located on the course syllabus (Appendix A). These guided discussions will take place in small groups, which will become part of a whole group discussion. For example, two small group discussions include a video response activity and the “What Would You Do?” exercise, offering attendees an opportunity to work with peers. .

During the first day of the workshop, attendees will view the interactive video, *What Will Make a Great Teacher and University Tomorrow*, featuring Dr. Ken Bain. Dr. Bain is the Founder and the Director of four major teaching centers in New York, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Illinois. He is best known for his book *What the Best College Teachers Do*. The video that will be used in this workshop focuses on *deeper learning*. Dr. Bain asks the audience how they can promote this type of learning for their students. Following up on his discussion, I will ask the attendees to explore the connection between Dr. Bain’s notion of deeper learning and social change, including a discussion on how deeper learning can affect how we mentor and teach future educators.

Post-viewing of the video, small groups will discuss how they might create a student-centered learning environment, how their designed learning environment will affect social change, and why social change is important (Appendix, A.3.3). On day three, attendees will engage in an exercise titled “What Would You Do?” In this classroom case based activity, attendees will discuss and offer suggestions to solve pedagogical dilemmas. Possible dilemmas given to attendees are converting a Smart/Promethean board into a student-centered instructional tool, adapting lesson plans to be more culturally inclusive when an international exchange student has joined the classroom in the middle of the year, designing pedagogical methods that

encourage a disengaged student to become more involved in a lesson, and developing student-centered lesson plan assessments.

In order to facilitate this process, each scenario will be posted on the wall using large flipchart paper. To encourage both individual and collaborative reflection, attendees will post their initial suggestions (using a yellow Post-It note), then respond to their colleagues' suggestions (using a green Post-It note). More specifically, attendees will walk around the room reading the posted scenarios. On a yellow Post-It note, each participant will write how she/he would use student-centered pedagogical methods to address the issue; he/she will post the yellow note under the scenario. Attendees will read all of their colleagues' yellow-colored suggestion notes and offer a comment or suggestion using a green Post-It note; they will post the green response note next to their colleague's yellow suggestion note. Each small group will be responsible for analyzing and presenting to the larger group a summary of the Post-It "discussion" for one scenario. The larger group will reflect and offer feedback. At the conclusion, I will lead a time of reflection and conversation to address how and why those pedagogical methods were chosen (Appendix A). According to Tamashiro (2011), it is important that attendees have a voice; attendees will be able to share their experiences, including their successes and challenges in the preservice classroom.

Goal two is to model student-centered activities in order to demonstrate this best practice. Since the topic of the workshop is student-centered pedagogy, the best way to foster that practice is to model it and to engage the attendees. According to Brookfield (2004), there is no right or wrong way to model; however, when attendees are allowed to have choices, to become involved, and to share with other attendees, the takeaway is proven to be a success (Brown, Dotson, &

Yontz, 2011; Richards & Skolits, 2009). Working with a variety of teacher educators and engaging them with discussion and interactive possibilities brings learning to life by offering choices and giving examples of collaborative projects (Wlodkowski, 2008). This approach is the model of student-centered pedagogy. Jackson, Dukerich, and Hestenes (2008) reported that modeling in a professional development setting places the attendees in the role of the student and offers attendees a better understanding of what is being taught. Modeling a lesson will allow the attendees to experience active learning and to visualize how it might play out in their classroom.

This part of the workshop includes group work, collaborative participation with hands-on “mini projects,” and individual group presentations. One of the mini projects that will meet this goal is the Re-Designed Lesson Plan. As the facilitator, I will model teacher-centered pedagogy by presenting the prepared lesson plan from this lens. In small groups, the attendees will re-write the lesson plan using the definition of student-centered pedagogical methods developed in the warm-up exercise earlier in the workshop. Once the lesson plan has been re-written, I will execute the same lesson using the prepared student-centered plan. Attendees will compare their re-designed plan with the prepared student-centered plan. At the closing of this exercise, the attendees will discuss the different methods, as well as decide which methods would best meet the needs of the 21st century learner. A copy of the lesson plans (both teacher-centered and student-centered) will be given to all attendees in their registration packet (see Appendix A).

The third and final goal of the proposed project is a reflection. Dewey (1933) introduced reflection in education as the idea that this practice might reinforce one’s own ideas or even change them. Teachers who become involved with self-reflection promote self-improvement and effectiveness in teaching (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). This purposeful reflection will ask

each workshop participant to identify characteristics of student-centered pedagogical methods, reflect on whether or not their understanding and attitude about student-centered pedagogy has changed since the beginning of the workshop, and to think about how they would use this method or why they would opt not to integrate it into their own classroom. To achieve the reflection goal, attendees will engage in a round table discussion at the end of each day to assess learning and to reflect on how they might implement what they learned. In addition, each attendee will complete a daily evaluation, as well as a final evaluation that will assess the learning outcomes of the entire three-day workshop (Appendix A). I will encourage attendees to use the built-in time following each exercise to speak freely about the exercise they just completed.

Educators have a responsibility to offer students an opportunity to become involved in their learning and to have choices (Bain, 2004). Although teacher-centered instruction is a viable method of pedagogy, it is suggested that best practices of 21<sup>st</sup> century education is that of student-centered (Brookfield, 2006; Gunel, 2008; Sands, 2011). Teacher educators preparing preservice teachers have an obligation not only to offer challenges and best practices to teachers of tomorrow, but also to present choices. In constructivism, Dewey (1929) and Piaget (1954) placed the learning responsibility on the student, giving them choices and an opportunity to be creative. College professors involved in the proposed staff development will have an opportunity to experience both teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogical methods through warm ups, exercises, and guest panels, who will also be a part of the workshop (Appendix A).

## Rationale

The findings of this study laid the groundwork for this project to be implemented in a three-day workshop of best practices for 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching skills (Brookfield, 2006; Gunel, 2008; Sands, 2011). Study findings indicated that preservice teachers needed more consistent exposure to student-centered pedagogy in order to be able to identify it in their own probationary practices; therefore, it seemed important to offer a professional development workshop for preservice teacher educators to re-visit best practices and to reflect on ways to hone their own skills. Merriam (2009) suggested that every study has interested audiences and that it is important to present findings in ways that benefit these diverse audiences. More specifically, “practitioners would be most interested in whether the research setting sufficiently resembles their own situation to warrant adopting the same practice (Merriam, 2009, p. 239). This case study focused on probationary teachers-probationary teachers are educators who have been in their classroom for three years or less. The participants in this study also graduated from Greentown University; therefore, priority registration will be reserved for 20 Greentown faculty who teach preservice teachers. If space allows, preservice teacher educators from other local colleges and universities will be invited. Though this project certainly has potential for virtual presentation, having the face-to-face opportunity will truly bring the study to life (McFarlane, 2011).

The probationary teachers, who gave the impression that they saw themselves as teacher-centered educators, stated they had a strong desire to be student-centered teachers. Unfortunately, they were not confident enough in their skills to use or identify student-centered methods in their own practices. This lack of confidence might be due to their inconsistent

exposure to student-centered pedagogical methods during their tenure as preservice teachers at Greentown University; therefore, a workshop for teacher educators, with the topic of student-centered teaching, modeled through engagement, discussion, and student-centered activities, might open the door to more student-centered classrooms on the Greentown campus.

### **Addressing the Problem Through a Hands-on Workshop**

Blanks' (2009) study concluded that there is a connection between how professional development is delivered to teachers and the impact it has on student learning. Data indicated that student-centered workshops designed to meet the needs of attendees through active engagement, hands-on activities, and collective participation resulted in improved teaching skills. These improved skills lead to student achievement; therefore, the proposed workshop will be conducted through student-centered methods of activities, group discussion, and collaborative assignments.

On day one, in small groups, I will assign articles focused on student-centered pedagogy for attendees to read. This extension assignment will serve as the foundation for the second day's discussion. On day two, the group will discuss the article prompted by the following questions: what was the main idea of the article, do you agree with this main premise, how does this article define student-centered, how might you put the findings of the article into action in your classroom, what would they look like, could the findings of this article bring on social change and how, where is the social change, what is the role of creativity in student-centered pedagogical methods, and what is the role of the student in the student-centered method (Appendix A). This exercise will promote more discussion about student-centered pedagogical



methods and social change. This exercise meets the curriculum requirements of Greentown University and CAEP as indicated in the syllabus (Appendix A).

Professional development is an opportunity to learn through doing (Rivera, Manning, & Krupp, 2013). For that reason, an interactive workshop was selected to offer a “student-centered” approach and the best practices for teacher educators. A collaborative-based workshop will bring together teacher educators to experience and practice student-centered teaching skills. More specifically, the exercise “If This is All You Had” was chosen to facilitate collaborative creativity. In this activity, the attendees will be presented with a prop box—each group will have an opportunity to choose three items from the box. Some examples of items from the box include a tablecloth, a mask, a drum, a folder, a puppet, a pen, a box of colored chalk, a cup, picture frame, and an empty Altoid tin. Once the group has chosen their three items, they are to create a lesson using only these items and bring the lesson to life through a student-centered approach. Each group chooses the subject and the grade level for this lesson. Each group will make a presentation to the entire group of attendees (Appendix A). This workshop will provide teacher educators with an opportunity to network, develop mentoring relationships, and to reflect on their own practices with peer feedback (Jarvis, Dickerson, & Chivers, 2012).

The entire case study revolved around how their learning experiences as preservice teachers influenced how they taught and how they described their own teaching practices. If teachers teach the way they are taught, then to present the data through student-centered teaching seemed to be the most productive way to present the information (Olitsky, 2013). This type of presentation will bring together educators and offer an opportunity to become engaged and

practice student-centered teaching skills; therefore, to “teach” in a professional development workshop, modeling best practices, reinforces Olitsky’s research.

The three goals of engagement, modeling, and reflection will drive the workshop. The researcher will determine if these goals were met through both formative and summative assessment. These assessments will consist of observations and reflections of the attendees. Each attendee will complete a written evaluation at the conclusion of each day of the workshop (Appendix A).

### **Review of the Literature**

A literature review was conducted to identify characteristics and best practices of various pedagogical methods. This literature review identified characteristics of the student-centered teacher, teacher-centered teacher, professional development, pedagogy, and college educators. The literature also examined staff development, modeling, collaborative learning, and educators. Sources used to conduct the search were online databases ERIC, EBSCO Host, and SAGE, in addition to purchased books, books on loan from a university library, and completed dissertations on the topic of staff development, which are new and in addition to those sources in the initial proposal. Based on these findings, a workshop rooted in engagement, choices, and group discussion would be the most beneficial for attendees, incorporating student-centered strategies, as well as allowing attendees the opportunity to share their experiences. Successful workshops are those that encourage attendees to engage with others (Brown, Dotson, & Yontz, E., 2011; Wagner & French, 2010). When the choice to be an educator is made, the choice, either intentionally or unintentionally, is to become a lifelong learner.

### **Staff Development**

Literature examining staff development is vast, especially studying higher education faculty, revealing that many college-level educators are very well educated, yet have never taught prior to their collegiate experience. With this knowledge, what can sometimes be seen on the college level are teachers who were once practitioners, professionals with an overwhelming experience in the *real* world, but lacking pedagogical preparation (Boman, Yeo, & Matus, 2013; Stes, De Maeyer, Gijbels, & Van Petegem, 2012). Therefore, professional development workshops that focus on pedagogy are necessary in the higher education environment.

### **Professional Needs of Educators**

The National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) Standards (2008) explicitly stated that educators need and benefit from professional development. NCATE is now known as Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, 2015). The curriculum guide for this workshop reflects the pedagogical framework of Greentown University, the standards of CAEP, and the state Standards of Learning (Appendix A). In doing so, the goals of professional education are addressed by allowing educators, through collaborative exercises and active learning, to bridge the gap of theory and practice. Successful teaching mandates opportunities for training and networking with other colleagues (Crow, 2008; Ruddy, & Prusinski, 2012). There must be a continued approach to meeting the professional needs of educators. An institution should see staff development as an investment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). Improvements and changes are necessary of teacher educators in order to meet the ever-changing needs of students (Joseph, 2015). Teachers are life-long learners and the institutions that employ them should encourage continuous improvement through staff development.

When meeting the needs of professional educators, there must be a clear understanding of the teacher educator and the role she or he leads in their instructional setting (Güleç-Aslan, 2013; Livingston, 2014). In order for the workshop to be successful, the needs of attendees must be identified and learning objectives and activities must be tailored to those needs (Jenkins & Yoshimura, 2010). The pre-assessment survey will measure pre-workshop knowledge and use of student-centered methods. Offering an all-purpose, one size fits all professional development workshop will not meet the needs of all of the attendees (Vaughan, & McLaughlin, 2011). The blueprint of a professional development workshop, written to meet the needs of attendees, is one which each individual is offered an opportunity to experience learning (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Vaughan, & McLaughlin, 2011). Identifying those needs will improve the take away of the workshop and possibly improve classroom instruction (Brenner, McManus, Wechsler, & Kann, 2013; Harris, Day, Goodall, Lindsay, & Muijs, 2006). Clearly stated objectives and goals in the workshop syllabus highlight workshop leader responsibilities, participant responsibilities, and desired learning outcomes (Appendix A). When educational needs are met and new ideas have been discovered, the professional development workshop can be deemed a success. In order to determine that educational needs were met, there will be a post evaluation attendees will be asked to complete (Appendix A). Both evaluations will be handled through the CAFE office to ensure anonymity.

### **Meeting Diverse Student Needs**

Classrooms on college campuses all over the country are changing. Classroom culture has changed, allowing for more student experiences (Alban & Reeves, 2014). Educators of future teachers need to address how diversity plays a role in the classroom. This will be

addressed during the alumni panel discussion, as well as during the “What Would You Do?” activity (Appendix A). Teacher educators who identify the cultural needs of their students and design instruction to meet those needs are also those educators who are practicing the student-centered methods of teaching. Training about and support for meeting students’ unique needs is paramount in improving the pedagogical methods of teacher educators (Lorenzetti, 2007). Working with teacher educators to consider diversity may create a domino effect; if they model this for the preservice teacher, when the preservice teacher becomes the probationary teacher, she or he will value diversity in their own classroom.

Educators require specific knowledge, especially those teaching the educators of tomorrow. Each student has the right to be taught through best practices, and it is the obligation of every teacher to teach with those practices. There is a shortage of available teaching positions- schools are closing and programs are being cut; therefore, it is more important than ever that there are strong educators in the classroom (Guthrie, & Peng, 2010). A local administrator shared with me the frustration when hiring new faculty, “I had one English teaching position open in my school and I had over two hundred and fifty applicants” (G. Bronze [pseudonym], personal communication, April 14, 2015). Teachers must come to the table knowing best practices, allowing students to have a voice, and encouraging discussion and engagement.

In order to meet the future needs of our students, the needs of the educators must be paramount (Cox, 2015; Rogers, 2007). Faculty members are often seen collaborating and exchanging ideas in the break room, at the faculty mailboxes, and simply standing in the hallway, informally exchanging ideas. There must be cooperative opportunities offered for

faculty to network, share, and be a part of something. “Educators need deep conversation about teaching and learning to spark real changes in practice” (Crow, 2008, p. 53). The deep conversation and the learning that Crow refers to can be met through staff development (Stegg & Lambson, 2015). A designated time for colleagues to engage, experience, and possibly change meets the needs of educators.

### **Benefits of Professional Development for All Teacher Educators**

Becoming an educator mandates the decision to become a life-long learner. Whether the educator is an experienced college professor or the practitioner who has entered the classroom for the first time, professional development is important. Having an opportunity to reflect and exchange ideas with colleagues who may contribute identical or opposing pedagogical ideas, is still beneficial to educators (Jarvis, Dickerson, & Chivers, 2012). Educators see themselves as equals experiencing the same frustrations and victories in the classroom. A professional development workshop is a chance for teacher educators from all disciplines to create relationships that will go beyond the walls and time frame of the workshop (Bates, & Wilson, 2012; Hillard, 2015; Austin, Whitebook, Connors, & Darrah, 2011). Educators have the desire to be trained to collaborate with their peers and learn new instructional techniques (Compton, 2010; Bradley, Munger, & Hord, 2015). The guided reflection of each participant’s teaching strategies, as well as a time to analyze their own instructional choices with peers, helps to hone skills and brainstorm strategies for improvement (Borko, Jacobs, Eiteljorg, & Pittman, 2008; Kelly, & Cherkowski, 2015). Educators bring to the classroom what they know, what they have learned, and what works for them; however, to take a fresh look at pedagogy through the eyes of

fellow educators benefits everyone. The practice of staff development has a place for both the novice and the experienced teacher educator.

As educators, we know modeling and reflection are both useful and powerful tools (Bullock & Christou, 2009; Kosnik et al. 2011; Range, Pijanowski, Duncan, Scherz, & Hvidston, 2014; Yang, 2009). Studies have shown the value of faculty development workshops that focus on effective teaching models through engaging attendees in discussion, reflection, peer coaching, or lesson planning (Borko, et al., 2008; Hargreaves & Fullan 2012; Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). Student-centered learning is considered best practice- offering students a voice in their learning journey. During this journey, skills such as creativity, thinking critically, and being able to work well with others in sharing ideas are imperative (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). Reflection, modeling and engagement are student-centered pedagogical methods; to model these methods in the proposed three-day workshop will be a validation to both the study and the workshop itself.

Discussions that promote a sincere invitation for attendees' active engagement open the door for changes in instructional implementation. More classrooms are adopting discussion as a teaching tool; therefore, discussion will play a major part in this workshop (Park, 2015). Discussion allows attendees to share what they believed worked in their classrooms and what did not. It is an opportunity to dig deeper into the pedagogical methods each participant of the workshop executes in their classroom. Encouraging open discussion as one of the teaching tools allows an opportunity for each participant to share their knowledge of student-centered teaching (Jorczak, 2011). This idea of open discussion, which will be a part of each day of the three day workshop, will also allow the attendees to become familiar with each other and possibly promote

camaraderie among the group, and during the three-day workshop, it will be a part of each day (Appendix A).

Reflection, in particular, continues to earn its place in the classroom and has shown to be an important method with which the college professors teach preservice teachers (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). Reflection is not a new method; Dewey (1933) defined the term as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 9). If this practice is merited for preservice teachers, college professors engaged in professional development can benefit from this practice as well. Using reflection as a teaching tool offers the participant the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses of their pedagogical methods.

Research continues to identify the importance of reflection as a key element of good educational practice, as reflection where educators can dig deeper into the cognitive, social, and moral implications of teaching (Pedro, 2006; Wittman, Velde, Carawn, Pokomy, & Knight, 2008; Williamson, Mears, & Bustos, 2015). This time of reflection can also validate teacher educators who are already successfully using student-centered pedagogical methods in their current preservice classroom. When attendees have a chance to reflect not only on how they teach but also on their experiences in the workshop, this will allow each one to identify characteristics of student-centered pedagogical methods and possibly identify how they might make changes in their teaching methods.

Professional development not only is a benefit for teacher educators, but is also a benefit for Greentown’s preservice teachers. An audience-centered professional development in which attendees can have choices, become actively involved, and have a voice in the procedure of the



workshop mirrors student-centered instruction. Research shows that staff development modeling student-centered pedagogy results in a willingness to engage in student-centered pedagogy in teachers' own classrooms (Vighnarajah, Luan & Bakar, 2008; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). This idea is not new, as established seminal educational theorists have reported (Bruner, 1974; Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Resistance to Student-Centered Pedagogy**

To offer a professional development about student-centered pedagogy and to present the workshop through student-centered pedagogical methods does not come without challenges. Teachers of any discipline who prefer a teacher-centered approach may not be eager to participate in a student-centered professional development and may have little interest in adopting it as their method (Bishop, Caston, & King, 2014). Educators currently practicing teacher-centered pedagogical methods may believe that student-centered methods create a chaotic atmosphere in the classroom because the teacher gives up too much control and permits too much freedom and choice to the students (Dole, Bloom, & Kowalske, 2016). They may also be skeptical of the assumptions about student acceptance of this method. The driving force behind the theory of student-centered pedagogical methods is that the students will take ownership of their own learning; however, there are students who will not make that choice and will have difficulty adapting to the student-centered classroom (Seng, 2013). Thus, the teacher-centered educator may choose to adhere to traditional practices.

There is also a time factor in making a shift to student-centered teaching. To change from a teacher-centered model that relies heavily on lecture as a method of delivering material to creating a more interactive learning environment will require significant preparation and

reconsideration. The student-centered teacher must be more of a facilitator of the lesson. This student-centered teacher will be the facilitator who will identify the different learning styles of the students being taught and meeting the needs of those individuals (McLaren & Kenny, 2015). As a facilitator, educators need to make time for students to present their knowledge through presentations or peer teaching, and they need to conduct research and make changes in their lesson (Attard, Di Lorio, Geven, & Santa, 2010; Blackie, Case, & Jawitz, 2010). All of these changes could be seen as taking away from instructional time needed to teach content.

### **Project Description**

The project, which is driven by the data gathered and analyzed in this study, suggests that preservice teachers require more exposure to student-centered pedagogical methods. In order to carry out the workshop, there must be a detailed plan of resources, existing supports, potential barriers, and implementation of the plan, which will include the timetable of the project and the roles and responsibilities of those involved. Each participant will receive a detailed agenda and a course syllabus (Appendix A). The agenda will include a detailed schedule of the day, as well as information about guest speakers and panels that will be a part of the workshop. Workshop objectives and curriculum details will be included in the syllabus. All PowerPoints, supplemental materials, and instructions of all exercises conducted will be posted on the website I created for the workshop (Appendix A).

### **Needed Resources and Existing Supports**

In order for me to successfully carry out this proposed workshop, the cooperation and support of Greentown University's CAFE office is essential.

The CAFE's mission is to foster a vibrant, intellectual community that supports

Innovative teaching, scholarship, and professional growth. CAFE pursues this mission with the understanding that a dynamic faculty engages students by integrating learning with 21st Century pedagogies. To this end, it seeks to promote, sustain, and celebrate a climate of open intellectual exchange—an ongoing cross-disciplinary dialogue that builds collaborative relationships.

(CAFE Center for Faculty Enrichment, 2016)

CAFE frequently collaborates with departments across campus by providing financial and staff support for faculty teaching, research, and leadership development. CAFE is committed to supporting this project. This workshop will be free to all who attend; however, they will need to register. CAFE will send e-invitations to all teacher educators, organize pre-registration, and administer the pre-workshop evaluation and post-workshop evaluation (Appendix A). CAFE will also provide hosts; these hosts will introduce the speakers and serve as official university representatives. Finally, CAFE will cover costs for all food and photocopies. All other manipulatives used during the workshop will add no additional cost, as the materials used will be items previously purchased for my classroom instructional use (Appendix A).

As noted earlier, CAFE will organize all correspondences and workshop registration. After a two-week registration period, if enrollment is below 20, teacher educators at other institutions in the commonwealth will be invited. Although there will be a limited number of attendees, a large room will be requested in order to accommodate any accessibility needs. CAFE will coordinate with Greentown conference staff to ensure that all meeting rooms are set up and that all technology (e.g. computers, projectors, and microphones) is working. They will troubleshoot any problems, as needed. The technology used for the session will be PowerPoint

and internet access for music, videos, and interactive discussion models (Appendix A). A copy of the PowerPoint will be saved to two USB drives and emailed to my personal and university email to ensure accessibility to the PowerPoint during the three-day workshop.

Prior to the workshop, attendees will have access to the PowerPoints, worksheets, and a list of student-centered activities conducted throughout the workshop. I created a password protected website titled “Putting Students in the Driver’s Seat: Engaged Learning and Social Change” (Scarrow, 2016). This website provides a detailed description of the workshop including outcomes, objectives, the syllabus, schedule, and evaluation forms. All workshop materials can be found at <http://student-centeredlearning.weebly.com/>.

### **Potential Barriers and Solutions to Barriers**

Staff development provides an opportunity to share, learn, reflect, update methods, and improve knowledge and skills. In most professions, professional development is encouraged, if not required. The selected audience presents specific challenges: (1) Will teacher-centered faculty members take an interest in the topic? (2) Will experienced teacher-educators be willing to engage in another pedagogy training? (3) Will educators who promote student-centered pedagogical methods see added value? These challenges can be remedied by a clear, detailed description and clear objectives of the workshop, which are a part of the syllabus (Appendix A). The description of the workshop will stress the idea of taking the challenge to try new ideas with scholarly methods of teaching (Kayler, 2009). The inclusion of a variety of experienced speakers will raise expectations and provide credibility to the value of the workshop. My hope is that student-centered educators will find, in the detailed description and the clear educational objectives of this workshop, a place to share, reflect, and collaborate with colleagues.

## **Implementation of the Project**

After a detailed review of the data collected in the study, it was evident that preservice teachers of this university were being exposed, taught and encouraged without a sufficient amount of attention to student-centered pedagogy. With student-centered methods being considered best practices for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, a three-day workshop was deemed sufficient to engage, model, and reflect on student-centered pedagogical methods (Gallavan & Kottler, 2012). The workshop will also be offered in the fall of 2017, which will also be repeated in the spring of 2018 and the fall of 2018. The workshop's purpose is to offer encouragement, support, and a time of reflection for classroom pedagogy.

The program agenda for this three-day workshop (Appendix A) includes a detailed schedule of the day, a course syllabus, daily activities, a list of guest experts and topics of discussion. In addition to having access to materials prior to the workshop, on the day of the workshop, attendees will check in and receive a participant's packet provided by CAFE. This packet will include a program schedule, a syllabus, as well as materials used during the three-day workshop (Appendix A).

Each day of the workshop will begin with a warm-up and will end with a reflection and an evaluation of the day (Appendix A). Mirroring student-centered instruction, I will use a variety of instructional strategies, materials, and examples (Bain, 2004; Freire, 2012; Peters, 2009; Yilmaz, 2008). There will also be a student dramatic interpretation of teacher-centered and student-centered instruction to give attendees a firsthand look at how the two methods contrast (Appendix A). Emphasis will be placed on the interactive nature of the workshop; this will encourage attendees to enter the workshop with an attitude of taking an active role and

feeling comfortable doing so. Bryson and Hand (2007) reported that providing a workshop in which attendees feel safe results in greater engagement.

This sense of community will hopefully transfer to attendees' practice and pedagogy. More specifically, on day one, we will focus on the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of best practice by forming definitions of student-centered teaching, discussing those definitions and developing one definition as a group. There will also be an interactive video featuring the author of *What the Best Teachers Do*, Dr. Ken Bain, where the attendees of the workshop will answer and discuss questions posed in the video, as well as questions the attendees pose (Appendix A). Day two will center on the critical connection between pedagogy and social change, which will be addressed by the alumni panel and the theatre education student's dramatic interpretation (Appendix A). Finally, on day three, attendees will learn about instructional creativity as a component of student-centered learning through creating their own definition of creativity and addressing the challenges with the activity "What Would You Do?" (Appendix A). Over the three-day period together, we will connect student-centered teaching, creativity, and social change.

As reported, I am a full-time lecturer at the university where each of the probationary teachers completed their education. In my duties as lecturer, I teach preservice teachers, as well as supervise multiple field placements; therefore, I will be the sole facilitator of this workshop. The facilitator is responsible for organizing the program and guiding the learning process. Although there will be a very short time to develop relationships with attendees, we know that a healthy student-teacher relationship promotes learning (Hattie, 2009; Jordon, 2006; McNally & Blake, 2009). This experience will be made as personal as possible- sharing both why this study

became of interest to me and some of my experiences, both as student and professor. This professional self-disclosure will encourage attendees to share their pedagogical ideas and their personal experiences. There will be bi-weekly pedagogy chats and quarterly lunches scheduled for after the workshop in order to encourage continuous improvement, professional collaboration, and reflection. Also, in an effort to connect with the attendees, I will provide my email address to encourage post-session contact, community, and mutual, ongoing support will be given to attendees (Chen, Chen, & Tsai, 2009; Hur & Brush, 2009; Vavasseur & MacGregor, 2008).

As a facilitator, it is my responsibility to create an atmosphere of trust and a place where attendees feel safe to share their successes and areas in need of improvement. An effective facilitator can increase the capacity of the teaching by training, modeling, encouraging involvement and allowing a time for reflection (Range, Pijanowski, Duncan, Scherz, & Hvidston, 2014). At the beginning of the workshop, I will ask the attendees to introduce themselves, share where and what they teach, and describe their reason for workshop attendance. Each day, there will be a warm-up to jump-start the day's events (Appendix A) and to get the attendees moving and interacting with one another. The warm-up for day one will be "What Are You Doing?" (Appendix A). The purpose of this exercise is to reiterate the importance of effective listening skills and the value of this skill in student-centered pedagogy. Attendees will be asked to do what they are told and not what they see.

At the conclusion of the warm-up, attendees will engage in a group discussion focused on their ideas on the instructional value of this exercise. In addition to the warm-up, there will be interactive exercises, including one exercise, Re-Designed Lesson Plan, which will model both

teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogy (Appendix A). This exercise will involve role-playing, where I become a 3rd grade teacher and the attendees play the role of the 3rd grade class. I will teach the lesson both from a teacher-centered and student-centered method. This process will allow attendees to discuss ideas about student preference among these methods. Attendees will be engaged throughout the workshop, student-centered pedagogy will be modeled, and at the closing, there will be an opportunity for reflection.

