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A Survey of Undergraduate Arts Majors' Attitudes toward Pursuing a Career in Arts Education

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Acknowledgments

My interest in researching an Alaska-centered arts education topic was inspired by conversations I had during the summer of 2009 with the executive director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA), Charlotte Fox. I would like to thank Ms. Fox for her willingness to share both written and anecdotal information with me about the ongoing efforts of her organization to support and provide access to and education in the arts to Alaska's students and population as a whole.

This report would not have been possible without the ideas, guidance, and editorial support of Annie Calkins, Special Projects Coordinator for the ASCA. Ms. Calkins provided specific direction for investigating and comparing arts education programs available in the State of Alaska. It was my hope to be able to assess the arts education offerings at all post-secondary education institutions within the State as suggested by Ms. Calkins, however, this being a graduate school project with a certain deadline, that level of research, though much needed, was not possible.

Abstract

University students who major in the fine arts may or may not choose to pursue a teaching career in their field following graduation. Some school district administrators in Alaska have expressed the concern that there is a lack of confidence, background knowledge and experience on the part of teachers to deliver arts instruction. A related issue is the relative lack of Highly Qualified arts teachers in all four major arts disciplines (music, theater, dance, visual arts). While data have been gathered from districts, schools and teachers in Alaska, there has been no comprehensive, comparative data gathering from the University of Alaska and other post-secondary institutions (Calkins, 2009). The present study attempts to investigate the factors affecting the decisions of students with majors in the arts regarding choosing a career in arts education. Education stakeholders in Alaska would benefit from knowing what arts education courses and arts endorsements and degrees are being provided by the post-secondary institutions in the State, and how that compares with offerings in other parts of the United States. A survey is conducted using an electronic questionnaire designed to investigate the attitudes of fine arts students towards the idea of becoming a teacher within their discipline. Data are collected from a total of 58 undergraduate students currently enrolled in music, art, theatre and dance departments at The University of Alaska and The University of Southern Mississippi. Analysis of the data reveals that music students are more likely to become teachers than theatre, art or dance students. The data also show most arts students would prefer to teach at the high school level and above. The present research also suggests that the students overwhelmingly consider departmental faculty to be the most-liked aspect of their programs; while limited facilities and departmental funding are the least-liked aspect.

A Survey of Undergraduate Arts Majors' Attitudes toward Pursuing a Career in Arts Education

A recent study entitled *On Thin Ice: Arts Education in Alaska Schools*, prepared by the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Alaska Arts Education Consortium, reports that a significant issue hindering the delivery of arts instruction in school districts around the state is the lack of confident, prepared, and experienced arts teachers (Alaska State Council on the Arts, 2009). While the 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) mandated that all elementary and secondary teachers be deemed “highly qualified” in the subjects that they teach by the 2005-2006 school year, the majority of Alaska teachers are part of the approximately one-third--or nearly 5,000--of all U.S. school districts that are considered rural, and thus are allowed a certain amount of flexibility within the NCLB mandate (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). *On Thin Ice* (2009) points out that nearly all arts instruction for rural elementary students in Alaska is taught by their classroom teachers.

Is the aforementioned “lack of confident, prepared, and experienced arts teachers” a reflection of the level of instruction provided by post-secondary arts education programs, or, rather, a commentary on the career choices made by college students who major or minor in the arts? Perhaps it stems from decisions made by school administrators who wish to reduce expenditures by foregoing a qualified arts specialist on staff and instead assigning the arts instruction to existing staff (Ingersoll, 2004). While Case (1998) and the Ohio Department of Education (2001) found that the demand for arts teachers is not great, educational statistics show enrollment to be continuing in post-secondary visual and performing arts programs (Snyder & Hoffman, 2001). A study of trends in bachelor's degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions in select fields of study, conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, shows that while the total number of degrees conferred in the visual and performing

arts may be fewer than in other fields of study, the actual percentage of increase between the '96-'97 and '06-'07 academic years is higher for the visual and performing arts than for the biological and biomedical sciences, computer and information sciences, education, engineering and engineering technologies, the health professions and related clinical sciences, and psychology (Snyder, T. D., Dillow, S. A., & Hoffman, C. M., 2008). One goal of the present study is to provide additional data to the Alaska State Council on the Arts that could supplement its recent report and be useful in that agency's efforts to leverage funding for comprehensive arts education in Alaska schools.

Although The University of Alaska (UA), which has three main campuses and several satellite colleges around the state, offers undergraduate degree programs in music, art, theatre and dance, the 2009 course catalogs for the three main campuses show that these programs are not uniformly designed, nor are all arts degrees offered at all campuses. Further, the only UA arts disciplines with specific education emphases aimed at teacher preparation are music and art. The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and Fairbanks (UAF) offer a bachelor of music education degree, and UAA offers a minor in art education (The University of Alaska, 2009). While not every elementary and secondary school arts teacher in Alaska is a graduate of the UA system, it is not surprising to note that of the almost 300 highly qualified arts teachers within the 32 districts responding to the statewide, comprehensive arts education survey outlined in *On Thin Ice*, less than 10% of those were in theatre, and none were highly qualified in dance (Alaska State Council on the Arts, 2009).

It is interesting to compare the UA arts education programs with those of The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). Though chosen for this study based on the needs of the researchers, the geographical distance between the two schools could hardly be greater within the United

States. There are similarities between the two schools, however, that make such a comparison surprisingly valid. UAA and USM Hattiesburg are each the main campuses of their institutions and have current individual enrollments of approximately 14, 800 students. Both schools have several satellite colleges that serve largely rural populations. However, something that sets USM apart from UA, though, is the fact that it was Mississippi’s first state-supported teacher training school, whose declared purpose in 1910 was to “qualify teachers for the public schools of Mississippi” (The University of Southern Mississippi, 2009). Like UA, USM offers undergraduate degree programs in music, art, theatre and dance. But USM, as a designated teacher training institution, it is not unexpected that in addition to a bachelor degree program in music education, that institution also offers a bachelor of fine arts degree with teaching licensure in dance and art. Like UA, however, USM does not offer a theatre education degree (see Table 1).

Table 1. Arts Education Degrees by Institution

	Music	Dance	Theatre	Art
USM	Music Education (BMEd) (Licensure)	Dance (BFA) (Licensure)	--	Art (BFA) (Licensure)
UAA	Music Education (BM) (Licensure)	--	--	Minor in Art Education
UAF	Music Education (B.M.) (Licensure)	--	--	--

Source: USM, UAA, UAF 2009-2010 Course Catalogues

A Harris Poll commissioned by Americans for the Arts (2005) to assess the attitudes held by Americans regarding arts education found the following: 93% agreed the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children, 86% agreed that arts education encourages and assists in the improvement of a child’s attitudes toward school, and 83% believe that arts

education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers. However, 72% of the school districts polled by the Alaska State Council on the Arts (2009) and the State of Alaska Department of Education have no allocated budget for arts education. In addition to a lack of funding, elementary and secondary school arts programs are affected by a combination of cuts in arts positions and the potential loss of skilled arts majors who have an interest in teaching in their fields, but who are unhappy with what they perceive to be relatively low salaries (Luftig, Donovan, Farnbaugh, Kennedy, Filicko & Wyszomirski, 2003).

Thus, it seems that in order for arts education in Alaska to become firmly established in and remain a vital component of a school district's curriculum, there must be support for expanded post-secondary arts programs that offer an education emphasis. Additionally, an understanding of the career decisions made by post-secondary arts majors could help gauge demand for arts education courses at the university level. Therefore, the current study focuses on two related issues: a survey of the intentions of undergraduate arts students to pursue a career as arts educators; and a comparison of arts education degree programs offered by The University of Alaska and The University of Southern Mississippi. It is the hope of the researcher that any resulting information can help university program administrators, and others interested in providing well-rounded arts education programs, understand where there might be gaps in course and degree offerings that, if addressed, would further the aim of increasing and improving arts education in Alaska's schools.

Methodology

The present study was conducted using the survey method of research. Fine arts departments at The University of Alaska (Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau) and The University of Southern Mississippi were chosen for this study based on their proximity to the researchers, and because

they provided a convenient sample population. Permission to solicit undergraduate student participation in the study was requested of the 13 fine arts departments on the main campuses of the two universities. A total of 10 department chairs provided written consent to survey their undergraduate students. An electronic questionnaire was distributed by email to the students, whose responses represent participation by 3 theatre departments, 3 dance departments, 2 music departments, and 2 art departments.

The questionnaire (see Appendix) was developed for this study by the researcher based on discussions with the executive director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA) and an arts consultant currently working with the ASCA. Five of the questionnaire items used a 5-point Likert-type scale (with 5 representing the highest degree of agreement and 1 representing the lowest degree of agreement) to assess the attitudes of the students regarding career choice and satisfaction with their individual arts programs. Two open-ended questions were included that gave the participants the opportunity to comment, in their own words, about the most- and least-liked aspects of their program. In addition to demographic questions about school, department, concentration, credit hours earned, age, and gender, students were asked about which grade level they would prefer to teach, and their reason, if applicable, for not pursuing an arts teaching career. Data pertaining to arts education degree programs were obtained from the UA and USM online catalogues for the 2008-2009 academic year. Additional information was obtained through email and telephone contact with the individual campuses and departments.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The results of the questionnaires are based on 58 completed instruments by undergraduates at UAF (28.1%), UAA (15.8%), and USM (56.1%). Demographic data indicate that the participants were music majors (59.6%), art majors (22.8%), theatre majors (15.8%), and dance majors (1.8%). If the age range of “traditional” university students is considered to be from 18-25, and “non-traditional” students are those aged 26 and above (Wikipedia, 2009), then 91.2 % of the survey respondents were from the “traditional” category, with 8.8 % from the “non-traditional” category. The sample population was 66.7% female and 33.3% male.

Of the total valid responses, 14% indicated that they had completed 1-12 credit hours, 12.3% had completed 13-25 credit hours, 19.3% had completed 26-36 credit hours and 54.4% had completed 36-48 credit hours. 25% of music majors indicated that “music education” was their area of concentration within their department. There were no art, theatre, or dance majors who indicated that education was a specific area of concentration for them.

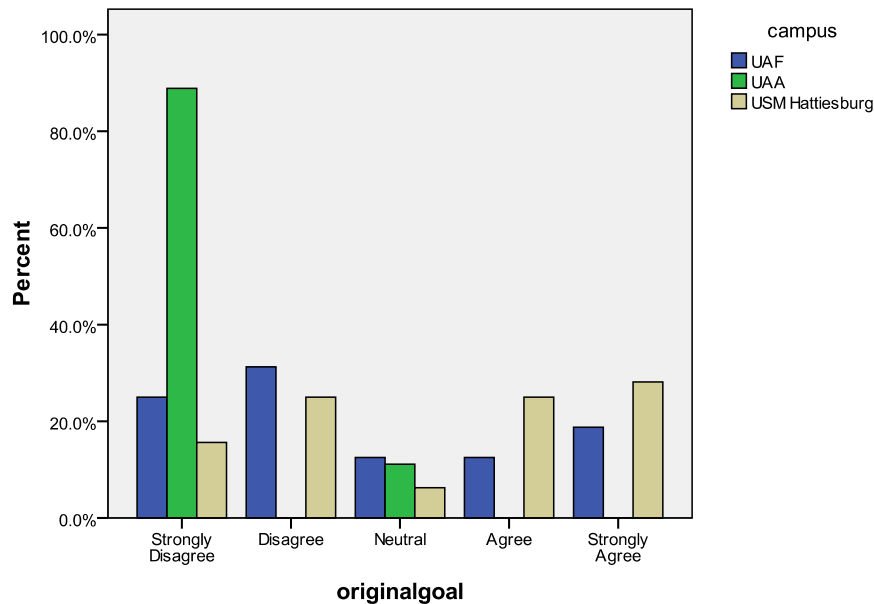
Response Profile

Data were analyzed with SPSS Statistics software, student version 17.0. The data set included frequency tables as well as crosstabs and Pearson chi-square analysis for each questionnaire item. Due to the limited sample size, it was not possible to determine valid statistically significant relationships among the variables. Instead, meaningful patterns, if they exist within the results, will be presented as they appear to the researcher for the following questionnaire items:

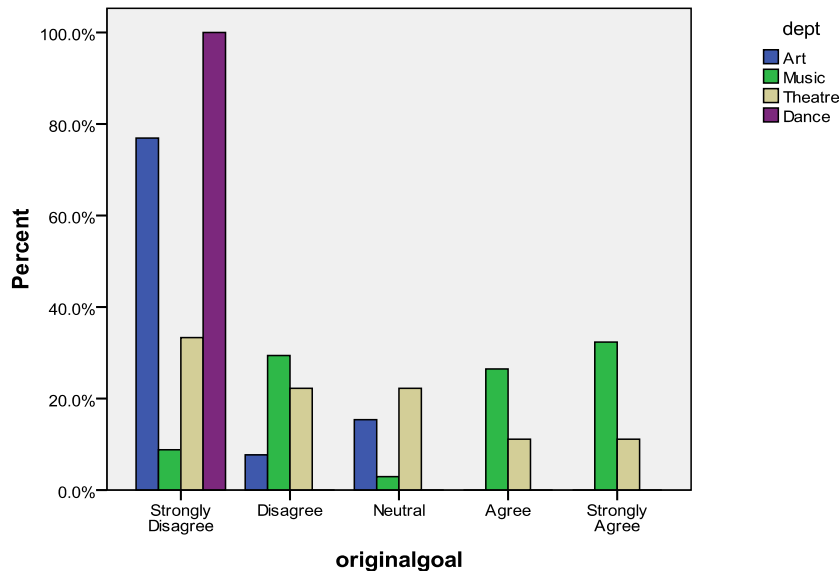
Factor #1: Original goal was to become a primary or secondary school teacher.

Overall results show a combined 53.4% of participants “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that a career in their field as a primary or secondary grade school teacher was their original goal when beginning their undergraduate arts program. 8.6% were neutral and 37.9% indicated they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement. Factor analysis by campus reveals that at 88.9%, the percentage of UAA respondents indicating strong disagreement to teaching as an original program goal is more than twice the percentage of USM respondents (40.6%) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Students with Original Goal of Teaching by Campus



More than half of the USM participants (53.1%) “agree” or “strongly agree” that their original goal was to become a teacher in their field, as compared to 31.3% of UAF participants and 0% of UAA participants. Among the four departments, more music majors (58.9%) had the original goal of teaching in the arts than majors in the other departments (art 0%, theatre 22.2%, dance 0%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Students with an Original Goal of Teaching by Major

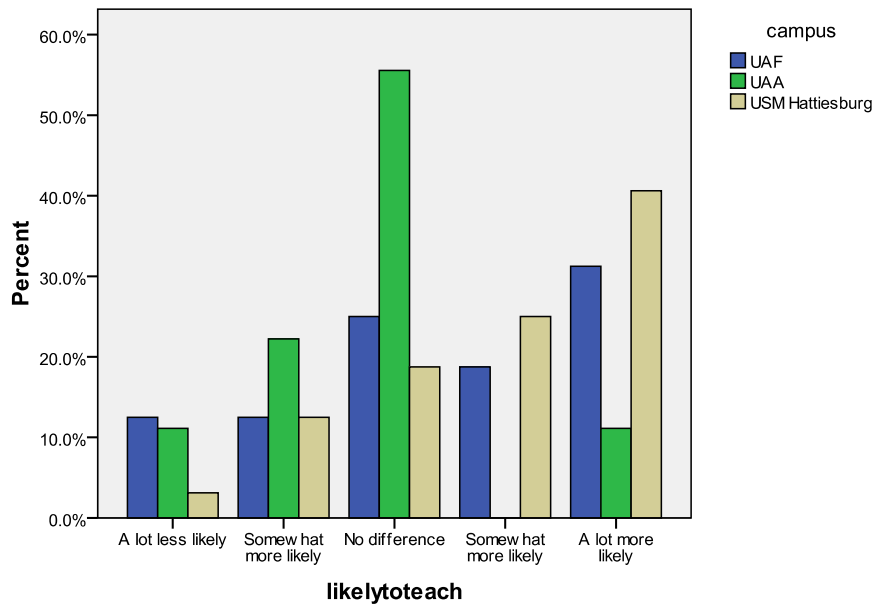
The participants with the least total credit hours earned in their program (1-12) showed the most agreement with the idea of teaching as an original goal (62.5%). Lack of credit hours earned was not a predictor of the original goal of teaching, as students with 13-25 credit hours earned indicated a combined 28.6%, 26-36 credit hours earned indicated 45.5%, and 36-48 credit hour earned indicated a combined agreement of 32.3%. Within the sample, more men than women agreed that teaching was their original goal in beginning their arts program (42.1% vs. 36.9%).

