

**INQUIRY INTO THE PREPARATION OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATORS  
PRACTICING IN MONTANA**

**SUMMARY FINAL REPORT**

*Prepared For:*

**The Montana Certification Standards  
and Practices Advisory Council  
(CSPAC)**

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## ***1.0 INTRODUCTION***

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report to the Montana Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC) describes the results of a two year series of interviews of practicing elementary and secondary educators in Montana.

The quality and effectiveness of teacher preparation programs are matters of interest to educators, parents and students not only in Montana but in states throughout the nation. Teacher preparation and staff development, for example, are key elements of the U.S. National Education Goals Initiative.

The opinions of practicing teachers about the advantages and disadvantages of their preparation, especially after they have been in practice for a few years, should be prime sources of information about the value of these programs for people engaged in statewide efforts to ensure that they are effective and relevant, and for the faculty, administrators, and students in the institutions that provide them.

In Montana, CSPAC is responsible for establishing teacher certification standards. To maintain accountability for this task, specific information regarding programs for training teachers obviously is needed on a continuing basis. What renders this inquiry for CSPAC unique is the agency's interest in a qualitative study, i.e., its desire to obtain such information through face-to-face interviews with practicing teachers.

Thus, the objective of the project was "to gain first-hand feedback from practicing teachers as to the relevance of their formal training in preparing them to teach, independent of where that teaching was received. The results are to be used to provide information to assist in developing state policy in the areas of teacher preparation and certification."

The project encompassed two interview cycles spread over a two year period. An interim report describing the results of the first year's effort was presented to CSPAC in

July 1997. That report contained recommendations for slight modifications in the methodology during the second year. Subsequently these were incorporated into the survey protocol, but, for the most part, the same questions were asked of teachers during each of the two years. The present report contains the findings for both years.

CSPAC's interest in a qualitative evaluation prompts a further word here. In this study, the expression "qualitative" is not used in an adjectival sense; rather, it refers to a distinctive methodological approach, essentially one that focuses on data depth rather than numbers, *per se* (or "quantitative" evaluation). Although both qualitative and quantitative research employ empirical values, by definition, qualitative research involves direct interactions between the researcher and the people of interest to the study, in this case, practicing teachers in Montana.

This personal contact and observation dimension distinguishes it from its methodological counterpart, quantitative research, which emphasizes distance (e.g., telephone rather than contact interviews), numbers (the larger the sample the better), and systematic neutrality (nameless interviewers and interviewees). The instruments used in quantitative research - e.g., telephone or mail surveys - also normally employ a relatively small number of closed-ended questions. The emphasis is on the number of contacts, or numbers, and the approach does not accommodate either depth or length. The goal is to assure representativeness through sample size and stratification.

The emphasis of qualitative research, in contrast, is on depth of insights rather than number. The qualitative approach is less concerned with statistical representativeness than information quality. In this sense the process is inductive, as conclusions are based on a variety of details and insights, rather than counts of pro or con responses. Thus, the interest is less a matter of assurance that the study findings will be generalizable to the entire population (in this case, all active Montana teachers), than in thoughtful and

deliberate opinions that can be used for evaluation purposes in the formulation of effective alternatives. For the purposes of this study, the alternatives will include information that can be used to guide state policies respecting teacher preparation and certification.

Qualitative research also may be less popular than quantitative methods because it is usually more demanding by virtue of its emphasis on extensive fieldwork, with the related travel requirements. In the present case, for example, interviewers had to travel to the schools and home towns of each of the randomly selected respondents. Moreover, face-to-face interviews usually are more time consuming. While the typical telephone interview normally is limited to about ten or fifteen minutes, the personal contact interviews utilized in the present study ranged between 45 and 90 minutes with additional time needed to schedule the appointment. In effect, the combined time involved in scheduling, traveling, and interviewing, averaged about three hours per interview. Since each interview was recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed, still more time was required for the analysis, about 45 minutes per interview.

Such time demands constitute the principal reason why quantitative research tends to be the more popular mode. Nevertheless, the qualitative method of inquiry, while more labor intensive than a quantitative (e.g., survey, telephone interview) approach, offers great promise for achieving the candor and detail about Montana's teacher preparation programs desired by CSPAC.

The results of these endeavors are described in the pages that follow. The immediately following section contains a summary review of the findings and the recommendations of the study. A more detailed discussion of the methodology and an itemized response distribution by question constitute the third chapter. Copies of the interview guide and other useful materials are presented in the Appendix.

***2.0 SUMMARY OF  
INTERVIEW RESULTS***

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## ***2.0 SUMMARY FINDINGS OF INTERVIEW RESULTS***

### ***2.1 Study Findings***

While Montana teachers have diverse opinions on their teacher preparation, they consistently display a clear and strong interest in more practical preparation. This is apparent in recurrent references to more and earlier field experiences, more student teaching and observation opportunities, more opportunities to work with faculty who are current in their knowledge of what is occurring in school classrooms, more exposure to practicing teachers, and more opportunities for professional development after they have begun their teaching careers. Most respondents also favor earlier field experience, and most would make field experience the cornerstone of the ideal teacher preparation program. Montana teachers also display a strong interest in linking the theoretical portions of their preparation programs directly to their field experiences. These interests showed up frequently and in many ways throughout the study.

With respect to their views about their college program's content, teachers rated as especially important their preparation for working with special education students, education technology, school law and administration, classroom management and discipline, parental relations, and cultural/ethnic diversity.

There was also a good deal of concern regarding ethnic, economic, and cultural shifts occurring in Montana, all which carry implications for the ways in which teachers are prepared. They frequently cited the effects of single-parent homes, substance abuse, and other emergent social problems on their schools and classrooms.

As the results of the interviews are reviewed more specifically and sequentially, the following additional observations emerge.

- The largest segment of the teachers who were interviewed teach in the elementary grades. Thus, most indicated that they teach a full range of subjects. Most teach classes of 21-30 students.



- The length of service ranged between four and eight years, as would be expected, in view of the interview eligibility criteria. Length of teaching service in the State of Montana varied, but it also ranged generally between four and eight years. Thus, most were educated and have since spent most of their teaching careers in the state. The majority plan to continue teaching until they retire.
- Most entered teaching directly from college. Care for children, parental experience, and the positive role models presented by the teachers they knew were the most popular influences behind their decisions to pursue teaching careers. Most made their decision to enter teaching careers while in college, and most completed their teacher preparation program after 1986. About three-fourths received their teacher education in Montana.
- The permissive special competencies, or endorsements, held by the teachers who were interviewed vary widely. Elementary education was the special competency held by the single largest share, although less than a majority. Between 90 and 95 percent hold baccalaureate degrees; about five percent have the master's degree. Elementary education was the most popular college major. Most did not pursue a college minor.
- The teacher preparation program for most of the respondents consisted of a typical four-year undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor's degree. Generally speaking, the respondents did not agree on any particular advantages for this (or any other) type of Education preparation program. Field experience, the promise of completing in four years, and a well-organized curriculum were among the more frequent advantages cited. There also appears to be no widespread consensus on disadvantages of the typical four-year major program. Lack of early field and irrelevant courses generally were among the disadvantages identified with some, albeit limited, frequency.
- Student teaching, followed at some distance by classroom observation, were the program aspects considered of most use in teaching. The practical, hands-on aspects of the student teaching component were the reasons given most frequently for its popularity.
- Many teachers feel that all of the components of their preparation programs were useful. For those who indicated otherwise, pedagogy or teaching methods and, conversely, non-Education classes were generally considered among the least useful. While many teachers felt that all of their preparatory courses were useful, a few considered many of their Education classes redundant or lacking in hands-on qualities. For many, the quality of professors and mentors and field experience received the highest marks as the most distinctive features of their teacher preparation programs.
- The teachers were about evenly divided on whether their favorite college course was in Education or in another discipline. The range of courses identified as favorites was quite broad, suggesting that this probably is an

aspect of personal experience with respect to subject matter and teacher. Most of these teachers felt that what was learned in their favorite course affected the way they teach now, and that they use this learning in their teaching. Proportionately more teachers listed non-Education courses over Education courses as their least favorite. Lack of relevance, large classes, and poor teaching were the reasons these courses were considered their least favorite.

- Student teaching comprised the most frequent form of field experience in the teachers' preparation programs. It usually lasted more than ten weeks and occurred during the senior year. Teachers consistently rated the field experience as extremely useful in preparing them for their actual teaching experiences. While mentoring was mentioned frequently as a desirable training element, most of the teachers said they received no formal mentoring early in their teaching career.
- Most teacher's preparation programs contained no special programming related to teaching environments (e.g., large or small school, rural or urban school). Teachers who attended programs with such a focus, however, believe that their present teaching setting aligns with this earlier focus and that it helped them.
- With respect to the relationship of other aspects of their preparation programs to the conditions they confront daily in their work, the issue of the math and science capabilities of American students is a perennial consideration. Most of the teachers who were interviewed teach at least some math/science now, some more than 10 hours a week. Most also believe their program prepared them adequately to do so.
- The application of the knowledge media, "technology", to education is another popular national issue, but it does not appear that Montana teachers acquired very much preparation in this respect. While most teachers report they had some preparatory work in education technology during college, this usually consisted of one class or fragments of others. Teachers were mixed in their views of the usefulness of their ed-tech preparation. About half considered it either extremely or somewhat useful, but a substantial percentage did not consider it very useful at all. Most felt there was something they needed but did not get in terms of education technology to prepare them for the classroom. Instruction in Internet & CD-ROM/Software, integrating computers with academics, and, a basic introduction to computers were the leading missing elements.
- Most teachers had preparatory classes in the governance/administration of schools. In most cases this involved instruction in school law and parental rights. While most consider the instruction in school law they received as useful to them in their careers they also felt a need for more preparation in the organization of schools. Courses in school law, organization, and school policy topped their lists of missing elements.
- A large proportion of the teachers did receive preparation in classroom management and discipline as part of their program, but many reported

that it was gained indirectly, either as parts of broader courses or as part of their student teaching experience. About a third said they obtained it as part of a specific course or program. Almost a third of those who did receive preparation in classroom management described it as extremely useful. About another third considered it somewhat useful. Most of the remainder did not consider it very useful in their subsequent teaching careers. References to types of needed preparation in classroom management and discipline emphasized practical experience and strategies. More than half of the teachers who were interviewed identified these. Another relatively large fraction mentioned need for specific classes in the area.

- Less than a third of the teachers who were consulted reported any preparation for relating to parents. Most of those who were exposed to such experience did so part of their student teaching assignments. While most of the respondents did not have such preparation, among those that did, the clear majority considered it useful. Communications and partnership building skills ranked highest among the specific needs for relating to parents that these practicing teachers identified.
- About half of the teachers said that they had preparation in student diversity during the course of their preparation for teaching careers, but the means by which they acquired it were eclectic. About half received it as part of regular courses focused on the issues. Many of the remainder acquired it as aspects of other courses. Many of the teachers who received preparation in student diversity considered it useful, although a sizable share felt it was only marginally so, or it was not useful at all. The responses seem to suggest that some preparation in this area is important, but formal courses may not be the most effective way to provide it. Overall, teachers feel that more preparation in student diversity is needed as an aspect of the inevitably changing social conditions that they consider part of Montana's future. They believe there is great need for more exposure to other cultures either through classroom work or through field experience.
- Most of the teachers received some preparation in the special education field. In most cases this consisted of only lecture courses; practical experience was present, however, for some. Teachers consider exposure to special education issues important and useful, and many indicated that they needed more in the way of such preparation than they received. There was not much variance on this issue among teachers working in different types of schools, but those in the larger elementary and middle schools may have felt the need more strongly than those in high schools. Preparation for inclusion, special needs identification, and strategies for academic and behavioral interventions rank high among these needs.
- The overwhelming majority stated they were happy with their chosen profession, and there is little evidence of dissatisfaction with their career choice. This may be fortunate, in that most of the teachers reported they did not receive career counseling while in college. Most did receive help,

however, with job seeking skills, and most of those considered it helpful. When asked to identify the greatest future challenges facing them in the classroom, more identified adapting to technology and social issues (single-parent families, immigration, poverty) as those carrying the greatest import for the future of teaching and the manner in which teachers are prepared.

- With respect to possible future certification trends, while a sizable portion of the teachers were familiar with the National Board Certification process and goals, the majority were not. During the first year interview cycle, most of those who stated they were familiar with the National Board Certification, or those who felt they understood it, indicated they either planned to pursue it, or that they would be interested in doing so. During the second year, after it was described in some detail by the interviewer, nearly three-quarters of the teachers stated they probably would not pursue it, thus reversing the pattern of the first year.
  
- Teachers were asked how they stay current in their fields. Formalized approaches - seminars, workshops, courses, etc. - comprised the prominent means, followed by books and articles. Continuing education is an important element in this, and teachers clearly consider continuing education courses important. The range of topics they considered appropriate for continuing education courses is as long and varied as the range of issues they confront in their profession. Courses in technology, more advanced work in their particular fields, and classes in classroom management were those mentioned with the greatest frequency. Judging from their responses, continuing education courses are popular among teachers, and most report that they regularly seek them. Most say they have done so at least once during the last two years. Technology, content area, and classroom management courses appear to be the areas most actively pursued. Teachers also seem to be generally satisfied with the range of continuing education courses available to them. More classes in technology, math, and such areas as ESL methods were mentioned among those that may be needed. According to teachers, the most effective ways of encouraging them to take more professional development courses would be to provide courses at a convenient time and location, pay the course fees, and offer them through more varied delivery systems. Continuing education opportunities also may be important because a significant number of teachers report that they teach classes or subjects for which they had no preparation as part of their college program. Science, computers, and social studies were the most frequently mentioned areas of deficiency.
  
- In terms of what they liked about their preparation programs, the range of qualities that were mentioned was very broad, but field experience, student teaching, and the quality of the faculty were the references that occurred with the greatest frequency. The things teachers did not like about their programs tended to be the obverse of what they liked: irrelevant courses, too little field experience, and out-of-touch faculty drew the greatest number of references.

- Teachers tend to grade the faculty who taught in their programs rather well. More than half gave these faculty either an A or B grade; another 40 percent gave them a C. There were very few D or F grades. Getting off the campus and into the schools, and increasing their involvement in the practical aspects of education were the suggestions given for improving low faculty grades when these were awarded. Teachers displayed similarly positive attitudes toward their preparation programs overall. More than half awarded an A or B grade; another 30 percent received a C. Only a few teachers awarded a D or F grade. Teachers were generally more critical of their preparation programs in terms of how they prepared them for their first day of school. In this case D and F grades began to appear with greater frequency. This also may be a reflection of attitudes about the importance of fieldwork and student teaching. Most teachers consider themselves pretty good at their work and award themselves an A or a B grade.
  
- The list of suggested improvements that teachers would make in their preparation programs is varied and lengthy, but most of the teachers agreed on additional opportunities for field experience as the change they would most ardently advocate.

Overall, the study demonstrates that teachers feel the colleges and universities are doing a respectable job preparing them for the careers they have chosen and love. They also probably feel that the need for more and earlier field experience and practice cannot be overstated. Finally, they would vigorously insist on modifications that would prepare them more adequately to address the conditions they confront daily in their schools - the difficulties of understanding an ever-changing education technology, and coping properly with the needs of a continually evolving culture in an increasingly litigious society.

The recommendations of changes that CSPAC and the institutions might consider proceed from these opinions.

## **2.2 Study Recommendations**

The following recommendations are offered for the consideration of CSPAC, the State Board of Education, and the Montana institutions of higher education that offer programs to prepare teachers to work in the schools in the state.

**Recommendation #1:**

**CSPAC and other education authorities should work with the faculty of Montana's teacher preparation programs and officials of the schools to identify and develop methodologies providing increased field experiences within the teacher education programs.** Montana teachers display a strong interest in more practical preparation, offered earlier in their program. More and extensive field experiences, student teaching, and observation opportunities were requested.

**Recommendation #2:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions offering teacher preparation programs in Montana develop and implement arrangements providing opportunities for faculty to visit and teach in the K-12 classrooms at regular intervals.** The importance of faculty who are current in their firsthand knowledge of what is occurring in school classrooms also was stressed by practicing teachers.

**Recommendation #3:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the faculty of Montana's teacher preparation programs develop ways in which practicing teachers can be brought to the campus classrooms to share their knowledge and experience with students who are aspiring to teaching careers.** Opportunities to work with practicing teachers as part of the teacher preparation program are a popular interest (e.g., during summer terms, in seminars, and on occasion throughout the school year, on a reciprocal or exchange basis with faculty, etc.).

**Recommendation #4:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the teacher preparation institutions develop and provide opportunities for effective and accessible professional development courses.** More opportunities for professional development after teachers have begun their careers is identified as a need. This could be accomplished through additional and more varied continuing education programs offered at times and locations, and via delivery systems, that would make the most accessible to working teachers. Classes in technology, math, classroom management, parental relations, and ESL methods were frequently mentioned needs.

**Recommendation #5:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions that provide education programs review the requirements and curricula to determine the extent and manner in which special education, education technology, school law and administration, classroom management and discipline, parental relations, and cultural/ethnic diversity are included in the curriculum and to implement changes where necessary.** With respect

to preparation program content, teachers rated as especially important their need for additional preparation in these areas.

**Recommendation #6:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions review the preparation program curricula and identify the extent to which critical ethnic, economic, and cultural shifts facing public schools and students in Montana are anticipated and addressed.** The effects of single-parent homes, substance abuse, and other emergent social problems on schools and students are profound.

**Recommendation #7:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions that provide teacher education programs require basic instruction in education technology including: Internet & CD-ROM/Software; integrating computers with academics; and, an introduction to computer use.** The application of the knowledge media, “technology”, to education is a particularly vexing issue due to the speed and frequency of change. They are, however, subjects that should be included in the curriculum of every preparation program. Instruction in various software programs might be provided on a continuing basis, in accord with the changes occurring in the field, through continuing education courses and credits as part of teachers’ professional development programs.

**Recommendation #8:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions address the identified need for courses in school law, organization, and school policy, and that they make the appropriate program changes.** It is clear from the study data that Montana teachers feel they lack background and expertise in these areas.

**Recommendation #9:**

**Similarly, it is recommended that CSPAC and the institutions consider needs for teacher preparation in classroom management and discipline, particularly addressing practical experience and discipline strategies.** Again, the practical aspects of classroom management and discipline techniques are seen as paramount needs by practicing Montana teachers.

**Recommendation #10:**

**It is recommended that CSPAC consider more organized approaches to mentoring.** Teacher mentoring in Montana varies widely by district. Those teachers that had a mentoring experience consider it highly useful. More organized approaches to mentoring would extend these opportunities to new teachers throughout the state.



***3.0 RESPONSE  
DISTRIBUTION BY QUESTION***

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### ***3.0 INTERVIEW RESPONSE DISTRIBUTION BY QUESTION***

#### ***3.1 Summary Review of Study Methodology***

The project involved two interview cycles spanning two years. An interim report describing the results of the first year's effort was presented to CSPAC in July 1997. That report contained recommendations for minor modifications in the methodology, particularly the respondent selection process, during the second year. Subsequently these were incorporated into the survey protocol, but, for the most part, the same questions were asked of teachers during each of the two cycles. The present report describes findings for both years.

While the sample universe -- practicing Montana teachers -- was the same for both phases of the study, the selection process used during the second year was modified to accommodate problems encountered during the first year. The sample for Year One was drawn from a random list of eligible teachers compiled from master lists maintained by the teachers' retirement system and from organizations representative of private education in Montana. This approach presented problems throughout, particularly as it was learned that many of the names on the lists were not teachers (e.g. administrators, aides, custodians, etc. also were included) or they were no longer teaching in Montana. Although this system was used for the first year cycle, it ultimately required a series of random lists to arrive at active addresses for the 104 teachers who were interviewed.

The approach used in Year Two was more direct. In this case, all of the districts were contacted directly by mail. They were advised of the study, and their assistance in identifying lists of potential candidates for the second interview cycle was requested. Seventy-one districts responded, and these served as the source of the sample pool (the Diocese provided names for teachers working in these schools). The superintendents then were contacted by telephone for lists of names of eligible teachers. The resultant

master list was alphabetized and divided by the project research team into four geographical sections of the state. Each seventh name was selected in each region (or the next name if for some reason the selected teacher was not available). These teachers were contacted by phone, and the interview was scheduled.

During both study phases, the MGT interviewers proceeded regionally, assuming responsibility for a specified number of interviews in the region assigned. These efforts assured a relatively even spread across the entire state. Attempts also were made to ensure a general distribution that involved rural and urban schools, large and small schools, and elementary, middle, and high schools.

Meanwhile, with the assistance of CSPAC and Project Advisory Committee members the survey protocols and interview guides were developed. The interview guide was field tested in Montana prior to the onset of the first interview phase. The results of the field test were discussed with the advisory committee, and the interview guide was modified accordingly. Nevertheless, a few minor problems with the questions emerged during the course of the Year One interviews.

In only one case did the resultant changes in the questions clearly affect response patterns. A question about National Board Certification in Year One presumed that Montana teachers fully understood the concept; this was modified during the second year with a common description that would be read during the interview. The response pattern reversed between the two years, as the majority who said they would seek such certification during Year One was displaced by the majority who said they would not in Year Two, possibly because of greater understanding of the concept.

The question numbering system needed to remain the same for both years, for obvious reasons. Thus, new second-year questions were given an alpha suffix (i.e., 31a,

34a, 49a, 54a, 57a, and 58a). A copy each of the interview guides is included in the Appendix.

The protocols required contact interviews with elementary and secondary teachers who have three to eight years of teaching experience (i.e., who were in their fourth to ninth years of teaching, including service in and outside of Montana), who possessed regular certification, and who were actively employed in the classrooms of Montana.

The first year sample involved 104 interviews. A total of 84 interviews clearly met all of the study criteria, and these formed the basis for the Year One analysis. The second year interviews involved 100 teachers; of these interviews, 85 clearly met all of the protocol criteria. Thus, the total number of interviews for the two years used in the study was 169, which fits well within CSPAC's original range of 100 to 200 interviews.

All of the scheduled interviews, 204, were conducted in accord with the protocol (e.g., use of a common questionnaire, personally administered.) Although considerable efforts were extended during both phases to ensure that the designated teachers met all of the criteria, in some cases it was discovered, usually during the course of the interview, that some variance was apparent. Usually the problem centered on the number of years of service, and usually this was because the teacher had been in service more than eight years, a situation that was usually missed because of a failure to mention teaching experience in other states.

Because both the interviewer and the respondent had gone to some length to arrange the interview, the full questionnaire was administered nevertheless, and the data were recorded. While these responses were not used in the present analysis, they are available in a separate sample set, should CSPAC wish to use them.

Interviews were conducted in the respondents' schools during lunch breaks, before or after school, or at other times at the convenience of the teacher. Interview

arrangements also required the cooperation of principals and other building staff, and such cooperation was consistently provided. Confidentiality was assured to each participant; thus, in project reports, including interview transcriptions (on which coded identifiers are used) respondents are not identified.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the QSR survey research computer program - the "Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing" program, QSR 3.0.4 - was used to organize and code the interview responses.

The results are presented in this section. The responses are summarized by year, with those for the second, most recent, year listed first, and those for the first year, which were presented to CSPAC in 1997, presented in italicized font immediately after. The material follows the order of the interview guide.

### **3.2 Responses to Questions**

#### ***Q1. Which grades do you teach? Which subjects?***

**A plurality of the teachers who were interviewed teach in the elementary grades. Thus, most indicated that they teach a range of subjects.**

#### **Year Two Responses; n = 81**

*Which grades:*

Elementary	37%
Middle	11%
High	31%
Elem-Mid	4%
Mid-High	5%

*Which Subjects: (listed in descending order)*

All Subjects  
Other  
Science  
Social Science  
Math  
English  
Physical Education  
Special Education  
Art  
Reading

Home Economics  
Business  
Computers

Year One Responses; n = 80

*Which Grades:*

Elementary	45%
Middle	27%
High	22%
Elem.-HS	2%
Mid-HS	4%

*Which Subjects:*

All Subjects (Elementary)  
Math  
Social Studies  
Science  
Special Education  
Physical Education  
English  
Health  
Music  
Art  
Reading  
Consumer Science  
Theology/Religion  
Business  
Foreign Language  
Computer  
ESL  
Title I  
Vocational Education  
Spelling

***Q2. What is your average class size?***

**Most respondents teach classes of 21-30 students.**

Year Two Responses; n = 80

1-10	6%
11-20	35%
21-30	58%
>31	1%

Year One Responses; n = 78

1-10	10%
11-20	37%
21-30	49%

>31            4%

***Q3. How long have you been teaching? (Expressed as current contract years)***

The length of service for most of the teachers who were interviewed ranged between four and eight years.

Year Two Responses; n = 82

Third Year	4%
Fourth Year	18%
Fifth Year	21%
Sixth Year	12%
Seventh Year	11%
Eighth Year	23%
Ninth Year	11%

Year One Responses; n= 79

Third year	18%
Fourth year	21%
Fifth year	15%
Sixth year	19%
Seventh year	17%
Eighth year	10%

***Q4. How long in Montana? (Expressed as current contract years)***

Length of teaching service in Montana among those interviewed varied, ranging generally between four and eight years.

Year Two Responses; n = 78

Three years	4%
Four years	22%
Five years	22%
Six years	12%
Seven years	8%
Eight years	23%
Nine Years	9%
Other	1%

Year One Responses; n = 80

Two years	7%
Three years	17%
Four years	19%
Five years	17%
Six years	20%
Seven years	12%
Eight years	8%

**Q5. How long do you intend to teach?**

The majority of the teachers who were interviewed plan to continue teaching until they retire.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Until retire	78%
Until burnout	2%
Career Change	2%
Next 3-10 years	7%
Don't know	10%

Year One Responses; n = 82

Until retire	74%
Until burnout	5%
Career Change	5%
3-10 years	7%
Do not know	9%

**Q6. Did you proceed directly from college into teaching?**

Most of the respondents entered teaching directly from college.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Yes	64%
No	36%

Year One Responses; n = 81

Yes	65%
No	35%

**Q7. What made you want to be a teacher? (listed in descending order)**

Care for children, parental experience, and positive role models were the most popular influences behind decisions to pursue teaching careers.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

- I like children
- My parents taught
- Positive role model
- I was encouraged to become a teacher
- I wanted to make a difference
- To share knowledge
- I always wanted to be one
- I liked school
- One of my teachers



Year One Responses; n = 81

I like children  
I always wanted to be a teacher  
My parents were teachers  
One of my teachers impressed me  
I wanted to make a difference  
I wanted to share knowledge  
I always liked school  
Kid's achievements reward me  
Positive role models  
I decided in high school  
Substitute teaching  
I was encouraged to be a teacher  
I made a career change

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"I like kids, and I like sharing what I know with them."*
- \* *"Probably my Mom and Dad. They are really good with kids, and they were always encouraging and very positive."*
- \* *"Some people affected me in the past, some teachers that I really cared for and who took care of me in the past."*
- \* *"Both my parents were teachers."*
- \* *"A personal catharsis in my life. I went through a divorce. I saw a need for male role models in elementary education, and it kind of naturally happened."*
- \* *"It runs in the family."*
- \* *"I took an internship in special education and found that I really enjoyed that. So I switched from Business to Education."*
- \* *"Relationship with students. All of the molding them, creating them, doing all that you can do."*
- \* *"I had great teachers. I had a younger brother; I was able to watch him grow up in front of my eyes as a high school kid, and that kind of hooked me on younger kids and some of the places where he was spending his days, and that got me."*
- \* *"When I was a social worker I directed a child to a care center and pre-school, and I came to realize that I didn't like the administrative part of it at all. I was loving the teaching part, and I realized that what I really wanted to do was to teach."*
- \* *"When I was a kid I played in school a lot. I always enjoyed school. In high school I went to an elementary school for a class in high school and helped in the classroom."*
- \* *"I was working as a tutor in high school and went one day to a resource room in an elementary school; this is what sparked my interest."*
- \* *"I started out as a graduate in Fish and Wildlife and things changed. I had so much background in science, I decided to teach it."*

- \* *"I sort of fell into teaching. I was living in Sweden, where I was considered an expert in English (which was my native language). So I trained there to teach."*
- \* *"I always liked the idea of being a teacher, although I've never liked the way society views teachers."*
- \* *"I've always been interested in Special Education. I enjoy working with students and seeing the strides they can make and the rewards they feel."*
- \* *"Ever since childhood. This is one of the best professions to make a difference in a child's life."*
- \* *"I came from a family of teachers. I never had a desire to be anything else."*
- \* *"Somebody told me I was good at it."*

**Q8. When did you decide to become one?**

**Most made their decision to enter teaching careers while in college.**

Year Two Responses; n = 82

Decided in college	35%
I always knew	17%
Decided in high school	13%
While in a previous career	6%
While substituting	1%
Other	27%

Year One Responses; n = 78

Decided in college	41%
Decided in high school	25%
While in a previous career	20%
I always knew	11%
While substituting	3%

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"On a Boy Scout camp-out when I was 30 years old."*
- \* *"When I was around 12; probably around high school time."*
- \* *"Formally -- probably not until my second year of college."*
- \* *"I was 26. I had gone to college before and had a different degree. I went out into the work force and decided it was not for me. I wanted to be a teacher."*
- \* *"After my community college I wasn't sure about my major; it was either physical therapy or education. I chose physical therapy, and that lasted about a year."*
- \* *When I was in high school. I was a teacher's aide; I taught summer religion class."*
- \* *"I knew I was going to teach when I was 5 or 6 years old."*
- \* *"From first grade on. I knew from the time was a Freshman that I would be a home-ec and PE teacher"*

- \* "Since I was 10 years of age."
- \* "I Have always worked with children."
- \* "All my life."
- \* "Since elementary school."
- \* "I Always knew."
- \* "During my sophomore year in college." (Note: This was a prominent response.)
- \* "I was about 21, and I decided that after meeting a lot of single people; that drew me back into school."
- \* "After having a banking career for seven years, I finally went back to my life-long dream of becoming a teacher."
- \* "After having my son and watching how he learned and his curiosity, and researching in the library; I decided about 11/2 years later."
- \* "When I was racing horses, I decided to go back to school."
- \* "On a forklift at K-Mart; another worker was an ex-teacher, and we talked. My father also was a teacher."
- \* "After working in real estate, I decided I wanted to go back to school and I really wanted to teach."

**Q9. When did you complete your teacher preparation program?**

**A clear majority completed their teacher preparation program since 1986.**

Year Two Responses: n = 79

1970-75	5%
1976-80	1%
1981-85	5%
1986-90	41%
1991-96	48%

Year One Responses: n = 82

1970-75	2%
1976-80	5%
1981-85	2%
1986-90	34%
1991-95	57%

**Q10. In what state or states did you receive your teacher education?**

**Most, about three-fourths, received their teacher education in Montana.**

Year Two Responses: n = 81

Montana	73%
Other	14%

MT and Other 14%

Year One Responses; n = 81

Montana	74%
Other State	21%
MT & Other	5%

**Q11. Which, if any, endorsements (“permissive special competencies”) in the State of Montana do you have?**

*{Researcher’s Note: While the question equates “endorsements” and “permissive special competencies”, reported responses reflect the clarified distinction.}*

The permissive special competencies held by the teachers who were interviewed vary widely. Elementary education accounted for a small plurality.

