

## INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the original text directly from the copy submitted. Thus, some dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from a computer printer.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyrighted material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is available as one exposure on a standard 35 mm slide or as a 17" x 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. 35 mm slides or 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.



300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA

PREVIEW

**Order Number 8824953**

**The importance school administrators place on selected contents  
of a teacher placement credential file**

**Schiefelbein, James Edward, Ed.D.**

**The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1988**

PREVIEW

**U·M·I**

300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

PREVIEW

**PLEASE NOTE:**

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark ✓.

1. Glossy photographs or pages \_\_\_\_\_
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print \_\_\_\_\_
3. Photographs with dark background \_\_\_\_\_
4. Illustrations are poor copy \_\_\_\_\_
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page \_\_\_\_\_
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Print exceeds margin requirements \_\_\_\_\_
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine \_\_\_\_\_
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print \_\_\_\_\_
11. Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered \_\_\_\_\_. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages \_\_\_\_\_
15. Dissertation contains pages with print at a slant, filmed as received \_\_\_\_\_
16. Other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**U·M·I**

PREVIEW

THE IMPORTANCE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PLACE ON SELECTED  
CONTENTS OF A TEACHER PLACEMENT CREDENTIAL FILE

by

James E. Schiefelbein

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,  
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Associate Professor F. William Sesow

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1988

**TITLE**

THE IMPORTANCE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PLACE ON SELECTED

CONTENTS OF A TEACHER PLACEMENT CREDENTIAL FILE

**BY**

James E. Schiefelbein

**APPROVED**

**DATE**

F. Wm. Sesow

May 2, 1988

James L. Fejfar

May 2, 1988

Rex K. Reckewey

May 2, 1988

Gordon Greene

May 2, 1988

Lee A. Witters

May 2, 1988

**SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

**GRADUATE COLLEGE**

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA**



THE IMPORTANCE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PLACE ON SELECTED  
CONTENTS OF A TEACHER PLACEMENT CREDENTIAL FILE

James E. Schiefelbein, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1988

Adviser: F. William Sesow

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance school administrators place on items commonly found in a new graduate's credential file as they consider applicants for a teaching vacancy. Specifically, the study was designed to determine influence that personal data items and reference data items have on school administrators as they make decisions about whether or not to give teaching candidates further employment consideration. The variables of the administrators' title, the size of the school district (by student enrollment) that they represented, and the level (elementary and secondary) of endorsement needed for the teaching position were examined.

An analysis of variance, chi-square, and t-tests were performed to determine any significant differences between and within groups based on the decision whether or not to give candidates for a teaching position further consideration. The study was also designed to determine administrators' preference regarding confidential references or non-confidential references, and if they desired to have an official grade transcript included in a candidate's credential file. Data for the study were obtained through

use of a questionnaire that was completed by 89 administrators representing school districts in 18 states.

Findings of the study displayed that school administrators place greater importance on reference data items when reviewing a credential file than personal data items. Administrative title, school district size (by student population), or level of endorsement (elementary and secondary) needed for a teaching vacancy did not influence the importance that administrators placed on credential file items. Confidential references were preferred and administrators desire to have an official grade transcript as part of a credential file.

This study seemed to display a need to work toward improving practices in the screening and selection of candidates for teaching vacancies. Also, there appears to be a need to explore ways to improve the quality of items commonly included in a credential file of a new college graduate.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this doctoral thesis has been accomplished with the help and encouragement of many caring people. Their support kept me going even when I did not want to, and without their help this paper would not exist.

Rex K. Reckewey provided me with many hours of his time to help me create preliminary drafts of the four chapters, along with the revisions. I appreciate his assistance.

F. William Sesow, my adviser, has been a source of encouragement from the first time that I met with him to discuss this study. His patience, honesty, optimism, and genuine concern helped me keep going when the going got tough. I am very grateful for the effort he put forth in helping me to fine tune this manuscript.

I also want to thank the other committee members, Gordon Greene, James Fejfar, and Lee Witters, for their flexibility, trust, and support. I enjoyed working with all of them.

