

**Research Proposal:**

**Finding What Works for Graduate Student Instructors in Teacher Education Programs**

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EDLD 7372: Qualitative Methodology

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May 4, 2022

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### Abstract

Graduate student instructors (GSIs) teaching in teacher education programs (TEPs) often face challenges such as low pay and status, lack of teaching preparation, and lack of support. This exploratory sequential mixed methods study seeks to pragmatically explore the experiences of GSIs in TEPs to find what is working and what is lacking for this subgroup of contingent faculty. Qualitative interviews will be conducted and used to create a survey instrument. The survey instrument will undergo rigorous testing before being deployed on a large scale to as many GSIs in TEPs as possible. Results from the survey will inform pragmatic recommendations for GSIs and the TEPs that employ them.

*Keywords:* graduate student instructors, teacher education programs, pragmatism, mixed methods, item development

**Commented [EP1]:** Good - strong abstract.

### Introduction

The American Federation of Teachers, the largest union of contingent academic workers serving 85,000 contingent and 35,000 graduate employees, surveyed 1,883 contingent faculty at public and private two-year and four-year institutions in 2020. Among their findings was the continued growth of contingent faculty, stating that while 70% of academic employees were either tenured or on the tenure track 40 years ago, today 75% of faculty are not eligible for tenure, a complete turnaround in the workforce (American Federation of Teachers, 2022). While thousands of graduate students each year serve as instructors for higher education courses (Spalter-Roth & Scelza, 2009), there is limited research into their experiences in this role, especially in the context of teacher education programs, which is the focus of this study.

### Researcher Positionality Statement

As a current graduate student instructor in a teacher education program, I recognize that I am closely related to this research. I began teaching as an adjunct lecturer immediately after I completed my master's degree and have continued to teach the same class through starting my doctoral program. While I was not a graduate student when I first began teaching this class, I have spent my entire time as a doctoral student as a graduate student instructor. I teach at the school where I received my master's degree, but it is not the same school where I am currently a doctoral student. This experience has informed my research interests and the design of this study; however, I recognize that my experiences are likely not the norm for GSIs in TEPs, and I go into this study with no preconceived ideas of what to expect in the data. I also have experience as a student in a TEP as my undergraduate degree is from the TEP at Kent State University. I believe my familiarity with both sides of TEPs will be a benefit for this study.

I am drawn to the pragmatic paradigm because it aligns with many of my own personal beliefs. I do not believe that there is one singular Truth that is accurate for everyone; many factors can affect

**Commented [EP2]:** Good - I like that you state clearly how you are related to the research.

what is True for a single person. Feilzer (2010) makes the assertion that pragmatism “sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality” and “orients itself toward solving practical problems” (p. 8). In this, pragmatism helps the researcher not to aim for describing the most accurate reality but aim to be useful. I seek to find not what can be defined as “accurate” but what has been shown to work for as many people as possible.

**Commented [EP3]:** Good - appreciative of stating your positionally in this regard

## Pragmatism

### Historical Pragmatism

Pragmatism first emerged in late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a reaction to the idea that beliefs are true when they correspond with reality and was influenced by scholars such as Charles Saunders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey (Ormerod, 2006; Rorty et al., 2004). Where Pierce believed that the more an idea works, the more likely it is to be true, James and Dewey believed simply that it is true if it works (Rorty et al., 2004). In his series of published lectures titled *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, James puts forth pragmatism as “the attitude of looking away from the first things, principles, ‘categories’, supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts” (James, 1907, p. 19). Following on the work of those before him, Dewey introduced a systematic pragmatism to tackle social issues by including the shared human experience along with the individual, thereby expanding pragmatism in philosophy, psychology, education, and politics (Kelly & Cordiero, 2020; Ormerod, 2006).

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### Today’s Pragmatism

Pragmatism today still holds the assumption that there are no basic universal Truths, rather “reality is what is useful, is practical, and ‘works’” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 35). For pragmatists, an idea is judged by practical worth (Rorty et al., 2004). Kelly and Cordiero (2020) define their pragmatic approach as “a philosophical and epistemological framework for interrogating and evaluating ideas and beliefs in terms of their practical functioning” (p. 3), again emphasizing the idea of looking at the

practical rather than the purely philosophical. The focus of pragmatic inquiry is on the outcomes of the research, rather than the “antecedent conditions” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 26).