In addition to my expertise, attendees will interact with a variety of educational experts. These invited guests will include professionals at different levels of educational experience. I will invite the following experts: a three member panel of alumni, who are currently teaching within our region, a four person panel of university supervisors, who are responsible for observing student teachers in the field, a group of theater education preservice teachers, who will present a lesson modeling both student-centered and teacher-centered approaches, and a guest speaker, who was a preservice teacher at Greentown University and a recipient of the Elementary Teacher of the Year award in her school system. I plan to invite student-centered professors (as identified by students in my current classes) to observe the workshop and provide feedback on its effectiveness.

Social change takes time and persistence. This workshop is meant to be a catalyst for change, and all social change movements require practice and continuous focus. It is not enough to present the workshop and walk away; Teacher educators need to feel constant support in their pedagogical methods by colleagues (Edwards & Burns, 2015). One effort to encourage continuous learning and collaboration is the website “Putting Students in the Driver’s Seat: Engaged Learning and Social Change.” As noted earlier, this website will host all workshop



materials, links to student-centered sites, and an interactive space where educators can post accomplishments, ideas, and even frustrations of being the student-centered teacher educator. In addition to this resource, there will be bi-weekly pedagogy coffee chats at the local Barnes & Noble Bookstore and quarterly lunches on campus to encourage continuous improvement, professional collaboration, and reflection. These follow-up activities will provide on-going support and an opportunity to develop future pedagogy workshops.

Sustainability of any professional development workshop will need an administrative support system, and the Greentown University's CAFE office will continue to support the development of effective student-centered pedagogy. For example, the CAFE blog site and website will include a link to the "Putting Students in the Driver's Seat: Engaged Learning and Social Change" website designed for the workshop. CAFE is responsible for helping new faculty transition to teaching at Greentown University; therefore, all new teacher education faculty will be directed to this website as a valuable resource to encourage collaboration and networking. CAFE will continue to be a co-sponsor for future workshops. With intentional sustainability efforts, student-centered pedagogical methods will grow and mature in the classrooms of teacher educators and the preservice teachers they teach will be better equipped to employ these methods (Avalos, 2011; Colbert, 2012; Gaspar, 2010). It is my intention that the idea of student-centered pedagogical methods will be an on-going learning process for all faculty members, including myself.

## **Project Evaluation Plan**

### **Goals and Objectives of the Project**

The ultimate goal of this entire project is that preservice teachers will have the opportunity to experience more student-centered pedagogy in their tenure at this university. The study findings, along with the scholarly literature, demonstrated that student-centered pedagogy reflected best practice and that Greentown University preservice teachers were not consistently exposed to this pedagogical method to have the confidence needed to master these teaching skills. There are three main goals of the proposed project, which include engaging attendees in interactive discussions of student-centered pedagogical, modeling student-centered activities, and offering a time of reflection on how the teacher educators might use the information in their own preservice classrooms. There are also objectives of the project. Upon completion of the workshop, each participant will have a clear understanding of student-centered pedagogical methods. Each participant will be able to discuss and give examples of best practices and activities of this method. Finally, each participant will feel confident in executing this method in their classroom; therefore, the goal of an effective evaluation is to measure what attendees learned and to measure whether or not the workshop goals were met (Appendix A).

### **Types of Evaluations and Justification**

Teachers are continually assessing their students, both formatively and summatively; therefore, in working with teacher educators as learners, it seemed logical to assess on both levels to ensure learning goals and objectives have been met. Most assessments focus on growth; both evaluation methods have been shown to improve learning (Thompson et al., 2014). One formative assessment will be ongoing and will measure objectives. I will conduct a

formative assessment by posing reflective questions to the attendees throughout the workshop. For example, I will periodically ask questions relevant to workshop content such as “How would you create a student-learning environment?,” “Where does creativity come into play in your classroom?,” and “What are the implications of social change?” This type of assessment allows for immediate feedback, which can be helpful in determining if learning goals and objectives are being met (Cai & Sankaran, 2015).

Summative assessment shows a final critique of goals and objectives met (Cai & Sankaran, 2015). I will evaluate outcomes through pre-evaluation and post-evaluation surveys (Appendix A). Using both the Likert-scale and qualitative questions, these surveys will measure pre-workshop and post-workshop knowledge and use of student-centered methods in their classrooms. To evaluate workshop goals, I will ask attendees to complete a daily survey/questionnaire. In these daily evaluations, I will assess the value and effectiveness of the day’s activities and discussions (Appendix A). At the conclusion of the workshop, attendees will complete an overall evaluation (Appendix A), which will help to determine if the facilitator’s goals were met (Lodico, et al., 2010). As noted, I will invite student-centered professors (as identified by students in my current classes) to observe the workshop. These educators will evaluate the workshop; this peer evaluation will be critical in determining if the goals and objectives of the workshop were met, effectiveness of the facilitator, and value of activities. This evaluation will be done at the conclusion of the workshop; I will schedule a meeting individually to go over their evaluation using the final evaluation as a guide (Appendix A). Peer evaluations have proven to help improve the pedagogy of the teacher being evaluated. It is an evaluation process that has been deemed a success in the education field (Sambell, McDowell, &

Montgomery, 2013). Peer evaluation has also been deemed successful in improving presentation and teaching skills (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013). This assessment will benefit me as a researcher and as facilitator, to help me identify if goals and objectives were clear and were they met.

### **Project Implications**

Greentown University has a well-established reputation in the state as being the university that produces teachers who make a difference in the classroom. Greentown University's mission statement proclaims their commitment "to the development of citizen leaders who are prepared to make positive contributions to the common good of society" ("Greentown University Mission Statement", 2015). More specifically, Greentown teacher-educators are invested in guiding preservice teachers to be agents of social change in their classroom. Now is the time is now to not only evaluate content knowledge, but to address how to teach the content to students (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2010) in order to contribute to a more engaged public. With its focus on student-centered pedagogy and social change, this project meets the needs of Greentown teacher-educators and can have an impact on their students and their students' students. According to researchers, student-centered pedagogy creates learning environments where students have a voice and are active attendees in the classroom. This method gives value to the student and increases their engagement with the learning process (Ahn & Class 2011; Cook-Sather, 2006). Students learn to be more proactive and take more responsibility for their learning. If they are empowered to be responsible learners, the hope is that they will transfer these skills to their role as citizens. During the workshop, attendees will be asked to reflect on how student-centered

teaching is connected to social change. For example, in small groups, they will discuss theory and consider implications for social change.

Teacher-educators are the direct stakeholders in the project. Knowing that there are other committed teacher-educators who want to share ideas, successes and failures and being able to identify other teachers who have an interest in student-centered pedagogical methods is critical for professional growth and social change. Preservice teachers are key stakeholders as well. What about the students they will teach? Every astronaut, lawyer, bricklayer, and teacher will sit in someone's first, second, and third grade class. What an amazing opportunity for every student to participate in group projects, active learning, problem based projects, and an environment that promotes learner agency.

This project may attract the teacher-centered preservice teacher educator who may be interested in making a change in their teaching methods (Eldridge, & Douglas, 2015). If only a few pedagogical changes are made in the teacher-centered classroom such as more class discussion and more than one type of assessment, it will be a start. The project might become a reoccurring workshop opening the door to more preservice educators at different levels of education including K-12 educators, as well as faculty from a variety of disciplines at Greentown University.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this case study was to examine the pedagogical methods of probationary elementary teachers who had graduated from the same university. I wanted to determine whether participants were using student-or teacher-centered pedagogical methods in the classroom. Based on study findings, I developed a 3-day professional development workshop for teacher-educators.

Section 4 will provide my reflections on the project. As an educator, this time of reflection will be utilized as a tool to inform my instruction and improve my effectiveness in the classroom (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012). In Section 4, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the project as well as possible alternative ways to address that pre-service teachers need to have more experience with student-centered pedagogical methods. I also discuss what I learned about scholarship, project development, and evaluation. I devote part of this section to what I learned about myself as an educator and as a leader. Another topic that I discuss is how I might bring about social change through my research. I conclude the section with a discussion of future research I would recommend. .

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

#### **Strengths of the Project**

During casual discussion and data collection participants expressed a strong desire to use student-centered pedagogical methods and have a student-centered classroom (Beavis & Beckmann, 2012; Wang 2011; Willan, 2009). Participants said they lacked the confidence level to carry out these methods; however, when they did, they were unable to identify best practices

in their own work. This lack of confidence and inability to identify these practices could be due, in part, to their inconsistent exposure to student-centered methods during their tenure as a preservice teachers at Greentown University. Educational researchers view student-centered pedagogical methods as best practices of 21st century education (see Brookfield, 2006; Gunel, 2008; Sands, 2011). For this reason, I believe that preservice teachers need more exposure to student-centered methods at the university level.

One of the major strengths of this project is the acknowledgement of the concerns these preservice teachers and probationary teachers have and support given to them by providing a professional development workshop for their professors. Based on the findings, teacher-educators at Greentown University need to be more consistent in their teaching and practice of student-centered methods. Therefore, I created this project for preservice teacher-educators at Greentown to offer them the opportunity to reflect on their teaching methods. The conceptual framework of this case study consisted of constructivism (Dewey, 1929; Piaget, 1954), social learning (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978), and humanism (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1954), all of which theorists advocate for student choice, engagement, and active learning. I wanted to draw from these same theories to guide project development. A goal of mine was to encourage attendees to be involved and engaged each day of the project as well as encourage them to share their voices in each session.

The strengths of the project include creating a student-centered environment while modeling student-centered pedagogical methods during the actual workshop. Modeling both student-centered and teacher-centered methods during a professional development setting allows attendees the opportunity to see through the eyes of their students (Jackson, Dukerich, &

Hestenes, 2008). Attendees will also have opportunities to network, be creative, hear firsthand from alumni who are now teachers, and see how preservice teachers view both a student-centered and a teacher-centered classroom. Although this project has ample strengths, in my view, it also has some limitations.

### **Limitations of the Project**

This project is grounded in research that showed faculty development is beneficial, especially workshops that model and engage there are some limitations (Borko, et al., 2008; Zwart, Wubbels, Bolhuis, & Bergen, 2008). The most concerning obstacle to me is the workshop timeframe. When the academic year comes to a close, Greentown-contracted faculty are required to be available for 2 weeks after grades are submitted; however, there are no other formal requirements for faculty. Many faculty members teach, research, and travel; they are not always on campus during this time. There are several ways to address this issue. The workshop could be offered online in an asynchronous learning environment where attendees can work at their own pace. This approach would allow more flexibility to the attendees and possibly encourage them to become involved; however, I chose a face-to-face approach to mirror the student-centered classroom approach that most teacher-educators at Greentown University use (Allen & Seaman, 2006). An on-line component would not be ideal.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Another possible solution is to spread the 3-day training over a semester, with one day held in the first month of school, the second after fall break, and the final day after grades are submitted. Another approach could be the use of a hybrid model, which is a blend of online and



face-to-face instruction. A hybrid model has been found to meet the needs of learners as well as offer opportunities for attendees to network and share with one another (Anders, 2015).

At Greentown University, each instructor must successfully complete pedagogy training prior to teaching online or hybrid courses. I have successfully completed the training, and with my online education experience through Walden, I believe that I could, at some point, transition the workshop from a traditional face-to-face environment to an online or hybrid one. As this workshop is a new initiative at Greentown University, for the first iteration of this project, I believe that a face-to-face workshop is necessary. It has been my professional experience that asking faculty to revisit and potentially reimagine their pedagogy requires careful facilitation.

Facilitators can be student-centered in online or hybrid learning environments; however, those environments do not offer the facilitator the opportunity to attend to important nonverbal cues such as gestures, tone, volume, inflection, and facial expressions (Polly & Hannafin, 2010). If left unattended, these issues could affect the success of the workshop. Professional development workshops provide educators with the opportunity to collaborate and reflect on their practices in community with other educators and in ways which somewhat mirror the elementary school learning environment (Desimone, 2009; McFarlane, 2011). Real-time interaction among colleagues can help to create a learning environment where spontaneous conversations about best practices, teaching challenges, and possible solutions take place (Desimone, 2009). Finally, at Greentown University, teacher educators teach pedagogical methods primarily in a face-to-face learning environment. One of the strengths of this project is the modeling of a student-centered approach, which participants might choose to eventually adopt in their own classrooms (Jackson, Dukerich, & Hestenes, 2008). Creating a workshop that

reflects participants' classroom structure should provide transferable resources that would correspond to their face-to-face teaching context.

In reflection, offering a student-centered teaching manual could be a solution to the time issue. Teacher educators could access this resource at their own leisure; however, individual use of a manual does not promote collaborative learning central to student-centered pedagogy. My concern for the manual would be that this tool would become another addition to my colleague's bookshelf and not be used, although, it would have remedied the time issues.

The final limitation of the project is that the attendees are teacher-educators only. Taking the limits off the workshop and opening it to all faculty would improve attendance. Adjunct professors, lecturers, and instructors could all benefit from having the opportunity to view the model of student-centered pedagogical methods (Bond, 2015). The United States Department of Education reported, in 2009, an increase in the part-time or non-tenured faculty on the university level. According to Barnshaw and Dunietz (2015), some of the college faculty population is made up of over 70% part time or non-tenured; therefore, it would be beneficial to advertise the workshop for all faculty or even stress that non-tenured or part-time faculty are encouraged to be a part of the three-day event. Although any one of the alternate ways listed might certainly have brought about a different population, or even a larger population of attendees, I feel confident in the approach I have set forth of a three, consecutive day workshop. If for no other reason, it has the whole concept of student-centered pedagogical methods-that of modeling, engaging, and reflection, which meets the needs of the key stakeholders in my study.

## **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

### **Scholarship**

When I began my doctor of education journey at Walden, my motive was clear-I wanted consideration as an expert in my field. If I were going to achieve that recognition in the field of higher education, I needed a terminal degree. Based on my experiences as a K-12 educator and college professor, I knew I wanted my study to focus on teachers; however, I was not sure of my focus. I had to read theory and research, discuss, discuss further, and read again to narrow my focus to how probationary teachers who graduated from my home university transfer their learning experiences at Greentown to their classrooms. In particular, I wanted to know what pedagogical methods they were using and whether or not they were student-centered educators. I learned that my university produces good teachers who care about their students, yet still lack the confidence to fully engage in and identify student-centered teaching and learning. I learned through observations and hearing about their experiences that they needed more opportunities to practice and observe student-centered methods prior to their probationary years.

In reviewing other scholars' work and applying it to my own research, I learned that it is important to distinguish credible sources from others, to include multiple sources to support my claims and ideas, and to see the review of literature as an ongoing process that extends from topic to study findings. My study required me to dispute a long-standing pedagogical approach—the teacher-centered approach. I needed to find support to challenge this tradition and to propose a more effective alternative. In terms of content, I learned that teacher-centered practices could work under limited conditions, but that these methods do not apply to the 21st century learners and to most learning situations. Through a variety of resources, it became clear

that student-centered approaches were more effective and could contribute to learning and social change.

