

You Are a Teacher First: Content Analysis of Classroom Qualifications on Job Openings in Texas

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Introduction

The teacher shortage is not a new subject when it comes to education and especially not new as it pertains to agricultural education (Moser &McKim, 2020). Since filling positions has become difficult, school districts must be clear about what qualifications and expectations they are looking for in their perfect candidate (Barth et al., 2016). Today, agriculture teachers need to possess a wide range of skills, including those related to classroom instruction (Larsen, 1992).

Classroom instruction is the core role of an agricultural science teacher (Terry & Briers, 2010). As educational demands evolve, so do the qualifications and skills required of teachers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). Job postings for these positions offer a valuable glimpse into the priorities and expectations of specific school districts and positions. The purpose of this study was to analyze and determine the specific qualifications denoted by school districts for their agricultural science teacher position in Texas that align with the classroom portion of the three-circle model. This data is a part of a larger study conducted.

Theoretical Framework

The Vocational Personalities and Work Environments Theory was implemented by the researchers for this study. The Vocational Personalities and Work Environment Theory by John Holland (1966, 1997) suggests that people are more likely to be happy and successful in their careers if it aligns with their personality type. The personality categories are divided into six types, realistic (R), investigative (I), artistic (A), social (S), enterprising (E) and conventional (C) also known as RIASEC. Understanding job qualifications in the classroom and matching them with appropriate personality traits can significantly enhance a teacher's effectiveness and job satisfaction, thereby mitigating teacher attrition and shortage issues (Hughes, 2012).

Methods/Procedures

For this study, the researchers employed a text-based conceptual content analysis on the job postings posted on the Texas association's website. This approach allowed the researchers to identify distinctive patterns within a text-based medium (Krippendorff, 2018). Content analysis serves several purposes, one of which is describing themes or trends (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). This data collection was between January 17th and April 30th, 2024. This time frame was chosen due to the nature of which school districts are beginning to prepare for staffing for the upcoming school year. The researchers used the associations information along with the district's posted job description to perform the content analysis. A codebook, initially created with potential codes using a numerical assignment system, was refined as new codes emerged from the postings. All coders were trained to use the codebook to ensure consistency throughout the coding process. Data was recorded daily using Excel, and a total of 206 job postings were analyzed. After the data collection period, the researchers reconciled the codes and categorized the textual material

(Krippendorff, 2018). Then a panel of experts reviewed and validated the codes for validity (Roller, 2019). IBM SPSS was used to input the data and calculate frequencies for the data set. Some possible limitations include coder subjectivity on coding categories and generalizability.

Results/Finding

The qualification that was the most desired for the classroom was a valid Texas teacher certification in agriculture sciences ($f=144$, 69.9%), followed by knowledge of agricultural science and technology ($f=135$, 65.53%) and bachelor's degree from an accredited university ($f=132$, 64.08%). Classroom qualifications with the lowest amount recorded were, alternative certifications will be considered ($f=1$, .49%), utilize schools outdoor learning area ($f=1$, .49%), and strong animal science background ($f=1$, .49%).

Within the organizational personality traits for each classroom qualification, eight qualifications fell into the social trait, followed by the six qualifications that fell into the investigative category. The category with the least number was the realistic category with four qualifications being listed. The artistic and enterprising categories received zero qualifications that coincided with personality traits within the classroom portion.

Conclusion/Discussion/Implications

A bachelor's degree is still held as the gold standard in terms of classroom qualifications and holding a valid teaching certificate is highly important when it comes to student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). School districts see this importance and continue to hold this standard for their potential employees. Even with the teacher shortage that the agricultural education profession has seen, alternative certification is not a desired trait when looking for applicants (Bowling & Ball, 2018). Agricultural science and technology knowledge is valued when it comes to secondary agricultural science teachers. These results should leave agricultural science teacher preparation programs with a sense of security that this pathway is still needed and supported by school districts alike. The classroom qualifications aligned perfectly with Holland's Vocational Personalities and Work Environments Theory (1966, 1997). Holland suggested that the social category aligns with the personalities of "teachers, nurses and counselors" (Pence, 2024, p.6). Eight out of the 23 qualifications fell into the social category.

Based on the findings within this content analysis, it is recommended that teacher preparation programs in Texas use this information to continue to prepare their students with the necessary skills, and content knowledge they need to be qualified candidates for the classroom. It is also recommended this content analysis be continued nationally to compile a national qualification guide for job postings in agricultural education. Understanding what school districts seek in their candidates is incredibly important when preparing teachers to search for teaching positions. Knowing the qualification and matching those with personality traits can be an area of further research to understand the benefits for teachers to choose the right position for them and potentially find longevity within the position.

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