### Pragmatic Principles

According to Ormerod (2006), pragmatism holds that anything that promotes dialogue and inquiry is considered good, while anything that suppresses dialogue and inquiry is bad. Ormerod (2006) further points out that pragmatic inquiry sees no benefit in pursuing a Cartesian First Philosophy, or “belief in the existence of man and God as a foundation for philosophy” (p. 904). Similarly, Kelly and Cordiero (2020) identified three central principles of pragmatic inquiry: an emphasis on actionable knowledge, the recognition of the interconnectedness between experience, knowing, and acting, and the experiential process of inquiry. These tenets of pragmatism boil down to the central idea that pragmatic inquiry should not focus on philosophical debates about truth or reality, but rather on finding what works to solve real world problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kelly & Cordiero, 2020; Ormerod, 2006; Rorty, 2004). As Creswell and Poth (2018) state, pragmatists believe “that we need to stop asking questions about reality and the laws of nature” (p. 27), and they further quote Rorty (1983) as saying, “They would simply like to change the subject” (p. xiv, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Feilzer (2010) asserts that pragmatism is well-suited to mixed methods research because it avoids the quantitative-qualitative argument, focusing instead on if the methods have the potential to answer the research question, and further qualifies this view by stating that “this is not an excuse for sloppy research” (p. 14), and pragmatists need a solid understanding of both qualitative and quantitative methods and analyses.

### Negative Perceptions

Research methodologies and frameworks all have their supporters and their detractors, and pragmatism is no different. Many hold a negative connotation to pragmatism, viewing it as a “failure to adhere to theory, sloppy thinking, trimming, lack of principles” (Ormerod, 2006, p. 894). Others point

**Commented [EP5]:** An interesting statement - how does one determine what promotes dialogue and inquiry?

**Commented [EP6]:** This is perhaps the key point! I wonder if there is a way to move this to more of a topic sentence so it does not get lost.

out that a “lack of a clearly articulated logic” to determine exactly what works weakens the stability of the framework (Kelly & Cordiero, 2020, p. 2). Therefore, Kelly and Cordiero (2020) suggest a thorough understanding of ~~the~~ pragmatism before attempting to use the framework.

### Literature Review

There exists a variety of research around contingent faculty, defined as non-tenured faculty, ~~and~~ ranging from graduate teaching assistants (TAs) to adjunct faculty with terminal degrees and anyone in between. Before considering the research that has been published in this general area, it is worth noting the lack of existing research about what is effective for supporting contingent faculty in institutions of higher education (IHE). There is even less existing research about what is effective for the subgroup of contingent faculty, GSIs, and research relating to GSIs specifically in teacher education programs is nearly non-existent. Considering the pedagogical content of teacher education programs, it seems safe to ~~assume~~ that these GSIs have some type of educational background, whether they came from teaching in a K12 setting or they have a degree relating to education. Perhaps this is why this subgroup has not been studied as intensively as other contingent faculty; it is assumed that these GSIs do not require the same level of teaching training and support. As discussed in Robinson’s (2017) dissertation, this is a flawed assumption.

A review of the literature that does exist revealed three key issues surrounding contingent faculty such as GSIs: institutional issues such as a lack of pay and status (American Federation of Teachers, 2022), preparation issues such as a lack of courses or training to prepare GSIs before teaching (Cheek, 2018; Iorio & Decker, 2011; Robinson, 2017; Smollin & Arluke, 2013), and support issues such as a lack of support while teaching and feelings of isolation (Cheek, 2018; Dolan, 2011; Smollin & Arluke, 2013).

### Institutional Issues

**Commented [EP7]:** Good - you are stating clearly a gap in the literature, which helps to elucidate the need for the study

**Commented [EP8]:** What makes this safe to assume? Such statements are sometimes slippery - better to ground it in the literature.

The primary purpose of any job is to provide for oneself and one's family. The report by the American Federation of Teachers (2022) shared that a quarter of respondents reported earning less than \$25,000 per year, with only 20% reporting an ability to comfortably cover their basic monthly expenses. Healthcare is another concern, with less than 50% of respondents reporting access to employer health insurance and nearly 45% reporting putting off necessary medical care. Many contingent faculty lack the job security of a full-time position, with three quarters reporting term to term employment and 48% reporting that they don't know if they will be teaching until a month before a semester starts. Finally, 37% of respondents say that they do not see a path for them to retire. The report states that the COVID-19 pandemic has "made a grave situation even worse" (p. 4). While this report covers a wider range of contingent faculty than just GSIs, these are important factors to consider when looking at this subgroup of faculty.

**Commented [EP9]:** I would clarify precisely who these respondents are here

#### **Preparation Issues**

Cheek (2018) noted the lack of systematic research on the experiences of being adjunct faculty in a teacher preparation program, despite the ever-increasing use of adjunct faculty requiring better support. In a phenomenology of contingent faculty in a teacher preparation program, Cheek (2018) found that participants expressed a lack of training.

In a case study of a TA training program at The University of Texas at Austin, Iorio and Decker (2011) discuss how research-oriented skills are legitimized by the university while similar pedagogically oriented skills are not. Activities that grow graduate students as researchers, such as attending research conferences and collaborating on research articles, are prioritized and showcased on students' CVs, while activities that grow graduate students as teachers, such as developing pedagogy and collaborative teaching, frequently are not. Still, graduate students understand the importance of their own pedagogical growth and development. Iorio and Decker (2011) state that "The next step is legitimizing the graduate student's growth as teacher and researcher—that is, a whole or complete scholar" (p. 49).

**Commented [EP10]:** Yes

Similarly, Smollin and Arluke (2013) found that graduate student instructors “feel the pressure of an academic system that prioritizes research over teaching” (p. 35) and largely rely on informal support and practices.

Robinson (2017) begins his dissertation with a narrative that showcases the stress of graduate student instructors when they feel unprepared for their higher education teaching assignments. The author describes his own experience in teaching middle school social studies as inadequate to prepare him for teaching college-level courses and connects his personal experience to the larger problem: graduate student instructors are teaching more and more classes, especially at the undergraduate level, without adequate preparation for teaching.

#### **Support Issues**

Often closely intertwined with issues of preparation, issues of support and isolation emerged from the existing literature. Dolan (2011) found that adjunct faculty want opportunities to learn from their peers in person, but the lack of such events does not decrease faculty motivation or loyalty, as adjunct faculty are loyal more to their students than to their institution. Participants emphasized the “need for constant and clear communication between administrators and faculty members” (Dolan, 2011, p. 72). Beyond a lack of feedback from administration, adjunct faculty expressed a need for events to provide connection with other faculty. Cheek (2018) also found a feeling of isolation in their positions among contingent faculty in a teacher preparation program. Smollin and Arluke’s (2013) study of sociology graduate students found that while the graduate students are grateful and excited to be chosen to teach an undergraduate class, they experience anxiety relating to five themes: “feelings of unpreparedness, seemingly unrelenting time demands, a lack of confidence, issues with students, and insufficient support” (p. 31).

#### **What Works**

Pragmatism focuses on finding what works by orienting “itself toward solving practical problems” (Feilzer, 2010, p. 7). This research seeks to identify what works for supporting GSIs in TEPs to improve the experiences of both the GSIs and their pre-service teacher students, by extension improving the learning for the next generation of K12 students.

### Research Questions

1. What institutional aspects (i.e., pay, benefits, status) are working for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?
  - a. What institutional aspects (i.e., pay, benefits, status) are lacking for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?
2. What pre-teaching preparation is working for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?
  - a. What pre-teaching preparation is lacking for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?
3. What support systems during teaching are working for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?
  - a. What support systems during teaching are lacking for graduate student instructors in pre-service teacher education programs?

### Proposed Methods

This study will utilize exploratory sequential mixed methods, specifically the survey-development variant (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative interviews will be analyzed to derive the themes of what works and what is lacking for GSIs in TEPs. Those themes will then be adapted into a survey to be distributed to a larger population. The data collected from this survey will lead to a more comprehensive picture of what works for the widest range of GSIs in TEPs.

**Commented [EP11]:** As I'm reading, it all flows nicely Waneta. You've laid out the theory (what works); you've used the literature to identify three areas that are important to research; you note the gap; the questions are directly built on those three areas. It is a great example of a funnel.

This method was chosen over a strictly qualitative or a strictly quantitative methodology for several reasons. The qualitative phase of the study is necessary to amplify the voices of GSIs in TEPs. This fills a current gap in the research by going directly to those who are experiencing or have recently experienced the phenomenon. Because pragmatism looks for what works in practice (Feilzer, 2010), the quantitative phase of this study will reveal what works for a larger population of GSIs in TEPs rather than the small subset that can be interviewed qualitatively. Many qualitative methods, such as phenomenology or case study, cannot necessarily be generalized to the whole population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal of this study is to report findings that are representative of what works for as much of the target population as is possible, while also creating a replicable survey instrument for use in future research and needs analyses.

As this study consists of several phases of data collection, several phases of analysis will be conducted. Details of analysis beyond the first phase will be further expanded once Phase 1 is complete. Additional details of analysis will be submitted for IRB approval through addendums to the original IRB. Memos will be kept throughout the coding and survey instrument development process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding and memoing may be conducted using a qualitative analysis software, such as NVIVO or MAXQDA, depending on availability and cost. If unavailable, coding and memoing will be completed using Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and pen and paper.

#### **Phase 1: Qualitative Exploration**

The first phase of this study will be qualitative and grounded in pragmatism. Interviews will focus on identifying the practical problems that GSIs face when teaching in TEPs and what they need to solve those problems.

#### ***Participants***

Five to 10 participants will be identified using a qualifying survey (see Appendix A) shared through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and within professional organizations,

such as the Association of Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). As the goal of this study is to find practical solutions for the majority of GSIs in TEPs, rather than to uncover the essence of a single phenomenon as in phenomenological studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018), participants will ideally come from a variety of institutions and have a wide range of experience to create a complex picture of the population. To accomplish this, maximum variation sampling will be used to select interview participants from those that complete the qualifying survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) by purposefully selecting the maximum variation from the pool of potential participants. Participants who meet the qualifications but are not needed for Phase 1 will be contacted for Phase 3.

**Inclusion Criteria**

- Was a graduate student within the past five years
- Taught at least one course in a teacher education program while a graduate student

**Exclusion Criteria**

- Non-English speaking
- Taught in a non-teacher education program
- Graduate student status and instructor status did not overlap

**Data Collection**

Interviews will be semi-structured to explore the participants experiences as GSIs and uncover what works and what is lacking. The questions in the interview protocol (see Appendix B) are informed by the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews will be recorded using Zoom transcription and manually reviewed for accuracy prior to analysis.

**Analysis**

Phase 1 data will consist of 5 to 10 interview transcripts. The transcripts will undergo member-checking in the form of a one-time transcript review by the participants. Each participant will receive the

reviewed transcription within seven days of the interview and will have a seven-day period to review the transcript and clarify any information or interpretations.

Prior to formal coding, the transcripts will be read several times to get a feel for the data, starting with skimming and followed by rapid reading (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Analysis will begin with holistic coding to sort the data according to the research questions (i.e., a priori themes) and data that falls into categories beyond the initial research questions (i.e., emergent themes) (David et al., 2018; Saldaña, 2021). To facilitate finding what pragmatically works for GSIs as a whole population, the data will be rearranged according to the holistic codes rather than separated by participants, as shown in Figure 1. For instance, all data relating to the support systems that work for graduate student instructors may be grouped into one document, while all data relating to the support systems that are lacking may be grouped into another document. In an effort to “prioritize and honor the participant’s voice” (Saldaña, 2021, p. 138) even after the data has been resorted, the sub-codes will be created using In Vivo coding, which will occur in two rounds to ensure nothing is missed. This data will then be used to create the first draft of items for the survey instrument in Phase 2.

**Figure 1**

*Coding Procedures*

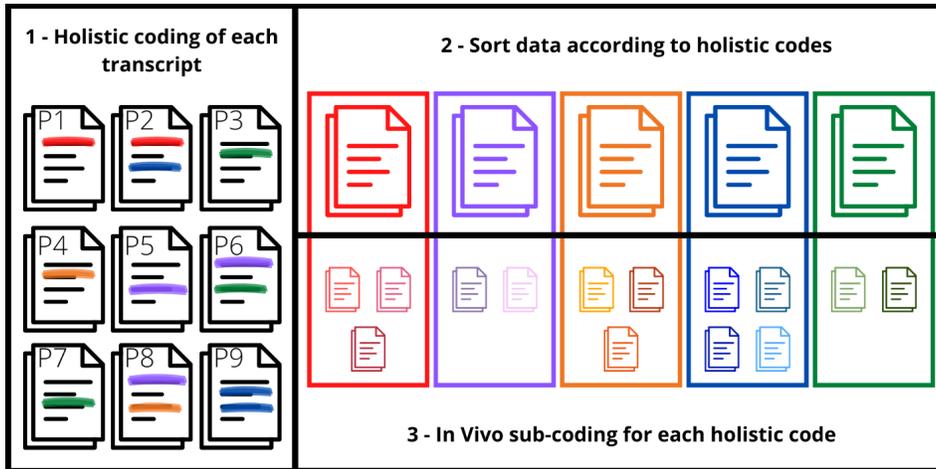
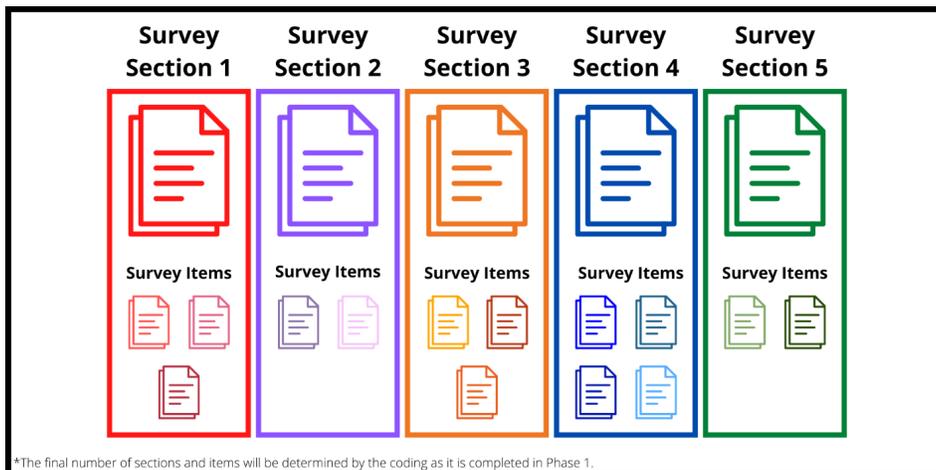


Figure 2

*Codes to Survey Items*



\*The final number of sections and items will be determined by the coding as it is completed in Phase 1.

**Phase 2: Survey Instrument Development**

In the second phase of this study, the themes identified in Phase 1 will be used to design a survey instrument. The holistic codes will be used to create the sections of the survey. The In Vivo sub-codes will be used to form the individual items on the survey. This structure is shown in Figure 2 where

each color represents a hypothetical holistic code. The exact number of survey sections and survey items will be determined as coding is completed. The survey instrument will include both quantitative closed-ended questions and qualitative open-ended questions as is deemed necessary ~~by necessary~~ by the Phase 1 results. This phase will also be grounded in pragmatism with a focus on what works for GSIs in TEPs, rather than a focus on identifying a singular Truth; however, additional theory may be pulled in as is necessary to ground the findings from Phase 1.

As this phase will rely upon the data collected in Phase 1, the specific details will be determined after Phase 1 is complete. Once the survey instrument is developed, an addendum to the initial IRB will be submitted to include these additional details rather than submitting a second IRB, as some participants will remain the same (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

### **Analysis**

The codes and themes identified in Phase 1 analysis will be used to develop the survey instrument, including quantitative closed-ended items assessed on a Likert scale and qualitative open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Quantitative items will be developed to be suited to a Rasch analysis by including items that would be agreeable to participants at opposite ends of the spectrum for each topic (Boone, 2016). Pragmatism will undergird the writing of the survey items, and existing research and guidelines will be consulted to aid in the wording or order of the survey items.

External expert review will be utilized prior to the beta test. An expert in item development will be located and asked to review the final revised survey instrument to provide feedback. Their feedback will be reviewed and implemented as deemed necessary.

The survey instrument will then go through a beta test before wider deployment, wherein the original participants from the Phase 1 interviews will be asked to pilot the survey instrument. Brief cognitive interviews, or rapid reconnaissance interviews, will be used to quickly assess the draft survey instrument, including the wording of individual items and the overall ordering of the items. Participants

**Commented [EP12]:** Ok - good to be open to this as you learn more.

**Commented [EP13]:** Say more about this - are you talking specifically about survey design research, or something else?

will be asked questions such as: “Are there any items that are confusing?” and “Are there words that do not make sense in this context?” (David et al., 2018, p. 8).

Rasch modeling will be used as a type of item response theory (IRT) for “evaluating how well the instrument appears to measure the chosen variable” (Boone, 2016). In the context of this study, the measurement will be “conceptualized as the probability that a respondent will endorse a specific item” (David et al., 2018, p. 4). Item fit will be determined based on infit and outfit statistics; items that fit will be retained while items that do not fit will be revised or discarded (David et al., 2018). In addition, the survey instrument will be evaluated using the Heuristic Analysis of Rating Scale Observations to “find the optimum number of responses (e.g., a 5-point Likert-type style approach or a 4-point, etc.) to fit the Rasch model” (David et al., 2018, p.8).

Cronbach’s alpha will be computed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument.

If deemed necessary at the conclusion of Phase 2, this full process may be repeated for the revised survey instrument with a new set of eligible beta testers.

### **Phase 3: Survey Instrument Deployment**

In the final phase of the study, the survey instrument developed and tested in Phase 2 will be administered to a large sample of participants. The participants in this stage will be new and unrepeated from previous stages; however, as the beta version of the instrument will have been included in the first addendum to the IRB, a second addendum will be submitted in lieu of a new IRB (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

#### ***Participants***

Similar to Phase 1, participants for Phase 3 will be recruited through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and professional organizations, such as the Association of Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). In addition, qualifying participants from the Phase 1 survey

who were not used in the Phase 1 data collection will be contacted to complete the survey instrument at this time. As many participants as possible will be recruited for Phase 3; therefore, snowball sampling procedures will be used to increase the pool of participants by asking identified participants to share the recruitment information with anyone they know who may qualify. Specific minimum goals will be determined during Phase 2 to ensure enough participants for the planned analysis of the survey instrument (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Was a graduate student within the past five years
- Taught at least one course in a teacher preparation program while a graduate student

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Non-English speaking
- Taught in a non-teacher preparation program
- Graduate student status and instructor status did not overlap

#### **Analysis**

Descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, median, and range) will be used to provide an overview of the quantitative results in addition to exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Rasch analysis, and Cronbach's alpha. Qualitative open-ended survey items will be coded using descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2021) and any other coding that is deemed appropriate when the survey instrument is developed in Phase 2. Results will be reported as in a convergent mixed methods study by determining and describing "in what ways the results confirm, disconfirm, or expand each other" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 222).

The results of this analysis will be used to make pragmatic recommendations for graduate student instructors in teacher education programs and for the programs that employ them. The resulting final survey instrument will be able to be used in future research.

#### **Scholarly Significance**

**Commented [EP14]:** Good

**Commented [EP15]:** I'm still trying to think more on this - because I feel like in this phase you have the survey designed and are trying to gather more information on what you found overall, so I'm still a bit unclear about what EFA will do here. Usually EFA is done in survey design phases.

GSI in TEPs have long been an overlooked subgroup of contingent faculty. This research seeks to validate their voices by hearing the challenges they face and what works for them as instructors and graduate students. By grounding this work in pragmatism, this study will contribute actionable and realistic recommendations for what works for GSIs in TEPs.

Furthermore, the proposed methodology of this study will contribute to the field of mixed methods, specifically in the development of survey instruments. This study builds on the existing work of David and colleagues (2018) in developing rigorous methods for creating and evaluating survey instruments using both qualitative and quantitative analysis to ensure validity and reliability.

**Commented [EP16]:** If you plan on developing a survey that can be used over and over, that would be another point to highlight in the scholarly significance section. Depending on what actually ends up on the survey, researchers could use that for future studies; or it just becomes a pragmatic tool that is important for program evaluation, etc.

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## Appendix A – Phase 1 Qualifying Survey

### Introduction

My name is Waneta Hebert, and I am a doctoral student in the Instructional Systems Design and Technology program at Sam Houston State University. I am conducting a study under the direction of [faculty advisor] to discover what works for graduate student instructors teaching in teacher education programs. This research will consist of a virtual interview via Zoom. This interview will be used in the first phase of a mixed methods study to develop a survey instrument. I hope that this study will provide insight and recommendations for graduate student **instructors** in teacher education programs.

**Commented [EP17]:** And institutions of higher education (?)

You are eligible for this study if you have taught at least one course in a teacher education program while also maintaining graduate student status in the past five years.

I do not expect the research to pose any risk to any of the volunteer participants. Any data obtained from you will only be used for the purpose of analyzing your experience as a GSI teaching in a TEP. Under no circumstances will you or any other participants who participated in this research study be identified, and your data will remain confidential. You will not be paid or otherwise compensated for your participation in this project.

This study has been reviewed by the Sam Houston State University Institutional Review Board (IRB #####). This is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. In order to make sure that you meet the parameters of the study, please submit responses to the questions in this survey. The survey will take approximately two minutes to complete.

### Section 1 – Qualifiers

1. Have you taught at least one course in a teacher education program in the past five years?
  - a. Yes **[Proceed to next question]**
  - b. No **[End survey]**

2. Were you a graduate student *at the same time* that you taught at least one course in a teacher education program in the past five years?
  - a. Yes [**Proceed to next question**]
  - b. No [**End survey**]

**Section 2 – Consent**

3. Are you willing to participate in a 60-minute interview?
  - a. Yes [**Proceed to next question**]
  - b. No [**End survey**]
4. Please provide your first and last name.
  - a. Open-ended
5. Please provide the best email address to reach you.
  - a. Open-ended

**Section 3 – Demographics & Additional Information**

6. Please indicate the gender with which you identify.
  - a. Open-ended
7. Please indicate your age range.
  - a. 18 – 24
  - b. 25 – 30
  - c. 31 – 40
  - d. 41 – 50
  - e. 51 – 60
  - f. 61 – 70
  - g. Over 71
8. What is your current level of education?

- a. Master's degree, in progress
- b. Master's degree, complete
- c. Doctorate, in progress
- d. Doctorate, complete

9. How long have you taught in a teacher education program?

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-3 years
- c. 4-6 years
- d. 6-9 years
- e. 10+ years

10. Were you a graduate student at the same institution where you taught in a teacher education program?

- a. Yes
- b. No

11. Please indicate the type of institution where you taught in a teacher education program.

- a. 2-year community college or junior college
- b. 4-year public college or university
- c. 4-year private college or university
- d. Other, please specify

12. Please indicate the type of institution where you attended your graduate program.

- a. 4-year public college or university
- b. 4-year private college or university
- c. Other, please specify

## Appendix B – Phase 1 Interview Protocol

### Consent Script

Thank you for your time. Before we begin, I would like to confirm your consent to participate in the interview and have this interview recorded. **[Yes = Continue; No = Terminate]**.

I will ask you to confirm this again during the recording. **[Start recording]**.

My name is Waneta Hebert, and I am a doctoral student in the Instructional Systems Design and Technology program at Sam Houston State University. I am conducting a study under the direction of [faculty advisor] to discover what works for graduate student instructors (GSIs) teaching in teacher education programs (TEPs). This interview will be used in the first phase of a mixed methods study to develop a survey instrument. I hope that this study will provide insight and recommendations for GSIs in TEPs.

Commented [EP18]: ^^

I do not expect the research to pose any risk to any of the volunteer participants. Any data obtained from you will only be used for the purpose of analyzing your experience as a GSI teaching in a TEP. Under no circumstances will you or any other participants who participated in this research study be identified, and your data will remain confidential. You will not be paid or otherwise compensated for your participation in this project.

This Zoom interview will be recorded with transcription. The automatic transcription will be manually reviewed for accuracy by the researcher. The audio and video recording will be available for your review for the duration of the research study at your request. Within seven days of your interview, you will receive an audio transcript, and you will have one seven-day period to review the transcript and clarify any information or interpretations. All meetings and recordings will be password protected. Audio and video recordings and audio transcripts will be kept for three years after the research study is complete and then destroyed.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, and I foresee no potential risks to you. You may discontinue participation at any time.

Do you have any questions? **[Answer as necessary]**.

Do you consent to participate in this interview? **[Yes = Continue; No = Terminate]**.

Do you consent to the recording of this interview? **[Yes = Continue; No = Terminate]**.

### **Interview Questions**

1. Describe your role and responsibilities as a graduate student instructor.
2. Describe any pre-teaching preparation you had before starting as a graduate student instructor.

*Follow-up if needed:*

- a. What courses have you taken specifically about teaching?
  - b. What teacher training have you participated in?
  - c. What experience do you have with teaching prior to becoming a graduate student instructor?
3. What types of pre-teaching preparation do you wish you'd had before starting as a graduate student instructor?
  4. Describe the support your institution provides/provided for you as a graduate student instructor.

*Follow-up if needed:*

- a. Describe the colleagues who work(ed) with you. How do/did they support you?
5. What types of support do you wish your institution provided for you as a graduate student instructor?
  6. How do/did you stay connected with your institution?

*Follow-up if needed:*

- a. Do/did you have friends on campus?
  - b. Do/did you spend time on campus not teaching or attending classes?
  - c. Do/did you attend institution events?
7. What could have helped you to be more connected with your institution?
8. How does/did the institution support your needs?
- a. In as much detail as you are comfortable, describe your satisfaction with your salary and benefits.
  - b. Does/Did the institution make you feel respected in your role? How?
9. What could the institution do/have done to better support your needs?

**Closing**

Thank you again for taking the time out of your busy schedule for this interview. Do you have any questions for me before we leave? **[Answer as necessary]**.

Again, thank you. I will now stop the recording. **[Stop recording]**.

### Researcher Biography

Waneta Hebert is an Instructional Designer in the Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation at Houston Community College where she provides professional development and assists faculty in course design. She is an adjunct lecturer in the College of Education at the University of Houston where she teaches a course on educational technology for pre-service teachers. She is also a resident author for Infobase where she writes high-interest blogs and conducts timely and research-based webinars.

In addition to working full time, Waneta is currently a doctoral student at Sam Houston State University studying Instructional Systems Design and Technology. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Education in Integrated Language Arts from Kent State University and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Learning Design and Technology from the University of Houston.

Waneta is a Certified Peer Reviewer in Higher Education for Quality Matters, a Certified Faculty Developer from LERN, and a Google Certified Educator at levels 1 and 2 from Google for Education. She also holds three graduate certificates from the University of Houston: Online Teaching and Learning, Designing and Developing Educational Graphics, and Designing and Developing Educational Multimedia.

In addition to her current experience in higher education, Waneta spent seven years as a public-school English teacher, and while her interests have shifted to higher education, she is still interested in research relating to the integration of technology in K12 education. Waneta's research interests also include best practices in distance education, pre-service teacher education, and the effects of COVID-19 on remote education and work. Her publication on the use of mobile-instant messaging in graduate level courses won the second place Journal Article (Mixed Methods) Award from the AECT Division of Distance Learning. Her most recent publication was a book chapter on connecting pre-service teachers through technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, and she has several projects in progress, including a study on instructional designers during the pandemic, a systematic review of the literature relating to

**Commented [EP19]:** I didn't realize this is where you were teaching. Good on you!

first-generation online students, and a semi-systematic review of the literature relating to the use of the flipped classroom model with pre-service teachers.

Waneta – you are a researcher at heart. This is a solid proposal overall, and you’ve followed the protocol nicely. I believe that you will be carrying this study out at some point (perhaps) and like I said, even if you start with the qualitative portion it would give us some much needed information as we continue to advance the number of people teaching at the contingent level (especially GSIs). I still have some outstanding questions about the survey because I’m trying to envision in my mind what that instrument will look like and the pragmatic use it will ultimately employ. As I was reading this one final time the question that kept coming to mind was this: who will the survey be *for* when the results are found? I think you should clarify if the aim is for informing administrators or GSIs themselves. As written right now it seems to be more aimed toward GSIs, but I’m trying to understand what they will take away from it (perhaps that they understand better what does and does not work?) So, think on that some more and let me know if you think I missed something on that.

It has been a pleasure to watch this come together and I hope that you will ultimately conduct the study!

Peaton (@profpeaton)