Year Two Responses; n = 82

K-8	17
Science	7
English	6
Reading	5
Special Education	5
Social Studies	5
Early Childhood	1
Other	14
None	22

Year One Responses; n = 79

Elementary Education	32
Social Studies	13
Special Education/Science/Math	10
Reading/English	7
PE & Health	6
Music/Foreign Language	5
Business/Art	3
Early Childhood/Consumer Science	2
ESL/Communication/Agriculture	1

**Q12 Which degrees do you hold?**

Between 90 and 95 percent hold baccalaureate degrees; about five percent have the master’s degree.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

BA	48%
BS	47%
MA	1%
MS	4%
Baccalaureate	95%

Masters 5%

Year One Responses; n = 84

Baccalaureate 90%  
Masters 10%

**Q13. What was your college major? (listed in descending order)**

**Elementary education was the most popular college major among the teachers who were interviewed.**

Year Two Responses; n = 83, listed in descending order

Elementary Education  
Physical Education  
English  
Soc. Sci. Broadfield  
Secondary Education  
Homemaking Educ.  
Science  
Economics  
Business Education  
Music  
Psychology  
Special Education  
Math  
History  
Other

Year One Responses; n = 85, listed in descending order

Elementary Education  
Science  
Special Education  
Math  
Social Science  
English  
Physical Education  
Business Administration  
History  
Music  
Art  
Homemaking Education  
Psychology  
Sociology  
Communications  
Philosophy  
Foreign Language  
Agriculture  
Early Childhood

**Q14. Your college minor? (listed in descending order)**

**Most did not pursue a college minor.**

Year Two Responses; n = 81, listed in descending order

None  
Special Education  
History  
Math  
Science  
Physical Education  
Reading  
Art  
Psychology  
Business  
English  
Foreign Language  
Health  
Other

Year One Responses; n = 85, listed in descending order

None  
Science  
Reading  
Foreign Language  
History  
English  
Special Education  
Psychology  
Business  
Education  
Math  
Art  
Health  
Coaching  
Physical Education  
Anthropology  
Religion  
Computer Science

**Q15. How was your teacher preparation program organized? For example, was it like any of the following forms?**

The teacher preparation program for most of the respondents consisted of a typical four-year undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor's degree.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

"Four-year" Undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor's degree

73%

Another four-year degree program, e.g., Bachelor's of Music Education	1%
Undergraduate major in a discipline other than Education and a graduate degree (MAT or MIT) in Education	5%
Undergraduate major in Education with a subsequent "Fifth Year" requirement	10%
Undergraduate major in a content area (e.g., history) with technical certificate	7%
Alternative certification	1%
Other	2%

**Year One Responses; n = 82**

Four-year Undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor's degree	67%
Another four-year degree program, e.g., Bachelor's of Music Education	18%
Undergraduate major in a discipline other than Education and a graduate degree (MAT or MIT) in Education	2%
Undergraduate major in Education with a subsequent "Fifth Year" requirement	1%
Alternative certification	8%
Other	4%

***Q16. What, if any, were the advantages offered by this program or model? (listed in descending order)***

**Generally speaking, the respondents did not agree on any particular advantages for this type of program. Field experience, the promise of completing in four years, and well-organized program were among the more frequent advantages given.**

**Year Two Responses; n = 81, listed in descending order**

- Well-rounded program
- None
- Finish in four years
- Field experience
- Strong content area
- Build on credits earned
- Well organized
- Quality of education
- In-state program
- Flexible schedule
- Test career choices
- More hands-on
- Other

**Year One Responses; n = 85, listed in descending order**

- Field experience
- Well-rounded program
- Flexible schedule

Well-organized program  
Finish in four years  
Strong content area  
Build on credit earned  
In-state program  
Could earn Associate's  
Small college  
Available faculty  
Opportunity to test career choice  
In-class emphasis  
Quality of program  
Opened opportunities  
Practical experience

**Illustrative Respondent Comments**

- \* *"It was nice to complete everything at one time."*
- \* *"Can't see any major advantages."*
- \* *"It was well-rounded, and it had a lot of different areas that helped."*
- \* *"You didn't have to take the bulk of your Education classes all at once. They were more spread out."*
- \* *"In our junior year we were put into a situation that we were actually into the schools. We would go in and have to teach a certain amount of time in that classroom, and we watched a master teacher at work and learned from them."*
- \* *"It had a requirement of a lot of discipline, which gave you a lot of background, and then a specialization in an area you wanted to spend your career in."*
- \* *"It gave me more experience in the classroom. It added additional student teaching and internships. It gave a broader perspective into the classroom, especially for special needs children."*
- \* *"It was pretty clear cut which courses were needed to do it."*
- \* *"You could get a job faster."*
- \* *"From the get-go you were talking about education, and you were constantly thinking about being a teacher, so that was about the only advantage I could see to it."*
- \* *"You can concentrate from the beginning and think through how you would apply that to education, and you made a commitment to it."*
- \* *"I thought the whole program was pretty good. The instructors I had in Anatomy were top notch. Some of the other parts were pretty remedial."*
- \* *"I liked the way the blocks were done when we did our paraprofessionals; we were on the same time. I liked being done in four years."*
- \* *"Being able to transfer. I was able to stay in the town where I was working."*
- \* *"I had good instructors."*
- \* *"Teachers' support; professors were easy to talk to and available a lot; flexible with class schedules."*



- \* *“Very useful that you got the content area before you got the methods.”*
- \* *“I went to a small college, so the class sizes were smaller; there was a lot of individual help. They were implementing a new program at that time; students had to work with the kids a lot, and in the classroom a lot, before they student taught.”*
- \* *“The program was all outlined as to the required classes and when they were offered. I crammed four years of college into those 2 1/2 years. There seemed to be a real equal balance between the education classes and the non-education classes.”*
- \* *“It was great. I got to do my double major in three years. It was very well organized. A very good counselor/advisor.”*
- \* *“I felt that one advantage was that they didn’t allow you to take elementary classes until you reached the junior status, and then they weaned you into the program. You took core classes until then.”*
- \* *“The content courses were more geared to what I might use as a teacher. I got to understand some foundation concepts. I think that format is helpful.”*

***Q17. What were the disadvantages? (listed in descending order)***

**Similarly, there appears to be no widespread consensus of disadvantages of the typical four-year Education major program. Lack of early field experience, methods courses, and irrelevant courses were among the disadvantages identified with some, albeit limited, frequency.**

**Year Two Responses; n = 81, listed in descending order**

None  
No early field experience  
Limitations  
Methods courses  
Irrelevant courses  
Unfocused  
Classes too large  
Had to commute  
Other

**Year One Responses; n =78, listed in descending order**

None  
Irrelevant courses  
No early (not enough) field experience  
Methods, theory classes  
Difficult to schedule needed classes  
Time and money required  
Lacked direction  
Limitations  
Unfocused  
Inadequate preparation in content areas  
Student teaching  
Lacked proper management, discipline  
Classes too large

Dept. staff not helpful  
Needed more case studies  
Needed more special education

Illustrative Respondent Comments:

- \* *"One couldn't study a subject area and a broad base at the same time."*
- \* *"None that I'm aware of."*
- \* *"Some things could have been cut out."*
- \* *"The college professors were kind of out of contact with what was going on in the schools. There were some unrealistic things they set up. I can remember some of the professors that I had had never taught in a public school system. That was a definite disadvantage."*
- \* *"The main problem was in the content area. You only got the 100 or 200 level courses in content, and not the 300 or 400 levels."*
- \* *"I wish there had been more reading preparation in there. There was, but I'm not sure you could ever have enough of that. It would have been good to have some specialized reading training that you would have had if you were in a special ed program."*
- \* *"Trying to understand how this was going to apply if I ever got a job."*
- \* *"I would have liked to have more classes in my subject area [Art]. There was not as broad a learning base in that area as I would have liked."*
- \* *"It was in a small town so the number of schools and classrooms was sometimes limited."*
- \* *"You didn't have much of a choice in your electives."*
- \* *"Limitations of the field itself. Special Education and the rules that govern it. You really can't recognize the importance of it until you are in the situation (teaching)."*
- \* *"The student classroom hands-on training should have been done during the freshman year."*
- \* *"The first two years were very general. If you weren't sure you wanted to be a teacher, it would have been very hard, not having any of the hands-on experience and being in the classroom. All that was required was the filling requirements. You never saw the teaching environment."*
- \* *"I don't think it prepared me with enough background in teaching special students."*
- \* *"Not enough time spent immersed in the education field; I didn't feel I had exposure to the 'Master'."*
- \* *"I was never sure what they wanted."*
- \* *"In order to complete in four years I had to take summer classes; this was a real disadvantage."*
- \* *"It had a real segmented approach to learning; this is not how it is done in a real classroom."*
- \* *"They changed the program every time I went back. In a way that was good, since they were improving their program all along, but it created problems."*

- \* *"It was sort of a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master-of-None."*
- \* *"We should have had more teaching experience before our classes in teaching."*
- \* *"They weren't focused enough on teaching. I would like to see it more concentrated in the area you might teach, and in the discipline areas."*
- \* *"You know a little bit about a lot of things and not much specificity about any one."*
- \* *"A very busy schedule. That's why I didn't minor."*
- \* *"It takes more time. None of the History classes I was taking had anything to do with teaching. If I had gotten more of a broad field degree, I would have more of an idea of what would be right for the classroom."*
- \* *"Having to take a class on lamination and posters."*
- \* *"In some of the programs there was a lot of busy work."*
- \* *"Some of the courses were hoops I had to jump through. Block courses (e.g., social sciences, science, math). They just didn't apply to practical application in the classroom."*
- \* *"I felt elementary education was just a lot of hoops I was jumping through. So you don't value those activities so much."*
- \* *"The student classroom hands-on training should have been done during the freshman year."*
- \* *"Methods courses were too general, not really like it was like in the classroom, e.g., how to teach a child to read, etc. During the methods courses there should be more connection to the actual classroom."*

***Q18. Overall, which aspects of your teacher preparation program proved to be of most use to you?***

**Student teaching followed at some distance by classroom observation were the program aspects considered of most use by the respondents in their teaching careers.**

**Year Two Responses: n = 82**

Pedagogy	9%
Student teaching	73%
Non-education courses	4%
Classroom observation	11%
Other	3%

**Year One Responses: n = 82**

Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods	10%
Student Teaching	71%
Non-education classes	7%
Classroom observation	11%
All [Not in Year Two]	1%

**Q19. Why is that so? Please tell me a little more.**

The practical, hands-on aspects of the student teaching component was the reason given most frequently for its popularity.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Practical, hands-on	79%
Methods classes	6%
Mentor teachers	4%
Other	11%

Year One Responses; n = 82

Hands-on experience, techniques	96%
Test the career choice	2%
All tied together	2%

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"I got to choose where and who I got to student teach with."*
- \* *"You realized that you start to apply the tools you need to become a successful teacher. It helps with classroom management - things you can't learn out of a book."*
- \* *"It makes you more aware of how kids act and react."*
- \* *"Where I work in elementary education, the kids are brutally honest. All you have to do when you are in front of them is look at them and you know if you have their attention or if you are simply stinking up the joint. So it is just that practice. But I also have to do it to know."*
- \* *"It's the real thing."*
- \* *"That was the real deal. I had people there that were in the classroom, and when I was confused and did not know what to do, they were right there, and I knew when they weren't. I didn't have teachers trying to remember what they had done 20 years earlier."*
- \* *"One of the biggest struggles teachers run into is classroom management, and that actually gave me some practical experience managing a classroom. It lets you see what other teachers are doing to manage a classroom."*
- \* *"I had a good Master Teacher."*
- \* *"I had an opportunity to work with a fantastic teacher the first time I worked with a full classroom. I learned how to plan, manage my time."*
- \* *"They all were needed and helpful; I would change some things around in my methods courses.."*
- \* *"You got to watch how others teach. I get the most out of watching others."*
- \* *"Some of my professors in my content classes were very good. I had so many courses that I felt confident going out and teaching those even though I didn't have my teaching credentials."*

- \* *“Say, boy, if that had been me I would have done this. I am a hands-on learner. When doing reading, I just read it; during lecture I was a passive listener, but when sitting there in that environment, it made me more a part of trying to react.”*
- \* *“My non-education classes gave me a good background; my methods classes have given me good techniques, and my observation was wonderful.”*
- \* *“It was at a grade I really liked; the teacher I had was really creative and had some good discipline, and I really enjoyed having her as my mentor teacher. She was wonderful.”*
- \* *“You should have to student teach for every content area you are going to be endorsed in.”*
- \* *“Because I think on a day to day basis and there is so much going on that your methodology and non-education courses, that you don’t even deal with those things. Just being there and getting the practice, observing children and other classrooms.”*
- \* *“Seeing how kids act in the classroom and actually getting up there and doing it were far more important. Student teaching should somehow be put more towards the beginning. When you student teach you find out just how much you want to be a teacher.”*
- \* *“You actually get to apply and do it. Reading about it and role modeling just doesn’t cut it. You need to be in there dealing with discipline problems, organization. There just isn’t anything that can replace it.”*
- \* *“Then you are in college and you haven’t taught before, I don’t think you really know what it is like until you get out there and student teach. You learn so much when you student teach.”*

**Q20. Which were of least use to you?**

Many teachers feel that all of the components of their preparation programs were useful. For those who felt otherwise, pedagogy or teaching methods and, conversely, non-Education classes were generally considered among the least use.

Year Two Responses; n = 82

Pedagogy	38%
Student teaching	1%
Non-Education classes	15%
Classroom observation	6%
Other	7%
All were useful	33%

Year One Responses; n = 82

Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods	43%
Student teaching	1%
Non-Education classes	48%
Classroom Observation	4%
Other	4%

**Q21. Why is this so?**

**Many teachers believe that all of their preparatory courses were useful. A few, however, felt that Education classes were redundant or lacking in hands-on qualities.**

Year Two Responses: n = 79, listed in descending order

All courses were useful  
Too abstract  
Needed more hands-on  
Education classes redundant  
Other  
Not applicable

Year One Responses: n = 79, listed in descending order

All courses were useful, important  
Need more hands-on  
Redundant and not all that useful  
Too abstract  
Professors need to be more in touch  
Student Teaching  
Distracts, time & energy/I was shy, nervous

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"I think sometimes a lot of the non-education courses get stereotyped."*
- \* *"The methods classes help you pass the professional exam, but I don't find that I used the things I learned in them."*
- \* *"There is something valuable in everything. We should always be open to learning, whether it is in one technique or another. Even if you don't agree with it, you are still learning. Who know when it might come into use."*
- \* *"I think they were teaching us more theory, how it should work, but when you found out how it did work, they were at opposite ends of the spectrum. I think we need less theory and more of what happens if this kid comes up and calls me an SOB."*
- \* *"They really don't set you up for where you are going. They showed you things, but a lot of the things were irrelevant to what you were doing in the classroom."*
- \* *"I understand that there must be some progression in teaching, there must be some guidelines, but, as a whole, teaching at times becomes not as structured as what they set you up to expect. Everything is not in Bloom's Taxonomy, but they set it out as this is how you are supposed to do it."*
- \* *"They didn't go in-depth enough to cover anything that I didn't know anyway. It seemed like in Elementary Ed you had to take the 101 class of every single thing they had. The beginning level was like high school."*
- \* *"They were supposed to make you a well-rounded individual, but I would have preferred to take classes in my field. They were not very helpful."*

- \* *"I guess because I felt like I wasn't engaging in the whole process. That I was just sitting. Whereas, in the other things I felt more engaged in what I was learning or what the students were learning."*
- \* *"Maybe some of the non-Education classes I didn't need, but many you do -- History and writing courses. I think it is important for teachers to know these."*
- \* *"I thought the methods they were teaching us were really hard to get a grasp on. They were too abstract to understand. The language I was taught with the whole language approach -- you need to do hands-on with kids."*
- \* *"Textbook learning is fine, but I needed to get out into the real world."*
- \* *"I feel all of these are important. I don't think you could get rid of one of those. They are all important to prepare you for teaching."*
- \* *"They all were needed. I used them on my first day. If I have not had all of them it would have affected me in my teaching. I think they all are valuable."*
- \* *"Professors were out of touch with the actual classroom situations and atmosphere. The program related mostly to adults and not first graders. Discipline, angry parents, these were things that they didn't prepare you for, but you had to hit them head on."*
- \* *"All had use in a certain way; they all apply and provide you with flexibility and viewpoints."*
- \* *"They really did all apply; if they were in a different order they would have been even more helpful."*
- \* *"Some apply, and some don't; these were made for way back, and today society is different."*
- \* *"The methods courses taught did not work with my students."*
- \* *"They provided a base of knowledge, but it didn't help me in the classroom."*
- \* *"There was a lot of busywork that didn't pertain."*
- \* *"Some of them I just did not use; some were really good classes, but some were making me wonder why did I take it."*
- \* *"Not that they weren't important or useful; there is a lot of education I know they need some sort of basis for your education, but they weren't as useful as student teaching and the education courses."*
- \* *"It was too abstract; it really didn't apply to the real world. It seems like a lot of talk until you have to do it. My methods classes seemed to be lacking in that specific area."*
- \* *"I don't recall having any methods courses that taught me good hands-on things to go out and use. I found that once I got into the classroom situation, it was hit or miss."*

**Q22. What, if any, do you consider the distinctive features of your preparation program?**

The quality of professors, exposure to mentors, and field experience received the highest marks as the most distinctive features of respondents' teacher preparation programs.