I remember when I attended the Walden Residency, one of the professors said, “You may wake up one day and think you are not supposed to be here, that you cannot do this, that you are not smart enough to do this,” and then she quickly reminded us that we were. The funny thing is that I had already said those things to myself- not once or twice, but many times. I was a first-generation undergraduate and graduate. Achieving any advanced degree seemed out of reach. Not only had I said those things before or during the residency, but also, often times during the beginning of the prospectus; however, once I started conducting the actual research, it felt natural because it fit with my value system as an educator. I strongly believe that to be the best teacher, we need to learn through observing our colleagues and share our pedagogical knowledge and techniques with others. I learned from these probationary teachers, and I believe that they learned from their experience in this study. All of the research I experienced planted a seed of wanting to know more and it was just the beginning. I look forward to facilitating professional development workshops for my colleagues by sharing what I have learned through scholarship.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Professional development is an opportunity for everyone to benefit, including the college professor, who teaches the preservice teacher about the current technique from the college classroom, and when the preservice teacher becomes a probationary teacher, takes the method of his or her own and executes it in his or her classroom. When faculty come together to reflect upon their current pedagogical methods and have the opportunity to review other methods, as well as the opportunity to practice them, research shows that attendees of the workshop will have

a willingness to use the method in their own classrooms (Vighnarajah, Luan & Bakar, 2008).

From very early in the research process, the message was clear that when students (attendees) have the opportunity to practice or engage with a method, they learn it and they retain it (Bruner, 1974; Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978). When individuals accept the responsibility of being educators, we also accept the responsibility to offer students best practices. Perhaps the best way to accept this responsibility is to stay current with best practices through staff development. As a presenter of other successful workshops, I have watched attendees become directly involved with an exercise and find it very rewarding. On the other hand, as an attendee, I have also found it beneficial to have the opportunity to become engaged rather than simply be lectured to throughout the session. All students are different and they learn differently; therefore, to present information in a variety of ways is an effective teaching tool (Gardner, 2011). Therefore, I do not believe it is enough to merely say get involved; instructions need to be clear and educators have the obligation to present information in a variety of ways.

As a classroom teacher and through my research process, I have become an ardent believer that it is necessary and beneficial in meeting the students' needs to both formatively and summatively assess the student. This approach is the same mentality I have about the evaluation for the workshop. This type of evaluation is also a benefit to the presenter. With the formative assessment, I will know where the attendees are as for meeting goals and objectives at all times; a summative evaluation will give insight into attendees' overall experience of the workshop.

Greentown University is accredited by NCATE/CAEP, and this organization is very specific in the professional development needs of the faculty (2008). Greentown University continues their accreditation with the organization formerly known as NCATE; however, now

known as CAEP (2015). The three-day workshop will meet the NCATE/CAEP requirement; it also offers the opportunity for faculty to network, reflect, practice, and bridge the gap of theory and practice (Crow, 2008). Professional development is not only a benefit to the teacher educators who attend; rather, it is an investment (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). The pedagogical needs of the classroom are constantly changing and professional development offers an opportunity to see, experience, and make changes. Improvements and changes are necessary of teacher educators in order to meet the ever-changing needs of future global leaders.

### **Leadership and Change**

Leadership leads to change. Effective leaders make a difference in the world. Those individuals are the ones who are identifying problems to solve and have the passion to make a difference. They pose questions such as what can I do to make a difference in the world, how can I be a part of making the world a better place, and how can I be an effective leader in these causes (Otte, 2015). Making the world a better place is not a change that will take place over night. It is a change that may take several years. Educators have an incredible opportunity to be leaders and to model effective leadership for their colleagues and their students. Effective research can be a catalyst for necessary changes in education. The findings in my study confirmed what I would describe as “gut feelings” about some gaps in our preservice teaching program and helped me to develop a professional development workshop. These are practices of a leader.

Change is not fast moving in education. In no way is this to imply education turns its back on change; pedagogical change takes time and resources. When I reflect on my teaching career, I remember when computers became a part of our classroom; most teachers were

reluctant. When we learned that with technology in the classroom, we could still communicate effectively, could record grades and file reports with the tap of a key, academia changed (Karabayeva, 2015). Technology has brought about many positive changes in academia, yet we remain skeptical; change is uncertain and difficult. When I think of how change occurs in education, my thoughts go immediately to reflection.

At Greentown, as part of the lesson plan template student teachers complete for their observed lessons, they are asked to reflect on the lesson- what worked, what did not, and what would you do over. In the act of doing research, I believe that I served as a role model for reflection and change. I believe that the participants learned from their experience and expressed a desire to grow and improve as a student-centered teacher. Through my research, I believe the participants had an opportunity to reflect. For example, when their interviews were transcribed and sent to them for member checking, this was a time for them to reflect upon their practices. If they chose to make changes in how they executed their lessons for the future, I cannot say; however, through the member checking, they did have a time of reflection. In the project I proposed, reflection would play a major part in the three-day workshop. Through this period, possibly more change will occur. Reflection is a powerful tool and can be a major contributor to change (McKinney, 2007; Cornish & Jenkins, 2012).

In the research process and in the development of this project, I know I have changed. As a preservice teacher educator, I have been reminded of the importance of creating consistent learning opportunities that allow preservice teachers to practice student-centered pedagogy. If I am expected to teach the leaders of tomorrow as the times evolve, I must change to not dislike

the huge computer, which sat on my desk many years ago, to the one which I can now carry in my hand.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

One of the most interesting things I learned about myself as a scholar is that I have become one. It had been many years since I was a student and going back to that role was not easy. I found myself starting over, and unlike riding a bicycle, I often felt like I had to re-learn many skills. I had been a student, however, there is a tremendous difference in a student and a scholar. I had not done research before and certainly nothing of this magnitude. I reminded myself daily that if I were going to take on the role of teacher educator, I not only needed a terminal degree, I also needed to understand and know how to study best practices. In understanding preservice teacher education, I needed to see the gap between practice and theory, and to see first-hand what pedagogical methods probationary teachers were using.

I have grown as a scholar. I can engage in expert conversation about pedagogy, and I have developed the confidence to communicate my expertise and to share it with my colleagues and students. I always valued life-long learning, but now understand more clearly how this applies to my role as a teacher educator. I now believe that it is my ethical responsibility to keep current on pedagogical theory and best practices. This responsibility is not just for me, but also for my students who will be our future teachers. I do believe that necessary change can happen by having an impact on one student at a time. I remember during my initial conversations with Walden, I was not sure of which route to take-the PhD or EdD. I was asked several questions and I answered as candidly as possible. At the end of the conversation, the person interviewing me said, “You want an EdD in Higher Education and Adult Learning.” I asked why they were so



sure and the response was so paramount. The Walden representative that day recognized immediately I wanted to teach teachers. I do and I will teach them.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

What I learned about myself as a practitioner is something that I stated in weekly Walden discussion posts: life gets in the way. As a practitioner, I kept reminding myself to keep my eyes on the prize, not just the degree, but also the journey-the journey of all that I learned. I saw every positive or negative moment as a learning experience and a teachable moment.

I learned that research and practice, as well as theory and practice, are connected. I learned that I value closing the gap between theory and practice. In the very beginning of research, every article that I read that related to enhancing the classroom, engaging students, and best practices; I immediately shared that new information with my preservice teachers. This action made a positive change in my pedagogical methods, and I believe in the future teachers who were a part of my classroom. I also came to understand how much I valued closing the gap between theory and practice.

As a practitioner, I came to fully understand the importance of collaborating with colleagues through reflection, casual conversation over a cup of coffee or a quick ride in the elevator, and more formal activities like professional development workshops. I am grateful for what my colleagues have shared with me. Through the sharing of my colleagues and paying close attention, I have become a more effective practitioner.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

Very early in my scholarly journey with Walden University, I remember watching a video of a woman who was a project planner. In this video, she discussed how she had been

contracted to take over a project; however, the last time the project was presented, the feedback from participants was that the conference had been a failure. The woman went on to tell that when she took the project over, it was not enough to know that the project in the past had been a failure but why the participants had deemed the workshop a failure. After much investigating, the problem was that there were chicken salad sandwiches for lunch on the final day, and unfortunately, the final speaker was a little longwinded; therefore, the caterers made the decision to put the sandwiches, along with the potato chips, back in the refrigerator. In short, the potato chips were soggy, and in essence, it was the last thing the participants of the project remembered; therefore, they deemed the workshop a failure. What did I learn from this story? Details matter and you always need to have the big picture in focus.

Every detail of a project is important. All handouts should be easy to read and free of any errors. Any videos that will be used in the session should be cued up and ready to go. The one thing that any good teacher knows is in attending to detail means to plan for the unexpected. It is important to always plan more than you think you will need and be prepared to make changes if what was planned is not working. As a project developer, my job is to do everything I can to present the best product possible, which means I may need to be flexible and attend to every detail.

I am an experienced facilitator; I have been the sole facilitator, as well as a co-presenter of a variety of pedagogy related workshops and seminars. I feel confident that I am an engaging speaker; however, I have never had the experience of developing an entire workshop. Nevertheless, my K-12 experiences of writing lesson plans and my familiarity with writing

syllabi as a teacher educator provided me with the knowledge to plan and execute a three-day workshop.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

The ultimate goal of the research was to lay the groundwork for putting together a final project that would have an impact on social change. The idea of creating a three-day professional development for fellow teacher educators was an idea that was the first step in having a small, yet important impact on preservice education at Greentown University. This student-centered teaching workshop holds one key of closing the gap between theory and practice (Brookfield, 2006; Gunel, 2008; Sands, 2011).

This project is essential. As teaching experts and scholars, we have the unique obligation to understand and to provide students with the most effective and current teaching models. In order for professors to provide these necessary resources for their students, it is essential for professional development to take place (Rivera, Manning, & Krupp, 2013). When faculty are offered the opportunity to share ideas, collaborate, and reflect, it is a benefit for the entire university.

Student-centered pedagogical methods represent the most effective teaching practice. A three-day workshop focused on this pedagogy will require active learning and engagement (Jackson, Dukerich, & Hestenes, 2008). It has been reported that when attendees have the opportunity to engage, have choices, and reflect, the take away is a success (Brown, Dotson, & Yontz, 2011; Richards & Skolits, 2009). In the proposed workshop, each attendee will have the opportunity to experience both student-centered and teacher-centered learning. In short, the

possibilities are high that the teacher educators in attendance will be more likely to practice student-centered methods when teaching their preservice teachers.

The overall impact will be that preservice teachers, during their tenure at Greentown University, will have exposure to more student-centered pedagogical methods; however, the change does not stop. It is possible this exposure will offer the probationary teacher the confidence level they need to execute and identify student-centered methods. In theory, the needs of the 21st century learner will be met, the Commonwealth of Virginia's SOLs will be met, and students will graduate while becoming global citizens because they were given choices, they were engaged, and they were challenged. The driving force behind this project is to create change and to make a significant difference in how future educators are prepared to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. Throughout the development of the study and the project, I was continuously asked "What difference will this make?", and my answer was always the same—the difference can only be measured by the change in teaching behaviors and attitudes of the education leaders of tomorrow. Teacher educators' values, ideas, and attitudes about education will change with this project. The changes in methods and values of education will be passed onto their preservice teachers and those preservice teachers will practice those methods in their classroom. Students of the student-centered teacher will be critical thinkers, problem solvers, creative thinkers and great communicators (Gasser, 2011; Korkman, 2007; Lee & Sharman, 2008; Threton, 2007). This is the difference, and in short, that is why this work is important.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

Future research is inevitable when discussing education as we always need to consider how social and structural changes affect our practices. Continuing to observe probationary

teachers, as well as the experienced teachers, in their natural setting through a qualitative study of what methods are being used in the classroom, will continue to close the gap on best practices and theory. The deep, rich narrative that a qualitative study allows the readers of such research to see is the classroom and the pedagogical methods through the researcher's words. More research might bring on more professional development, which creates networking and engagement of everyone involved in education from the teacher educator, parents, and school officials on the local level.

In order to have a more detailed understanding of preservice teachers' practices, future research might focus on teacher-educators and their programs from the perspective of these professors. It would be interesting to learn how the teacher-educator perceives their own pedagogy, how they define different methods, and what challenges they face in the classroom that might keep them from engaging in best practices. It would also be important to know how their practices have changed over time. Having this additional knowledge might help with the development of future professional development workshops.

### **Conclusion**

In this project study, the mention of change occurs over 90 times and the word reflection appears more than 50 times. We know reflection is a powerful teaching tool; it is an opportunity to examine what is going on in the field of education and what changes could be made to make improvements (Cornish & Jenkins, 2012; McKinney, 2007; Yuan, 2015). In the research study and in the proposed project, reflection was a key component. In the study, I had an opportunity to reflect on my own teaching, and the probationary teachers had the same opportunity as participants. With the data derived from this study, I believed a three-day workshop for teacher-

educators at Greentown University could be the beginning to a social change in educational practices, closing the gap for the probationary teachers graduating from Greentown University. The attendees of the workshop will re-evaluate and re-imagine their own teaching over the course of the three-days. Social change is possible when learners, in this case, teacher educators, have the opportunity to witness and engage in best practices. Providing them with the resources to translate theory into practice in their own classrooms benefits future teachers and their students. Elementary school students who experience pedagogy centered on empowering them to be active learners develop the skills, behaviors, and confidence necessary to be engaged citizens. When they are rewarded for taking responsibility for their own learning journey, the outcomes can be life changing.