Factor #2: Current likelihood of teaching.

After considering their total credit hours earned, students responded to the question “At this point in your program, how likely is it that you will teach in your field after completing your degree?” Overall results show 6.9% chose “a lot less likely”, 15.5% chose “somewhat less likely”, 25.9% chose “no difference”, 19% chose “somewhat more likely”, and 32.8% chose “a lot more likely”. Combining the two highest levels of likelihood, traditional students (55.7%) indicated they would be overwhelmingly more likely than the non-traditional students (20%) to teach in their field after completing their degree. When analyzed by campus, survey participants

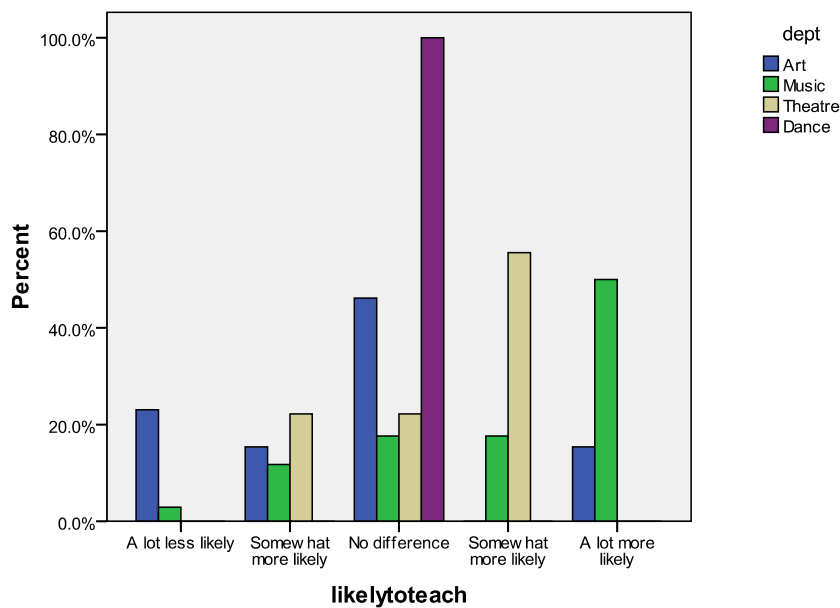
at USM (65.6%) were more likely to teach than those at UAF (50.1%). Participants from UAA responded with a positive likelihood of 11.1%, and 55.6% indicated that there was no difference in the likelihood since beginning their program (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Current Likelihood of Teaching by Campus



Music majors (67.6%) and theatre majors (55.6%) were more likely to teach than art majors (15.4%) and dance majors (0%) (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Current Likelihood of Teaching by Major

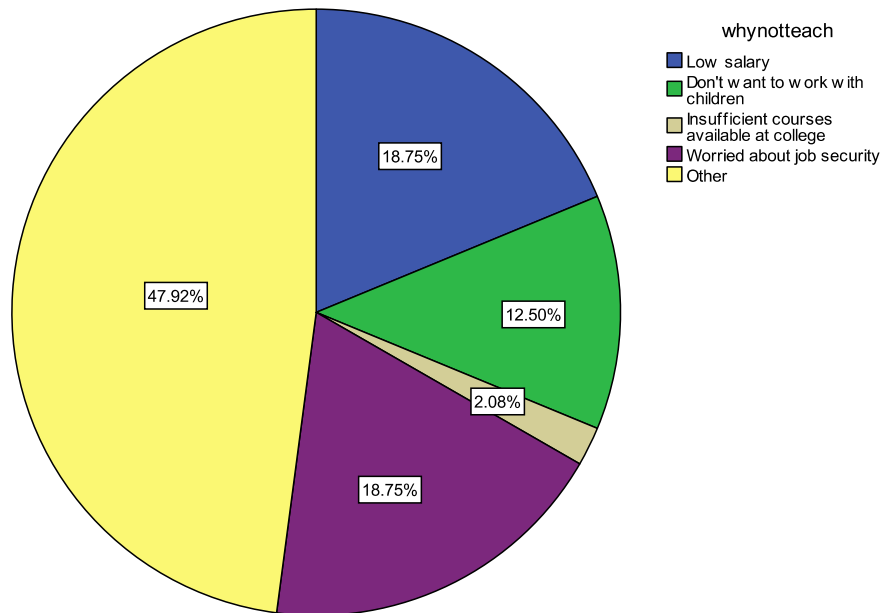


Gender was not a significant factor in teaching likelihood, as the results show similar percentages in each category for men and for women. Respondents indicating an education emphasis in their program were almost twice as likely to teach as those with other emphases (79% vs. 39.5%).

Factor #3: Why not teach?

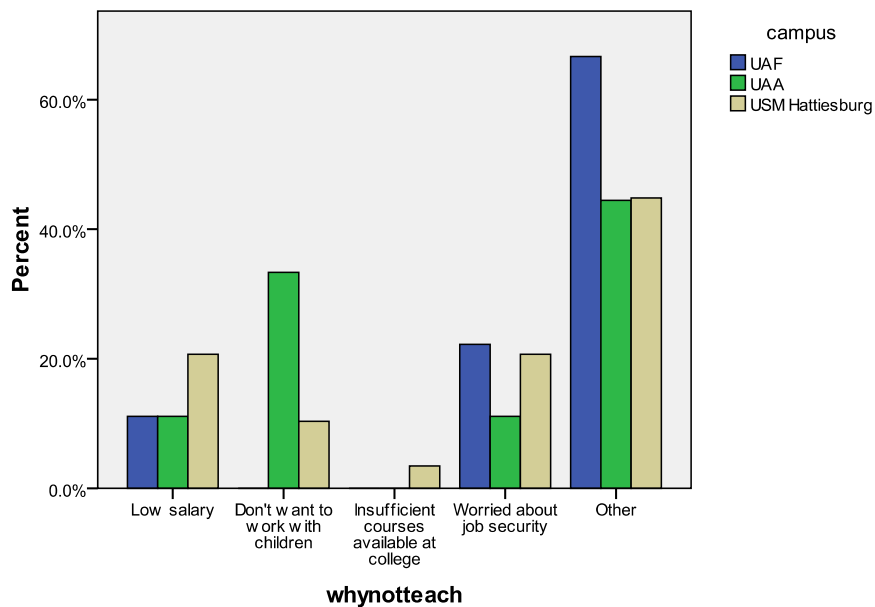
To gain an understanding of why a student might chose not to teach in their field, participants were asked to select all that applied from among low salary, not wanting to work with children, insufficient college courses, or concern about job security. The choice of “other” was also provided. Participants were asked to choose all answers that applied to them. Overall results indicate that 47.92% of respondents chose “other” as the reason or reasons for why they would choose not to teach (see Figure 5). Low salary and concern for job security were equally indicated at 18.75%. 12.5% of students chose not wanting to work with children and 2.08% indicated that there were insufficient courses available.

Figure 5. Reasons Why Respondent Would Choose Not to Teach



The choice of “other” had the highest percentage for traditional (47.6%) and non-traditional students (60%) as a reason for not wanting to teach. Non-traditional students were more concerned about low salary (20%) and not wanting to work with children (20%) than traditional students with 16.7% concerned with low salary & 11.9% not wanting to work with children. Traditional students were more concerned with job security (21.4%) than non-traditional students (0%). Analysis by campus shows a high percentage of UAF (66.7%), UAA (44.4%), and USM (44.8%) choosing “other” as a reason for not wanting to teach, but perhaps more noteworthy is the percentage of UAA students (33.3%) who don’t want to work with children versus the 10.3% of USM students and 0% of UAF students. UAA respondents at 11.1% were half as concerned about job security as UAF respondents (22.2%) and nearly half as concerned as USM respondents at 20.7% (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Reason Not to Teach by Campus



Among students in all majors, the choice of “other” had the highest percentages of selection; however, theatre majors indicated an equal reason in “low salary”. The reason chosen second-most frequently by art majors was “don’t want to work with children” (25%). The reason chosen

second-most frequently by music majors was worry about job security (26.9%). Dance majors indicated no other reason (See Figure 7). Men and women had a similar distribution among their choices (see Figure 8). Those students with a specific education emphasis indicated they were much more worried about job security than the other participants at 31.5% vs. 12.9%.

