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Admissions strategies for graduate teaching credential programs: holistic approach using non-cognitive variables

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ADMISSIONS STRATEGIES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING CREDENTIAL PROGRAMS: A

HOLISTIC APPROACH USING NON-COGNITIVE VARIABLES

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Jennifer Agatep

August, 2018

Martine Jago, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Jennifer Agatep

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Martine Jago, Ph.D., Chairperson

Robert Barner, Ph.D.

John C. Tobin, A.L.J.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my loving and supportive parents. Through all the hard work, setbacks, and problems that have been obstacles for me personally, academically, and professionally, thank you for encouraging and having faith in me when I needed it the most. I greatly appreciate all the sacrifices you have made so that I am able to follow my dreams. Because of you, I have finally reached the highest academic honor: Dr. Agatep.

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VITA

Education

2017   Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA
        Ed.D. Organizational Leadership
        Dissertation Topic: Admissions Criteria for the Selection of Graduate Teacher Education
        Programs: A Holistic Approach using Non-Cognitive Variables

2008   California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA
        M.A. English

2004   University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
        B.A. English: American Literature and Culture

Certifications

2009   California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA
        Certificate, Human Resource Management

2007   California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA
        Certificate, Grant Writing

Relevant Experience

2010–2016 **Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology, Los
Angeles, CA**
EDUCATION ADMISSIONS MANAGER

2009–2010 **California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA**
2006–2008 *DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATOR SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT*

2008–2009 **University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA**
MANAGEMENT SERVICES OFFICER, CENTER FOR SOCIETY AND GENETICS

Additional Experience

2010 **Los Angeles Harbor College, Wilmington, CA**
WRITING & MATH INSTRUCTOR, EXTENDED EDUCATION

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Professional Presentations & Conferences

- "Marathon Training and its Relationship in Helping Create Effective Leaders," presented at the International Global Leadership Conference, August 26, 2014, Placentia, Belize.
- Attended National Associate of Graduate Admissions Professionals 28th Annual Conference, April 2015, New Orleans, LA.
- Attended National Association of Graduate Admission Professionals Summer Institute, July 2013, Las Vegas, NV.
- "Equality in Graduate Admissions: A Holistic Non-Cognitive Approach to Admissions Decision Making in Higher Education" presented at the National Association Graduate Admissions Professionals Conference, April 14, 2016, Nashville, TN.

Professional Affiliations

- Member, National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP)

ABSTRACT

Cognitive variables have been the primary indicator of academic and professional success used to process degree applications in many admissions departments. Cognitive variables are numerically based markers such as grade point average and test scores. Although cognitive variables are essential in determining qualified candidates in graduate programs, noncognitive variables provide significant additional information about a candidate, such as motivation, strength of character, interpersonal skills, and field experience. This qualitative research study examines (a) the use of noncognitive variables in holistic admissions processes to predict academic and professional success of selected candidates in graduate teaching credential programs offered in private educational institutions in the state of California, and (b) the extent to which admissions administrators and decision-makers utilize holistic non-cognitive criteria to assess their applicants.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter Overview

Within the last decade, there has been a growing number of prospective students (traditional and non-traditional) applying to graduate schools throughout the United States (Hammond & Yung, 1993). Admissions departments have become more specific in the selection criteria used to determine candidates who are more likely to excel and graduate. The evaluation of potential success is often based on high academic merit and test results. While these criteria may have been significant indicators in the past, there has been a large increase in nontraditional students seeking advanced degrees. This chapter sets the foundation for a research study on admissions strategies for graduate teaching credential programs, specifically looking at a holistic approach using non-cognitive variables (NCVs).

Background

In many graduate schools, a framework of objective criteria is utilized in the admissions process for the selection of teaching-credential candidates. Objective criteria tend to include three key data points: (a) the cumulative grade point average (GPA), (b) the GPA in a specified subject area obtained at the undergraduate level, and (c) the results of a national standardized examination (Graduate Record Examination, Miller's Analogy Test, and the Graduate Management Admissions Test). Researchers and scholars have found that objective scores and GPAs can have an impact on determining future success of applicants in a graduate program (Jaschik, 2010; Kyllonen, 2012; Messick, 1979; Oltman & Hartnett, 1985; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985; Ransdell, 2001; Thomas, Kuncel, & Crede 2007; Zimmermann, Heinimann, Brodersen & Buhmann, 2015).

Staff in graduate admissions departments may use personal statements and recommendation letters as a form of subjective evaluation. Depending on specific admissions requirements, some institutions may also interview or request the completion of questionnaires from each candidate to gain a clearer insight of leadership qualities, motivation levels, interpersonal skills, as well as practical experience within the field, work ethic, and unique or diverse contributions in the field of study (Thomas et al., 2007). These qualities can help predict a candidate's academic success and experience within the program, as well as the overall reputation of the educational institution. Research has shown that subjective criteria can highlight a number of variables that grades and test results fail to disclose (Adebayo, 2008; Brown, 2007; da Roza, 1988; Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Kogan, 2002; Kyllonen, 2012; Kyllonen, Walters, & Kaufman, 2005; Messick, 1979; Ransdell, 2001; Sedlacek, 2004a; Shaw, Martz, Lancaster, & Sade, 1995; Thomas et al. 2007; Vernon, 1996). While GPA and test scores offer an overview of the applicant, personal statements and recommendation letters permit a more qualitative level of evaluation. These subjective data can offset the quantifiable portion of the admissions process.

There may be positive correlations among subject criteria and potential academic performance, success, and graduation (Adebayo, 2008; Dee & West, 2011; Jaschik, 2010; Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Kyllonen, 2012; Kyllonen et al., 2005; Messick, 1979; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985; Ransdell, 2001; Sedlacek, 1993, Sedlacek, 2001, 2003, 2011; Sedlacek & Adams-Gaston, 1992; Thomas et al., 2007; Zimmermann et al., 2015). A system of candidate selection lacking assessment of (NCVs) might not provide an understanding of the applicant as a whole.

The pool of graduate applicants comprises a diverse population in terms of ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and ability status.

Nontraditional applicants may include those with more life experiences, such as baby boomers and generation X. For an admissions committee to select a candidate primarily on the basis of objective criteria sets limitations and may exclude or ignore qualities that would otherwise highlight strengths of outstanding applicants. Objective criteria may fail to capture the nonacademic attributes that can be essential to overall success in any graduate program. A selection committee is charged with evaluating and measuring potential success, retention possibilities, and the graduation rate of future students. Decisions based on reviews of only objective data in the application package can be very limited, revealing a snapshot of the student's academic performance, but not overall ability to complete a graduate program.

Personal statements tend to reflect character and strengths and are often drafted with the intention to represent an ideal candidate. Applicants select recommenders who are likely to write strong letters of support regarding qualities of integrity, academic excellence, professional expertise, and personal achievements. A letter may provide an accurate portrait of the applicant, but may also offer insufficient evidence or inadequate insights. Cognitive methods tend to pre-dominate the application process. Despite that many educational institutions have multiple approaches and entrance admissions requirements pertaining to specific programs, it is essential to review quantitative data, but also to gain a more subjective understanding of a candidate's strong interests, knowledge, and personal history. These can provide additional and significant predictors of the future academic achievement and professional success.

Problem Statement

Admissions staff and faculty need to be able to access qualities and dispositions of prospective students early in the application process in order to propose candidates who are best suited for the teaching profession. In teacher preparation, subjective criteria, such as NCVs, are

not always used in the selection of candidates. If admissions staff can determine the qualities and dispositions of what might be deemed an effective teacher, then it may be possible to identify characteristics of effective teachers. This process will allow admissions departments to filter out unqualified candidates. A more holistic approach might address issues that grades and tests alone cannot achieve.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of subjective criteria, including NCVs, in graduate admissions and to determine the future professional and academic success of students in institutions of higher education, specifically within the teaching credential programs at the Master's degree level. The researcher wanted to explore the extent to which NCVs are implemented in the decision-making process within private colleges and universities in the state of California and possibilities for incorporating a holistic approach to admissions.

Significance of Study

It was anticipated that this study would contribute to a better understanding of the admissions selection process for graduate teaching credential programs offered in private educational institutions in California and the extent to which admissions administrators and decision makers utilize holistic noncognitive criteria to assess their applicants. Holistic admissions criteria may provide additional data that inform decisions made on behalf of future teachers. This study was intended to improve selection processes for predicting teacher quality in the Kindergarten-12 (K-12) system.

Definition of Terms

This section provides definitions of key terms that were used throughout the study.

Academic Success: Completion of the graduate teaching program with high grades and thus the potential to become an exceptional teacher, based on principal and peer review, and having more than three years of experience.

Objective Criteria: Cognitive variables (CVs) used by admissions staff to determine an applicant's qualifications based on prior academic merit, such as GPA and test results, and largely comprising the interpretation of numerical data.

Subjective Criteria: NCVs defined by Sedlacek (2004a, 2004b, 2011) as "variables relating to adjustment, motivation and perception" (p. 191), which can be assessed efficiently in a variety of ways and incorporated into any admissions process.

Holistic Criteria: A combination of strategies used by admissions staff to assess objective and subjective attributes with equal emphasis on both categories.

Theoretical Framework

Sedlacek (1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011) has researched the use of NCVs in the admissions processes at institutions of higher education. This study applied Sedlacek's research. His framework focused on the advantages of using NCVs in admissions. Sedlacek studied NCVs extensively and has provided strong evidence of their measured success in admissions. He argued that CVs alone cannot provide a substantial amount of data about an applicant's success. Testing provides only some information on grade predictions for first-year college students, but does not represent effectively women and people of color. The Big Test as he calls it, lacks many elements in assessing graduate applicants and their overall potential success in a program (Sedlacek, 2011, p. 7). Other measures should be considered when attempting to meet

educational needs now and in the future. New strategies can expand on what is currently used in an admissions process to identify students who have the ability to perform successfully in academic studies, learn to teach effectively, and graduate in a timely manner. This step might also improve retention rates from an institutional perspective.

Sedlacek's research was an extension of Sternberg's study on intelligence. According to Sternberg (2010, 2012) and Sternberg, Bonney, Gabora & Merrifield (2012), there are three types of intelligence: componential, experiential, and contextual. Componential intelligence is how one is able to interpret, analyze, and retrieve information within a predetermined system (unchanging context). Experiential intelligence deals with creativity and involves the ability to interpret, analyze, and retrieve information from a changing context. Contextual intelligence is the ability to adapt to a changing environment where one is able to control and negotiate the system. Sedlacek focused on experiential and contextual intelligence because they closely reflect his definition of NCVs. Experiential intelligence, contextual intelligence, and NCVs can help motivational and personality traits in non-traditional students who might not otherwise be revealed through grades and tests (Sedlacek, 2011).

There are a number of ways to define and assess NCVs. According to Sedlacek (2011), "The term non-cognitive is used here to refer to variables relating to adjustment, motivation and perception" (p. 191). He states that NCVs can be assessed efficiently in a variety of ways, and incorporated into any admissions process (Sedlacek, 1993, 2011, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). Sedlacek described NCVs as follows:

- Positive Self-Concept: Demonstrates confidence, strength of character, determination, and independence.

- Realistic Self-Appraisal: Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development. Recognizes need to broaden individuality.

- Understands and Knows How to Handle the System: Exhibits a realistic view of the system based upon personal experiences and is committed to improving the existing system. Takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs, but is not hostile to society nor is a cop-out. Involves handling any *isms* (e.g., racism, sexism).

- Prefers Long-Range to Short-Term or Immediate Needs: Able to respond to deferred gratification; plans ahead and sets goals.

- Availability of Strong Support Person: Seeks and takes advantage of a strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement.

- Successful Leadership Experience: Demonstrates strong leadership in any area: church, sports, non-educational groups, gang leader.

- Demonstrated Community Service: Identifies with a community, is involved in community work.

- Nontraditional Knowledge Acquired: Acquires knowledge in sustained and/or culturally related ways in any area, including social, personal, or interpersonal factors.

Epistemology

Kant, a German philosopher in the 18th century, studied extensively epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics. His perspective was interpretivist in nature, being "associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness"

(Collins, 2010, p. 38). Interpretivism is concerned with understanding meanings and acknowledging multiple perspectives. Consideration of motives and reasoning are features of an interpretivist approach to research.

Within the interpretive paradigm, the researcher chose to explore the use of NCVs in the admissions process for teaching credential programs at the graduate level. Colleges and universities may use similar methods in evaluating applicants. In this study, the researcher did not seek a specific answer, but planned to expose various interpretations of this phenomenon. It was important to understand variations in human ideas, interactions, perceptions, and actions.

Research Questions

The research question that guides this study is as follows: To what extent might current measures for selecting teaching credential candidates at the Master's degree level in California be effective predictors of success in the program and in the profession? The following sub-questions were addressed:

1. What admissions strategies (cognitive and noncognitive) are currently utilized in making an admissions decision for graduate teaching credential programs in private institutions of higher education?

2. To what extent is there a difference in the quality of students admitted when implementing a holistic approach as opposed to using only cognitive variables in the decision-making process?

3. What recommendations can be proposed for admissions administrators for the development of a streamlined practice in the selection of teacher candidates?

Limitations

Data were collected in the state of California. The study was not intended to provide a generalized outcome reflecting institutions across the United States. Participants included admissions staff and faculty in private educational institutions that offer graduate teaching programs: respondents did not always reflect the full range of admissions administration. Informants voluntarily provided data based on individual beliefs and judgments. As generalization was not the purpose of this research study, outcomes would inevitably be localized and would therefore, not pertain to graduate teaching credential programs nationwide.

Delimitations

The focus of this research was private educational institutions that offer graduate teaching credential programs in the state of California. Research on holistic admissions processes in private institutions is a small sample population, but data provided from this study would help to recognize possible trends and issues. Although there have been a number of studies on holistic admissions, Sedlacek's research on NCVs was selected as the primary theoretical framework. There were very few studies on NCVs in education admissions, especially related to graduate teaching credential programs. Sedlacek's research and definition of NCVs support the identification of key qualities and characteristics in teacher candidates and the potential to become effective educators. Another limitation was that this study focused solely on private, rather than public, educational institutions.

Positionality

Based on the researcher's experience as an admissions manager in a graduate department of education, there were specific criteria established by the institution and requested at state level for selecting candidates in the graduate teaching credential program. The researcher's

professional role was defined by these criteria. GPA scores helped to predict the likelihood of a

student to complete a rigorous program. Personal statements and recommendation letters can be

an indicator of an applicant's level of critical thinking. The personal profile can provide

additional documentation in the assessment of future success in the program. The submission of

passing graduate record examination (GRE) scores was not required by all institutions.

Submission of personal statements and recommendation letters are expected; however, additional

measures could improve the selection process. Alternative measures, such as NCVs, could

improve the selection process and help to distinguish an excellent candidate. The researcher's

professional experiences in this role have an inevitable impact on perspectives brought to this

study. These assumptions have been suspended as far as is humanly possible.

Organization of the Study

This research study is presented in five chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study.

- Chapter 2 demonstrates a review of the literature.

- Chapter 3 describes the research methodology.

- Chapter 4 presents the findings.

- Chapter 5 concludes the study with an analysis of the data.

Chapter Summary

Quantitative data are limited as predictors of academic and professional success in the

admissions process for graduate teaching credential programs. There is increasing diversity in the

applicant pool for degrees at this level. Applicants are often assessed according to objective

criteria or CVs. Many potential students could be excluded from graduate studies because the

evaluation of their skill sets was not holistic and did not necessarily include the use of NCVs.

The following chapter addresses these concerns and provides insights into the use of a more holistic approach to admissions in graduate teaching credential programs.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

Some educational institutions implement a holistic admissions process at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. As teacher candidates will potentially have a significant impact in the lives of many children, a detailed assessment in the admissions process is required. Distinctive teacher qualities can be recognized through the use of NCVs. Kent and McCarthy (2016) explained:

> One challenge for graduate education, then, is to develop a more organized national conversation about holistic review—establishing and sharing information about what the concept means, supporting the practices associated with it, and sharing evidence of its potential benefits. (p. 10)

There is a substantial benefit for admissions departments to incorporate a system that allows the ability to select future teacher candidates who have innate skill sets and qualities necessary to provide the best education and make a positive impact on society.

Historical Context

In recent decades, there have been many changes in the teaching profession. In order to understand the present situation, one must look at past admissions processes. Much research has been conducted on the use of NCVs in graduate admissions programs and its effectiveness in determining academic success and diversity. Some fields that have implemented NCVs as part of the admissions process include medical, psychology, veterinary science, and nursing. It is essential to incorporate NCVs when selecting candidates in medical programs because of the nature of the professions in the field. For example, doctors and nurses help patients by providing

the best medical attention. In these occupations, character traits such as patience and empathy are needed in addition to the academic skill sets learned in school. Similarly, professional fields that have an influence and impact on society should initially be selected based on both CVs and NCVs in graduate-level admissions. In education programs, it should be the goal of admissions to select candidates who possess qualities that determine an effective teacher (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Grades and test scores are not enough to identify future teachers who could make a difference in the lives of many students.

Although there have been studies on NCVs at the undergraduate level for teacher education programs, there is limited research at the graduate level. In a profession that involves extensive social interaction, certain behavioral characteristics and qualities can be identified during the admissions phase, which may become prerequisites for admissions. To select effective teachers, it is essential to learn how to identify innate qualities before allowing individuals to enter and pursue a graduate program in teaching. Some educators choose this career having not been assessed for key dispositions and traits required to be an effective teacher. A teacher can shape how a student thinks and views the world and can have a significant and positive impact on society by providing the best learning experiences for children in the classroom. Flanders (1970) best described the role of teachers:

> Teacher influence can be categorized by the following: clarify feeling constructively; praise or encourage; clarify, develop or make use of ideas suggested by students; ask questions; lecture; give directions; criticize; student talk in response to the teacher; student talk initiated by the student; and silence or confusion. (p. 174)

Some teachers are exceptional at their craft. It is more than achieving good grades, passing exams, and receiving a graduate degree and a teaching credential. Becoming an effective

teacher is a culmination of knowledge, skills, and personal qualities (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2003, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003, 2006; Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Flanders, 1970; Harris & Sass, 2010; Kalogrides, Loeb, & Beteille, 2012; McBer, 2000; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011; Tucker, Stronge, Gareis, & Beers, 2003). These qualities are what set apart a good teacher from a great teacher.

Current Measures

There has been a plethora of research on graduate admissions and its correlation to academic success (Adebayo, 2008; Brown 2007; da Roza, 1988; Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Kogan, 2002; Kyllonen, 2012; Kyllonen et al., 2005; Messick, 1979; Ransdell, 2001; Sedlacek, 2004a, 2004b; Shaw et al., 1995; Thomas et al. 2007; Vernon, 1996). Some graduate programs focus more on the objective criteria of admissions, while others view the importance of utilizing both subjective and objective variables to increase diversity and select highly qualified candidates for their programs. Nevertheless, admissions staff for graduate programs in clinical psychology, nursing, veterinary science, and social work tend to use objective variables that do not provide enough details about an applicant and his or her potential success in the program (Kyllonen et al., 2005). Studies have shown that NCVs play an important role in these subject areas because there are certain characteristics and behaviors linked to that specific field of study. There may be a direct correlation of subjective criteria and student success.