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## Appendix A: The Project

**Professional Development: Course Agenda**

## Day 1

Time	Activity
8:00am-8:30	Registration and continental breakfast
8:30am-9:00	Welcome and overview of the goals and objectives of the workshop, Syllabus- Appendix A Warm-Up: Introductions – Tell the group who are you, what do you teach, and why are you here? Warm-up, What Are You Doing, Appendix A
10:15am-10:30	15 minute break-coffee and a chat
10:30am-12:30	Second Session: What Will Make a Great Teacher and University of Tomorrow Appendix A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Let's Talk Bain-what do the best college professors do?</li> <li>- Define teaching</li> <li>- What will you do to cause students to learn deeply</li> <li>- How will you create the learning environment</li> <li>- How will this affect social change</li> <li>- Why is that important</li> </ul>
12:30pm-1:30	Lunch
1:30pm-3:30	Third Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role playing-teaching – a history lesson for third graders, Appendix A</li> <li>- You are now third graders</li> <li>- Teaching through teacher-centered</li> <li>- Discussion</li> <li>- What do you think?</li> <li>- Would you like this teacher?</li> </ul> More Role Playing- a history lesson for third graders, Appendix A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Still third graders</li> <li>- Student-Centered</li> <li>- Which did you enjoy the most</li> <li>- Which classroom would you prefer</li> <li>- Discussion-If all third graders were taught through student-centered pedagogical methods-can you see the social change</li> </ul>

(table continues)

## Day 1

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Time	Activity
3:30pm-4:00	Final Session Reflection and what is to come
	Activity –Article- Appendix A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Homework- each group will be assigned an article</li> <li>- Return tomorrow prepared to discuss the article within your group and then share with all participants</li> </ul>

## Day 1 Evaluation, Appendix A

## Day 2

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Time	Activity
8:30am-10:30	First Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Warm-ups-choices Appendix A</li> <li>- Review of the article-round table discussion-within your group Appendix A</li> <li>- Discussion within each group-addressing questions from Appendix A</li> <li>- Q and A with the entire group</li> </ul>
10:30am-10:45	Coffee and a chat
10:45am	Second Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Panel of alumni who are teachers, Appendix A</li> <li>- Questions which were posed to the panel in advance: (4) teachers ranging from 1 to 3 years' experience in the field</li> <li>- Can you teach through student-centered pedagogical methods and meet the standards of learning</li> </ul> What type of impact on social change to you see the student-centered classroom having on future classrooms How do you teach Did you always teach this way Were you exposed to both methods as a preservice teacher Has your teaching changed over the years
12:00pm-1:00	Lunch
1:00pm-1:15	Group Activity: If these materials were all you had, Appendix A
1:15 pm-2:15	Group presentations (all one session)

(table continues)

## Day 2

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Time	Activity
2:15 pm- 3:15	Dramatic Interpretation of the student-centered and the teacher-centered classroom-preservice education majors of Greentown University (Round table discussion on dramatic interpretation-can you see the difference, can you see the impact on the 21 <sup>st</sup> century learner)? Appendix A
	3:15 pm -3:45 Jeopardy, Appendix A
	3:45 pm to 4:00Day 2 Evaluation, Appendix A and Closing Remarks

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## Day 3

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Time	Activity
8:30am-	Welcome
9:00	Recap of the workshop thus far Creativity warm-up, Appendix A
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9:00 am - 10:00	Session One Guest Speaker-Mrs. Lynn Morris (pseudonym)-Greentown Alumni- a teacher who was honored with the “Teacher of the Year Award” in her elementary school-by her peers Title of presentation: <i>An Interactive Talk on the Obligation of the Teacher Educator and Their Commitment to Social Change</i>
10:00am	Coffee and a chat
10:15am-	Session Two
11:15	- Where does creativity come into play, Appendix A - Stand up! - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY</a> - Ken Robinson - Round table discussion - My personal meeting with Ken Robinson - What would you do? Student-Centered vs Teacher-Centered - Where is the social change, how, why, when -
11:15 am- 12:15	Lunch
12:15 pm- 1:15	Session Three - What would you do activity: Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered, Appendix A Where is the social change, how, why, when

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(table continues)

## Day 3

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Time	Activity
1:15 pm- 1:30	Coffee and a Chat
1:30 pm- 3:00	Session Four <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- University Supervisors Panel-what do they see in the field when they observe student teachers. Is it student-centered or teacher-centered? Appendix A</li> <li>- Q and A</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
3:00 pm- 3:30	Final Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group reflection and networking</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
3:30 pm - 4:00	Bring up the lights...Let's hear from the audience- what worked, what changes would you recommend, would you recommend this workshop to your peers, why or why not
	Closing remarks from the presenter on social change
	Day 3 Evaluation, Appendix A
	Overall Course Evaluation, Appendix A

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### Course Syllabus

Students in the Driver's Seat: Engaged Learning and Social Change

Length: Three Work Days

Location: Greentown University meeting room

<http://student-centeredlearning.weebly.com/>

All materials are located at the above website

1. Course Description: This course is a practical exploration of the theory and practice of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogical methods. Designed for teacher educators, the course represents an interdisciplinary student-centered approach. The curriculum guide for this workshop reflects the pedagogical framework of Greentown University, the standards of CAEP, and the commonwealth Standards of Learning. In order to guide workshop participants to an understanding and confident use of student-centered pedagogical methods and how these methods contribute to social change, the course design is a hands-on, interactive based approach. Through its focus on comparison and synthesis, this course should heighten participant's ability to critically evaluate best practices for social change and execute them in their own classroom.

## 2. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, attendees will be able to:

- Define student-centered pedagogical methods
- Define Teaching
- Discuss and give examples of best practices and activities of student-centered pedagogical methods
- Execute student-centered pedagogical methods in their classroom-while connecting to SOLs
- Identify and the discuss the possible social change brought on by the student-centered classroom
- Make connections to the conceptual framework of the university
- Connect classroom techniques to (CAEP) standards
- Identify the role of diversity in the classroom

## 3. Requirement for Course Enrollment:

Register for CAFE Workshop by deadline

## 4. Course Methodology:

This workshop will be taught through student-centered pedagogical methods with examples of teacher-centered methods in order to compare and contrast. Participants will meet the goals and objectives of this course through demonstrations, roundtable discussions, guest speakers, outside readings, interactive videos, guest panels of alumni, guest panel of university supervisors of preservice teachers, modeling, small group activities, and dramatic interpretation of the classroom techniques, question and answer opportunities.

## 5. Methods of Evaluation:

There will be a pre and post evaluation of learning (Appendix A). This assessment will be administered through CAFE. There will also be both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments will range from participation, contributions to discussion, and group presentations. The summative assessment will be in the form of a written evaluation at the end of each day, as well as an overall evaluation of the three-day workshop (Appendix A).

6. Textbook: None required for this course.

## 7. Meeting Times

This training is three-day course offered in the Fall of 2017 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on the first day due to registration. The second and third day timeframe for the workshop will be 8:30-4 PM. The times have been determined by the CAFE office of Greentown University. This workshop is scheduled to be repeated in the spring of 2018 and fall of 2018. The times for all workshops will remain the same.

## 8. Curriculum

## Conceptual Framework of Greentown University

### Conceptual Framework (CF)

I = Content Knowledge

VI = Communication

II = Planning

VII = Technology

III = Learning Climate

VIII = Diversity

IV = Implementation/Management IX = Professional Disposition

V = Evaluation/Assessment

#### CF Standard I: Content Knowledge

Educational Professionals possess an extensive working knowledge of the content of their profession and are able to deliver or assist in delivery of content in a manner that is consistent with best professional practices and that positively impacts student learning.

#### CF Standard II: Planning

Educational Professionals possess the ability to develop individual and group outcomes using appropriate techniques, strategies, technology, and available resources to meet state standards, other educational goals, and student needs.

#### CF Standard III: Learning Climate

Education Professionals are able to create for all students a positive and supportive environment that is conducive to learning, developmentally appropriate, and encourages mutual cooperation and respect.

#### CF Standard IV: Implementation/Management

Education Professionals design and use effective strategies that motivate students to have high expectations while encouraging critical thinking and creative problem solving.

#### CF Standard V: Evaluation/Assessment

Education Professionals use a variety of appropriate appraisal and evaluation methods to assess student learning and growth and to evaluate and improve on their professional practices.

#### CF Standard VI: Communication

Education Professionals possess the ability to communicate in a variety of contexts and with a variety of audiences, including students, parents, colleagues, and administrators, and value such communication as a means to provide opportunities for all students to grow and develop to their fullest potential.

#### CF Standard VII: Technology

Education Professionals utilize appropriate media, technology, and available resources for planning and implementing instruction, assessing and communicating learning results, and engaging students in instruction.

#### CF Standard VIII: Diversity

Education Professionals value diversity as an opportunity to enhance the learning of all students. They are deliberate in using what each child brings to the learning situation and facilitating learning experiences crafted to each student's learning needs. They also challenge students to reflect upon and transform their own beliefs about a diverse society as well as to challenge stereotypes and negative assumptions about diverse cultures, languages, economic resources, and abilities.

#### CF Standard IX: Professional Dispositions

Education Professionals demonstrate dispositions associated with the profession by their valuing of learning, personal integrity, diversity, collaboration, and professionalism.

**Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (accrediting organization of Greentown University- CAEP)**

<http://caepnet.org/standards/standard-1>

**Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions**

1.1 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the 10 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (In TASC) standards at the appropriate progression level(s) 1 in the following categories: the learner and learning; content; instructional practice; and professional responsibility.

**Provider Responsibilities**

1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).

1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

1.5 Providers ensure that candidates model and apply technology standards as they design, implement and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; and enrich professional practice.

**Partnerships for Clinical Preparation**

2.1 Partners co-construct mutually beneficial P-12 school and community arrangements, including technology-based collaborations, for clinical preparation and share responsibility for continuous improvement of candidate preparation. Partnerships for clinical preparation can follow a range of forms, participants, and functions. They establish mutually agreeable expectations for candidate entry, preparation, and exit; ensure that theory and practice are linked; maintain coherence across clinical and academic components of preparation; and share accountability for candidate outcomes.

**Clinical Educators**

2.2 Partners co-select, prepare, evaluate, support, and retain high-quality clinical educators, both provider- and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and P-12 student learning and development. In collaboration with their partners, providers use multiple indicators and appropriate technology-based applications to establish, maintain, and refine criteria for selection, professional development, performance evaluation, continuous improvement, and retention of clinical educators in all clinical placement settings.

**Clinical Experiences**

2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical

experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Plan for Recruitment of Diverse Candidates who Meet Employment Needs

3.1 The provider presents plans and goals to recruit and support completion of high-quality candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations to accomplish their mission. The admitted pool of candidates reflects the diversity of America's P-12 students. The provider demonstrates efforts to know and address community, state, national, regional, or local needs for hard-to-staff schools and shortage fields, currently, STEM, English-language learning, and students with disabilities.

#### Admission Standards Indicate That Candidates Have High Academic Achievement And Ability

3.2 REQUIRED COMPONENT The provider sets admissions requirements, including CAEP minimum criteria or the state's minimum criteria, whichever are higher, and gathers data to monitor applicants and the selected pool of candidates. The provider ensures that the average grade point average of its accepted cohort of candidates meets or exceeds the CAEP minimum of 3.0, and the group average performance on nationally normed ability/achievement assessments such as ACT, SAT, or GRE:

- is in the top 50% from 2016-2017;
- is in the top 40% of the distribution from 2018-2019; and
- is in the top 33% of the distribution by 2020. [i]

[ALTERNATIVE 1] If any state can meet the CAEP standards, as specified above, by demonstrating a correspondence in scores between the state-normed assessments and nationally normed ability/achievement assessments, then educator preparation providers from that state will be able to utilize their state assessments until 2020. CAEP will work with states through this transition.

[ALTERNATIVE 2] Over time, a program may develop a reliable, valid model that uses admissions criteria other than those stated in this standard. In this case, the admitted cohort group mean on these criteria must meet or exceed the standard that has been shown to positively correlate with measures of P-12 student learning and development.

The provider demonstrates that the standard for high academic achievement and ability is met through multiple evaluations and sources of evidence. The provider reports the mean and standard deviation for the group.

[Board amendment adopted February 13, 2015] CAEP will work with states and providers through this transition regarding nationally or state normed assessments. Alternative arrangements for meeting this standard (beyond the alternative stated above for "a reliable, valid model that uses admissions criteria other than those stated in this standard") will be approved only under special circumstances. The CAEP staff will report to the Board and the public annually on actions taken under this provision. In all cases, EPPs must demonstrate the quality of the admitted candidates.

#### Additional Selectivity Factors



3.3 Educator preparation providers establish and monitor attributes and dispositions beyond academic ability that candidates must demonstrate at admissions and during the program. The provider selects criteria, describes the measures used and evidence of the reliability and validity of those measures, and reports data that show how the academic and non-academic factors predict candidate performance in the program and effective teaching.

#### Selectivity during Preparation

3.4 The provider creates criteria for program progression and monitors candidates' advancement from admissions through completion. All candidates demonstrate the ability to teach to college- and career-ready standards. Providers present multiple forms of evidence to indicate candidates' developing content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and the integration of technology in all of these domains. [ii]

#### Selection at Completion

3.5 Before the provider recommends any completing candidate for licensure or certification, it documents that the candidate has reached a high standard for content knowledge in the fields where certification is sought and can teach effectively with positive impacts on P-12 student learning and development.

3.6 Before the provider recommends any completing candidate for licensure or certification, it documents that the candidate understands the expectations of the profession, including codes of ethics, professional standards of practice, and relevant laws and policies. CAEP monitors the development of measures that assess candidates' success and revises standards in light of new results.

#### Impact on P-12 Student Learning and Development

4.1 **REQUIRED COMPONENT** The provider documents, using multiple measures, that program completers contribute to an expected level of student-learning growth. Multiple measures shall include all available growth measures (including value-added measures, student-growth percentiles, and student learning and development objectives) required by the state for its teachers and available to educator preparation providers, other state-supported P-12 impact measures, and any other measures employed by the provider.

#### Indicators of Teaching Effectiveness

4.2 **REQUIRED COMPONENT** The provider demonstrates, through structured and validated observation instruments and/or student surveys that completers effectively apply the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the preparation experiences were designed to achieve.

#### Satisfaction of Employers

4.3 **REQUIRED COMPONENT** The provider demonstrates, using measures that result in valid and reliable data and including employment milestones such as promotion and retention, that employers are satisfied with the completers' preparation for their assigned responsibilities in working with P-12 students.

#### Satisfaction of Completers

4.4 **REQUIRED COMPONENT** The provider demonstrates, using measures that result in valid and reliable data, that program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that the preparation was effective.

#### Quality and Strategic Evaluation

5.1 The provider's quality assurance system is comprised of multiple measures that can monitor candidate progress, completer achievements, and provider operational effectiveness. Evidence demonstrates that the provider satisfies all CAEP standards.

5.2 The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable measures, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

#### Continuous Improvement

5.3 REQUIRED COMPONENT The provider regularly and systematically assesses performance against its goals and relevant standards, tracks results over time, tests innovations and the effects of selection criteria on subsequent progress and completion, and uses results to improve program elements and processes.

5.4 REQUIRED COMPONENT Measures of completer impact, including available outcome data on P-12 student growth, are summarized, externally benchmarked, analyzed, shared widely, and acted upon in decision-making related to programs, resource allocation, and future direction.

5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

### **Commonwealth Standards of Learning**

#### **United States History to 1865**

#### **Standards of Learning-**

#### **Grade 5**

USI.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by

c) describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry

## Workshop Materials and Instructions-Day 1

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to teach action verbs and improve listening skills.

**The Connection:** The connection of this exercise to student-centered pedagogy is that the students are up and engaged in the exercise as opposed to sitting at their desk and writing actions verbs. In improving listening, the student will also need to focus on what they hear as opposed to what they see.

*What are you doing?*

*The attendees will gather in a circle at the center of the room. As the facilitator, I will go to the center of the circle and perform an action verb. For example, I will model mowing grass, and the next participant, the one to my right, will enter the circle and ask me- "what are you doing?" My response can be any action verb other than what I am doing. Example: I will say "brushing my teeth." Each participant is modeling a different activity rather than what is instructed. The participant who asked me what I was doing will model brushing their teeth and the next participant will enter the circle and the sequence will continue until everyone has had a turn. This exercise serves as an icebreaker, an activity to teach action verbs, as well as to promote effective listening. In addition, I will ask the question: how can you use this exercise to teach a lesson?*

*I will offer the idea it can help in teaching listening skills-you are seeing one action but you must listen to know what action you are to perform. (CF: VI).*

### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

### Defining Student-Centered Teaching

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to determine if each attendee has a clear definition of student-centered teaching. Also, to form once precise definition written by the entire group which will be the road map for the entire workshop.