Last but not least, I want to thank the following individuals for their efforts. They made it possible for me to meet my deadlines and complete this study:

Typist/Word Processor: Luise Berner

Typist: Linda Taylor

Data Processor: Shana Dawson

NEAR Center Staff Members: Laura Boettcher

Alice Corkill

Kathy Kenney

PREVIEW

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family. First of all, to my wonderful wife, Joyce; she is a far greater blessing to me than any degree attainment could ever be. She was my hope, inspiration, and motivation. Joyce kept me going when I felt like giving up on the dissertation and graduation. Secondly, to my darling daughter, Carrie. She has brought the family so much joy and happiness. Finally, to my parents, Jim and Lorraine, and Joyce's parents, Bob and Velma. They supported me and my endeavors in many ways over the years. I cannot thank them enough. Hopefully, by completing this study and earning a doctoral degree, they will realize how much their assistance has been appreciated. Thanks family. I love you all very much.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iv
DEDICATION . . . . .	vi
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	ix
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The Statement of the Purpose . . . . .	3
Research Questions and Hypotheses . . . . .	3
Assumptions . . . . .	5
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	6
Definition of Terms . . . . .	6
Procedures . . . . .	8
Organization of the Study . . . . .	11
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	12
Introduction . . . . .	12
Screening Procedures . . . . .	15
Teacher Credential File . . . . .	18
Personal Data Items . . . . .	21
Reference Data Items . . . . .	28
Criticisms of References . . . . .	29
Recommendations for the Improvement of References . . . . .	30
References and Teaching Competence . . . . .	34
Confidential Versus Non-Confidential References . . . . .	37
Summary . . . . .	41
3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS . . . . .	44
Methodology . . . . .	46
Review of Literature . . . . .	46
Instrumentation . . . . .	48
The Population . . . . .	50
Data Collection . . . . .	51
Treatment and Analysis of Data . . . . .	53

Chapter	Page
Research Questions and Hypotheses . . . . .	54
Question 1 . . . . .	54
Question 2 . . . . .	59
Question 3 . . . . .	76
Question 4 . . . . .	79
Summary . . . . .	81
4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . .	84
Summary . . . . .	84
The Purpose . . . . .	84
Conclusions . . . . .	87
Recommendations . . . . .	89
REFERENCES . . . . .	91
APPENDIX A--QUESTIONNAIRE . . . . .	98
APPENDIX B--CONSENT FORM . . . . .	103
APPENDIX C--COVER LETTER . . . . .	105
APPENDIX D--SAMPLE CREDENTIAL FILE FORMS . . . . .	107
APPENDIX E--STATES TO WHICH QUESTIONNAIRES WERE ORIGINALLY SENT . . . . .	114
APPENDIX F--FOLLOW-UP LETTER . . . . .	116
APPENDIX G--NUMBER OF RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES BY STATE . . . . .	118

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Administrative Title of the Sample . . . . .	52
2. Two Factor Analysis of Credential File Items as Grouped by the Varimax Rotation Matrix . . . . .	56
3. Rank Ordering of Credential File Items by School Administrators . . . . .	58
4. Further Consideration Given to New Graduates After the Initial Credential File Reading by School Administrators . . . . .	60
5. Influence of Credential File Items on Administrators' Decisions of Whether or Not to Give Further Consideration to Candidates for a Teaching Vacancy . . . . .	61
6. Influence of Personal Data Items on Administrator's Decision Whether or Not to Give a Candidate Further Consideration . . . . .	63
7. Influence of Reference Data Items on Administrator's Decision Whether or Not to Give a Candidate Further Consideration . . . . .	63
8. Reliability Analysis of Grouping Personal Data Items . . . . .	64
9. Reliability Analysis of Grouping Reference Data Items . . . . .	64
10. Whether or Not Further Consideration Was Given to New Graduates After the Initial Credential File Reading Based on Administrative Title . . . . .	67
11. Influence of Personal Data Items Based on the Administrative Title . . . . .	68



Table	Page
12. Influence of Reference Data Items Based on Administrative Title . . . . .	69
13. Size of School Districts That Administrators Represented . . . . .	70
14. Influence of Personal Data Items Based on the Size of School District the Administrators Represent . . . . .	71
15. Influence of Reference Data Items Based on the Size of School District the Administrators Represent . . . . .	72
16. New Graduates by Level of Endorsement . . . . .	73
17. Influence of Personal Data Items Based on Level of Endorsement . . . . .	74
18. Influence of Reference Data Items Based on Level of Endorsement . . . . .	75
19. Type of Reference Preferred by School Administrators . . . . .	77
20. School Administrator Preference for the Inclusion of an Official Grade Transcript . . . . .	79

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most important tasks for any school administrator is to select the best qualified candidates for available teaching positions. Once a teaching vacancy has been identified and advertised by a school district, the hiring process will begin by inviting candidates that are interested to submit a letter of application and a personal resume. In addition, the candidates will usually provide the school administrator with a copy of their credential file. Obviously, there may be other factors that influence school administrators in deciding which candidates deserve serious consideration for employment, but the importance of the credential file cannot be overlooked.

