

Fall 2009

Bringing the Real World into the Classroom: Career Change Business Educators and the Pedagogies of Engagement

Bonnie Pazin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Pazin, B. (2009). Bringing the Real World into the Classroom: Career Change Business Educators and the Pedagogies of Engagement (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/1030>

This Immediate Access is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact phillips@duq.edu.

BRINGING THE REAL WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM:
CAREER CHANGE BUSINESS EDUCATORS
AND THE PEDAGOGIES OF ENGAGEMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By

Bonnie M. Pazin

December 2009

Copyright by
Bonnie M. Pazin

2009

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Department of Instruction and Leadership

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Instructional Leadership Excellence at Duquesne

Presented by:

Bonnie M. Pazin

Master of Business Administration, University of Pittsburgh, 1994
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, University of Pittsburgh, 1990

July 31, 2009

**TITLE: BRINGING THE REAL WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM:
CAREER CHANGE BUSINESS EDUCATORS AND THE
PEDAGOGIES OF ENGAGEMENT**

Approved by:

_____, Chair

Peter M. Miller, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Duquesne University

_____, Member

Margaret I. Ford, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Duquesne University

_____, Member

Donna L. Cellante, Ed.D.
Associate Dean, Department of Education and Social Sciences,
School of Education, Robert Morris University

Program Director
Joseph C. Kush, Associate Professor

ABSTRACT

BRINGING THE REAL WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM: CAREER CHANGE BUSINESS EDUCATORS AND THE PEDAGOGIES OF ENGAGEMENT

By

Bonnie M. Pazin

December 2009

Dissertation Supervised by Peter Miller, Ph. D.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the influences of prior work experience in the classroom of career change secondary business educators. The 21st century workforce is rapidly evolving due to increases in innovative technology and global competition. Educators are expected to prepare a digital generation of students to face the challenges that lie ahead as they transition into this new workforce. To meet the needs of this new generation, teachers are increasingly being expected to teach 21st century skills that include technology literacy, collaboration, and communication. High attrition rates and an increasing teacher demand continue to be critical issues facing education, and career change educators may play an important role. Business education encompasses many of the 21st century skills, and a career change business educator has first-hand knowledge of the 21st century workplace.

The research questions focused on the influence of prior work experience as it relates to business education curriculum, instructional strategies, and expectations of teaching. The collective case study included interviewing five career change business educators and five principals who observed their classes. Observations were conducted in the career change business educators' classrooms using a rubric based on the theoretical framework of Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement.

Common themes emerged through within-case, cross-case, and constant comparative analysis. Themes included possessing unique personal characteristics and perspective, having a passion for business, making learning relevant, bringing content to life through personal stories and experience, and extending curriculum to teach life lessons and character traits. These educators engage students in teamwork, collaboration and problem solving within the classroom and the community. They use technology creatively and innovatively to engage 21st century students, are seen as technology experts, and are often asked to develop and deliver formal and informal training. Regarding expectations, themes included feelings of isolation, little need for support, little flexibility, and satisfaction in the career change. These educators stay connected to the workplace, pursue continuing education, and keep up with the challenges of technology. Recommendations were included for school districts, for teacher preparation programs, for those considering a career change into teaching business education, and for further research.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my beautiful son, Jason. You are my bright and shining star. You approach each day with curiosity and wonder and show me why it is important to experience life to its fullest! You are, and shall be, my biggest, most rewarding accomplishment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors who have helped me along this journey, and to each I owe my deepest gratitude. I feel so blessed and lucky to have each and every one of these people in my life. They support my wildest dreams and quick whims, no matter how far-reaching or silly they sound at the time. They lend a hand, offer a shoulder, or give a pat on the back, and they always seem to know which one it should be at the right moment.

During this process, I have watched my amazing little boy Jason grow from a toddler to a kindergartner. He is the center of my universe. To hear him proudly tell others that “Mommy is going to be a Doctor of Education” was simply the incentive I needed to press onward. I hope he will believe that if you work hard and if you keep trying, anything is possible!

My husband is my strength and my home. He takes care of our family and is an amazing, brilliant man. His constant support and kindness carried me through the good and the bad of this journey. He celebrated and commiserated with me as I needed. He is truly my soulmate and my best friend. I never had to worry or feel stressed about things at home; he never complained and always surrounded me with love and security.

My mother, Grammy B., is another grounding force in my life. She has been bragging about me for as long as I can remember, and it makes me want to be the best I can be. She and my dad sacrificed some of their own dreams by raising me in their teenage years. They are always there to help me when I need it and are so proud of me and my accomplishments. They helped by watching Jason during classes or even if I just

needed some time to finish papers or research. My sister, Cheryl, even though far away in Florida, and my best friend, Chris, always knew when I needed a boost of confidence.

I must thank my Grandpap, James Kneeland, who is no longer with us. He reminded me of a very valuable lesson in life – patience. He was such a strong influence in my life while he was alive, and he continues to be now in the decisions I make.

Most people cannot say this, but I shout it from the rooftops. I have the greatest in-laws on the face of the Earth! They are constant supporters, full of love and encouragement. They helped me in any way they could, especially Grammy P., who not only watched Jason, but who often would clean for me when she could tell I was overwhelmed. And, of course, to the two Dr. Pazins already in my life, I am honored to now share that title.

I would like to thank my wonderful committee; Dr. Peter Miller, Dr. Margaret Ford and Dr. Donna Cellante. They are the best dissertation committee in the whole world! They are so supportive and wise. They made the process an enjoyable one, which is not always what I hear when talking to other doctoral students! Their gentle, reassuring style kept me on the right path. Their positive encouragement and guidance made it easy to reach benchmarks and to complete the work. I learned so much from them, and I am honored to call them mentors.

I must not forget to thank my participants for opening their classrooms and their hearts, especially during a busy time of the year. Their passion for business illuminated our experiences together and reminded me of why I changed careers many years ago. They made this study so enlightening and so worthwhile.

Lastly, I need to thank my cohort members...ILEAD 5 – BCE! They truly are the best cohort ever. Our camaraderie has been electric from the start. Thanks to all for the friendship, the competition, the support, and the laughter! I still remember the smell of the woods at Linsley and that first exercise in orienteering. We found our way down “the Road to Doctorateville” – together! The friends I have made and the experiences we shared will be with me always.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	vi
Acknowledgments.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Preparing the 21 st Century Student for the Future	3
Business Education Reaches the 21 st Century Student.....	3
Attracting and Keeping Good Teachers.....	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Definition of Terms.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Significance of the Study	8
Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature	10
21 st Century Skills and the Workplace.....	10
Business Education	15
Characteristics of Effective Teachers	19
Characteristics and Challenges of Career Change Teachers.....	21
Motivations of Career Change Teachers.....	26
Pathways to Certification for Career Change Teachers.....	28
Teacher Retention	33
Theoretical Framework.....	36
Chapter 3: Research Design.....	41

Collective Case Study	41
Sample Selection.....	42
Data Collection	44
Data Analysis	46
Study Validity and Reliability	47
Investigator’s Position	48
Limitations	48
Chapter 4: Discussion of Findings	49
Research Question 1	50
Personal Characteristics and Perspective.....	51
Ability to Multitask and Get the Job Done	53
Willingness to Get Involved	54
Passion for Business	55
Sharing Experiences and Bringing the Content to Life	57
The Technology Expert.....	59
The Choice to Hire a Career Change Business Educator	60
Summary of Research Question 1.....	61
Research Question 2	62
Interacting with 21 st Century Students.....	63
Anecdotes and Personal Stories as an Instructional Strategy	66
Beyond Curriculum - Teaching Soft Skills, Character Traits and Life Lessons ..	69
Teamwork and Collaboration	77
Problem Solving.....	81

Creative Use Technology for Engagement	83
Summary of Research Question 2.....	86
Research Question 3	87
Isolation and Little Need for Support	88
Little Flexibility	90
Matching Expectations with Reality and Feeling Prepared.....	91
The Constant Challenge of Technology	92
Always Reinventing Themselves.....	93
The Stigma of “Business”	96
Summary of Research Question 3.....	98
Relation of Findings to Pedagogies of Engagement.....	100
Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations.....	106
Relationship to Previous Literature	107
Implications and Recommendations	111
Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs	111
Recommendations for School Districts	112
Recommendations for Professionals Considering a Career Change.....	113
Limitations of the Study.....	113
Recommendations for Future Research.....	114
Conclusion	116
References.....	118
Appendix A: Interview Questions for the Career Change Business Educator	125
Appendix B: Interview Questions for Administrator.....	127

Appendix C: Classroom Observation Rubric 128

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Schools of today are under pressure to produce a new type of worker for the 21st century global workplace. This worker must be able to process information faster, to work with various international cultures, to use the latest technology for communication and trade, and to demonstrate a comprehensive array of skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. This 21st century worker is in high demand, and many believe that schools in the U.S. are not preparing students to enter post-secondary environments and to compete in the growing technological and global workplace. According to a recent poll by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007):

- Eighty percent of registered voters feel the U.S. is not preparing students with 21st century skills needed in the workplace and that the skills of today are different than those needed 20 years ago
- Sixty-six percent of voters say that students need more than just the basics of reading, writing and math and that schools need to incorporate broader skills
- Fifty-three percent say that schools should place equal emphasis on 21st century skills and basic skills.

Bybee and Starkweather (2006) state that technological innovation drives the global economy and K-12 education must play a larger role in teaching this technology. Education is failing to produce citizens that can perform in an increasing complex global society and is in need of urgent reform (Fullan, 2007). In preparing this 21st century workforce, several areas of K-12 education need reform, such as policies and practices that address workforce competencies, career awareness, technology and science (Bybee

& Starkweather, 2006). Schools must produce citizens who are able to continuously learn, to solve problems, to work together in groups, as well as to work with diversity (Carnoy, 1998; Fullan, 2007).

Students of today are quite different from their predecessors, as they have grown up in the digital age. Prensky (2001) calls this group of students “digital natives” and posits that they differ from previous generations in the ways they think and process information. They are used to receiving instant feedback and work better when networking with others. This new group, born after 1982, are also called “millennials” and possess characteristics such as a preference for group activity, the belief that “smart is cool” and a fascination with technology (Oblinger, 2003). Technology comes naturally to the millennial generation and the Internet is commonplace for school and leisure. Research conducted on children ages 12 to 17 found that 94 percent use the Internet for school research, 78 percent feel the Internet helps them with schoolwork, and 41 percent use email and instant messaging to contact teachers or classmates about schoolwork (Oblinger, 2003). Often younger students find a disconnect between the technology that is used at home versus school, as well as the differences in knowledge of that technology between teacher and student. Oblinger (2003) reports that students believe they are more “Internet savvy” than their teachers and feel they could find better uses of technology than their teachers. These students also believe the technology in schools is outdated and can be inhibiting.

Teachers, on the other hand, have not always had technology as part of their own learning or teaching repertoire. Many teachers can be categorized as being “digital immigrants” who learned technology later than childhood or who have developed a

fascination with it. Digital immigrants, according to Prensky (2001), speak with an “accent” such as printing an email or having a secretary print an email before reading it.

Preparing the 21st Century Student for the Future

American public high schools have long been entrusted with preparing students to be future citizens (Gandy & Grider, 2007). As that future changes, schools must adapt and connect the new learning styles and attitudes of the digital native, millennial student with the experience and knowledge of the digital immigrant teachers. This millennial student needs a skillful, innovative, and knowledgeable 21st century teacher to recognize that times have changed. Teachers of today need to engage students in higher order thinking, problem solving, and collaborating with others. Schools need to focus on deeper, authentic learning practices that match the needs of the new students’ learning styles with the changing demands of the 21st century global workplace.

Business Education Reaches the 21st Century Student

Business education has historical roots that trace back to early colonial education. What began as mostly vocational education has transformed into education *about* business, allowing students to become better citizens and education *for* business, preparing students for the workplace (Hosler & Meggison, 2008). Business education curriculum encompasses many of the skills that students will need in the 21st century workplace. In addition, many business educators are in a unique position having changed careers from business and industry to becoming secondary business educators. This dynamic group of teachers has a wealth of knowledge and expertise. They become the connection between the world of work and the school and will prepare students for the future through authentic learning that allows students to see the meaning of why they

learn particular content (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). The career change business educator can provide this necessary connection between the content and skills learned in the classroom environment and the importance of its real world application. Not only are business educators traditionally trained in content areas that include business and technology, but the business educator with prior business experience can then bring that content to life through experiences and knowledge that a traditionally trained teacher may not possess. Career change teachers, a growing population, bring a different set of skills and personality traits to teaching than their traditionally trained colleagues (Bigelow, 1956). They may be able to make real world connections in the classroom that encourage greater understanding and higher learning through innovative instructional strategies and teaching styles that engage the student in a way that traditional education cannot (Chambers, 2002; Resta et al., 2001).

Business education, as a content area, has experienced drastic change over the last 20 years. Business education spans from elementary computer curriculum such as keyboarding, to secondary curriculum that includes multi-level business and technology topics (Anderson, 2008; Hosler & Meggison, 2008). Business educators were once the teachers of secretarial skills such as typewriting and shorthand, however, roles have evolved to teaching computer applications, programming, and networking, e-commerce, multimedia, desktop publishing, Web page design and entrepreneurship (Anderson, 2008; Hosler & Meggison, 2008; Crews, Moore, Rader, & Rowe, 2006). Many business education departments offer professional certifications that can be used in the workplace (Anderson, 2008). In the 21st century, business educators are charged with providing skills that students need in a global economy (Perreault, 2007). Schools have not been

focused on business education or 21st century skills, as they have been faced with the high stakes accountability for proficiency on standardized tests in core content areas such as math, science, reading, and writing. As schools have felt the squeeze of federally mandated accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001), the need for reform in business education and technology programs and in 21st century skills has not been of central focus. Schools still offer business education courses as electives (Anderson, 2008), while 21st century skills and preparation remain a high priority with businesses and the general population.

Attracting and Keeping Good Teachers

In addition to the call for educational reform by business and society, the demand for teachers continues to increase. It has been predicted that in the decade leading to the 2008-09 school year that 1.7 million to 2.7 million newly hired public school teachers would be needed, and that each year over 150,000 teachers would be hired (Hussar, 2000). Hussar (2000) states that there are many reasons for this level of demand including retirement of baby boomers in teaching, increased enrollment, teachers leaving the profession and new requirements in school districts. Another key factor in teacher demand is the continuation rate of teachers (Hussar, 2000). Teachers often do not stay in teaching, and Hussar (2000) states that this is especially true when there is a good economy and other opportunities are present for teachers to find higher paying positions. Therefore, the field of teaching can be an ever-changing field, with some leaving the profession for better opportunities while the need for teachers continues to grow. Christensen (2003) predicts that career changers will help to fill the teacher shortages that will occur over the next decade and that finding new sources of teachers is important as

the shortage may not be able to be filled with traditional teacher education. The career changers who enter the field of teaching may receive their training in various types of alternative and acceleration teacher preparation programs that differ greatly from traditional, undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn more about how career change business educators teach today's unique students. Specifically, this study will examine how prior business experience influences curriculum and instructional strategies in the classroom. The study will assess the practices of career change business educators including their background and preparation for becoming a teacher, their knowledge of business and curriculum of business education, as well as special skills and characteristics they possess that may differ from traditionally trained teachers. This study seeks to understand if and how connections are being made to the real world of business and how that connection influences their teaching. In addition, this study will seek to understand the differences between the teachers' expectations of teaching and the reality of what they experience as teachers. As schools across the nation struggle with issues of 21st century educational reform, preparing millennial students for the global workplace, and teacher shortage and retention, this study seeks to understand this unique population of educators and how it fits into the realm of 21st century education.

Definition of Terms

21st century learning

Twenty first century learning is defined by NCREL enGauge (2003) as fitting into four distinct skill clusters; (1) digital-age literacy, (2) inventive thinking, (3) effective communication, (4) high productivity.

21st century skills

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2004) defines a framework of 21st century skills that includes (1) learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills and (3) life and career skills.

Career changer/Second career teacher/Career-switcher

A career changer, second career teacher or a career switcher is a person who has had a first career in an area not in education such as business. In the literature, these three terms are used interchangeably, and therefore in this writing, “career changer” or “career change educator” will be used.

Digital native

Prensky (2001) defines the digital native as a young person who has grown up with technology and thinks and processes information differently. This young person is used to multi-tasking, receiving instant feedback and works better when networking with others.

Alternative certification program

Alternative certification program has been defined as a program “designed for adults who decide to enter teaching after completing the baccalaureate degree in fields other than education” (Bohning, Hale, & Chowning, 1999, p. 143).

Digital immigrant

The digital immigrant is an older person who did not grow up with technology and learned it or became fascinated with it later in life (Prensky, 2001).

Millennial

Oblinger (2003) describes the millennial as a young person born since 1982 who possess characteristics such as a preference for group activity, a fascination for technology, and who is very social.

Research Questions

This study seeks to investigate how currently employed career change business education teachers integrate previous business experience in the secondary classroom. Specifically, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

- (1) How do career change business educators connect their real-world business experience and the business education curriculum?
- (2) How are the instructional strategies employed in the classroom influenced by prior real-world business experience?
- (3) How does the expectation of teaching for career change business educators measure up to the reality of their teaching experiences?

Significance of the Study

In a society that is demanding educational reform to better prepare 21st century workers, and where a teacher shortage is still in critical status due to an aging teacher population and teacher attrition, the career change business education teacher is a growing population that needs to be investigated. Career change in adult life is a topic that has not received much attention (Teixeira and Gomes, 2000) and specifically career

change teachers are a promising but an ignored segment of the labor force (Crow et al., 1990; Friedus & Krasnow, 1991; Serow & Forrest, 1994). Teixeira and Gomes (2000) describe a trend that career changes in professional adults are occurring at a higher frequency rate than ever before through increases in job market changes, lack of job security and perhaps extinction of some professions. As career change teachers increase as an important segment in the field, it is important to study this group and its potential impact on K-12 education and teacher preparation. While there is research in existence of career changers who become teachers, and even some who were employed in business, there is little to no research with specific attention from real-world business to business education. More specifically, there is a gap in the research that directly applies business experience to the pedagogical practices in the business education classroom. Business education has always been a content area that focuses on the future and has pursued objectives of “occupational competence and economic efficiency” (Hosler & Meggison, 2008, p. 16). Business education encompasses 21st century skills and subjects necessary for the 21st century student to succeed in the workplace. Specifically, career change business educators are a unique population within our changing educational environment that warrants further study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

21st Century Skills and the Workplace

In 1991, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), issued a report that described how businesses and schools must work together to prepare students for the future of the global, high-tech workplace (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). This report was a call to action for schools to reevaluate what they are teaching students and to redirect the focus to the skills and competencies identified in the report. The five competencies identified by SCANS are (1) Resources, (2) Interpersonal, (3) Information, (4) Systems, and (5) Technology. In addition, three skill areas were defined: (1) Basic, (2) Thinking, and (3) Personal Qualities. Schools, according to the report, are to prepare students for various levels of proficiency in these areas and provide the training necessary for them to succeed in the world of work. Schools were charged to match the needs of the workplace with what students were being taught, and it was recommended that changes also be made in instructional delivery and in the ways that students learn (Hosler & Meggison, 2008). Since 1991, the focus has been on the standardized test results and the high stakes accountability of the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The core content areas of math, science, reading and writing have received primary attention in order to meet the federal mandate.

The International Society for Technology Education's National Education Technology Standards for Students (ISTE NETS) Project has recently issued its Next Generation standards. While the previously issued ISTE NETS Profiles for Students

concentrated on technology tools that students should know, the Next Generation standards focus on skills. The six areas of skills competency outlined as follows:

- Creativity and Innovation
- Communication and Collaboration
- Research and Information Fluency
- Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving, and Decision-Making
- Digital Citizenship
- Technology Operations and Concepts

(ISTE NETS, 2007)

Many states have their own views of what skills should be taught in preparation of the 21st century workforce. For example, in 1998, the State of Michigan conducted a statewide survey of businesses and found three broad skill areas that employers seek: academic, management, and teamwork (Zinser, 2003). As a result, the Michigan Department of Education published a set of career and employability skills content standards to help students move successfully into the world of work and/or continuing education and are comprised of the following content:

- Applied academic skills
- Career planning
- Developing and presenting information
- Problem solving
- Personal management
- Organizational skills
- Teamwork

- Negotiation skills
- Understanding systems
- Using employability skills

(Michigan State of Education as cited in Zinser, 2003)

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills who links business and education, has defined The Framework of 21st Century Learning as a vision of skills that are necessary for success in society including:

- Core subjects (like those under No Child Left Behind)
- 21st century content (global awareness, finance, economics and business, literacy in entrepreneurship, civics, as well as awareness in health and wellness)
- Learning and thinking skills (critical thinking, problem solving, communication, creativity and innovation, collaboration, contextual learning, and media literacy)
- Information and communication technology (ICT) Literacy
- Life skills (leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity and responsibility, interpersonal skills, self-direction and social responsibility)

(Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004)

As all areas can be tied into Business Education or applied across the curricular areas, there are two specific areas that directly apply to Business, Computer & Information Technology (BCIT) teachers in Pennsylvania: The Core Subject and 21st Century Theme of Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy, and

Information, Media and Technology Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004). In the core subject and 21st century theme of Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy, goals include understanding how to make personal economic choices, the role of the economy in society and how to use entrepreneurial skills for both personal careers and for workplace productivity. Business education specifically addresses these areas in its classes and curriculum. In the area of Information, Media and Technology skills, the framework includes Information Communications Technology (ICT) Literacy and goals of using technology in a variety of ways to “function in a knowledge economy” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004). This area also includes how to use technology as a research and evaluation tool and understanding ethical and legal implications surrounding access and use of information. BCIT teachers in Pennsylvania focus on these areas in the curriculum, and many are adapting the curriculum to specifically meet ICT Literacy requirements. Of particular interest in the study of career change teachers from business to business education, a third area from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2004) stands out under the heading of 21st Century Curriculum and Instruction. While its goals are to teach the 21st skills “discretely in the context of core subjects” and to apply those skills across content areas, it states the importance of innovative learning methods, problem-based approaches to learning, higher order thinking skills, and the “integration of community resources beyond school walls” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004). Business educators, especially career change business educators, successfully meet the needs of the 21st century learner through this style of teaching and their connections to the business world.

Balotsky and Christensen (2004) proposed the need to create a revised teaching pedagogy to better reflect 21st century business success. Pedagogy should be both traditional and IT-mediated so that students become proficient in the needed technologies in the workplace and because of workplace demand (Balotsky & Christensen, 2004). Their focus was specifically on the higher education training of tomorrow's business leaders, however, the importance of 21st century skills is important for K-12 as well, as many of those students will progress to business programs at the college level. Hallinan and Khmelkov (2001) recognize the pressure that teachers face in today's society as a reflection of the economy and the demand for skilled workers. Teachers must learn new skills to meet the demands of the 21st century. They must focus on competence in technology as well as job-related skills and expertise.

The global culture and the combination of media and technology is challenging education as we know it and changing our outlook on the world (Thoman & Jolls, 2004). These authors believe that there should be a focus on media literacy education as necessary to be a functioning part of the 21st century in terms of citizenship, living, and working. Thoman and Jolls (2004) believe that media has infiltrated our lives with powerful images and sounds, stating that "media no longer just shape our culture – they are our culture" (p. 18).

The global community is of recurring importance in the literature about 21st century skills in education and in the workplace. It is important in today's world for teachers to be able to deliver necessary education needed in a complex, global community (Dempsey, DEST, McKenzie, OECD as cited in Williams, 2004). International skills are highly valued 21st century skills as well in becoming successful

citizens and workers (Kagan & Stewart, 2004). Teachers need to be prepared in how to teach culturally diverse populations and to assist students in becoming informed learners and citizens (Gutierrez, 2000).

In the 2006 report *Tough Choices or Tough Times*, the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce made bold statements about globalization and the fact that the United States no longer can remain comfortable as a leader of industry. The report urges educators to provide high levels of preparation in not only core subjects but in technology, the arts, history and literature, being proactive and constant with technical competence and cultivating workers who possess higher order thinking skills such as opposing ideals such as “analysis and synthesis...creativity and discipline...and flexibility and organization” (Lozar Glenn, 2007, p. 12).

Many organizations have defined the skills needed by today’s global workplace, and although slightly different, the urgent need for reform is a recurring theme that transcends them all.

Business Education

Business education remains an important part of American education, and because of technology, it has evolved dramatically over the past 50 years. In the 1950s, Bigelow (1956) conducted a seminal study of how business experience affected business educators. He found that the business experience gave the business teachers more confidence, and that administrators preferred a business teacher with business experience over those without. In addition, he found that business experience provided these teachers with information they could not have gained in any other way than in practical business

experience. The participants in his study in the 1950s taught secretarial, bookkeeping, and general business courses.

Many people agree that business education is important for students, and in order for business education to prepare students for the 21st century workplace, it must be flexible to change and progress (Gandy & Gryder, 2007). Over time, the teaching of business has grown from the secretarial and bookkeeping content to include more up-to-date courses such as marketing, accounting, office technology and data processing, each of which, until recently, required a separate certificate in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania recently changed the secondary education certification from a 7-12 secondary certification to a K-12 certification in Business, Computer & Information Technology (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2004). This comprehensive BCIT certificate now represents the technological shift of society that is reflected in business education in our schools, such as the lowering of business and technology courses into the middle school and even into the elementary school (Lozar Glenn, 2006). This necessary push into lower grades is a response to the digital native, millennial student who now possesses the technological knowledge and skills earlier in life. Lozar Glenn (2006) asserts that technology must be the background and that projects should be the focus for integrating technology and business concepts. Wagner (as cited in Lozar Glenn, 2006) states that students often come ready to the classroom with technology skills, and do not need typing training when they already have their own e-mail and Web pages. This shift is reflected in the changing role of the business educator over the past 20 years. Business education has evolved greatly, shifting from traditional business courses such as typewriting, shorthand and basic business to courses such as computer applications,

networking, e-commerce, desktop publishing, Web page design, and entrepreneurship (Crews et al., 2006). These courses better reflect new technologies and a changing workplace of the 21st century. Gandy and Gryder (2007) assert that business educators have an important mission to teach students how to process information, think using higher order skills and to adapt quickly and solve problems when faced with unpredictable situations.

The business environment and the academic environment are not always in agreement about the importance of business education in secondary schools. In a study by Brumley, Pollard, and Yopp (1993), an investigation of business managers and secondary principals in three states identified competencies that should be addressed in secondary school. A disparity was revealed on what competencies were important and should be required. They agreed that the following competencies should be required:

- Decision making/critical thinking
- Human relations
- Keyboarding/typewriting
- Word processing and microcomputer applications
- Career awareness/goal setting
- Responsibility/self management
- Future employment opportunities
- Leadership development
- Economics and consumer economics
- Taxes and law

(Brumley et al., 1993)

The perceived importance of these competencies by the business managers and principals showed differences in these additional areas:

- Business communication
- Business math
- Small business management
- Management functions
- Marketing and distribution functions

(Brumley et al., 1993)

Brumley, Pollard, and Yopp (1993) support the need for these competencies to be required as business and industry has been spending two-thirds of training budgets to develop communication skills, word processing, writing, speaking, and more (Honl as cited in Brumley et al., 1993). Business math involves problem solving and decision making in addition to the basic calculations that can be tied to real world situations. Because opportunities for employment are increasingly arising in small businesses as opposed to large corporations, management and leadership abilities are necessary for project teams and decision making within the job environment. Lastly, marketing and distribution require an employee who can think quickly, maintain accurate business records, are flexible, and work well with others. Regarding the importance of business education, both populations were asked if it was more important than the previous decade. The results were alarmingly different; 93% of the business managers indicated that it was more important now than in the last decade compared to 57% of principals (Brumley et al., 1993). Moreover, the principals in general did not perceive a change in business education programs over the past decade. Business education has had significant

change, moving from bookkeeping, accounting, and typing to a wide array of competency areas such as computer application/simulation including computerized accounting, word processing and desktop publishing, economics and consumer economics, leadership development, parliamentary procedures, basic business and marketing, and business communications. Even though principals agreed with business managers that business competencies and skills are necessary to succeed, they did not necessarily agree they should be required for all students to be successful in today's society. The business managers were in support of requiring business education for all students because all students will be required at some point in their lives to make business decisions either personally or professionally. This formal business education should be required by students before graduation, and work experience opportunities that prepare them for the working world should be a high priority (Brumley et al., 1993). In addition, business and marketing courses have always been "designed to promote communication skills, mathematics, leadership, teamwork, friendly competition, and self-esteem" (Brumley et al., 1993, p. 48). Secondary curriculum decision makers should be aware of the role that business education can play in preparation of students in the business and marketing competencies required by the working world.

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Although a well-designed business education curriculum is essential to the preparation of 21st century students, effective instruction must be evident for student achievement. Many highly effective and well-respected teachers exemplify common characteristics that contribute to their success in the classroom. Polk (2006) asserts that

there are consistent traits of master teachers and he identifies ten basic characteristics of effective teachers:

1. good prior academic performance
2. communication skills
3. creativity
4. professionalism
5. pedagogical knowledge
6. thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment
7. self-development or lifelong learning
8. personality
9. talent or content area knowledge
10. ability to model concepts in their content area

(Polk, 2006)

A study conducted by Krueger (as cited in Polk, 2006) asked students and administrators to rank a list of 37 teacher behaviors and attributes they felt were fundamental to effective communication of material. While administrators and students agreed on things such as clarity, such as in giving directions, students ranked knowledge of subject matter third. In contrast, the administrators ranked it nineteenth. For a business practitioner who leaves industry to teach business, the content area knowledge may play an important role in effective teaching for 21st students as it connects the outside world to the curriculum.

In addition to content area knowledge, teacher enthusiasm and energy is part of the category of effective communication in teaching. A business education teacher who

has left business to teach business may be able to share experiences that may emerge as personal insight into the curriculum of the K-12 classroom. By personalizing the curriculum, Polk (2006) asserts that increased student attention and enjoyment can be reached through this energetic and intense style of teaching.

Another area of effective instruction that relates to career change business educators is modeling. A business teacher who has real world business experience may model specific strengths or characteristics of a business professional that may carry over into the K-12 classroom. While modeling has led students to emulate effective teacher characteristics and assisted in advancing student achievement (Polk, 2006), perhaps the complex business concepts gained from real world business experience can be transferred into the K-12 classroom to better prepare students for the global society that awaits them in the post-secondary realm.

Characteristics and Challenges of Career Change Teachers

Bringing unique qualities and skills into the classroom, more and more adults, including business practitioners, are changing careers to teaching (Chambers, 2002). There is not a large amount of research conducted on specifically business education career change teachers, however, research can be found about career change teachers in general. Career change teachers see themselves differently than first-career teachers and feel they can offer valuable skills that can transfer from their prior experience (Chambers, 2002; Novak & Knowles, 1992). These transferable skills include communication, organization, management, multi-tasking, analytical thinking, as well as the ability to share life experience with students. Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003) assert that career changers who choose the field of teaching will change the profile of newly

qualified teachers and bring expertise such as management and organizational skills to the profession. Lord (2000) reported that the life experience of career change teachers helps them to manage the classroom better and help them to relate to parents more effectively than their younger coworkers. Chambers (2002) also reported that the career change teachers' age and experience provide them with specialized teaching skills and abilities to manage multiple projects, think analytically, and display a highly developed work ethic. Due to the unique characteristics of non-traditional teachers, such as career change business educators, there may be positive, in-depth effects on the classroom as well as education in general. In light of the influence that career change business educators bring into the classroom, there is evidence of alignment with the necessary skills for the 21st century workplace. Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2002) state "midcareer individuals understand the realities of the workplace within the global economy and want to do their best to prepare students to be successful adults" (p. 62). As teaching 21st century skills is a call for reform in the United States, it is important to note that career change teachers often feel like empowered agents of change and may participate in educational reform (Chambers, 2002).

The skills that career change teachers bring to the profession affect pedagogical practices in the classroom as well as the creation of positive learning environments. Chambers (2002) describes a perceived advantage of career change teachers as the "introduction of expert knowledge into the classroom" (p. 215). Teachers who enter the teaching field later may bring skills that transfer not only in the content area, but also in how they approach instructional planning and delivery. In addition, career change teachers "express the value of connecting the classroom to the outside world" (Chambers,

2002, p. 216). They draw on previous experiences in life and work to help students see the connection to the real world. Novak and Knowles (1992) believe these new teachers are promising to the profession as they have the “potential to invigorate the teaching of academic subject matter” and that career change educators deserve special attention and fostering (p. 3). Career change educators, through the infusion of their previous experiences, can have a significant impact on the classroom.

In addition to experience, age may be an important factor for career change teachers. Crow, Levine, and Nager (1990) noted that “professionals in their thirties and forties are now leaving successful business careers for teaching” (p. 198). Murnane et al. (as cited in Chambers, 2002) noted a “striking age trend” of “men and women licensed at age 31 or older” (p. 212). These teachers are more separated in time from their own school experiences and have more fixed notions of what school should be like, raising the question of whether or not teachers would adopt current pedagogical reforms (Chambers, 2002). Despite this concern, Chambers (2002) found that the career change teachers were *more* likely to adopt new and sometimes uncomfortable strategies, bring broader perspectives on how the learning experience should be and creating new and exciting curricula.

Powers (1999) studied the organizational socialization processes of mid-life career change teachers and found that participants felt they were more innovative than their peers of a more traditional certification route, yet they experienced systemic pressure to not implement new teaching methods. Career changers also felt that they needed more encouragement and preparation time from the administrators. Powers (1999) found career changers were frustrated regarding student motivation and discipline,

especially during the first year of teaching. These career change teachers used their life experiences to deal with any surprises that arose in teaching and to understand the new career in general. Powers (1999) believes it is the responsibility of the teacher to explain why and how the content is important in the everyday life of the student, and that authenticating this information and its application requires innovative methods, which career change educators inherently embed in their instruction.

An additional study on career change teachers by Rohlwing (2006) concentrated on the perceptions of teaching reading and of classroom practices in the area of reading and literacy. The study focused on how their life experiences and “literacy lives” influenced their practice in the classroom. She found that their personal worldview served as a “filtering lens for classroom practice” and was reflected in their literacy instruction (Rohlwing, 2006, p.1).

A study of career change teachers by Madfes (1990) found that participants were “verbal, articulate, and mature workers” who were able to assess the workplace and their responsibilities quickly (p. 178). She also stated that younger teachers who do not possess the same maturity and wealth of work experiences are often unable to express frustrations and joys as they often have to learn to work as they learn to teach (p. 178). Teachers with business experience can understand the interrelationships between professionals and see perspectives from which traditionally trained teachers may not be prepared. Madfes (1990) states, “these experienced workers have the ability to interpret the work of a teacher from a vantage point of knowing what other professional situations and relationships involve” (p. 174).

Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2001) describe those who change careers into teaching from other fields are said to bring “maturity, experience and commitment” (p. 60). These “midcareer candidates” can bring maturity, life experience, and good work habits to the profession. They can enrich their teaching through authentic examples from their past experience. “They give real world answers to the age-old student question, ‘Why do we have to learn this?’” (p. 61). The research indicates a positive effect of the life and career experience of a career change teacher in terms of skills, knowledge, and personality traits that are transferred to the classroom.

Although there are many benefits of career change teachers in experience, knowledge, and skills, they bring challenges to the workplace unlike younger, traditionally trained teachers. They have different needs, such as perhaps differentiated teacher education programs requiring modified supervision and ongoing reflection (Freidus & Krasnow, 1991). Career change teachers may also bring challenges to administration with regard to personality traits. They are not easily persuaded and have high expectations for problem solving, mentoring, and moral support (Resta et al., 2001). They have little patience for bureaucracy and see it as a barrier to teaching students. They also believe that strong collegial and administrative support is crucial to their successful induction into teaching. According to Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2001), “Administrators who want docile teachers who won’t make waves may not be prepared for the assertive, resourceful and vocal second-career teacher” and “those administrators who appreciate the skill, wisdom, resourcefulness, and determination of the career changer who have come through high quality teacher preparation programs will find strong teachers committed to student learning” (p. 62). In order for our students to be

competitive in the 21st century workplace, it is vital that education leaders embrace the value of career change teachers and recognize that the benefits outweigh the challenges.

Motivations of Career Change Teachers

Although career change teachers bring positive business achievements and experiences to the K-12 classroom, many career change teachers perceive that teaching will be even more fulfilling than their previous career (Chambers, 2002; Daraviras, 2006). Often career change teachers cite specific reasons for choosing teaching as being motivated through the desire to make a difference and perceived personal benefits (Chambers, 2002; Powers, 1999). Christensen (2003) performed a phenomenological study describing and analyzing the motivations of career change teachers, with the object of finding the motivational factors that influenced the career change teachers' decision to become a teacher. Seven themes were identified in the research:

- back of mind teaching desire
- dislike of previous occupation
- spousal support
- teacher, friend, family member encouragement
- inspired awakening
- impact on society
- role of a Professional Development School

(Christensen, 2003)

Of the seven themes found, three had not been mentioned in previous literature: the role of spousal support, the role of teacher, friend and family member encouragement and the role of a Professional Development School. The role of spousal support and the role of

teacher, friend, and family member encouragement were found to be key motivational factors in the teachers deciding to change careers. Many of the participants made financial sacrifices and needed both financial and emotional support and encouragement during the career change process. The role of a Professional Development School (PDS) was also important to the participants' motivation. The format of the PDS is considered an alternative certification because the career change could happen in a shorter timeframe and in a practical environment that combines the theory and practice of teaching (Christensen, 2003).

In 2003, Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant described a research project in England called Change for the Better, funded by the Teacher Training Agency that focused on career changers into secondary school teaching. There were two phases in this project: exploratory research into motivations to change careers into teaching and recruitment strategies that may encourage career changers into teaching. One purpose of the study was to shed some encouraging light on the field of teaching which the authors describe as “embattled and beleaguered, operating under eroding disciplinary standards and hence facing teacher shortages” (p. 96). Six different profiles were identified in the research: the parent, the successful careerist, the freelancer, the late starter, the serial careerist, and the young career changer.

Daraviras (2006) conducted a case study of career change teacher candidates who all believed teaching would be more meaningful than their previous careers and would better align their personalities with their careers. Teacher candidates in this study cited positive memories of schooling, previous teaching careers and personality traits of favorite teachers, such as the “love of their discipline” (p. 135). It is these unique

characteristics and desires that build the foundation for effective instruction for education in the 21st century.

Pathways to Certification for Career Change Teachers

Career change teachers already possess the desire and motivation to enter the teaching profession. Increasingly career men and women are leaving professions to become teachers (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Hallinan and Kmelkov (2001) predict a need for hiring over 2 million new teachers in order to place a qualified teacher in all classrooms over the next decade. Career change teachers may be one answer to this teacher shortage (Resta et al., 2001; Serow & Forrest, 1994). According to Basinger (2000), career changers are the fastest growing group of perspective teachers enrolled currently in teacher training programs. Brady (1997) states that an additional trend in teacher education programs is a large number of people abandoning corporate and professional careers to seek spiritual growth in families and communities through teaching. In addition, the National Center for Education Information indicates that career changers account for more than half of students admitted to post-baccalaureate teacher training programs (Lord, 2000). These career change teachers must be trained in content and methods differently than a traditional undergraduate student.

With a looming teacher shortage of over 200,000 K-12 teachers that will be needed in the next decade, an aging teaching force, and rising attrition rates, career changers and retirees from other areas who switch to teaching will emerge from new, comprehensive, and accelerated teacher preparation programs (Resta et al., 2001). These alternative programs may cater to a working or older student or a student who has

obtained a degree in a field other than education, and they lead to teacher certification and usually a master's degree at a university (Bohning et al., 1999). "Alternative describes the route leading to certification – it may be intensified, shortened or changed in some way as compared to traditional teacher programs" (Bohning et al., 1999, p. 143). The group of individuals who attend alternative certification programs are a potentially rich group of teachers in life experiences as well as maturity in comparison to new teachers (Feistritzer as cited in Bohning et al., 1999). Bohning, Hale and Chowning (1999) believe that in addition to maturity and life experience, alternative certification programs are believed to be successful in preparing career change teachers.

It appears that there are many varying views about the benefits and disadvantages of traditional teacher certification versus alternative teacher certification, and much of it centers on placing highly qualified teachers into the classroom while meeting demands of teacher shortages. There are many types of alternative certification programs, from placing emergency certified teachers directly into the classroom to post-baccalaureate programs (McKibbin, 2001). Feistritzer and Chester (as cited in McKibbin, 2001) determined elements necessary for a program to be called an Alternative Certification Program:

- The program has been specifically designed to recruit, prepare and license talented individuals for teaching who already have at least a bachelor's degree
- Candidates for the programs pass a rigorous screening process, such as passing tests, interviews, and demonstrated mastery of content
- The programs are field based and have as the goal a permanent teaching credential

- The programs include coursework or equivalent experiences in professional education studies while teaching
- Candidates for teaching work closely with trained support providers
- Candidates must meet high standards for completion of programs.

According to McKibbin, there are many programs that do not fit those qualifications but that have provided valuable services such as recruiting services and support, such as Troops to Teachers, Teach for America, the Peace Corps Fellows Program and Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.

McKibbin (2001) suggests that both traditional and alternative methods to certification of teachers need improvement, and that it is important to recognize how people learn through either route. McKibbin (2001) asserts that in both cases, theory is separated from practice and training is weak. Common concerns relate to student teaching and the selection of the cooperating teacher (McKibbin, 2001). Others have concerns that students are being taught by interns and student teachers who are just learning their craft under a “learn as you go” approach. McKibbin (2001) uses a legislative description of a qualified teacher that is defined in California law as “a person who has met the prerequisite requirements, which include baccalaureate degree, demonstration of basic skills and subject matter competence, character identification, and participation in a Commission-approved teacher preparation program” (McKibbin, 2001, p. 136).

Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2001) believe that there is a shift away from the alternative certification programs that employ teachers before earning certification to “intensive, accelerated field based programs that culminate in initial certification before

the individual is employed as a teacher” (p. 61). There is a focus on the Teacher Recruitment and Induction Project (TRIP) that is a collaborative project of the Southwest Texas State University College of Education, Science and Liberal Arts as well as seven school districts that was designed specifically for mid-career adults. It targets adults with bachelor’s degrees and provides them with high-quality preparation and facilitates their employment in higher needs schools. It also supports them during their induction period of the first two years of teaching (Resta et al., 2001). Because the teachers receive the official certification before employment, Resta, Huling and Rainwater (2001) believe it is not an alternative certification program. It involves tough curriculum in the following:

- Content preparation
- Pedagogy
- Human growth and development
- Principles of teaching and learning
- Classroom management
- Instructional strategies
- Curriculum development
- Content integration
- Assessment of student learning
- Technology applications
- Content pedagogy

(Resta et al., 2001)

The type and intensity of initial teacher training under accelerated or alternative certification programs may be an important factor in retention of teachers. Jorissen

(2003) notes the challenge of retaining new teachers especially in urban schools. In a qualitative study focused on six black sixth-year teachers in two Midwestern urban school districts, it was found that an alternative route preparation program helped them to make a successful career transition into teaching. The successful factors of the program included effective instruction in content and pedagogy, as well as a close mentoring relationship between faculty and a cohort. Jorissen (2003) believes that there are developmental needs that are significant when teachers have transitioned from other careers. Zumwalt (as cited in Jorissen, 2003) believes that alternative certification “attracts more diverse, mature, academically able teachers, it is argued, who want to teach in urban schools, are more likely to be successful and are more likely to stay there, breaking the cycles of high turnover” (p 42). Central to this point is the growing need to staff schools and the process of preparing alternate route teachers. Jorissen (2003) states the need for “highly qualified” teachers again under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. She describes alternate route preparation in as little as two weeks of training before entering the classroom to two-year post-baccalaureate programs with three years of mentoring. The design of programs that will increase the staying power of the alternatively certified teacher is an important consideration especially for urban schools (Jorissen, 2003). Jorissen (2003) found in previous research that an important piece in retention of these alternatively certified teachers is length of their preparation program; there have been higher retention of alternate route teachers that have completed longer preparation programs that included field work. By preparing highly qualified teachers through proper alternative certification programs, there may be a new type of teacher who is competent and will make a commitment to remain in teaching (Jorissen, 2003).

Teacher Retention

This career change population may have a significant impact in the field of education and may stay longer than traditional education teachers. Age may play an important role in the critical issue of retention of qualified teachers. Many young teachers do not view a teaching career as long-term (Kwiatkowski as cited in deBettencourt & Howard, 2004). Career change teachers, or teachers who are licensed through alternative licensure programs, may be likely to remain in teaching, but the research in this area is mixed (deBettencourt & Howard, 2004).

Research shows that teachers entering the field at an older age have lower attrition rates than those entering at a younger age (Basinger, 2000; Grissmer, 2000 as cited in Resta et. al., 2001). Subsequently, one may question whether one who changes careers from business to education will remain there, given that there are more financial and advancement opportunities in the business world. Career change teachers seeking to make differences in lives of students are willing to make financial sacrifices (Crow et al., 1990; Serow & Forrest, 1994). Career change teachers tend to view teaching not as a job, but as a profession (Novak & Knowles, 1992). Spirituality may play a role in changing careers as well, as some teachers have expressed the desire for “flow” in their lives, or taking part in an activity because the experience itself is so enjoyable that it is worth the cost just to do it (Csikszentmihalyi as cited in Christensen, 2003). Commitment to teaching was found to be an important theme in the work of Crow, Levine, and Nager (1990). They studied career-changers who became teachers and identified recurring themes from their participants as (1) homecomers, who felt that they were always meant to teach (2) the converted, who did not consider teaching until changed by a pivotal

event, or (3) the unconverted, who had achieved high status in former occupations (Crow et al., 1990). Both the homecomers and the converted career-change teachers seemed likely to remain in the profession longer as a result of a deliberate choice to transition to education.

Crow, Levine, and Nager (1990) also noted that some cooperating teachers were not receptive or supportive of the “unusual shift from business to education” or “encountered teachers who were suspicious of their desire to apply knowledge and skills acquired in previous occupations” (p. 219). It was noted that more preparation and better communication may be necessary between education and business for the future of these career-change teachers.

Retention of career change teachers may depend on how teachers perceive the difference between expectations and reality and their levels of job satisfaction. In a study of the meaning of work of career change mathematics and science teachers, it was found that the career changers were older, more mature and yet novice teachers, who found the “work” of teaching rewarding, yet the “job” of teaching was frustrating and cumbersome (Madfes, 1990). They felt that teaching was stressful yet enjoyable and they felt rewarded and emotional attachments to students. The participants felt isolated from other professionals and often frustrated with apathetic students.

Powers (1999) describes challenges such as being placed into situations that are not familiar as in their prior careers, making especially the first year transition difficult. In general the participants in Powers’ study tried to seek similarities between prior careers and teaching, however, found that different types of leadership were required for students versus other professionals, as students do not have the “frame of reference”

required to relate to an adult professional (Powers, 1999, p. 186). Some participants stated that they had “taught” in other professions. Several challenges were identified, such as student motivation and discipline, fatigue, isolation and administrators. Some participants felt very different than their peers and felt as if they were not accepted well by those who were more traditionally trained teachers. Powers (1999) recommended that those who plan to teach as a second career should be aware of surprises that may arise especially the first year that are different than other careers. In addition, Powers warns not to expect promotions, frequent compliments and close personal relationships with peers and superiors. He recommends to school districts that as teacher reform becomes more in focus, they should capitalize on the career change teachers’ experience in the “world of work” and the “wisdom of life” (p. 235). Lastly, his recommendation to administrators is to be aware of the management and leadership skills of the career change teacher and embrace them to enhance the quality of the district.

Powell (1996) conducted case studies with four teachers who changed careers to teaching: two English teachers and two science teachers. The study was conducted over one year and looked at how personal philosophies were shaped by prior experiences in addition to the curriculum in the school district. This study explored relationships between life experience and classroom teaching and personal practical knowledge as well as personal theories, which can affect the philosophies and how curriculum is approached (Powell, 1996). Powell (1996) found that career change teachers may feel prohibited from infusing authenticity and prior experience into curricula, which he states is the difference in teaching prescribed curriculum versus becoming a “curriculum maker” (p. 171). These frustrations lead to lessened job satisfaction, which may in turn factor into

teacher retention and lack of commitment. Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant (2003) posit that there exists a gap between the expectations and realities of career changers into secondary education, and that long term retention may be gained through retaining the attractiveness of the profession.

Overall, the literature supports further study of career change business education teachers and the unique perspectives and skills they may bring to the classroom. A career change teacher has shown promise in connecting students and content to real world applications, as well as longer retention in service. Career change educators have special skills and characteristics that set them apart from traditionally trained teachers. Today's environment demands engaging strategies to reach a new and different type of student, the 21st century digital native. Business Education as a content area includes so many of the areas that the 21st century marketplace is looking for in its citizens, such as technology, globalization, problem-solving, and collaboration. The career change business educator may be able to creatively connect curriculum to its real world application and meaning through the influence of the prior work experience and exposure. In addition, the career change business educator is a critical contributor to the classroom. Their willingness to remain in the profession longer than traditionally trained teachers combined with unique skills and characteristics, motivational attributes and educational philosophy makes them an invaluable asset to the field of 21st century education.

Theoretical Framework

To investigate this unique population, a framework has been identified that may encapsulate the impact that career change business educators have in the modern 21st

century classroom. Many advocate that it not just *what* a student learns but *how* the student is involved in learning that matters most. Levels of student engagement have been directly linked to student beliefs and expectations for school success (Akey, 2006). By engaging students in authentic and meaningful work, teachers can increase student learning and retention (Hancock and Betts, 2002; Willms as cited in Akey, 2006).

The changing information-based, global society demands educational reform (Bybee & Starkweather, Carnoy, 1998; Fullan, 2007). Skills that are required in the 21st century workforce, such as problem-solving, cooperating with others in teams and continuous learning through life in societal roles are areas that need to be addressed in secondary schools (Carnoy, 1998).

The instructional strategies and styles that involve students and address these areas of reform are called “pedagogies of engagement” and include interaction between teachers and students, cooperation among students and active learning such as problem based learning and team projects in the classroom (Smith et. al, 2005). In a call for action for education, Edgerton (2001) stated:

Throughout the whole enterprise, the core issue, in my view is the mode of teaching and learning that is practiced. Learning ‘about’ things does not enable students to acquire the abilities and understanding they will need for the twenty-first century. We need new pedagogies of engagement that will turn out the kids of resourceful, engaged workers and citizens that America now requires (as cited in Smith, Sheppard, Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p.1).

The National Survey of Student Engagement Project (NSSE) identified five benchmarks among college students regarding student engagement and classroom-based learning that include:

- Level of academic challenge
- Active and collaborative learning
- Student-faculty interaction
- Enriching educational experience
- Supportive campus environment

(as cited in Smith et. al, 2005, p. 1)

In particular, the NSSE project supports that students learn more when “intensely involved in the educational process and when they are encouraged to apply their knowledge in many situations” (p. 1). Students reported that learning was enhanced through opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom and when teachers acted as role models or mentors.

Pedagogies of engagement can be traced back to earlier foundations of education. In 1896, John Dewey described a view of pedagogy that expanded beyond the methods required to teach a particular subject, one that “mirrored the central interaction of expertise and deliberation in a democratic society” (Ehrlich, 1998, p. 493). This democratic society requires “pedagogies of engagement,” which meant that “learners must be engaged with the wider world, must be active problem solvers, and must learn collaboratively” (p. 493). Dewey saw the school as a community where citizens should be prepared to interact with each other and with the outside world. His view of democracy was a “way of life” that “enabled educated citizens to use their full potential

of intellect and emotion for productive and interactive lives” (p. 493). Ehrlich (1998) describes Dewey’s three key elements of the democratic learning process; that it should:

- (1) engage students in reaching outside the walls of the school and the surrounding community;
- (2) focus on problems to be solved; and
- (3) be collaborative, both among students and between students and faculty (p. 494).

The three elements above incorporate Dewey’s ideas of the importance of how a subject is taught and what is taught; that “substance and pedagogy are closely intertwined” (p. 494). Lane (as cited in Ehrlich, 1998) believed that this idea motivated students to learn and then learning was made worthwhile.

Dewey’s ideas of the pedagogies of engagement described by Ehrlich (1998) directly apply to business education as it is intertwined with our community and society as a whole. Civic learning, or understanding the functions of a community, are inherently taught in business education courses, especially those related to economics, general business, and business law. Career education can be also linked to these pedagogies of engagement, as many employers are complaining of interpersonal issues such as discord in the workplace between employees (Ehrlich, 1998), and career education focuses on personal development, leadership and interrelationships with others. Business education often uses problem-based learning, which is another of the pedagogies of engagement. The use of case studies, simulations, and other hands-on projects allow for collaboration and problem-solving skills that can be transferred to other disciplines and to real life. Business education, through the use of projects, problems and cooperative learning, can

also improve collaborative skills such as team building and respect among students as they work together for common goals. Technology is another way that students can build skills in collaboration. Ehrlich (1998) posits that the pedagogies of engagement can improve student learning and achievement and that interactive learning through technology can aid in enhancing those pedagogies. Business education is a natural setting for technology, as the components and the application of technology is part of its curriculum. Business education can reach outside of the traditional classroom and a career change business educator may connect those two environments in an engaging and exciting way.

The framework of Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement will be used to guide this study, focusing specifically on the three main categories of real world connections, collaborative learning, and problem-solving. Through interviews, observations, and documents, this study seeks to better understand if and how career change business educators use their prior business experience and the Pedagogies of Engagement to reach the unique 21st century students and prepare them for success in the future working world.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

This qualitative study investigated how prior real-world business experience influences curriculum and instructional strategies in the classrooms of career change secondary business educators. It also investigated the views of the business educators relating to their expectations of education and teaching as they have experienced it. The analytical framework for this study used was Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement theory, and the design was a collective case study. Qualitative research relies on the assumption that "individuals interact with their social worlds," and that meaning is both derived through individual experience and conveyed through the researcher's perceptions (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). The study took place in the participants' natural setting, with little to no disruption to normal activity. Careful consideration was taken to ensure that the researcher attempted to understand the participants' perspective.

Collective Case Study

The research study design was a multi-site, collective case study with an embedded approach, which is an aspect of the case but not the whole case itself (Creswell, 2007). A case can be defined as a single unit or bounded system such as an individual (Creswell, 2007; Smith as cited in Merriam, 1998). Each teacher participant, or case, was a secondary business education teacher currently employed in a public school. The aspect of the case that was investigated is the influence of the prior real-world business experience on the instructional strategies and perspectives in the secondary business education classroom. There were five pairs of participants in the study, a total of ten people. Replication occurred across cases so that each case was studied under the

same process and procedures (Yin as cited in Creswell, 2007). This allowed for comparison between and within cases regarding the issue or concern, which is the influence of prior real-world business experience on the instructional strategies, methods, practices and perspectives in the secondary business education classroom. The collective case study allowed for multiple examples of the phenomenon, and because it is occurring in real-life situations, provided rich and holistic descriptions of the investigation (Merriam, 1998). Case study research is effective for the field of education and is “particularly useful for studying educational innovations” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41) which makes it a natural fit for studying the influences of prior business work experience on the classroom strategies of the career-change secondary business educator.

Sample Selection

Through the use of purposive sampling, five teachers were selected from a pool of candidates that would best assist the researcher in the understanding of the research questions (Creswell, 2007). It was important to choose multiple cases that allow different perspectives on the same issue or concern. Because the intent was to deeply investigate the participants with specific guiding questions in mind, purposeful sampling was used to carefully select the participants who may provide the best understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). The criteria for selection of the sample were as follows:

- (1) The teacher participant must be employed as a full-time, secondary business education teacher in a public school district;
- (2) The teacher participant must have real-world business work experience prior to teaching business education;

- (3) The teacher participant must be willing to open his or her classroom to observation and willing to partake in interviews with the investigator;
- (4) The teacher participant must allow a principal to reflect on how the prior business experience influences the teacher participant's classroom practices.

The five teacher participants, the career change business educators, were selected from a list of graduates provided to me from a mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program. The five principal participants were provided by the teacher participants and were administrators who had observed the career change business educator in the classroom.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Career Change Business Educators

Teacher	Job before Teaching Business Education	Age When Career Change Made/Started Masters Program	Years in Teaching	Principal who Observed this Career Change Business Educator
Brenda	Database Analyst/Manager	41	2	Mr. Stanley
Jennifer	Marketing/Sales	24	4	Mrs. Beckett
Jeffrey	Marketing/Sales	30	10	Mr. Kendall
Paula	Programmer Analyst	33	15	Mr. Stevens
Justin	Consultant	24	5	Mr. Maxwell

Data Collection

Data collection was extensive and involved a close look at multiple information sources including classroom observations, interviews, and documents (Creswell, 2007). Interviews and observations served as the main data sources, but data has been triangulated through documents, archival records, and physical artifacts including lesson plans, resumes, syllabi, student worksheets and handouts, and formal principal observation forms.

There were two different interviews in the data collection process, one with the teacher participant and one with the principal participant. Each interview was recorded using a digital audio recorder. The teacher participant interviews lasted approximately 30-40 minutes each, and the principal participant interviews lasted approximately 20-30 minutes each. In all interviews, inquiry was made through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, which allowed the gathering of demographical information and responses to pre-determined questions. In addition, the questions encouraged open-ended perspectives and revelations. The teacher participant interview questions stemmed from the three research questions with primary focus on the prior work experience of the career change business educator and the strategies used in the classroom, as well as the perceptions of the teacher participant about his or her own teaching expectations and experience. The full set of teacher participant questions is shown in Appendix A. The principal participant was recommended by the teacher participant and was an administrator who had observed the participant in the classroom. These interview questions focused mainly on the observation as an administrator of the instructional strategies used in the classroom of the career change educator, and perspectives on career change educators' advantages and

disadvantages in education. The full set of principal participant questions can be found in Appendix B. The researcher conducted and audio recorded all interviews with a digital audio recorder, keeping field notes during the interviews. The digital audio recordings were transcribed verbatim using both digital audio recording software and a word processing software.

In addition to the interviews, an observation of the teacher participant was conducted in the business education classroom. This served as a direct observation of the methodology and pedagogy employed in the secondary business education classroom, specifically focusing on the three areas of Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement. A rubric was designed using the three focus areas of the Pedagogies of Engagement (Appendix C). As the researcher is a certified business education teacher, with prior business experience, the content area being taught was within the realm of expertise of the researcher. However, through looking for specific points in the observation process, the bias of the researcher was attempted to be controlled. Lastly, in an effort to fully substantiate and understand each case, artifacts and documents were collected and examined. Each teacher participant provided a resume, lesson plans, a syllabus, student handouts and a copy of a formal observation form. Through cross case analysis and within case analysis, themes were sought to transcend the case (Creswell, 2007) that naturally fit into Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement Theory and allowed for meaningful final interpretation and analysis. Data was collected in the Spring Semester of 2009, before the participants concluded the 2008-2009 school year.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred within each case and across multiple cases. Embedded analysis occurred of specific aspects of the case (Yin as cited in Creswell, 2007), which are the strategies, methods and perceptions of the teacher relating to the prior real-world business experience. The analysis encompasses all of the following data collection methods: interviews, observations, artifacts and documents. The interviews were audio recorded with a digital audio recorder and transcribed verbatim. An observation rubric was completed during each classroom observation that assisted in recall and highlighted certain key points of the theory and the study. Field notes were taken during all interviews and observations. The analysis was performed using both inductive and deductive processes. Using inductive data analysis, broad or general perspectives were formed from the specific raw data collected (Creswell, 2007). These themes and categories were matched against the Pedagogies of Engagement framework.

After transcription of the interviews, data was coded first using open coding, taking all data collected and inductively developing a smaller number of themes for the study (Creswell, 2007). This segmentation was followed by axial coding, which identified one related central theme or phenomenon and sought to find causes, strategies and contexts of influence (Creswell, 2007). Through the constant comparative method of data analysis, the information collected was compared to emerging categories (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). The data was then organized with the central theme and segments that relate to the theoretical framework of Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement. In addition, other emerging themes outside of this framework were captured and revealed in the final interpretation. Within-case analysis provided a detailed description of the issues

and themes for each case. The cross-case analysis examined themes across the cases and interpreted the cases in context with the research questions (Creswell, 2007). Matching the themes to Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement framework supported the original research questions and allowed for thoughtful conclusions and recommendations for future study.

Study Validity and Reliability

In this study, validity was improved through such strategies as triangulation of data through multiple sources and member checks with original participants. In addition, the views and biases of the researcher were stated and clarified from the beginning. Creswell (2007) considers validation the attempt at the "accuracy" of the findings and a strength of qualitative research due to extended time in the field with the participants, "detailed thick description" and "closeness" of the researcher to the participants (p. 206-207). By including multiple cases, there is the potential for enhancing the external validity and generalizability of the findings (Merriam, 1998). Because each case is human, complex and ever-changing, reliability cannot be assumed or assured because repeating it from case to case or to a larger population will not always yield the same result (Merriam, 1998). The career-change business educators were described deeply and uniquely, using as many of their own words as possible to support the data. In order to increase reliability, Merriam (1998) suggests three methods:

- (1) The investigator's position should be identified and described in detail from the beginning of the study process;
- (2) Data triangulation should occur using multiple sources of data collection; and

- (3) An audit trail of detailed documents of process should be deeply described and accessible to others who may want to understand or replicate the study.

All of these methods were addressed and substantiated in this study of career change business educators.

Investigator's Position

The investigator is a career change business educator currently employed as a full-time business education teacher in a public, K-12 school district in Pennsylvania. The investigator believes fully that this population is enriched by prior work experience and is able to bring qualities and richness to the classroom that traditional teachers may not possess. Through the study, the investigator has put methods into place to reduce or eliminate bias. In addition, the investigator found that revelation of position did allow for greater rapport and understanding between participant and investigator.

Limitations

In any research, there are limitations to the study in terms of bias, human error and generalizability. Because in qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data collection, it is imperative that the bias of the researcher be taken into consideration as well as identified up front. Human error in translation may also occur, but may be reduced through member checking and audit trail. In addition, because cases are in different contexts, it will be important not to generalize across cases, but to look for common emergent themes. The passion and the background of the researcher, being a certified, fully employed secondary business education teacher with prior real-world business experience, may allow for a deeper understanding of the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This qualitative study investigated how prior business experience influences career change business education teachers in the secondary business education classroom.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

- (1) How do career change business educators connect their real-world business experience and the business education curriculum?
- (2) How are the instructional strategies employed in the classroom influenced by prior real-world business experience?
- (3) How does the expectation of teaching for career change business educators measure up to the reality of their teaching experiences?

Dewey's Pedagogy of Engagement theory, which outlines three key areas for increasing student engagement and learning, was used to support the research questions and provided the underlying framework for the study. The observation rubrics used in the classroom were based on the three areas of the theory, which are connections to the outside world, collaboration, and problem-solving. Data was triangulated through teacher and principal interviews, classroom observations and a collection of documents such as resumes, course syllabi, lesson plans, student handouts, and administrative observation forms. After the interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, the data was coded through open coding and axial coding, and themes transcended the cases through both within-case and cross-case analysis. Constant comparative data analysis was used to compare data to emerging categories. Several themes were revealed related to each

research question and to the underlying theory of Pedagogies of Engagement, and these themes will be discussed in this chapter.

Research Question 1

The first question was designed to discover how career change business educators connect their real-world business experience and the business education curriculum, or how they connect their work experiences with the business education content. Business education is multifaceted and complex and encompasses a wide range of general business subjects as well as computer technology. The general business subjects include entrepreneurship, business management, personal finance, accounting, business law, marketing, advertising and career development. Technology can include keyboarding, computer applications such as database, presentation, or word processing, desktop publishing, web page programming and design, and computer programming. The career change business educators in this study teach a variety of these courses in both the academic areas as well as the computer technology areas of business education. The career change business educators were asked a series of questions (Appendix A) that were aimed at understanding what they bring to the classroom. In each case, the teacher clearly referenced and incorporated prior work experience and bridged the real world to the business education curriculum for the students. This was evident in all data from the interviews to the classroom observation and supporting documentation. In addition, each educator's principal was asked to comment on how they felt the career change business educator brought the prior work experience into the classroom.

Personal Characteristics and Perspective

The first theme that was revealed in the study is the unique personal characteristics of the career change business educator, beginning with possessing a broad perspective on education and the business world. The career change business educators in this study, regardless of age, bring a certain maturity and confidence to the classroom. The teachers appeared highly confident in their content areas as they had seen this content in action in the prior workplace. The prior work experience, in addition to providing a unique perspective on the real world versus the educational setting, also offers a link into that world outside of the classroom through networking and industry contacts. This is beneficial both to students and to other staff and faculty. One principal, Mr. Stanley, spoke of his career change teacher, Brenda, who is in her first year of teaching in a public school setting:

For a first year teacher, she has wisdom and experience much beyond her years. I directly attribute that to her. She came to us from a cyber school where she was doing online teaching, and she has a great deal of technology skills, so she has brought in that experience and has done some online things with the kids which helps them. I've noticed for a first year teacher that she's doing things much more advanced than we typically see of a first year teacher. I think she also is used to working in a professional environment, and that environment is a little different than an education setting. Sometimes education settings can become a little artificial, so she brings in that real world influence as a professional and she gets to share that and interact with our teachers.

Another principal, Mrs. Beckett, commented that she didn't realize how unique the career change business educators were until she was approached about participating in this study. She said:

Career changers have different perspectives and outlook. Sometimes I think traditional teachers are in a bubble. The career changer knows what it's really like can convey that to the students. What I see them bringing into the classroom compared to maybe their previous teachers in their positions or some of the other teachers in this school, just trying to get students to understand the basic, the

fundamentals they should have in place, the work ethic, just to make sure the students are prepared to enter the workforce where other teachers may just be covering the curriculum.

It's a "get it done" attitude and work ethic that principal Mr. Stevens noted:

It benefits everybody the whole way around. It helps us from an administrative standpoint to where they have that I-can-do attitude, but it also lets the kids know that you can go through different opportunities through your life and be successful. A lot of kids think I have to make my choice now and I have to stick to it for 35 years. It creates a connection between kids and that teacher because they have a different perspective on things, they've been in different jobs, and they can relay that to the kids. Most of them think we sleep here 24/7 and it's our lives.

The career change business educators are models of professionalism and have positive morale and attitudes on the job. Mr. Kendall stated:

In my experience, people that come from industry become a little bit more well-rounded in appreciating their job a little bit more and being able to relate to kids a little bit better, too, by making what they're studying in the classroom apply to something in real life. That's not everyone, but I find most people from industry are much more cooperative and find it easier to do that. Maturity – that's definitely one skill. If they've been in industry then they are a more seasoned adult. I think that they value their jobs maybe a little bit more, or the chances of them not valuing their job is a lot less than someone getting right out of school.

The resumes provided during the research study solidify the kind of professionals these educators exemplify. They have excellent academic records and were top of the class in the mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program. They list numerous achievements and awards both in and out of school activities. Justin and Brenda both won the Dean's Teaching Fellow Award for Business Education in the mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program. They have served in many leadership roles throughout their work experience and academic backgrounds and continue that into their teaching roles. While traditionally trained teachers may possess some of these individual

characteristics, the career change business educators in this study all demonstrated a special combination of these skills that may be attributed to prior business work experience.

Ability to Multitask and Get the Job Done

Based on the professional backgrounds and the unique characteristics of the career change business educators, all five principals believe that they have proven to be the right people for the job. They are confident that the career change educator has a natural ability to multi-task or possesses the can-do attitude and drive to get a task accomplished because of their successful track records in business. This confidence is translated in asking teachers to step outside of their comfort levels. Paula remembers being thrown into a new course with little time to prepare in a related content area when a sudden opening arose due to an illness. Because she had worked in the steel industry as a computer programmer for over 10 years, the administration moved her into teaching CADD and Robotics, even though it is typically not taught by business education teachers. She commented how the administration was confident that she could learn to teach it quickly based on her industry experience, so she just did it without question or complaint.

Brenda recalls being asked to teach a programming course in a language she did not yet know, and she spent a great deal of her personal time learning how to teach it:

I do think I made a good decision, but I honestly do think that there's a definite advantage to being a career change person. I mean, having all that experience, and I think actually my school district saw that in me. When they hired me I didn't know Dreamweaver. I had programmed in other languages but I had never programmed in C++. That was something that honestly when they offered me the job I was very surprised because I thought "why are they hiring me" but I later realized that they realized that with all of the experience I had that I could figure this out. And that's basically what I've done. So I said, "Well, I'll do whatever it

takes to learn whatever I have to do.” And I did. I spent my summer learning and working on all this and I’m still learning and working on all of it. But I do think that they saw this and I’m glad that they saw this because I’m happy to be here.

All five of the career change business educators teach multiple courses throughout the day, which means several “preps” to try to organize and prioritize. These courses include academic topics like business math, accounting, business law, marketing, international marketing, and finance. In addition, they teach multiple levels (beginning and advanced) of technology courses including web page design, computer programming, desktop publishing, keyboarding, and computer applications. During the day of the classroom observation and interview with Justin, he was described by both a student and by a colleague as an “overachiever” at separate times, independent and unknowingly of each other’s comments.

In many cases, the administration expressed confidence and trust with the career change business educators, acknowledging the unique characteristics they bring to the classroom and to the school district. Again, these characteristics may be found independently in non-career change educators but were exemplified by all five of the educators in this study. Administrators are often willing to offer these educators opportunities to excel and get involved on many levels with students and other staff and faculty.

Willingness to Get Involved

Based on the interviews and the resumes provided by the career change business educators, the classroom is not the only place students can interact with them. All five teachers are involved in sponsoring or coaching at least one extracurricular activity or sport. Three of the five teachers are involved in coaching sports. Four of the five teachers

are involved in business education related extra-curricular activities, including Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Junior Achievement (JA), programming club and yearbook. While the content is directly related to business education, the students are also exposed to other important characteristics such as teamwork, responsibility, dedication and work ethic. Jeffrey stated that during the winter, he works from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. with a 45-minute commute, four days a week. Jennifer stated that she goes to at least one of every activity's game or events, documenting all of it on digital camera and posting it throughout the hallways and on the school's website. Justin and Paula are FBLA sponsors, and they put in numerous hours and take students to regional conferences, often involving much of their own free time. Justin and Brenda also teach business content part-time at the college level because they enjoy the combination of both teaching and business. This willingness to get involved was also recognized by the principals during the interviews. They believe that this involvement increases the rapport with the teacher and ultimately helps with student engagement in the classroom because the students have a relationship with the teacher outside of the classroom.

Passion for Business

An overwhelming common theme for all five career change business educators is their passion for business and how it is weaved throughout their teaching of business education and computer technology. Justin outwardly expressed his feelings:

Personally I *love* teaching the field of business, I went into business I worked in business. What I try to stress with my students both at the high school and the college level - everything that happens in the world is a business. Even in health care, you're trying to cure and help patients, but in the end everything comes down to dollars and the abilities of what you're able to perform within a business, hospital and school are based on dollars. I love it! It's an ever-changing world, technologies, strategies, philosophies. Even today with the economic crisis,

there's always something that you can relate to the real world and really show students why what we are teaching them is so critical and so important.

Paula agrees and feels that teaching business is essential to understanding the reality of the workplace and what is expected of them in order to be successful:

I think it's so important. I really do. I feel bad because they don't think it is and they don't understand. I've had kids come back to me and say, I *now* understand what you were talking about because a lot of times I'll stand there and say, "do you think when you are in college and you are in the work force you're going to be able to walk in here and say that?" You don't fail them, but you tell them that what they're going to do is not acceptable. They've got to work hard and they don't get that yet. A lot of them *never* get it.

Jennifer enjoys teaching business a great deal because she feels that the content area of business education is deep, and is a natural fit to real life application as well as a good cross-curricular fit with other content areas such as reading, math, social studies and science:

I feel like it involves all of those disciplines but you also such a more visible connection with the outside world. So you can actually do assignments that are done exactly like the outside world. You can do Excel spreadsheets that you are actually doing in a job. You can do payroll, you are going to have a paycheck regardless of where you end up, whether you are in accounting or not. You will have to fill out a W-2, a W-4, all of these things. It's so nice because I can relate all of the things that I've been through. I can discuss all the jobs I had. In another field, would I be able to actually teach lessons based on what I did. I can be honest and tell them, I didn't know how to fill out the W-2, and this is what I did and how I handled it. All of the little life lessons that I learned - where some people are help their children with that - for us, we're able to help even more people. All of those things I did wrong were maybe for a reason, so I can explain to them how it happens. You can use your little life experiences and mistakes to actually help. It's really a nice field because you can use your life experiences and even the mistakes to actually help these kids.

In all five of the classroom observations, the career change business educator was extremely enthusiastic about the content and it shined throughout the entire class period.

Their upbeat attitudes did not appear to be swayed by minor discipline issues or by normal classroom procedures. They seemed to get even more excited as they shared why

the material is important for the students to understand and know. Mr. Kendall believes this could be a main reason that a person might change careers from working in business to teaching business is that “they liked what they were doing so much they wanted to share it with others.” They truly seemed to care for the students and their success and want to share their experiences with the students. The principal observation forms also stressed the positive attitudes and enthusiasms in the classroom. Brenda’s observation form showed the highest rating for “demonstrates knowledge of subject matter taught” and “displays enthusiasm for teaching,” and overall she received the highest rating possible. Jennifer received excellent remarks as well on her observation forms, with a note of “superior” for being active in the classroom regarding use of interactive technology and “excellent” in the area of “adequate knowledge of subject taught.” It was clear in the principal interviews as well as in the review of the principal observation forms that they recognize this enthusiasm as a positive contribution to the classroom.

Sharing Experiences and Bringing the Content to Life

It is through the sharing of personal stories and life lessons where the most obvious integration of prior work experience occurs. During the classroom observations in the study, the ability of the career change business educator to bring the content to life through the infusion of anecdotes and personal stories was a very relaxed and natural process. All five teachers responded that they consciously try to relate personal experiences or stories of colleagues or friends to the classroom. Justin said:

I try to always relate the information or the material – I try to prepare myself in advance to think about different anecdotes, situations or stories that I was involved with prior to delivering that information. But also, as students tend to ask questions I can then try to relate real world examples and those aren’t always prepared. I try to pull those from real life situations that I encountered to show

them that this is how I handled something or this is how in the business world someone would handle or react to something.

Jeffrey sees the experience and the content as intertwined:

So much of what I do, I try to blend the book knowledge and the book theory with real life experience. I really try to bring real life to the kids understanding of what we're studying. I think to the Rodney Dangerfield movie, "Back to School" and the stodgy professor of business is talking about the ways you're going to do this and Rodney starts talking about the kickbacks you have to pay to the politician. There's a lot of humor in this, but in reality, the theory tells you this kids, but let me tell you, that's not the way it's always going to work.

During the classroom observations, the teachers clearly used both planned and spontaneous examples. Sometimes the topic would seem conversational, as a matter of fact, or as an addition to a point. Also, the teacher would enhance or expand on the curriculum, taking the lesson or essential point one step further than the book material. An example of this was evident in Paula's classroom. She instructed the students to try a step in the computer program her way instead of what the book stated. She knew it was a faster, more efficient way of getting to the same end result based on her experience. The students were observed to be excited that she was such an expert. Other times the career change business educators would validate what the book content said, but then give an example of how it might extend into the work setting as it had happened to them. Jennifer believes that she can give the students validation that what they are learning will be used later in life:

It is neat because you get to let the kids know that this isn't the only place I've been and to actually be able to tell the students I've been out there and this happened to me and I had this job and this boss and this is what I had to do, and this is what time I had to go to work and this is what I had to do at work. Especially with the computer software. Kids always ask, well, when am I going to use this? How am I going to use this? And to actually be able to give them a concrete answer or example, it does help with some of them.

Some of the teachers felt that it wasn't only their outside experiences that are important, but also the outside experience of the students as well. Justin encourages students to bring outside examples and content into the class and states on his syllabus, "Discussion is encouraged within the class to bring in outside knowledge and experiences." Jennifer encourages students to look at real flyers and websites to provide context for her assignments. Jeffrey reminds students on his syllabus to "open your eyes and mind and notice all that is going on around you each and every day." The five teachers in this study connect their personal experiences both relating to the curriculum content itself, and relating to the real world of work in general, such as an office environment or atmosphere. Jennifer stresses simple tasks, like addressing and mailing a real envelope. Brenda simulates keeping a checkbook and reconciling a bank statement, skills that are essential to adult life in the real world. The infusion of personal anecdotes, stories and activities from prior experience appears to be beneficial from both a teacher and a student viewpoint and will also be discussed under Research Question 2 as a type of instructional strategy used by the career change business educator regularly in the classroom.

The Technology Expert

Whether or not the teacher worked in a technological capacity in the business world, the five teachers are considered an expert and a go-to person for technology assistance. For example, Paula has an official title of Technology Facilitator and serves as a resource for faculty, staff and administration. Jennifer is asked to provide technological support and creative design for the district's website and to provide promotional flyers throughout the building. Justin provides mentoring and training to faculty, staff and administration during in-service time at his school and also during a countywide in-

service day. The combination of the prior business experience and the business education content propels these career change educators to the front of the line for technology implementations, enhancements, training, and a resource for other staff and faculty. Mr. Stevens commented on Paula being a Technology Facilitator, “to manage that and to be somebody in the forefront of technology for the teachers to follow and for her to be able to give out information I think her career experience helps considerably.” The career change educators commented on how they take initiative to stay on top of the latest technology. They recognize its importance, not only in the world of work but to try to stay current or a step ahead of the technology exposure the 21st century students will bring into their classrooms. Justin, in addition to providing technology staff training and development, was specifically chosen to create online curriculum and courses both within his content area and with other departments at the school. The data suggests that the opportunities for the career change business educators to demonstrate their technical savvy and knowledge is another example of the special characteristics they can bring to a school district.

The Choice to Hire a Career Change Business Educator

In many cases, the principal cited the prior work experience or career as a determining factor in the hiring and selection of the business educator for the position. The principals felt that the prior work experience was an added benefit to them and to the staff. Mrs. Beckett said,

Overall, I think they are more realistic idea of what students need to succeed and the work ethic they have as teachers – they rarely miss class, they’re here, they’re on task, and they’re constantly revamping the curriculum. The observation I have - because it is unique - I didn’t realize until you came and asked about it. We have 3 career change business educators here. I don’t see any disadvantages. I see only

advantages to the district. They bring the knowledge of “what it’s like” and they can give real-world application to the kids. This IS what it’s like out there.

Mr. Maxwell expressed confidently that Justin lives up to his expectations:

First and foremost, I know that Justin’s prior experience was influential in his selection as a teacher. We were *certainly* aware of his background. Another part of bringing in a career changer is typically they’re at least a few years older than a 21-year-old, and that maturity in itself made Justin attractive. Those two things had a lot to do with his selection. His background obviously made him a viable candidate, because he had real life experience besides the college experience. Justin’s a sharp guy and all that played in to his selection. His past practice and experience really is reflective in his teaching and his interactions with the kids because he knows and he shares that. It really is what you would expect it to be.

All five of the principal participants had positive comments about the hiring of the career change business educators. They appear to recognize that the work experience in general is an attractive characteristic that can be considered for all disciplines, but especially applies to business education. The data suggests that they view the career change business educator as having a positive impact on students and on other faculty and staff.

Summary of Research Question 1

Overall, the data found to support this research question suggests that career change business educators bring unique characteristics and skills to the classroom and to the educational setting itself, having an impact on students and on other faculty. These characteristics include big-picture perspective, maturity and confidence. The five career change business educators have positive attitudes and the initiative and knowledge of how and when to get tasks done. These characteristics may be demonstrated by traditionally trained teachers, but it is the special combination of these skills and characteristics that may be attributed to prior business work experience. The five teachers actively share experiences from their prior work and from their personal lives to enhance the class content and help students to understand its application. They also encourage

students to participate with their own stories and experiences. The principals revealed in this study that the career change business educators are positive additions to their schools and have validated their decision to hire them in all five cases.

Table 2

Summary of Research Question 1

Summary of Research Question 1
How Career Change Business Educators Connect their
Real-world Business Experience and the Business Education
Curriculum

Unique Personal Characteristics and Perspective

Ability to Multitask and Get the Job Done

Willingness to Get Involved

Strong Passion for Business

Sharing Experiences and Bringing the Content to Life

Technology Expert Knowledge and Skills

Business Experience a Strong Factor in Hiring Decision

Research Question 2

The second research question was designed to answer how the instructional strategies employed in the classroom are influenced by prior real-world business experience, or *how* they teach business education. As the career change business educators are older than a traditionally trained teacher candidate just graduating from

college, they recognize that there is a different type of student in the schools than when they were students, with new demands and pressures as they prepare for the 21st century global workforce. They also realize that the instructional strategies and content should be suitable to the needs of this generation. Technology plays a large role in the lives of the 21st century student, and therefore, a large part in the methods used by the career change business educators.

Interacting with 21st Century Students

All five of the teachers responded that today's students are a different breed than when they were in school, even the ones who were closer in age to the students. The 21st century learner needs more engagement and differentiated methods of instruction. The students need to see how the content connects and applies to the real world. Although business education has the benefit of being a popular elective and having technology involved, students often bring their bad habits into the classroom and find distraction and temptation when the computer is in front of them. During the observation of Brenda's classroom, while she confidently taught her lesson, students did sneak and played Solitaire on the computer. While 21st century students are known for their multitasking, this seemed very natural to them. They still appeared to be listening to the lesson. However, for a career change educator, this distraction can be frustrating and an issue for the classroom. Jennifer noted the key difference in her students compared to when she was in school:

The main difference, especially in my field, is related to technology. I don't know if it's *changed* them, but there is so much more going on. I felt like I was lucky to have a calculator! I wasn't distracted by much, because even if we had computer classes, we didn't go on the Internet; it was just the software. And now I find that it is good in a way because they know all this stuff and they help me with things. They tell me about this and that and there is much quicker access to everything,

but it is hard because this is what they want to do all of the time. They're really into ALL the technology and it's really even if the school rules are don't have this or don't have that, they are trying to pull out the cell phones and they always want to listen to music. Other teachers and students say, oh, it's great to be a computer teacher, because kids love computers. Parents even say that, and I say "Yeah, kids love computers, but they don't want to learn the software and all the stuff that we're trying to do. They want to be on the Internet, playing games, surfing the Web. There is more out there to distract them from whenever I was in school. When I was a student, notes were the biggest things. But, it's hard to keep up on all of this, if you're helping a student over *here*...well, over *there*, it just takes a second for text messaging and instant messaging, and emailing and UGH! Big challenge is to keep them engaged.

Even though the students are immersed with technology and have the latest tools and devices, Justin commented on students not knowing how to handle themselves around computers or lack the basic knowledge of computer hardware and functionality:

Even little things like the computers. Having all of our rooms with computers, they jump in and immediately they want to jump on games or change the backgrounds...little things like that. If you came from a professional environment, that behavior's not happening there. On the other hand, if a student gets a blue screen, I tell them to turn off the computer or hold the power button in. They don't know where the power button is, they don't know what a CPU is. They don't know these things!

The career change educators feel the students lack motivation, or they try to "get by" in doing the minimum effort required. Paula identifies with the students of today. She recalls:

We were lazy to some respect, too. If I went back and told my teachers that I was a teacher they would probably say (*big gasp*)! Not as respectful, just a different breed now. I think the difference between me and them is that I had a teacher who said I would amount to nothing; that I had no logic and I couldn't even get a job as a key puncher at that time. She was quite cruel. I had a couple of teachers like that. I tell the kids, I don't want to be like that, but I do get mad at them. I tell them, "Don't tell me you can't do this – I don't want to hear it." They say, "You're smart" and I say, "No I'm not. I am like you." That's the big thing I find. As a student I can really relate to when they are struggling. I get angry with them because they quit and they don't continue to try, and I get angry with my really smart kids because they don't use what they have and I say, "Do you know how smart you are and what you could do with that brain?" Instead they choose to do nothing and that's frustrating.

Justin is frustrated by the overall lack of motivation of the students and feels that today's educational environment has changed drastically over the years:

Students have significantly changed since I was in high school. But I don't see the motivation today, to a great extent. There are some students who obviously put forth some effort and we have some great kids and great students, but I see a lack of motivation. I also see a great change in the teachers really needing to be able to differentiate - a wide variety of learning styles and wide variety of adaptations and things of that nature. From a teaching perspective, maybe teaching has become more challenging today than it used to be, especially with the emphasis on technology and the 21st century learning and skills.