Figure 7. Reason Not to Teach by Department

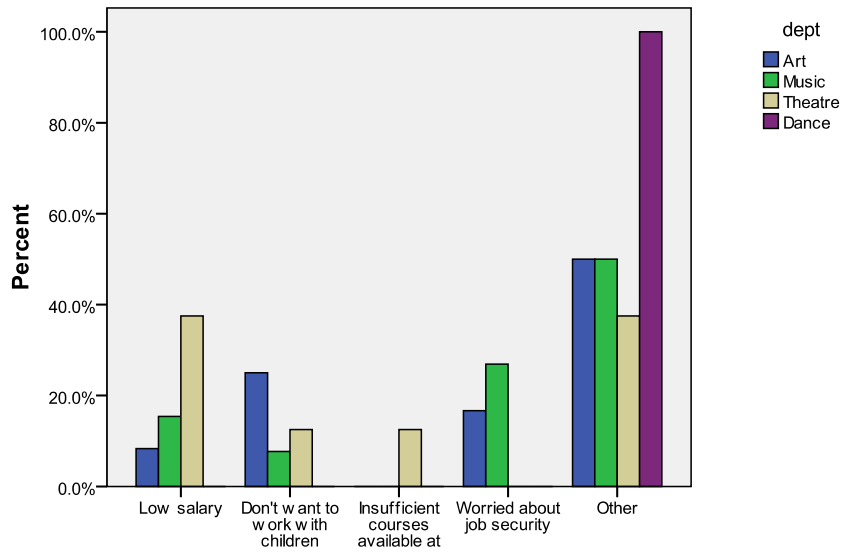
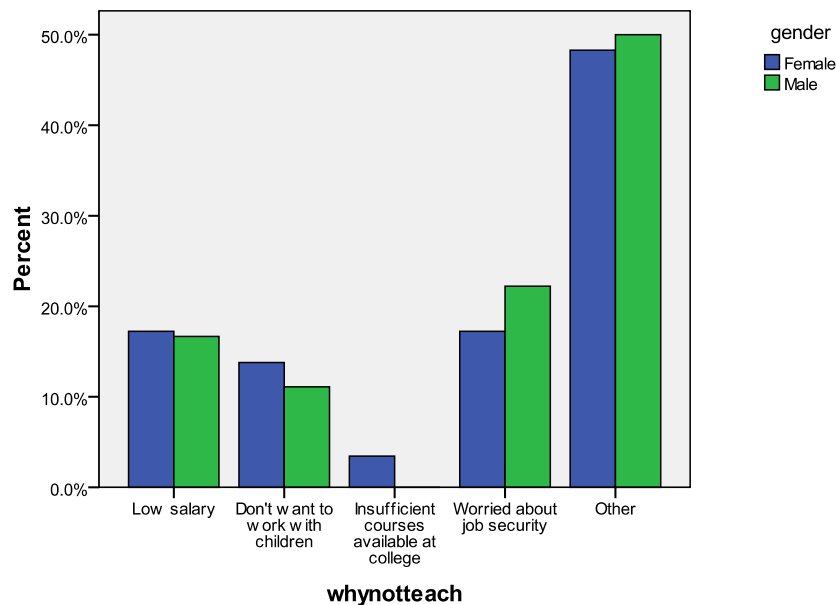
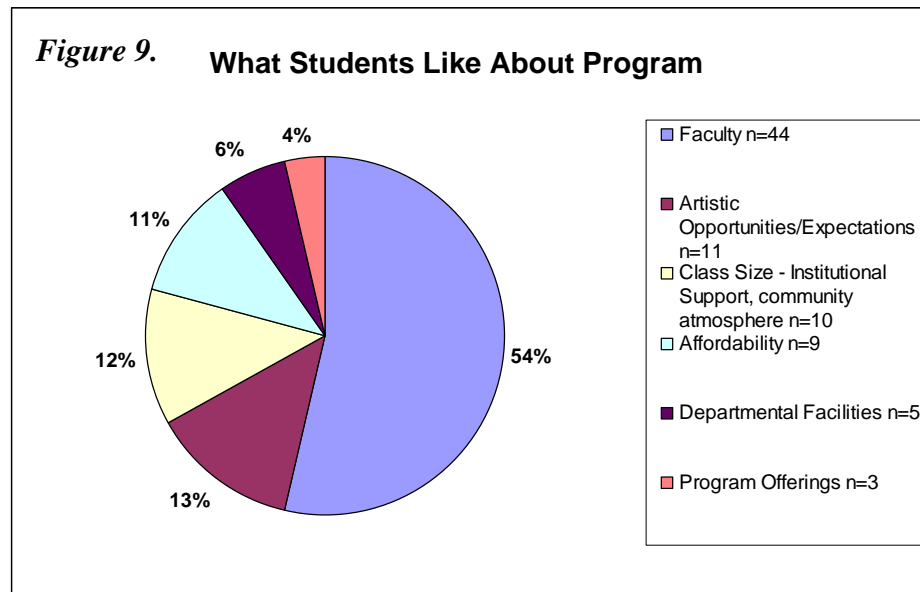


Figure 8. Reason Not to Teach by Gender



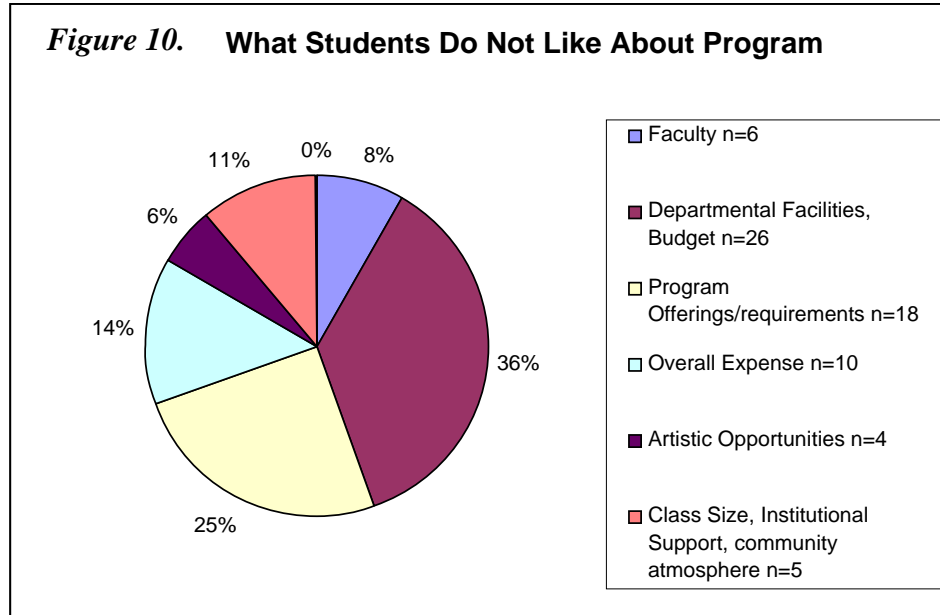
Factor #4: What is liked about arts program?

82 responses were received from the participants (n=58) to the open-ended prompt, “What things do you like best about your arts program or arts education program”. The response data were categorized using qualitative methodology and labeled as follows: Faculty (n=44=54%); Departmental Facilities (n=5=6%); Program Offerings (n=3=4%); Affordability (n=9=11%); Artistic Opportunities/Expectations (n=11=13%); Institutional Support/Class Size/Community Atmosphere (n=10=12%) (see Figure 9).



Factor #5: What is not liked about arts program?

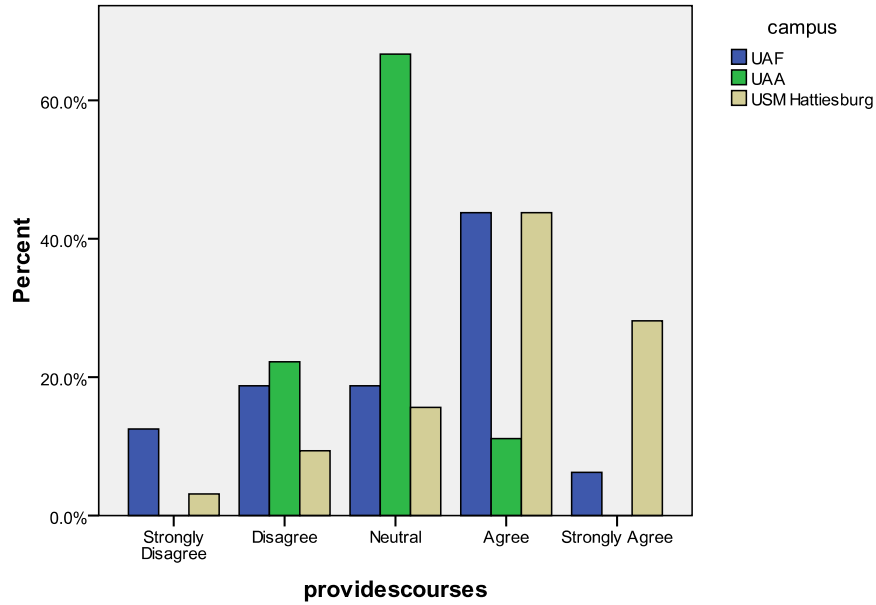
69 responses were received from the participants (n=58) to the open-ended prompt, “What things do you NOT like about your arts program or arts education program”. The response data were categorized using qualitative methodology and labeled as follows: Faculty (n=6=10.34%); Departmental Facilities/Budget (n=26=44.82%); Program Offerings/Requirement (n=18=32.75%); Overall Expense (n=10=17.24%); Artistic Opportunities (n=4=6.89%); Class Size/Institutional Support/Community Atmosphere (n=5=8.62%) (see Figure 10).



Factor #6: Undergraduate institution provides courses to work as an educator.

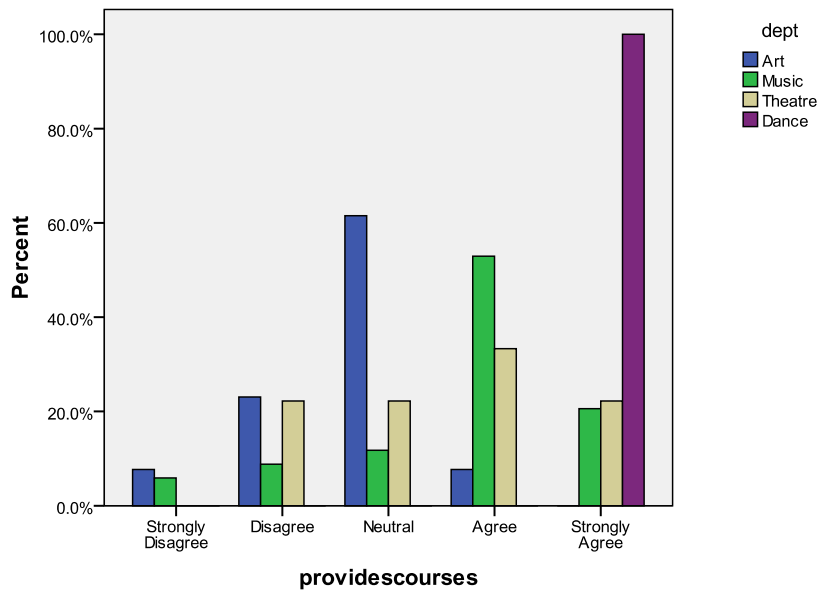
Overall results indicate that 55.1% of survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that their institution provided all the course work necessary for them to work as an educator in their field. 25.9% were neutral, while 19% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Analysis by campus shows that more USM students (71.9%) considered their programs to provide sufficient course work than those at UAF (50.1%) and UAA (11.1%). 66.7% of UAA participants indicated they were neutral on the subject, versus 15.6% of USM participants and 18.8% of UAF participants (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Sufficient Courses for Teaching by Campus



Departmental analysis indicates that music majors (73.5%) and dance majors (100%) felt their programs offered the courses necessary for teaching over theatre majors (55.5%) and art majors (7.7%) (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Sufficient Courses for Teaching Provided by Department

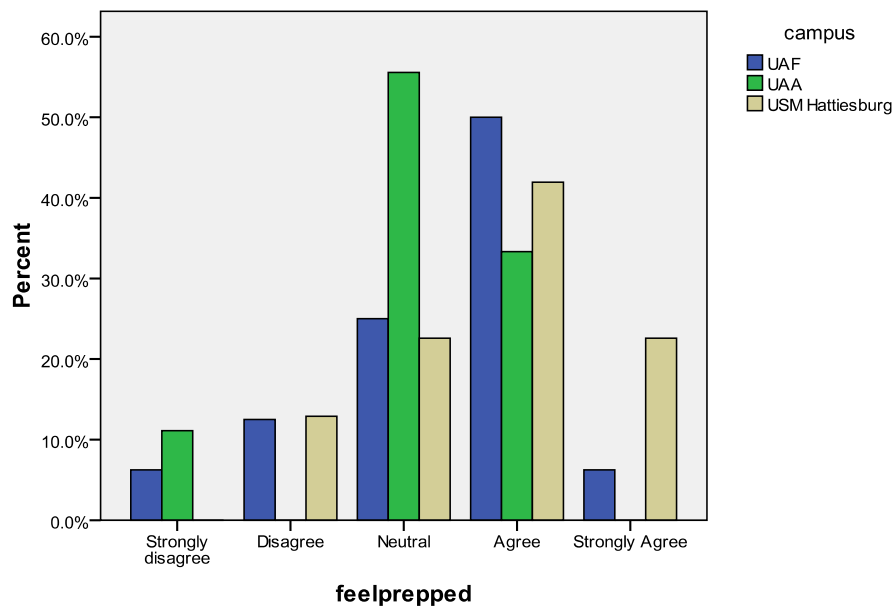


Those participants who indicated that their major included an education emphasis (79%) agreed or strongly agreed more than those with an emphasis other than education (44.7%). Of the responses based on total credit hours earned, 100% of respondents with 1-25 credit hours were either neutral or agreed that their program provided the courses necessary to teach in their field. Only 9% of respondents with 26-36 credit hours disagreed, but 29.1% of respondents with 36-48 credit hours disagreed that their program provided the necessary courses.

Factor #7: Program encourages students to feel prepared and confident as a teacher.

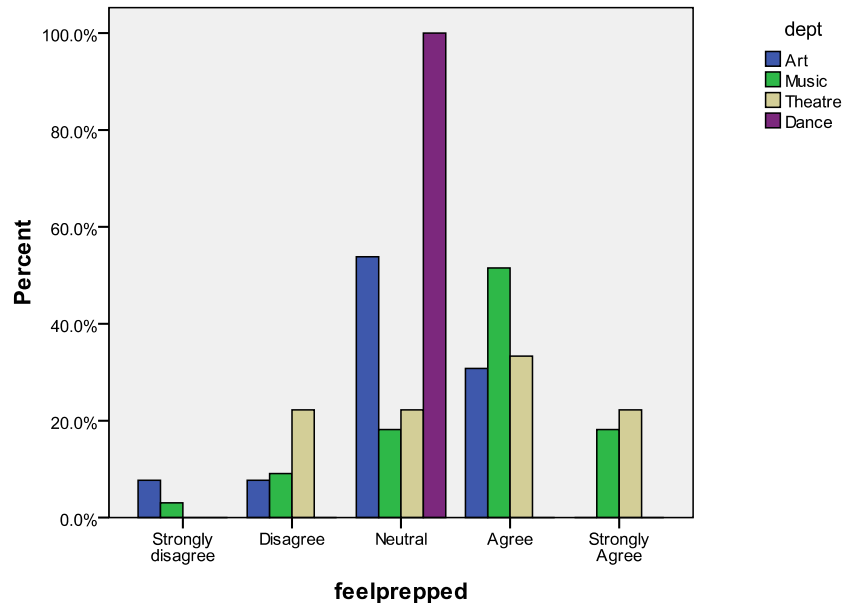
Overall results to the question of a feeling of preparedness and confidence because of the courses taken and the program support indicate that 56.1% of respondents agree or strongly agree on the issue. 28.6% were neutral while 15.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Non-traditional students (20%) disagreed with feeling prepared and confident more than traditional students (13.8%). 58.8% of traditional students either agreed or strongly agreed, and 40% of non-traditional students only agreed. Students at USM (64.5%) agreed nearly twice as much as UAA students (33.3%) that they felt prepared and confident to teach as a result of their courses and program support. 56.3% of UAF students agreed to feeling confident and prepared (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Students Feel Confident and Prepared for Teaching by Campus



Music majors felt the most prepared and confident with 69.7% agreement, followed by theatre majors at 55.5%, art majors at 30.8% and dance majors at 0% (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Students Feel Confident and Prepared as Teachers by Department



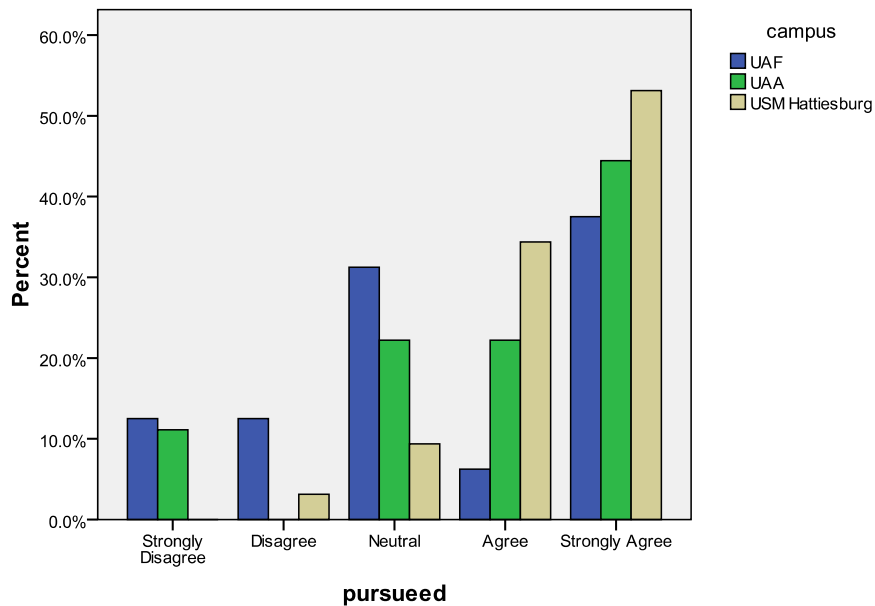
Women both agreed slightly more than men (59.4% vs. 52.6%), and disagreed more than men (16.2% vs. 10.6%), but more men were neutral than women (36.8% vs. 24.3%). Participants with an education emphasis within their majors (73.7%) indicated significantly more confidence and preparedness over those with other emphases (48.6%). Students with the least amount of credit hours exhibited the most agreement (87.5%) with the question of confidence and preparedness from course offerings and program support.

Factor #8: Pursuit of education beyond undergraduate level

Overall results show that 70.7% of all respondents intend to pursue higher education in their field beyond the undergraduate level. 17.2% were neutral and 12.1% either agreed or strongly disagreed. 100% of non-traditional students agreed or strongly agreed that they would pursue

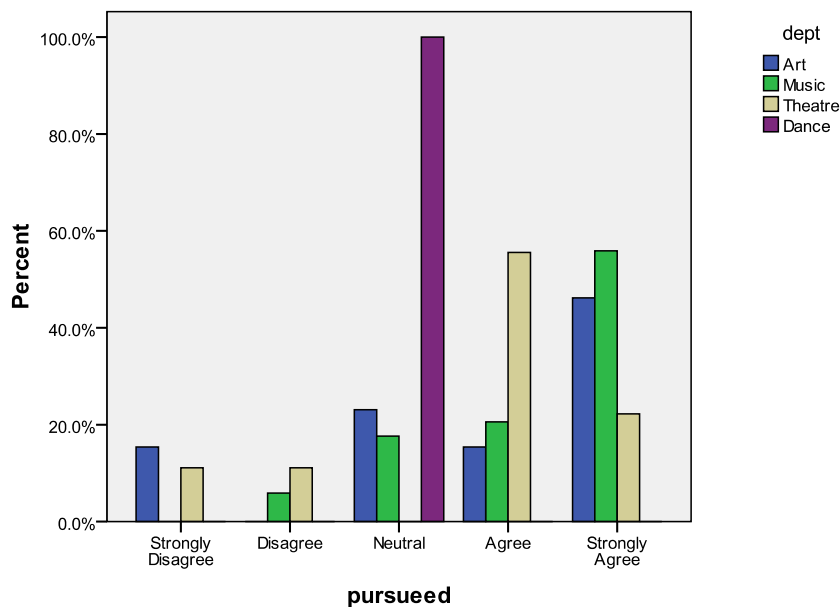
education beyond the undergraduate level, while 69.3% of traditional students agreed. When analyzed by campus, the data show 87.5% of USM students intend to pursue higher education, followed by 66.6% of UAA students and 43.8% of UAF students (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Intent to Pursue Education Beyond Undergraduate Level by Campus



Within the arts departments, 0% of dance majors indicated they would pursue higher education in their field, while 77.8% of theatre majors agreed to the intent, followed by 76.5% of music majors, and 61.6% of art majors (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Intent to Pursue Education Beyond Undergraduate Level by Major



Males (84.3%) agreed more than females (65.8%) to the intent. Respondents with a declared education emphasis (78.9%) show more intent to pursue higher education than those with other emphases (68.4%). Students with the second lowest credit hours earned had the highest level of agreement to the idea of higher education in their field beyond the undergraduate level at 85.7%, followed by students with the most credit hours earned (77.4%), then the students with the least credit hours at 75% and finally students with 26-36 hours earned at 45.5%.

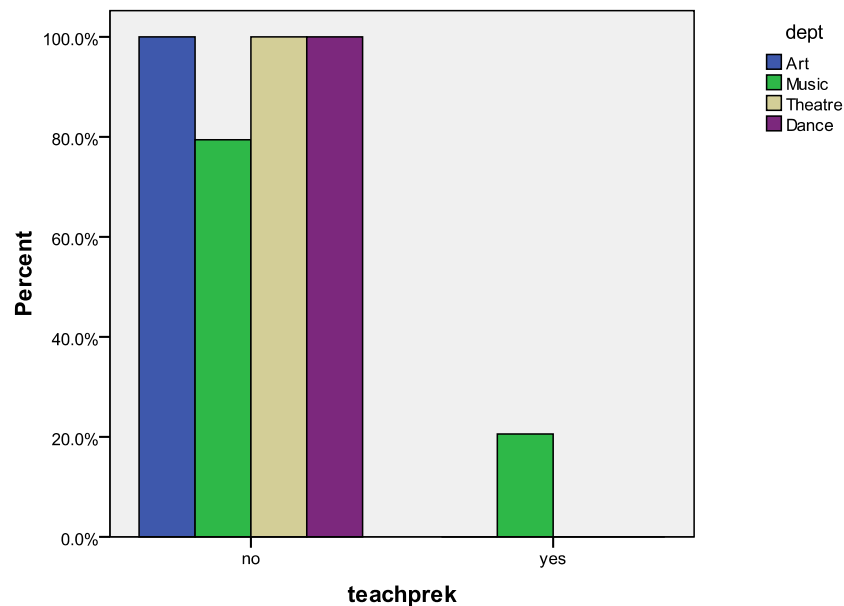
Factor #9: Preferred grade level(s) to teach.

To better understand the grade level teaching choices made by future arts educators, participants were asked to choose which grade level(s) would appeal to them were they to become a teacher. Respondents chose from among “Pre-K”, “Elementary Grades”, “Middle School”, “High School”, and “University”. 58 responses were received for each grade level indicating either a “yes” or “no”.

Pre-K

Overall results show 87.9% of respondents chose “no” for pre- with 12.1% responding “yes”. When analyzed by age, only 13.5% of traditional students chose pre-K as a grade level they would want to teach and 100% of non-traditional students answered “no” to this grade level. By campus, 18.8% of UAF students indicated they would want to teach pre-K, followed by 12.5% of USM students and 0% of UAA students. Among departments, a small percentage of music majors (20.6%) chose pre-K as a preferred grade level to teach and all other departments chose “no” for that grade level (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. Desire to teach Pre-K by Department

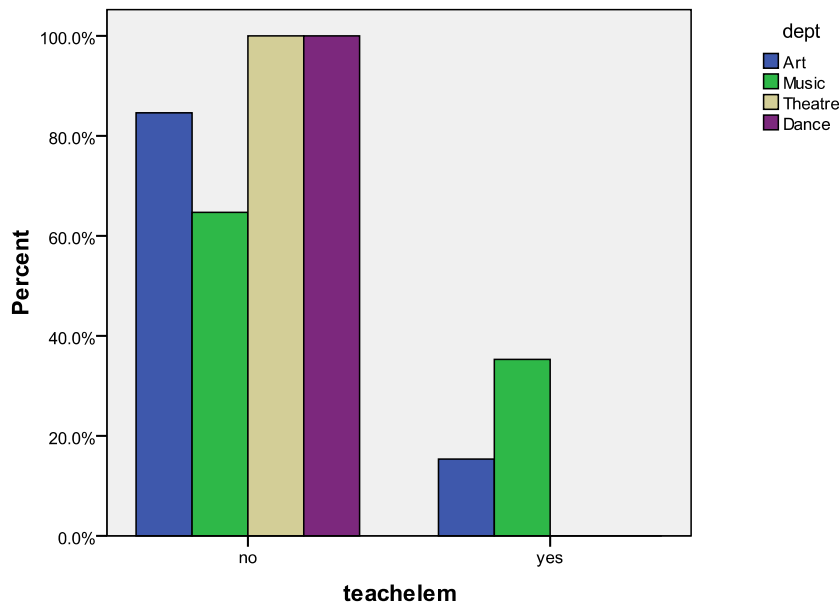


94.7% of males would not choose to teach pre-K which is only slightly more than the 84.2% of women who chose “no”. 21.1% of students with a specific education emphasis and only 7.9% of students with other emphases chose pre-K. Results from those respondents with the lowest and highest total credit hours earned are similar for this grade level at 12.5% and 12.9%. 0% of students with 13-25 credit hours earned chose pre-K compared with 9.1% of students with 26-36 credit hours.

Elementary Grades

Overall results show elementary grades had a 74.1% response to “no” and 25.9% to “yes”. When analyzed by age, only 26.9% of traditional students chose elementary as a grade level they would want to teach and 100% of non-traditional students answered “no” to this grade level. By campus, 37.5% of UAF students indicated they would want to teach elementary grades, followed by 25% of USM students and 0% of UAA students. Among departments, 35.3% of music majors chose elementary as a preferred grade level to teach, followed by art majors at 15.4%, and all other departments chose “no” for that grade level (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. Desire to Teach Elementary Grades by Department



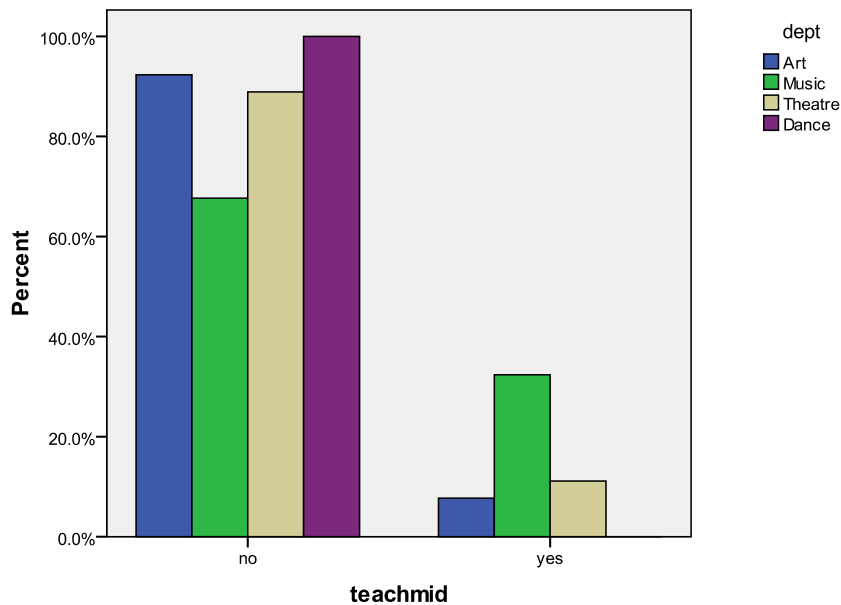
89.5% of males would not choose to teach in the elementary grades, which is more than the 68.4% of women who chose “no”. 31.6% of students with a specific education emphasis and 21.1% of students with other emphases chose elementary grades. Results from those respondents with the lowest and highest total credit hours earned are similar for choosing this grade level at 25% and 25.8%. 0% of students with 13-25 credit hours earned chose elementary grades, compared with 36.4% of students with 26-36 credit hours.

Middle School

Overall results show 77.6% responded “no” to teaching middle school, while 22.4% indicated “yes” to those grades. When analyzed by age, only 23.1% of traditional students chose middle school as a grade level they would want to teach and 80% of non-traditional students answered “no” to this grade level. By campus, 25% of UAF students indicated they would want to teach middle school grades, followed by 28.1% of USM students and 0% of UAA students. Among

departments, 32.4% of music majors chose middle school as a preferred grade level to teach, followed by theatre majors at 11.1%, art majors at 7.7% and 0% for dance majors (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Desire to Teach Middle School by Department



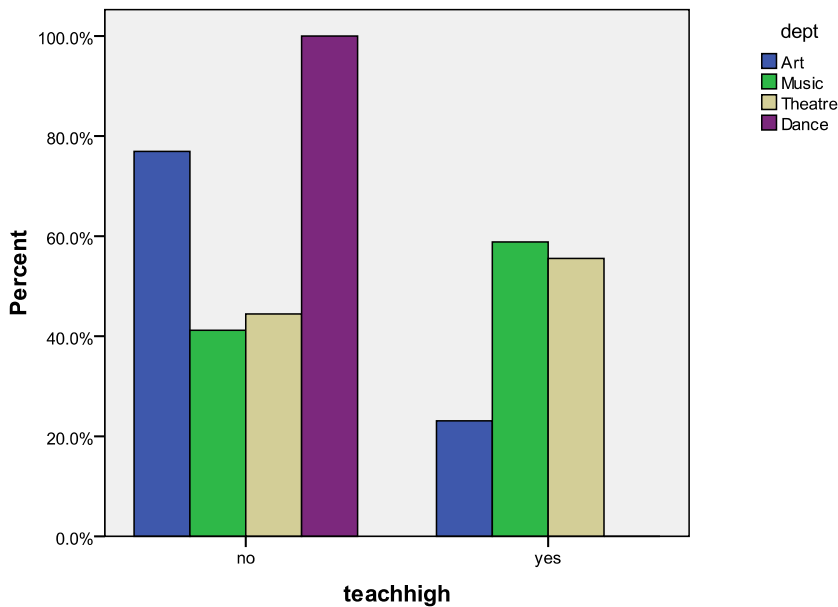
82.4% of males would not choose to teach in the middle school grades, which is only slightly more than the 73.7% of women who chose “no”. 36.8% of students with a specific education emphasis and 15.8% of students with other emphases chose middle school grades. Results by total credit hours earned show 27.3% of students with 26-36 credit hours chose “yes” for middle school grades, followed by 25.8% of students with 36-48 credit hours, 14.3% of students with 13-25 credit hours and 12.5% of students with 1-12 credit hours earned.

High School

Overall results show 51.7% of survey participants responded “no” to teaching high school and 48.3% responded “yes”. When analyzed by age, 50% of traditional students chose high school as

a grade level they would want to teach and 60% of non-traditional students answered “no” to this grade level. By campus, 59.4% of USM students indicated they would want to teach middle school grades, followed by 43.8% of UAF students and 22.2% of UAA students. Among departments, 58.8% of music majors chose high school as a preferred grade level to teach, followed by theatre majors at 55.6%, art majors at 23.1% and 0% for dance majors (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Desire to Teach High School by Department

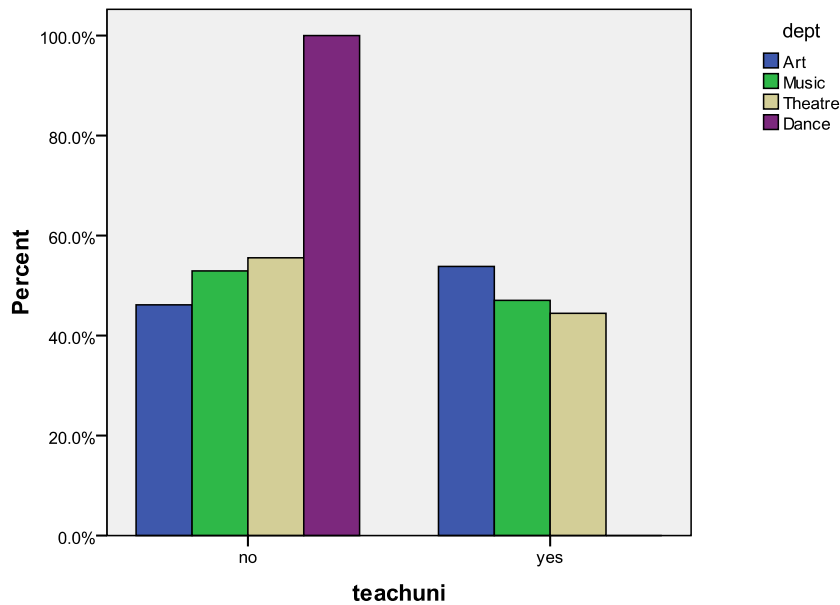


57.9% of males would choose to teach in the high school grades, which is more than the 44.7% of women who chose “yes”. 68.4% of students with a specific education emphasis and 39.5% of students with other emphases chose high school grades. Results by total credit hours earned show 75% of students with 1-12 credit hours chose “yes” for high school grades, followed by 54.5% of students with 26-36 credit hours, 42.9% of students with 13-25 credit hours and 41.9% of students with 36-48 credit hours earned.

University

Overall results show 53.4% of respondents didn't want to teach at the university level, while 46.6% indicated they would. When analyzed by age, 44.2% of traditional students chose university as a grade level they would want to teach, while 80% of non-traditional students answered "yes" to this grade level. By campus, 66.7% of UAA students indicated they would want to teach at the university level, followed by 43.8% of both UAF and USM students. Among departments, 53.8% of art majors chose university as a preferred grade level to teach, followed by music majors at 47.1%, theatre majors at 44.4% and 0% for dance majors (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Desire to Teach at University Level by Department



57.9% of males would choose to teach at the university level, which is more than the 42.1% of women who chose "yes". 42.1% of students with a specific education emphasis and 50% of students with other emphases chose the university level. Results by total credit hours earned show 51% of students with 36-46 credit hours chose "yes" for university, followed by 50% of students with 1-12 credit hours, 42.9% of students with 13-25 credit hours, and 36.4% of students with 26-36 credit hours earned.

Discussion

The results of this study point to several issues regarding fine arts education programs and the choices made by undergraduate arts students to become teachers in their fields. A strong word of caution must first be made, however, about interpreting these results, as the survey sample is quite small, reflects one of convenience, and does not equally represent all arts disciplines included in the research. As indicated in the introduction to this report, The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is a dedicated teacher training institution, therefore the researcher was not surprised that the data, when analyzed by campus, show more USM respondents as having the begun their degree programs with the original goal of becoming a teacher compared with those from UAA and UAF. What was not anticipated by the researcher was the overwhelmingly large percentage of UAA participants who indicated that they do not intend to become teachers, and that the majority of them do not feel there are sufficient teacher training courses within their discipline. The context shows a bigger picture, however, when one considers that even as the largest campus within the University of Alaska system, UAA respondents numbered nine out of the total fifty-eight, and were students in the art department which offers only a minor in art education.

That UAF students feel nearly as confident and prepared for the task of teaching as USM students, and much more so than UAA students, is a reflection of the sample distribution from both campuses being weighted toward music majors. The majority of UAF (65%) and USM (75%) respondents indicated they are working toward music degrees. Of the survey participants, only music majors (over 60% of the sample) specified that they are taking an education emphasis in their program. Within the study, the only other represented arts discipline to offer an education degree is dance at USM.

The data analysis illuminates the connection between the responses to the questions regarding a potential teacher's preferred grade level, and the reason a respondent would choose not to become a teacher in their field. The results show that only music majors would choose to teach at the pre-K level; only music majors and a small percentage of art majors would choose to teach at the elementary level; and (not surprisingly) that music majors comprised the smallest percentage of respondents to select "don't want to work with children" when asked why they might not choose to teach.

Overall, music and theatre majors express a preference for teaching at the high school level over the younger grades, while all of the responding art majors choose university as their preferred teaching level. While the results of this study cannot be effectively extrapolated to the general population, any lack of arts teachers below the high school level in Alaska schools is supported by the trend shown here. A challenge, then, is to examine further the reasons for arts majors not wanting to work as teachers at the elementary and middle school levels. An analysis of the answers given by respondents for what they like best and least about their arts programs might shed some light on the issue.

In general, the findings suggest that departmental faculty is the "most-liked" aspect of the respondents' arts program experiences. According to Susan Haedicke, speaking at the 2000 Arts Advocacy Roundtable, that kind of professorial influence is "the point of education". Haedicke states,

It is not so much a question of imposing my ideology on particular students as much as helping them to understand what they believe and why they believe it, exploring with

them the process of arriving at an opinion (Costa, A. M., Green, S. L., Haedicke, S. C., Mardirosian, G. H., Martin, D., Schildcrout, J., Spencer, J. S., Weinberg, M., 2001).

It could be that the survey participants are so inspired by their professors that they hope to continue this type of mature student/teacher relationship, and do not see the possibility for that kind of interaction in working with the youngest student populations.

Another question that arises from the results is what the students had in mind when choosing “other” as their reason for not wanting to teach. Luftig, et al, found that many arts majors choose to get their teaching license as a good “backup” in the case they are unable to secure their preferred manner of employment in their field (2003).

What is clear, however, is the wide range of arts education degree program offerings among the three schools in this study. This reality could probably be extended to all the schools in the nation. If music education continues to be the only Alaska fine arts degree to offer teacher licensure, then the dearth of qualified and prepared teachers in other arts disciplines will be sustained. Therefore, a better understanding of the career needs and decisions made by post-secondary arts majors could help structure more effective arts education programs at the university level. Stakeholders in arts education for Alaska schools would do well to conduct additional research to supplement the present findings if they expect to generate more support for expanded post-secondary arts education programs.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Section 1. Please answer the following questions about career choice and program satisfaction.

1. My original goal in pursuing an arts degree was to become a primary or secondary school teacher in my field.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2. How many total credit hours have you earned to date?

- 1 - 12
- 13 - 25
- 26 - 36
- 36 - 48

3. At this point in your program, how likely is it that you will teach in your field after completing your degree?

- A lot less likely
- Somewhat less likely
- No difference
- Somewhat more likely
- A lot more likely

4. If you do not intend to pursue a teaching career in the arts, which of the following best describes why?

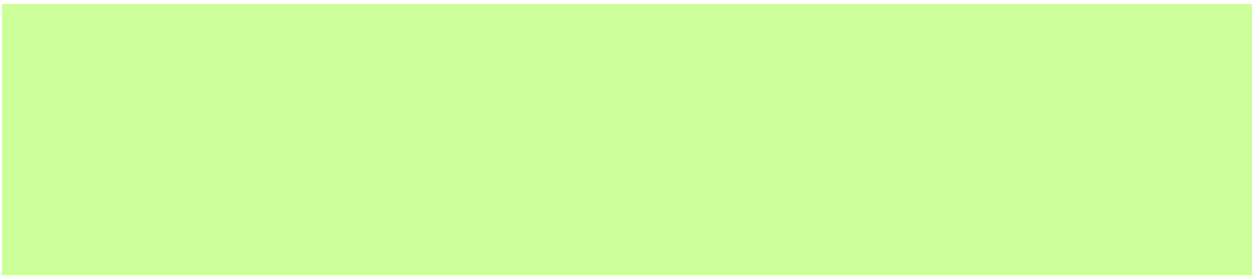
- Low Salary
- Don't want to work with children
- Insufficient courses available at my college/ institution
- Worried about job security
- Other

5. What things do you like best about your arts program or arts education program? (i.e. faculty, department facilities, affordability)

6. What things do you NOT like about your arts program or arts education program? (i.e. limited facilities, high cost)

7. My undergraduate institution provides all the courses I need to work as an educator in my field.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Don't Know
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



8. If I were to pursue a career as an arts educator, I would feel well prepared and confident because of the courses I have taken and the support I have received in my program.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. I plan to pursue education in my field beyond the undergraduate level (i.e. graduate, doctoral program)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. As a teacher, my preferred grade level(s) would be:

- Pre-K
- Elementary Grades
- Middle School
- High School
- University

Section 2. Demographic Information**1. Which campus are you attending?**

- University of Alaska Fairbanks
- University of Alaska Anchorage
- University of Alaska Juneau
- University of Southern Mississippi Hattiesburg
- University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast

2. How old are you?**3. In which department is your intended major?**

- Art
- Music
- Theatre
- Dance
- Education
- Alaska Native Arts

4. Within your department what is your area of concentration? (e.g. Acting, Painting, Music Composition)**5. What is your gender?**

- Female
- Male

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