

Illinois University Council for Career and Technical Education  
Awards for Innovation Final Report

**Teacher Identity: A Model for Professional Development**

Submitted by:

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## **The Strand Addressed by the Proposal**

Southern Illinois University's Department of Workforce Education and Development (WED) and Fashion Design and Merchandising Program partnered to address the strand of professional development for pre-service and beginning practicing teachers. We defined professional development of pre-service and beginning practicing teachers as: activities that promote acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits (e.g., personal qualities) that enhance teachers' performance. The proposal objective was to develop, present, and disseminate a research data-based professional development seminar to enhance teacher identity development.

## **Rationale for the Project**

The impact of teacher professional identity, including appearance, on the learning environment is an emerging topic. This is particularly true for career and technical education teachers who focus on the technical component of their work, perhaps at the expense of professional aspects (Martin, 1995) of their identity. Teacher professional identity includes demonstrating the appropriate knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits (KASH) to facilitate student learning and success. Research suggests that first impressions of teachers' professionalism are based on appearance (55%), voice (38%), and what they say (7%) (Jones, 2006). First impressions based on appearance are explained by the concept of appearance perception, that is, the "process of observing and making evaluations or drawing inferences based on how people look" (Kaiser, 1997, p. 7). Teachers and administrators have suggested that content regarding the impact of appearance on teacher professionalism should be included in new teacher training (Solocheck, 2007). Indeed, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (*Teacher Education*, 2005) added dispositions (i.e., external behaviors that include appropriate dress) to their standards. Evidence of the need for including this content is supported by the laissez-faire ideas of many beginning practicing teachers about appropriate dress for work (Sternberg, 2003).

## **The Objectives and Deliverables**

Table 1 below provides a summary of the objectives, sub-objectives and deliverables for the project with due dates and additional comments.

## **Final Expense Summary**

We requested \$7,500 in funding for the project and received \$6,435. Slight adjustment in the line items was due to lodging costs being less than our original estimate and one salary line and supplies being slightly more. The total is the exact amount for which we received funds. Table 2 below provides a summary of our expenses. Please note that our SIUC Grants Accounting Department will send the final bill via separate email no later than the June 30, 2008 due date.

We appreciate the opportunity to work on this project. Our graduate students valued the opportunity to work on a grant-funded project. All evidence suggests that it was a valuable project for their professional development. Seminar participants thought new graduate student teaching assistants would benefit from the seminar. Some teachers were surprised at the discrepancy between their views of themselves and student perceptions of them. One participant commented that he wanted his children to be taught in an environment conducive to learning where teachers were role models for impressionable young children.

**Table 1 – Objectives of the Project and Completion Dates**

Objective	Completion Date	Comments
<p>1. Develop a research data-based professional development seminar.</p> <p>a. Analyze teacher dress codes for the purpose of identifying the rationale for imposing standards for appearance on teachers by administrators and boards of education.</p> <p>b. Analyze teacher self-reflections and student impressions of teachers, using image-text (Simon, 1995) to understand how these perceptions reflect teacher identity.</p> <p>c. Prepare research data-based seminar content, learning activities, and handout materials.</p>	<p>November 2007</p> <p>March 2008</p>	<p>Data collection: Employee handbooks</p> <p>Data collection for human subjects approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee.</p> <p>The two graduate students hired by the project collected the data for the teacher self-reflections and student impressions of teachers.</p> <p>The two graduate students hired by the project developed the seminar based on results of the data analysis.</p>
<p>2. Deliver a research data-based professional development seminar.</p> <p>a. Deliver seminar in a synchronous setting to pre-service teachers and beginning practice teachers.</p> <p>b. Video tape the seminar to include seminar content and presenter/participant discussion.</p>	<p>April 2008</p>	<p>The two graduate students hired by the project delivered a seminar held in the SIUC Student Center and in Pre-Service teacher classes.</p>
<p>3. Disseminate the data-based professional development seminar.</p> <p>a. Prepare an asynchronous video presentation based on the synchronous presentation to pre-service and beginning practicing teachers.</p> <p>b. Video tape the seminar to include seminar content and Disseminate the seminar through web-based resources.</p>	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>Website for seminar asynchronous presentation is:  <a href="http://wed.siu.edu/lifeskills/Teacher%20Identity.wmv">http://wed.siu.edu/lifeskills/Teacher%20Identity.wmv</a></p>

**Table 1 – (continued)**

Objective	Completion Date	Comments
<p>4. Disseminate research data by submitting one manuscript to a professional journal and one presentation proposal to a national conference.</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>June 2008</p> <p>December 2008</p>	<p>Presentation made at the Illinois Connections Conference (state conference)</p> <p>Abstract accepted for oral research presentation at AAFCS, June 19-22, 2008 (national conference)</p> <p>Manuscript entitled "Rationales for Teacher Dress Codes as Reflections of School Culture" submitted to National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin</p> <p>Abstract accepted for research presentation at ACTE conference in December 4-6, 2008.</p>
<p>5. Provide two CTE teachers (graduate students) with an opportunity to assist in the research, development, and delivery of a professional development seminar to pre-service and beginning practicing teachers, specifically CTE teachers.</p>	<p>January through May 2008</p>	<p>Graduate students were trained to collect and analyze data. They were given responsibility for developing and delivering a professional development seminar with guidance and oversight by project leaders.</p>

## References

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