Jeffrey stated that he would not want to be a student today and face the environment in which they live. He also noted a drastic change in the parents of today:

(Emphatically) OH! UGH! Today's kids have so many more pressures. I could not imagine being a teenager today. I can't imagine what these kids go through. Just think about watching TV. I sit and giggle and laugh at Two and a Half Men but the sexual innuendo that's thrown at these kids. The girls, *oh!* I can't even begin to imagine the pressure that these young ladies feel because every message in the media is pushing them towards behavior that they are not yet equipped to handle. I marvel at the ones which are going through and getting it right, and I wonder how they do it. The other thing that's changed, too - the parents have drastically changed. I remember as a kid, I was never right. If an adult said that I did something, it was never, "they're lying" or my parents never came in and said "not my child." That's probably the most frustrating part of all. The entitlement generation, the attitude of "I have to do for my kid," the kids driving through here in their fancy cars. I had a student working on a paper in word processing about what he got for Christmas and he was complaining because he only got a 42 inch TV for his room and he wanted the 52 inch. *(Laughing)*. I had the hand me down black and white with rabbit ears and I took that to college! Getting one pair of Nikes or Chuck Taylors was a huge deal! That's probably the most frustrating thing. I don't know that the kids have changed, but the surroundings and the expectations and the baggage they bring has changed.

The career change teachers try to motivate their 21st century students by making the content directly apply to their lives, while helping students learn from their own mistakes and their own preferences. Paula, who teaches programming, doesn't stop at the cross curricular ties to the content. She finds that programming is heavy in math by design, but

that was something that she had trouble understanding and finding meaning in when she was a student. She likes to create real life situations and problem solving so that students find real meaning in the work. She tries to make it relevant to 21st century students by relating it to their own personal lives and the video games that they play:

The students always tell me “I don’t like math problems.” Most programming teachers do a lot of math. I don’t care for that because I don’t think they can relate to that at all, or they think “when am I going to use that when I leave from here?” Right now they’re doing a memory game, I’m trying to get them so they can think logically through what they need to do and how to do it but then it comes out to be a game. You play games constantly and this is a simple little game. When you go out and you’re sitting there playing a game, just think how much code and how much work went into this.

All five of the career change business educators recognize that the students need different types of instructional strategies, and that most importantly the content must be made relevant and interesting to them in order to keep them engaged and active in the learning process.

Anecdotes and Personal Stories as an Instructional Strategy

As discussed in the findings for Research Question 1, the career change business educators pointedly and specifically relate their career experiences with the students to enhance the curriculum. Although the career change business educator can add to a lesson with an unplanned memory or story, they do consciously integrate their experience into the lessons as they relate to units of curriculum. This is a method that helps to engage the students and to bring the content to life. The teachers show the students how the content can be used for real life applications. Often there is humor or other emotion involved, which also helps to engage the students. It is not only their own personal stories but those of colleagues, friends and family members, as Brenda recalls:

Even with life experience, when we talk about risks and so on...like, my dad was a big investor. I have some stories of how he invested in real estate and how he pulled his money out too soon (*laughing*). That's kind of a sad story, but he worked for [a large company] for awhile and they'd have contests and he would take stock instead of money, and how that's basically what my mother's been living off of for a long time because it doubled so many times over. Or like how when I was 22 years old and when I started working and the kind of retirement program my company had and how at 22 you might not think about things like that. They had a deal where I put in 8% of my income and they put in 12% and that's been sitting there all those years. I try to explain to them that even though the market has gone down many times, it's always rebounded and I'm not going to retire from THIS (*pointing at the classroom*). I'm only going to be here maybe 15 years. I'm going to retiring from THAT! And that was when I was 22! I try to show them that. And I brought in a report that I had from my mutual fund to show them the money and how it's changed.

During the classroom observations, many examples of real world personal stories were used. Justin used a real example of a used car that he had purchased as the students were working on a car buying analysis project. He told about how he decided to purchase a less expensive car and used humor and the students were highly engaged and interested. Justin told the students after he drove an expensive car, he felt like he "needed back surgery." The students were laughing and told him, "yes, but it's all about the image." That led into an entire discussion on marketing, images, etc. that was unplanned. Ultimately, Justin revealed to the students that he bought the less expensive car and was very happy with the decision even if he didn't look as cool. Jeffrey used real examples and modeling in his classroom observation, incorporating real examples of advertisements that he had sold when he was a salesperson for a printing company for the students to analyze. After modeling the analysis, he asked the students to do the same with other examples given by the book and brought in by him. This real world application really clarified the task at hand for the students and made it more understandable as to its importance. During the process, he talked to them about how he handled the clients in

deciding what would be included in the advertisements. He talked to them as other printing salespeople, taught them printing terminology that was not listed in the book like “ad slicks” and “camera-ready art” and showed them insider tricks like noticing different in font typeface so they felt like they were role playing in that environment. In Jennifer’s accounting class, she provided the students with a real pay stub of hers and step by step walked through the process of taxes and filling out W-2, W-4’s. She even showed a district pay schedule with names blocked out for confidentiality. This real data showed the students how critical it is to understand issues related to accounting and employee pay. The students were engaged and asking many questions, as she related it to their part-time jobs, and they realized that their own take home pay could be affected if they did not understand the topic. She also shared with them how she did not understand it either when she was first out of college, and that by being in her first job she wished she had learned about it in high school. Jennifer used humor as well, asking the students as they were completing W-4 forms, “Does anyone in here have a spouse?” and then brought them back to reality with a discussion of the importance of honesty and responsibility. She stressed the importance of memorizing your social security number and realizing why they needed to understand what the information on the W-4 meant. After the students heard what she made as the minimum wage in her first job, she started a brief, impromptu discussion of why the current minimum wage is higher and what that means to the economy. As often and in as many ways as they can, the five career change business educators incorporate real world examples and experiences into their instructional strategies.

Beyond Curriculum - Teaching Soft Skills, Character Traits and Life Lessons

The career change business educators all mentioned ways that they use personal experience to not only teach business education curriculum but also to teach other areas such as soft skills, character traits and life lessons. The teachers all overwhelmingly agreed that while the business education curriculum is important, there is much more to the business world and being successful in a career than just what the books have to offer. The skills that were common between all teachers included time management, honesty, preparedness, organization, independence, responsibility and respect. Some teachers felt that these skills and character traits were commonplace and common sense, but were somehow lacking in today's students. Brenda used an interesting technique in her classroom, by setting up a simulated office environment to try to teach organization, responsibility and independence. When observing her classroom, she had established clear procedures, color coded in-bins, folders and stations. She noted that she went from managing a department to managing a classroom. She feels the same skills are being used and are easily transferred from the previous experience into the classroom. She stated on responsibility and deadlines:

Sometimes it's hard because you're looking back and I think that a lot of things are very much the same although I do feel that the students are not quite as independent as I would like them to be, especially the freshmen. I was hoping to see them develop a lot more throughout the year and I haven't seen that. For example the interviews we're working on. I gave them the papers on Tuesday. We talked about it. It was due Friday, and I told them I wasn't going to be here but they were due anyway. I needed to work with them over the weekend so I could get something ready to do with them this week, and *nobody* turned them in! A handful – only a few kids did, and it was like “hey guys” (*sing song voice*)...I try to tell them that a lot, I'll say, “You know in the business world, your boss doesn't say to you all the time...like, (*sing song voice*) Hey that's due...hey that's due...he tells you what's due and he expects to see it and he expects it to be completely finished, and if you have questions, he's not going to come and beg you, “do you have any questions, *please* can I help you” (*in a sweet voice*). He's

going to say, “hey, if you have questions, you need to see me.” Like, I tell them that but I don’t know if they believe me or if they care or what, but sometimes it is a little disappointing. I think in a way I try; it prepares them not just only for are you going to be a business man, but for everything you’re going to do in life. No matter what job you do. I tell them this, too: I don’t care if you’re the garbage man or the CEO, you have a boss and you have deadlines and responsibilities and you have to meet them.

Besides responsibility and deadlines, Brenda had to refine her procedures because she felt the students were just not getting it:

You know (*mimicking the process*), you print it out, you staple it, you have highlighters to highlight your name and you put it in the box. They would be SO confused weeks into school. They kept asking me, “Where am I supposed to turn this in?” I said, look, guys, this is like real world. You have to put your papers together (*banging papers on desk*) staple it in the corner, make it neat and organized, put the pages in order. Things that to me are so simple but I had to explain it to them. The papers have to be even (*showing me the papers...how to do it*). Things like this – this is real world stuff no matter where you work!

Brenda continued to stress the point of organization and responsibility, things that the business curriculum doesn’t directly teach:

Again, I think it keeps going back to being organized and responsible. Like even just a simple thing like logging out when you leave. You can’t leave your computer logged in, someone could come in and delete out all of your files, or do something malicious under your name. So that responsibility, and asking questions when you have questions, but trying to figure things out...when they did their stock research like they said, well, I can’t find...um, Taco Bell...I can’t find it, I can’t find it. I said, wait a minute, what if you were trying to download your favorite song on your ipod, and you couldn’t find it off the first place that you went what would you do? (*pretending to be student*) “Well , I’d look somewhere else.” Well, yeah! (*she says emphatically*) Look somewhere else! Be resourceful! Use what you have in front of you to figure it out! Because if you keep running to your boss every minute...” (*voice trails off*) In fact we just talked on Friday, and I was *thinking of you* and I thought “oh, Bonnie should be here today” and we were just talking about how employers would value somebody who was honest MORE maybe than somebody who had all of the skills that they wanted, and we discussed why they thought that was true.

Honesty and respect were other traits that the career change educators felt were imperative in the workplace. Brenda and Jennifer both spoke of the importance of these

traits both during the interviews and during the classroom observations. Brenda told a story of a boss who took all of the credit for her work, and she was never able to trust him again. Jennifer spoke of the importance of honesty in her payroll and accounting lesson, bringing in accountability and the government with tax consequences. All five syllabi collected from the educators stressed respect for the computers, the teacher and each other. All of the five career change business educators model these traits through their presence in the classroom, their model of respect to the students and to their colleagues, as well as through the shared real-life experiences to their students.

Jennifer says that she relates to the students and tries to share the importance of being prepared and learning something up front that can save them time later and help them to become more efficient:

The toughest class I have to motivate is keyboarding, but you keep promoting what happens later on and how it's going to cut down your time and help them down the line. I even bring my experience into that. I say to them, "To be honest with you I had only 9 weeks of typing on a typewriter. I was in the back of the room and just like all of you I wasn't that good at it. I'd be typing away and I was the last one in the computer lab every night in college because I never did end up getting into that typing. It would have saved me so much time, I sat there *every* night." I give them an example and I also teach them it's never too late. I went out and bought software because now it is available and I taught myself before I went back to business school.

Preparedness is a trait that Justin reinforces daily through a warm-up activity that is posted on the board. On his syllabus, he states that students should be prepared daily for this activity, and on some days it will be worth points and some days it will be used in the class discussion. Many of the career change business educators feel that preparedness should be routine and that this is a necessary skill for the workplace.

Paula, who has college age children, feels like it is beneficial for her to relate her daughters' stories to the class, as they may be more likely to apply to the students since they are closer in age. She would like students to exercise independent thinking:

Since it has been a long time that I've been out of the field, I don't use my prior work as much, or I may say, when I'm in a meeting this transpired. It's so many years ago. I try to relate in their way now, and now I use my kids' experiences in college. When you go to school and this happens. You're not going to be able to raise your hand and say "can I ask a question?" You've got to figure out how to do the best you can do with what's in front of you and that's what I'm trying to get them to learn how to do. None of them are going to become programmers, and that's not my goal here. My goal is to get them to think in a way they've never thought before. I find that is the biggest task for me to do.

During the classroom observation, Paula related herself to a "typical user" and she told the class that she would try to take shortcuts in the programming. She followed up with the reasons that they should *not* take these shortcuts and what she learned from it. She broke down the steps of a complex program and modeled it for the students in a simpler manner. She engaged the students with some humor about how she was "cringing" when she was trying their draft programs, and they seemed to enjoy that and become more interested in what she was teaching. Paula wants students to keep building on their knowledge...not to learn the material for a test or project and simply forget it right afterwards:

I had a student that said to me, and I say this all the time but I was in shock that he actually figured it out, "You know, when I'm in your class, you never let us learn something and forget it. From that point on we have to learn it and use it." That's the whole point, you build on what you know and you keep on building.

Another skill that Paula emphasizes in her classroom is listening skills:

Part of it is their listening skills – I'll stop and have them repeat what I am saying here. I'll say, "Look up here. This is part of your grade" but I'll have kids who will go off in their own world. I'll ask the kids, "Didn't you have to use this? No, we learned that last 9 weeks. There was no building or continuation. I try to bring

that in more. Bottom line is that in the business world you can't just do something today and forget that you ever did it. So I try to tell them that.

Brenda also feels that independent thinking, or the ability to know how to find information and how to figure something out, is more important than knowing the exact steps. She also gets a little tough on them and makes them exert some independence and responsibility:

It's independence and responsibility that I try to pull out of them. For example, with the 07 version of Word. I try to explain to them we're in the 07 version which is different than the 03 Office, so by the time you graduate there's probably going to be a new one and by the time you get through school there's going to be another one. So if you have a question I'll answer it, but if you keep asking me the same question, I'm going to make you look it up because I'm not going to be there when you finish high school and when you finish college and when you're trying to do it. You have to learn how to look things up for yourself. It comes back to the organization and responsibility. Hopefully all of the teachers are doing that. Because that's one of the things, and I told them that about Word, you know what? If you don't know how to do a custom tab, an indent or a bulleted list, you could fake it. You could make the document look nice, print it out and no one would ever know you didn't do it the right way. But if you don't turn it in on time, that's going to show. I don't know if they heard me, but I told a lot of the parents this when they came in for parent teacher conferences, like, that's mainly what I'm trying to teach, even though my curriculum is Office 2007. I'm trying to teach you to be responsible, organized, keeping their hard drive space organized so you can *find* what you want. You know, that kind of stuff, so it's *neat*, and organized and turned in on time.

The ability to see the big picture and how actions and consequences affect each other is often something that is beyond the scope of a typical teenager. Justin stresses the importance for students to see the big picture and work on the skills that are necessary in a workplace:

Time management, without a doubt. Organization. Deadlines. Because when you go out into the real world, the boss doesn't care that if you stay until 8 or 9 or 10 o'clock at night, because if it needs to be done it needs to be done. I would say just trying to think outside of the box, and to really try to think about the world as a whole and how it can affect the larger picture and not just you individually. How do your actions affect the larger scope and the larger organization? I think that's critical when you're dealing with a major organization.

Jeffrey emphatically stated time management as well:

Time management. Boy, I just wish that they could take every ten minutes of my class time that they waste and understand just how valuable that 10 minutes is. I wish they understood the world doesn't shut down the two days before vacation, that the world gears up two days before you go on vacation, because you have to prepare while you're gone and when you come back. Then you have two terrible days because you have to catch up on everything that you missed. These kids just don't have any understanding of that; you try to instill that.

Justin agrees that there should be no wasted time in a class and his syllabus states, "We will have something to do each class period. DO NOT ASK FOR FREE DAYS!"

As important as it is for career change business educators to apply real world scenarios and perspective to the students, it is also their hope that they can help students learn from their mistakes and learn from their life lessons. Jeffrey hopes that he can motivate students to achieve more than he did:

As a student I was easily bored, most things I would do as a student were done to get done, done for completion and not for excellence. Minimal work to achieve minimal standards. Teaching today, I always keep that in the forefront. These kids are a lot like I am and they're going to do the bare minimum to survive, and I really want to push them into developing the habit that takes them beyond that. I didn't discover that until I was 25. I want to give them the opportunity to pick up on some good habits that took me a lot longer to learn, see if they can't apply that and then they can go further than I ever dreamt of going. It's something that drives you. Yesterday I taught a lesson on depreciation to a group of business math kids. That's one of the hardest subject that accounting students struggle with. I told my wife last night, "You know, this is the 3rd time I taught this course, god, I wish someone would have taught it to me that way when I was in high school because I would have understood depreciation a lot better." I felt like I really nailed that one and you could see it in their eyes that they got it and it wasn't as hard as you said it would be. And it was a great feeling; it was a great feeling...those are the small moments that you live for.

Jeffrey also feels that students need to take an active approach to learning, and on his course syllabus and in class he tells the students that his classes follow the LAW:

Learning, Attendance and Work. He feels that students need to actively learn; that sitting and listening is not enough. They need to be in class, and he says with humor:

A is for attendance, you cannot learn if you are not here. I don't care if it's excused or unexcused. You're employer isn't going to care if it is excused or unexcused - they just care if you are there! Attendance is critical.

He sets high expectations for his students, and in his experience, it has resulted in a positive response for the most part. Responsibility is an important skill which must be learned before students can be successful in the workplace. Part of responsibility that is difficult for students is when they are absent from class. The class syllabi of all five of the career change business educators have tough policies for absenteeism and procedures upon returning, however, the students do not always follow them. This is a situation where teachers feel that if the students are in the real world, they will need to be responsible for work and information missed in their absence. Brenda reminds students that the boss is not going to chase them for work they missed while they were absent, that it is just expected to be complete. She establishes bins for them to check when they miss class and expects it to be handed in on time. She operates a "strict but fair" absenteeism policy and holds students accountable for being responsible when they return to school.

Justin has a similar procedure for absences. He writes on his syllabus:

Attend daily – you cannot do well in school if you are not present. Remember: you are responsible for every class session. All makeup work will be placed in the file folders in the back of the room. YOU are responsible for locating this folder and picking up the materials for EACH day you are absent. I will NOT track you down to give you missed assignments.

All five of the career change business educators expressed the importance of maintaining procedures and routines in the classroom, as it is an expected part of being successful in the workplace.

Overall, the career change educators maintain a positive presence in the classroom, and they truly want their students to be successful and to take advantage of all of the opportunities that business and life have to offer. Jennifer stated:

There's always going to be opportunities out there. You have to actually go out and find them. They're not always going to be handed to you. They are not always going to be easy to come by. You're going to make mistakes, and you're going to make bad choices and I've made plenty of them. It doesn't mean you aren't going to get where you want to be. There was a time when I thought well what happened? I wanted to do all this stuff, and I thought I was going to be happy, and I don't know what I'm doing, and this job is OK but it's not what I want to do for my whole life. I was even scared to make the decision to go into teaching because it was another \$10,000, and to not even know if you're going to be good at it or like it. But if you just keep chipping away, and if you don't try you will never know. I could have stayed in that business, and it was ok, but now I have a job that I love. I tell them to get out there and try and be prepared that they're going to make mistakes. Every risk they take will get them one step closer to what they want.

Justin conveys his love of business to his students and advises his students to capitalize on every opportunity available:

I would say that the business world is ever changing, it's a challenging environment, but it can be a very rewarding environment to be able to go out and work with a wide variety of people. You work in a diverse, very diverse atmosphere with people from all over the globe. In my consulting job there were people from all different countries that we worked with. I would say to make the most of your high school experiences and try to take those to the college level with you and then learn the most there so you can go out and really develop a sense of the business environment.

Justin creates a positive message on his syllabus when he writes in his "Last Words" section:

It is my hope, and belief, that all students can succeed in this course. After all, it is my job to make sure that each student understands the material that they are learning. However, the students must take the responsibility to alert me if they are having difficulty. I will make myself available before school, after school, and periods throughout the day for any questions. Please stop by and see me if you have any difficulties or questions. Let's have fun, and learn together – that is – while I am teaching you, I hope to also learn from you!

In that section of the syllabus, Justin creates a partnership with his students built on responsibility and mutual respect.

After sharing her experiences, the students question Brenda as to her reasons for leaving the workplace for teaching. She tells skeptical students that she absolutely loves her job. She also tells them, “Your education is never wasted no matter what you do. Even if you’re a mom and stay home for ten years, it’s never wasted.” She encourages them to be their best, and this was observed during the classroom observation as they discussed careers and personal career inventories.

The career change educators hope that they can pass on the important character traits, skills and life lessons that are essential to success after high school and in the business world. They hope that they can begin to prepare them, although all of them recognized that they must learn some lessons on their own. These traits were emphasized in each of the classrooms observed and also were specifically integrated into the course syllabi and the lesson plans.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Besides using the personal anecdotes and stories to share prior business experience with the students and enrich the business education content, all of the career change business educators foster collaborative learning experiences in the classroom.

Collaboration occurs in many ways in the secondary business education classroom. It can occur between students, between students and teacher, between students and other school personnel or content areas, or outside within the community. One principal, Mrs. Beckett, recalls the career change business educators using real industry contacts and doing real case studies and problems with local government and

communities. Through contacts that career change business educators have or establish, students can collaborate in real world applications and interact with business professionals, such as the case of Justin's International Business class:

Actually my international business class, right now they've been working almost for a month now on an international marketing strategy – they are going to [a large international computer company] to present that to project to executives in United Kingdom, though a telepresence system where they can talk to them live.

Brenda has the students conduct interviews with career professionals in the career unit.

She believes this collaboration is vital and helps the students see the whole picture of a career, not just the job itself:

They did a career inventory, and an interview with someone in any career (not just what they're interested in). They were trying to talk about the different elements of your life, like your free time, leisure time with your friends and family and how that plays into the kind of the career you choose. Like, if you don't want to be called out in the middle of the night, you probably don't want to be a surgeon. As much as you like medical things, maybe you need to be a family doctor, things like that like so they could see that it plays into all of those things. Like, you're not going to have time. Or even just preparing for your career, like if you want to be a surgeon, how many years of preparation. You're not going to have time for leisure, you're probably not getting married at 25, or 22 if you're going to be going to school for 12 years. Those kinds of things we talked about but whether they understand that, we'll see.