A credential file is usually established just prior to graduation by all new graduates and will probably be used throughout their educational careers. The data provided in a credential file is valuable information used by hiring officials during the initial screening process. Most placement offices receive frequent questions from new graduates about the nature of their credential files and the references that are needed. Because school administrators rely heavily on the credential file in the screening

process, it is important that all parties involved in the hiring process know what items are of greatest value.

While some school districts may be looking for applicants with teaching experience, others are willing to consider new graduates, or beginning teachers. In either case, the information contained in the letter of application, the resume, and the candidate's credential file will be extremely valuable in making the decision as to which candidates should be invited for a personal interview. Probably the most important of the three data sources is the credential file since it contains more detailed information about the candidate's qualifications than the letter of application or the resume. As Smith (1980) observed, the credential file is likely to be the most important set of documents in the selection process.

It is important that both hiring officials and candidates examine current employment practices to determine if any changes are needed to make the initial screening process more effective. Obviously, the major source of data about teaching candidates is the credential file. Although numerous studies have been conducted in the past to determine the status of selection procedures, there is always a need to determine if there have been any new developments in the selection process--especially the use being made of the credential file.

Each school district needs a planned program to effectively screen candidates for teaching vacancies. Because of the importance of selecting the best teachers, administrators must make selection one of the most important aspects of their assigned duties (Engel, 1984). Since staff salaries are the major portion of a district budget, the investment in a teacher is great.

Useful research on initial screening of teacher candidates is lacking. The results of this study will contribute to the body of information about initial selection which should be of value to new graduates, college faculty, school administrators, and teacher placement administrators.

#### The Statement of the Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the importance school administrators place on selected items commonly found in a new graduate's credential file as they consider applicants for a teaching vacancy. Specifically, the study was designed to answer the following research questions and test accompanying hypotheses.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. As a group, how do school administrators rank the importance of the following items that are contained in a credential file of a new graduate seeking his or her first teaching position?

Personal Data Items

- Undergraduate grade point average
- Undergraduate courses
- Memberships, awards, and activities
- Candidate's statement/essay of educational goals and philosophy

Reference Data Items

- Student teaching final evaluation
- Cooperating teacher's narrative reference
- University supervisor's narrative reference
- University faculty references
- Building administrator's reference
- Previous employer's reference.

2. As a group, what importance do school administrators place on items contained in a credential file of a new graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in determining whether or not to give the individual further consideration for a specific teaching vacancy?

Hypothesis: At the .01 level of significance, there is no difference in the importance placed on credential file items between and within groups of school administrators based on their administrative title.

Hypothesis: When giving consideration to a candidate for a teaching vacancy, at the .01 level of significance, there is no difference in the importance placed on credential file items between and within groups of school

administrators based on the school district size that they represent.

Hypothesis: At the .01 level of significance, there is no difference in the importance placed on credential file items between and within groups of school administrators based on the level (elementary and secondary) of the teaching vacancy a candidate has applied for.

3. As a group, do school administrators prefer confidential references, non-confidential references, or have no preference of the type of reference contained in a credential file of a new graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that is seeking his or her first teaching position?

4. As a group, do school administrators desire an official grade transcript to be included in the credential file of a new graduate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that is seeking his or her first teaching position?

#### Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the preferences, practices, and procedures used by hiring officials in the initial screening of teacher candidates could be determined by their responses to a questionnaire.

2. It was assumed that the school administrators would be honest in giving their perceptions about the credential files of new graduates from Teachers College at the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln and would respond accurately to the questions included in the survey instrument.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. This study was limited to the initial screening of new graduates of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln by school administrators reviewing the credential files of these candidates that were seeking their first teaching position during the 1985-86 academic year.

2. The data used in the study were limited to information collected through use of a questionnaire completed by school administrators.

#### Definition of Terms

The following items were defined as follows for the purpose of this study:

Credential file--a collection of personal data items and reference data items voluntarily submitted by new graduates from Teachers College at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in their attempt to gather information needed by school administrators for employment consideration during the hiring process of teaching candidates.

Personal data items--are the following items commonly included in the credential file of a new graduate from Teachers College at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

- Undergraduate grade point average
- Undergraduate courses
- Memberships, awards, and activities
- Candidate's statement/essay of educational goals and philosophy.

Reference data items--are the following items commonly included in the credential file of a new graduate from Teachers College at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln:

- Student teaching final evaluation
- Cooperating teacher's narrative reference
- University supervisor's narrative reference
- University faculty references
- Building administrator's reference
- Previous employer's reference.

Initial screening--the preliminary screening of a teaching candidate by a school administrator with respect to the reviewing of a new graduate's credential file.

New graduates--graduates from Teachers College of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln during the 1985-86 academic year.

School administrators--the hiring officials in a school or school district that had been given the administrative responsibilities associated with the selection process of teaching candidates for employment.