Educators who are passionate about their profession and their students are often remembered. Children need teachers who want to be in a classroom; who want to make a difference. Discovering effective teachers should not start after the teaching credential has been earned but during the admissions process. A systematic method can be established to select candidates who will not only excel academically, but also prove to be effective teachers. The

GPA and examinations alone cannot deem an individual as a qualified candidate for a teaching program (Brown, 2007). "Because women and underrepresented ethnic and racial minorities attain lower scores on average than majority men (ETS, 2014), the position of the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) in graduate admissions has reportedly come into question" (Kent & McCarthy, 2016, p. 7). Examination results cannot fully determine that an applicant is an excellent fit for a teaching program. Letters of recommendations and personal statements give some information about a potential student. Interviews have been found to be very useful. Deciphering what makes a great teacher and who possesses key qualities can be challenging, especially during the admissions phase at the graduate level.

California is one of the most populated states with one of the largest school districts in the United States. Examining teaching credential programs at the graduate level is important in the research on NCVs in relation to professional social service fields that involve the use of NCVs. In comparison to undergraduate level teaching programs, the graduate level offers a different population. According to Bernardo's (2017) analysis of the best and worst school systems in the United States, California ranks 37th nationally. There are many factors that may have affected the educational ranking, but some may argue that the teaching quality of educators contributes to California's poor rating. The educational system has the potential to improve. Identifying those who have the probability to succeed as teachers based on both CVs and NCVs during the admissions phase, will filter out good teacher candidates from the application pool.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Influential teachers have the power to make a large impact and create a better future by instilling in young people a strong educational foundation, skill sets, and values. According to Goldhaber and Anthony (2007), students with high quality teachers will reach a learning gain of

1.5 grade-level equivalents in comparison to students with low quality teachers, who will only gain 0.5 level equivalents. This statement suggests that a teacher who possesses high-quality teaching abilities can have a significant impact in the learning and development of students. Darling-Hammond (2006) further explained, "Education is increasingly important to the success of both individuals and nations, and growing evidence demonstrates that—among all educational resources—teachers' abilities are especially crucial contributors to students' learning" (p. 300). Having effective teachers not only influences pupils in the classroom, but contributes to the overall well-being of society. Teachers can influence future leaders, accountants, doctors, business people, scientists, and many other professions. Teachers pave the way for future generations. This is one of the many reasons it is crucial to have powerful, resourceful, and effective teachers in classrooms.

In recent years, the landscape of the classroom has changed significantly. A typical class is composed of diverse students. Different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, gender affiliations, and patterns of upbringing are significant factors in creating a student's identity. Teachers should fully be aware and understand the diverse student population in a classroom. "Teachers need not only to be able to keep order and provide useful information to students, but also to be increasingly effective in enabling a diverse group of students to learn ever more complex materials" (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 303). Becoming mindful of student diversity will help a teacher better manage a classroom and create lesson plans that address the needs of all students.

Preparing children and young adults as future politicians, lawyers, nurses, or accountants begins with a teacher who has that growing desire, enthusiasm, and eagerness to change a child's perception of the world; a world of endless possibilities. With the knowledge and skills learned,

students can gain confidence, and be prepared for professions that have a critical impact on society.

Teachers play a significant role within classrooms and society. To some extent, they can serve as gatekeepers of knowledge, which shapes and molds how students perceive themselves and the world. They influence the development of essential skills. It is uncertain what percentages are considered excellent in their occupation. An ongoing process should be in place to delineate between an effective teacher and one who is below standards. There are systematic tools and observations used in determining the quality of teaching in the classroom (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2007).

Among the procedures and tools implemented in determining teaching quality, classroom observations have been one of the most useful. Observations of teacher and student interactions within the classroom can be a quality indicator. Strong, Gargani, and Hacifazlioglu (2001) explained:

> The several hundred observational systems that have been developed for all purposes use a variety of procedures such as charts, rating scales, checklists, rubrics, and narrative descriptions. The most widely used technique has been systematic classroom observation based on interactive coding systems. (p. 368)

Classroom observation is an excellent measurement tool that can help determine teaching quality and how it is incorporated in the classroom to help improve high student achievement gains (Stronge et al., 2011, p. 368).Understanding each student's needs, strengths, and weaknesses is important in finding ways to create a classroom environment where students' have the potential to grow and excel academically and personally. This will also give the teacher a better understanding of the specific needs of each student. Teachers should have the ability to

communicate effectively with each student and create a safe classroom environment that

promotes learning without biases or judgments. An effective teacher takes into account the

psychological and cognitive operations that influence human behaviors (Stronge et al., 2011). A

teacher should understand that not all children learn at the same level. Many come from diverse

backgrounds and some may have learning disabilities. This should be taken into account to help

assess what each child needs in order to excel inside, as well as outside, the classroom. It is

important that teachers empathize with and encourage each child to reach their potential.

Darling-Hammond (2006) stated:

>Teachers also need to understand the person, the spirit, of every child and find a way to
>nurture that spirit. And they need the skills to construct and manage classroom activities
>efficiently, communicate well, use technology, and reflect on their practice to learn from
>and improve it continually. (p. 300)

Conducting effective classroom activities that incorporate the use of technology is

indispensable. To nurture and teach with an open heart and mind has a significant impact on the

lives of millions of students. These are all part of the classroom learning environment. An

individual can go through college with high academic merit, pass all required state examinations,

and complete a teaching credential. These accomplishments do not necessarily make a highly

qualified educator. According to Goldhaber, Brewer, and Hanushek (as cited in Goldhaber &

Anthony, 2007), a "small percentage of what makes a successful teacher is associated with

characteristics such as degree and experiences, and certification status" (p. 5).There are certain

qualities that an effective teacher possesses that cannot fully be taught in a classroom or through

textbooks. A teacher's personality and interaction with students can make a significant impact on

student learning. Having a positive attitude, being sensitive to the needs of others, and effective

communication are traits required for creating an effective learning environment. Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) identified a list of distinctive qualities that are part of the development of an effective teacher. These qualities, in addition to content knowledge, teaching skills, and intelligence, are all important factors that create a successful teacher and classroom environment (Harris & Sass, 2010).

- Commitment and determination;
- enthusiasm, passion, and attitude;
- sensitivity;
- flexibility;
- creativity;
- open communication;
- organizational skills;
- skills and knowledge;
- management skills; and
- adapt to diversity.

Enthusiasm, passion, and a positive attitude are also important in creating a constructive classroom environment. If an educator is excited about teaching, student attitudes can also change for the better. Learning becomes more positive.

Sensitivity to the needs of students and adapting to diversity are also essential because not every child or young adult share the same problems, concerns, or issues. Some students may excel academically while others can fall behind as a result of a learning disability. Students have various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and others may follow different cultural customs. It is the role of the teacher to be receptive to these differences. It creates a classroom of

acceptance and openness, which builds stronger relationships between teacher and students (Harris & Sass, 2010).

Flexibility and creativity are qualities that can affect the dynamics in the classroom. A monotonous lesson or teaching style can result in students losing interest. Being open to change and thinking outside the box can breathe new life into a classroom. These generate innovative ideas and allows students the freedom to be creative and exchange viewpoints. These promote a fun cultural environment where students are eager to learn and are interested in the subject areas taught (Harris & Sass, 2010).

Open communication is another quality that is critical between teacher and student. Questions pertaining to students understanding lesson plans, having a difficult time in the classroom, or needing further guidance or assistance are important and can be answered if the teacher takes the time to talk to the student. Being fully engaged and interacting with students is fundamental to learning (Cochran-Smith, 2005; McBer, 2000). When a teacher openly communicates, students become more receptive. This also builds on the teacher-student relationship. A sense of support, trust, and respect stems from daily communication.

Organizational and management skills are important qualities in creating order within the classroom. Classroom management is a great indicator of effective teaching (Shulman, 1987). Organizational and management skills are key factors in constructing a stable and orderly classroom.

Teaching skills and content knowledge are critical and are taught in a graduate teaching credential program. Compared to an undergraduate teaching program, graduate school offers more in-depth knowledge and research in the field of education. Acquiring teaching skills is imperative in content delivery. Leadership is an essential skill. Teachers who have the ability to

lead classrooms are generally more successful (Kalogrides et al., 2012). A teacher is the authoritative adult who should have the ability to manage a classroom efficiently while providing content knowledge. Students respect teachers who are good leaders. Bogler and Somech (2004) stated, "A teacher should be confident, have a willingness to learn and expand skill sets, and a need to accomplish desired outcomes" (p. 278). Confidence and leadership go hand-in-hand. A confident leader is assertive, self-assured, positive, and poised. These are qualities that are part of being a great leader inside and outside the classroom.

Harris et al. (2010) provided a list of distinctive qualities of an effective teacher. A teacher's presence for example, captures the attention of students. A study has found that a teacher who is expressive, outgoing, and has an engaging personality and sense of humor creates a fun classroom atmosphere where students are attentive and eager to learn (Stronge et al., 2011, p. 374). Bogler and Somech (2004) suggested, "various dimensions include altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, civic virtue, obedience, loyalty, helping, and voice" (p. 280). Setting a positive example, motivating, and supporting classroom learning are all part of a teacher's responsibility. Cochran-Smith (2003) discussed social accountability. She stated that teachers "are decision makers and collaborators who must reclaim their roles in the shaping of practice by taking a stand as both educators and activists" (p. 6). It is important to teach children and young adults to be agents of change.

Assessment of Teaching Abilities

The measurement of one's ability to teach comes in forms of basic-skills tests or examinations in subject-matter competence. Examinations and academic grades in a credential program cannot fully indicate one's teaching abilities. A more valid method of measurement is through classroom observation (Shulman, 1987). It is the interaction between the student and

teacher that can help assess teaching strengths and weaknesses. Through classroom observation, a principle or administrator can determine if the teacher has the necessarily skill sets needed to become a successful educator. Content knowledge and general teaching behavior become apparent when observing teaching styles firsthand. A teacher's personality and interaction with students illustrate the level of commitment the teacher has in ensuring best educational practices for student learning.

One of the responsibilities of an educator is to raise student achievement and make sure that each pupil reaches his or her maximum potential in the classroom. A culmination of "dedication, work ethic, organization, classroom management, providing a role model for students, positive relationships with teacher colleagues and administrators" (Harris & Sass, 2010, p. 6) contribute to student success. To determine if a teacher possesses these qualities, generally an observer, whether it is a principal or administrator, will visit the classroom and examine the teacher and students. Observing the quality of teaching within the classroom is the best indicator of the potential success of the teacher. As Strong et al. (2001) suggest, what constitutes an effective teacher includes the, "usage of charts, rating scales, checklists, rubrics, and narrative descriptions" (p. 368). Systematic classroom observation is most widely used. An observer "will record the interaction between teacher and student" (p. 368). Classroom observations can help determine the level of teaching abilities and the social interactions between teacher and pupils. A teacher should have the ability to demonstrate subject knowledge, teaching skills, intelligence, and motivation (Harris & Sass, 2010; Shulman, 1987). An effective teacher should be able to show compassion, manage the classroom, and provide substantial interaction and communication. The results stemming from a classroom observation reveals the initial impact a teacher has on students and whether the student responses are positive.

Classroom observation can provide insight on a teacher's behavior and characteristics aside from teaching abilities. "A teacher who possesses the teaching skills, knowledge, as well as essential characteristics will have the largest impact on student learning" (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 24). A teacher who has the ability to connect with students, and care for their well-being and their future success leaves a lasting impression on students. The role of a teacher becomes more than an instructor. A teacher becomes a mentor, a friend, a confidant, and parent. Harris and Sass (2010) assert, "Teacher productivity correlates to student learning outcomes" (p. 1). One can also argue that a student's personality, and view of one's self and the world correlate to the efficiency of a great teacher. Teachers can have a significant impact to change lives for the better. The best way to discern a mediocre from a great teacher is through first-hand classroom teaching observation and most important, student learning outcomes.

Portfolios are used to evaluate and assess teacher performance. The definition of a teacher portfolio can best be described as the following according to the *WJC Public Teacher Evaluation Handbook* (as cited in Tucker et al., 2003):

> A portfolio is a collection of carefully chosen documents selected by the teacher that provides evidence that teacher responsibilities are being met. Examples of documentation that a teacher might enclose in a portfolio include samples of student work, logs of journals, schedules, tests, lesson plans, and notes from parents. (p. 8)

This method of evaluation has been effective because of its authentic nature, recognition of task complexity, active involvement of participants, encouragement of reflection and self-assessment, and facilitation of collaborative interactions (Tucker et al., 2003). An educator along with the administrator can spend time in reflection on improvements for future classroom practice.

There are guidelines used in the evaluation process of teacher portfolios, which include content analysis, archival analysis, survey questionnaire, and focus groups:

- Content Analysis—artifacts included in the portfolio that reflects teacher performance and responsibilities.

- Archival Analysis—records of all teacher evaluations.

- Survey Questionnaire—teachers' and administrators' answers to the evaluations on portfolios.

- Focus Groups—teachers selected and divided into elementary and secondary teaching to express opinion and insight. (Tucker et al., 2003, pp. 580–582)

There is not a specific rule in the construction of a teacher portfolio. In this case, the portfolio evaluation mentioned was used as a study to evaluate its effectiveness in selected schools. There are still limitations on its effectiveness in measuring teacher quality. There are issues involving the utility, validity, and reliability in the use of portfolios (as cited in Tucker et al., 2003).

The utilization of teacher portfolios and classroom observations has been effective to some degree in determining teaching abilities. These methods have not only been used for credentialed teachers, but also in teacher preparation programs offered in universities (Thomas et al., 2007). This is an excellent way to ascertain an individual's teaching skills while in the process of completing a teaching program and for those who are already in the profession.

General Admissions Criteria

Many graduate teaching preparation programs follow very similar requirement guidelines in admissions. In most graduate teaching programs throughout the United States, the basic requirements for admissions include completion of an undergraduate degree from an accredited

institution, GPA, GRE, recommendation letters, personal statements, and interviews (if required, which may be group and/or individual). The GPA criteria will be different among graduate programs in which the minimum requirement may typically be 2.8 or a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. This will also be the same for the GRE scores in which the minimum requirement is not the same for all graduate admissions. The Verbal and Quantitative are scored between 130 and 170 and Analytical Writing is scored between 0 and 6. Recommendation letters are typically required, but the number of letters submitted can vary. The average minimum requirements are two professional letters of recommendations. Preferably, letters should be written by someone who knows the applicant on a professional level. This may include work colleagues, supervisors, and professors. Some graduate schools may be more lenient than others in terms of accepting recommendation letters from friends and/or family members (da Roza, 1988; Ransdell, 2001; Sedlacek, 1993, 2011, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Sternberg, 2010; Vernon, 1996).

Personal statements are a key factor in the admissions process. A candidate may be asked to write a one- or two-page personal statement that may incorporate the mission of the university, an essay prompt related to the candidate's interest in the program, or issues that are currently affecting the educational system. The personal statement is commonly used to determine the writing strength of the candidate. It gives personal insight as to why the candidate is pursuing a graduating teaching credential program, explanation as to why the candidate applied to the specific university, how the candidate can relate to the goals and mission statement of the university, and how the candidate can contribute to improving the ongoing challenges in the educational system (Sedlacek, 1993, 2011, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Vernon, 1996).

Interviews with candidates may be an admissions requirement within certain educational institutions to get a better understanding of candidates, to see if they will be a good fit for the

program, and to assess potential for future teachers. The interview may be conducted individually or possibly within a group setting where a series of questions are asked and candidates answer each question to the best of their ability. Interactions between the candidate and the admissions committee during the interview can determine whether the candidate is accepted into the program (Jaschik, 2010; Kyllonen, 2012; Messick, 1979; Oltman & Hartnett, 1985; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985; Ransdell, 2001; Salvatori, 2001; Thomas et al., 2007; Vernon, 1996; Zimmermann et al., 2015).

Professional Certifications

Within the United States and Puerto Rico, there are academic requirements to enter a teaching credential program. Teaching credential requirements vary on a state-by-state basis. Some states require that candidates obtain a Bachelor's degree in the area they wish to teach. Others require a certification in each subject area or a certification in the specific grade level ("Get Your Teaching Credential," n.d.).

In the state of California, teacher candidates must satisfy the California Basic Educational Skills test (CBEST) and the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET). It is imperative that the teacher candidates have acquired the knowledge in the subject area(s) they wish to teach. It is the presumption that passing the state teaching examinations meets the adequate comprehension requirements to teach specific subject area(s). If a candidate wishes to pursue a multiple subject credential, he or she must also take the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment examination. For both the multiple- and single-subject credentials, it is required that a candidate complete the English Language Development standards and reading requirement, have passed or completed coursework in U.S. Constitution from a regionally accredited college or university, and have completed course work in foundational computer

technology (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2013). Completing a graduate teaching credential program and satisfying the state requirements, thus, qualifies the candidate to teach in his or her respective subject area(s). The state of California will issue the candidate a preliminary 5-year teaching credential. After 5 years of teaching, the candidate must complete requirements for a clear credential in order to continue teaching.

Professional Success

The benefits of completing a Master's degree in conjunction with the teaching credential include giving the candidate an opportunity for a pay increase compared to those who have only completed a Bachelor's degree. Earning a Master's degree allows the candidate to further his or her education and pursue a Doctoral degree with the possibility of becoming a principal or superintendent in the future. If a candidate wishes to teach at the university level, the individual may be able to do so depending on the specific institution.

Understanding the institutional and state requirements for a graduate teaching credential program are important. It is questionable whether these requirements alone have the capability of predicting academic success as well as producing effective teachers. A teacher candidate can pass all exams and maintain a high GPA in graduate courses, but this does not give any indication that he or she can excel in teaching. According to the California Teaching Commission, there are performance expectations that must be met in order to be deemed as an effective teacher. The following is a list of expectations provided by the California TPE (2013): (a) making subject matter comprehensible to students, (b) assessing student learning, (c) engaging and supporting students in learning, (d) planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students, (e) creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning, and (f) developing as a professional educator.

Evaluating a teacher based on the above criteria is essentially important because it can help measure whether the teacher is capable of creating a positive and effective learning environment for students through curriculum and classroom instructions (California TPE, 2013). The TPEs clearly show that what a teacher candidate learns in a graduate teaching credential program is only part of what makes an effective teacher. For example, engaging and supporting students in learning is not an indication as to whether the teacher is interacting and conversing with his or her students. Engagement and support requires an individual who cares and understands the needs and concerns of each student. It is an individual who is invested in and committed to providing a classroom experience where students can learn and grow. Having passion and desire to teach is crucial for an individual who wants to make a significant impact in the lives of young children and adults. Teaching is not only a job, but rather a profession that can create positive change in society, one student at a time. These are characteristics that cannot be learned in graduate school. According to the National Education Association (2015), "GPA may be a strong predicator of success due to its ability to capture content knowledge and skills crucial to success, such as perseverance and self-control" (p. 1). A teacher candidate who excels academically demonstrates strength in content knowledge, a drive to succeed, and skills (i.e., creating lesson plans) that can be valuable in the classroom. Although a GPA and test scores can help identify certain needed qualities, they cannot provide essential cognitive characteristics that are innately part of our personalities. Messick (1979) explained, "Measures of cognitive characteristics such as intellective abilities, information-processing skills, and subject-matter knowledge have had a long and honorable history of involvement in educational practice and for good reason" (p. 281). Many factors contribute to the overall success of a teacher.

Certain cognitive characteristics play a vital role in creating effective teachers. There are many factors that contribute to the potential success and failure of the educational system in the United States. Improving the educational system has been a challenge throughout the years. Many have argued that there is not enough parent involvement and support, lack of sufficient funding, lack of diversity, overcrowding, and teacher preparation. As education continues to change, educators must also learn to adapt. Technology, diversity, the way in which students learn, and an ever-changing society has impacted the system. Teacher preparation has come into question, as many educators who are currently teaching in the K-12 public school system are ill-equipped or unprepared to teach students. As Darling-Hammond (2006) stated, "Producing poorly prepared teachers for this system is a major part of the problem rather than a solution" (p. 311).

Teachers play a vital role in a child's learning process. The role of an effective teacher is to motivate, encourage, and guide students to excel. Participation from both the teacher and students are essential. Sharing ideas further promotes continual growth and development (Flanders, 1970). Teachers provide essential and necessary tools for students to succeed in society. They are the gatekeepers of information as they shape and mold how a child perceives the world and himself or herself. Teachers have a great influence on their students and significantly contribute to the development of a child's mind and his or her learning abilities. Having qualified teachers in all classrooms is a significant way to improve our nation's educational system. Darling-Hammond (2006) affirmed, "Standards for learning are now higher than they have ever been before, as citizens and workers need greater knowledge and skill to survive and succeed" (p. 300). It is within the classroom setting that teachers cultivate an environment where children discover ideas and can be creative.

Objective Criteria

The GRE primarily measures CVs, which involves aptitude of verbal, numerical, and abstract reasoning. If an admissions department were to specifically define CVs, it would consist of the following:

1. Comparative thinking structures: recognition; memorization, conservation of constancies, classification; spatial orientation, temporal orientation, and metaphorical thinking;

2. Symbolic representation structures: verbal and nonverbal language; mathematics; music and rhythms; movements, dance, and gestures; interpersonal interactions, graphics (two-dimensional drawings, paintings, logos); sculpture and constructions; and simulation, drama, and multimedia;

3. Logical reasoning structures: deductive and inductive reasoning, analogical and hypothetical thinking, cause-effect relationships, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, problem framing, and problem solving (Garner, 2007).

CVs are important attributes to consider during the admissions phase in a graduate teaching credential program. The ability to reason, understand symbolic representations (i.e., mathematical equations) and engage in comparative thinking can help assess an individual's academic potential in a graduate program.

It becomes apparent that a teacher's formal education cannot fully determine one's success in the field of education. There are many factors involved in developing an effective teacher, which involves both education and distinctive qualities that cannot be taught in a college classroom. A candidate can learn the content knowledge and teaching skills while attending graduate school, but the other qualities are intrinsically part of the individual, which is a crucial piece of what makes an outstanding teacher. Having the ability to identify these traits early on

during the admissions phase of a graduate teaching program, can help prevent admitting

candidates who are otherwise not as qualified to become future educators (Cochran-Smith, 2005;

Darling-Hammond, 2006; Harris & Sass, 2010).

Identifying NCVs during the admissions phase of a graduate teaching credential program

can be deemed as a significant part in determining an excellent candidate for a program.

According to Sedlacek (2011), "The term noncognitive is used here to refer to variables relating

to adjustment, motivation and perception" (p. 191), which can be assessed and incorporated in

any admissions process. NCVs have been implemented in many graduate programs, but in

comparison to CVs, it is questionable if it has any significant impact on admission decisions.

According to Kyllonen et al. (2005), recent studies have shown that "Graduate admissions staff

frequently mentioned the need for non-cognitive indicators to augment the cognitive measures of

the Graduate Record Examination" (p. 175).

Subjective Criteria

The use of CVs is important when making an admissions decision, but it cannot capture

the entire profile of the applicant. There are other characteristics that are needed to help

determine well-rounded applicants and whether they may be successful in a graduate program.

CVs help in deciphering the applicant's level of logical reasoning and comparative thinking, but

they cannot provide information on the applicant's motivation, leadership qualities, or personal

characteristics. Universities have traditionally focused on quantitative data rather than qualitative

data in making admissions decisions (Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a,

2004b, 2011). NCVs reveal characteristics of an individual that can be of great influence in a

student's potential success within a graduate program and in their future profession. There have

been extensive studies on NCVs (e.g., maturity, motivation, self-concept, interpersonal skills,

and personality variables) identified in non-cognitively oriented measures (e.g., biographical information, personal interviews, and letters of recommendation) that help determine student performance (Adebayo, 2008; Brown, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2003; da Roza, 1988; Jaschik, 2010; Kalogrides et al., 2012; Kalsbeek, Sandlin, & Sedlacek, 2013; Kent & McCarthy, 2016; Kogan, 2002; Kyllonen, 2012; Kyllonen et al., 2005; Messick, 1979; Oltman & Hartnett, 1985; Pruitt & Isaac, 1985; Ransdell, 2001; Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Shaw et al., 1995; Sternberg, 2010, 2013; Sternberg et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2007; Vernon, 1996; Zimmermann et al., 2015). These variables play an important role and, in many cases, have been significant in predicting future academic and professional success.

Studies have shown that both CVs and NCVs are useful for an admissions department (Sedlacek, 2011). NCVs are not a means to replace CVs, but rather add to the various attributes in developing a more holistic approach in the admissions process. Although there are a number of definitions of NCVs, Sedlacek (1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011) identified eight variables. Sedlacek's research and framework has been a great influence in identifying NCV's in the admissions process as well as in the educational field in general. His research has spanned for more than 30 years, making him a great contributor in the understanding of NCVs for many scholars and researchers.

- Positive self-concept: Demonstrates confidence, strength of character, determination, and independence;

- Realistic self-appraisal: Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development; recognizes need to broaden his or her individuality;

- Successfully handling the system: Exhibits a realistic view of the system on the basis of personal experience of racism; committed to improving the existing system; takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs, but is not hostile to society and not a cop-out; able to hand racist system;

- Preference for long-term goals: Able to respond to deferred gratification; plans ahead and sets goals;

- Availability of strong support person: Seeks and takes advantage of strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement;

- Leadership experience: Demonstrates strong leadership in any area of his or background (church, sports, non-educational groups, gang leader, and so on);

- Community involvement: Participates and is involved in his or her community:

- Knowledge acquired in a field: Acquires knowledge in a sustained or culturally related way in any field. (Sedlacek, 2004b, p. 37)

NCVs can contribute an assessment model that would improve and streamline the admissions process. Primarily relying on standardized tests and grades cannot capture a complete profile of an applicant and his or her future potential in the educational field.

In a graduate teaching credential program, students should possess leadership skills because they will be in charge of a classroom. A positive perception of oneself demonstrates confidence and drive to excel. A realist view of the world is also important because it can determine how one may view a situation and decide on steps to resolve any issues and concerns. The ability to understand the system in which we live in is imperative especially for a future teacher. A classroom is composed of a melting pot of students who come from various social and economic backgrounds. There are students with diverse cultures and religious affiliations. A

teacher candidate needs to be aware of issues that may arise and be sensitive to the needs of students because of these differences. Having the ability to plan ahead and set goals is significant, especially when a teacher creates lesson plans for the upcoming year. Community involvement can play an important role for teachers because it allows them to connect with parents, students, and society in general. It is that caring factor of wanting to help, to be part of something greater that is usually instilled in effective teachers. NCVs provide a common thread of qualities that great teachers possess. Identifying these qualities during the admissions phase can best distinguish potentially great teachers from other candidates (Sedlacek 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). Sedlacek's research on NCVs was greatly influenced by Sternberg's study on successful intelligence and its impact on the admissions selection process. Successful intelligence, according to Sternberg et al. (2012) is composed of wisdom, intelligence, and creativity synthesized. The main ideas stemming from wisdom, intelligence, and creativity synthesized involves:

> (a) creativity to generate ideas, (b) analytical intelligence to determine whether the ideas are good, (c) practical intelligence is to act upon the ideas and convince others to see its significance, and (d) wisdom to that their abilities and knowledge combined are used for a greater good in both long and short term. (p. 30)

More specifically, identifying creative skills would include creating, exploring, inventing, imagining, and supposing. Analytical skills consist of analyzing, evaluating, critiquing, judging, and comparing and contrasting. Practical skills include applying, putting into practice, using implementing, and persuading. Wisdom-based skills involve seeking a common good, balancing one's own interests with the interests of others and larger interests, understanding others' points of view, understanding how what is true can change over time and place, and thinking of positive

ethical values (Sternberg, 2010; Sternberg et al., 2012). Sternberg (2010) argued that future

academic and job performance cannot be measured by quantifiable measures such as Scholastic

Aptitude Test and American College Testing. Standardized tests provide only a narrow segment

of an applicant's overall potential. Sternberg's framework suggests that successful intelligence

captures significant information on creative and practical skills that allows an individual to adapt

to an ever-changing society while having the ability to contribute to society and turn ideas into

action. This framework became part of Sedlacek's foundation on his extensive research on NCVs

and its relationship to admissions. Although, Sternberg's study focused primarily on

undergraduate admissions, the information can also be transferable and very useful in specific

graduate admissions programs.

The use of NCVs has great advantages beyond the admissions process of a teaching

credential program. Sedlacek's NCVs can be utilized in various educational institutions and

programs because of their broad definition. Although there has not been much study on the use

of NCVs in a graduate teaching credential program, the traits defined by Sedlacek closely

correlate to observations and implications of what is deemed as an effective teacher. Educational

institutions benefit by admitting well-rounded, highly qualified students, which creates a fairer

and diverse applicant pool (Sedlacek 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). Sedlacek argued

"International students, people of color, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, [transgender], and people with

disabilities among others, are participating in higher education in more extensive and varied

ways" (as cited in Knapp, Kelly, Whitmore, Wu, & Gallego, 2002). Typically, White,

heterosexual, able-bodied, Eurocentric males in the United States (traditional students) scored

significantly higher in CVs (Sedlacek 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). This would be a

disadvantage for non-traditional students.

Sedlacek further explains that if non-traditional students were evaluated with a feeling of empowerment, or expected success, using NCVs skills would give a better prediction of their success (Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). In terms of graduate teaching credential programs, both traditional and non-traditional students apply to these programs. Some applicants are individuals who may have been out of school for a couple years and have recently decided to apply to a teaching program. Many come with different experiences, skill sets, and cultural backgrounds, but what they all hopefully have in common is a desire to make a difference in the lives of children. Some applicants may have earned a high GPA and standardized tests scores compared to others. As previously mentioned, this alone, cannot determine overall success in the teaching profession. Sternberg (2010) stated:

> These traits do not measure creativity, motivation, passion for learning, and other skills and attitudes that are important for academic success. Moreover, to the extent that the goal of admissions is to admit people who will be active citizens and leaders of society…GPA and standardized test scores seem to miss the mark almost entirely. (p. 62–63)

The combination of CVs and NCVs can contribute to equality and fairness in the admissions playing field. Essential traits can be determined early on during the admissions phase, which can determine an individual has certain qualities that define an excellent teacher candidate.

The admissions process of any educational program can vary on the method of selecting the best candidates. Some programs may solely rely on CVs such as Math and Science programs. Other programs need more information about a candidate because of the nature of certain disciplines that involve public-civil service. Kyllonen et al. (2005) stated, "They [NCVs] may prove especially useful for certain disciplines where personality may be particularly important,

such as clinical psychology, social work, nursing, and others involving interpersonal skills" (p. 177). Although CVs can help determine academic success, they do not give any indication of other skill sets (interpersonal, leadership, etc.) that are important in excelling within these professions. As with social workers, doctors, and psychologists, teachers play a significant role in society. Outside of the academic realm, NCVs are crucial particularly when a professional must interact with others on a daily basis and their interactions have an impact on society. Rather than identify these NCVs after an individual enters the profession, it may be advantageous to detect these variables when the individual is considering a graduate program. Whether it's medical school or a teaching credential program, NCVs should be taken into consideration as much as or even more so than as CVs.

Research has shown that NCVs have a direct correlation in determining success in graduate programs. As Kyllonen et al. (2005) suggested, "We propose that personality, attitude, and quasi-cognitive factors directly affect graduate school outcomes" (p. 156). Obtaining additional information about applicants will not only give better insight on academic performance, but also their overall success once they enter and begin work in their selected profession. Thomas et al. (2007) contended that NCVs can also help improve program diversity, and retention. There is an increasing interest "in noncognitive predicators; increased minority admissions, improved prediction of student performance, and increased college retention of all students, but minorities in particular" (p. 636). In many cases, an applicant may not have strong CVs but will excel in NCVs. This does not necessarily mean that he or she will fare better in comparison to someone who has scored much higher in CVs. When an admissions committee makes a final decision on an applicant, it is important to take into account both CVs and NCVs.

It's essential to understand that in some professions, NCVs may have a stronger influence on the overall professional success of the applicant.

Use of NCVs

The use of NCVs as part of an admissions process is not new in a number of graduate programs. Medical programs, Ph.D. programs such as public policy, and many more graduate programs in general, acknowledge the importance of having an assessment that incorporates NCVs. This provides insight on the qualities and character of a potential student. Subjective components such as empathy, communication skills, ability to solve problems, and critical thinking are traits that are essentially needed when a student becomes a practicing professional (Kogan, 2002). Occupations, such as a doctor, nurse, veterinarian, or psychologist need these particular traits to be successful and excel in their field (da Roza, 1988; Kogan, 2002; Salvatori, 2001; Vernon, 1996). Grades and tests scores can show potential academic success for a student, but cannot provide a gauge on a student's professional success after graduation. According to Kogan (2002), studies have shown that NCVs in medical schools find that tests scores can only provide limited information regarding a student's ability to excel. Shaw et al. (1995) agreed that grades have not been a strong indicator of predicting good doctors. Other researchers have also suggested that scores cannot determine excellent doctors. Numerical data are not enough to deem an individual capable of succeeding in the medical field. "MCAT scores identify applicants who will be successful medical students, not necessarily those who will become good physicians" (Shaw et al., 1995, p. 533). Another example is the RAND Graduate School, which focuses on the Ph.D., with an emphasis on public policy. Vernon (1996) stated, "Personal attributes and achievements can predict or explain some of the variation in future academic or later life performance" (p. 4). Using CVs can only provide a small fraction of fully understanding a

potential candidate for a graduate program. It is essential to "measure noncognitive, non-teachable traits" (Shaw et al., 1995, p. 535). If an admissions department focuses on NCVs more so than CVs, then there may be a greater chance in selecting highly qualified students for graduate programs. Using both NCVs and CVs has proved to be successful in the admissions selection process for a number of graduate programs.

Although utilizing NCVs in the admissions process has great benefits, it has also been a challenge when seeking ways to measure these subjective traits. Questionnaires and interviews are generally used to assess NCVs. Interviews have been one of the most important measurements during the selection process (Shaw et al., 1995). An admissions committee can be composed of two interviewers or possibly several. It is through the interview process that interviewers can obtain more information on non-cognitive traits of a graduate candidate. Kogan (2002) stated, "Numerous non-cognitive qualities (i.e., problem-solving, critical thinking, communication skills, personal integrity, and empathy) that contain a subjective component have also been identified as important characteristics of veterinary students as well as practicing professionals" (p. 3). Through the interview process, the interviewer should gain a sense of the candidate based on interaction and answers to the questions given. The interviewer can learn more about the candidate's NCVs and determine if the individual is an overall fit for the graduate program.

Although the interview process has been successful in collecting information on personal traits and qualities, this does not mean that the grading system of the interviews is viewed the same. Each interviewer may ask the same questions, but opinions can be different as well as contradicting. An interviewer may rate a candidate more highly based on race and gender. Academic information can also have an influence on how a candidate is perceived (Shaw et al.,

1995). If an interviewer is aware of one's GPA or test scores, this can also affect his or her judgment on that particular candidate. "If the primary purpose of the interview is to assess noncognitive characteristics independently of cognitive measures, academic variables should have minimal capacity to predict applicants' noncognitive qualities" (Shaw et al., 1995, p. 533). An interviewer's decision on how a candidate is graded during the interview process is then tainted and altered based on predisposed feelings. The question becomes whether interviews can be a reliable source in selecting the best candidates in an impartial admissions process. The interview is ultimately perceived as potentially flawed.

Selecting a candidate based on gender and race has also been a problem in selecting candidates for graduate programs. According to Shaw et al. (1995), men can be rated more favorably than women and Whites more favorably than African Americans. The idea of *fair* has been argued that traditional prerequisites can discriminate against cognitive abilities that cannot be measured through scholastic performances or aptitude tests (Kogan, 2002). The notion of *fairness* and *equality* may be questionable. It is not always possible for an interviewer, whether a staff or faculty member, to make an unbiased decision with each candidate who is being interviewed, despite giving the exact same questions to all graduate applicants. Vernon (1996) argued, "Admissions committee ratings may not fully reflect decision makers' true judgments about the desirability of each applicant" (p. 69). It can be difficult to determine if an interviewer is truthfully making an admissions decision objectively. Greater reliability is needed in this process so that all those who are involved in the decision making can accurately evaluate a candidate based on the same qualities, specifically those NCVs as well as non teachable traits (Shaw et al., 1995). If a graduate admissions committee is to be fair and just in the interview process, then policies and procedures must be effective. Admissions interview criteria should be

reevaluated to represent a number of ranges such as the cognitive, personal, and attitudinal variables (da Roza, 1988; Kogan, 2002; Shaw et al., 1995; Vernon, 1996). Age, race, and gender should not be factors when interviewing candidates for a graduate program. This can possibly change one's judgment about an individual, which can have a great impact, whether positive or negative on the admissions decision.

Strengths of Using NCVs

Using NCVs in graduate admissions has been favorable in making admissions decisions. Not only does it serve as a way to learn more about an applicant, but it also promotes diversity and student retention. If an admissions committee was to base primarily its decisions on CVs, then it would exclude other candidates who would otherwise be just as qualified. Research has shown that White males maintained higher CVs compared to women and minorities (Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011; Shaw et al., 1995). If an admissions department focuses on CVs rather than NCVs, then it essentially will eliminate other applicants who have the potential to succeed and diversity would be difficult. Having a diverse student population contributes to the success of graduate programs. Diversity and inclusion is part of student achievement. This should be taken into consideration during the recruitment and admissions process. Developing strategies for student success should also be reinforced beyond admissions (Kent & McCarthy, 2016).

During the admissions phase, NCVs bring to light the qualities of applicants that are crucial to the success of the student and program. According to Kyllonen et al. (2005), "In admissions, one can imagine using noncognitive variables in the creation of a guide for writing or interpreting letters of recommendation or personal statements" (p. 178). Kyllonen et al. suggest that NCVs should be considered when creating a guide that helps committee members

interpret application materials. Sedlacek suggests that there are many methods for incorporating NCVs in admissions such as NCVs questionnaires, behavioral checklists, advisor rating forms, and interview technique. These various methods have the probability to benefit students in the long run in a variety of contexts (Sedlacek, 2011). If Sedlacek's definition of NCVs were implemented in creating admission guidelines, questionnaires, and interview techniques, it could improve the quality of applicants admitted into a program. Admissions committee members can better detect which applicants possess quality strengths that define a great teacher, nurse, or psychologist.

Aside from creating admissions guidelines in interpreting materials, developing an NCVs rubric may also have its advantages. Providing a series of questions relating to NCVs can give further details about the thought process and interpersonal skills of an applicant. Incorporating NCVs in the admissions phase and having it align with the overall mission of the educational institution will help the department and university as a whole achieve its goals of admitting the best candidates for their programs. "Holistic review processes are most likely to be successful when well-aligned with a graduate institution's mission and with the goals of particular master's, doctoral, and professional graduate programs" (Kent & McCarthy, 2016, p. 5). When examining the quality and characteristics of an applicant for a graduate program, it becomes more than reviewing test scores and GPAs. There is a much larger picture to explore. Receiving high marks in a graduate program will not suffice. Having a great personality and social skill sets cannot predict success. It is a culmination of both that must be considered. To excel in a profession that services the public, having both content knowledge and interpersonal skills are what sets apart mediocrity from excellence.

Challenges of Using NCVs

Although there are many positive implications in the use of NCVs, there are also challenges. According to Kent and McCarthy (2016), the challenges of implementing NCVs are tradition, time constraints, and tools. With every graduate program, there is already a system in place, which has been utilized possibly for many years. Traditionally, an admissions department may review applications in a particular manner where NCVs are not necessarily taken into account as much as CVs. The process to change a system that is in place can be problematic. Time is of the essence in an admissions department with hundreds or even thousands of applications received each year. Without sufficient manpower to sift through all applications, detecting NCVs can be a challenge. "Limited staff and faculty time is considered the greatest barrier to performing more holistic admissions processes for graduate programs" (Kent & McCarthy, 2016 p. 4). An application must be thoroughly examined especially when reviewing personal statements, recommendation letters, and supplemental documents. The tools needed in detecting NCVs may not be readily available for an admissions committee. This would include sufficient number of staff members and committee members experienced in identifying NCVs, specific NCVs rubrics, and guidelines. Training may also be required. Designing a system will take time, effort, as well as monetary resources. These challenges may be too great for an admissions department to make any changes and revisions to an existing process.

Certain application materials and how committee members make decisions are also called into question. An applicant can embellish a personal statement by writing with the perception of satisfying committee member and what he or she deems excellent essays. Applicants will include information that they assume an admissions committee will want to see even though it may not

necessarily be true. Personal statements can also be written by someone other than the applicant. Recommendation letters can also be faulty. Kyllonen et al. (2005) stated:

> Others [recommenders] could be advisors, professors, and other members of the college community who typically write letters of recommendation for students now. Although they too could be taught to game the system and fake good for their applicant rate, it would seem that that problem is no greater or less than the current problem of distortion in letters of recommendation. (p. 175)

Depending on whom the applicant asks to write a recommendation letter, the recommender can write a letter that may not be entirely true. Whether the applicant is an excellent candidate for the program, the main objective for a recommender is to ensure that the applicant is admitted by fabricating a letter that does not fully reflect actual qualities and strengths.

The admissions decision of committee members can also be a problem. If an applicant is asked to be interviewed by committee members, personal opinions may sway decisions. Personal beliefs and judgments can determine a committee member's decision. Although the questions asked are relevant to NCVs, a committee member can interpret an answer differently compared to others, which can have a positive or negative impact on the decision-making process. Cochran-Smith (2003) explained:

> Policies and practices around graduate admissions were also influenced by our focus on social justice.…What was most important about this new process was not only that it made issues of diversity an explicit part of the admissions process but also that it took faculty differences in values, beliefs and experiences—usually left unspoken in admissions decisions. (p. 17)

It can be complicated to separate personal opinions, views, and beliefs when making an admissions decision. Some committee members may disagree with others and a consensus may never be reached. In these cases, it may be best to create certain guidelines on how to conduct interviews, how to create questions, and rubrics that can alleviate these challenges. The NCVs challenges will continue if change is not implemented. To make effective use of NCVs, an admissions department has to reassess the current process and decide if focusing on NCVs can have an affirmative impact on the program, university, and the profession as a whole (Sedlacek, 2004a, 2004b).

Next Steps

There are many unknown answers regarding the extensive use of NCVs in graduate admissions especially a teaching credential program. Limited research has been done in respect to the use of a holistic approach in graduate admissions. Although there is still more to learn from the use of NCVs and its influence in the admissions process, research has shown that there are positive results. A holistic admissions process can provide a more thorough profile of an applicant. Evidence has shown that personal statements, recommendation letters, and interviews are helpful in giving insight to the qualities and characteristics of an applicant, but level of accuracy and effectiveness are still questionable. If a graduate teaching credential program focused on creating a streamlined process, which revises how interviews are conducted and personal statements are read, then it can help improve issues of biases and misinformation reflected in admission materials. Suggestions on committee training in identifying key NCVs can be equally effective. Re-creating personal statement prompts that include the use of NCVs is also another means to improve the admissions process. Designing a specific rubric that captures

NCVs is an additional process that can be beneficial. Adebayo (2008) emphasized that there is much more to gain in further studying NCVs:

> Future research is needed to further examine how programs that are already in place in many colleges and universities (e.g., freshmen seminars, mentoring programs, diversity programs and faculty didactic initiatives) could be modified to enhance psychosocial attributes that complement cognitive elements in our understanding of academic success and retention. (p. 21)

Chapter Summary

Some educational institutions implement a holistic admissions process in the undergraduate and graduate levels. Distinctive teacher qualities can be identified through the use of NCVs. For example, Kent and McCarthy (2016) noted, "One challenge for graduate education, then, is to develop a more organized national conversation about holistic review—establishing and sharing information about what the concept means, supporting the practices associated with it, and sharing evidence of its potential benefits" (p. 10). A holistic approach in admissions may influence the number and quality of students registered in graduate teaching credential programs. Reviewing both CVs and NCVs during the admissions phase has an impact on the quality of students admitted into the program. Focusing on CVs can only provide partial information about the applicant. Examining NCVs as part of the admissions process can give a better understanding about the student's potential success in the program and in the teaching field. For the reasons noted above, this field of study has been selected for further investigation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and data collection methods that were used in this investigation. The research question that guided this study is as follows: To what extent might current measures for selecting teaching credential candidates at the Master's level in California be effective predictors of success in the program and in the profession? By closely examining current systems in the private education sector, the researcher determined which institutions utilize NCVs and whether these have a significant impact on selecting the best candidates to become effective teachers.

Research Design

A qualitative approach was used in this study. According to Creswell, individuals who try to understand the world in which they live and work are taking a constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2014). It was the goal of the researcher to examine and interpret the varied and complex viewpoints of key players in the graduate admissions arena. The objective was to learn about admissions methods from individuals who were part of the decision-making process and to describe their experiences of selecting applicants for graduate teaching credential programs.

The interpretivist paradigm was used to formulate various meanings and understandings of NCVs in admissions through interviews of participants who are part of admissions committees within private educational institutions in California. The interpretivist tradition seeks to understand human ideas, actions, and interactions. The researcher believes that reality is socially constructed, very complex, and always changing. The research design focused on interactions with people at various sites. There were multiple interpretations on admission processes. In this

phenomenological inquiry, the researcher planned to uncover the use of NCVs in graduate

teaching credential programs and disclose how these variables were perceived by individuals

who participated in the admissions process. The focus was on the 'lived experiences'of the

participants (individuals who are part of the admissions committee) and their perceptions of

NCVs as tools for reviewing application files (Creswell, 2014). Interviews were conducted as a

means to interpret data and to seek meanings and themes. This phenomenological study

examines the behavior of individuals who participate in admissions decisions. Figure 1 shows the

emergence of the research design:

APPROACH	→	GOAL	→	THEORIST	→	METHODOLOGY
Qualitative	→	Understand	→	Immanuel Kant	→	Phenomenology
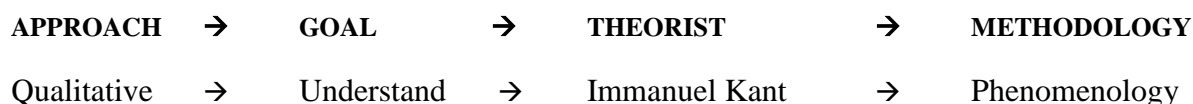
Figure 1. Research design flow chart.

Design Validity

Exploration of a variety of sources strengthened the validity of this study. To ensure

consistency and accuracy of researcher and participants, strategies were employed to determine

the authenticity, credibility, and trustworthiness of the findings. Triangulation was used to

examine several sources and to seek similarities and differences. A survey and interviews were

used as tools to gather data. Common themes emerged as the researcher examined the data.

When collecting data for this study, the researcher took measures to ensure its validity.

According to Creswell (2014), data analysis and interpretation requires following specific

guidelines in order to ascertain consistency and accuracy.

1. Avoid going native—'taking-sides.'

2. Avoid disclosing only positive results.

3. Respect the privacy of participants.

4. Communicate in clear straightforward, appropriate language.

5. Avoid falsifying authorship, evidence, data, findings or conclusions.

6. Avoid disclosing information that would harm participants.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the credibility of the survey and interview questions asked to future research participants. It was in the best interest of this research and participants that the questions provided were clear, concise, and unbiased. Two participants (identified as A and B) were asked to be part of this pilot study. Participants A and B were former university employees at a private university in Southern California. Both individuals have worked in the Admissions and Recruitment departments at their respective universities. Participant A had a total of 10 years of experience in admissions management. Participant B had a total of four years of experience in recruitment management. After providing the participants with a copy of the survey and interview questions, the researcher gave them one week to review and provide feedback. Participants A and B provided feedback (see Appendix E and Appendix D). The suggestions that given by participants A and B are the following:

- You might want to offer multiple choice options. It will make your quantitative scoring easier and less subjective.

- You might want to offer a range for scoring purposes (0–2 years, 3–5 years, etc).

- Need to be more specific—decision making regarding applications or in my role in the admissions department. You asked about the role so people might assume you're asking about the process regarding their role.

- If you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities? Also, what tools worked best at each institution?

The suggestions given were useful and made particular questions more comprehensible. The revisions were taken into consideration and were used to develop the final survey protocol and interview questions (see Appendix F and Appendix H). One suggestion that was not used was the recommendation to add multiple-choice options to the question pertaining to the role of the participants. The researcher wanted to know the specific job titles of each respondent and believed that it was more important to leave this item as an open-ended question.

Setting

The study included 29 private colleges and universities in California that offered a graduate teaching credential program. The researcher wanted to find out how many admissions administrators used NCVs as part of their selections process and whether these could serve as good indicators of a student's academic success as well as their ability to become an effective educator. Private educational institutions that offered a graduate teaching credential program were the primary focus in this study. Interviews were conducted in person at individual institutions within Northern and Southern California.

Sample

The participants in this study were individuals who had some influence on admissions decision making for graduate teaching credential programs at private educational institutions in the state of California. The participants included admissions administrators, directors, managers, specialists, counselors, coordinators, and faculty members. A survey was mailed and e-mailed to 29 private educational institutions. The following Website provided a list of accredited institutions in California: http://www.college-scholarships.com/schools/california/. Based on the responses received from these institutions, candidates were selected on the degree of NCVs used in the admissions process. A rubric was used to determine the selection process of participants

who were interviewed (see Appendix G). It was anticipated that 10 educational institutions would be selected for an interview. Age, race, and gender were not part of selecting participants. Rather, participants were chosen based on the level of involvement in the graduate admissions process. After individuals at the educational institutions were selected for an initial interview, admission employees within the institution were asked if they would like to participate in this study. Information pertaining to each interviewee (name, title, e-mail address, phone number) remained anonymous and confidential.

Human Subject Considerations

Before private educational institutions were contacted and participants were selected, approval from Pepperdine's Institutional Review Board was obtained. Institutional Review Board standards and protocol ensured that participants: (a) had the right to voluntarily withdraw anytime from this study, (b) were provided with information on how their confidentiality will be protected, (c) were given with the central purpose of the study and the procedures used to collect data, (d) were provided with information about any known risks associated with participation in the study, and (e) were provided with a statement of possible expected benefits of participating in the study. Signed consent was obtained from the both the participant and researcher that all information was provided and outlined (Creswell, 2014).

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board, the researcher forwarded the survey to all 29 institutions. Respondents were asked to provide contact details if they wished to participate in the second phase of the study. Those who indicated a willingness to be interviewed were contacted via e-mail and phone by the researcher. The interview was to last between 45 minutes to one hour. Participants were given 11 questions one week prior to the interview date and time. Names, titles, and educational institutions remained anonymous to

protect the informants. It was at the discretion of the subjects to determine the data that were shared. Following the interview, participants had the opportunity to review transcripts and were given a summary of the research study upon request. The data from this study were stored digitally and in a password-protected location. Data were copied onto a USB drive, which was stored in a locked drawer of a desk at the researcher's home. An audio-recording device for the interviews was also kept in this drawer. All measures were utilized to protect and secure the data collected. Only the researcher had access to data collected in this study.

Instrumentation

The instruments for this study included a survey of seven closed- and open-ended questions (see Appendix F). The survey was structured through Survey Monkey, an online system that creates surveys and analysis of responses. The survey was also created through a Microsoft Word document and mailed to each institution. The questions included Sedlacek's NCVs model (Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011). This framework was used as a basis for a rubric in the selection of interviewees from the pool of survey respondents. A rubric (see Appendix G) was used to select interviewees from the survey responses. Participants who scored 2 or higher in the use of NCVs were invited to be interviewed. The interview consisted of 11 questions, which were open-ended, unstructured, and related to the use of NCVs in a holistic admission process (see Appendix H). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected in two stages: a survey and follow-up face-to-face interviews. The purpose of using a survey was to determine if NCVs were utilized in the admissions process in private educational institutions in California. The survey questions focused on subjective and

objective criteria used in the admissions process. The survey was forwarded to 29 private educational institutions that offered a graduate teaching credential program. Once the surveys were collected, the answers to these questions determined which participants would be selected for an interview.

After reviewing the results from the data, interviewees were chosen based on the level of NCVs used (2 or more) in the admissions process. Individuals who were employed in the admissions department were selected from each chosen institution. Participants were contacted via phone and e-mail. Information regarding this study was e-mailed and mailed to each participant. Subjects who agreed to participate in this research study were asked a series of questions in person. The purpose for face-to-face interviews rather than phone or online video chat was the type of data that would be collected during the initial interviews. Face-to-face interviews provided a more in-depth, quality conversation between the participants and interviewee. Body language and the manner in which the conversation is articulated add to the interview answers. In addition, face-to-face interviews have a higher probability of lasting much longer compared to phone or online video chat conversations. The interview questions asked specific NCVs questions regarding graduate admissions and its relationship to the profession of teaching. Specific NCVs qualities and characteristics were asked and the degree it influenced decision making. The validity and reliability of the data collection was based on the participants' personal experiences, involvement in the admissions selection process, title, and years of experience in the profession. Educational institutions selected for an interview were based on a brief survey that was mailed and e-mailed to individuals who were involved in the admissions decision-making process. The responses and level of use of NCVs in the admissions process determined candidates who participated in this study.

Interviews were conducted to determine the correlation on the effectiveness of making admissions decisions based on holistic criteria. Interviewees were individuals who were decision makers in the admissions process (i.e., faculty, administration, directors, specialists, counselors, coordinators). Definitive answers were not necessarily provided through the interviews but highlighted various methods in the selection process of future teacher candidates in the admissions phase.

Data Management

The data collection was managed through an Excel spreadsheet, audio-recording device, personal notes taken by the researcher, data files of each institution, and transcription of interviews. All research data were managed and stored in a locked computer and USB drive. The USB drive and audio recorder were stored in a locked drawer of an office desk. The data from this study will be securely kept for 5 years and then deleted or destroyed.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed holistically by seeking meaning to participants' perceptions according to the interpretivist paradigm. The researcher tried "to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 186) to identify multiple factors and emerging themes that affected the selection process in a graduate teaching credential program. By gathering various perspectives through a survey and interviews, the researcher was able to draw a picture from emerging themes and topics (Creswell, 2014). The surveys collected were reviewed to identify similarities and differences in responses. After conducting interviews, audio recordings were transcribed and compared for accuracy. The researcher highlighted common themes and topics in each interview transcription to identify significant factors that contributed to the overall understanding of NCVs in a holistic approach in selecting qualified

applicants. It is the role of the researcher to provide truthful and accurate information while analyzing data in this research study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the process in which data were collected. Instruments such as a survey and conducting interviews were part of the collection process. From the participant responses, data were analyzed to find multiple factors and themes that affect the graduate admissions process in a teaching credential program. The researcher asked probing questions and listened carefully. After several reviews of the interview data, she compared the interview responses with answers received in the survey.

There was a significant difference on the quality of students selected when implementing holistic criteria focusing on NCVs. Students selected were more likely to excel at the graduate level based on academic performance, retention, graduate rate, and future teacher performance compared to students who were selected based solely on objective CV criteria. It is during the admissions phase that early detection can be made on how an institution can theoretically select strong candidates to become effective teachers.

With continual change in education, and the increase of future students applying to graduate programs, there should be an effective methodological procedure in determining applicants who best meet the qualifications and the mission of educational institutions and the field of teaching. Success is not only determined solely by high GPAs and test results. It is measured by the individual student who possesses academic, professional, and personal qualities that contribute to the overall success and reputation of the graduate program and as a future educator who will impact the lives of many children.

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore current measures using NCVs as part of a holistic admissions process for predicting academic and professional success in the graduate teaching credential program in private institutions in the state of California. Key findings in relation to the research question and sub-questions are presented in this chapter. The research question that guided this study is as follows: To what extent might current measures for selecting teaching credential candidates at the Master's degree level in California be effective predictors of success in the program and in the profession? The following sub-questions were addressed:

1. What admissions strategies (cognitive and noncognitive) are currently utilized in making an admissions decision for graduate teaching credential programs in private institutions of higher education?

2. To what extent is there a difference in the quality of students admitted when implementing a holistic approach as opposed to using only cognitive variables in the decision-making process?

3. What recommendations can be proposed for admissions administrators for the development of a streamlined practice in the selection of teacher candidates?

Following the interpretivist paradigm, the researcher aimed to gain a better understanding of NCVs in the admissions process for graduate teaching credential programs. In this phenomenological study, complexity of meanings and themes became more apparent as the researcher examined viewpoints and the lived experiences of participants who might be able to influence the admissions decision-making process.

Survey to Admissions Staff and Faculty

It was clear from the data gathered in the survey that admissions processes in graduate teaching credential programs generally consisted of personal statements, recommendation letters, and official undergraduate transcripts. The target population consisted of 62 subjects in 29 institutions. Of those responses received in the survey, many admissions departments required applicants to have passed or signed-up for the CBEST during the admission phase, although the CSET requirement varied in each institution. It was found that signing up to take the CSET was a requirement for some institutions but not for others. Some institutions select candidates for interviews as an admissions practice. All universities used personal statements and recommendation letters as a method to determine NCVs. Of the surveys received, 75% required a committee interview as part of the selection process. All but three had specific measures on defining and examining NCVs. Of survey participants, 63% used NCVs. All respondents agreed that GPA and test scores were important but could not fully provide detailed information about prospective students.

The subjects were selected on the basis of holding positions that influenced the decision-making process in admissions. Survey Monkey was used as the tool to contact the subjects. A hard copy survey was also mailed directly to their offices as well. Of the 62 recipients, 16 responses were received from 11 private educational institutions. Seven questions were asked in the survey (see Appendix F). Respondents held various positions within admissions departments in Northern and Southern California. Subjects consisted of associate deans, enrollment services officers, professors, and other occupations that had some influence in the decision-making process of admissions. Table 1 shows the occupations of respondents to the survey.

Table 1

Occupation of Survey Participants

Survey Participant Occupation	Number of Participants in Occupation
Assistant Dean, Enrollment and Marketing	1
Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions	2
Dean, Teacher Education	2
Director of Bilingual Education	1
Department Chair-Professor	2
Director of Elementary and Secondary Education	1
Director of Graduate Admissions	1
Director of Moderate-Severe	1
Enrollment Services Officer	1
Graduate Enrollment Counselor	2
No Response Received	2
Total	16

Table 2 shows an analysis of the responses to the survey. The data were drawn from the results of the seven questions. Table 2 illustrates the number of years worked by each subject in admissions.

Table 2

Number of Years of Experience Working in Admissions

0–5 Years	6–10 Years	11–15 Years	16+ Years
8 Respondents	5 Respondents	1 Respondent	2 Respondent

Half of the survey participants (50%) had 5 years or less experience working in admissions. Of participants, 31% had 6 to 10 years of experience. Of the participants, 6% had 11 to 15 years of experience, while participants who had more than 16 years' experience were at 13%. Table 3 outlines the number of NCVs (defined by Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011) used as part of the admissions process.

Table 3

Number of NCVs

Use of NCVs in Admissions	Number of Participants
0 NCVs	3
1 NCVs	1
2 NCVs	4
3 NCVs	0
4 NCVs	1
5 NCVs	1
6 NCVs	3
7 NCVs	1
8 NCVs	2

Among the 62 survey participants, 25% used two NCVs during the admissions phase. Among the participants, 19% used six NCVs when reviewing applications. Only 13% used all eight NCVs as part of the admissions process. Subjects who did not use any NCVs were also at 13%. These data show that majority of respondents used at least two NCVs while 6% used one, four, five, or seven NCVs. Table 4 outlines Sedlacek's (2004b) NCVs examined during the admissions phase.

Table 4

Admissions NCVs

NCV	Number of Respondents
Positive Self-Concept	10
Realistic Self-Appraisal	9
Successfully Handling the System	5
Preference for long-term goals	8
Availability for Strong Support System	4
Leadership Experience	6
Community Involvement	10
Knowledge Acquired in Field	6

Positive self-concept and community involvement were ranked the highest (63%) among NCVs that participants examined during the application and decision-making process. Of the participants, 56% looked at realistic self-appraisal while 50% considered preference for long-

term goals when reviewing applications. Availability for strong support system was assessed by

25% of participants. Leadership experience and knowledge acquired in field scored similarly at

38%. The lowest-rated NCV was how an applicant can successfully handle the system at 31% of

participants who considered this NCV when reviewing applications. Table 5 outlines

respondents' definitions of NCVs.

Table 5

Definitions for NCVs

NCV	Definition
Positive Self-Concept	Positive outlook in life
	Overcoming obstacles and challenges
	Ready to change lives
	Motivate others and foster safe learning environment
	Sense of capacity to succeed
Realistic Self-Appraisal	Emotional intelligence
	Self-awareness
	Self-Reflect
	Good Character
	Truthful
	Self-Actualization
	Authentic self-evaluation
Successfully Handling the System	Display traits of perseverance
	Understand state and district policies
	Need organizational change management skills
	Understanding graduate level expectations
	Systems do not always provide for positive individual outcomes without intervention
Preference for long-term goals	Becoming a change agent
	Addressing goals
	Understanding basic goals of teaching
	Helping others
Availability for Strong Support System	Understands mentoring and life-long learning
	Empowering and transforming students
Leadership Experience	Lead initiatives
	Volunteers
	Organize and motivate
	Leads
	Coaches
	Leadership in community and classroom
	Involvement in education
	Contributing to organization
	(continued)

NCV	Definition
Community Involvement	Knows the community
	Community agency and church involvement
	Well-rounded
	Core values
	Internships
Knowledge Acquired in Field	B.A. degree
	Professional or volunteer experience
	Apply concepts learned

Participants were asked to provide their own definition of NCVs. Table 5 shows the specific definitions as defined by survey participants. The description of NCVs paralleled to Sedlacek's (1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011) definition to some degree. Although the description to handling successfully the system did not include the isms (racism, ageism, sexism, etc.) or finding solutions to solve existing wrongs in society, the survey answers were not necessarily incorrect. Rather, it showed that the participants were unclear in Sedlacek's specific definition. All answers could be considered as an extension to the broad range of definitions associated with NCVs. Table 6 shows the general basic requirements used in the admissions process.

Table 6

Requirements

Requirement	Number of Respondents
GPA	16
GRE	4
Personal Statement	16
Recommendation Letters	15
Committee Interview	12
Decline to Answer	2

All survey participants used (100%) GPA and personal statements as part of their admissions process. Of the participants, 94% used recommendation letters when reviewing applications. Among the participants, 75% required a committee interview as part of their admissions procedure and 25% evaluated GRE scores. Among those surveyed, 13% did not respond or declined to answer this question.

Other criteria used as part of the admissions process:

- CBEST;

- CSET;

- Certificate of Clearance;

- Experience with children;

- Values of conscience, compassion and competency;

- Commitment to social justice.

Aside from the required California state exams (CBEST and CSET), Certificate of Clearance was also required during the admissions phase. The Certificate of Clearance is a background check for all teacher candidates. Experience working and/or volunteering with children was also stated in the survey responses. Some survey participants also mentioned that it would be helpful to demonstrate compassion, and competency through personal statements, recommendation letters, and/or interviews.

Issues or concerns related to graduate admissions:

- CBEST should be taken before admissions;

- Passing both CBEST and CSET before admissions;

- Statement of philosophy or concept that has led the applicant to the teaching field;

- Challenges in evaluating candidate's disposition;

- Aligning social justice to the program;

- Do they know their content?

- Are they good communicators?

- Do they have a confident "presence?"

When asked if there were any issues or concerns in regard to admissions at their respective institutions, survey participants felt that taking or passing the CBEST would be helpful in the process of determining qualified applicants for the program. It would also be advantageous to have passed or taken the CSET before or during the admissions phase because of its level of difficulty in all subject areas. This can also show to some degree mastery of the chosen subject area. Although personal statements illustrated reasons an applicant has decided to pursue a teaching program, not all institutions emphasized this as part of their essay prompt. An indistinctive essay prompt that does not address specific reasons for entering the educational field in addition to poor writing and grammatical skills can be a great challenge for an admissions department. Survey participants would like to see an alignment between social justice and education when reviewing applications. Improving the process would then uncover content knowledge, communication skills, and behavioral traits, which would include an applicant's confidence in potentially excelling academically and professionally in the field.

The current measures demonstrated the similarities and differences on how each educational institution functions at the graduate admissions level. Most survey participants used both CVs and NVCs, with the exception of 13% who did not use any of NCVs defined by Sedlacek. Understanding the current measures implemented in admissions procedures and identifying key issues or concerns that are addressed can cultivate ideas that can help improve an existing process.

Follow-Up Interviews

Of the 16 individuals who responded to the survey, 12 were selected for the interview phase. Among the 12 participants, seven agreed to participate in the face-to-face interview phase of this study. The interviewees were employees at six different private educational institutions in

the state of California. The roles of the interviewees varied from associate dean of enrollment

and marketing to admission counselors for the graduate teaching credential program at their

respective institutions. Each interviewee was asked 11 questions pertaining to the admissions

process at their university. Appendix H contains a list of questions asked during each interview.

Table 7 shows the role of each interviewee in graduate admissions.

Table 7

Occupations

Interviewee Occupation	Interviewee Identifier
Assistant Dean, Enrollment and Marketing	19
Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions	58
Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions	59
Director of Bilingual Education	06
Enrollment Services Officer	62
Graduate Enrollment Counselor	54
Graduate Enrollment Counselor	55

The responses to these questions provided detailed information about the admissions

processes, understanding of NCVs according to Sedlacek's definition, to what extend NCVs

were utilized as part of the admissions decision making, and the correlation of NCVs as

predictors of academic and professional success. Although there were variances in the answers

given regarding admission procedures and policies at each educational institution, there were

also strong commonalities in the positive use of NCVs and the significance it had on determining

qualified teacher candidates.

There were a number of factors in defining success in a graduate teaching credential

program and the teaching profession. Generally, success in many graduate programs has been

primarily determined by a student's GPA and test scores in most educational institutions. In a

graduate teaching credential program, obtaining a high GPA and passing teaching entrance

exams such as CBEST and CSET are good indicators on how a student will perform

academically and the level of content knowledge level prior to the start of the program. There were additional predicators, which have included personal traits and behavioral qualities that can determine overall success academically, but more so professionally.

Receiving high marks in test scores and exams could help predict how well a student will perform in a graduate program. It demonstrated that the applicant has the capability in handling the work load and comprehension while in a teaching program. As interviewee 06 stated, "The CBEST, the GPA, those are important because obviously we want to make sure that we have those basic skills and that we have people that are qualified." For an applicant to excel in the graduate teaching credential program, basic skills were needed. In order to become an effective educator, a teacher candidate must be able to have extensive knowledge in his or her subject area. Interviewee 55 cited, "You have the CSET, which is really challenging and the CBEST.…I think that in itself already weeds out students…being knowledgeable in your subject area." Content knowledge in any program is a significant factor in academic success. The ability to write, solve problems, analyze, and comprehend classroom material in a graduate program are all part of the potential success of the applicant as a student and future educator.

In a profession such as teaching, other behavioral qualities were regarded valuable in comparison to numerical CVs. Making a formative decision on an applicant using NCVs during the admissions phase can have a significant correlation to the potential success in the program and profession.

As the researcher conducted interviews with the seven selected participants, there were similarities in what was considered essential in predicting success academically and professionally. As Interviewee 55 stated:

> I think that, more important than GPA or how they did in their bachelor's degree, is how good of a teacher are they going to be. Is this person going to make a difference for these kids' lives? Are they going to be quality teacher that we want teaching in our community? I think especially in the teaching field that is way more important than their GPA that they got in their Bachelor's degree.

A number of questions would come to mind when making an admissions decision on a potential applicant. Key qualities such as a sincerity to make an impact in the lives of children and the community as well as a passion to make a difference in society were crucial implications of a candidate who had an aptitude to become a successful teacher. Interviewee 06 also shared similar sentiments on what it took for a graduate candidate to excel in the teaching profession:

> I would say a commitment to children, commitment to social justice…Why are they really teaching? Sometimes you get people that are doing it because they don't know what else to do. I always think about my own kids and think about, 'Would I want this person to be my daughter's teacher'?

Predictors of success are not necessarily how well a prospective applicant did academically as an undergraduate student or if he or she scored high marks in an entrance exam, although this has been helpful information. Success was more so found in the behavioral traits and qualities on how the candidate sees the world through the lens of an educator, according to the interviewees. As a highly effective teacher, a teaching candidate should have an innate feeling to want to help and improve society by providing the best education in the classroom. The idea of commitment to social justice was also prevalent in answers provided by surveys and interviews. A teacher candidate who possesses communication skills and empathy was mentioned as well as flexibility. Interviewee 54 stated that the teaching profession is a "relational

career." Creating and building relationships were essential in developing a trusting environment for teacher and students. Interviewee 54 stated:

> I think especially for the teaching field, because it's a relational career. You have to be able to talk to people, and have relationships, and have empathy for your students and things like that. There are almost way more important than how knowledgeable you are.

The ability to connect and effectively communicate with others was another important trait that was imperative to becoming a successful student and future teacher.

To determine particular qualities that predict academic and professional success, recommendation letters provided insight on an applicant's relational skills with others. It gave an outside perspective on the applicant that could not be found in a personal statement or in the interview process. Interviewee 59 stated:

> When we are looking at academic references, they really want to see strong faculty members who have spoken on behalf of the student. Are they invested in them? Have they mentored them? Did the student get good grades? Did the student volunteer in the class?

The questions that interviewee 59 mentioned were critical when trying to determine how an applicant interacted with other peers and professionals. Were they helpful and wanted to contribute? How do they work with other students in the classroom? These questions bring to light an applicant's characteristics and traits in a social setting. Having the ability to collaborate, communicate, and be supportive are additional indicators of potential success in a graduate teaching credential program and teaching profession. Knowledge in the field is essential, but there are additional factors that must be taken into consideration. All interviewees agreed that NCVs found in personal statements, recommendation letters, committee interviews, and personal

one-on-one interactions with the applicant were crucial in the selection process. Reviewing an applicant holistically (CVs and NCVs) can produce a better outcome when selecting the best candidates for the program.

Admissions Strategies

The admissions strategies used within each private institution had very similar processes. All interviewees mentioned that they reviewed an applicant's GPA, test scores (if taken during the admissions phase), personal statements, and recommendation letters. Out of the seven interviewees, four did not make the final decision but had input on applicants who were eligible for an interview with the department committee. Three of the interviewees were part of making the final decision on all applicants for the graduate teaching credential program. Admission strategies included the applicant meeting the minimum GPA (varied at each institution) requirement and test scores (if applicable). The applicant must have demonstrated writing skills through his or her personal statement and have the ability to communicate effectively and convey their reasons for entering a teaching program when interviewed. Recommendation letters provide additional information for the admissions department to learn more about the applicant that may not otherwise be revealed through the personal statement, short essays, or interviews.

Each private institution also had different methods when evaluating applicants. Two interviewees stated that they use their intuition while others rely on rubrics that identified integrity, flexibility, patience, and other ideal qualities as a teacher. Interviewee 06 explained that it's "not an official admissions policy," but also she goes "with [her] gut when admitting." She included that she preferred group interviews with other applicants compared to one-on-one interviews with faculty. "It gives us so much more information. Not just about them as a person, but then also how they are as an academic because they read those articles and then they talk

about them and they analyze them." Interviewee 06 was the only participant who used peer group interviews and article discussions as part of the admissions process. Interviewees 54, 55, and 59 used specific rubrics as a means to determine behavioral evidence and performance levels. Interviewee 55 stated, "We do have these rubrics where we are looking at those non-cognitive variables and so that is important and people are more than just their GPA and test scores." Interviewee 54 and 55 used a noble character rubric, which specifically measured honor, spirit of harmony and collaboration, reflective learner, and professional and positive perseverance. They also used a rubric for writing and interview mechanics. Interviewee 59 used reference forms requested from three recommenders that provided a rubric system in measuring an applicant's characteristics. Interviewee 59 was the only participant who required three recommendation letters rather than the traditional two letters that are frequently asked at all other private institutions.

Personal statements were also examined differently from each institution. Interviewee 62 closely analyzed personal statements before an application is submitted to the program director for a final decision:

> I personally like to read those personal statements and see if it's put together, it has a flow from start to finish, why they are looking to be in education. Are there grammatical errors? They really need to express why they want to go into education, why they want to impact students. I think that's important.

All interviewees agreed that reviewing personal statements were fundamental in learning more about applicants and their intentions for wanting to be a future educator. Although all interviewees required a personal statement, Interviewee 58 required two essays: a Christian testimony and vocational objective essay:

We do feel like being professing Christians and having them grow, not just in their

excellence and expertise in being able to be confident teachers and excellent teachers, but

also Christians who are committed to the Lord but also want to make a difference.

In addition, Interviewee 58 required two recommendation letters that had to come specifically

from a pastor and professor. Although some of the interviewees worked at a faith-based

educational institution, only Interviewee 58 highly stressed the significant importance of a

student's alignment with the university's Christian mission and values.

The slight differences in making an admissions decision may appear inconsequential

when comparing university processes, but they can have a vital impact when selecting highly

qualified candidates. The application methodology from the six educational institutions had

variances in development of admissions strategies in streamlining the application and candidate

selection processes. These slight differences are what can set apart the quality of applicants who

are admitted into teaching programs.

Although all interviewees have agreed that their current admissions process has been

successful, they also believed that there can be improvements in particular areas to help

streamline admissions department. Interviewees saw the need for change in staff-faculty

collaboration, technology, admission orientations, recommendation requirements, and

completion of CBEST and CSET.

Table 8 shows recommendations for improvement in an admissions department. The

responses were problems or concerns that need improvement to create a more streamlined

process in admissions.

Table 8

Recommendations

Interviewee	Recommendations for Improvement
06	"I would like to be able to do group interviews more, which is hard." "You could probably do a lot more individualized attention and recruiting if you had more time, which is hard to do."
19	"I think more orientation on the front end to the applicant about the CCTC requirements, how to understand those, and how the local districts are hiring."
54	"Things could be more high speed, technologically. Because we are a small private school, there's systems in place that may not be up to date."
55	"…I think that our input could definitely be beneficial (decision made at department level not admissions). There are students that I meet with where it's like, 'Hmmm, see you as a teacher, I don't know how that's going to work."
58	"…as far as what would change if we did go from one instead of two [recommendation letters] that would be okay…maybe we could ask one paragraph question instead of having two essays."
59	"I think I would probably require two references instead of three. Three references can be a little redundant and usually, you can get two people who can really speak to your character."
62	"I would love to see them be a little bit more selective because I think education is huge as I have three children myself, and I really think that there shouldn't be a lot of leniency in the process in terms of accepting marginal applicants."

The definition of NCVs varied from the six institutions. The understanding of NCVs and how they were used in the admissions process was broad, ambiguous, and loosely defined. There was no definitive answer but rather a general understanding. It was implicitly defined as variables that were different from GPA and test scores. All responses varied but shared the same concept that NCVs were behavioral characteristics. NCVs were classified as a culmination of character traits rather than a specific definition as illustrated in Sedlacek's theoretical framework of NCVs. The interviewees were not familiar with Sedlacek's definition of NCVs but provided their own interpretations.

NCVs as defined by interviewees:

- character;

- external;

- self-reflection;

- self-awareness;

- psychological process;

- subjective;

- impression of individual.

Although the definitions provided by interviewees were limited, most agreed that NCVs were one of the most important factors in the decision-making process. Interviewee 19 stated, "I think [the use of NCVs] is the ideal approach. Think it's the best…Probably, one of the best approaches."

All interviewees understood the important role of NCVs in comparison to GPA and tests scores. Interviewee 19 stated:

> [NCVs] would be especially helpful for advising someone who's coming into the teaching profession because these are the same variables that they'll be using frequently to evaluate students, to invoke students, to motivate students.…I think it plays an important role in self-reflection, self-awareness, in different roles that we as individuals play, but also to motive students and serve students.

Interviewee 30 stated that NCVS identified in the admissions process and during graduate classroom experiences were the same NCVs that would be needed once a student becomes a teacher. NCVs are essential traits that can have a positive impact, which can be passed down from teacher to student. These qualities can distinctly differentiate an applicant from other.

For Interviewee 58, NCVs were examined in the required Christian testimony essay. The institution required two essays, which included a personal statement. When reviewing applicants, Interviewee 58 reviewed the Christian testimony to see if "Christian principles" were integrated

in the essay. In addition to personal statements, NCVs were positive traits that could be found in essays that were faith-driven. The idea of helping, empathy, educating, and nurturing are all teachings in Christianity. The personal statement can provide NCVs as well, but the Christian testimony, according to Interviewee 58, can reveal a deeper level of commitment and passion.

The overall definition of NCVs and understanding Sedlacek's framework was not fully clear when conducting the interviews, but there was a universal understanding of its importance in graduate admissions. Interviewee 59 stated, "Because if we're just judging off those [cognitive] variables, a lot of times you miss specific things about a student that make that student unique." According to Interviewee 59, the quality and uniqueness of an applicant was more prevalent through the use of NCVs. Incorporating NCVs "creates a better process" and thus, "better candidates."

Incorporating a holistic approach in admissions was considered to be an ideal method. Reviewing an applicant solely on NCVs or CVs would only present partial information about an applicant. Good grades and test scores can dictate the potential academic achievement in graduate school while NCVs can predict both academic as well as long-term professional success.

For all interviewees, NCVs carried more value in regard to long-term success in the teaching field, but GPA and test scores could not be discounted because they were also useful in terms of cognitive variables, which determined the applicant's comparative thinking structures, symbolic representation structures, and logical reasoning structures that are conducive in how well the student will excel in a graduate program (Garner, 2007).

The use of both NCVs and CVs provided a detailed picture of the overall applicant. As Interviewee 06 explained, "We're very focused on the support of the student and it matters. We believe in the education of the whole person and the whole person really is what's important."

Focusing on particular admissions requirements while neglecting other important aspects only limited the types of students admitted into the program. There were applicants who did poorly while completing undergraduate course work and others who were not the best test takers. NCVs balanced the strengths and weaknesses of applicants. It also helped applicants who were from marginalized populations receive a fair opportunity to enter the profession. Interviewee 19 stated:

> There's a push to get more Latino, and first generation, and African American people into the profession. I think it's very important to have a holistic approach to admissions, because a lot of those students are coming from marginalized populations where they had hurdles in their undergrad experience.

> Challenges and experiences shape an individual's character. These were all parts of developing traits identified through NCVs. It was another facet of an applicant that was recognized through personal statements, recommendation letters, interviews, and possibly other admissions criteria utilized. According to the interviewees, CVs and NCVs (holistic admissions) were imperative in selecting the best candidate for a graduate teaching credential program. Interviewee 62 stated:

> I honestly think the personal statement means the most to me because a GPA can be a compost in varying degrees at different schools depending on the difficulty of the school, but how they present themselves on paper and their reasons for wanting to go into education, I think those are very important.

It was also important to be mindful that although CVs were arguably considered central to the decision-making process for most graduate programs, NCVs played a vital role, especially in public service fields where behavioral qualities and traits are conducive to the overall success or failure within a profession.

Chapter Summary

The research conducted for this dissertation offered significant findings on the admission processes in private educational institutions. It was insightful to learn that although each institution presented similar basic requirements for the admissions process, there were key differences in determining and defining NCVs. Each institution also approached the decision-making process differently, whether additional criteria were implemented or if decisions were made at the admissions or department level. It was evident that NCVs were considered significantly valuable in comparison to CVs, but both were needed in order to select effectively qualified teacher candidates for the programs. There were strengths in implementing a process that considered both CVs and NCVs because these capture the subjective and objectivity of each applicant. Although NCVs were regarded highly important, definitions to these variables were broad and ambiguous, which can challenge an admissions department in identifying these specific variables. By developing a holistic approach in the admissions decision-making process, specifically defining what NCVs mean, a system that can help identify these variables can produce a much higher probability in predicting academic and professional success in the teaching field.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter Overview

Key findings from the data are discussed in this chapter. The measures implemented in a graduate admissions department have a great impact on selecting candidates for a graduate teaching credential program. The use of NCVs plays an important role by determining qualities that CVs cannot define. This study explores the use of NCVs as part of a holistic approach in determining the future academic and professional success in the teaching field. The research question asked, To what extent might current measures for selecting teaching credential candidates at the Master's level in California be effective predictors of success in the program and in the profession?

A qualitative research approach was used in this study that included surveys and interviews. The data provided significant details regarding the extent to which NCVs are part of a holistic admissions process in selecting qualified teacher candidates. This chapter includes conclusions, implications for practice, an evaluation of the study, and recommendations for further research.

Discussion of Key Findings

Analysis of the data is organized according to the three sub-questions that were presented in Chapter 1:

1. What admissions strategies (cognitive and noncognitive) are currently utilized in making an admissions decision for graduate teaching credential programs in private institutions of higher education?

2. To what extent is there is a difference in the quality of students admitted when implementing a holistic approach as opposed to using only cognitive variables in the decision-making process?

3. What recommendations can be proposed for admission administrators for the development of a streamlined practice in the selection of candidates?

Admissions Strategies

In this study, the researcher explored strategies (cognitive and noncognitive) that are currently utilized in making admissions decisions for graduate teaching credential programs in private institutions of higher education. After analyzing the survey data, all (100%) subjects used the general admissions criteria, which included GPA, personal statement, letter of recommendations, and committee interviews. A limited number of subjects (13%) required the GRE. For most subjects, the GRE was of no significant value in the admissions-decision process. The CBEST and CSET were essential requirements, but there were differences in the time frame in which they were received. An applicant who passed or attempted to take the CBEST before admissions was a requirement for some institutions while others requested it after the application process. Generally, the CSET was taken after a decision has been made during the admissions phase, but it was optional for an applicant to submit their results during the application process.

Additional admissions criteria varied from each institution. Only one institution required a third recommendation letter and only one institution required a Christian testimony. These two requirements were categorized as materials that could identify NCVs. GPA, CSET, and CBEST determined CVs while NCVs were found in personal statements, recommendation letters, and committee interviews.

A Holistic Approach

From the survey responses, the researcher examined potential differences regarding the quality of students admitted to graduate teaching credential programs when a holistic approach is implemented. The results from this study showed the extensive use of NCVs as part of a holistic approach. Answers received from 16 subjects determined that their understanding of NCVs was limited to what was initially expected when compared to Sedlacek's NCVs. The results showed that particular NCVs had significant importance in admissions in comparison to other variables and not all NCVs were utilized as part of the review process. There was a unanimous agreement that NCVs played an important role in decision making. Identifying these NCVs can affect the quality of students admitted to the institution. Thus, there was a higher probability of success in academic and profession if NCVs were identified early in the admissions process.

Based on the survey, all but three subjects used both NCVs and CVs in their decision-making process. NCVs and CVs provided different perspectives when examining the overall applicant. GPA, CSET, and CBEST assessed the "aptitude of verbal, numerical, and abstract reasoning" (Kyllonen et al., 2005, p. 175) of applicants. If an applicant received low marks in CVs, there was a probability that the applicant would have difficulty academically, but not necessarily professionally. Interviewee 54 stated, "You can't just put somebody here with a 2.0 GPA that has not shown any signs of improvement, or any sort of commitment. Then they can lower the whole school's GPA." Personal statements, recommendation letters, and committee interviews were used to assess NCVs. The NCVs that the subjects largely examined (based on Sedlacek's NCVs) were Positive Self-Concept, Community Involvement, and Realistic Self-Appraisal. These NCVs were significant compared to other variables (63% Positive Self-Concept, 63% Community Involvement, 50% Realistic Self-Appraisal). When the participants were asked

to define these variables, there were a number of variances. Positive Self-Concept, for example, was defined as the following:

- positive outlook in life;

- overcoming obstacles and challenges;

- ready to change lives;

- motivate others and foster safe learning environment;

- sense of capacity to succeed.

Personal Self-Concept had more than one definition but there was not a central definitive answer. This was the same for other NCVs. When interviewees were asked which NCVs were used in admissions and the differences in the quality of applicants selected when compared to CVs, seven characteristics were summarized from these results:

- character;

- external;

- self-reflection;

- self-awareness;

- psychological process;

- subjective;

- impression of individual.

The interviewees' answers indicated discrepancies in understanding Sedlacek's NCVs and the meaning of NCVs in general. The interviewees' definition and comprehension of NCVs were broad and vague. Interviewees 54 and 55 had a specific rubric in recognizing behavioral traits that were used during the interview process, but both participants were not involved in the final decision-making phase. However, Interviewees 54 and 55 reviewed applications and

provided recommendations to the department committee about which applicant should be interviewed. Interviewee 59 used a reference guide for recommenders to fill out. Interviewee 59 stated, "All the references are supposed to fill out a reference form, and on the reference form we try to get those noncognitive variables." The behavioral traits presented in the reference forms may be different in comparison to the committee interview rubric. The interview committee in University A perhaps had a list of characteristics that was not presented in the reference form in University B. When making a final decision on an applicant in University A and University B, they could have potentially focused on different character traits.

Some interviewees were unsure on how to define NCVs in their admissions process. As Interviewee 55 stated, "I understood it [NCVs] as character.…Who is a person beyond their grades? I guess their character and how they carry themselves. That's how I understood it." Interviewee 55 acknowledged that NCVs were associated with character traits. However, it was unclear on the specific NCVs used in identifying qualified applicants in Interviewee 55's institution. Interviewee 06 concluded, "I haven't ever studied anything about noncognitive variables in terms of admissions…Would they be external things? Things that don't have to do with the way their mind works or their thinking or their grades." It was evident that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding of the term NCVs. During the survey phase, the interviewees were presented eight NCVs as defined by Sedlacek. Later in the interview phase, they were asked again about the use of NCVs in their admissions process, but not one interviewee mentioned any specific definition. Answers such as "subjective," "external," and "psychological process" were their understanding of NCVs.

Overall, the interviewees did believe that NCVs were an important factor in the admissions process. Encompassing the use of CVs and NCVs in a holistic approach was ideal. A

holistic admissions process can provide more detailed information about the overall applicants and their future potential success in the educational field. Interviewee 55 stated, "I think it would just ensure that we're sending out good candidates. Good people to go out and be good teachers." There was evidence that NCVs and the use of a holistic process can help decision makers identify qualified candidates who can successfully complete the graduate program and become effective future teachers. Although all interviewees understood that NCVs correlated to personality and behavior traits, it was concerning that specifically defining NCVs was ambiguous. If the definitions of NCVs were broad and vague, then there was a possibility that particular traits, which could have a strong impact, may not have been considered in certain admissions criteria but were greatly emphasized in other institutions.

A Streamlined Practice

Based on the results from the survey and interviews, a streamlined admissions practice helps to improve the selection process of teacher candidates. Interviewees identified five issues that needed improvement in the process.

- Include group interviews;

- update technology;

- provide an efficient orientation during the admissions phase;

- improve communication between admissions department and faculty (decision makers);

- become more selective in the process.

Rather than have committee interviews, one option was to integrate peer group interviews. The interaction during a committee interview (faculty, Director of Admissions, admissions staff) would show different results in comparison to group (all applicants) interviews. Behavioral traits

can change in different environments. Interviewee 06 stated, "It really gives us a different lens into who they are, which we don't get in an individual". In an interview with committee members, the applicant's personality may be projected as more serious and focused. Faculty and administrators will base their decisions on their personal interactions with the applicant. On the other hand, an applicant surrounded with other peers applying to the same program may change his or her behavior in this particular group setting. The applicant may have acted differently in both interview situations.

Technology was another issue in the admission department. The software used in processing applications could produce issues that can have an effect on the overall admissions procedures. Interviewee 19 stated, "Most often, higher business tools are disjointed data points, or disjointed from the CRM, to the application program, to the student information system." Specific admissions software may not have been compatible and some were outdated; therefore, streamlining a process can be difficult. This can cause delays in processing applications, gathering admission requirements, and making final decisions.

Developing an orientation was another suggestion which can benefit students and admissions. Interviewee 19 stated, "I think it's important that applicants go into it a little bit more well-versed.…The laws and policies in California commission changes things on an ongoing basis." The orientation would include current state policies on obtaining a teaching credential. Understanding what it means to become a good teacher and the academic expectations within the program could help determine if the teaching profession was the right fit for the applicant. State policies and procedures (for example, California Certificate of Clearance) would be presented in the orientation to help guide applicants through the admission phase.

Communication between admissions and the educational department was another problem that needed to be addressed. While some institutions make final decisions at the admissions level, other institutions ask the education department to make all admissions decisions. There were variances in communication strategies between the applicant and the admissions department compared to the interaction with faculty. Faculty and the admissions department may have differences in opinion in relation to decision-making in the admissions process. Interviewee 54 stated, "Maybe I would like the faculty to ask more input from us." Developing an efficient communication flow between the two departments can help in making better decisions about applicants. Lack of communication tends to affect the quality of applicants entering the program. The interaction with the admissions department may be negative, but in a committee interview, the faculty might have had a pleasant experience with the applicant. The selection process differs between admission departments at the universities in this study, although in most cases, applicants are expected to meet the admissions requirements standards. Interviewee 62 stated:

> I would love to see them be a little bit more selective because I think education is huge, as I have three children myself, and I really think that there shouldn't be a lot of leniency in the process in terms of accepting marginal applicants.

An enormous responsibility is placed on staff in admissions departments for the selection of applicants to graduate teaching credential programs.

Conclusions

From this study, two conclusions may be drawn:

1. NCVs are an integral part of a holistic approach to graduate admissions.

   According to interview data, compassion, motivation, and positivity were nouns

used to describe the qualities of an excellent educator. An inclusive admissions process can capture a holistic picture of an individual (personality, traits, reasoning, logical way of thinking). Interviewee 59 stated:

> I think I prefer an overall holistic review, and that's why I think that the interview is so important for every student. Because if we're just judging off those variables, a lot of times you miss specific things about a student that make that student unique.

2. The use of NCVs in the admissions processes for graduate teaching credential programs is inconsistent across the state of California. Responses from the interviewees indicated that integration of NCVs varies according to faculty, staff members, and university admissions policies. Wider acceptance of the significance of NCVs can be used to build a more systemic approach to admissions.

The researcher has therefore determined that decisions based purely on cognitive variables in the selection of teaching credential candidates at the graduate level can be detrimental not only to the education workforce but also to children in the school system.

Implications for Practice

Although there was some understanding of the definitions of NCVs, there was not a specific set of variables that all interviewees shared in terms of character and behavioral traits of an effective teacher. It would benefit an admissions department for a graduate teaching credential program to have a standardized set of NCVs. Each private institution in this study had their own definition of NCVs, of which some overlapped with others. Having no distinctive set of NCVs would then influence graduate admissions to selectively pick their own NCVs that worked best

for department and institution. Thus, qualities in one institution would vary from another institution, and the results of selected applicants can vary.

Creating a set of NCVs specifically for a graduate teaching credential program can be used at all admission departments. If institutions across California used the same set of NCVs, then all institutions would look for similar qualities. Ideally, these characteristics would be aligned with definitions of effective teachers (Harris & Sass, 2010) and the teaching performance expectations. The following list identifies these qualities (Harris & Sass, 2010):

- Qualities of effective teachers:
  - commitment and determination;
  - enthusiasm, passion, and attitude;
  - sensitivity;
  - flexibility;
  - creativity;
  - open communication;
  - organizational skills;
  - skills and knowledge;
  - management skills;
  - adaptability to diversity.
- California TPEs:
  - making subject matter comprehensible to students;
  - assessing student learning;
  - engaging and supporting students in learning;
  - planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students;

- o creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning;

- o developing as a professional educator.

Incorporating the concepts listed by Harris and Sass (2010), the California TPEs, and more than 30 years of Sedlacek's extensive research on NCVs, a modification of Sedlacek's framework has been created to help identify qualified applicants in the admissions phase, specifically for a teaching credential program. The Agatep model (Admissions NCVs for Future Educators) is one approach to assess graduate applicants for the teaching profession:

Agatep Model (Admissions NCVs for Future Educators)

1. Emotional Intelligence

    a. Be able to manage own emotions and emotions of others.

    b. Empathize, motivate, influence, and inspire.

    c. Have a deeper understanding of self and its effect on others.

    d. Perceive self and surroundings.

2. Nurture

    a. Be able to support and foster relationships.

    b. Create a caring and encouraging environment.

    c. Express compassion and understanding to the needs of others.

    d. Have patience to work with others.

    e. Cultivate and empower personal growth.

3. Social Justice

    a. Have a desire to improve society.

    b. Feel a sense of purpose and have an open-mind.

    c. Make a difference in the community.

4. Innovation

    a. Be able to develop new ideas, concepts, and insights.

    b. Be creative, inquisitive, and think outside the box.

5. Environmental Diversity

    a. Recognize and accept diversity.

    b. Be sensitive and non-judgmental.

6. Positive Attitude

    a. Demonstrate enthusiasm, excitement, and passion for teaching.

    b. Have an optimistic view on life.

7. Communication Skills

    a. Be able to listen carefully.

    b. Express ideas in verbal and written form.

8. Initiative

    a. Have the confidence to lead and take action.

    b. Show commitment and perseverance.

Agatep's model is an extension of Sedlacek's definition of NCVs. California TPE and the definition of qualities of effective teachers (according to Harris & Sass, 2010) were incorporated in developing a modified version of NCVs for educators. Sedlacek's framework provided a generalized understanding of NCVs that can be used in many admissions processes for various programs. Agatep's framework was developed as a means to modify NCVs as they relate to potential future teacher success. If a standardized form of NCVs focusing on teacher education were used at all institutions, then the admissions departments would be able to identify the exact

same traits and qualities that define an effective teacher. This would eliminate any ambiguity and obscurity when defining NCVs.

It would also benefit institutions to implement admissions workshops for the admissions department and faculty members who make final decisions. It appeared admissions staff had difficulty communicating with faculty. The admissions staff believed that their input regarding an applicant should be considered when faculty interview applicants. Creating admissions workshops could effectively help in developing better communication between the admissions staff and faculty. This would greatly help in better streamlining the process and improve the selectivity of qualified candidates. Workshops should be provided before school terms begin. If there were any changes to the admission processes, this should also be addressed in these workshops. Communication is one of the many key factors that are critical in the success of an admissions department.

Evaluation of the Study

This study primarily focused on private educational institutions in the state of California that offered teaching credential programs. The small sample in this study provided valuable information about what private institutions implemented in graduate admissions, but it could not represent all educational institutions in the state of California. The admissions process in private institutions may have a different policy compared to institutions that were not part of this study. If the study included public institutions, the results would have been profound by providing a much larger sample, but the outcome would also be different. Involving public institutions would afford a much larger response rate that could offer insightful information about the similarities and differences between private and public education institutions. It would be advantageous if the study expanded throughout United States. Significant results from all educational institutions

can help further expand the knowledge of NCVs and their relation to a holistic admissions approach in graduate programs. Conducting this study during different times of the year would have possibly provided a much larger sample for this study. It was anticipated that 10 subjects would be interviewed, but only seven subjects agreed to an interview. The research was conducted during one of the busiest times for admissions. This may have potentially affected the number of samples in this study. Conducting research during the least busy season for admissions, such as summer, could result in the number of samples likely increasing.

Recommendations for Further Research

Aside from teaching credential programs, staff in other graduate professional programs could learn from having a study conducted on the use of NCVs. Admissions departments focusing on programs that lead to professions in public services (i.e., Social Work, Law, Political Science) can benefit from future research of the use of NCVs as part of a holistic admissions approach in selecting quality students. It would also be noteworthy to include undergraduate programs that also lead to public service professions. It would be interesting to see the various results if a study were conducted on programs where character and behavioral traits could have an effect on future professions. The results from other graduate and undergraduate programs could also be compared to this study for finding better solutions on how institutions select students in the admissions department. Future research could explore the differences and similarities among the admission procedures, policies, and decision-making.

Chapter Summary

The use of a holistic approach in admissions decision-making process has shown that it can predict academic and professional success in the educational field. NCVs have been indispensable tools when identifying key characteristics that define an excellent teacher. To help

improve a part of the educational system, it is critical to learn how to distinguish and define the many differences between a good and bad teacher. If these qualities can be detected even before an individual becomes a teacher, this can reduce the number of unqualified students from entering a teaching credential program. Education has an impact on society as a whole: children deserve the most effective teachers. An educator, who possesses qualities of compassion, enthusiasm, motivation, and a sincere desire to make a difference, enriches the lives of many children. A positive learning environment contributes to the development and growth of students. A teacher has the power to shape and mold the minds of students and how they see themselves and the world. Determining whether an individual has the qualities to become an effective teacher can be identified before he or she sets foot in a classroom. The admissions departments in educational institutions have the opportunity to support the development of individuals who are aspiring teachers.

A promising future could lie ahead for many students if institutions become familiar with NCVs and learn better ways for identifying exceptional candidates who have the potential to succeed in the teaching profession. To make a positive impact in the classroom, it takes a great teacher who is whole-heartedly committed and determined to ensure that each student receives the best educational experience. The gift of teaching changes lives forever - one student at a time.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH
ACTIVITIES

**Admissions Criteria for the Selection of Graduate Teacher Education Programs:
A Holistic Approach using Non-Cognitive Variables**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Agatep, doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University, because your involvement in the decision-making practices in a private educational institution in the state of California. Before you decide to participate in this study you should read the information below to understand why the research is being done and what the study will involve. Please ask questions about anything that you do not understand. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may decide to discuss participation with your family and friends. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participating in this study at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to examine the use of non-cognitive variables and its influence in graduate admissions decision-making in a graduate teaching credential program within your educational institution and to explore: a) the use of non-cognitive variables in holistic admissions processes to predict academic and professional success of selected candidates in graduate teaching credential programs offered in private educational institutions in the state of

California; b) the extent to which admissions administrators and decision-makers utilize holistic non-cognitive criteria to assess their applicants. This researcher will seek and interview subjects employed in admissions departments who have influence in making decisions on graduate student applications. The researcher will explore to gain a better understanding into the admissions process within your educational institution that utilizes a holistic admissions approach when reviewing applications.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you agree to volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Read the provided interview questions.
2. Sign the informed consent form.
3. Spend approximately 45 minutes in an interview with the researcher (face-to-face or virtual).
4. If face-to-face, then the location will be of your choice. The researcher will meet you at a public location which is convenient for you, Skype, or phone conference.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include no more than minimal risk. Possible risks for participating in the study include but are not limited to:

1. A potential breach of confidentiality. The answers from the interview will be stored in a password protected computer and Gmail account but any material stored electronically could potentially be hacked.
2. Potential risk to reputation or negative self-reflection.
3. Self-Efficacy; boredom or fatigue, recollection of uncomfortable memories or feelings.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATE AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants as this is a qualitative study, your responses will be used as data for a doctoral dissertation focusing on identifying the use of non-cognitive variables in predicting future academic and professional success in the field of

teaching. It is anticipated that this information will support educational institutions in the significant use of non-cognitive variables as part of a holistic approach in admissions decision making.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive $15 Starbucks gift card for your time. You do not have to answer all of the questions in order to receive the card. The card will be given to you at the conclusion of the interview. Participants may request a copy of the final study results.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected by you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

There will be no identifiable information, such as address or driver's license, obtained in connection with this study. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded using a audio recorder. Your name will be replaced with a unique identifier on all documents (field notes, recordings, transcripts). The master list linking your actual name to your unique identifier/pseudonym will be maintained only on the external hard drive of investigator's password protected computer, which only investigator has access to. The hard drive is not backed up to any type of external cloud data storage service.

The principal investigator will interview you and transcribe the data. All audio recordings of the conducted interview will be destroyed and deleted once the information has been

transcribed and read for accuracy. After the interview data is transcribed by investigator, the unique pseudonym ID assigned to each survey participant will continue to be used in lieu of participant's actual name and to avoid identifying information being on the final interview transcripts. The transcribed data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. Upon an initial coding taking place, the data will then be provided to a carefully selected doctoral peer reviewer with similar amount of training and preparation for conducting qualitative research. The data collected will be coded, transcribed and placed into themes for data analysis. The de-identified interview transcripts will be kept for 5 years, at which time they will be destroyed the use of a professional shredding vendor.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating in the study or completing only the responding to the questions which you feel comfortable answering.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury.

INVESTIGATION CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact Jennifer Agatep ███ ████████████████████████ if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, (310) 568-5753; gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

Principal Investigator _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Recruitment Script

Good morning/afternoon _____,

My name is Jennifer Agatep and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am currently working on my dissertation entitled:

"ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF GRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A HOLISTIC APPROACH USING NON-COGNITIVE VARIABLES"

You have been selected on the basis of your responses to the survey to participate in the second phase of this study. I should like to schedule an interview with you. There will be 7 questions that I will ask you in regards to the admissions process within your educational institution.

If you would like to continue to the second phase of this study, I will provide you a Informed Consent Form and additional information on the interview. I will contact you to schedule an interview date, time, and location. Please note that approximately one week before the interview. I will provide you a copy of the interview questions for review

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Warm Regards,

Jennifer Agatep
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP

APPENDIX C

Thank You Script

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral dissertation study for Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology: title of dissertation I look forward to exploring best practices for incorporating non-cognitive variables in a graduate admissions process for a teaching credential program.

I have attached/included an informed consent form which provides more details into the nature of the study. Please know that your participation is completely voluntary and you may opt out of the study at any time. Once you read and agree to the informed consent, please provide your signature (electronic/signed paper document) as your agreement to the terms.

Thank you again for your support of this study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate in calling me at ██████████████████████████████.

Warm Regards,

Jennifer Agatep
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University, GSEP
█████████████████

APPENDIX D

Pilot Study Participant's Responses (Bold-typed)

Survey Questions

1. What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program? **(You might want to offer multiple choice options. It will make your quantitative scoring easier and less subjective.)**

_____

2. How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program? **(You might want to offer a range for scoring purposes – e.g. 0-2 years, 3-5 years, etc.)**

_____

3. Which requirements do you use in the admissions selection process?

   <u>Objective Criteria</u>

   - GPA   YES   NO

   - GRE   YES   NO

   - GMAT   YES   NO

   - MAT   YES   NO

   <u>Subjective Criteria</u>

   - Personal Statements   YES   NO

   - Letters of Recommendations   YES   NO

   - Committee Interviews   YES   NO

4. Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program?

If yes, please provide details below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? *

- Positive self-concept YES NO

- Realistic self-appraisal YES NO

- Successfully handling the system YES NO

- Preference for long-term goals YES NO

- Availability of strong support person YES NO

- Leadership experience YES NO

- Community involvement YES NO

- Knowledge acquired in a field YES NO

6. For the criteria to which you answered YES in item 5 (above), please provide a definition.

- Positive self-concept _____

_____

- Realistic self-appraisal _____

_____

- Successfully handling the system _____

_____

- Preference for long-term goals _____

_____

- Availability of strong support person _____

_____

- Leadership experience _____

_____

- Community involvement _____

_____

- Knowledge acquired in a field _____

_____

7. Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information below.

NAME: _____
PHONE:_____
EMAIL:_____

*These criteria are taken from Sedlacek's framework as outlined in Sedlacek, W.E. (2004). Beyond the Big Test: Noncognitive Assessment in Higher Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

APPENDIX E

Pilot Study Participant's Responses (Bold-typed)

Interview Protocol

All questions are related to the graduate teaching credential program.

1. Tell me about your role in the admissions department.

2. Please describe the decision-making process. (**Need to be more specific – decision making regarding applications or in my role in the admissions department. You asked about the role so people might assume you're asking about the process regarding their role**)

3. What qualities do you look for when making a final decision on an applicant?

4. **If you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities? Also, what tools worked best at each institution?**

5. Which criteria do you prefer to use in your selection process?

6. Why are these requirements important to you?

7. In your opinion, are there any changes you would like to make in the admissions process for graduate teaching credential program at your educational institution?

8. What steps might you take to improve the current admission process at your institution?

9. Tell me what you understand by the use of NCVs? [Refer to survey responses]

10. What impact, if any, might the use of NCVs have on selecting qualified candidate for the program?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add today or anything you would like share?

APPENDIX F

Survey Questions (Final)

1. What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?

    _____

2. How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?

    - 0-5 years   YES   NO

    - 6-10 years   YES   NO

    - 11-15 years   YES   NO

    - 16 +years   YES   NO

3. Which requirements do you use in the admissions selection process?

    Objective Criteria

    - GPA   YES   NO

    - GRE   YES   NO

    - GMAT   YES   NO

    - MAT   YES   NO

    Subjective Criteria

    - Personal Statements   YES   NO

    - Letters of Recommendations   YES   NO

    - Committee Interviews   YES   NO

4. Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program?

If yes, please provide details below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? *

- Positive self-concept   YES   NO
- Realistic self-appraisal   YES   NO
- Successfully handling the system   YES   NO
- Preference for long-term goals   YES   NO
- Availability of strong support person   YES   NO
- Leadership experience   YES   NO
- Community involvement   YES   NO
- Knowledge acquired in a field   YES   NO

6. For the criteria to which you answered YES in item 5 (above), please provide a definition.

- Positive self-concept _____

_____

- Realistic self-appraisal _____

_____

- Successfully handling the system _____

_____

- Preference for long-term goals _____

_____

- Availability of strong support person _____

_____

- Leadership experience _____

_____

- Community involvement _____

_____

- Knowledge acquired in a field _____

_____

7. Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information below.

NAME: _____

PHONE:_____

EMAIL:_____

*These criteria are taken from Sedlacek's framework as outlined in Sedlacek, W.E. (2004). Beyond the Big Test: Noncognitive Assessment in Higher Education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

APPENDIX G

Survey Rubric

Survey # _____

Non-Cognitive Variables (adapted from Sedlacek, 1993, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2011)

Years of Experience	0-5	6-10	11-15	16+

Objective Criteria	Yes	No
GPA		
GRE		
GMAT		
MAT		

Subjective Criteria	Yes	No
Personal Statements		
Recommendation Letters		
Committee Interviews		

Non-Cognitive Variables	Yes (1point)	No (0 point)
Positive Self-Concept		
Realistic Self-Appraisal		
Successfully handling the system		
Preference for long-term goals		
Availability of Strong Support Person		
Leadership Experience		
Community Involvement		
Knowledge acquired in a field		

Score: _____

APPENDIX H

Interview Protocol (Final)

All questions are related to the graduate teaching credential program.

1. Tell me about your role in the admissions department.

2. Please describe the decision-making process in your role in the admissions department.

3. What qualities do you look for when making a final decision on an applicant?

4. If you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities? Also, what tools worked best at each institution?

5. Which criteria do you prefer to use in your selection process?

6. Why are these requirements important to you?

7. In your opinion, are there any changes you would like to make in the admissions process for graduate teaching credential program at your educational institution?

8. What steps might you take to improve the current admission process at your institution?

9. Tell me what you understand by the use of NCVs? [Refer to survey responses]

10. What impact, if any, might the use of NCVs have on selecting qualified candidate for the program?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add today or anything you would like share?

APPENDIX I

Survey Participant #23

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
0%	0/8	9/9	11%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	0	1	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
None

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
Respondent skipped this question

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
Respondent skipped this question

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
Respondent skipped this question

0/8pts
Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
Respondent skipped this question

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
Respondent skipped this question

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
Respondent skipped this question

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX J

Survey Participant #48

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
75%	6/8	1/9	100%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
I oversee the process and am ultimately the final word on an application, tho I typically only "rule" on applicaitons that are outliers

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 16+ years
-

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- Committee Interviews

- Letters of Recommendations
- Personal Statements
- GPA

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
CBEST, CSET, resume, experience working with youth, commitment to social justice
6/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- 3Community involvement1pt

- Availability of strong support person1pt
- Preference for long-term goals1pt
- Successfully handling the system1pt
- Realistic self-appraisal1pt
- Positive self-concept1pt

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
Respondent skipped this question

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
> 1) Do they know their content? 2) Do they embrace the ideals of social justice 3) Are they good communicators 4) Do they have a confident "presence"?
> 2)

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX K

Survey Participant #54

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
25%	2/8	4/9	67%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	1	0	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Enrollment Counselor

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 0-5 years

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA

- Personal Statements

-
- Letters of Recommendations

-
- Committee Interviews

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
Respondent skipped this question
2/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- Positive self-concept1pt

- Successfully handling the system1pt

-
Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
- **Positive self-concept:** We look for candidates who have a positive outlook in life, who are called to be teachers; students who have the characteristics teachers should have

- **Successfully handling the system:** We look for candidates who display traits of perseverance/overcoming challenges

-
Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
No

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX L

Survey Participant #41

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
75%	6/8	1/9	100%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	1	0	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Director of Admissions and Outreach

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 16+ years
-

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA
- GRE
- Personal Statements
- Letters of Recommendations
- Committee Interviews
-

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
Respondent skipped this question
6/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- 3Positive self-concept1pt
- Realistic self-appraisal1pt
- Preference for long-term goals1pt
- Leadership experience1pt
- Community involvement1pt
- Knowledge acquired in a field1pt
-

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
- **Positive self-concept:** Ability to overcome obstacles and challenges

- **Realistic self-appraisal:**Abilty to self reflect in the personal statement
- **Preference for long-term goals:** Addressing goals in personal statement
- **Leadership experience:**Any experience leading/coaching/teaching
- **Community involvement:**Any experience leading/coaching/teaching
- **Knowledge acquired in a field:**Professional or volunteer experience

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
Teaching disposition is reviewed and writing quality

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.

Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX M

Survey Participant #13

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
0%	0/8	9/9	11%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	0	1	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Admissions Coordinator

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 0-5 years

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA

- GRE
- Personal Statements
- Letters of Recommendations
- Committee Interviews

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
CBEST, CSET
0/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
Respondent skipped this question

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
Respondent skipped this question

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
Respondent skipped this question

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX N

Survey Participant #58

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
25%	2/8	4/9	67%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	1	0	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Assistant Director

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 6-10 years

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA

- Personal Statements
- Letters of Recommendations
- Committee Interviews

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
We do require that the CBEST be taken but other then that the items above.
2/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- Realistic self-appraisal1pt

- Preference for long-term goals1pt

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
- **Realistic self-appraisal:** Important that they know who they are in regards to their calling as a teacher

- **Preference for long-term goals:** Understand what their basic goal is of teaching

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
If other programs requiring that the CBEST is taken before an admissions decision is done

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX O

Survey Participant #11

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
25%	2/8	4/9	67%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	1	0	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Director of Graduate Admissions

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 0-5 years

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA

- GRE
- Personal Statements
- Letters of Recommendations
-

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
Writing sample in person
2/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- Leadership experience1pt

- Community involvement1pt

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
- **Leadership experience:** Leadership experience in the community or in classroom setting

- **Community involvement:** Community agency, church involvement, etc.

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
None

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX P

Survey Participant #55

QUIZ SUMMARY

SCORE	POINTS	RANK	PERCENTILE
50%	4/8	3/9	78%

Quiz Results

Correct	Incorrect	Partially Correct	Skipped	Total Questions
0	0	1	0	1

PAGE 1: Graduate Admissions Process Survey

Q1: What is your role in the graduate admissions department for the graduate teaching credential program?
Graduate Enrollment Counselor

Q2: How many years of experience do you have in the field of admissions for the graduate teaching credential program?
- 0-5 years

Q3: Which requirement(s) do you use in the admissions selection process? You may select more than one answer.
- GPA

- Personal Statements
- Letters of Recommendations
- Committee Interviews

Q4: Do you use other criteria as part of your admissions process for the graduate teaching credential program? If yes, please provide details below:
CBEST/CSET scores
4/8pts

Q5: Do you seek any of the following criteria in your applicants for the graduate teaching credential program? You may select more than one answer.
- Positive self-concept1pt

- Realistic self-appraisal1pt
- Preference for long-term goals1pt
- Community involvement1pt

Q6: For the criteria to which you answered in Q5, please provide a definition.
- **Positive self-concept:** Positive attitude and good character

- **Realistic self-appraisal:** Good character
- **Preference for long-term goals:** Interest in teaching and helping others
- **Community involvement:** well-rounded individual

Q7: Are there issues that you would like to discuss that are important to you regarding requirements for the graduate teaching credential program?
Importance of being able to pass the CSET/ other exams that are required by the CTC to earn a teaching credential in CA

Q8: If you are interested in further participating in this research study, please provide your contact information (name, phone, email) below.
Respondent skipped this question

APPENDIX Q

Transcription Interviewee #06

Speaker 1:   Okay. Thank you for meeting with me. As far as the questions, there's 11 questions. The first question I'll ask is tell me about your role in the Admissions Department.

Speaker 2:   Okay. Well I'm not in the Admissions Department. My role is I'm Director of Bilingual Education and Assistant Director of the whole Department of Elementary and Secondary Ed. The way we work in The School of Ed here at University C is that each program does the admissions for their program. We have The School of Ed as its own college within the university and we have an admissions office in The School of Ed. They do things like they get all the paperwork. These are all the admissions files. They get everything and make sure all the documents are there. Once it's complete, they send it over to my office. Then we set up interviews. Then I interview. One of the things I do is admissions, but I really am working more largely in terms of the program or the programs. Everything from syllabi and creating syllabi and building syllabi or changing, revising, signature assignments, working with part-time faculty and the full-time faculty, exit interviews, the whole setting up student teaching. All of that. Anything that has to do with the program I work with and admissions is just one part of that.

Speaker 1:   Okay.

Speaker 2:   Yeah. I don't know if that was ...

Speaker 1:   Yeah. That answered it. Please describe the decision making process in your role in the department.

Speaker 2:   Okay. We have admissions requirements. We want to make sure that they meet all of those first. If they haven't passed the CBEST yet, for instance, then we wait until they've actually given us that before the file even comes to me, except for international students. We make an exception for them. The whole process is really looking at that they're meeting all the requirements. We want to meet the minimum requirements, but then I look at ... It's a little bit different. It's interesting because especially as we move into teacher shortage, we really want to have as many teachers as possible. If they meet all of the requirements, which are still high, but there's actually not so many people that apply that don't meet requirements. Again, it depends on what program. In the just general elementary secondary, we can accept more people. In the bilingual, in the Chinese bilingual, I can only accept 20 per year. We have a cohort of 20 per year, so that'll be a lot harder.

Then what I use to make the decision is the English. The TOEFL score matters a lot. We have students that come from China to get their Chinese bilingual. It's a Mandarin program. Their TOEFL score will matter because they're also getting a credential to teach elementary education. We need them to be fluent in English in order to do that. Then I'll look at TOEFL scores. We interview every single student. The interview is probably the biggest indicator of disposition and fit. Their statement. I think it's a lot of the more personal things. Most people have the GPA. Most people have the test scores, all of that stuff. It's really the statement, the letters of reference and then the interview is huge.

Speaker 1:   Okay.

Speaker 2:   Yeah.

Speaker 1:   What qualities do you look for when making the final decision?

Speaker 2:   Well for the bilingual, the English matters. In terms of personal qualities, it's interesting because we just started a couple years ago trying to do more group interviews. In group interviews, we get to a quality that's harder to get to in an individual interview. In our group interviews, the way we do it is we have usually seven to 10 people and we send them two articles ahead of time to read. Then when they come in, we go in and we ask everybody just two questions about them, about why they're in education and that kind of a thing or why they're wanting to become teachers. Then we leave about 20 to 30 minutes where we ask them to just talk about the two articles. We remove ourselves completely. We don't ask questions. We don't guide them in any way. It's really for them to start up and we're taking the notes the whole time.
It really gives us a different lens into who they are, which you don't get in an individual. In a one on one, they're obviously talking to me. In the group interviews, we really see how did they process the articles that we sent? Some of the information is more culturally sensitive. How are they working with that? How are they talking about that? The disposition matters to us a lot because our program really focuses on social justice. Those types of things matter. Their approach to understanding students with diverse needs or from diverse backgrounds. Their ability to interact with other people. We've had group interviews where one person just keeps cutting people off and dominating and really doing that type of a thing and we've chosen ... Even though everything else looked great on paper, we decided not to admit that person because we felt that ... We have small classes. Our classes are no more than 20. We don't want to have someone that's going to always dominate.

Speaker 1:   Oh, I see. Yeah.

Speaker 2:   That's not an official admissions policy, but we have to also go on our gut when we're admitting. It's rare that something like that happens, but sometimes you really see things like that in a group interview that we don't with individuals, but

we can't always do group because not everyone is always available to come at these specific times. I would say a commitment to children, commitment to social justice and a commitment to ... Why are they really teaching? Sometimes you get people that are doing it because they don't know what else to do. Not that you want to dissuade someone from that, but does that mean that they're actually committed and are going to stay in this? I think you look for that type of ... I don't know. It's often just a gut feeling.

Speaker 1: Okay. If you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities? Also, what tools worked best at each institution?

Speaker 2: Well I came from public ed. This is my first time in higher ed. Before I was a high school teacher, then coordinator, then administrator. It was public, so there was no admissions involved at all. We'd do articulation between the middle school and the high school, that type of thing, but it's not admissions in terms of that we would turn anyone away ever. I think it's probably not applicable to me because I don't have anything to compare to.

Speaker 1: Yeah. Okay. Which criteria do you prefer to use in your selection process?

Speaker 2: You mean go over our different admissions requirements or admissions criteria or ...

Speaker 1: Amongst the admissions criteria, what do you look at more compared to the other criteria?

Speaker 2: That's like I guess what I said. That they meet all the grades, the GPA, the tests, that type of stuff, but then the part that matters to me most is the statement, the references. Everything that talks about that person, who that person is. Their disposition. Those are the things that I feel are most important in terms of ... I always think about my own kids and think about, "Would I want this person to be my daughter's teacher?" I think that matters a lot, which I can say that all of these people I loved. It's very rare that I find someone that I really feel ... Yeah. Their letters of reference, their statement and the interview. Those are probably my three most important. Sometimes people have a lower GPA. We have a 3.0 requirement. Sometimes someone has a 2.5 and we still allow them to apply via what's called exceptions. Then what they have to do is they have to write an additional statement explaining their low GPA and then what they would do differently here in graduate school.
Sometimes if you only look at a number, you don't know what the story is. The most recent one I had, as an undergrad, her mom was diagnosed with cancer and she had to move home and take care of her mom while she was trying to go to school. Then her mom died after nine months and she had to take care of all of that. Her grades and the timeline, we can really see it. She was getting all As in

the first semester and then you could see them going down. Then she had to withdraw. Then after, she pulled it all back together again.

By her junior year, she was doing well again. Yeah, that dropped her GPA down, but there was a very specific reason and she brought it all back up again. To me, the fact that she didn't have the 3.0, we shouldn't turn her away because of that when we know that there's a real story there. Right? Of course ... Could she be making that up? It's possible, but there's no way ... We don't go out and prove that, but I really feel that then you give somebody an opportunity if all the other things are strong. Yeah. It's more about the person, I guess, which usually comes through in the statement, the interview, the letters of reference.

Speaker 1:   You did touch on this, but the next question is why are these requirements important to you?

Speaker 2:   Okay. Well the basic ones, like the CBEST, the GPA, those are important because obviously we want to make sure that we have those basic skills and that we have people that are qualified. In terms of the more personal things, references are important because ... We don't allow friends. We'll get ones that's like, "Oh, I've known her my whole life. I'm her mom's best friend." We don't accept those. We've made it really clear and we'll send those back and say, "You need to get it from either a supervisor or an instructor or something like that." Yeah. They're important because that's what gives us a window into who they are. Then that will lead into, would they be a good teacher?

Speaker 1:   Okay. In your opinion, are there any changes you would like to make in the admissions process for graduate teaching credential program at your educational institution?

Speaker 2:   Well the group interview was a change I made two years ago and I wish we could do all group interviews.

Speaker 1:   Okay.

Speaker 2:   I don't know how we would, but I wish we could because I think it's ... It gives us so much more information. Not just about them as a person, but then also how they are as an academic because they read those articles and then they talk about them and they analyze them. They have to discuss. The way they do it and the way they engage and even what they're ... They're all educational articles. It gives us an idea about how familiar are they with these topics to begin with? It almost would be great, but with resources it's always hard, it would be good to have somebody that really just focused on this. This is one of the things I do, but it's only the beginning. Then it's everything else from scheduling and then supporting all these people once they're in our program.

You could probably do a lot more with individualized attention and recruiting if you had more time, which is hard to do very much recruiting. The recruiting

aspect of it on top of other things. I think the process itself is good and I think the requirements are good. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Okay. What steps might you take to improve the current admissions process?

Speaker 2: Is that different than what I would change?

Speaker 1: It's somewhat similar. I guess number seven is what changes would you make overall and then what specific challenges do you have right now in the admissions?

Speaker 2: Well I guess I don't know. I would like to be able to do group interviews more, which is hard. With the Chinese bilingual, I can't because they're all in China. I do Skype with them. I don't know that I would change anything else right now or I can't think of anything else. I wish I had more time.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: I'm sure everyone working anywhere in higher ed wishes they had more time.

Speaker 1: Yeah, that's true. I agree.

Speaker 2: Or more hands.

Speaker 1: Yeah. The next one is tell me what you understand by the use of non-cognitive variables.

Speaker 2: Well I would think that it's looking at ... I don't know. We don't talk about it. I'm just trying to think. I haven't ever studied anything about non-cognitive variables in terms of admissions. I don't even know. Would it be things that have to do with the student that do not have to do with their cognition, but their ... Would they be external things? Things that don't have to do with the way that their mind works or their thinking or their grades. I don't actually know because I haven't worked with that term.

Speaker 1: Okay. Actually I have breakdowns, so you can take a look at this.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: There's different types of definitions for non-cognitive variables, but my focus is on Sedlacek. He did an expensive research on non-cognitive variables in education and how that can also ... Not just admissions. It can also be a great benefit for student services.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1:   Those are the lists that he has.

Speaker 2:   These are non-cognitive? Like a positive self-concept is non-cognitive?

Speaker 1:   Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2:   Wow. Yes, absolutely. These are all the things that we look for. Yeah, I didn't know they were called non-cognitive variables. That's great. I think it's definitely all of the ... We do leadership experience, community involvement. They're all things that are important and this is what they write about in their statement. They have to write in their statement and then connect it to our conceptual framework. We have this reel it's called and it's talking about advocacy and respect. It's focused on a lot of these things in terms of their work, their community involvement, their approach to themselves, their goals for the future. It's interesting. Yeah.

Speaker 1:   Where did my questions go? Oh, here it is. Next question is what impact if any might the use of non-cognitive variables have on selecting qualified candidates for the program?

Speaker 2:   What impact?

Speaker 1:   If any might the use of non-cognitive variables have on selecting qualified candidates for the program?

Speaker 2:   These are all the things that are part of somebody's disposition in a way, right? You know how we talk about it as disposition. It gets into also a bit like maturity and experience and that type of thing. I would think that if you didn't use this and you didn't look at any of these things, then really all you're looking at is what was their GPA? What was their test score? Those types of things. We don't care about them as a person, which is the exact opposite of what we do. When I say that the things I care about are the interview and the statement and the references, that would be all this stuff. Right?

Speaker 1:   Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2:   Things like the GPA, yeah, we want it to be good but if there's a reason that it isn't, it's not just because they failed because they're lazy and they didn't feel like doing their schoolwork. We may still accept them, but the things that matter are all these types of things. I'd actually say that that's probably what the majority of what we're looking at is. I went to University X both for undergrad and grad. It was a completely different ... It was a full paper application and there was never an interview. There was never anyone talking to me about who I was. You write that two-page statement, but they don't really know who I am. Right?

Speaker 1:   Yeah.

Speaker 2:   I think it's a different process that we do here at University C, which I didn't even know about until I came here. It's probably part of being a private university, I would think. Maybe it's the same at University P. I don't know, but because it's private, because we're very focused on the support of the student and it matters. We believe in the education of the whole person and the whole person really is what's important. This is how you get at that, which GPAs and test scores don't get at. Yeah. I don't know if that answers that.

Speaker 1:   Oh, no. That definitely does answer it. My last question is is there anything else you would like to add today or anything you would like to share?

Speaker 2:   No. I think it's an interesting ... I don't have anything else to add. It's an interesting dissertation topic, though.

Speaker 1:   Okay. Thank you.

Speaker 2:   Yeah.

APPENDIX R

Transcription Interviewee #19

Speaker 1:   Okay. Thank you #19 for meeting with me. I will be asking you 11 question regarding admissions and teaching credential. My first question is tell me about your role in admission's department.

Speaker 2:   My role in the admissions department is to oversee all of the admission operations, ensuring that we're in alignment with all of federal regulations. Also, the admission criteria for the various disciplines and deans that I serve. I also oversee the staff and ensuring that they're in compliance with admission criteria, admission requirements, and they're courting applicants to the process in a personalized manner.

Speaker 1:   Okay. Great. Please describe the decision making process in your role in the admissions department.

Speaker 2:   It varies by program, but specifically to the graduate education programs, my role is to ensure that we are recruiting qualified students that meet the mission and vision of the program and the institution. Also, that there are some hard criteria and soft criteria that we also look for. We also are looking to screen or vet admission ... Or applicants, to ensure that if this institution isn't the right fit, then we help guide them to another ... To ensure that their academic goals are being moved forward.

Speaker 1:   Okay. My next question is what qualities do you look for when making a final decision on an applicant?

Speaker 2:   Whether or not they met the hard criteria. For instance, it would be the CBEST, CSET, some of the graduate level entrance exams, the GPA, from the last 60 of their accumulative undergrad. Reasons why they want to transition to the teaching profession; the statement of purpose. Then, if they haven't a very clear understanding of what ... What we want to make sure that they have a very clear understanding of what student teaching is going to be like and the sacrifices that they're going to have to make to get through that. Also, with the NCLB and all of the ... And orienting them with where the districts are, how they hire, and so there's no surprises at the end.

Speaker 1:   Okay. My next question is if you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities? Also, what tools worked best at each institution?

Speaker 2:   Can you repeat that question one more time?

Speaker 1:   If you have had previous admissions experience at other institutions, can you describe some of the differences and similarities. Also, what tools worked best at each institution?

Speaker 2:   Okay. Let's see, difference ... I would say one of the tools that works best is ... As far as it relates to recruiting students and ensuring that they have a smooth enrollment experience, is making sure that there's less people involved, so that they have a personalized experience. They are being advised in the enrollment process with one, or two at the most, quoting them through to ... From inquiry to admitted.
The other piece of this is the communication flow of what to expect from how to apply, getting them through the individual ... The applicant portal. Helping them upload ... Not helping them upload, but helping them know on the front end of all the documents that are going to be required.
I would say having a personalized experience with one or two at the most points of contact until they have applied where other processes I've observed or other admission practices is they'll have housing, or financial aid, or if their military, the Veterans Affairs. Multiple entities that can become overwhelming. Making sure that the staff, or the enrollment staff member can vet back for them, or help them get through that. That is one practice that I found to be really efficient and it help serve the applicant better.
Also, having the business tools that ... Most often, higher business tools are disjointed data points, or disjointed from the CRM, to the application program, to the student information system. In those types of organizations where the business tools are disjointed and the data is not connected, it's a bumpier experience both for the applicant and for the staff.
Having more connected data systems so that the enrollment funnel and the enrollment experience can be a smoother, almost efficient streamlined process, I think, are organizations that have been more successful both with their recruitment, the enrollment, and then also serving the applicant. I don't know if that's too broad.

Speaker 1:   No. It does answer the question.

Speaker 2:   Okay.

Speaker 1:   Yeah. Which criteria do you prefer to use your selection process?

Speaker 2:   I'd like to do the holistic admissions process, particularly at the graduate level, because, I think adults, they maybe made poor choices or had adverse situations in their undergrad experience. Particularly, for teaching credentials, we want to ... There's a push to get more Latino, and first generation, and African-American people into the profession. I think it's very important to have a holistic approach to admissions, because a lot of those students are coming from marginalized

populations where they had hurdles in their undergrad experience that not everyone ... Disproportionate to other kinds of graduate students.

Allowing for room to evaluate the applicant based on where they are now and not so much from their undergrad experience that could have had a low GPA. I think the gatekeeper, particularly, for teacher credentialing, or education programs is holding the line with the CBEST and the CSET, if they can pass those two graduate requirements on the front end, then the rest ... That would be one hard criteria to consider. If they can pass that, then that would trump the low GPA if they're coming in with a low GPA.

Having flexibility; letting them do, maybe, a non-degree, or out of the class, out of a graduate level class and see if they can keep up with the academic criteria for graduate level class is also an option for them to be admitted.

Speaker 1:   Okay. Why are these requirements important to you?

Speaker 2:   Because I think there's a disproportionate mismatch of the students ... I'm going to speak of California. Nationally, I would think so as well. Particularly, in California, there's a disproportionate number of teachers that come from the populations that the demographic of the students in California are.

I would hope to see that, overtime, graduate education programs can help close that gap so that there's more culturally relevant material being delivered to the student population, to the demographics. There's a whole host of things that we can go into serving English language minority students.

It's important to have that flexibility so that we can begin to close that gap between teachers that are, primarily, of the dominant culture. Then, you have student population that is of a marginalized population.

Speaker 1:   Okay. In your opinion, are there any changes you would like to make in the admissions process for graduate teaching credential program at your educational institution?

Speaker 2:   [inaudible 00:09:17] admission criteria? I don't think so. I think ... No. I don't think there would be change ... I would recommend that most admission selection processes have a rolling admission cycle versus a hard stop traditional admission cycle. I'd say a nontraditional admission cycle serves well. That's what the institution has, and I think I value that versus a traditional enrollment admission cycle.

Speaker 1:   Okay. What steps might you take to improve the current admissions process at your institution? If there's any current situation that you would like improvement on and the question before that as more of a generalized idea.

Speaker 2:   I think more orientation on the front end to the applicant about the CCTC requirements, how to understand those, and how the local districts are hiring. I think it's a lot information for someone to have to consume going into a teacher credential program. I think it's important that applicants go into it a little bit more well-versed than they are as far as how ... The laws and policies in California commission changes things on an ongoing basis.

Being taught that it's up to them to stay in tune with those changes and to begin that practice early so that they're not blindsided, one, in their first year of teaching, because that's where we lose most teachers. Also, they have a successful experience during the credential process, which a lot of times institutions get blamed for these requirements that aren't even ... That are either university requirements, they're state requirements.

Helping the applicant and the population at large understand what's a university requirement versus what's the state requirement. I think there's a lot of ... It needs to be demystified for the average person.

Speaker 1: Okay. Let's see. Tell me what you understand by the use of non-cognitive variables? I have a list so you could take a look at it. It would be these right here and that's based on ... There's a lot of non-cognitive variable definitions, but this is more of Sadlacek. He studied extensively.

Speaker 2: These are non-cognitive variables. Okay. Repeat the question.

Speaker 1: What is your understanding by the use of non-cognitive variables even before looking at the list?

Speaker 2: I think having non-cognitive variables as a practice, as a student, as a professional, and definitely as an admission counselor, or a moment counselor, or as a mentor, whatever the role may be, would be specifically helpful for advising someone who's coming into the teaching profession, because these are the same variables that they'll be using frequently to evaluate students, to invoke students, to motivate students.

I think it plays an important role is self-reflection, self-awareness in the different roles that we as individuals play, but also to motivate students and to serve students. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1: Yup.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Yeah, it totally answered the question. Yes.

Speaker 2: Okay. Sometimes I go on a tangent and I'm like, "Where did I go again?"

Speaker 1: No. You definitely answered the question. What impact, if any, might the use of non-cognitive variables have on selecting qualified candidates for the program?

Speaker 2: Gosh. Using non-cognitive variables I think is the ideal approach. I think it's the best ... Probably, one of the best approaches. I don't want to say it's the one size fits all approach, because there's going to be people that that's not their strength, they've not been oriented. They don't know what that language means. It might be a growth area for them individually.

> You might miss an opportunity, or we might miss an opportunity to make decisions based on how much or how little someone has or is using non-cognitive variables for the admission decision.

Speaker 1:   Okay. The last question is, is there anything else you would like to add today or anything you would like to share?

Speaker 2:   No, I think I'm good.

Speaker 1:   Okay.

Speaker 2:   All right.

Speaker 1:   Thank you so much.

Speaker 2:   Thank you.

APPENDIX S

IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 22, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Jennifer Agatep

Protocol #: 17-01-477

Project Title: ADMISSIONS CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF GRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A HOLISTIC APPROACH USING NON-COGNITIVE VARIABLES

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Jennifer Agatep:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair