



A Phenomenological View of the Effects of COVID-19 on Student Teachers



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Introduction and Purpose

- The student teaching process is critical for the development of SBAE teachers (Harlin et al., 2002).
- On March 19, 2020, the governor of Texas closed all public schools because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Abbott, 2020).
- Student teaching ended for preservice teachers at Texas Tech University.
- The purpose of this study was to determine the effects COVID-19 on preservice teachers at Texas Tech University.

Theoretical Framework

- The student teaching process is important for developing self-efficacy (McKim & Velez, 2017).
- Student teacher self-efficacy starts high at the beginning of the experience, dips to the lowest point during the middle of student teaching, and peaks at the end of student teaching (Roberts et al., 2006).
- By week seven, student teachers start thinking like a teacher rather than a student (Sorensen et al., 2018).
- The theory of teacher concerns states that teachers experience concerns in three stages: self, task, and impact (Fuller & Brown, 1975).
- Student teachers normally experience self-concerns and start to experience task concerns by the middle of student teaching.

Findings

	“The toughest part was one of the seniors was helping us load the trailer because she had taken the day off to travel to Houston with us and after we told her the show was cancelled, it looked like someone had just ran over her dog. This feeling pretty much stuck around the rest of the week.”	Theme 1 Empathy for High School Students							
	“This broke my heart for not only my kids but every kid that would be going or was already there.”								
	“Thursday was the bombshell day. This morning we received our email about student teaching termination of experiences. A lot has changed from this virus spreading, but never did I think it would get to this.”	Theme 2 Disappointment in Ending Student Teaching							
	“Today I got the news that my student teaching experience was over. This was very heartbreaking because there was so much I was looking forward to. I lost my motivation to do work, so I took a day off from it.”								
	“I’m worried I won’t be able to get a job because my certification exam got cancelled and I won’t have full teaching certification.”								
	“I feel like my binder full of stuff to teach in a real job is missing stuff.”	Theme 3 Worry and Loss of Self-Efficacy							
	“I didn’t get to see if I was good at training CDE teams.”								
	Emma		Jennifer		Megan		Kelley		Kristin

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The themes identified in this study show student teachers at Texas Tech University were sad for their students and disappointed in their own situations.
- The group believed they were less prepared for the job because of the shortened experience.
- Through the lens of Fuller and Brown’s (1975) theory of teacher concerns, it can be inferred that student teachers showed signs of thinking in the impact stage while showing concern for their students which usually occurs during the first year of teaching.
- Student teachers reverted to the self-concern stage at the end of their experience.
- COVID-19 altered the order and timing of teacher concerns and lowered self-efficacy.
- We recommend teacher preparation programs develop a plan to provide professional development for first year teachers to help with the effects of COVID-19.
- Further research should determine how teacher preparation programs can help student teachers that experience traumatic events during student teaching.
- A longitudinal study of this cohort across the nation should be conducted to determine impacts of COVID-19 on job placement and retention in the profession.

Methods

- A phenomenological investigation was conducted.
- Five student teachers from the spring 2020 cohort were selected because they all experienced the phenomenon of COVID-19 and had to end student teaching at week 10 of 17.
 - Emma
 - Megan
 - Kelley
 - Kristin
 - Jennifer
- Data were collected through required written reflections and a semi-structured end of semester group interview over Zoom.
- Notes were taken during the interview and it was recorded to compare to written reflections to improve trustworthiness and credibility.
- Themes were identified by the researchers as suggested by Creswell (2012) and reflexive journaling was used to reduce bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

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