Jeffrey frequently uses group projects and collaboration together, such as designing store layout models in assigned groups to encourage students to learn to work with people who they normally wouldn't choose to work. He believes that there are lessons to be learned within student collaboration groups that emulate real life situations, and it is not always positive for *all* members of the team:

I like the idea of putting them in groups because the real world works that way. There are groups that don't do jack and they get the same amount of credit as somebody else. That's a valuable lesson that they need to learn.

Paula sees natural collaboration on a daily basis in her programming classes. She believes that sometimes the content is difficult, and in the real world you are able to talk to each other, to have a “sounding board” for your ideas. She encourages the students to engage in this kind of collaborative conversation often. She cautioned that she needs to pay close attention so the line between cheating and collaboration is not crossed by monitoring students closely and by having tests and quizzes periodically. Brenda shared similar concerns and believes that students figure out how to cheat easily with computers and technology. She also believes in frequent monitoring and periodic individual assessment to ward off cheating. In Jennifer’s Web Page Design class, she pairs students and assigns smaller tasks that will eventually lead to one big, cumulative website. She stated that the students find the smaller tasks manageable, and then they are excited to see it all come together as one finished project.

Another way that students can collaborate with professionals in the real world is to interact with guest speakers and participate in field trips. Justin tries to connect his school district’s community to his curriculum, as he mentioned the area has a great community of high level executives and business individuals, and believes it is important for him to get them involved. Jeffrey enjoys collaborating through field trips and takes his class to the printing company where he used to work. He also regularly sets up guest speakers. This year, his guest speaker is a former student who started a bottled water company with charitable ties. He recalls this student working on the idea in his marketing class, and wants to show the students the result of following through on a good business idea.

Collaboration doesn't only happen face-to-face in real life, and the career change business educators try to simulate that in the classroom as well. Brenda, who besides working in an office for several years taught in a cyber school for one year, used an example of online collaboration that would occur in a professional office environment:

We did an activity in computer applications when we shared, either in Word or Excel, when we shared a document, and I had them email it to a partner, make changes and put comments in it. We do that in the Advanced Applications class a lot. We're doing that now in PowerPoint. Instead of just teaching the real basics of PowerPoint which they've known for years, we do other things like sharing, because in the real world, you might not be working on a presentation by yourself. You're working with a team. That's a big thing, so you might email it to somebody, they're going to change something, put comments in and it might go around to three or four people before it gets back to you. So we emailed it around, everyone made comments and the final person got it back to show them that that's how it works, that you're not just working on it on your own.

Collaboration using the latest software designed for that purpose is used in Justin's classroom for discussion outside of the classroom, or "off hours" as it appears in his course syllabi. Through the use of Blackboard, students discuss topics in a discussion board forum. He provides opportunities for students to complete this out-of-class communication activity during homeroom, study hall, lunchtime or after school, just in case a student would not have access to technology at home. Because he teaches college courses as well and uses this technology, he provides the students this online discussion activity that will most likely be used in their college courses.

Collaboration occurs in the business related extra-curricular activities as well, such as FBLA, yearbook and desktop publishing clubs. In FBLA, students have the opportunity to work with other students and faculty, and they can study together and compete either individually or as a team at the local, regional, and state levels. In the yearbook and desktop publishing clubs, teams work together with the career change

business educators to create cumulative, comprehensive final products that are compatible with real life industry publications. All of the career change business educators agree that collaboration and teamwork is a vital skill necessary for the workplace. The administrators expressed confidence that the career change business educators are purposefully trying to show students what it's like to work in the real world. Mr. Stanley said that he has witnessed Brenda's class frequently engaged in teamwork and knows that she stresses its importance in the workplace. Mr. Maxwell said about Justin:

He realizes that business and interaction really depends on your ability to work with other people and interact with other people, depend on others knowledge and on your knowledge. He makes it as real world as he can for the kids.

The career change business educators have experience and are comfortable with many aspects of teamwork and in dealing with others in a professional manner. Three of the five career change business educators mentioned that collaboration is easier with smaller class sizes and small groups. Throughout their classes and extra-curricular activities they encourage teamwork and collaboration as much as possible and continually seek new ways to incorporate collaboration both inside and outside of the school walls.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is also another instructional strategy common in business education and with the career change business educators in this study. Problem solving and simulation of real life situations and cases are used consistently in the business education classroom. Problem solving often includes an element of collaboration as well, whether it be a group project in class or online, or it can be tied to professionals in a real workplace. A key difference between the career change business educators and a

traditionally trained business educator is that the career changer can actually divulge real answers to the problems and can enhance the curriculum and book content with real world problems that they've experienced. They also convey real world approaches and methods to solving problems that have been tried in the workplace. An example of this is used by Paula, who teaches computer programming when she devised a complicated computer programming project:

I did an airline reservation once. They had people who got assigned seats, people who were on waiting lists, then someone could cancel and they would bump the first person off and they went nuts! They loved it and I loved it. Programming Three is now creating a bingo – you can have up to 12 players and each player can have 1-5 cards. It's really complicated, but some of my better kids have finally figured out that you break it down into small little things. I keep telling them, "You have a major project due and you're overwhelmed. Do you quit? NO!" What's the easiest thing for me to do first, just so I can get something done and feel good about myself.

Common problem solving activities used in the business education classroom are related to the stock market. Justin creates a research environment, providing information and opportunity to students on a continual basis, not just a single activity:

There are a number of activities or projects that are real-world based. One is a stock market project. There is an entire listing of items (we arranged them neatly for them to go through it) for them to try to understand such as dividend, yield, how and what happens in the news on a daily basis affects the stock market. Students have to identify why they would or would not buy a stock. Saying, "I would buy this because it's a stable stock"...well, that doesn't mean anything. So through problem solving, research-based activities where they have to dive into the information, analyze it at the end. Then with all this information, NOW I can identify whether or not this is appropriate.

Justin's classroom, during the stock market unit and during other points of the year will scroll the stock ticker and display the daily news so that students can understand the complexity of the stock market and situations that affect the economy. Brenda participates in the Stock Market Game, a collaborative simulated competition between

students within the school and statewide, run by Temple University. This can also be considered a problem solving project, as students must analyze and make profitable decisions with their teammate. During this project, Brenda has daily reports from the teams on research from the Wall Street Journal, from local newspapers, and daily news online. They analyze as a team, make decisions as a team, and then share their decision with their classmates. During Jeffrey's marketing class, a very big-picture, real-world business problem was being analyzed through discussion and collaboration in class, and also bringing in cumulative lessons learned throughout the school year. Students were engaged in the perplexing question of "Should Coke and Pepsi stop advertising?" The level of discussion was elevated beyond expectations. There were connections to economics and the current recession, globalization, marketing and advertising, and ripple effects throughout the business world. There was a great deal of logic and debate and high level learning where all students in the class were engaged and involved.

Overall, business education easily and naturally combines problem solving and collaboration and seamlessly connects these to the real world to make the content come to life for the students and promote active engagement and learning.

Creative Use Technology for Engagement

Technology is a part of business education content, and it is a natural motivator and a fit with the 21st century students of today. The career change business educators all felt that if they could get past the distractions and the negatives of technology, that students can be highly engaged through technology. Overall, the teachers truly enjoy learning and teaching technology and are able to make creative real world projects for the students. Jennifer states enthusiastically:

Desktop publishing is one of my favorite courses. Publisher is one of the best things! We actually have a club. We did all of the flyers around the school for every event. Mrs. Beckett would say this is what's going on in the school this week and we need these flyers. I would assign some students for Open House, opening game night, business cards, etc. We get real life experience. My brother opened a detail shop and the students made some business cards designs and he can pick one of them. He did pick one, and he used so many he got his own made. This will be in a real business and he's going to pick one of these. They made a flyer for it and business cards. I think Publisher is fun. You see flyers everywhere, even at the grocery store, there's flyers, there's posters, there's everything!

Jennifer also incorporates other aspects of technology into engaging, creative lessons for the students:

We're doing PowerPoints. They've done a dream car presentation. You look at the exercises in the book, and there are a lot of really good ones, and relate to other classes, but then you can throw in one that's fun, and it's reality. If you were looking for a car, what would it be. What features, etc. It's nice to be able to pull in every area of business no matter what the class is. For example, HTML Web Design, we look at real web pages, analyze it, this is what happens, etc. I think that any class you teach can be related back to real life.

Many principals felt that the career change business educators go the extra mile, taking the lesson and book knowledge further to enhance student learning and engagement.

Mr. Stanley said, "Brenda doesn't just tell them how to input the information into a spreadsheet, she has them research real world problems and then apply the data." Mr. Maxwell believes that Justin uses technology to gain high engagement levels in his classroom:

He's not a bubble sheet type of a guy - he brings high level technology into the classroom. I think the level of engagement is high because he is so multimedia, so high-tech - that resonates with kids very well. It is not mundane, it is not the same. There's really a lot of technology with him and it is high engaging.

On an observation form from a different principal, Justin was described as having "seamless use of technology" upon using an interactive whiteboard, online research,

student generated PowerPoint presentations, and teacher control of student workstations all in one class period. The observation form specifically stated that in Justin's class all students were engaged and there was "relevant evidence of personalized learning," "active student engagement," and "evidence of digital learning."

Others also use varied types of technology besides the Internet and application software.

Mrs. Beckett reports:

Jennifer does have the use of the technology, the students are familiar with it, and she has kept up to date with technology. This year with accounting class, she uses the interactive board a lot, and I've watched a change in her teaching style, etc. She engages the students and is very interactive with them. I think her enthusiasm for the class and how she interacts with the kids is all positive.

While Jeffrey doesn't teach directly in a computer lab, he still uses technology on a daily basis for both communication and for engagement with students. His principal, Mr.

Kendall, understands that in his school business classes are sought after by the students:

Business is a popular *elective*. Now that they want to be there, he continues that interest because he has varied teaching styles. He is not just lecture. He does add a lot of different flavor into his classroom. A lot of different modalities, a lot of different project work. He is very organized in regards to his communication with kids. He is probably one of the best at technology collaboration and communicating with kids via the Internet, a website that he created, some online testing. If you miss class, able to pull things from the website, practice tests, homework, etc. He provides valid websites that they can go to study for tests, etc. Jeffrey is probably one of the best in the school. As for 21st century learning, he was ahead of that curve, but that curve is moving quick and he'll have to stay ahead of that curve. A lot of that has to do with infrastructure, and he is only as good as the tools we give him.

Jeffrey has been using his website for nine years. He tells the students that they can find something related to class every day, whether it be a supplemental learning resource, a link to an activity, assignments, and schedules for class. Some of the teachers had very advanced tools and were very comfortable using them, like Justin. During the class observation, which is held in a computer lab every day, he used a laptop connected to an

interactive whiteboard, and at the end of class he engaged the students in a multiple choice quiz. The quiz was answered through a student response system, which is kind of like a game to the students. Students each had a handheld piece of equipment into which they entered their answers secretly as individuals. Justin was able to immediately show the group results to the class (and he had access to the individual responses). This was highly engaging to the students and they were having fun while learning. Jennifer regularly uses an interactive whiteboard to facilitate instruction and to engage the students in active learning. This was observed both by the researcher and also noted on her principal observation form. All five of the career change business educators demonstrated expert skills and innovative integration of technology in their instructional strategies.

Summary of Research Question 2

The career change business educators are aware of the importance of the connection of the outside world. The methods and instructional strategies in the classroom include sharing personal anecdotes and stories either planned or spontaneous, collaboration within or outside of the school and real-world problem solving. The administrators confirmed that these strategies are used frequently and successfully in the career change business educators' classrooms. Another theme that evolved that permeates the career change business educators' classrooms is the high level use of technology and subsequently high levels of engagement by the students. It is the type of use and the way that they use the technology, providing connections to real world and using a variety of applications that might be found in the real workplace that really gets the students interested and involved. Overall, there is no surprise to the administrators that the career

change business educators are successful in the classroom techniques, and Mr. Kendall feels that prior work experience has only advantages when he said, “I don’t see any disadvantages, it’s more a plus; I see it as yet another tool in their bag that they can pull out.” Overall, the creative mix of instructional strategies that the career change business educators employ in the classroom are engaging the students and providing the connection to the real world.

Table 3

Summary of Research Question 2

Summary of Research Question 2
How the Instructional Strategies Employed in the Classroom are Influenced by Prior Real-world Business Experience
Effectively Interact with 21 st Century Students
Planned or Spontaneous Anecdotes and Personal Stories
Extending Curriculum to Teach Character Traits & Life Lessons
Teamwork and Collaboration
Problem Solving
Creative Use of Technology for Engagement

Research Question 3

The third and final research question was designed to answer how the expectation of teaching for career change business educators measures up to the reality of their teaching experiences. The interview questions related to the third and final research

question revealed the following themes of isolation, little flexibility and a positive match between expectations and reality of their teaching experiences.

Isolation and Little Need for Support

The educators in this study were surprised about how isolated teaching really is, although some had expected some individuality and being the manager of their own classrooms. This is a notable difference between working in a business and working in a school. One reason is the structured daily bell schedule; you have strict time frames and often do not have a chance to interact with others. Also, the workload of a teacher from day to day can often be overwhelming, including planning for classes, communication with teachers, administrators and parents, and grading assignments, tests and projects. Overall, the career change business educators in the study generally felt they need less administrative support as they are experienced in working in a professional environment regardless of whether it is education or business. Brenda stated:

I probably require *less* support than someone who is traditionally trained, right out of college, and didn't ever work. Just because all the management things you do in here; the bins, the papers, handing things in. Keeping track of your gradebook is very much like being a manager. Keeping track of what projects everybody's working on at work and what they're doing and what they're turning in and the quality of their work and all that *directly* relates to managing the classroom, running meetings, etc. all that stuff. I probably think I require less support and honestly I would say I would almost feel bad for someone who is 22 years old and fresh out. That's hard; you're by yourself in here all day. The isolation's a little tough – somebody said – when we had these through the inductee program here. We have meetings once a month with the new teachers and they asked us what is your biggest complaint. Our first month, everyone had different things and someone said it was isolationism. It wasn't like 2 months in, and I was like, yep! I see it. I don't go over to the lunchroom at lunch time, I sit here and do emails and stuff, so I am like, it's me and the kids *all day!* And it's not until the end of the day that I actually have a chance to like, talk to somebody. You never know, you might catch a teacher in the copy room or something during your plan period, but *that's it!* You know! I was very anxious to meet the people that I feel like I'll be working with for the next 15 years, and it was Christmas time before I knew everybody! That was a little bit hard, but probably easier for me than it was

maybe for someone else. I would say, to go back to that business question, like what do you miss, probably that would be the one thing. When there were certain things going on, like someone new was coming in, or leaving, or a baby shower or something, we always had lunch and the supervisor was good about letting the lunch go a little long that day or you would have the one the last office. The department I was in they were big on Thanksgiving and Christmas. They would have a “beast feast” and the people who lived in the areas would cook turkeys and hams in their homes and bring them into the office and we would set them up in the hallway! So that’s what I would say I miss, is the social aspect. You know in here you get 42 minutes! When that bell rings you need to get back out the door.

Jennifer felt similarly:

I definitely think that administrative support and things like that – I do like the fact that I have my own environment here but coming from the working world I’m so used to reporting to somebody and having a boss and having my own rules and regulations of what I’m supposed to do. Even though I have a lot of freedom, I still like to converse with the administration from time to time and ask, is this good? Is this what I’m supposed to do?

Paula said:

I thought that schools weren’t political and I hated the politics of business...but they are *very* political (laughing). And you can’t move when you’re in the school. In business you can take another job. Here you’re kind of stuck and you can’t go anywhere else! Support-wise I always feel like I’m on my own. Nobody really knows what I do here. So when I’m trying to do something I feel very alone.

A few of the career change business educators in this study mentioned that they had a hard time remembering when they were last observed in the classroom. They were not bothered by this, as they were comfortable with their teaching ability and classroom management. In the interviews, some principals mentioned only observing the teachers periodically, but believe they see enough of the career change business educators’ positive impact through reputation and through walk-throughs. This laissez-faire attitude is confirmed by the principals. Mr. Stevens said, “From a principal’s point of view, if you don’t hear about somebody, then they’re doing what they’re supposed to be doing.” They

are content to leave teachers to their own classrooms and trust that they are doing their jobs well, especially the career change business educators in this study.

Little Flexibility

Little flexibility was another key theme described by all teacher participants. The ability to go to the bathroom whenever you want or have a day when you want to be “low key” can be done in business, for the most part. In teaching, you are expected to be on the mark, all of the time. The students will be appearing at the bell schedule, in 40-minute increments. You cannot legally leave them in the classroom by themselves, so you have to use the bathroom between classes or at designated times. In addition you give up the simple things like making or taking a phone call in the middle of the day. Brenda recalls the more flexible environment of the workplace:

I'm DEFINITELY happy I made the change. There are things, you know, like the day before a break. You're thinking...gee, you know I'd like to just...(voice trailing off). And there were days in the business world where we'd joke around. You'd hide from the boss, go on a long lunch. You *know* you can't do that here! There's *no hiding!* There are 20 faces looking at you every 40 minutes. There's *no hiding!*

Jennifer agrees:

I do not miss working in business. There's those days when maybe you don't feel well or something. In business I did have a little bit of time where I could have spend it by myself, recovering from something, and still getting work done but I going at my own pace. Those may be the only days that I actually think that.

Jeffrey believes that giving up the flexibility is the tradeoff he has for his free time in the summer:

I miss the luxuries that business people don't understand. I miss going to the bathroom off of a bell schedule. You can relate. I miss being able to make a phone call during the day or take a phone call during the day from my mechanic. I miss being able to go to the doctors or stop at a bank without making a critical issue of it. Those are the things I miss, and that's the trade off. That's the tradeoff for 180 days, and I respect that, but on the same token, I do miss those things. I think that

the public sometimes forgets about that though. Not being able to take a phone call when your car is getting fixed, that's pretty darn brutal...that's pretty darn brutal...but that's the nature of the beast.

Justin, coming from a consulting position where travel happened frequently and sometimes abruptly, believes he made the right decision and doesn't mind the inflexibility:

There are days, when I think well, we wouldn't have had to deal with this in business, but by and large I can say I made the right decision without hesitation. I enjoy working with the kids and seeing their successes, and even the kids that come back and show us their successes, those are valuable experiences. I would say it's a little bit more constant changing in the business environment, our structure, our way of life here is more structured on a daily basis of how things go, the traditional schedule and things of that nature. There is not as much flexibility in the building itself, obviously there is in your classroom, and that's not a negative here, but in teaching in general. I miss the flexibility at times, but on the flip side, it's also a good thing. When I was in business I could walk in today and someone would say I need you in New York tomorrow. That doesn't happen here. On a personal level I like that, so without a doubt I definitely made the right decision.

All in all, the teachers felt they had made the right decision, and weighed the good and the bad of the lack of flexibility in the daily teacher schedule. They all agreed that it was something they expected in education, but it was something they missed from the business world, if only from time to time.

Matching Expectations with Reality and Feeling Prepared

All of the career change business educators in the study were very happy with their decision to change from working in business to teaching business. Four of the five career change business educators mentioned that they had at least one teacher in their family or close friends. Two of them knew they always wanted to teach at some point in their lives. In addition, the expectations of teaching matched up with what they expected. Part of this expectation was based in that they all completed the same mid-Atlantic post-

baccalaureate business education Master's certification program. All five career change business educators stated that they felt prepared to teach in the classroom based on their preparation. The participants felt that the program maximized their individual backgrounds and capitalized on skills and resources they had gained from their work experience, helping them to easily transfer it into the classroom. The key areas that they felt were addressed well in their academic program were content and lesson development, special needs, classroom management, and most of all, technology.

The Constant Challenge of Technology

All five career change business educators felt very prepared to teach the latest technology both in gadgets as well as the latest software, either from their work experience in business and industry or from learning it as part of the mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program. What some weren't prepared for was that some situations would require them to use or relearn outdated technology, or to prepare lessons from textbooks that are very outdated. In some cases, there is a dichotomy between what a business education teacher is expected to know and how lagging or outdated the school technology may be. This is also true in light of what kinds of technology both the 21st century workplace and 21st century students have available to them. Jeffrey said:

The one thing that I found kind of humorous in my experience, the program was very good at preparing us to use the technology. They didn't prepare us for what to do when you get to the school and they don't have the technology! We spent so much time working on PowerPoints, nobody ever taught me how to use the overhead projector...huh! These computers are dinosaurs! It's very frustrating. I came from an industry that couldn't wait to get the latest, greatest technology because your clients had it. Boy, I'd love to be a history teacher (laughing). We just installed Office 2007 this year. I had to relearn everything. My textbook is so out of date right now and my textbook will be out of date in six months if I got a new one tomorrow. The examples in here, they talk about the Rolling Stones

Voodoo Lounge Tour when some of these kids were 3 years old. At least in history, if you prepare a great lesson you can teach it again 30 times, because you know (*emphatically*) “Let’s face it...Mussolini still lost the war!” The challenge of a changing technology - sometime it’s daunting. You’re not allowed to be behind when you’re the business teacher. I’m tired of learning computers systems, but you’re not allowed to quit.

The career change business educators accept this challenge as part of the job. The administrators all commented on how they have no doubt that these career change business educators to stay updated and abreast of the latest technology. They support them by providing opportunities to attend conferences and training and by networking with others within and external to the school. All of the teachers hold current memberships with either or both of the National Business Education Association and the Pennsylvania Business Education Association.

Always Reinventing Themselves

The career change business educators remain positive and take their own opportunities to learn more or to do better in the classroom. Jeffrey has already completed his principal’s certification, and isn’t opposed to moving up to an administrative position, although his summer time off is a big deterrent. Justin is currently finishing his principal’s certification. Paula, Brenda, and Jennifer are content being available for their families and friends and for improving within their own positions by going to conferences and taking classes. Brenda said:

I look at what I did from one semester to another semester. A student said, well you never did that with *our* class, and I said something like “well, a wise man learns from his past” - but it was true! (*laughing*) I learned! It was a great chance to start over the second semester. It’s sort of like once you blow it with a group of kids there’s no way to go back. It’s kind of a shame. But the good thing about that, even the kids I have all year, I think, well, *next year* I can change, I can do something next year that I didn’t do this year. That’s kind of nice. You can reinvent yourself and reinvent things for next year and make up for mistakes.

Jennifer felt prepared to teach in the classroom, but was surprised at how hard she really works to know the content deeply and understands the demand to be prepared for her students on a daily basis:

I was surprised and I don't know why because I knew when I was preparing to teach that I was only touching on things. I thought, just as the students say, "well, I understand this, I know it enough"...but you have to know the material inside and out. Anything that you are teaching. Even with keyboarding, there are lessons with inside it about the outside world. You have to be prepared and know *everything* because students ask *a lot* of questions. Even though the program went on about the preparation and stuff I think I was still not seeing the whole picture of how prepared you must be and how much you have to know and how difficult it can make your whole day. If I don't do one of these lessons before I teach the class, (*emphatically*) it causes chaos!

Jennifer believes that she can be better at her job as a teacher because of her experience from her past. She said:

Jennifer said I think my business experience helps because being out there I was confronted with different issues and what it's like to be unprepared in a situation where you're meeting with someone and you don't have the materials ready and you haven't done your research and how actually uncomfortable you can be and how on edge and how unsatisfied and with me, I was a marketing rep, and if the person, she didn't do her research, she wasn't prepared, she didn't get enough sleep last night. I lost money. Not that it's all on money, but still you lose your representation within the company and respect and the people you work with and there's so much riding on it, especially with that field and if I wasn't then I lost out that day. That helps me because I am self-motivated to know that teaching is going to go so much smoother because I was already out there working, and I know that if I was prepared and ready that my interactions - and it's not that much different - are going to go well. My PowerPoint presentations just like in the business world went better if I went through them.

Jennifer also feels that she can learn from her daily activities and how a lesson transpires, and she can do better the next day or next time, and she doesn't let it affect her confidence:

If you just come in to teaching, you might just have a bad experience and think it was teaching in general. Whereas I'm like, well, no. It was me. I didn't do enough or look up the answers or research the lesson well enough. Others might think they know this material, so why didn't it go so well? Having other work

experiences, you realize it may not be the field itself, it may be something else going on, or what you did to prepare.

Overall, Jennifer is very happy with her decision to change careers and teach. She believes that by working first in a business, she has a greater appreciation for the teaching world, and is happy she had the experience in business first. She said she even finds joys in the routine or mundane activities that the students do not:

I don't know that it's quite what I expected, but it is probably better than I expected. I definitely haven't looked back and I say that all of the time. My dad, who is a teacher, kept saying, "Are you sure! Are you sure! Are you sure! You're going to take a pay cut and it's a lot more work than people think." He would go on and on. Now it is just right up my alley. I love to be busy, I love all the interaction and the activities. OK - I actually like - OK, we're going out for a fire drill...I'm such a dork (*laughing*). I'm like "OK, I'm in the auditorium!" (*laughing, mocking herself*). There were a lot of tedious little things I did in my office work that I wasn't always interested in. and with this for some reason...everything. I'm like what's the message in this today? And, you're constantly busy. Whatever extra time you put in doesn't feel like extra time because you're benefitting in some way because it's going to make my next day easier or it's going to be a great lesson - or they're *really* going to like this lesson. Even when you're doing busy work, you feel good. I feel like I've actually accomplished something when I leave. I'm doing something worthwhile and I really do like it.

Justin states that most days he doesn't miss working in business:

There are days, when I think, well, we wouldn't have had to deal with this in business, but by and large I can say I made the right decision without hesitation. I enjoy working with the kids and seeing their successes, and even the kids that come back and show us their successes, those are valuable experiences.

The career change business educators in the study believe that they are now in environments that match up with what they expected or even may be better than they expected. They truly love business and love teaching, making a positive combination for a second career.

The Stigma of “Business”

Even though all of the career change business educators believe that their expectations of teaching match the reality of their situations and they feel committed and passionate about what they teach, they are perplexed by some outdated views of business education that remain in education. Business education continues to grow rapidly, attempting to match the trends of the competitive, global workforce. Coming from a fast-paced global environment, the teachers expected that students would take business electives and that they would be regarded highly by the administrators, the students, the parents and the community at large. Some are perplexed that a student going to college and even majoring in business may have never even taken one business course in high school. Jeffrey said,

It bothers me more than anything else to have students honored at our graduation and they talk about she’s going to be a marketing major at x university and I know that that child has never taken a single business course. There’s a stigma attached to the term “business.” We are working so hard on renaming our courses. We’re keeping the same content, but we’re avoiding the word “business” because they don’t want to take the course. “Business” is not a nasty word. Every single person works at a business. Years ago, if you took Typing you were going to be a secretary, if you took Distributive Ed, you were going to be a clerk somewhere. Maybe it’s the generational thing; that these children’s parents still think that way. You would think that working in a modern workplace that they would know better, but that certainly has not been the case.

Paula has seen declining enrollment in her computer classes, as more students take accelerated science and math courses. She wishes that there was more interest and value placed on business education in her school, and she feels that students would benefit more long term by taking a course in computer applications:

I think we need more support in the community for what we teach. I think we’re *real life*, and there are a lot of kids who start college but who don’t finish. And the skills that we teach could make them more productive. I think the students need a better understanding of what they need to know.

As for the future of the business education department and what the career change educators would like to see, more would like to see emphasis on technology skills and personal finance. As business is an elective, many of the educators felt that there should be some required electives in these areas. Jeffrey said:

Unfortunately our department is based on electives. There are no required courses. It's there for the students taking if the students so choose. We have an alumni survey done every year, the one thing that *always* comes back every year is that the students needed more computer usage. We have students who take 5 sciences because the parents think that that is the answer to getting into college...AP chem., bio, physics. Bottom line those are all great, and that is excellent for your resume and everything else, but you're going to learn a hell of a lot more in a spreadsheets class, and more useful across-the-board information in a spreadsheets class than in one of those classes.

Justin believes we need to educate the future citizens in areas of personal finance and technology to help them transition to the real world:

For any student that is going into a business major, which if you look at a high school, depending on the high school, you have a pretty good percentage of kids going into business. All are going to be required to take a finance course, two accounting classes, and for whatever reason, they're not taking these classes in high school. Maybe one issue is that a lot of classes in business electives are not weighted; taking weighted courses to increase the GPA. In addition to a required technology course, I would say a required personal finance course. We have kids who graduate at the high school and even the college level who don't know how to balance a checkbook or write a check, are getting themselves into trouble. They're going away to college getting 10 credit card applications filling them *all* out and then just loading up on debt. Those types of things are critical for high school students to know before they leave our institutions.

Some of the school districts are more open and supportive of the accelerated changes in the areas of business education, including technology as they have seen explosive growth and changes in recent times. Mr. Maxwell calls his business education department "exploding" and "cutting edge" and feels that as a business educator, one must be able to change in order to succeed:

In your department there has been *overwhelming* change, from shorthand to business accounting to THIS. And if you have somebody in the field for a while and they haven't changed...oooh, they've got to get out, or you've got to do something. With the influx of Justin and two others with high technology, that department is growing. I never was an elective teacher, but I can understand the angst of an elective teacher that are really dependent upon getting kids into that program, and how many kids have signed up? If you're social studies, they're coming. Whether you stink or not, they're coming. With business you've got to bring kids in, and they do. FBLA has gone off the roof, their enrollment has gone off the roof, they've written online courses and Justin has been a huge part of that. They understand the changing field; they understand that he needed to be adaptable to present something 21st century to these kids, so it's been good.

With the rapid advancement of technology and the dynamic 21st century workplace, the image of business education should also be changing. The career change business educators and their principals recognize that drastic change has happened in business education over the past 20 years. They are making adjustments in course content and course titles to reflect this change in the hopes that the community will recognize the need for more emphasis on business education, technology and the life skills that are embedded within it.

Summary of Research Question 3

All five career change business educators believe that the reality of the teaching experiences match what they expected, and in some cases, it is better than expected. It is clear that the career change business educators in this study appear to truly care about their content area, their jobs, and their students. The negative aspects they experience include some isolation and little flexibility in the classroom, and some teachers and principals mentioned that they realize they could make more money elsewhere. However, all five career change business educators agreed this was an acceptable sacrifice for the value of their personal time and the other benefits of teaching. Frustration often arises in dealing with outdated curricular materials and technology provided by the schools,

because the fast-paced, global, 21st century work environment demands proficiency in the latest technology and trends. The five career change business educators in this study appear to constantly analyze their courses, curriculum and teaching and continually try to improve their own teaching as well as the reputation of the department with the students and with the community. These teachers expressed concern that students and the community haven't fully seen or accepted the vast progress of today's business education curriculum and placed more importance on subjects such as personal finance and technology. All of these career change business educators strongly believe that the best part of the job is seeing students succeed and all feel that is their ultimate goal.

Table 4

Summary of Research Question 3

Summary of Research Question 3 How the Expectation of Teaching for Career Change Business Educators Measures Up to the Reality of their Teaching Experiences
Isolation and Little Need for Support
Little Flexibility
Teaching Meets or Exceeds Expectations/Feel Prepared
Keeping Up with the Challenges of Technology
Always Reinventing Themselves
The Stigma of "Business"

Relation of Findings to Pedagogies of Engagement

Many years ago, Dewey outlined three key areas to improve student engagement through active learning: connection to the outside world, collaboration and problem solving. The career change business education teachers in this study naturally provided an environment that includes all three of these areas. In all cases, the previous work experience illuminates the business content and brings it to life for the students. The instructional strategies in the classroom are enhanced through personal stories and anecdotes, either planned or spontaneous, and the professionalism and maturity of the career change educator is evident. The connections to the real world are done through the teaching of soft skills, reflecting those required in the workplace and as a citizen. The career change business educators make it a priority to stay connected to the business world through conferences, professional development, field trips, and networking and maintaining contacts with other business educational professionals as well as industry associates. Career change business educators also stay up to date with the latest trends in business as well as with developments and new innovations in technology. Collaboration and problem solving were both prominent methods of teaching business education as well as activities that are present in extracurricular activities related to business. Often collaboration and problem solving were intertwined and a natural fit with the curriculum. Whenever possible, problem solving simulates real world issues and cases, and the outside community is involved wherever and whenever possible to varying degrees. Moreover, technology collaboration is a growing trend that business educators are comfortable exercising, such as multiple online revisions through email or online

applications, online discussion boards, and communication with business executives via teleconference equipment.

To see this theory in action was the most rewarding part of the study. The five classroom observations revealed a vibrant, engaging environment that uniquely combines the pedagogies of engagement and suggested students are active in the learning process. The Classroom Observation Rubric (Appendix C) listed the three areas of the pedagogies of engagement with key ideas of what each might entail. In the Connections to the Real World and Wider Community section, key strategies to look for included personal experiences, anecdotes, case studies, networking, project-based learning involving the community, and relating lessons to students' lives. The collaboration section included planned group activities, roles and accountability within a group, collaboration with other teachers or outside community, and collaboration between small groups in the classroom. Lastly, the Problem Solving and Active Learning section included strategies like problem solving activities, case studies, simulations, and real-world projects. It was surprising to see how much of each key area was demonstrated in each of the career change educators classrooms. Brenda's Career and Finance Class was like a simulated office environment, with opportunities for learning happening in many dimensions. The students were involved in independent career inventory and research projects, but were also collaborating in stock market analysis groups. Technology was used by the students and Brenda to enhance the collaboration through Internet research and analysis. Synthesis of career unit concepts was occurring through an interactive discussion. During this process, Brenda infused the anecdotal real-world experiences that could help students understand the material and to be successful in the learning assignment. Brenda's confidence and

positive rapport was evident as she controlled the classroom with mature expertise that she attributes to her management experience. Students seemed involved and excited to learn and interact with each other and with Brenda. Overall, in one class period, Beth exhibited all three areas of the pedagogies of engagement with technology.

Julie's Accounting class was structured and engaging from the beginning bell. She immediately gave students real accounting data of her own personal paycheck, with real payroll amounts, as well as school district pay schedules (with the names blocked off for confidentiality). She then related the payroll lesson to their personal lives, by involving the students own work experience and having them complete a W-4 form step by step. The technology used in her classroom was an interactive white board. Jennifer appeared to be mature, confident, and positive. She tied the lesson to important soft skills and characteristics needed in the workplace, reminding students of the importance of honesty and responsibility. She took that point a step farther by engaging students in a discussion about what might happen if they did not possess either of those traits. She shared her personal experiences by discussing the minimum wage that she made in the past and spoke of her trouble understanding the W-4 form when she first got a job. She used humor in revealing her own insecurities as well as trying to apply the government terminology to the students' lives. Her assignments and classroom procedures were posted, and she left students with real world advice to memorize their social security numbers and to go to the United States government website if they needed more information on the forms. Her students were actively involved in the learning and discussion. Jennifer also demonstrated the pedagogies of engagement.

Paula's Programming class started working before the bell even rang. They immediately started diving into their computer programs and were collaborating with classmates on how to approach the problems they were experiencing. Paula pulled the class together as one and modeled a correct approach to the problem. She then used humor and her outside perspective to illustrate to the class the efficient way of completing their program as well as why it was important to them. She displayed maturity and confidence, and she provided opportunity for the students to collaborate on their programs, yet they were aware of their individual accountability within the group. Students were actively engaged and excitedly involved in the learning process, asking questions and appearing to be on task for the entire class period.

Jeffrey's Marketing class took place at the end of the day, so the students were a little slow in coming in the door. However, within minutes, Jeffrey had them laughing and involved, immediately relating the content to the students' personal lives. He included funny and serious anecdotes and personal stories from his marketing work experience and his personal life. He spoke of tennis shoes he wore over 20 years ago, golf balls and sports drinks. The rapport was friendly yet respectful, and he demonstrated a controlled command of the classroom. He did not remain at the front of the room; he got close to the students and, at times, sat at their level during the discussion. The students engaged in a high level problem solving discussion about whether two large soft drink companies should stop advertising and how it would affect smaller competition and the economy. The students collaborated as they analyzed this situation and most students appeared very comfortable participating in the discussion. The students related the topics to the global marketplace and demonstrated logic and critical thinking. The class was not

taught in a computer lab, but Jeffrey used an interactive white board to conduct the lesson.

Lastly, Justin's classroom was buzzing with activity. It was in a computer lab, and there were lots of technology tools available to both Justin and the students. When the bell rang, Justin immediately turned on his laptop and whiteboard and began. The students and Justin had a respectful and friendly rapport, and after Justin stated the objectives for the day, one of the students called him an "overachiever." Justin laughed with the class and it appeared that they clearly knew what was expected of them. The project was a car buying analysis project. The students were working individually, but were collaborating with each other as they worked. The discussion part of the class was engaging, as Justin used humor about test driving cars and buying one that would fall apart as soon as it was driven off of the lot. He displayed dynamic energy as he moved around the room and involved all of the students. He utilized student response systems for a quiz, and the students immediately became competitive and actively involved. Justin's classroom looked very office-like, with procedures and places established for finding and obtaining necessary resources for the class. Justin's professionalism was apparent in the way he carried himself and the way he spoke. He connected the content to the real world through his stories and experience and encouraged the students to share their experiences as well.

Overall, the five career change business educators in this study demonstrated the pedagogies of engagement during the classroom observations. The interviews and documents collected validated the strategies and objectives used in the classroom. The teachers are aware that they can increase student engagement and involvement through

the creative use of these strategies. In addition, technology is another innovative way they engage students in the classroom, either in using it as a tool to disseminate information to the students or as a way of getting them actively involved in the lesson or a project. This combination of the pedagogies of engagement and the use of technology by the career change business educators in this study can be seen in Figure 1. The career change business educators in this study are a unique and interesting group of educators who can reach the 21st century students with multidimensional learning activities and engagement.

Career Change Business Educators' Pedagogies of Engagement

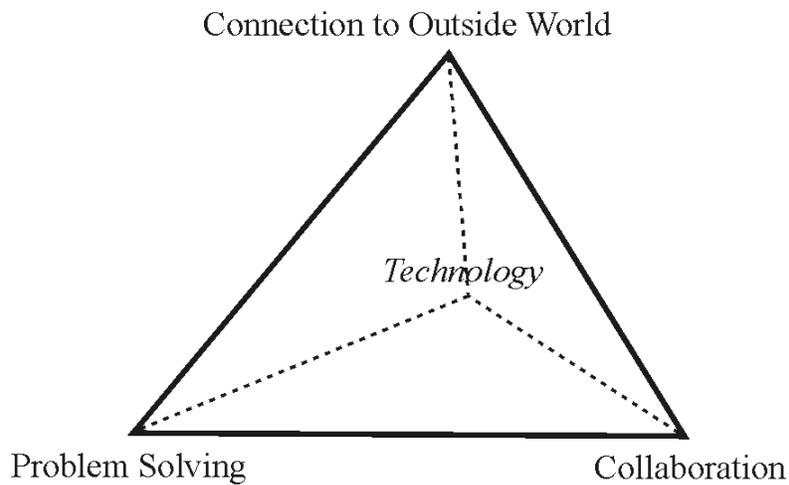


Figure 1

Career Change Business Educators' Pedagogies of Engagement

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative collective case study revealed the unique attributes of career change business educators who have prior, real-world experience in business. Their insights into the real world of business are infused into the classroom, making the class more interesting and engaging for the student. One principal described education as an “artificial setting,” therefore, the real world experience of these seasoned business educators enables students to get a glimpse of what may be in their future. The students can gain some perspective into what life will be like after high school and when they enter the world of work. The passion of the teachers about sharing business content and about teaching business is very evident in teaching strategies and in their overall outlook on teaching and education.

The reality of the experiences in business is naturally woven throughout their teaching. This happens as a carefully selected anecdote or story that fits a point in the curriculum, or as an off-the-cuff, spontaneous memory that highlights a moment in teaching. The career change educators believe that although the curriculum of business education, including technology, helps to prepare the students for the future, there needs to be an emphasis on soft skills that are vital to survival in the workplace. These include work ethic, honesty, responsibility, organization, independence, time management, and respect. They do not try to minimize the reality of the workplace, nor do they try to exaggerate any negatives, but they honestly try to get the message through that they may have to work long hours, perform mundane tasks or work with people they would not choose to work with normally. The emphasis on collaboration in the classroom helps to

provide practice for teamwork, but also to utilize resources such as other students, teachers, and professionals who are already in the workforce. Collaboration occurs face to face, but also may happen on-line or through email, just as it occurs in the real world. Problem solving in the classroom is created to simulate real world problems, such as in the stock market, accounting, marketing, advertising and finance. By analyzing and working through problems, the students can anticipate what problems lie ahead in the workforce and can help to determine what fields may interest them. Problem solving and collaboration often are coupled as would happen in a real work situation. Business education as a field lends itself easily to the combination of all three areas of Dewey's Pedagogies of Engagement: connections to the outside world, problem solving and collaboration, creating an exciting, engaging learning environment for the students.

Relationship to Previous Literature

As found in the literature review, the changing information-based, global society is demanding reform in education (Bybee & Starkweather, Carnoy, 1998; Fullan, 2007). There is a focus on 21st century skills, including extension beyond traditional core content curriculum to general skills such as communication, collaboration, and technology. Some believe there should be focus on additional skills that lie outside of traditional content. Many feel that the students need to be taught to be prepared for the workforce and in broad skill areas that employers seek (Brumley et al., 1993; Hosler & Meggison, 2008; Lozar Glenn, 2007; Zinser, 2003). The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2004) outlines several areas that link business and education, including "21st century content" like global awareness, finance, economics, and business, "learning and thinking skills" like critical thinking and problem solving, "ICT literacy skills," and "life skills" like leadership,

ethics, responsibility, personal productivity, self-direction, and accountability. The career change business educators in this study overwhelmingly agreed with this movement and purposefully include this type of instruction in the classroom in addition to class content. The skills that were revealed in this study include time management, responsibility, organization, independent thinking, respect, and honesty. In addition, there is a need to change pedagogical styles and methods as we face a generation of new, digital native, millennial students, who require that the content be made relevant and applicable to their own personal lives and the world around them (Oblinger, 2003; Prensky, 2001). The career change business educators in this study continually try to incorporate their past experiences with modern lessons so that students can directly apply business education and technology content with their world as they know it.

Another area that is confirmed by the literature is the special set of characteristics and skills that a career change educator transfers from a professional career to the classroom. These skills and characteristics include maturity and perspective on their own abilities as well as their personal experiences (Chambers, 2002; Madfes, 2006; Powers, 2006; Resta et al., 2001, Rohlwing, 2006). Regarding teaching strategies, career change teachers are innovative and take risks in the classroom (Powers, 1999) and try to better prepare students for the workplace (Resta et. al, 2001). In addition, career change teachers understand the value of connecting the real world with the content and try to relate it to the lives of students (Chambers, 2002; Powers, 1999; Resta et. al, 2001). The soft skills and personality traits that career change teachers bring to the profession are also important such as management and organizational skills, work ethic and expert knowledge (Chambers, 2002; Lord, 2000; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). They

also are more confident and have little patience for bureaucracy, especially when it is a barrier to student learning (Resta et al., 2001). Again, all of the previous literature has referred to career change teachers in general, and not to career change business education teachers. These statements overwhelmingly describe all of the five career change business educators in this study. They have demonstrated the high level of skill and dedication necessary to teach complex and comprehensive business education content to the challenging breed of 21st century students.

The literature also supports characteristics of effective teachers, as many share common traits that promote success in the classroom. Polk (2006) identified 10 basic traits of master teachers, and the career change business educators in this study meet most, if not all, of these characteristics. They clearly demonstrated nine of the ten traits including good prior academic performance, communication skills, creativity, professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, self-development or lifelong learning, personality, talent or content area knowledge, and ability to model concepts in their content area. The only trait on the list that was not directly demonstrated was thorough and appropriate student evaluation and assessment. The study was not designed to investigate that specific trait. Polk also asserts that student attention and enjoyment can be reached through personalized curriculum and modeling, and all five of the career change business educators in this study demonstrated this aspect during the classroom observations and interviews.

An advantage that career change educators have in the classroom has to do with the experience of work itself. Madfes (2006) found that beginning teachers are learning to work and learning to teach at the same time, which can be frustrating and difficult. The

career change teachers already know how to work, therefore giving them an advantage in the educational work environment as well. They do not need to work on the soft skills such as management and organization since they have had successful careers in the past. The career change business educators in this study were comfortable with working and even try to teach these soft skills to their students through classroom procedures and lessons.

Challenges and frustrations exist in the transition from professional career to a teaching career, such as isolation, little flexibility, lack of motivation of students, and a difficult first year of teaching (Madfes, 1990; Powers, 1999). All five of the career change business educators recognized the isolation and little flexibility, but they also felt as if it was a manageable part of the job that was outweighed by its benefits. One even compared the little flexibility to structure and felt it could be a positive aspect compared to his previous career. All of them struggle with the lack of motivation of the students, but they all try to overcome that with innovative, relevant lessons. Only one of the career change business educators expressed any negative frustration about the first year of teaching but was happy she stayed in teaching. A gap can exist between expectations and realities of career changers that may be a factor in retention (Priadharshini & Robinson-Pant (2003). It is important to recognize and address these concerns and frustrations in order to attract and to retain talented professionals in education.

Finally, many believe that there is a teacher shortage, as an aging teacher force reaches retirement age, and attrition rates continue to rise (Hussar, 2000; Resta et. al, 2001). Teachers will emerge from previous careers and from alternative programs of study to fill these openings with mature, talented professionals. Jorissen (2003) believes

that the type of program combined with the prior work experience may produce a competent, committed teacher. All five of the career change business educators in this study were very satisfied with their program of study and very happy in their new career. Two of the teachers had obtained principal papers but still planned to stay in the field of education. It is important for many to recognize this changing teacher population. They need to embrace the talents and skills that a career change business educator has to offer and to recognize that multitude of benefits of a career change business educator can bring to education.

Implications and Recommendations

The implications of this study are important for many reasons, as it is predicted that the teaching population will be made up of approximately half first career and half second career teachers and many will fill the teacher shortage gap (Hedrick, 2005). It is important for business education teacher preparation programs, schools, and those professionals considering the change from business to business education to recognize the unique characteristics and talents of the career change business educator can bring to the classroom.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

Based on the findings of this study, business education teacher preparation programs need to recognize that the age and maturity of the career change teacher is different than the traditional teacher candidate. The career changer can bring maturity and perspective to teaching, and that should be capitalized upon as lessons are developed and content is learned. Because of the varying types and degrees of backgrounds, the business education content could be customized to fit the needs of each candidate with perhaps

electives for areas where they feel more study is necessary. Many of the candidates felt that they were properly prepared to teach in the secondary classroom, so the methods and program of the Midwestern business education Master's certification program could possibly be examined and emulated. The career change business educators in this study suggested emphasis on pedagogical and disciplinary subjects such as differentiated instruction, addressing standards and classroom management. They also mentioned the challenges of technology regarding compatibility and keeping up with advancements. Technology should definitely be a focus, including using it for student engagement and innovative lessons, staying up to date, and how to teach technology to others. While the career changer business educators in this study are asked to provide technical support and training to other faculty and staff, perhaps some adult education should also be included in the curriculum of the teacher preparation program.

Recommendations for School Districts

For a school district, the career change business educators in this study have proven to be successful additions to the faculty. They provide real world perspective to other staff as well as the students. They provide technical support and training, as well as networking for the school to the outside community. They may be able to consult on innovative strategies and developing online curriculum as education shifts to meet the needs of 21st century students. The career change business educators in this study appear to take initiative and possess the can-do attitude that school districts need as they face the call for reform in education. The data from this study suggests that the career change business educators are preparing the 21st century students for their future in college and in the diverse, global workplace. Some of the five continue to pursue more education and

classes, and two are considering becoming principals and advancing within education. School districts should recognize that career change educators tend to stay in the job longer than traditional teachers, so it may be wise to consider the challenges and frustrations that they face. In this study, the educators were frustrated by the lack of social contact and felt isolated in the classroom. Perhaps more social endeavors could be organized to try to minimize this frustration, or perhaps mentoring programs could ease this frustration. Opportunities for networking, professional development and training could be provided as well to overcome frustrations with technology.

Recommendations for Professionals Considering a Career Change

Lastly, for those professionals who are considering changing careers to teaching business education, the recommendation is to consider the data that this study has revealed. The five career change business educators expressed that the change has met or exceeded their expectations, and they feel they made the right choice in making the switch. The career changer business educators in this study are happy in their second careers as teachers and find many benefits including the intrinsic rewards of feeling like they accomplished something on a daily basis to the extrinsic rewards of seeing the students learn and succeed.

Limitations of the Study

As this study provided a glimpse into the intriguing stories of secondary business educators who have changed careers from working in business to teaching business, some limitations exist that could have affected the data and results of the study. One limitation may be the varying lengths and types of previous careers the career change business educators had, considering the scope of business. Another factor could be the varying

ages and life status regarding marriage and family. All five participants were all graduates of the same mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program though not from the same year. Although they are employed in five different school districts within two different counties, the districts are all within the same geographical area in the same state. Also, the time of year could have affected this study. All of the participants were interviewed and observed towards the end of the spring semester of a school year, with only a couple of months remaining. The career change business educators all stated that they had minimal numbers of observations, which also may have affected the extent of the information provided by the principal participants. Lastly, the students were not studied directly regarding student attitudes or achievement levels, as the focus of the study was directly on the career change business educator.

Recommendations for Future Research

As this study was conducted specifically on five career change business educators, it is a small, yet important, contribution to the body of literature on career change educators. The literature supports a growing trend for working professionals to enter education and that these career change teachers have a great deal of potential but have been not been studied enough to date (Crow et al., 1990, Freidus & Krasnow, 1991; Hendrick, 2005). Specifically, there was little to no research found studying business professionals who became career change business education teachers. As the results of this study were enlightening and provided insight into the phenomenon of career change secondary business educators, more research can be done in this area of education and the impact they can have on 21st century students. First, a more longitudinal study of the

participants could provide deeper information and insight into this phenomenon. Multiple observations and interviews could be conducted to provide further insight into their classroom strategies and pedagogical methods. Perhaps multiple observations at different points of the school year could provide a more rich and deep picture of these fascinating career change business educators. In addition, more teacher participants could be studied from the same mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program to gain a broader knowledge base or to see if these particular teachers are merely an exemplary group in connecting the real world to the classroom. Because all of the teachers graduated from the same mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program, perhaps a study could be done on the impact of that program compared to another type of post-baccalaureate educational program of study, professional development school, or other alternative methods of certification. If a study were conducted on a much larger scale and with participants from other programs, or from other methods to certification such as alternative certification, the extent of the role of the mid-Atlantic university's post-baccalaureate business education Master's certification program could be examined. The career change business educators in this study were all currently teaching in the same regional geographic area. Perhaps teachers from other or multiple geographical locations could be studied. A comparison study could be conducted between career change business educators and traditionally trained business educators. While this study focused on the influences of business experience on secondary business education, other careers or other content areas could be examined. There have been studies of prior work

experience and career changes into other content areas such as math and science, but I have found little to no studies on changing from business into business education.

Conclusion

Overall, unique findings in this study reveal that these career change business educators recognize and meet the demands of the ever-changing, ever-evolving 21st century students and workplace. They are, in essence, a 21st century teacher. The business education content area is rich and deep with essential knowledge that will be used by all students at some point in their lives regardless of choice of career. The skills learned through business education and technology will allow students to become efficient citizens and communicators. The students learn through collaboration how to work with others. They have some experience in how to approach problem solving with creativity, innovation, and confidence. This confidence can only be enhanced by having had even just a touch of experience and insight into the real world through the career change business educator. The career change business educators are experts in technology and can guide students in proper use of technology, as well as assist other faculty and staff in learning and application. The career change business educators in this study are passionate about business, love teaching business and teaching as a profession. Their enthusiasm and style shines through as they model professionalism to the students. They are excited to share their knowledge and are very appreciative of the benefits and personal satisfaction of teaching. In addition, the career change business educator can be recognized for the talent and ability to combine the pedagogies of engagement and integrate them together seamlessly, even in one class period. This creative, real world

connection can engage students and perhaps increase achievement and retention of information as they apply it to their own lives and the world around them.

In conclusion, the opportunity to study this dynamic, fascinating group of career change business educators, full of passion for business and for teaching, should only serve as the beginning foundation of research in the field of career change business educators. It is the hope that research with this intriguing population and with the field of business education itself will continue, as the importance of this 21st century content increases in the diverse, global workplace. As career change business educators enter the teaching workforce, it will be important to understand how to attract and retain this valuable population, who are innovatively engaging and thoroughly preparing our young students of today to be successful citizens and workers of the future.

References

- Akey, T. M. (2006). School context, student attitudes and behavior, and academic achievement: An exploratory analysis. New York, NY:MDRC.
- Anderson, M.A. (2008). The business education curriculum in the education system. In M.H. Rader (Ed.), *National Business Education Association Yearbook 2nd edition*, 46, (p. 20-36). Reston, VA:NBEA.
- Balotsky, E. R., & Christensen, E. W. (2004). Educating a modern business workforce: An integrated educational information technology process. *Group & Organization Management*, 29(2), 148.
- Basinger, J. (2000, January 14) Colleges widen alternate routes to teacher certification, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, pp. 18–21.
- Bigelow, C. (1956). Values of business experience for business teachers of Minnesota. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wyoming, 1956).
- Bohning, G., Hale, L., & Chowning, F. (1999). Change-of-career preservice elementary teachers: Their concerns about teaching science. *Education*, 120(1), 143-148.
- Brady, K. (1997). In search of meaning...not money. *Techniques: Making Education and Career Connections*, 72(4), 34-37.
- Brumley, D., Pollard, C. & Yopp, M. (1993). Views, beliefs, and opinions of secondary business education by state employment service managers and secondary principals in the Pacific Northwest. *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 34(1), 39-50.
- Bybee, R. W., & Starkweather, K. N. (2006). The twenty-first century workforce: A contemporary challenge for technology education. *The Technology Teacher*(May/June 2006), 27-32.

- Carnoy, M. (1998). The changing world of work in the information age. *New Political Economy*, 3(1), 123-128.
- Chambers, D. (2002). The real world and the classroom: second-career teachers. *The Clearing House*, 75(4), 212-217.
- Christensen, A. A. (2003). Exploring second-career teachers' career change motivation. (Doctoral Dissertation, Colorado State University, 2003).
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches 2nd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Crews, T. B., Moore, W. A., Rader, M. H., & Rowe, B. A. (2006). NBEA research task force study: Important research questions for business education. *Business Education Forum*, 60(4), 18-26.
- Crow, G. M., Levine, L., & Nager, N. (1990). No more business as usual: Career changers who become teachers. *American Journal of Education*, 98(3), 197-223.
- Daraviras, T. (2006). Back to school: Career changers and their reasons for pursuing teacher certification. (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 2006).
- deBettencourt, L., & Howard, L. (2004). Alternatively licensing career changers to be teachers in the field of special education: Their first-year reflections. *Exceptionality*, 12(4), 225-238.
- Ehrlich, T. (1998). Reinventing John Dewey's "Pedagogy as a University Discipline". *The Elementary School Journal*, 98(5), 489-509.
- Freidus, H., & Krasnow, M. (1991, April 3-7). Second career teachers: Themes and variations. American Educational Research Association. Chicago, IL.

- Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gandy, J.M. and Gryder, R. (2007). Curriculum: The challenge. *Business Education Forum*, 61(4), p. 22-25.
- Gutierrez, K. (2000). Teaching and learning in the 21st century. *English Education*, 32(4), 290-298.
- Hallinan, M. T. & Khmelkov, V.T. (2001). Recent development in teacher education in the United States of America. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 27(2), 175-185.
- Hancock, V. & Betts, F. (2002). Back to the future: Preparing learners for academic success in 2004. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 29(7), 10-13, 27.
- Hedrick, C.H. (2005). Retaining career switchers. (Doctoral Dissertation, George Mason University, 2005).
- Hosler, M.M. & Meggison, P.F. (2008). The foundations of business education. In M.H. Rader (Ed.), *National Business Education Association Yearbook 2nd edition*, 46, (p. 1-19). Reston, VA:NBEA.
- Hussar, W. J. (2000). Predicting the need for newly hired teachers in the United States to 2008-09. *Education Statistics Quarterly*, 1(4).
- International Society for Technology Education/National Education Technology Standards for Students Project (2007). National Educational Technology Standards for Students: The Next Generation. Retrieved December 5, 2007, from http://www.iste.org/inhouse/nets/cnets/students/pdf/NETS_for_Students_2007.pdf
- Jorissen, K. T. (2003). Successful career transitions: Lessons from urban alternate route teachers who stayed. *The High School Journal*, 86(3), 41-51.

- Kagan, S. L., & Stewart, V. (2004). Putting the world into world-class education: Introduction. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(3), 195-196.
- Ladd, P. D. (1995). The learning and teaching styles of Tennessee secondary business education teachers. *The Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 37(1), 29-45.
- Learning Point Associates (2007). Engauge 21st Century Skills Framework. Retrieved December 11, 2007, from <http://www.ncrel.org/engauge/skills/skill21.htm>
- Lord, M. (2000). The ranks of teachers are swelling with former pilots, lobbyists, and lawyers. *U.S. News & World Report*, 128(14), 91-92. Retrieved July 14, 2009 from ABI/INFORM Global (Document ID: 52193696).
- Lozar Glenn, J. M. (2007). Internationalizing the Business Curriculum. *Business Education Forum*, 61(4), 9-15.
- Lozar Glenn, J. M. (2006). (Inventing) The future of middle school business education. *Business Education Forum*, 60(4), 9-14.
- Madfes, T. (1990). Second career, second challenge in mathematics and science education: A hermeneutic study in the meaning of work. (Doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco, 1990)
- McKibbin, M. D. (2001). One size does not fit all: Reflections on alternative routes to teacher preparation in California. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28(1), 133-149.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- The New Commission on the Skills for the American Workforce (2006). *Tough Choices or Tough Times*. Retrieved December 11, 2007, from <http://www.skillscommission.org/executive.htm>

- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL). (2003). EnGauge 21st century skills for 21st century learners. Retrieved November 13, 2007 from <http://www.ncrel.org/engauge>
- Novak, D., & Knowles, G. J. (1992, April). Life histories and the transition to teaching as a second career. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Oblinger, D. (2003). Boomers, Gen-Xers, & Millenials: Understanding the new students. *Educause Review*(July/August 2003), 37-47.
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2004). Framework for 21st Century Learning. Retrieved November 13, 2007, from <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (October 10, 2007). U.S. Students Need 21st Century Skills to Compete in a Global Economy. Press Release. Retrieved December 5, 2007, from <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org>
- Pennsylvania Department of Education (2004). Program Specific Guidelines for Certification No. 33. Retrieved December 12, 2007, from <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>
- Perreault, H. (2007). Using podcasts to develop skills for the global workplace. *Business Education Forum*, 61(3), 59-61.
- Powell, R. R. (1996). Constructing a personal practical philosophy for classroom curriculum: Case studies of second-career beginning teachers. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 26(2), 147-173.
- Powers, F.W. (1999). The organizational socialization process of second-career teachers: A heuristic inquiry. (Doctoral dissertation, Gonzaga University, 1999)

- Prensky, M. (2001). Digitals natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.
- Priyadharshini, E., & Robinson-Pant, A. (2003). The attractions of teaching: An investigation into why people change careers to teach. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 29(2), 95-112.
- Resta, V., Huling, L., & Rainwater, N. (2001). Preparing second-career teachers. *Educational Leadership*(May 2001), 60-63.
- Rohlwing, R. (2006). The literacy lives, perceptions of teaching reading, and classroom practices of second-career preservice teachers.(Doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 2006)
- Serow, R.C. & Forrest, K.D. (1994). Motives and circumstances: Occupational-Change experiences of prospective late-entry teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 10(5), 555-563.
- Smith, K.A., Sheppard, S.D., Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T. (2005). Pedagogies of engagement: Classroom-based practice, *Journal of Engineering Education*, 94(1), 87-101.
- Teixeira, M. A. & Gomes, W. B. (2000). Autonomous career change among professionals: an empirical phenomenological study. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 31(1), 78-96.
- Thoman, E., & Jolls, T. (2004). Media Literacy - A national priority for a changing world. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(1), 18-28.
- U.S. Department of Education (2001). No Child Left Behind Act. Retrieved November 27, 2007, from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=ln>.

U.S. Department of Labor (1991). Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report. Retrieved December 11, 2007, from

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS/whatwork/>

Williams, J. (2004). Becoming a teacher: Motivations and experiences of career change students in teacher education. Proceedings of the 2006 Australian Teacher Education Association Conference. p. 320-328.

Zinser, R. (2003). Developing career and employability skills: a US case study. *Education & Training*, 45(7).

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions for the Career Change Business Educator

1. Describe your experience as a business education teacher (how long you have been teaching, what grades/classes taught)
2. Describe your experience in business/industry before becoming a teacher (roles, achievement, etc.)?
3. What made you decide to change careers and how old were you?
4. Describe your preparation for changing careers to become a teacher (certification program, alternative routes, other preparation)
5. How does your experience as a teacher relate to your own experience as a student?
6. How do you feel today's students are different than when you were a student?
7. How do you feel about teaching business?
8. Do you draw on personal experience when you teach? If so, how?
9. Do you bring the business world into your classroom? How?
10. What kinds of activities do you plan that involve your prior business experience?
11. Do you have students collaborate in class? How? Why?
12. What kinds of real world problems do you discuss in class? Why?
13. Now that you have been teaching, how do you feel about your career change and is it different than what you expected? Do you miss working in business?
14. Do you feel you were properly prepared to teach in the secondary classroom? Are there areas of teaching / pedagogy in which you wish you had more training?
15. What kind of support do you need as a teacher? Do you think this is because you are a career changer?

Interview Questions for the Career Change Business Educator (*continued*)

16. What is different about working in a school versus working in business? What skills do you feel are important in the business world?
17. Do you feel business curriculum as it is properly prepares students for the business world? Is anything missing from the business curriculum or business classroom?
18. What advice or information would you like to tell students about the business world?

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions for Administrator

As an administrator, you have observed Teacher _____ in the classroom. I am interested in knowing specifically how this teacher draws upon prior experience and makes real world connections in the classroom.

1. Describe any observations of connections between personal work experience or real world business in Teacher _____'s classroom?
2. Have you observed any collaboration between students in Teacher _____'s classroom?
3. How did the students respond to the strategy?
4. Was this tied to a real-world problem?
5. Can you describe any problem solving techniques observed in Teacher _____'s classroom?
6. How did the students respond to the strategy?
7. Was this tied to a real-world problem?
8. In your opinion, how would you describe the rapport or how students relate to Teacher_____?
9. How would you describe the level of engagement of the students in Teacher _____'s classroom?
10. What advantages do you think that Teacher _____ (or any career change teacher) has because of his/her prior business experience?
11. What disadvantages do you think Teacher _____ (or any career change teacher) has because of his/her prior business experience?

APPENDIX C

Classroom Observation Rubric

Pedagogies of Engagement	Observations & Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to the Real World and Wider Community <i>Examples may be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Personal Experiences/History ✓ Anecdotes ✓ Case Studies ✓ Networking with businesses and business people ✓ Application of curriculum to real business simulations/role play ✓ Project-based learning that involves the community ✓ Relating to students' lives and interests 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration <i>Examples may be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Planned group activities ✓ Identifying various roles in a group ✓ Individual accountability within a group ✓ Collaboration with other teachers or outside community ✓ Collaboration between small groups within the classroom 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-Solving and Active Learning <i>Examples may be:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Problem-solving activities ✓ Case studies ✓ Simulations ✓ Real world projects 	
Miscellaneous/Other Observations	