**The Connection:** It is vital to the success of this workshop that all attendees have a clear definition of student-centered pedagogy.

*I will divide the 20 attendees into four groups of five. Each participant will get a note card, on which he/she will write his/her definition of student-centered teaching. Once each attendee has written their definition, he/she will share with the other members of their group, at which time they will choose what they believe to be the best definition. Once the best definition is chosen, a volunteer from the group will write their definition on the board. The entire group at which time will construct one definition for the entire class (CF: I).*

Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.2 The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable measures, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

Ken Bain

Purpose: Dr. Ken Bain, an expert in the field of education, encourages scholarly discussion concerning what educators can do to improve as teachers and, in essence, their university will improve. It is important to hear from experts in the field of education who promote student engagement in a deeper learning.

Connection: The connection to student-centered pedagogy and Dr. Bain's presentation is the ideas and methods he discussed are directly connected to improving a teacher's pedagogy, and the methods he discussed are directly connected to student-centered.

*The group will watch the video entitled*

*What Will Make a Great Teacher and University Tomorrow?*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj9izcorKbc>

*In this video Dr. Bain ask questions of his audience. The questions listed below are the questions the 20 attendees in this three-day workshop will address in a round table discussion of their group and at the conclusion of the individual groups' discussion, each group will make their presentations to the entire group. There will also be a round table discussion with all attendees.*

- *Define teaching*
- *What will you do to cause students to learn deeper*
- *How will you create the learning environment?*
- *How will this affect social change?*
- *Why is that important?*
- *How deeper learning can affect how we mentor and teach future educators*
- *(CF: I, II, III, IV, V)*

Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.2 The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable measures, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

Re-Designed Lesson Plan

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is to allow the attendees the opportunity to see what both teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogy looks like in action and in writing on a lesson plan.

The Connection: When the attendees have the opportunity to see and experience both teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogical methods, it will clearly connect why student-centered pedagogy is the best practice for 21st century learners.

*On the interactive board, the attendees will be presented with a teacher-centered lesson plan. I will demonstrate some of the techniques from this plan teaching a third grade history lesson plan. As the facilitator, I will model teacher-centered pedagogy by presenting the prepared lesson plan from this lens (see plan below). In small groups, the attendees will re-write the lesson plan using the definition of student-centered pedagogical methods developed in the warm-up exercise earlier in the workshop. Once the lesson plan has been re-written, I will execute the same lesson using the prepared student-centered plan. Attendees will compare their re-designed plan with the prepared student-centered plan. At the closing of this exercise, the attendees will discuss the different methods as well as decide which methods would best meet the needs of the 21st century learner. A copy of the lesson plans (both teacher-centered and student-centered) will be in each attendee's registration packet.*

**Greentown University Lesson Plan Outline  
Scarrow-Teacher-Centered**

Academic Standards- list the SOL and/or Common Core Standards that align with the lesson

Revolution and the New Nation: 1770s to the Early 1800s

**Standards of Learning-**

**Grade 5**

USI.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by

c) describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry;

1. Instructional Objectives- The students will be able to identify American Revolutionary Figures and be able to discuss their roles in the American Revolution. The students will also be able to engage in discussion of the cause and results of the war.

### **George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry**

2. Instructional Design-

- **Introduction/Motivational Device**

- I will show a video of the America Revolution to spark the interest of the study of the war. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHdyONZ46dY>
- After the video I will lecture on the American Revolution. Key notes from the lecture will be dates and information concerning the 4 political figures and the role they played in the war

- 

- **Subject Content/Topics** The students will learn the key points contributed to the war and the role Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Henry played.

- Learning Activities/Procedures

- Lecture

- 

- After the video and short lecture. Class lap tops will be passed out and the students will be required to find links of the speeches of the figures being discussed. The students will choose one of the speeches and write a one paper response to the speech. This will be turned in at the end of class for a grade.

- 

- **Key Discussion Questions**

- There will be no discussion

- 

3. **Differentiated Learning Activities-**

- All students will do the same work. There are no learning issues in this class.

4. **Instructional Resources and Technology-**

Computer

Lap tops

Large Screen

## 5. Formative Assessment-

I will ask if students have any questions and I will monitor the students as they work on their papers.

### Reflection-

This will be completed at the end of the lesson.

*Adapted from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania's Lesson Plan Format and Scoring Guide*

## Greentown University Lesson Plan Outline Scarrow-Student-Centered

### Standards of Learning- Grade 5

USI.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes and results of the American Revolution by  
c) describing key events and the roles of key individuals in the American Revolution, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry

### Instructional Objectives

The students will correctly identify American Revolutionary Figures (George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Patrick Henry) and accurately discuss and detail their roles in the American Revolution. The students will also engage in discussion of the cause and results of the war.

### Instructional Design

#### **Introduction/Motivational Device**

A video will be shown about the America Revolution in order to hook the interest of the students as they prepare to learn of the war.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2xwoFhkVTo>

#### **Subject Content/Topics**

The students will learn the key points which contributed to the war and the roles Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Henry played during that time.

## **Learning Activities/Procedures**

### Class Discussion on the Video

After the video, there will be collaborative group work. The students will be divided into four fun groups –ice cream-music, cookies-visual art, soda-dance, and candy bars-singing. This will encourage students to work collaboratively with all classmates. Plus the group names will promote comradery. Each group will come up with an 8-10 minute presentation of your group’s interpretation of the American Revolutionary War and the role the 4 historical figures played in the war through the discipline you have chosen.

### **Key Discussion Questions**

Who were these men and what were their roles (Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and Franklin?

Why were the colonists upset?

What did the colonists contribute to the war and to the peace after the war?

### **Closure**

Students will take-part in a role playing activity about the Revolutionary War and the events surrounding it, bringing history to life in the modern day classroom.

### **Differentiated Learning Activities**

For students who are not interested in any of the centers, they will have the choice of writing a short paper about the war and the key figures.

### **Instructional Resources and Technology**

- Computer
- TV
- Costumes
- CD Player
- CDs
- Paper, crayons, markers, and paint

### **Formative Assessment**

I will work with each center to assist them in brainstorming their approach to the project. Periodically I will ask, “Are we doing ok?” “Does anyone need help?” “Do you need more



time?” and “Are we on schedule?”

## **Reflection**

This will be completed at the end of the lesson.

*Adapted from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania's Lesson Plan Format and Scoring Guide*

### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

## Extension

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is that the research will validate the information shared in the workshop. It will also promote group discussion about the researcher.

**The Connection:** The exercise is carried-out in a student-centered method and the attendees will be able to connect current research to the information shared over the three-day workshop.

*Each group will be given the link to an article (listed below) which deals with student-centered pedagogical methods and possible social changes which would occur if this method was executed in the classroom. Upon the return of the attendees on day two, they will go back into their groups where they will discuss the article and prepare a presentation to the entire group of attendees about their individual article, addressing questions such as:*

- *What was the main idea of the article?*
- *Do you agree with the article?*
- *If you were to put the findings of the article into action in your classroom, what would they look like?*
- *Could the findings of this article bring on social change, how?*
- *How does this article define student-centered?*

- *Where is the social change?*
- *What is the role of creativity in student-centered pedagogical methods?*
- *What is the role of the student in the student-centered method*
- *This is to promote more discussion about student-centered pedagogical methods and social change (CF: I, IV, VII).*

#### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).

1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

1.5 Providers ensure that candidates model and apply technology standards as they design, implement and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; and enrich professional practice.

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Group 1

Gilis, A., Clement, M., Laga, L., & Pauwels, P. (2008). Establishing a competence profile for the role of student-centered teachers in higher education in Belgium. *Research in Higher Education*, 49(6), 531-554. Retrieved from <http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/higher+education/journal/11162>

#### Group 2

Eckhoff, A. (2011). Creativity in the early childhood classroom: Perspectives of preservice teachers. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 32(3), 240-255. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ujec20/current#.UdcOaztwqMM>

### Group 3

Garrett, T. (2008). Student-centered and teacher-centered classroom management: A case study of three elementary teachers. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 43(1), 34-47. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ829018.pdf>

### Group 4

Kosnik, C., Cleovoulou, Y., Fletcher, T., Harris, T., McGlynn-Stewart, M., & Beck, C. (2011). Becoming teacher educators: an innovative approach to teacher educator preparation. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 37(3), 351-363. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221937780\\_Becoming\\_teacher\\_educators\\_An\\_innovative\\_approach\\_to\\_teacher\\_educator\\_preparation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221937780_Becoming_teacher_educators_An_innovative_approach_to_teacher_educator_preparation)

## Workshop Materials and Instructions-Day 2

### Choices

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to start the day with the attendees up and moving. It is also an exercise that will promote creativity; although, I use sequence of fruits, cars, and vegetables, I will challenge the attendees to come up with other ways this exercise can be used to possibly teach math sequence, historical time periods, and/or verbs, nouns, or proper nouns.

**The Connection:** Students are up and engaged. Student-centered pedagogy encourages student engagement with student choice making, and offers different types of assessment opportunities.

*The entire group will form a circle and will be asked to choose (2) fruits. The objective of the warm-up is to remain in the circle, and each attendee will turn to their right –one at a time and say their fruit. The reason they have been told to have two fruits is that if the person to your left says orange and your fruits are apples and oranges you will then turn to your right and say apples because you cannot repeat what the person to your left just said. That is why you are choosing (2) fruits. For this exercise, a tomato is a vegetable. Your personal objective is to focus only on the person to your left and then release your choice verbally to the person on your right. Once this round is complete, the group is asked to choose (2) vegetables and the group will follow the same procedure. Once completed, the group is told to choose (2) makes of cars- Chevy, Honda, Volvo, etc. At which time the same instructions are completed. At this time each attendee will have (2) fruits, (2) vegetables, and (2) makes of cars. As the team leader, I am the only one who can change the sequence. I start with fruits, once the fruit is passed to the person on my right, I repeat my vegetable, which once released I repeat my choice of car. As the group continues on with the exercise and the person to my left repeats their choice of fruits, -the person on my right may be anticipating I will continue with the selection of fruits, but I change to car (even though car has not been repeated back to me, as the leader I can change any time I want, I can add each category as many times as I like).*

*The length of the exercise will vary- which can be determined as to how the group responds to the exercise.*

Questions to the group:

- How could you use this exercise to teach through student-centered pedagogical methods?
- What subjects could be taught through this exercise?
- Could this exercise be used to meet SOLs?

Examples:

Student-centered pedagogical methods-the students are up, moving, making choices

You could teach math- multiples of certain numbers

This exercise could be used to meet SOLs- math SOLs of math comparison, sequence, counting, etc. (CF: VI).

Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

SOL example from Virginia Department of Education

Computation and Estimation

Focus: Factors and Multiples, and Fraction and Decimal Operations

4.5 The student will

- a) determine common multiples and factors, including least common multiple and greatest common factor;

Extension and Extension Continued

Purpose: The purpose of this exercise is that the research will validate the information shared in the workshop. It will also promote group discussion about the researcher.

The Connection: The exercise is carried-out in a student-centered method and the attendees will be able to connect current research to the information shared over the three-day workshop.

*Each group will be given the link to an article which deals with student-centered pedagogical methods and possible social changes which might occur if this method was executed in the classroom. Upon the return of the attendees on day two, they will go back into their groups where they will discuss the article and make a presentation to the entire group of attendees about the article. This is to promote more discussion about student-centered pedagogical methods and social change (CF: I, IV, VII).*

## Group 1

Gilis, A., Clement, M., Laga, L., & Pauwels, P. (2008). Establishing a competence profile for the role of student-centered teachers in higher education in Belgium. *Research in Higher Education*, 49(6), 531-554. Retrieved from <http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/higher+education/journal/11162>

## Group 2

Eckhoff, A. (2011). Creativity in the early childhood classroom: Perspectives of preservice teachers. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 32(3), 240-255. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ujec20/current#.UdcOaztwqMM>

## Group 3

Garrett, T. (2008). Student-centered and teacher-centered classroom management: A case study of three elementary teachers. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 43(1), 34-47. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ829018.pdf>

## Group 4

Kosnik, C., Cleovoulou, Y., Fletcher, T., Harris, T., McGlynn-Stewart, M., & Beck, C. (2011). Becoming teacher educators: an innovative approach to teacher educator preparation. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 37(3), 351-363. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221937780\\_Becoming\\_teacher\\_educators\\_An\\_innovative\\_approach\\_to\\_teacher\\_educator\\_preparation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221937780_Becoming_teacher_educators_An_innovative_approach_to_teacher_educator_preparation)

*Each group will have the opportunity to discuss their assigned article. Proposed questions will be on the board to prompt discussion.*

*Upon the return of the attendees on day two, they will go back into their groups where they will discuss the article and make a presentation to the entire group of attendees about the article.*

Questions to promote discussion about student-centered pedagogical methods and social change:

- What was the main idea of the article?
- Do you agree with the article?
- If you were to put the findings of the article into action in your classroom, what would they look like?
- Could the findings of this article bring on social change, how?
- How does this article define student-centered?
- Where is the social change?
- What is the role of creativity in student-centered pedagogical methods?
- What is the role of the student in the student-centered method (CF: I, IV, VII).

## Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

- 1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).
- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).
- 1.5 Providers ensure that candidates model and apply technology standards as they design, implement and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; and enrich professional practice.

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Alumni Panel

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to examine the pedagogy Greentown's alumni who are currently in the classroom; are they teaching through student-centered or teacher-centered. Also with the diverse and cultural changes in the classroom today the alumni panel will address how that is handled through their teaching method.

**The Connection:** The entire workshop is addressing how Greentown's teacher-educators are teaching. To hear from them in a face-to-face conversation will validate that more student-centered exposure is needed.

*An alumni panel of (4) teachers ranging in experience of teaching from one year to three (probationary teachers) will discuss various pedagogical methods and implementation of such methods. (CF: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX)*

Questions which have been posed to the panel in advance:

- Define both student-centered and teacher-centered
- List five characteristics of both student-centered and teacher-centered
- How do you teach-student centered or teacher-centered- did you always teach this way
- Were you exposed to both methods as a preservice teachers
- Has your teaching changed over the years

- Discuss the challenges you face in a diverse student population and how you handled it
- What type of impact on social change do you see the student-centered classroom having on future classrooms-explain

#### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).
- 1.5 Providers ensure that candidates model and apply technology standards as they design, implement and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; and enrich professional practice.

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

#### If This Was All You Had

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to challenge the creativity of the attendees.

The Connection: Student-centered pedagogical methods encourage creativity in the students. Through this activity, the attendees have the opportunity to model creativity.