Year Two Responses; n = 81, (listed in descending order)

Professors, mentors	
Field experience	
Methods classes	
Student teaching	
Observation	
Practicum	
Teachers	
Content area	
Other	
None	10%

Year One Responses; n = 85, (listed in descending order)

- Field experience and student teaching
- Professors, mentors
- Nothing
- Field experience and Practicum
- Methods classes
- Field experience
- Early field experience/Content area classes/Field experience and observation/Small classes
- Learn from practicing teachers
- Class management courses
- Master's level courses
- Middle school emphasis
- Methods teacher
- Flexible schedule
- Curriculum courses
- Children's Literature
- Special Education courses

**Q23. What was your favorite course in college?**

The teachers were about evenly divided on whether their favorite college course was in Education or in another discipline. The range of courses identified as favorites was quite broad, suggesting that this probably is an aspect of personal experiences with respect to subject matter and teacher.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Education course	49%
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***Interview Response Distribution by Question***

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Non-Education course	49%
Other	1%
N/A	1%

***Year One Responses: n = 75***

Education courses	35%
Non-Education courses	65%

***Elementary teachers' responses (listed in descending order):***

Sciences  
Reading  
Anthropology  
Language Arts

***Each of the following was mentioned once:***

Accounting  
Child Psychology  
Computer Science  
Cross Country Skiing  
Kindergarten courses  
Math Methods  
Methods  
Montana History  
Observation  
Religion  
Special Education  
Teaching Art  
Teaching Physical Education skills

***Middle school teachers' responses (listed in descending order):***

History  
Literature  
Psychology  
Sciences  
Special Education

***Each of the following mentioned once:***

Art  
Computer Science  
Child Development  
Educational Psychology  
Elementary Math series  
Equestrian skills  
History of Media  
Instrumental Techniques  
Musical Arrangements  
Teaching Language Arts

*High school teachers' responses (listed in descending order):*

Sciences  
Math  
Art  
History

*Each of the following was mentioned once:*

Child Psychology  
Computer Science  
Dramatic Activities for Teaching  
Philosophy  
School Law  
Teaching Math Class  
Religion  
Welding  
Writing

**Q24. Tell me more about this: Did what you learned in this course affect the way you teach? Have you used this in your teaching?**

**Most of the teachers felt that what was learned in their favorite course affected they way they teach and that they use this learning in their teaching.**

Year Two Responses; n = 74

Yes	88%
No	12%

*Have you used this in your teaching? (n = 44)*

Yes	89%
No	9%
N/A	2%

Year One Responses; n = 74

Yes	95%
No	5%

*Have you used this in your teaching? (n = 75)*

Yes	92%
No	4%
N/A	4%

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"I bring a lot of what I learned from different cultures, I bring a lot of that into the classroom and share with the students -- different land formations, different cultures."*
- \* *"In both the Science and Literacy classes the teachers really believed in getting the teachers into hands-on, and so we got to do a lot of fun experiments. That helped me to realize the importance of doing that."*

- \* *“Yes. In one of my Teaching Math classes we had a book I liked, and I use that book all of the time now when I teach Math.”*
- \* *“I use a lot of genetics, and I think that is one of the most interesting things that I do. In my own classroom, when we talk about genetics, I think the kids get the more excited about that. That would be my favorite.”*
- \* *“It was challenging. I was with a bunch of pre-med kids, and I really had to work. I help kids with their Science quite a bit. Even though we are departmentalized, I work with kids during study hall. So I still use Math and Science.”*
- \* *“It was a medieval history course. I use it extensively.”*
- \* *“A curriculum class I had was invaluable. It has been very helpful. The English program has some good classes also.”*
- \* *“Really good background in special education. I learned a lot about children’s literature and literature methods, so those stand out.”*
- \* *“Masters’ level courses to count toward my certification. I was allowed to student teach alone the whole time.”*
- \* *“With the paraprofessionals you didn’t stay in one classroom; you got to go around to different classrooms to get different teaching methods.”*
- \* *“I had the opportunity to go to summer school. Many of the other students in my classes were already teachers, and what they had to offer was far more informative than anyone standing in front of the classroom telling you what to do; they had been in the trenches and were able to share that with us.”*
- \* *“Special education training was very focused on teaching you how to do the paper work and things like that.”*
- \* *“Student teaching; it is so close to the real thing. Some of the methods courses that were focused on teaching methods.”*
- \* *“They had block classes and it was all your teacher preparation courses, and you had to take them together. Within that block we worked in smaller groups and had a professor as a mentor, and I think that was the best preparation for becoming a teacher.”*
- \* *“Classroom immersion -- I had the same four professors; I liked that because they got to know me.”*
- \* *“My advisor played a key role. He made more of a difference than any class could have.”*
- \* *“I had some professors who had been in the public schools.”*
- \* *“I was able to seek out professors that I was able to have some ongoing dialogue with on education. That was very helpful to me.”*
- \* *“My methods class was great because the teacher was an actual teacher in the classroom, and she was teaching us things that we would use in the real world and the classroom, not just a bunch of ideas that may or may not work by trial and error.”*

**Q25. What was your least favorite course? Why?**

Proportionately more teachers listed non-Education courses over Education courses as their least favorite. Lack of relevance, large classes, and poor teaching were the reasons courses were considered least favorite.

Year Two Responses; n = 69

Education course	42%
Non-Education course	58%

Why? (listed in descending order)

Irrelevant  
Not interesting  
Poor instructor  
Classes too large

Year One Responses; n = 74

Education course	30%
Non-education course	67%
Don't remember	3%

Why? (listed in descending order)

Not interesting, not interested  
Poor instructor  
Irrelevant to teaching  
Not very good at it  
Classes too large  
Took lots of time (away from education course work)

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"Where we just read the book. Any course that did this."*
- \* *"Military Science, which is certainly an oxymoron."*
- \* *"Any of the Education classes in the Education Department. They were not very realistic."*
- \* *"I liked them all."*
- \* *"Some of my Education classes. I don't think they did anything for me. It was really hard to sit there and listen to some professor who had been out of teaching for a long time telling us how we were going to teach, but not really teaching that way himself. That was really hard."*
- \* *"Methods courses. I wasn't really given the credit I thought I deserved."*
- \* *"Foundations of Education, because it was the history of education back to the 1800s, and I did not see the relevance of it. I do so now, but I didn't then."*
- \* *"A behavioral class on Skinner. It was my least favorite because I felt I was digging up all of the archaic information, and it was basically a research paper that did not*

- apply to anything we were doing. It was long, and the practical use of it was minimal.”
- \* “Ed-Technology. We spent a lot of time learning different software, spreadsheets, etc., and I never really used them.”
  - \* “I had a feeling I wasn’t learning much. For example, reading methods. I didn’t teach children how to read. I came into my first years of teaching K-1[and] I was so shocked at what I didn’t know and what I wasn’t going to get out of my teacher’s manual.”
  - \* “The class described a lot of the learning disabilities. We could all relate to them in one way or another. There is a lot of stereotyping done with disabilities. I think in some aspect it teaches us to give kids a reason not to succeed. I think every kid is capable of succeeding.”
  - \* (With respect to poor instructors) “The class was a waste of time. The professor wore his credentials on his forehead. He wanted to see us sweat.”
  - \* “I had a professor who contradicted what he taught.”
  - \* “The professor wasn’t too concerned about whether we were there or not or concerned about content. He had no concern for the course. He was tenured, and he was just there to serve out his time.”
  - \* (With respect to class size) “I grew up in a small community, and when I went to college I had to sit in a class full of students. It was kind of overwhelming. It was so large and I wasn’t used to that sort of an environment.”

**Q26 Please describe the field experience part of your preparation program. What was it like? How long? When in your program did it occur?**

**Student teaching comprised the most frequently references form of field experience in the teachers’ preparation programs. It usually lasted more than ten weeks and occurred during the Senior year.**

Year Two Responses:

*Student teaching (n= 70)*

1-4 weeks	4%
5-9 weeks	34%
10-12 weeks	47%
>13 weeks	14%

*When? (n = 76)*

Freshman	0%
Sophomore	0%
Junior	1%
Senior	88%
Fifth year	3%
Other	8%

*Observations (n = 52)*

< 1 week	23%
1-4 weeks	38%
5-9 weeks	12%
10-12 weeks	19%
>13 weeks	8%

*When? (n = 56)*

Freshman	14%
Sophomore	36%
Junior	39%
Senior	9%
Fifth year	0%
Other	2%

*Paraprofessional experience (n = 19)*

<1 week	11%
1-4 weeks	26%
5-9 weeks	21%
10-12 weeks	5%
>13 weeks	37%

*When? (n = 21)*

Freshman	5%
Sophomore	10%
Junior	33%
Senior	28%
Fifth year	0%
Other	24%

*Year One Responses:*

*Student teaching (n = 64)*

5-9 weeks	12%
10-12 weeks	41%
>13 weeks	47%

*When? (n = 70)*

Sophomore	1%
Junior	7%
Senior	84%
Fifth year	2%
Other	6%

*Observations (n = 29)*

< 1 week	15%
1-4 weeks	32%
5-9 weeks	11%

10-12 weeks	21%
>13 weeks	21%

*When? (n = 37)*

Freshman	11%
Sophomore	29%
Junior	34%
Senior	23%
Fifth year	3%

*Paraprofessional experience (n = 14)*

1-4 weeks	12%
5-9 weeks	19%
10-12 weeks	19%
>13 weeks	44%
Throughout program	6%

*When? n = 20)*

Sophomore	45%
Junior	23%
Senior	23%
Early in program	9%

**Q27. How would you rate the usefulness of this field experience in preparing you for your later actual teaching experiences?**

Teachers consistently rank the field experience as extremely useful in preparing them for their actual teaching experiences. This response pattern did not vary among teachers working in different types of schools.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Extremely useful	81%
Somewhat useful	14%
Not useful at all	2%
Other	2%
N/A Didn't have field experience	0%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Extremely	41%	27%	33%
Somewhat	40%	40%	20%
Not at all	50%	50%	0%
	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely	21%	42%	37%
Somewhat	10%	50%	40%
Not at all	50%	0%	50%

**Interview Response Distribution by Question**

**Year One Responses; (n =84)**

Extremely useful	80%
Somewhat useful	17%
Not useful at all	0%
Other, please describe	2%
N/A Didn't have field experience	1%

**Year One Responses by School Type and School Size**

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely Useful	80%	81%	75%	83%	80%	81%	80%	79%
Somewhat Useful	17%	16%	17%	17%	17%	15%	17%	18%
Not Useful At All	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Didn't Have	1%	0%	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	3%
Other	2%	3%	4%	0%	2%	4%	3%	0%

***Q28 Please explain [For Year One Only -- No Year Two Data]***

**Year One Responses (in descending order); n = 85**

- Practical experience
- Learn from experienced teachers
- Good teachers/Diverse experiences
- Helped identify my own style preferences
- Philosophy into practice
- Unpleasant teaching experience
- Lot of paperwork/Field experience needed to be longer

**Illustrative Respondent Comments**

- \* *“Every school has its own dynamic, and by having a mentor teacher your first year of teaching you can learn all about the school.”*
- \* *“With the middle school situation we have here, it is kind of a four person mentoring system for you. In the junior high model or the high school, you are very isolated.”*
- \* *“Yes, it’s good to have someone to bounce ideas off of.”*
- \* *“I had it informally. I had a teacher come in and help me out, but it wasn’t anything the school had set up.”*
- \* *“I would not have made it without it. That’s how useful it was to me. I would have been really dead in the water without it.”*
- \* *“Definitely! Absolutely! It would have been nice just to have someone to direct stupid questions to.”*
- \* *“Yes, I wish I had had one. But I wonder if they had put you with someone you didn’t really click with.”*



- \* *“The principal at this school does a wonderful job. I never felt that I could not go to her with a question or concern.”*
- \* *(With respect to learning from experienced teachers) “You are being taught in a manner that is almost like a mentor program. Here you are; you have a master teacher that shares everything that has taken them years and years to master, and they share that with you.”*
- \* *“Some of the teachers I worked under had been teachers for years, and I learned a lot from them, and I am using some of these things now.”*
- \* *“I had two master teachers I worked under. Student teaching is the best preparation a student can have. They have to get into the classroom where there is someone else to help them and to take over if necessary.”*
- \* *“It was wonderful. I had a teacher that had been teaching for 28 years. She was very supportive. She allowed me to try different things, and allowed me to fail and to learn about things that did not work. It was very helpful for my first years, so if things didn’t go well then it was okay, and you knew what to expect if it didn’t go as well your first year. I think it was very beneficial to fail in student teaching.”*
- \* *“When you are observing, the students know that the teachers still have control of the classroom. They can only push you so far because they know the teacher is hanging around, but when you go out and teach, it is totally different because you are the head honcho.”*
- \* *(With respect to the practical experience gained) “It was hands-on. You were interacting with children laying out your philosophies. You may have ideas, and these may change after you get into the classroom and are working with students.”*
- \* *“It was hands-on, and if you have a fine master teacher, there is nothing that a [college] classroom can teach you that the master teacher can’t teach you in the [school] classroom.”*
- \* *“I think that visiting the student teachers. . . , the seven of us got the best experience; the mentor teachers and students taught us how to deal with real life situations and how to teach using tough love.”*

**Q28. [New Question For Year Two - No Year One Data] Did you receive any formal mentoring early in your teaching career? Yes/No**

**Most teachers received no formal mentoring early in their teaching career.**

Year Two Responses; n = 72

Yes	18%
No	82%

**Q29. Was your teaching preparation program oriented to any special teaching environments, (e.g., rural or urban, big school or small school, reservation school, etc.) settings? Does your present teaching setting align with this preparation? (If so, how so?)**

**Most teachers’ preparation programs contained no special programming related to teaching environments (urban, rural, large school, small school). Most of those**

who attended programs with such a focus find that their present teaching setting aligns with it.

Year Two Responses; n = 83

Rural	14%
Urban	6%
Large School	1%
Small School	0%
Reservation	0%
No special focus	78%

*Does the present setting align with this focus?*

Yes	80%
No	15%
N/A	0%
Irrelevant	5%

Year One Responses; n = 79

Rural	9%
Urban	14%
Large School	5%
Small School	2%
Reservation	2%
No special emph.	68%

*Does your present teaching setting align with this preparation? (If so, how so?) (n = 78)*

Yes	84%
No	16%

**Q30. How much science/math do you presently teach? [How many hours/courses (specify) in science/math do you presently teach? Did your teacher preparation program provide you with a sufficient background in math, science, and other substantive academic areas for your work as a classroom teacher?**

**Most teachers teach at least some math/science, some more than 10 hours a week. Most also believe their program prepared them adequately to do so.**

Year Two Responses; n = 80

<5 hours/week	14%
5-10 hours/week	24%
>10 hours/week	30%
None	33%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
<5 hours/week	36%	9%	55%
5-10 hours/week	68%	21%	11%
>10 hours/week	48%	26%	26%

***Interview Response Distribution by Question***

None	13%	42%	46%
	Small	Medium	Large
<5 hours/week	9%	55%	36%
5-10 hours/week	16%	63%	21%
>10 hours/week	21%	37%	42%
None	27%	23%	50%

**Year One Responses; n = 82**

<5 hours/week	26%
5-10 hours/week	34%
>10 or full-time	16%
None	24%

*Did your teacher preparation program provide you with a sufficient background in math, science, and other substantive academic areas for your work as a classroom teacher? (n =76)*

Yes	71%
No	29%

**Year One Responses by School Type and School Size**

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Less than 5 hours	26%	23%	35%	23%	26%	24%	30%	23%
5-10 hours per week	35%	55%	22%	14%	36%	44%	50%	12%
+10 hours per week	17%	11%	17%	27%	17%	20%	7%	27%
None	22%	11%	26%	36%	21%	12%	13%	38%

***Q31. Did your teacher education program include any preparatory classes in education technology (e.g., computers, CD-ROM, Internet, etc.)? If so, how many classes?***

**Most teachers report that they had preparatory classes in education technology during college. In most cases this consisted of one class.**

**Year Two Responses; n = 64**

Yes	59%
No	12%

*How many classes? (n = 55)*

One course	56%
Two courses	13%
Three courses	9%
Aspects of courses	9%
None	7%

N/A 5%

Year One Responses; n = 77

Yes 66%  
No 34%

*If so, how many classes? (n = 60)*

One course 56%  
Two courses 23%  
Three or more 13%  
Individual class meetings 8%

**Q32. How would you rate your ed-tech preparation overall in terms of its usefulness to your present position?**

Teachers were mixed in the views of the usefulness of their ed-tech preparation. About half considered it either extremely or somewhat useful. But a substantial percentage did not consider it useful at all.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Extremely useful 11%  
Somewhat useful 31%  
Not useful 27%  
Other 4%  
N/A 27%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Extremely useful	44%	44%	11%
Somewhat useful	35%	22%	43%
Not useful	33%	33%	33%
	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	56%	44%	0%
Somewhat useful	13%	43%	43%
Not useful	15%	40%	45%

Year One Responses; n = 78

Extremely useful 16%  
Somewhat useful 38%  
Not useful at all 14%  
N/A Didn't have such classes 32%

Year One Responses by School Type and School Size

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely	16%	17%	9%	23%	15%	4%	20%	19%
Somewhat	38%	44%	39%	27%	39%	42%	43%	31%

**Interview Response Distribution by Question**

Not	14%	11%	17%	14%	14%	21%	7%	15%
Didn't	32%	28%	35%	36%	32%	33%	30%	35%

***Q33. Is there anything in the way of preparation in education technology that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)***

Most of the teachers felt there was something they needed but did not get in terms of education technology to prepare them for the classroom. Instruction in Internet & CD-ROM/Software, Integrating computers with academics, and, basic introduction to computers were the leading missing elements.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Yes	85%
No	15%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Yes	38%	25%	37%
No	50%	42%	37%

	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	15%	44%	40%
No	36%	45%	18%

Year One Responses; n = 76

Yes	76%
No	24%

*Specifics (listed in descending order)*

- Internet & CD-ROM/Software
- Integrating w/Academics
- Introduction to Computers
- Everything
- Introduction to different types of computers
- Administration Tasks
- Computer Art & Design/Calculators, graphing, etc./Word processing

Year One Responses by School Size and School Type

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Yes	76%	71%	83%	76%	75%	79%	62%	85%
No	24%	29%	17%	24%	25%	21%	38%	15%

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* "The Internet. Teach teachers how to teach from a computer, CD-ROM, networking systems, an overhead that's hooked-up to a computer."

- \* *“How to integrate technology into the curriculum. Basic skills, I guess.”*
- \* *“How to keep up with it. It’s changing all of the time. I used to be current, but I’m not now.”*
- \* *“They need to show you CD-Rom material and how to order software, etc. They need to bring you through Internet training. These are things I wish I had know before I got here.”*
- \* *“Just a general awareness of the things that are out there.”*
- \* *“There is a ton of computer stuff we didn’t have back then that is available now.”*
- \* *“I could use as much of this as I could possibly get. I would like to know more about the software that is geared towards education, games my students could play relating to history, simulations they could play, programs I have used, HyperCard. I wish I had learned more and knew more. Anything we can get. The Internet has been of minimal usage in the classroom.”*
- \* *“We need basic courses on how to teach this technology to children, how to break it down into manageable units.”*
- \* *“There should be tons of classes on computers and integrating the computer into the classroom.”*
- \* *“I am currently enrolled in my master’s program in computer technology. My student teaching got me familiarized with grading on the computer, and I was able to see how [the teacher] used the computer with 25 kids. More teaching with computers is needed.”*
- \* *“It could have been better if the university had more modern equipment. How you hook up your computer to your TV, etc. More on design, basic engineering principles, inventing on a more sophisticated level, using tools. There is much that can be used in technology.”*
- \* *“I teach the kids spreadsheets, so I have to write the project, figure it all out myself on my own time, and then teach it to them. A spreadsheet class would be helpful.”*

***Q34. Did you have any preparatory classes in the governance/administration of schools, school policy, school law, parental rights, etc.?***

**Most teachers had preparatory classes in the governance-administration of schools. In most cases this involved instruction in school law and parental rights.**

**Year Two Responses: n = 74**

Yes	77%
No	23%

**Answers to “yes” responses (n = 66)**

Governance	3%
School law, parental rights	56%
Other	41%

Year One Responses; n = 82

Yes	61%
No	37%
Do not remember	2%

Answers to "yes" responses; (n=41):

Governance/Administration	15%
School Policy	19%
School Law	51%
Parental Rights	15%

**Q35. How would you rate this background in terms of its usefulness in your career?**

**Most teachers consider instruction in school law as useful to them in their careers.**

Year Two Responses; n = 82

Extremely useful	28%
Somewhat useful	39%
Not useful at all	12%
Other	4%
N/A	17%

Year Two Responses by school type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Extremely useful	27%	32%	41%
Somewhat useful	35%	26%	39%
Not useful at all	56%	22%	22%
	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	9%	50%	41%
Somewhat useful	25%	36%	39%
Not useful at all	10%	30%	60%

Year One Responses; n = 82

Extremely useful	23%
Somewhat useful	32%
Not useful at all	14%
Other	1%
N/A Didn't have such classes	30%

Year One Responses by School Type and School Size:

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely	23%	33%	25%	4%	23%	12%	27%	29%
Somewhat	33%	28%	21%	52%	33%	38%	37%	25%
Not	14%	17%	12%	13%	15%	17%	13%	14%
Didn't	30%	22%	42%	31%	29%	33%	23%	32%

**Q36. Is there any aspect of this - preparation in the administration or organization of schools, etc., you feel you needed but did not get? (Please explain)**

Most of the teachers who were interviewed felt a need for preparation in the organization of schools that they did not get. Courses in school law, organization, and policy topped their lists.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Yes	63%
No	38%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

- School law, policy
- Special needs
- Structure
- Forms, paperwork
- Other

Year One Responses; n = 77

Yes	59%
No	41%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

- School law
- Structure, responsibilities
- School policy
- General overview
- School finance
- Forms, paperwork
- Special Education laws

**Q37. How about preparation in classroom management, discipline - Did you have such preparation as part of your program? Please describe it.**

A large proportion of the teachers did receive preparation in classroom management and discipline as part of their program, but many reported that it was gained in a fragmented manner, either as parts of broader courses or as part of their student teaching experience. About a third said they obtained it as part of a specific course or program.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Yes	69%
No	31%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

- Specific course



Inadequate  
 Student teaching  
 Other

Year One Responses; n = 77

Yes                    76%  
 No                     24%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

Specific course, seminar  
 Inadequate, theory only  
 Aspects of other courses  
 Learned through student teaching  
 From non-education course (psychology)  
 Course not part of program

**Q38. How would you describe it in terms of its usefulness in preparing you for the classroom?**

**Almost a third of those who received preparation in classroom management described it as extremely useful. About another third considered it somewhat useful. Most of the remainder did not consider it very useful in their subsequent teaching careers.**

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Extremely useful      15%  
 Somewhat useful      38%  
 Not useful at all      19%  
 Other                    3%  
 N/A                      26%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Extremely useful	39%	25%	42%
Somewhat useful	25%	36%	39%
Not very useful at all	45%	29%	33%
Other	50%	0%	59%
N/A	60%	25%	15%

	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	25%	50%	25%
Somewhat useful	14%	39%	46%
Not very useful at all	14%	43%	43%
Other	0%	0%	100%
N/A	32%	42%	26%

Year One Responses; n = 81

Extremely useful                    35%

***Interview Response Distribution by Question***

Somewhat useful	32%
Not useful at all	13%
Other, please describe	1%
N/A	19%

***Year One Responses by School Type and School Size***

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely	36%	32%	54%	24%	36%	32%	32%	44%
Somewhat	32%	30%	14%	52%	31%	20%	42%	30%
Not	13%	16%	14%	8%	14%	12%	13%	15%
Didn't	19%	22%	18%	16%	19%	36%	13%	11%

***Q39. What, if anything, do you need but did not get with respect to preparation in classroom management, discipline? (listed in descending order)***

**Missing but needed preparation in classroom management and discipline focused on practical experience and strategies. More than half of the teachers who were interviewed identified these. Another relatively large fraction mentioned need for specific classes in the area.**

***Year Two Responses; n = 82***

- Practical experience
- Strategies
- Child development
- Nothing
- Other
- Specific classes

***Year Two Responses by school type***

	Elementary	Middle	High School
Practical experience	39%	25%	36%
Strategies	47%	24%	29%
Child development	25%	25%	50%
Nothing	50%	50%	0%
Other	33%	28%	39%
Specific classes	50%	25%	25%

  

	Small	Medium	Large
Practical experience	25%	39%	36%
Strategies	20%	47%	33%
Child development	20%	40%	40%
Nothing	0%	50%	50%
Other	12%	35%	53%
Specific classes	25%	50%	25%

***Year One Responses; n = 85***

- Strategies
- Practical experience

## Interview Response Distribution by Question

Nothing  
 Behavioral, learning problems  
 Everything  
 Class management and discipline  
 Child development background  
 Teachers' rights

### Year One Responses by School Type and School Size: (listed in descending order)

Response	Total Number of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total Number of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Strategies	27	11	11	5	27	8	9	10
Practical	17	7	3	7	17	4	7	6
Other	14	5	2	7	14	4	5	5
Nothing	13	7	3	3	12	5	5	2
Behavioral	8	6	2	0	8	5	3	0
Everything	6	3	2	1	6	2	2	2
Classroom Manager	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	0
Teacher's Rights	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Child Development	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1

### Illustrative Respondent Comments:

- \* *(With respect to teaching strategies) "You need to learn how to take constructive comments from kids without taking offense to them."*
- \* *"My first principal sent me to workshops because he realized this was a difficult situation."*
- \* *"Hands-on experience. It's very difficult to prepare for the multitudes of 'wrecks' that can happen in one day."*
- \* *"I have continued to take classes. This requires on-going training throughout one's career."*
- \* *"Teachers need to understand student behavior from a psychological standpoint because everything a kid does is done for a reason, and a little empathy and understanding can make a situation easier to deal with. Everyone is a bit behind the times when they start out. They just don't understand the kinds of problems kids have today."*
- \* *"Actual experiences, chances to work with students. Even in little groups, go into the schools and tutor."*
- \* *"I think understanding just what you can and can't do with kids, especially special ed kids."*
- \* *"Different models that have been used in classrooms. Maybe background information on that and why people think it does or does not work."*
- \* *"I think teachers need to know every example of student that people can think of. There are so many different kids, and you have to deal with each one totally"*

differently. They need to provide some things like that 'tough kid' work book or workshop. I use that a lot now. They have this toolbox and all kinds of materials. I think that should be a book they give out or you should be required to buy before you leave college."

- \* "I had an in-service class that was called Discipline with Love and Logic. That would be nice to see in college."
- \* "There are some good methods out right now. I think something along the lines of dealing with parental involvement and how to get the parents involved. . . teaching the teachers how to do that."
- \* "It would have been very useful to have a few weeks on doing role playing."
- \* (With respect to practical experience) "[They should] have teachers from outside the school give advice on how they handle difficult situations in the classroom." "Exposure. I think that [students] who are wanting to go into education [need] to see how teachers prepare and take care of their classes and set the tone for discipline and classroom management."
- \* (With respect to behavioral and learning problems) "[My program] never addressed 'tough kids.' We need some literature on that or on classroom discipline for [such students]."
- \* "[Teachers] need to know how to handle the emotionally disturbed kid, and that seems to be a bigger issue; there are more kids that if they get to severe they end up going to the girls and boys ranch."
- \* "I think they should have required a class on unusual behavioral problems. I learned a lot from my cooperative teacher, especially classroom management."
- \* "Classroom management. How to set up a classroom; how to deal with all those students coming the first day; how to deal with parents when they walk into your classroom and when they won't leave; [how] to be very organized, etc. This would be a good thing to include."
- \* "A better awareness of teachers' rights in the classroom."
- \* "How not to focus on negative behavior. What I didn't get was what to do when you get angry a few times a day; what to do with that so that you aren't rude to those kids. So how do you process that so you don't explode? Or how to create an environment over the long haul?"
- \* (With respect to curriculum planning) "I would like to have learned how to teach a theme throughout my curriculum without having to take days to plan it. It takes me hours to plan; I would like to learn how to plan."

**Q40. Did you have any preparation for relating to parents? How was this done?**

Less than a third of the teachers who were consulted reported any preparation for relating to parents. Most of those who received such experience did so as part of their student teaching assignments.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Yes                      31%

No 69%

*How was this done (listed in descending order)*

In student teaching  
Theory only  
Case studies, guest speakers

Year One Responses: n = 81

Yes 30%  
No 70%

*How was this done? (listed in descending order)*

In student teaching  
Theory only  
Case studies, guest speakers

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *(In student teaching) "Not in the course work, but in student teaching. My mentor did a lot of that."*
- \* *"There was a little of this in the 'Issues in Education' course -- things that might come up, and rights, and teacher rights."*
- \* *"Some, but not much. It might have been covered in a chapter here and there."*
- \* *"Yes. We had to do a major report on three different ways we would deal with parents and have a whole huge presentation on it. I actually used some of these ideas."*
- \* *"I would say that in special ed classes it was required to talk about how to relate to parents because you are going to give them disturbing news from time to time, and they are not always going to be able to handle it well."*
- \* *"I got it when I was student teaching, but not before."*
- \* *"I had an assistant principal observe me during my student teaching and tell me to call the parents."*
- \* *"Very little; one day of parent/teacher conferences during student teaching."*
- \* *"During student teaching; my teacher made me make phone calls and do conferences."*
- \* *"In student teaching. My master teacher made some phone calls with me early on. I never had any parent/teacher conferences. There was nothing in my methods classes that I recall."*
- \* *"One night we had a parent night during student teaching."*
- \* *(Theory only) "Yes, as a special education teacher. It was theory again and no practice ever. As a student teacher we were able to sit in on meetings and disciplinary actions, but we weren't really allowed to say anything, which is fine, but it was more of an observation activity than a real learning experience."*

**Interview Response Distribution by Question**

\* “It was done in the context of how you might need to defend your curriculum, what might you do to help with parents, how might you get parents involved? There was no single course; it was just integrated into other courses.”

**Q41. How would you rate such preparation in terms of its usefulness for your present position?**

While most of the respondents did not have such preparation, among those that did, the clear majority considered it useful.

Year Two Responses; n = 79

Extremely useful	20%
Somewhat useful	14%
Not useful at all	5%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	61%

Year Two Responses by School Type

	Elementary	Middle	High
Extremely useful	31%	19%	50%
Somewhat useful	20%	50%	30%
Not useful at all	25%	0%	50%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	50%	26%	24%

  

	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	13%	60%	27%
Somewhat useful	11%	56%	33%
Not useful at all	0%	25%	75%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	26%	35%	39%

Year One Responses; n = 81

Extremely useful	14%
Somewhat useful	12%
Not useful at all	6%
N/A Didn't have such preparation	68%

Year One Responses by School Type and School Size:

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	500+
Extremely	14%	16%	13%	13%	15%	8%	14%	21%
Somewhat	13%	13%	13%	9%	12%	12%	14%	11%
Not	6%	11%	4%	0%	6%	12%	7%	0%
Didn't	67%	60%	70%	78%	67%	68%	65%	68%

***Q42. Is there anything in the way of preparation for relating to parents that you feel you need but did not get?***

Communications and partnership building skills ranked highest among the specific needs for relating to parents that these practicing teachers identified.

Year Two Responses: n = 80

Yes	76%
No	24%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

Communications, partnership building  
Mentor teachers  
Hands-on experience

Year One Responses: n = 76

Yes	78%
No	22%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

Communication, partnership building skills  
Role play, hands-on  
All of the above  
Mentor teachers  
How to write IEPs

***Q43. Did you have any preparation in student cultural/ethnic diversity, limited English proficiency, etc.?***

About half of the teachers said that they had preparation in student diversity during their preparation for teaching careers; the means by which they acquired it were eclectic. About half received it as part of regular courses focused on the issues. Many of the remainder acquired it as aspects of other courses.

Year Two Responses: n = 78

Yes	47%
No	53%

*How was it acquired (listed in descending order)*

Specific course  
Aspects of other courses  
Inadequate  
Other

Year One Responses: n = 78

Yes	63%
No	37%

*How was it acquired? (listed in descending order)*

- Specific course
- Aspects of other courses
- Inadequate
- Gained in student teaching
- Picked up but not from program
- Had a seminar or unit
- Adequate

***Q44. How would you rate the preparation you had in terms of its usefulness for your present position?***

**Many of the teachers who received preparation in student diversity considered it useful, although a sizable share felt it was only somewhat useful or not useful at all. The responses seemed to suggest that some preparation in this area is important, but formal courses may not be the most effective way to provide it.**

*Year Two Responses; n = 80*

Extremely useful	18%
Somewhat usefu	23%
Not useful at all	8%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	49%

*Year Two Responses by School Type*

	Elementary	Middle	High
Extremely useful	21%	14%	64%
Somewhat useful	50%	28%	52%
Not useful at all	67%	17%	17%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	39%	36%	35%

  

	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	21%	36%	43%
Somewhat useful	17%	50%	33%
Not useful at all	33%	33%	33%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	21%	41%	38%

*Year One Responses; n = 78*

Extremely useful	22%
Somewhat useful	27%
Not useful at all	11%
Other	1%
N/A Didn't have such preparation	39%

*Year One Responses by School Type and School Size*

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely	23%	15%	25%	32%	23%	22%	27%	19%



**Interview Response Distribution by Question**

Somewhat	27%	41%	25%	9%	27%	17%	37%	23%
Not	11%	12%	13%	9%	11%	13%	10%	12%
Didn't	39%	32%	37%	50%	39%	48%	26%	46%

***Q45. Is there anything in the way of preparation in student/ethnic diversity, etc., that you feel you need but did not get?***

Teachers feel that more preparation in student diversity is needed, and their opinions center on more exposure to other cultures, either through classroom work or through field experience.

Year Two Responses; n = 77

Yes            61%  
No              39%

*Specifically (in descending order)*

Background with various cultures  
Social and economic issues  
Field experience with diverse cultures  
Other

Year One Responses; n = 72

Yes            53%  
No              47%

*Specifically (listed in descending order)*

Background on various cultures  
Native American culture  
Field experience with diverse populations  
Foreign languages  
ESL background  
Low income/single parent exposure  
Abused, neglected children  
Anthropology

***Q46. There have been calls for more preparatory courses in the special education area, including measurement, reporting, observing or field experience with special education students, etc. - Did your program include such preparation? What did it consist of? How many classes?***

Most of the teachers received preparation in the special education field, and in most cases this consisted of lecture courses. Practical experience was present for many others.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Yes            64%  
No              36%

*What did it consist of? (n = 52)*

Lecture courses	50%
Practical experience	12%
Special Ed. Laws	12%
Other	27%

*Year One Responses: n = 81*

Yes	69%
No	31%

*What did it consist of? (n = 63)*

Lecture course	43%
Observations	5%
Special Education laws	9%
Practical Experience	17%
Talked about IEPs	5%
Inclusion	12%
Measurement	2%
All of the above	7%

*How many classes? (n = 50)*

One course	61%
Two courses	9%
Three courses	11%
Four or more courses	4%
Aspects of courses	7%
My concentration	8%

***Q47. How would you rate its usefulness as classroom preparation?***

Teachers consider exposure to special education issues important and useful. There was not much variance by among teachers in different types of schools, but those in the larger elementary and middle schools may have felt the need more strongly than those in high schools.

*Year Two Responses: n = 81*

Extremely useful	21%
Somewhat useful	33%
Not useful at all	12%
N/A, did not have such preparation	32%

*Year Two Responses by School Type*

	Elementary	Middle	High
Extremely useful	41%	35%	24%
Somewhat useful	41%	33%	26%
Not useful at all	22%	33%	44%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	50%	13%	38%

**Interview Response Distribution by Question**

	Small	Medium	Large
Extremely useful	13%	60%	27%
Somewhat useful	22%	37%	41%
Not useful at all	30%	20%	50%
N/A, Didn't have such preparation	17%	43%	39%

Year One Responses; n = 81

Extremely useful	34%
Somewhat useful	29%
Not useful at all	12%
N/A Didn't have such preparatory courses	25%

Year One Responses by School Type and School Size

Response	Total % of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total % of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
Extremely	34%	31%	38%	35%	34%	33%	30%	39%
Somewhat	29%	31%	29%	26%	28%	29%	30%	25%
Not	12%	19%	4%	9%	12%	17%	10%	11%
Didn't	25%	19%	29%	30%	26%	21%	30%	25%

**Q48. Is there anything in the way of preparation in special education that you feel would have helped but which you did not get?**

Many teachers indicated that they needed more in the way of special education preparation than they received. Preparation for inclusion, special needs identification, and strategies for academic and behavioral interventions rank high among these needs.

Year Two Responses; n = 78

Yes	87%
No	13%

*What? (listed in descending order)*

- Special needs
- More field experience
- Classroom management
- Behavioral and parenting techniques

Year One Responses; n = 73

Yes	89%
No	11%

*What? (listed in descending order)*

- Preparation for inclusion
- Identifying special needs
- Academic and behavioral interventions
- More field experience

Writing IEPs  
Special Education laws, do's and don'ts  
Everything  
How to work in different handicap areas  
Testing, measurement/Information later in program/Dealing with parents

***Q49. Are you happy you became a teacher?***

The overwhelming majority of these teachers who were interviewed indicated they were happy with their chosen profession. There is little evidence of dissatisfaction with their career choice.

*Year Two Responses; n = 81*

Yes	99%
No	0%
Used to be	1%

*Year One Responses; n = 81*

Yes	98%
No	0%
Used to be	1%
Yes and no	1%

***Q50. Did you receive any career counseling at your college?***

Most of the teachers reported that they did not receive career counseling while in college.

*Year Two Responses; n = 81*

Yes	33%
No	67%

*Year One Responses; n = 81*

Yes	30%
No	70%

***Q51. Did you receive preparation with respect to job seeking skills - resume/portfolio preparation, interviewing for a position, etc.? If so, how would you rate it?***

Most of the teachers did receive help with job seeking skills while they were in college, and most of those that did consider it helpful.

*Year Two Responses; n = 81*

Yes	72%
No	11%
N/A	17%

*If so, how would you rate it?*

Extremely useful	62%
Somewhat useful	33%
Not at all useful	5%

Year One Responses: n = 77

Yes	86%
No	14%

*If so, how would you rate it?*

Extremely useful	49%
Somewhat useful	35%
Not useful at all	4%
N/A Didn't have such preparation	12%

**Q52. *The world of teaching is changing constantly, and new challenges arise at a similar rate; do you see anything on the horizon that has implications for the ways in which teachers should be prepared? (listed in descending order)***

**Technology and social issues comprise the challenges for the future of teaching and the manner in which teachers are prepared for most of those who were interviewed.**

Year Two Responses: n = 84

*Top six in descending order:*

Social Issues	31%
Technology	24%
Special education	7%
More hands-on	7%
Class management	2%
Policy and law	1%

Year One Responses: n = 85

Technology	26%
Social Problems	18%
Special education	9%
Discipline, Mgt.	9%
At-risk kids	3%
Teachers as co-learners	2%

Illustrative Respondent Comments:

- \* *(With respect to Social Problems) "I think that as a society we need to decide if we are going to have a school that teaches academics or if we are going to have schools that teach life skills and all of these other things."*
- \* *"The percentage of at-risk students is increasing in our schools. Our teachers need to be taught more about what these students are all about and how they learn best and how we can teach them the best."*

- \* *“Everyday we seem to be dealing with angry kids. The population has changed from where I went to school and where we are now. The needs have changed. We have to become not just teachers but almost pseudo-parents. That part of it has to be expected and demanded.”*
- \* *“Teachers have got to start to micromanage a little more to handle the diversity that is coming in. I know for a fact that many of our students have different labels, but we have to set the labels aside for awhile and get back to the 3-Rs and start getting them back in gear. Too much of my education was ‘touchy-feely’; sometimes we need to get back to basic discipline.”*
- \* *“If there is one area that I feel that teachers should be prepared in, it is dealing with a lot of these problem kids -- the accountability part of kids and parents.”*
- \* *“I think in Montana teachers need to be better prepared in how the schools are financed because that is just getting worse and worse. Preparation in special education, special education law, and what the expectations are going to be for you in having those special needs students in your classroom is going to be extremely important also.”*
- \* *“I think that more and more responsibilities are falling on the schools for all aspects of a child’s life. I am not happy about that. There should be more parental involvement.”*
- \* *“The breakdown of the family unit has been a challenge. I don’t know how we can prepare teachers for that, but it is an issue that teachers have to deal with. Behavior problems seem to be increasing, lack of respect, technology.”*
- \* *(With respect to Technology) “Teachers should be taught to be prepared for the technology aspect, that is has global usefulness, a way for teachers and students to reach other countries.”*
- \* *“Technology is really important. The problem is that it is changing so rapidly it is hard to keep up.”*
- \* *“Teachers need to know their way around the Internet.”*
- \* *“Technology has to be included. Our students are ahead of us. They have a natural interest in it. Also, some background in special education. This is not so much special education, but I am seeing so many more situations of students coming from difficult social situations, divorce, Mom’s not around, not sufficient supervision. Some skills and sensitivity issues would be helpful.”*
- \* *“I think they need to add some things from technology. They kids are growing up in a more visual society, and I think that they sit there and listen to lectures. They need more visual aspects.”*
- \* *(On the subject of Special Education) “Regular education teachers need to have more exposure to the special education kids because that is what I see; they are faced with more and more of this.”*
- \* *“There is a growing number of emotionally disturbed children who are no longer out in the community in special schools. Now they are in the schools in inclusion or in self-contained classrooms. We are not prepared for these students. There also are special education children that we are handling, and I have had no preparation for this. These children are emotionally disturbed and can be harmful.”*

- \* “. . . being sensitive to the children in your classroom that have so many different special needs due to mainstreaming in the classroom. [There should be] more classes on child behavior.”
- \* “I think we need more background in discipline, more background in options.”
- \* (With respect to other matters) “The universities are doing so many things in groups, but not many [schools] are hiring groups, and so many of the students are not ready to be in front of a classroom by themselves.”
- \* “Teachers entering the profession have less and less mastery in their content area.”
- \* “They [new teachers] ought to be prepared for anything. There are new things and jobs happening everyday. I don’t know if you can prepare anybody for that. I think you should try to expose them to what they are really getting into - preparing people for the array of students they are going to see.”

**Q53. National Board Certification is awarded by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards to those teachers successfully completing a two-part assessment: 1) the development of a portfolio demonstrating good teaching practices and 2) completion of several written exercises. National Board Certification, based on nationally established standards, signifies that an educator possesses the skills and knowledge of accomplished teaching. Are you familiar with the National Board Certification?**

While a sizable portion of the teachers were familiar with the National Board Certification process and goals, the majority were not.

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Yes	43%
No	50%
Don’t know	8%

Year One Responses; n = 80

Yes	40%
No	58%
Don’t know	2%

**Q54. If it were available, would you pursue it?**

During the first year interviews, most of those familiar with the National Boards Certification, or those who felt they understood it indicated they either planned to pursue it, or that they would be interested in doing so. During the second year interviews, probably because the concept was explained more fully, the pattern reversed, as nearly three-quarters of the respondents stated they probably would not pursue it.

Year Two Responses; n = 68

Yes	13%
No	72%

Don't know 15%

Year One Responses; n = 78

Yes 58%  
No 21%  
Don't know 21%

***Q54a. How do you stay current in your field?***

This question was not posed to respondents during the first year visits. Among those interviewed during the second year, formalized means of remaining current -- seminars, workshops, courses, etc. -- comprised the prominent means, followed by books and articles.

Year Two Responses; n = 97 (more than one answer possible)

Seminars, workshops, courses 71%  
Books, articles 19%  
Other means 10%

***Q55. Do you feel continuing education courses for teachers are important? If so, what types are most important?***

Teachers clearly consider continuing education courses important. The range of topics they considered appropriate for continuing education courses is as long and varied as the range of issues they confront in their profession. Courses in technology, in their particular fields, and in classroom management were those mentioned with the greatest frequency.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Yes 70%  
No 30%

*If so, which types? (Top four, listed in descending order)*

Lesson and Coursework planning  
Classroom management, school policy  
Special education  
Social and cognitive development

Year One Responses; n = 80

Yes 99%  
No 1%

*If so, what types are most important? (listed in descending order)*

Relevant to own area  
Technology  
Discipline & classroom management  
Current Education Trends



Teaching to learning styles  
Reading methods  
Developing captivating lessons  
Math  
Science  
Special Education  
Methods  
Child Development  
Laws Substance abuse, pregnancy, etc.  
Everything  
Social issues, at-risk youth  
Learning about society  
Building self-esteem  
Teacher mentoring, sharing  
Stimulating courses  
Career-vocational education  
Cultural diversity  
Curriculum development

***Q56. Do you regularly enroll in such courses? When was the last time? What sorts of courses?***

**Judging by their responses, continuing education courses are popular among teachers, and most report that they regularly seek them. Most have done so during the previous two years. Technology, content area, and classroom management courses appear to be the areas pursued.**

*Year Two Responses; n = 66*

Yes	92%
No	8%

*When was the last time (descending order)*

Summer '97  
Spring, '98  
Winter, '98  
Other

*What sorts of courses (top five in descending order)*

Curriculum, content  
Technology  
Teacher-student relations  
Special education  
Social issues

*Year One Responses; n = 79*

Yes	95%
No	5%

*When was the last time? (listed in descending order)*

Spring '97  
Summer '96  
Fall '96  
Master's candidate  
Spring '96  
Winter '97

*What sorts of courses? (listed in descending order)*

Technology  
Content area  
Discipline, management  
Master's courses  
Special Education  
Science  
Gifted, talented  
Reading  
Incorporating Science and Math  
Drugs, violence  
Stress management  
Inclusion strategies  
Development positive environment  
First-aid  
Math  
Study skills  
Writing assessment  
Block Scheduling  
Teacher-Student relations  
Design Technology  
Cross-curriculum  
Curriculum  
Parent relations

***Q57. Are there any continuing education courses that are now generally unavailable that would help you if they were offered?***

**Teachers seem to be generally satisfied with the range of continuing education courses available to them. More classes in technology, math, and such areas as ESL methods were mentioned among those that may be needed.**

*Year Two Responses; n = 72*

Yes	28%
No	72%

*What are they? (listed in descending order)*

Reading  
Science  
Internet/Technology  
Home Economics

Physical Education  
Special Education  
English  
Foreign Language  
History

Year One Responses: n = 75

Yes	31%
No	61%
Don't know	8%

*What are they? (listed in descending order)*

Technology  
Math  
Reflective time  
Methods  
Music  
History  
ESL methods  
Dealing w/parents  
Teaching reading  
Mini-classes  
Grammar  
Class management  
Gifted, talented  
Master's program  
Science

***Q57a. What would encourage you to take more professional development courses?  
[Year Two only; this question was not asked during Year One]***

The most popular way of encouraging teachers to take more professional development courses would be to provide them at a convenient time and location. Employer payment of the course fees was a close second. More varied delivery systems also were mentioned.

Year Two Responses: n = 124, more than one answer possible

Convenience of time and location	38%
Costs were paid	35%
Mode or medium, delivery system	12%
Other	15%

***Q58. Do you teach classes or subjects now for which you were not prepared in your college program? If so, which?***

A significant number of teachers reported that they taught classes or subjects for which they had no preparation as part of their college program. Science, computers, and social studies were mentioned with the greatest frequency.

*Year Two Responses: n = 82*

Yes	51%
No	49%

*Which? (Top five, listed in descending order)*

- Technology
- Science
- Humanities
- Social Studies
- Early Childhood

*Year One Responses: n = 79*

Yes	36%
No	64%

*If so, which? (listed in descending order)*

- Science
- Reading
- Social Studies
- Keyboarding
- Religion
- Math (including SIMMS)
- Early Childhood
- Art
- Resource room
- Communications
- Computers
- Design Technology
- Anger management
- Language arts

***Q59. What did you like most about your teacher preparation program? (listed in descending order)***

The range of considerations that teachers said they liked about their preparation programs was very broad, but field experience, student teaching, and the quality of the faculty were the references that occurred with the greatest frequency.

*Year Two Responses: n = 80*

*Top four, listed in descending order:*

Field experience  
Professors  
Courses  
Diversity of subject area

*Year One Responses: n = 82*

Field experience, student teaching  
Professors  
Collegiality  
Working with kids  
Education courses/Small classes  
Block classes/Diversity of subject areas  
College/Non-education courses/Work with different grade levels/Evening classes/Courses were integrated

*Illustrative Respondent Comments*

- \* *"The courses I took in my own subject matter were really interesting to me. The student teaching experience, and then a number of the final methods courses, right before I went into the student teaching experience were useful too."*
- \* *"Talking with professors. It's the before class and after class part."*
- \* *"Graduation"*
- \* *"How small it was and the one-to-one relationships we could establish with the instructors."*
- \* *"That there was a whole lot of hands-on, and that one course I took throughout the whole year - the language theories."*
- \* *"I like the whole wide spectrum of it. They gave you a lot of everything, maybe not always that good. Once you got into the situation, the setting, you kind of knew what you were up against, you could change and take different things."*
- \* *"The opportunity to be with kids."*
- \* *"Student teaching was the most helpful and enjoyable."*
- \* *"Student teaching. That is where I learned the most. Working with kids."*
- \* *"I got as lot of useful ideas [from my program] that I could apply in the classroom. I enjoyed being with my colleagues. I loved my field experience."*
- \* *(Professors) "My supervisor. She was an ex-teacher. She was right on top of new times."*

- \* *"I think it was mainly a waste of time unless you were out observing."*
- \* *"Quality professors that taught what was real and applicable in the classroom setting. Not just talking about theory and philosophy but applying things."*
- \* *"Working with professors. The professors that taught me were really good."*
- \* *"The overall atmosphere that the professors tried to give us. Small classes."*
- \* *"I liked going to college. Some of the professors who shared with me their views, my student teaching experience."*
- \* *(The program) "It got me to where I wanted to be. It taught me skills that I needed. I met some great people."*
- \* *"It was very broad. I appreciated it, but maybe I didn't get all of the depth I needed."*
- \* *"It was easy. I didn't really have to ever study."*
- \* *"I liked the block classes, the things you could actually take from the classroom and the kids could actually use."*
- \* *"I liked that it focused on where you wanted to go. I really did want to teach. I got lots of information. The courses I needed were available in the evening, and this freed up the day for observation."*

***Q60. What did you like least about it? (listed in descending order)***

**The things teachers did not like about these programs tended to be the obverse of what they liked: irrelevant courses, too little field experience, and out-of-touch faculty drew the greatest number of references.**

**Year Two Responses: n = 79**

*Top four, listed in descending order*

Education and non-Education courses  
Too little field experience  
Professors  
Too little content

**Year One Responses: n = 81**

Irrelevant courses  
Non-education courses  
Professors out of touch  
Nothing applies  
Too little field experience  
Limited options  
Core courses  
Methods courses  
Education courses  
Research papers  
Theory courses  
Courses generally  
Evaluators

School too large  
Insufficient content area  
Fifth year costs and time  
Inadequate Special Education

Illustrative Respondent Comments

- \* *"The education block classes."*
- \* *"The numbers, the numbers of students in some of the classes - I felt should have been 30-40; we had 200-300."*
- \* *"Mainly non-Education courses."*
- \* *"A computer class where the teacher could not speak English and a class in which I had to do a 30-page paper on Skinner."*
- \* *"Too much busy work."*
- \* *"I felt I did not have enough work in how to plan a curriculum."*
- \* *"Some of the instructors."*
- \* *"I would have liked to have been in the classroom sooner and in practical situations."*
- \* *"The core classes you had to take."*
- \* *"Working with a first year teacher who did not know how to manage his time."*
- \* *"Not enough time to explore what was actually available."*
- \* *"I can't really think of anything I didn't like about it."*
- \* *"Some courses that I really have not used very much; these seemed like a waste of time."*
- \* *"Being stuck in a classroom in some dingy hall trying to learn methods that were outdated."*
- \* *"All of the hoops you must jump through to get your certificate."*
- \* *"The general courses seemed like such a waste of time to me. I would rather have had more teaching time."*
- \* *"They didn't try to give you things that apply to teaching; didn't touch on current issues relating to school policy."*
- \* *"The hoop jumping. It just seemed like there were a lot of things they required that were almost senseless, almost pointless. I can understand requirements, but there was a lot I just could not see."*
- \* *"Some of the classes I had to take seemed like busy work without a real goal at the end. Some of the methods classes seemed like a waste of time, because they lacked practical experience. In one particular course, all we had to do was plan out lesson plans. There could have been a lot more done that would have been more applicable to teaching kids."*
- \* *"Some of the methods courses, the way it was organized - it just seems that it could have been formatted in a different way. Maybe more time in general courses learning specific content and then having a few different kinds of methods courses."*

- \* *"I hated the methods courses; they were pretty useless I thought, and I guess I should qualify that by saying I thought they were mostly busy work that served no real purpose. And then, especially for me, everything had an elementary basis, so I have boxes and boxes of elementary stuff I'll probably never use. I just thought it was totally busywork, it was overkill, and it was for a whole semester."*
- \* *"My non-education classes."*

**Q61. What about the faculty: How do you feel about the faculty who taught in your program? On an A through F scale, how would you grade them as a group in terms of their understanding of the realities of classroom teaching as you have come to know it? Tell me more about this -- if you gave a C, D, or F, how could it be improved?**

Teachers tend to grade the faculty who taught in their programs rather well. More than half gave them an A or B grade; another 40 percent gave them a C. There were very few D or F grades. Getting off the campus and into the schools, and increasing their involvement were the suggestions given for improving lower faculty grades when these were awarded.

Year Two Responses; n = 81

Grade A	14%
Grade B	46%
Grade C	35%
Grade D	5%
Grade F	1%

Year One Responses; n = 75

Grade A	(18%)
Grade B	(38%)
Grade C	(40%)
Grade D	(4%)
Grade F	(0%)

*Tell me more about this -- if you gave a low grade, how could it be improved? (listed in descending order)*

Needed to get out into the schools  
Lacked involvement  
Some were good, some were not

Illustrative Respondent Comments:

- \* *"Having faculty members who have recently been in the classroom or who still are in the classroom. We need to have more interactive time in the classroom rather than just lecture."*
- \* *"If you are going to tell me how to teach, then teach that way. I would like to have professors who are currently teaching or teachers who have taken a sabbatical and want to teach an Education class. I want the real 'I have been there, and this is what we have been doing.'"*



- \* *"I was very happy with my training."*
- \* *"Faculty need more 'real-world' experience."*
- \* *"They were excellent in what they taught, but I don't think they had been in a classroom."*
- \* *"Instructors should be required to observe an elementary or high school class occasionally, so they are in touch with the changing classroom."*
- \* *"Send them out into the community to be a teacher first, and then bring them back to [the college] to teach."*
- \* *"The need for the professors to know what's going on in the classrooms of the schools."*
- \* *"They themselves should have to go back into the classroom."*
- \* *"There were some professors that had been in the classroom in the last few years, and there were some that hadn't been in the classroom in a really long time. I think it is really important that they go back into the classroom occasionally because the students, technology, and classrooms change so much in just a few years."*
- \* *"They were out of teaching for so long, and they were 'professors.' They weren't as involved and knowing what is going on. They were kind of giving us the rose colored glasses."*
- \* *"They needed to get into an elementary or secondary classroom weekly."*

**Q62. Staying with the A through F grading scale, what grade would you give your teacher preparation program overall in terms of its adequacy in preparing you for your later teaching experiences?**

**Teachers displayed attitudes toward their preparation programs overall as they did to the faculty in those programs. More than half received an A or B grade; another 30 percent received a C. Only a few teachers awarded a D or F grade.**

Year Two Responses; n = 80

Grade A	10%
Grade B	56%
Grade C	30%
Grade D	3%
Grade F	1%

Year Two Responses by School Type and School Size (listed in descending order)

	Elementary	Middle	High
Grade A	25%	25%	50%
Grade B	41%	27%	32%
Grade C	50%	23%	27%
Grade D	0%	100%	0%
Grade F	100%	0%	0%
	Small	Medium	Large
Grade A	13%	50%	38%

***Interview Response Distribution by Question***

Grade B	21%	38%	40%
Grade C	14%	50%	36%
Grade D	0%	100%	0%
Grade F	100%	0%	0%

***Year One Responses: n = 79***

Grade A	15%
Grade B	50%
Grade C	33%
Grade D	2%
Grade F	0%

***Year One Responses by School Type***

Response	Total Number of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total Number of Responses	1-250	251-500	500+
B	41	20	14	7	41	11	15	15
C	27	12	4	11	27	10	10	7
A	12	4	5	3	12	3	5	4
D	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	1
F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

***Q63. What grade would you give your teacher preparation program in terms of preparing you for your first day in school as a teacher?***

Teachers were generally more critical of their preparation programs in terms of how they prepared them for their first day of school. In this case D and F grades began to appear with greater frequency. This may be a reflection of attitudes about the importance of field work and student teaching.

***Year Two Responses: n = 77***

Grade A	13%
Grade B	21%
Grade C	36%
Grade D	14%
Grade F	16%

***Year Two Responses by School Type and School Size: (listed in descending order)***

	Elementary	Middle	High
Grade A	40%	20%	40%
Grade B	38%	31%	31%
Grade C	42%	35%	23%
Grade D	30%	30%	30%
Grade F	58%	17%	25%
	Small	Medium	Large
Grade A	20%	50%	30%
Grade B	29%	36%	36%
Grade C	20%	40%	40%

***Interview Response Distribution by Question***

Grade D	0%	55%	45%
Grade F	17%	50%	33%

***Year One Responses; n = 77***

Grade A	14%
Grade B	29%
Grade C	38%
Grade D	11%
Grade F	3%
N/A	5%

***Year One Responses by School Type and School Size: (listed in descending order)***

Response	Total Number of Responses	Elementary	Middle	High	Total Number of Responses	1-250	251-500	501+
C	32	14	8	10	30	8	15	7
B	23	9	5	9	23	7	9	7
A	11	3	5	3	11	3	2	6
D	9	5	4	0	9	3	1	5
F	3	2	0	1	3	1	1	1

***Q64. What grade would you give yourself as a teacher?***

Perhaps as a reflection of their satisfaction with teaching as their career choice, most teachers consider themselves pretty good at their work and award themselves an A or a B grade as teachers.

***Year Two Responses; n = 79***

Grade A	34%
Grade B	61%
Grade C	5%
Grade D	0%
Grade F	0%

***Year One Responses; n = 79***

Grade A	21%
Grade B	71%
Grade C	8%
Grade D	0%
Grade F	0%

***Q65. I guess this brings me to the central question: If you could design your own program of teacher preparation, based on your experience as a teacher, what would it look like? How would it differ from what you had? More field work? More classroom courses? Which subjects? (listed in descending order)***

The list of suggested improvements that teachers would make in their preparation programs is varied and lengthy, but most of the teachers agreed on additional opportunities for field experience as the change they would advocate.

*Year Two Responses; n = 80*

- More field experience
- Leave it the same
- Other changes

*Year One Responses; n = 82*

- More field experience
- Earlier field experience
- Classroom management, discipline
- Technology
- Special education
- Methods classes
- More student teaching
- Parent relations
- Developing motivating lesson plans
- Longer student teaching
- Guest speakers, practicing teachers
- Stress content areas
- Screen program applicants
- School law
- Communication
- Sharing of experience
- Teaching one hour day through program
- Content area emphasis
- More teaching of reading
- Child development
- Faculty w/more current classroom experience
- More courses
- Broader background for teacher
- More interaction with professors
- Ability to select own courses
- Develop and teach lessons
- Matching students with supr. teachers
- Mentoring system
- Professionals modeling teaching methods
- Lab school/Relating core to classrooms
- Organization, time management skills
- Job search skills
- Structure
- Group by grade level interests

Different reference materials for dif. situations  
Developing objectives/Education terminology  
Case studies  
Voc opportunities across curriculum  
Videotape real classrooms  
Know and teach what schools want  
More professionalism, appearance, attire  
More emphasis on collaboration  
Measurement & statistics/History of education courses  
Handling first day of school  
Multi-culturalism, foreign languages  
Middle school philosophy

**Illustrative Respondent Comments**

- \* *“Once you get past the basics, I think you should really focus on what is going to help these kids.”*
- \* *“Put the teacher in a classroom situation first. Some teachers go through four years of college and then don’t even make it through the first year of teaching because they don’t really see what it is like soon enough.”*
- \* *“More special education, but leave everything else the way it is. More field work, more courses that demand professionalism, technical writing, things like that.”*
- \* *“Add some job experience. We had quite a bit of it, and it was pretty good. I also feel that in the special education part of my program, they need a lot more experience in writing IEPs and making them useful, to learn to do the paperwork part of it.”*
- \* *“I would drop a lot of core-required courses and keep a four-year program, but I would have [a lot more] field work and student teaching, where students are in as many different classrooms as possible.”*
- \* *“A lot more interaction with students, parents, and teachers. More hands-on experience with technology.”*
- \* *“More field work where the teachers are really able to get into the teaching process and have an opportunity to observe fine teachers. Also, more classes in special ed, because the lines are blurring.”*
- \* *“I would put a prospective teacher with a master teacher in the Freshman year, and they would work together throughout the college program. This would be a public school teacher and not a university professor.”*
- \* *“I would say more observation. In special education we had to do observations for almost all of our classes, so I was in the classroom a lot.”*
- \* *(With respect to more field experience) “More time in the [school] classroom; all of the courses we take leading up to that are very, very important, but more time in the classroom to see how it all really operates.”*
- \* *“More time in the classroom; content area is very important; work through your methods classrooms with a real teacher, a whole class with the same teacher, and then work into your student teaching; you need to see how a full day works, and how a full week works.”*

- \* *"I would take the morning and put a college junior in the classroom. In the afternoon you could take methods classes and core classes. I think every day of the junior and senior year should be in the [school] classroom. Every quarter or nine weeks you would change grade levels."*
- \* *"I would have a program that has a lot more contact with kids, instead of just these isolated little spurts of assignments where you go into the community or into the school. I would have more contact with teachers and administrators."*
- \* *"The field experience is most important. I think they need to get out early on and do observations; . . . just an hour where they have to participate in a group activity, first day of school things, testing, reporting results to parents in a good understandable way. More hands-on experience."*
- \* *"I would require lots of field work and observation; student teaching is plenty. I think our paraprofessional [experience is] not long enough. Seeing many different classes of observations, actual lessons that worked, the ability to see many different teachers and how they handled classrooms and lessons I could carry with me."*
- \* *"I think the field experience is the most beneficial part of teacher education. I think teachers need methods, but in hands-on you are learning the methods."*
- \* *"They need to be in the school classroom more often, so they can really see what is going on in there. There should be more courses on special ed, technology, parents, and dealing with them."*
- \* *"They would work and observe in early childhood programs, elementary programs, starting at the bottom and going through to the top. There would be more time in the classroom, an emphasis on what is appropriate for prospective teachers as to how they dress, conduct themselves in the classroom, being prompt; professionalism should be emphasized and taught; a lot of technology, English, writing, communications skills, dealing with parents and guardians, emphasis on classroom management, observing special education and courses."*
- \* *"I would include more in-depth work in multi-cultural awareness, sensitivity, special education, in depth, not just there are the laws that protect the kids. Lots of field work where you would have to help in the classroom early on."*
- \* *"More observation of TA's by the college faculty or for the teacher to establish direct contact with the college professor. More hands-on. More preparation in subject areas -- reading, math, science, social studies methods. Raise the standards for who are let into the program. It is a lot tougher than people think it is. A lot more of parent relationships, school laws, governance, special education, etc."*
- \* *"Skills for effective teaching, the process for what you are being evaluated on. Some of Susan Fisher and some of her social skills and how you manage classrooms with social skills, the components of how you teach a lesson. You have monitoring, guided practice, behavioral objectives; written lesson plans that are meaningful."*
- \* *"It would look like a day in the life of a teacher. Use manipulatives, make/design a lesson -- how do you teach a child to spell. How to run a classroom using six different classes/lessons at a time. How do you do a year plan of fifth grade. How to section your lessons."*
- \* *"Start earlier with more intense field experience; let people get in there and give them guidance and let them teach lessons, lab situation. Learn from a regular*

classroom and teachers, helping you build up on your weaknesses. Lots of reflection. See that professors stay involved with the classroom.

- \* *“More field work: plan lessons, actually teach them, start the field experience as early as possible; get them working with the students so that they know if that is what they want to do.”*
- \* *“One year of student teaching. You can see a class start and end; when you are placed in your job you are assigned a master teacher to help you. A couple of years of methods were helpful, and you really need basics; more field work, more teaching reading.”*
- \* *“More field experience; on certain days you could be in the field, and then in the classroom to discuss the situation. You could use and talk about strategies that might work and might not work. You can learn the rules and regulations of the schools.”*
- \* *“Some way to process the field experiences in the university classes; one processing day a week then really it could have been much richer. There could have been a lot more of questioning strategies you are studying in a course. The professors could have used similar questioning strategies on the students. More case studies.”*
- \* *“I would make a school that is a teaching school. I would tie that in strongly with the National Standards that have come about in math and science. So it would be a teaching school, actual on-the-job experience for more than a quarter -- much like a hospital school where interns are there for a year and take on some of the duties.”*
- \* *“I would add a course on how to handle the first day of school.”*
- \* *“How to keep an orderly classroom.”*

***Q66. Did I miss anything? Is there any important aspect of your teacher preparation program we have not covered? Can you think of any questions I should have asked but have not?***

*Year Two Response; n = 38*

Additional comments	45%
No	55%

*Year One Responses; n = 65*

Additional comments	40%
No	60%

*Illustrative Year One Respondent Comments*

- \* *“Individualizing your curriculum. I had no course work with that. I would like to know how.”*
- \* *“I don’t agree with tenure. I don’t think tenure be part of the teaching profession.”*
- \* *“Professional development courses are not really relevant to what is going on in the classroom.”*
- \* *“Spend a day with an administrator or a disciplinarian. We need to appreciate what their jobs are about, how they handle kids that are in trouble.”*

- \* *"We have a real problem with professionalism. That's what we are talking about. It bothers me the image that teachers have. We don't have a lot of respect."*
- \* *"Knowing what teachers' legal rights are and how to best work with other teachers, principals, and administrators. There should be a course on how to work with the system."*
- \* *"The big thing is getting people into the classrooms sooner and having instructors that aware of what is going on, that are current."*
- \* *"This interview has been so long I can't remember."*
- \* *"There needs to be more of a focus on middle school problems in these programs."*
- \* *"More understanding of the chain of command -- where to go within the district when you have problems."*
- \* *"More special education courses."*
- \* *"There seems to be a real arrogance that if you were in Education [it was] a less important major. There is a real arrogance against people who are in education. Somehow you are not as bright, not as motivated; I think that is real sad. I don't know how anybody would fix that, but I think it should be fixed. In education there is a real arrogance [among] people who are in regular ed over those who are in special ed. A lot of that is translated into the work place."*
- \* *"The only other thing in my field as music goes, I think it needs to be a five year program because of the additional work and having to learn so many instruments and the aspects of music. I think it is very difficult to do your music program in four years."*
- \* *"The amount of teachers who are out of work, amount of jobs available. We need to address stress and the numbers of students - the overcrowding of schools."*



***4.0 YEAR TWO  
RECOMMENDATIONS***

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#### **4.0 YEAR TWO RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations regarding the second study year have been developed from the field experiences of the first.

1. The first recommendation involves an interest in encouraging even more reflective responses to the substantive questions. The teachers interviewed during the first year cooperated magnificently, lending their time and thoughts without hesitation. Still, it was difficult for them to marshal their thoughts on some of the matters of interest without some opportunity for prior consideration. While the interviewers often described in advance some of the matters that would be covered in the interview, the teachers were not provided an opportunity to review the questions prior to the actual interview. This could be addressed during the second year if the teachers were sent a list of the more substantive questions prior to the actual interview and invited to give some thought to them.
2. The interview guide was generally effective. The study team will, however, assess the efficacy of each question and make minor changes as appropriate. No radical changes to the questionnaire during the second year are planned at this time.
3. The problems associated with locating eligible teachers is a continuing one. The lists provided by the retirement system were dated, and it was difficult to draw current information from them. Other sources of such information will be sought during the second year. This will be discussed with the CSPAC and the Technical Advisory Committee.
4. An effort will be made to schedule the interviews earlier in the year, ideally during the autumn months. The second year will require 116 usable interviews; this will probably necessitate a total sample of 120-125 teachers. The approach, contacting the school staff and the teacher, and conducting the interview in the school setting proved effective and will be continued.

***Inquiry into the Preparation of Elementary and Secondary Educators Practicing in  
Montana***

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This concludes the first year report. The full project report at the conclusion of Year Two will include recommendations for change.

## ***APPENDICES***

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**PREPARATION OF MONTANA TEACHERS**

**FIELD INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**MGT of America, Inc.  
Olympia, Washington  
360/866-7303**

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_ 

For Transcriber -- Resp. Code # _____
---------------------------------------

Telephone Number in case clarification needed \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Type (EL, MS, HS, Other \_\_\_\_\_)

Ownership Type: Public \_\_\_ Private \_\_\_ Reservation \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

School Size (total number of students \_\_\_\_\_; total number of teachers \_\_\_\_\_)

Interviewer's impression of unique school characteristics

urban    rural    very remote    reservation    other

If other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

*Interviewer: Write only explanatory or clarifying remarks on this form.*

*Check off each question in the box provided after it is asked.*

*Speak loudly and clearly, as the recorder is voice activated, and the tape will be the only comprehensive record of the interview.*

**[Start Recorder]**

**Introduction and introductory remarks:**

## Year Two Interview Guide

*"I'm \_\_\_\_\_ . As you may recall from earlier telephone conversations, I am with MGT of America, the consulting firm retained by the Montana Certification, Standards, and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC) to conduct a study of the preparation of elementary and secondary classroom teachers practicing in Montana. The study will identify aspects of their teacher education programs that teachers consider most relevant to their classroom experiences and what, if anything else, they wish had been part of their preparation. The results of the study will inform future CSPAC proposals respecting state policy on teacher preparation and certification.*

*"You are one of the teachers who was randomly selected for participation in the study. I appreciate greatly your willingness to meet with me and answer our questions. I assure you that your answers are important and will be used in the study. I also assure you that your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Although we may quote some of the things you say, we will not attribute them to you directly, and there will be no way to track back to you from the transcription of this interview.*

*"I expect the interview to last about 45 minutes to an hour. Do you have any questions of me before we begin?"*

*"Let me start with a few questions about your present teaching situation . . ."*

Q1. [ ] Which grades do you teach? Which subjects?

Q2. [ ] What is your average class size?

Q3. [ ] How long have you been teaching?

Q4. [ ] How long in Montana?

Q5. [ ] How long do you intend to teach?

Q6. [ ] Did you proceed directly from college into teaching?

Q7. [ ] What made you want to be a teacher?

Year Two Interview Guide

- Q8. [ ] When did you decide to become one?
- Q9. [ ] When did you complete your teacher preparation program?
- Q10. [ ] In what state or states did you receive your teacher education?
- Q11. [ ] Which, if any, endorsements (“permissive special competencies”) in the State of Montana do you have?
- Q12. [ ] What degrees do you hold?
- Q13. [ ] What was your college major?
- Q14. [ ] Your college minor?
- Q15. [ ] How was your teacher preparation program organized? For example, was it like any of the following forms? [Note to Interviewer: read or show this list]
- “Four-year” Undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor’s degree
  - Another four-year degree program, e.g., Bachelor’s of Music Education
  - Undergraduate major in a discipline other than Education and a graduate degree (MAT or MIT) in Education
  - Undergraduate major in Education with a subsequent “Fifth Year” requirement
  - Undergraduate major in a content area (e.g., history, physical education, etc.) with technical certificate
  - Alternative certification
  - Other, please describe
- Q16. [ ] What, if any, were the advantages offered by this program or model?

Year Two Interview Guide

Q17. [ ] What were the disadvantages?

Q18. [ ] Overall, which aspects of your teacher preparation program proved to be of most use to you?

- Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods
- Student Teaching
- Non-education classes
- Classroom observation
- Other, please specify

Q19. [ ] Why is that so? Please tell me a little more. . .

Q20. [ ] Which were of least use to you?

- Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods
- Student Teaching
- Non-education classes
- Classroom observation
- Other, please specify
- None, all were useful

Q21. [ ] Why is this so?

Q22. [ ] What, if any, do you consider the distinctive features of your preparation program?

Q23. [ ] What was your favorite course in college?

Q24. [ ] Tell me more about this: Did what you learned in this course affect the way you teach? Have you used this in your teaching?

Q25. [ ] What was your *least* favorite course? Why?



Year Two Interview Guide

Q26. [ ] Please describe the field experience part of your preparation program.

- Classroom observation:  
What was it like?  
How long?  
When in your program did it occur?
- Paraprofessional Experience  
What was it like?  
How long?  
When in your program did it occur?
- Student Teaching  
What was it like?  
How long?  
When in your program did it occur?

Q27. [ ] How would you rate the usefulness of this field experience in preparing you for your later actual teaching experiences?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have field experience

Q28. [ ] Did you receive any formal mentoring early in your teaching career?

- Yes     No

If yes, how would you rate usefulness?

If no, do you wish you had it?

Please explain.

Q29. [ ] Was your teaching preparation program oriented to any special teaching environments, e.g., rural or urban, big school or small school, reservation school, etc., settings? Does your present teaching setting align with this preparation? (If so, how so?)

Year Two Interview Guide

Q30. [ ] How many hours/courses (specify) in science/math do you presently teach? Did your teacher preparation program provide you with a sufficient background in math, science, and other substantive academic areas for your work as a classroom teacher?

Q31. [ ] Did your teacher education program include any preparatory classes in education technology (e.g., computers, CD-Rom, Internet, etc.)? If so, how many classes?

Q31a [ ] Was it offered as part of another course?

Q32. [ ] How would you rate your ed-tech preparation overall in terms of its usefulness to your present position?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have such classes

Q33. [ ] Is there anything in the way of preparation in education technology that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Q34. [ ] Did you have any preparatory classes in the governance/ administration of schools, school policy, school law, parental rights, etc.?

Q34a [ ] If yes, please identify specific courses.

Q35. [ ] How would you rate this background in terms of its usefulness in your career?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have such classes

Year Two Interview Guide

- Q36. [ ] Is there any aspect of this -- preparation in the administration or organization of schools, etc., you feel you needed but did not get? (Please explain)
- Q37. [ ] How about preparation in classroom management, discipline -- Did you have such preparation as part of your program? Please describe it.
- Q38. [ ] How would you describe it in terms of its usefulness in preparing you for the classroom?
- Extremely useful
  - Somewhat useful
  - Not useful at all
  - Other, please describe
  - N/A - Didn't have such preparation
- Q39. [ ] What, if anything, do you need but did not get with respect to preparation in classroom management, discipline?
- Q40. [ ] Did you have any preparation for relating to parents? How was this done (courses, fieldwork, other – please specify)?
- Q41. [ ] How would you rate such preparation in terms of its usefulness for your present position?
- Extremely useful
  - Somewhat useful
  - Not useful at all
  - Other, please describe
  - N/A - Didn't have such preparation
- Q42. [ ] Is there anything in the way of preparation for relating to parents that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Year Two Interview Guide

Q43. [ ] Did you have any preparation in student cultural/ethnic diversity, limited English proficiency, etc.? What was that like?

Q44. [ ] How would you rate the preparation you had in terms of its usefulness for your present position?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have such preparation

Q45. [ ] Is there anything in the way of preparation in student/ethnic diversity, etc., that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Q46. [ ] There have been calls for more preparatory courses in the special education area, including measurement, reporting, observing or field experience with special education students, etc. -- Did your program include such preparation? What did it consist of? How many classes?

Q47. [ ] How would you rate its usefulness as classroom preparation?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have such preparatory courses

Q48. [ ] Is there anything in the way of preparation in special education that you feel would have helped but which you did not get? (Please explain)

Q49. [ ] Are you happy you became a teacher?

Q49a [ ] Would you make the same decision again?

Year Two Interview Guide

Q50. [ ] Did you receive any career counseling at your college?

Q51. [ ] Did you receive preparation with respect to job seeking skills -- resume/portfolio preparation, interviewing for a position, etc.? If so, how would you rate it?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A - Didn't have such preparation

Q52. [ ] The world of teaching is changing constantly, and new challenges arise at a similar rate; do you see anything on the horizon that has implications for the ways in which teachers should be prepared?

Q53. [ ] National Board Certification is awarded by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards to those teachers successfully completing a two-part assessment: 1) the development of a portfolio demonstrating good teaching practices and 2) the completion of several written exercises. National Board Certification, based on nationally established standards, signifies that an educator possesses the skills and knowledge of accomplished teaching. Are you familiar with National Board Certification?

Q54. [ ] Are you planning to pursue it?

Q54a [ ] How do you stay current in your field?

Q55. [ ] Do you feel continuing education courses for teachers are important? If so, what types are most important?

Q56. [ ] Do you regularly enroll in such courses? When was the last time? What sorts of courses?

Year Two Interview Guide

Q57. [ ] Are there any continuing education courses that are now generally unavailable that would help you if they were offered?

Q57a [ ] What would encourage you to take more professional development courses?

Convenience of time and location (what does that mean?)

Costs were paid

Mode or medium, delivery system

Other

Q58. [ ] Do you teach classes or subjects now for which you were not prepared in your college program? (If so, which?)

Q58a [ ] Given your present teaching situation, what would you need to take in the way of continuing education to bolster your effectiveness or marketability?

Q59. [ ] What did you like most about your teacher preparation program?

Q60. [ ] What did you like least about it?

Q61. [ ] What about the faculty: How do you feel about the faculty who taught in your program? On an A through F scale, how would you grade them as a group in terms of their understanding of the realities of classroom teaching as you have come to know it? Tell me more about this -- if you gave a C, D, or F, how could it be improved?

Q62. [ ] Staying with the A through F grading scale, what grade would you give your teacher preparation program overall in terms of its adequacy in preparing you for your later teaching experiences?

Q63. [ ] What grade would you give your teacher preparation program in terms of preparing you for your first day in school as a teacher?

Q64. [ ] What grade would you give yourself as a teacher?

Year Two Interview Guide

Q64a [ ] Why?

Q65. [ ] I guess this brings me to the central question: If you could design your own program of teacher preparation, based on your experience as a teacher, what would it look like? How would it differ from what you had? More field work? More classroom courses? Which subjects?

Q66. [ ] Did I miss anything? Is there any important aspect of your teacher preparation program we have not covered? Can you think of any questions I should have asked but have not?

***Thank you.***

***Reminder to Interviewer: make sure to include the demographic and school information at the beginning of the form, especially the data on student enrollment and teaching staff.***

***Also, make sure to remove and label tape***

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**PREPARATION OF MONTANA TEACHERS**

**FIELD INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**MGT of America, Inc.  
Olympia, Washington  
360/866-7303**

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_

Male \_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_ **For Transcriber -- Resp. Code # \_\_\_\_\_**

Telephone Number in case clarification needed \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Type (EL, MS, HS, Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Ownership Type: Public \_\_\_ Private \_\_\_ Reservation \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

School Size (total number of students \_\_\_\_\_; total number of teachers \_\_\_\_\_)

Interviewer's impression of unique school characteristics (e.g., urban, rural, very remote, reservation, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

***Interviewer: Write only explanatory or clarifying remarks on this form.***

***Check off each question in the box provided after it is asked.***

***Speak loudly and clearly, as the recorder is voice activated, and the tape will be the only comprehensive record of the interview.***

***[Start Recorder]***

**Introduction and introductory remarks:**



## Year One Interview Guide

*"I'm \_\_\_\_\_ . As you may recall from earlier telephone conversations, I am with MGT of America, the consulting firm retained by the Montana Certification, Standards, and Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC) to conduct a study of the preparation of elementary and secondary classroom teachers practicing in Montana. The study will identify aspects of their teacher education programs that teachers consider most relevant to their classroom experiences and what, if anything else, they wish had been part of their preparation. The results of the study will inform future CSPAC proposals respecting state policy on teacher preparation and certification.*

*"You are one of the teachers who was randomly selected for participation in the study. I appreciate greatly your willingness to meet with me and answer our questions. I assure you that your answers are important and will be used in the study. I also assure you that your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Although we may quote some of the things you say, we will not attribute them to you directly, and there will be no way to track back to you from the transcription of this interview.*

*"I expect the interview to last about 45 minutes to an hour. Do you have any questions of me before we begin?"*

*"Let me start with a few questions about your present teaching situation . . ."*

Q1.  Which grades do you teach? Which subjects?

Q2.  What is your average class size?

Q3.  How long have you been teaching?

Q4.  How long in Montana?

Q5.  How long do you intend to teach?

Q6.  Did you proceed directly from college into teaching?

Q7.  What made you want to be a teacher?

## Year One Interview Guide

Q8.  When did you decide to become one?

Q9.  When did you complete your teacher preparation program?

Q10.  In what state or states did you receive your teacher education?

Q11.  Which, if any, endorsements (“permissive special competencies”) in the State of Montana do you have?

Q12.  What degrees do you hold?

Q13.  What was your college major?

Q14.  Your college minor?

Q15.  How was your teacher preparation program organized? For example, was it like any of the following forms? [*Note to Interviewer: read or show this list*]

- “Four-year” Undergraduate major in Education leading to a Bachelor’s degree
- Another four-year degree program, e.g., Bachelor’s of Music Education
- Undergraduate major in a discipline other than Education and a graduate degree (MAT or MIT) in Education
- Undergraduate major in Education with a subsequent “Fifth Year” requirement
- Alternative certification
- Other, please describe

Q16.  What, if any, were the advantages offered by this program or model?

Q17.  What were the disadvantages?

## Year One Interview Guide

Q18.  Overall, which aspects of your teacher preparation program proved to be of most use to you?

- Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods
- Student Teaching
- Non-education classes
- Classroom observation
- Other, please specify

Q19.  Why is that so? Please tell me a little more. . .

Q20.  Which were of least use to you?

- Classes in pedagogy or teaching methods
- Student Teaching
- Non-education classes
- Classroom observation
- Other, please specify

Q21.  Why is this so?

Q22.  What, if any, do you consider the distinctive features of your preparation program?

Q23.  What was your favorite course in college?

Q24.  Tell me more about this: Did what you learned in this course affect the way you teach? Have you used this in your teaching?

Q25.  What was your *least* favorite course? Why?

Q26.  Please describe the field experience part of your preparation program. What was it like? How long? When in your program did it occur?

Q27.  How would you rate the usefulness of this field experience in preparing you for your later actual teaching experiences?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful

## Year One Interview Guide

- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have field experience

Q28.  Please explain.

Q29.  Was your teaching preparation program oriented to any special teaching environments, e.g., rural or urban, big school or small school, reservation school, etc., settings? Does your present teaching setting align with this preparation? (If so, how so?)

Q30.  How much science/math do you presently teach? Did your teacher preparation program provide you with a sufficient background in math, science, and other substantive academic areas for your work as a classroom teacher?

Q31.  Did your teacher education program include any preparatory classes in education technology (e.g., computers, CD-Rom, Internet, etc.)? If so, how many classes?

Q32.  How would you rate your ed-tech preparation overall in terms of its usefulness to your present position?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such classes

Q33.  Is there anything in the way of preparation in education technology that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Q34.  Did you have any preparatory classes in the governance/administration of schools, school policy, school law, parental rights, etc.?

Q35.  How would you rate this background in terms of its usefulness in your career?

- Extremely useful

## Year One Interview Guide

- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such classes

Q36.  Is there any aspect of this -- preparation in the administration or organization of schools, etc., you feel you needed but did not get? (Please explain)

Q37.  How about preparation in classroom management, discipline -- Did you have such preparation as part of your program? Please describe it.

Q38.  How would you describe it in terms of its usefulness in preparing you for the classroom?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such preparation

Q39.  What, if anything, do you need but did not get with respect to preparation in classroom management, discipline?

Q40.  Did you have any preparation for relating to parents? How was this done?

Q41.  How would you rate such preparation in terms of its usefulness for your present position?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such preparation

Q42.  Is there anything in the way of preparation for relating to parents that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Q43.  Did you have any preparation in student cultural/ethnic diversity, limited English proficiency, etc.? What was that like?

## Year One Interview Guide

Q44.  How would you rate the preparation you had in terms of its usefulness for your present position?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such preparation

Q45.  Is there anything in the way of preparation in student/ethnic diversity, etc., that you feel you need but did not get? (Please explain)

Q46.  There have been calls for more preparatory courses in the special education area, including measurement, reporting, observing or field experience with special education students, etc. -- Did your program include such preparation? What did it consist of? How many classes?

Q47.  How would you rate its usefulness as classroom preparation?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe
- N/A Didn't have such preparatory courses

Q48.  Is there anything in the way of preparation in special education that you feel would have helped but but which you did not get? (Please explain)

Q49.  Are you happy you became a teacher?

Q50.  Did you receive any career counseling at your college?

Q51.  Did you receive preparation with respect to job seeking skills -- resume/portfolio preparation, interviewing for a position, etc., If so, how would you rate it?

- Extremely useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not useful at all
- Other, please describe

## Year One Interview Guide

- N/A Didn't have such preparation

Q52.  The world of teaching is changing constantly, and new challenges arise at a similar rate; do you see anything on the horizon that has implications for the ways in which teachers should be prepared?

Q53.  Are you familiar with the National Board Certification?

Q54.  If it were available, would you pursue it?

Q55.  Do you feel continuing education courses for teachers are important? If so, what types are most important?

Q56.  Do you regularly enroll in such courses? When was the last time? What sorts of courses?

Q57.  Are there any continuing education courses that are now generally unavailable that would help you if they were offered?

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Q60.  What did you like least about it?

Q61.  What about the faculty: How do you feel about the faculty who taught in your program? On an A through F scale, how would you grade them as a group in terms of their understanding of the realities of classroom teaching as you have come to know it? Tell me more about this -- if you gave a low grade, how could it be improved?

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## Year One Interview Guide

Q64.  What grade would you give yourself as a teacher?

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***Thank you.***

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- ***Also, make sure to remove and label tape***

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