#### *Group Activity*

*The attendees will be presented with a prop box– each group will have an opportunity to choose 3 items from the box. Some examples of items from the box include a tablecloth, a mask, a drum, a folder, a puppet, a pen, a box of colored chalk, a cup, picture frame, and an empty Altoid tin. Once the group has chosen their three items, they are to create a lesson using only these items and bring the lesson to life through a student-centered approach. The group chooses the subject and the grade level. Each group will make a presentation to the entire group of attendees.*

#### *Example:*

*This would be a review lesson after a detailed lesson had been taught on weather and the different types of weather produced by certain clouds.*

*I would choose the chalk, a folder, and a drum. I would plan to teach a lesson on weather in a 4th grade class. I would divide my class of twenty in to 4 groups of 5. Since there is a box of chalk, I would break the chalk in pieces until there were 20 – each student would get a piece of chalk, and as a class, we would proceed outside to the sidewalks. This where each student would draw on the sidewalk a cloud that might produce rain, or one that would bring snow. Also based on what the class had already learned about clouds and what they were made of-I would tear the folder into 4 pieces and give it to each group and I would ask the students –how can you use this piece of folder to show me what you learned about cloud make up-example the tear the paper into small droplets-to show that clouds are made up of ting rain drops. The final object the drum – as the teacher I will be a certain rhythm on the drum and have the students to move to the rhythm and then answer the question – which cloud do you think would move in the tempo that I will beat out on the drum. This is a student-centered lesson-the students are up, they are participating, they have a voice in their learning, and they are being encouraged to be creative. (CF: I, II, IV, V, VI)*

#### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.
- 1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).
- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

Standards of Learning-Commonwealth  
Interrelationships in Earth/Space Systems



4.6 The student will investigate and understand how weather conditions and phenomena occur and can be predicted. Key concepts include

- a) weather phenomena;
- b) weather measurements and meteorological tools; and
- c) use of weather measurements and weather phenomena to make weather predictions.

#### Impromptu Dramatic Interpretation

**The Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is once again to allow the attendees an opportunity to see what student-centered and teacher-centered looks in the classroom from the perspective of preservice theatre teachers.

**The Connection:** Student-centered is deemed best practices for the 21st century learner. This activity will not only show what this method looks like it will also offer the attendees to make a comparison of the two methods.

*The theatre education methods class of Greentown University will present an impromptu dramatic interpretation of what the student-centered classroom and a teacher-centered classroom might look like teaching a lesson in order designed to meet the 2nd grade science SOLS. The group that will be performing will only get the SOLS for the performance.*

Discussion questions for the attendees after the performance:

- Could you see the difference?
- Where does social change come in?
- Will student-centered pedagogical methods make a difference in our world?
- Is this best practice for the 21st century learner and why?

At the conclusion of the discussion from the attendees, the students will have an opportunity to talk about their experience during the exercise. The facilitator will provide the following information grounded in research:

Teacher-centered classrooms are an educational tradition (Johnson, Kimball, Melendez, Myers, Rhea; Kember, 2009; Travis, 2009; Weimer, 2002). In education studies, the student-centered pedagogical method has been shown to increase high-order thinking, which increases cognition; the student is more fully supported and practiced in the critical thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Doyle, 2008; Gilis, Clement, Laga, Pauwels, 2008; Lew, 2010). When a teacher practices the student-centered pedagogical methods in the classroom, learning becomes a more dynamic experience. (CF: I, II, III, IV, VI, VII)

#### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Science-Commonwealth

##### SOL: 2.3

- The student will investigate and understand basic properties of solids, liquids, and gases.

##### Key concepts include:

- a) identification of distinguishing characteristics of solids, liquids, and gases;

#### Appendix A Jeopardy Assessment

**The Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to assess the attendees and the knowledge which has been gleaned from the workshop thus far.

**The Connection:** Student-centered pedagogical methods encourage different types of assessment. This particular assessment will not only assess, but it will engage students through a collaborative group activity.

*Jeopardy-assessment: Attendees will take-part in a game of Jeopardy to review material they have learned thus far and for me to formally assess their understanding of the material. Each group will have a spokesperson and a response buzzer. I purchased the buzzers from Amazon and have used them in my classes. The group that buzzes in first will be given a chance to respond to the question. If the answer is incorrect, the second team that buzzes in will be given a chance to answer. This will be repeated until the correct answer is given or until all groups have answered incorrectly, at which time the correct answer will be given. Each team will acquire points for the correct and points will be subtracted for the incorrect answers. CAFE will assign a scorekeeper. Winners will receive pens and notes pads provided by CAFE. (CF: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI)*

Jeopardy Game Template described below and at link located at [student-centeredlearning.weebly.com](http://student-centeredlearning.weebly.com)

#### Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

- 1.5 Providers ensure that candidates model and apply technology standards as they design, implement and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; and enrich professional practice.

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

### Jeopardy! Questions and Answers

#### Student-Centered Pedagogical Methods

This is a method where students learn through authentic, real-life situations. problem based learning

Student-Centered pedagogical methods give students a \_\_\_ in their learning journeys. voice

Who is the facilitator? the teacher (you)

Who is in-charge of the students' learning? the students

Students are given \_\_\_ in their learning activities. choices

#### Teacher-Centered Pedagogical Methods

Who is at the center of the stage? the teacher (you)

Who is in the driver's seat? the teacher (you)

In a teacher-centered classroom, there is little to no room for student \_\_\_. voice

What are commonly used in teacher-centered classrooms? worksheets

Every child is expected to learn \_\_\_. the same way

#### Classroom Design

In a student-centered classroom, the desks are arranged \_\_\_. in a variety of ways to accommodate for multiple learning experiences.

In a student-centered classroom, technology (Active Boards, computers, iPads, etc.) is primarily used by \_\_\_. the students

Students are not free to \_\_\_ in a teacher-centered classroom. move around

Student desks are arranged in such a manner to accommodate \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ learning. group and kinesthetic

In a student-centered classroom, authentic \_\_\_ \_\_\_ is displayed around the room. student work

### **Characteristics of a Student-Centered Teacher**

Their number one priority is \_\_\_ \_\_\_. their students

They do not need \_\_\_ \_\_\_. the power

They put responsibility in the hands of \_\_\_ \_\_\_. their students

Students are given \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ of their education. ownership and charge

They ultimately \_\_\_ in their students. believe

### **Characteristics of a Teacher-Centered Teacher**

Little to no \_\_\_ \_\_ is displayed. student work

This style of teaching is common. lecture style

Where are the students? in their seats listening

The \_\_\_ is at the front of the room, talking, and leading the class. teacher

There is little \_\_\_ among students. movement

## Workshop Materials and Instructions- Day 3

### Creativity

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to challenge the creativity of the attendees.

The Connection: Student-centered pedagogical methods encourage creativity in the students. Through this activity, the attendees have the opportunity to model creativity.

*Each group member will get a note card, on which he/she will write his/her definition of creativity. Once each attendee has written their definition, he/she will share with the other members of their group, at which time they will choose what they believe to be the best definition. Once the best definition is chosen, a volunteer from the group will write their definition on the board. The entire group will construct one definition for the entire class.*

The definition below will be given to the class after their definitions have been discussed.

1. The state or quality of being creative.
2. The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc.; originality, progressiveness, or imagination: the need for creativity in modern industry; creativity in the performing arts.
3. The process by which one utilizes creative ability: Extensive reading stimulated his creativity.

This definition comes from:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/creativity>

Round table discussion:

- Where does creativity come into play in the classroom? (CF: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII)

Standard1: Content and Pedagogical Methods

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.

Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge,

skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

## Stand Up

**The Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is an examination of the attendees and how they view themselves by asking them to answer the questions listed below. Also the purpose of this activity is that in many cases educators see themselves as above average intelligence but not as creative. This exercise will show that there is a connection and help the attendees to see it.

**The Connection:** Student-centered pedagogy encourages creativity and this activity will make the connection through discussion and the video featuring Sir Ken Robinson.

As a presenter, I will ask the group two questions:

- If you believe you are of above average intelligence stand up (I will ask the attendees to look around and then be seated)
- If you believe you are creative stand up (I will ask the attendees to look around and then be seated)

The attendees will watch the video and then we will come back to the stand-up activity.

*Sir Ken Robinson is an internationally known leader in the development of education and business. His contributions to the 2006 and 2010 TED Conference have been viewed by over 250 million people in over 150 different countries. He works with governments and education systems on three continents. He was professor of education at the University of Warwick in the UK for twelve years and is now professor emeritus. He has received numerous honorary degrees from various universities. Sir Ken Robinson has also been the recipient of many prestigious awards, including being named as one of Time/Fortune/CNN's 'Principal Voices in 2005 and receiving a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his services to the arts in 2003 (Sir Ken Robinson, 2016).*

**Video Discussion-what we know:**

-Susan Isaacs, a teacher in London from 1933 to 1943, presented her method of teaching preservice teachers, which advocated putting the student first. Her goal as an administrator and teacher was to offer her students who were preservice teachers an opportunity to have input in the learning process in hopes that when they became teachers they would model student-centered methods in their classrooms. Her student-centered methods focused on encouraging imagination, fostering creativity, and giving value to students' personal interests (Willan, 2009).

Putting the student first in the educational process is an idea that may have begun as early as 1933 in London, but it is reaching a small university right here in Southside.

-Also:

Striving for instructional best practices spans the globe. In a study examining Ugandan teaching methods, researchers found teacher-centered pedagogical methods stifled students' creativity and offered no encouragement for students to develop problem-solving skills. Findings from this study prompted many African countries to move more to a child-centered pedagogy (Altinyelken, 2010). Another study in Turkey revealed teacher-centered pedagogical philosophies stifle students from thinking creatively and offer little encouragement to promote problem-solving skills (Elma, Demirdogen, & Geban, 2011). Chu (2010) reported that Hong Kong's teachers are expected to produce leaders of tomorrow who think independently and creatively. Hong Kong's educational system introduced and encouraged student-centered methods, challenging teachers to develop students as productive, problem-solving members of society. This method of teaching placed the emphasis of learning on the student and the motivation for learning on teacher. Preservice teachers are the educators of tomorrow; they will teach future presidents, executives, doctors, lawyers, and teachers.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of how student-centered pedagogical methods can make a difference in our world because it will make a difference in our classroom, which will make a difference in our people-the change will not stop.

Refer the attendees back to the question I proposed earlier- standup if you believe you are of above ...

*My reason for asking those questions were – I actually had the pleasure of meeting and talking with Sir Ken Robinson and that was the first question he asked the group. There were probably over 200 people in the room. Almost everyone stood up when ask about intelligence but when the group was asked about creativity- only two stood up, me and one other person. My question to you is why?*

*Do you agree/disagree and why? (CF: I, II, III, IV)*

#### Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.
- 1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).
- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation

Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

#### Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.2 The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable measures, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.
- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

#### What Would You Do?

Purpose: To challenge attendees to examine classroom scenarios that may be considered obstacles and turn them into student-centered methods.

The Connection: This student-centered exercise will host collaborative learning, discussion and critical thinking

#### *Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered*

*In this classroom case based activity, attendees will discuss and offer suggestions to solve pedagogical dilemmas. In order to facilitate this process, each scenario will be posted on the wall using large flipchart paper. To encourage both individual and collaborative reflection, attendees will post their initial suggestions (using a yellow Post-It note) and then respond to their colleagues' suggestions (using a green Post-It note). More specifically, attendees will walk around the room reading the posted scenarios. On a yellow Post-It note, each attendee will write she/he would use student-centered pedagogical methods to address the issue; he/she will post the yellow note under the scenario. Attendees will read all of their colleagues' yellow-colored suggestion notes and offer a comment or suggestion using a green Post-It note; they will post the green response note next to their colleague's yellow suggestion note. Each small group will be responsible for analyzing and presenting to the larger group a summary of the Post-It "discussion" for one scenario. The larger group will reflect and offer feedback. At the*



*conclusion, I will lead a time of reflection and conversation to address how and why those pedagogical methods were chosen.*

The scenarios will be as follows:

- How would you make a Smart/Promethean board a student-centered instructional tool?
- You have a student that is disengaged with your lesson. What pedagogical methods might you utilize to try to engage the student?
- You have to give an assessment on lesson plan design. How would you make that assessment student-centered?
- It is your teacher workday-your desks have arrived-how would you arrange the desk?
- Everyone in your class passed the most recent test, but one – this one student is normally an A/B student-what would you do? (CF: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII)

#### Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

- 1.1 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the 10 In TASC standards at the appropriate progression level(s) 1 in the following categories: the learner and learning; content; instructional practice; and professional responsibility.
- 1.2 Providers ensure that candidates use research and evidence to develop an understanding of the teaching profession and use both to measure their P-12 students' progress and their own professional practice.
- 1.3 Providers ensure that candidates apply content and pedagogical knowledge as reflected in outcome assessments in response to standards of Specialized Professional Associations (SPA), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), states, or other accrediting bodies (e.g., National Association of Schools of Music – NASM).
- 1.4 Providers ensure that candidates demonstrate skills and commitment that afford all P-12 students access to rigorous college- and career-ready standards (e.g., Next Generation Science Standards, National Career Readiness Certificate, Common Core State Standards).

#### Standard 2: Partnerships for Clinical Preparation

- 2.3 The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in Standard 1, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students.

#### Standard 5: Quality and Strategic Evaluation

- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

## University Panel

**The Purpose:** The purpose of the University Panel is to have the teacher-educators who supervise student teachers during their field experience to share with the attendees what methods of teaching the student teachers are executing during their field experience.

**The Connection:** The field experience of preservice teachers is the final experience before they move onto their probationary experience. If they are practicing student-centeredness in the field experience how they will be ready to execute this method in their probationary classroom. In essence, that is why this three-day workshop is important.

Teacher educators who supervise student teachers during their field experience will serve as a guest panel to address what they witness in the field when observing student teachers. The questions that will start the discussion will be: “When you observe student teachers in the during their field placement-do you see more student-centered or teacher-centered pedagogical methods and please give an example of each.

When you are in the field, do you see more student-centered or more teacher-centered pedagogical methods executed? Please offer an example of each method you observed.

When you see teacher-centered methods, do you suggest to the student teacher- possible student-centered methods they might use to execute the same lesson?

If the student teacher used a worksheet during any one of your observations was this worksheet used as the “sole” part of the lesson or is the worksheet used in conjunction with other components, which might be considered student-centered-such as group work, other projects or an oral presentation?

Knowing you will observe each student-teacher in the field teaching a lesson at least three times during the first placement do you find during the second and third observation of both the first and second placements that you observe did the student teacher call their students by name?

How did the student teacher have the room arranged? Were they able to move around the room with ease? Have you ever addressed the room arrangement with student teachers who you observed?

On the walls of the classroom where the student teacher was assigned did the student-teacher have her student’s work displayed?

Would you ever suggest for the student teacher to do this?

Have you observed the student teacher integrating technology into the lesson?

During an observation of the student teacher, did the student teacher use games and prizes as a

teaching tool? Did you see this as an effective teaching tool? (CF: I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX).

#### Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement, and Capacity

- 5.1 The provider's quality assurance system is comprised of multiple measures that can monitor candidate progress, complete achievements, and provider operational effectiveness. Evidence demonstrates that the provider satisfies all CAEP standards.
- 5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

#### Workshop Evaluations

##### Day 1 Evaluation Form

#### 1. To what degree do you feel the goals and objectives for the day were met?

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

#### 2. How were the sessions' activities (presentations, videos, discussions, etc.) in regards to alignment of the course objectives?

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

#### 3. How would you rate the instructor- methods, energy, knowledge, etc.?

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

#### 4. How helpful was today's workshop to you, and do you see yourself utilizing any of the methods in your own teaching?

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

#### 5. How would you rate the ease of accessibility to today's materials?

1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**6. How did you feel about the length of the day?**

1 ( too short)     3 (just right)     5 (too long)

Comments:

**7. What, if any, recommendations do you have for improving today's workshop?**

**8. Additional Comments**

Day 2 Evaluation Form

**1. To what degree do you feel the goals and objectives of today's workshop were met?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**2. How were the sessions' activities (presentations, videos, discussions, etc.) in regards to alignment of the day's objectives?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**3. How would you rate the instructor- methods, energy, knowledge, etc.?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**4. How helpful was today's workshop to you, and do you see yourself utilizing the methods in your own teaching?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**5. How would you rate the ease of accessibility to today's materials?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**6. How do you feel about the length of the day?**

- 1 (too short)     3 (just right)     5 (too long)

Comments:

**7. What, if any, recommendations do you have for improving today's workshop?**

**8. Additional Comments**

Day 3 Evaluation Form

**1. To what degree do you feel the goals and objectives of today's workshop were met?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**2. How were the sessions' activities (presentations, videos, discussions, etc.) in regards to alignment of the day's objectives?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

**3. How would you rate the instructor- methods, energy, knowledge, etc.?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:


**4. How helpful was today's workshop to you, and do you see yourself utilizing the methods in your own teaching?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments:

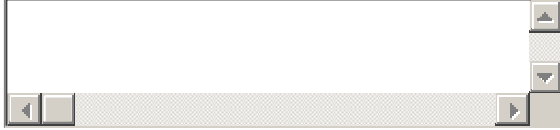
**5. How would you rate the ease of accessibility to today's materials?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

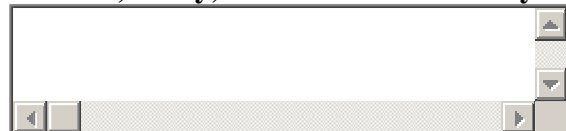
Comments: 

**6. How do you feel about the length of the day?**

- 1 (too short)       3 (just right)       5 (too long)

Comments: 

**7. What, if any, recommendations do you have for improving today's workshop?**



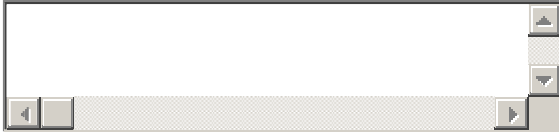
**8. Additional Comments**



Overall Course Evaluation

**1. To what degree do you feel the goals and objectives of this course were met?**

- 1 (needs improvement)       2       3       4       5 (outstanding)

Comments: 

**2. How were the sessions' activities (presentations, videos, discussions, etc.) in regards to alignment of the course objectives?**

- 1 (needs improvement)       2       3       4       5 (outstanding)

Comments: 

**3. How would you rate the instructor- methods, energy, knowledge, etc.?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments 

**4. How helpful was this course to you, and do you see yourself utilizing these methods in your own teaching?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments 

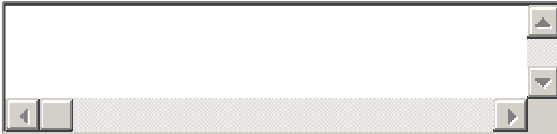
**5. How would you rate the ease of accessibility to course materials?**

- 1 (needs improvement)     2     3     4     5 (outstanding)

Comments 

**6. How did you feel about the length of the course (3 days)?**

- 1 (too short)         3 (just right)         5 (too long)

Comments 



**7. Lunches and meetings for coffee have already been scheduled throughout the next year. How likely are you to attend these?**

- 1 not very likely  3 likely  5 definitely

Comments

**8. How likely are you to recommend this workshop to a colleague/friend?**

- 1 not very likely  3 likely  5 definitely

Comments

**9. What, if any, recommendation do you have for improving this course?**

**10. Additional Comments**

Fact Sheet

Purpose: The purpose of the fact sheet is a take away of key components of the workshop.

The Connection: This handout offers the attendees some key information to reflect on after the completion of the workshop.

Student-Centered Fact Sheet

Best Practices:

- Best practices of 21<sup>st</sup> century education are that of student-centered (Brookfield; 2006; Gunel 2008; Sands, 2011).
- Educators have an obligation to model best practices of education to future teachers
- Educational theory and best practices suggest student-centered pedagogy is more effective in reaching students and achieving learning outcomes than traditional approaches of lecture or test and quiz sequences (Bain, 2004; Freire, 2012; Peters, 2009).

#### Student-Centered:

- There is no right or wrong way to model (Brookfield, 2004); however, when attendees are allowed to have choices, to become involved, and to share with other attendees, the takeaway is proven to be a success (Brown, Dotson, & Yontz, (2011); Richards & Skolits, 2009). This is the model of student-centered pedagogy.
- By encouraging open discussion as one of the teaching tools this allows an opportunity for each participant to share their knowledge of student-centered as well as divergent information to be shared (Jorczak, 2011).

#### Problem Based Learning (PBL):

- This is a life skill that could be taken into the real world, cultivating ideas to solve practical issues (Etherington, 2011). Teachers who enter their classroom practicing PBL methods will teach problem-solving skills that have real world application.
- In a mixed methods study carried out by Etherington (2011), 150 preservice teachers participated in a 13-week study that exposed them to PBL methods through the teaching of science. Given to the preservice teachers were real world problems, such as developing product improvements using inexpensive materials; using PBL methods to solve the problems encouraged the preservice teachers to analyze, ask questions, research, and find answers. This study indicated that PBL is a motivator. Preservice teachers who participated were reported to have more confidence in teaching science to their students. The typical PBL student and teacher must give up the role of being passive and take on the role of getting involved with learning. PBL is a tool in which the students take charge of their learning and the instructors take to the sidelines as guides.

#### Choices:

- The student-centered classroom is one in which the students are engaged, are able to make choices, and have a voice in their learning (Cubukcu, 2012).
- When students have an opportunity to make choices, it supports their own individuality, as well as create positive relationships; learning to play well and interact with others as form friendships (Jensen 2009; Nguyen, 2008).

#### Assessment:

- Formative assessment allows the facilitator to determine in an ongoing manner if goals and objectives are being met, while the summative assessment shows a final critique of goals and objectives met (Cai, & Sankaran, 2015).

#### 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

- Pedagogical methods of the 21st century promote students becoming critical thinkers, facilitating discussion, and valuing new ideas (Tamashiro, 2011).
- 21st century learning skills include being creative, thinking critically, and being able to work well with others in sharing ideas (Gallavan, & Kottler, 2012).

- Although teacher-centered is a viable method of pedagogy, it is suggested that best practices of 21st century education is that of student-centered (Brookfield; 2006; Gunel 2008; Sands, 2011).

Pre Evaluation

The Purpose: The purpose of the pre-evaluation is to determine what the attendees know prior to the workshop. The post-assessment will determine if their knowledge changed.

The Connection: Both evaluations will serve as a reflection tool.

**What I Know**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your definition of teacher-centered pedagogy?

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2. Please list three examples of teacher-centered pedagogical methods.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your definition of student-centered pedagogy?

---

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4. Please list two examples of student-centered pedagogical methods.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. On a scale of one to five, with one being never and five being every day, how often do you utilize teacher-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom? Please explain.

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6. If you do utilize teacher-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom, please list two examples:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

7. On a scale of one to five, with one being never and five being every day, how often do you utilize student-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom? Please explain.

---

---

---

8. If you do utilize student-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom, please list two examples:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have your instructional practices evolved over time or have they remained consistent? Please explain.

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10. Who and/or what has been your greatest influence on your pedagogical methods?

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---

11. Why are you attending this workshop?

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12. What questions do you have that you would like to have answered by the end of this workshop?

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**\*\*Thank you! \*\***

Appendix A Post Evaluation

**What I Know Now**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your definition of teacher-centered pedagogy?

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2. Please list three examples of teacher-centered pedagogical methods.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your definition of student-centered pedagogy?

---

---

---

4. Please list three examples of student-centered pedagogical methods.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. On a scale of one to five, with one being never and five being every day, how often do you see yourself implementing teacher-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom? Please explain.

---

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6. If you plan to utilize teacher-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom, please list two examples:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

7. On a scale of one to five, with one being never and five being every day, how often do you see yourself implementing student-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom? Please explain.

---

---

---

8. If you plan to utilize student-centered pedagogical instructional methods in your classroom, please list two examples:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have your instructional practices evolved over time or have they remained consistent? Please explain.

---

---

---

10. Who and/or what has been your greatest influence on your pedagogical methods?

---

---

---

11. Why did you attend this workshop?

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---

12. What questions do you still have regarding student-centered pedagogical practices?

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**\*\*Thank you!\***

\*

## References

The Purpose: The purpose of the reference list is to validate the information shared in the workshop.

The Connection: Student-centered is deemed as best practice and the literature will confirm this.

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**Appendix B: Initial E-mail to Probationary Teachers**

Dear Probationary Teacher - Holding a Teacher's License,

I currently serve as a Lecturer at Greentown University. I also am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. As part of my studies, I am examining probationary elementary teachers holding a Teaching License who are currently teaching in a Public School and the pedagogical methods they execute in the classroom. You were selected as a possible participant because of the institution from which you graduated and your position as a probationary year teacher. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with university or me. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in three face-to-face, one-on-one individual interviews with me-lasting no more than one hour. The date and location will be determined to meet your convenience. Additionally, you will be asked to allow me to observe two of your classes during a 15 week period teaching a complete lesson and allow me to review five lesson plans two of which would be of the lessons which I observe. If there are other instructional materials the participant feels comfortable sharing that would be acceptable. Prior to observations the school you are currently employed by must give written permission. Due the weather in our state the weeks will be decided on once the participant has agreed to the study.

The interviews will be audio recorded and I will take hand notes as well. All data will remain confidential and only be used for the purposes of this research project.

I would appreciate your response by February 15, 2014.

If you have any questions call me at [redacted] or e-mail me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

Ronda Scarrow

### Appendix C: Participant Letter Confirmation

Doctor of Education Student

Higher Education and Adult Learning

Phenix, VA 23959

Dear [respondent],

I currently serve as a Lecturer at Greentown University. I also am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. As part of my studies, I am examining probationary teachers and the pedagogical methods they execute in the classroom. You were selected as a possible participant because of the institution from which you graduated, your position as a probationary teacher, and your current geographical location within a 50 miles radius of Greentown University. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with university or me. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in two face-to-face, one-on-one individual interviews with me-with no time limit. The date and location will be determined to meet your convenience. Additionally, you will be asked to allow me to observe two of your classes during a 15 week period, specifically the second and eighth week.

The interviews will be audio recorded and I will take hand notes as well. You will be allowed to review what has been transcribed. All data will remain confidential and only be used for the purposes of this research project.

I would appreciate your response by [deadline].

If you have any questions call me at [redacted] or e-mail me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

Ronda Scarrow

**Appendix D: Letter to School Administration**

Principal  
School  
Virginia

Dear [Principal]:

I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. As part of my studies, I am required to conduct research. I have identified a need for research examining the pedagogical methods of probationary teachers (teachers who have been teaching for three years or less) graduating from the same university. I request your approval to have access to \_\_\_\_\_'s classroom for two observations of her teaching.

My intention is to conduct three face-to-face, one-on-one interviews and observe the classroom instruction twice. The interview will not take place during class time. I will observe the teacher for one complete lesson on both visits. This project will span fifteen weeks. All information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Participants will be asked to read and sign an informed consent regarding confidentiality and their ability to withdraw from the research study at any time.

I am available to discuss any details of this proposed study.

Sincerely,

Ronda Scarrow  
Lecturer  
University

### Appendix E: Interview Questions

1. What experiences during your teacher education program helped to inform your definition of teacher-centered teaching?
2. What experiences during your probationary period of teaching helped to inform your definition of teacher-centered teaching?
3. If your ideas about teacher-centered teaching have changed, what has caused the change?
4. What experiences during your teacher education program helped to inform your definition of student-centered teaching?
5. What experiences during your probationary years of teaching helped to inform your definition of student-centered teaching?
6. If your ideas about student-centered teaching have changed, what has caused the change?
7. Would you describe yourself as a student-centered or teacher-centered educator-explain?
8. Describe pedagogical methods and instructional practices that support that definition.

### Appendix F: Observation Guide

Probationary Teacher Number/Letter/Pseudonym Observed \_\_\_\_\_

(For confidentiality purposes, instructors will receive a unique number/letter assigned by the researcher.)

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

	Observed	Not Observed	Specific Comments
Teacher begins lesson with instruction and asks for questions prior to the start			
Encourages questions during lesson			
Were students allowed to get out of their seats for the lesson?			
Was there group work?			
Was there discussion between students and teacher?			
Were Power points and worksheets a part of the lesson?			
Was there an assessment for the assignment?			
Were the students given any choices during the lesson?			
Were students engaged and actively involved in the lesson?			

Was there time for reflection in the lesson?			
During discussion, were there open-ended questions asked?			



**Appendix G: Follow Up Interview Questions**

1. Describe the goals and objectives of the lesson observed.
2. What did you do to accomplish those goals and objectives?
3. What did the students do to accomplish those goals and objectives?
4. Would you describe the lesson observed as an example of teacher-centered or student-centered instruction? Explain.

### Appendix H: Observation Guide for Supplemental Materials

Probationary Teacher Number/Letter/Pseudonym Observed

\_\_\_\_\_

(For confidentiality purposes, instructors will receive a unique number/letter assigned by the researcher.)

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

	Evident	Not Evident	Specific Evidence
Directions are clear and concise			
Higher order and/or open ended questions are presented			
Document is aesthetically appropriate			
Clearly relates to past and current instruction			
Student learning needs are emphasized			
Evidence of student choice			
Assessment method is clearly presented			
Document promotes creative thinking			
Document asks students to reflect on their learning			

**Appendix I: Lesson Plan Template**

## Lesson Plan

Date of Instruction:

Teacher Name:

Subject/Topic:

Grade Level:

SOL:

Specific Learning Objectives:

Instructional Design:

Introduction/Motivation:

Subject Content/Topics:

Learning Activities/Procedures:

Key Discussion Questions:

Closure:

Differentiated Learning Activities:

Instructional Resources/Technology:

Formative Assessment: