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Social Studies Middle Childhood Education OAE Economics Workshop

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Social Studies Middle Childhood Education OAE Economics Workshop

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Honors Project

Submitted to the Honors College
at Bowling Green State University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with
University Honors

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Abstract

This project focuses on the Social Studies Middle Childhood Education OAE Economics Workshop that was carried out on November 14th, 2015 at Bowling Green State University. The workshop was created to help Bowling Green State University pre-service teachers prepare for the Economics portion of the Middle Grades Social Studies Ohio Assessment for Educators (OAE). Throughout the workshop participants were taught lessons on microeconomics and macroeconomics. At the beginning participants were pretested and at the end participants were post tested on Middle Grades Social Studies OAE practice test questions to assess how much they learned. The project includes the Research Questions, Literature Review, Proposed Activity, Methodology, and Expected Results/Potential Conclusion, as well as the Annotated Bibliography from the planning phase of the project. After the Proposal the Method, Results, and Discussion are included to show how the workshop was conducted, as well as the outcome of the workshop.

Research Question

The main question that has been guiding my research is “how can pre-service teachers be better prepared to pass their teacher assessments?” The reason I am researching this question is because I have come to understand that the teacher assessment, known as the Ohio Assessment for Educators (OAE) which replaced the well-known *Praxis Examinations* as of September 1, 2013, is making it difficult for college students to pass their assessments due to the wide gaps between what pre-service teachers are learning and what they are being tested on. More specifically, I have noticed that my fellow peers, Bowling Green State University pre-service teachers, are struggling to pass their Middle Grades Social Studies OAE for the very reason explained above. Some supporting questions that have also been driving my research are “how can this gap close?” and “what can BGSU do to help?” While researching I have found documents to support these research questions.

Literature Review

Throughout my research I have found many documents that have given me insight as to why pre-service teachers are struggling to pass their assessments, as well as ways to help them better prepare. A majority of my research has pointed to the cause of student struggle coming from the difference between the old Praxis II exam and newly implemented the Ohio Assessment for Educators.

Two key documents that I have found in my research endeavors come from the School of Education and Professional Studies at Mount Vernon Nazarene University (MVNU). The documents are actually annual reports of MVNU pre-service teacher pass rates on the Praxis II and Ohio Assessment for Educators. *MVNU Praxis II Pass-Rate Data Academic Year: 2012-2013* encompassed the passing rates of MVNU pre-service teachers who took the Praxis II exam

during the 2012-2013 academic year since the Praxis II was still the standardized assessment for Ohio pre-service teachers at that time. For the Middle School Social Studies exam the MVNU passing rate was 90%. The data also included the Ohio pass rate for the 2012-2013 academic year, which was 96%. However, *MVNU Ohio Assessment For Educators (OAE) Pass-Rate Data Academic Year: 2013-2014* encompassed the pass rates of the MVNU pre-service teachers who took the OAE during the 2013-2014 academic year. The 2013-2014 academic year was the first year the OAE was used. For the Middle Grades Social Studies exam the MVNU passing rate was 38%, while the Ohio pass rate was 58%. This data from MVNU goes to show that the Praxis II and OAE have some serious discrepancies that are creating negatives outcomes for pre-service teachers in Ohio universities.

In the online document, *Alignment of OAE Middle Grades Social Studies Assessment Framework with Ohio-specified Standards*, Pearson Education, Inc. (2013) shows how the Middle Grades Social Studies OAE is aligned with Ohio student standards, Ohio educator standards and Ohio educational preparation standards. The beginning of the document states, “An indication of alignment does not necessarily imply complete congruence of the content of an OAE test competency with the relevant standard,” which is very true because for the Ohio educational preparation standards some standards are met heavily while others are not included at all.

These many changes that have been made are causing confusion when it comes to making sure educators, pre-service teachers, and students are on the same page with what to teach to students and what is being taught to pre-service teaches from professionals at the university level. Anderson, D., & Mills, A. (2015) show this confusion in their study *Depth of Knowledge of American Elementary Pre-service Teachers' Social Studies Lessons*. The study

brought to light that “the PSTs’ assessments primarily required only recall (36.2%) and basic reasoning (29.8%); however, more than one-third of their assessments required students to apply complex or extended reasoning.” This means that although the tests were aligned with higher order thinking that the state standards encompass, the pre-service teachers were teaching lower order thinking skills so students were not prepared for the types of skills that the test questions were asking of them.

In summary, The Ohio Assessment for Educators is a new assessment for pre-service teachers that is obviously far from perfect. However, the economics portion of the exam is of particular importance. While only 12% of the OAE, anecdotally I know that students struggle with the economics concepts and applications. A focus on this portion of the exam will enable me to see whether a workshop enhances economics knowledge. Success could imply an extension of workshops for other social sciences that are part of the OAE.

Proposed Activity

In order to help combat the many changes between the old and new pre-service teacher assessments I have come up with the idea to host a workshop for BGSU Social Studies Middle Childhood Education pre-service teachers in order to help them prepare for the economics portion of the Middle Grades Social Studies OAE. The economics portion is only 12% of the test, however since the pre-service teachers at Bowling Green State University are only required to take one course in economics I feel that extra help in this area is necessary.

The workshop will provide students with a pre-assessment piece, which will be based on a reading prior to attending the session, as well as a post assessment that gives the pre-service teachers in attendance a chance to dabble in some possible OAE questions in the area of economics. Throughout the session attendees will move between two breakout sessions that

review macroeconomics and microeconomics, as well as provide many take-home resources. From this workshop I hope to leave attendees with more confidence about taking the Middle Grades Social Studies OAE, as well as numerous take-home resources in order to help them prepare.

The workshop will hit the criteria of: Oral Communication; Written Communication; Integrative Learning; and Critical Thinking. Attendees will practice oral communication throughout the workshop when asking questions and working with others. They will practice written communication within the workbook provided and post assessment. They will also practice integrative learning and critical thinking just by taking part in the activities provided for them through the workshop.

Methodology

For my Honors Project I am creating an applied project by holding a workshop. I have researched how to run an effective workshop and will be using some of the guidelines of Aikat, D. (2010) and the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. My workshop will be based on the goals I have stated previously and will be providing the attendees with many resources to take home with them.

The only limitation I can foresee happening is having possible lack of workshop structure since I only am using two examples of how to run a workshop. However, I chose two very thorough examples so they should give me plenty of ideas on how to go about setting the workshop up.

Expected Results/Potential Conclusions

In conclusion, I expect there to be a few potential conclusions that will arise from this workshop. I believe pre-service teachers will feel more prepared to take the Social Studies

Middle Grades Ohio Assessment for Educators coming out of the workshop due to the practice they received while in attendance. I also foresee pre-service teachers having a lot of new resources to use for when they are preparing to take the test in the future. I also plan on collecting data from the pre-assessment and post-assessment to see what attendees gained from the workshop.

Method

Participants

Participants included four Bowling Green State University undergraduate students (3 males, 1 female). All students were Education majors that were currently enrolled in an Economics course. Attending the workshop was a chance to earn extra credit points in their Economics class.

Materials

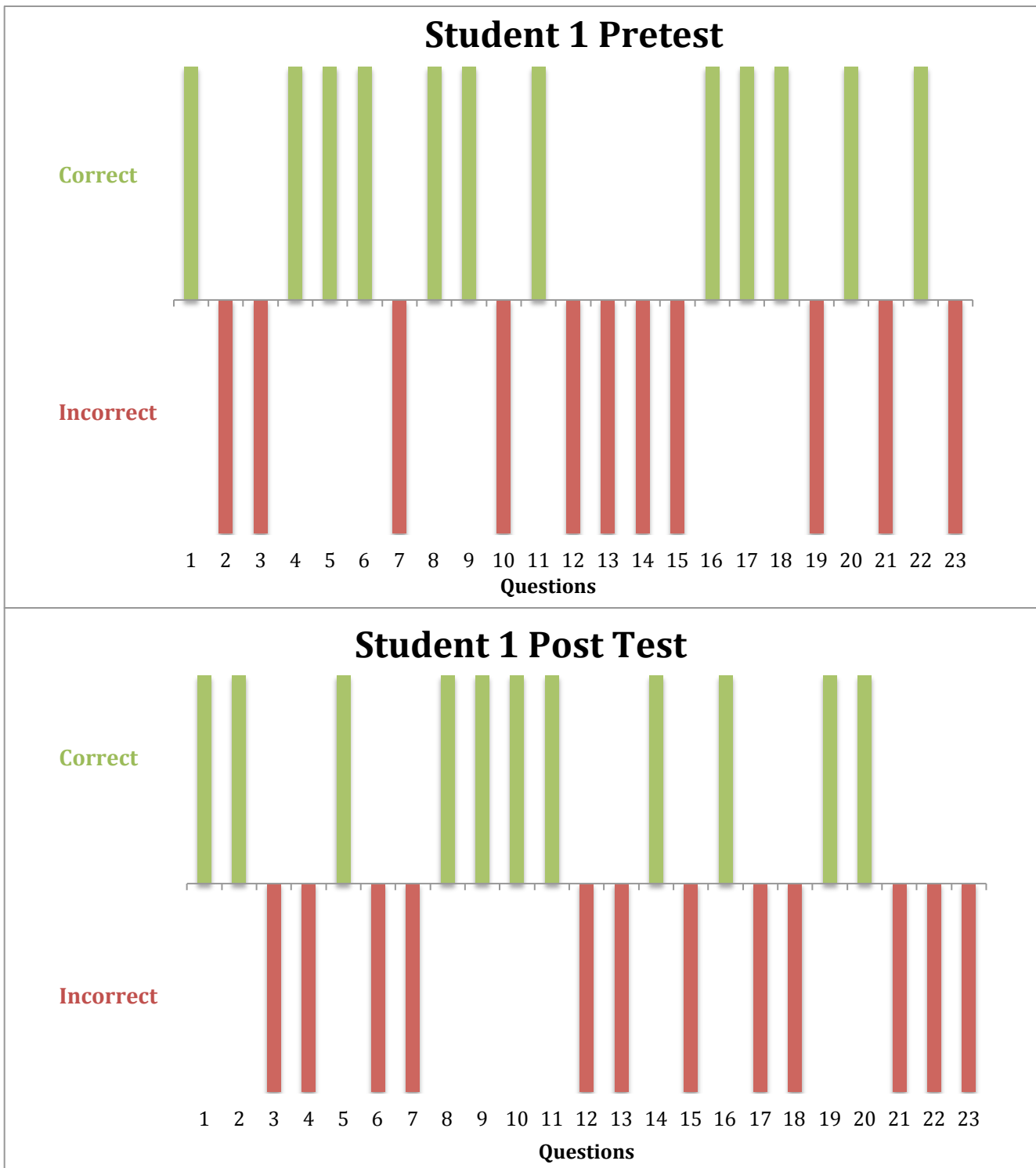
Each participant was given a folder that had the following inside: workshop schedule, a list of OAE test preparation resources, pretest, post test, microeconomics lesson handout and macroeconomics handout. The pretest and post test questions were taken from *Study Guide for the Middle school Tests* and *OAE Middle Grades Social Studies (031) Secrets Study Guide: Your Key to Exam Success*. The lesson handouts were taken from EconEdLink, a website provided by the Council for Economic Education with free lessons. The OAE test preparation resources were a list of websites and textbooks that participants could look up when studying for the OAE.

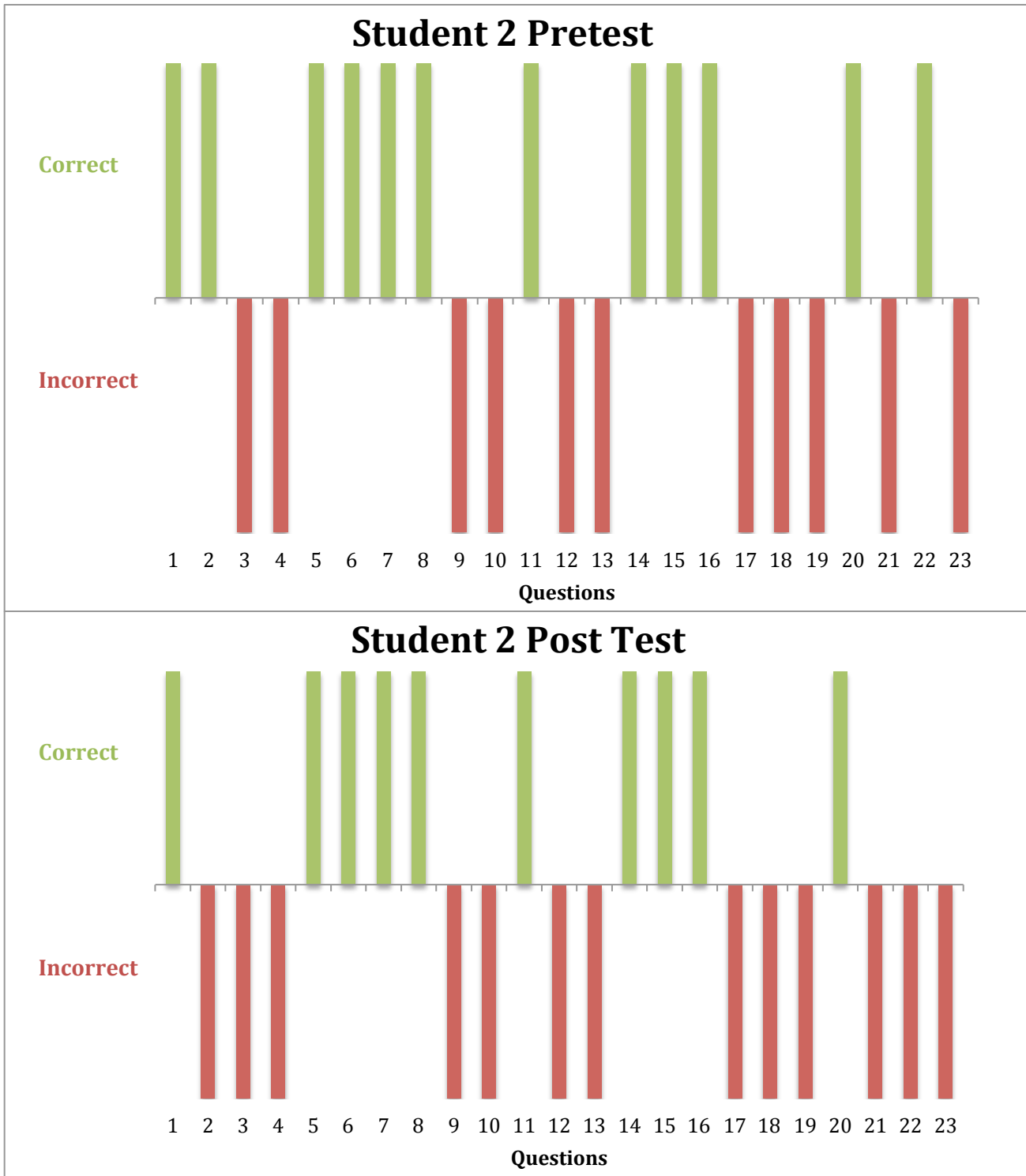
Procedure

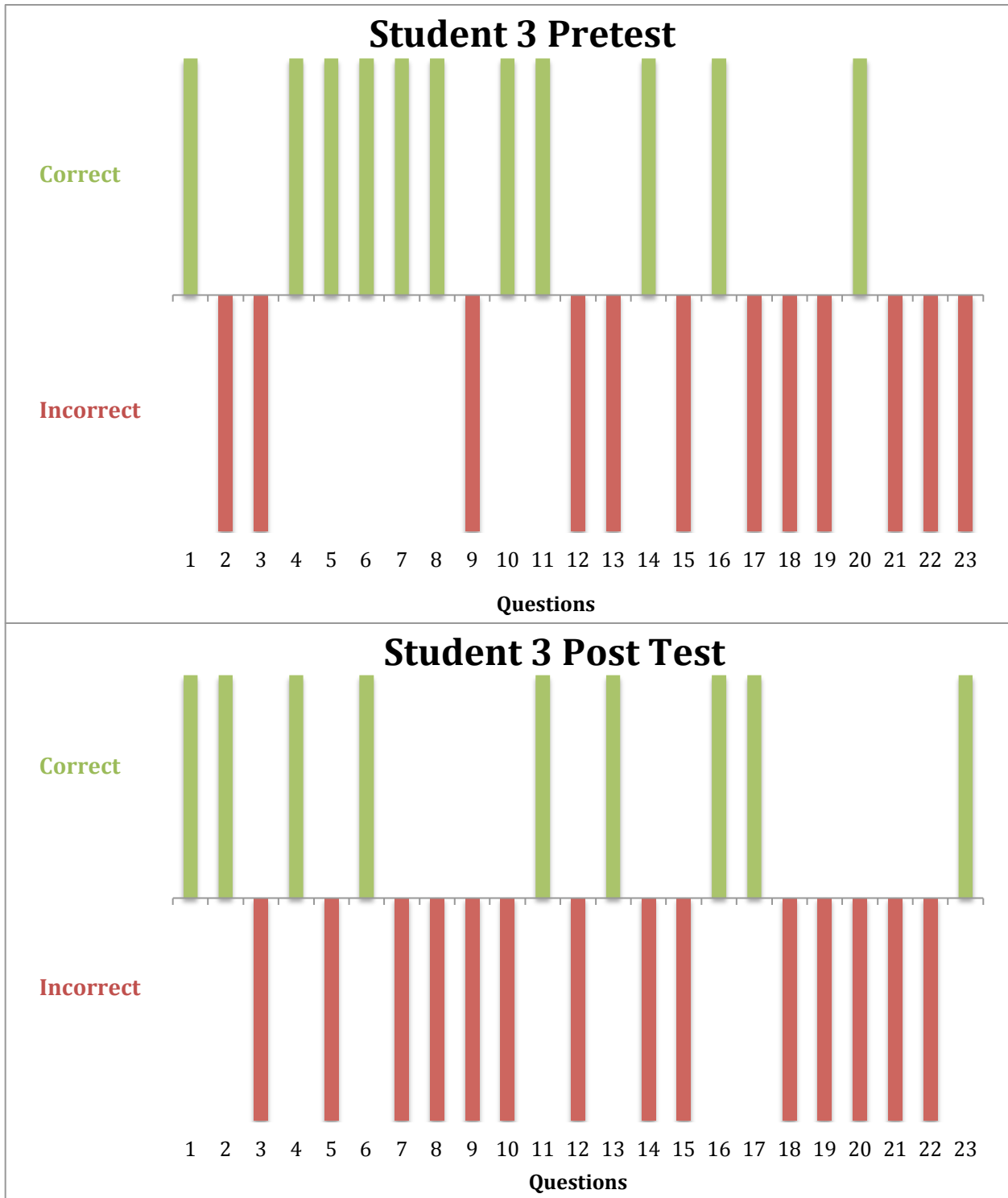
Upon arriving at the workshop, participants were given folders with all of the materials (listed above) inside. After going over the schedule for the workshop participants were given 20 minutes to take their pretest. After finishing the pretest, Dr. Mary Ellen Benedict taught the

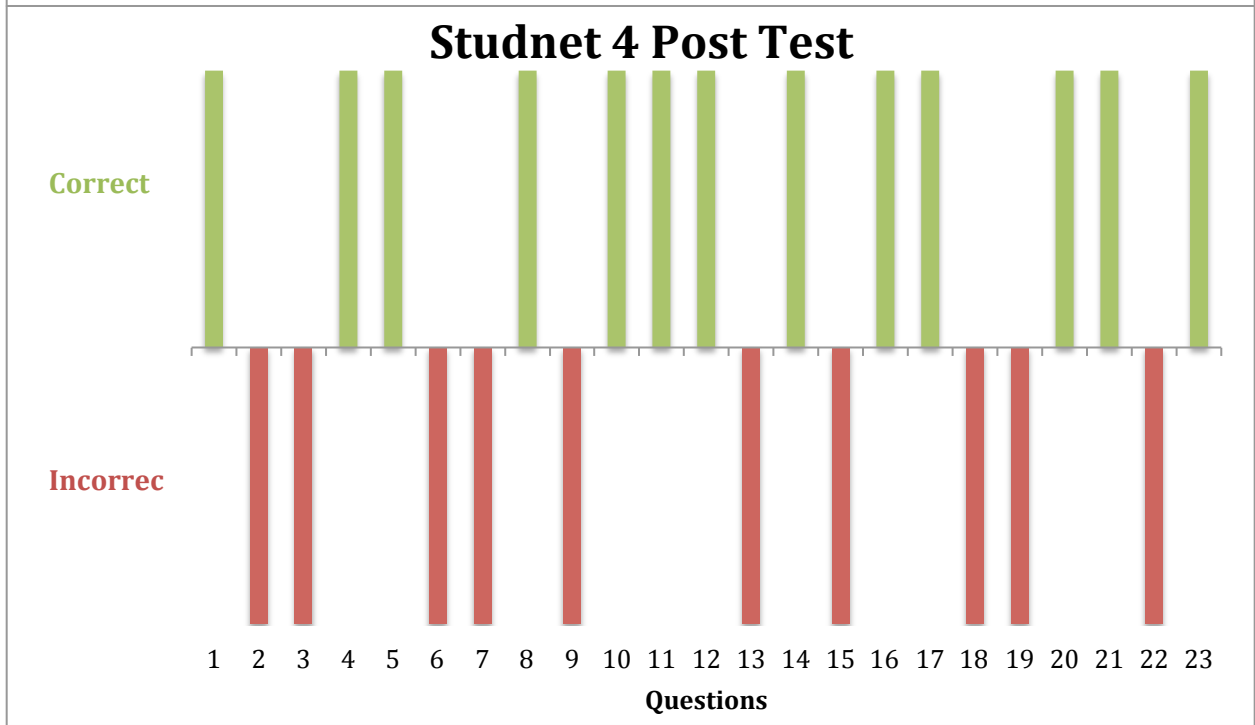
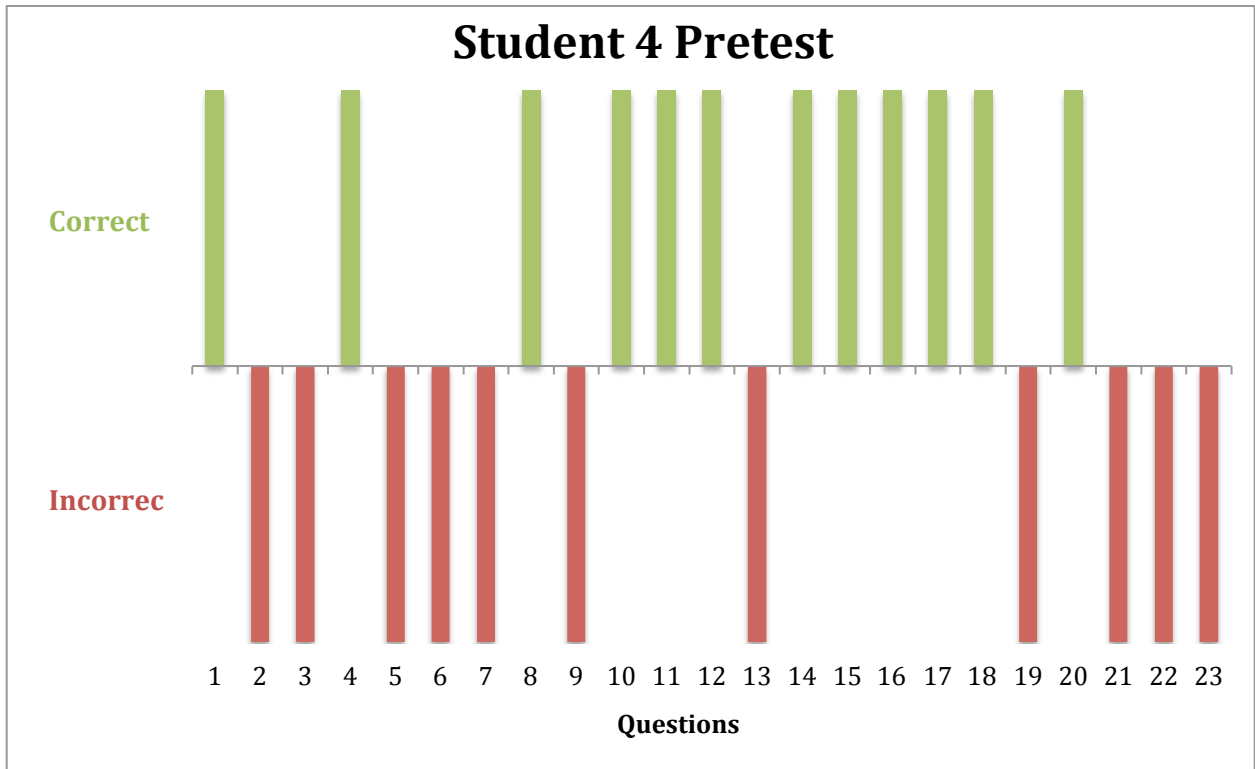
participants a 45-minute mini-lesson on microeconomics called “Would You Demand It?” After this lesson, participants were given a break. After the break Katharine Kontak taught participants a 45-minute mini-lesson on macroeconomics called “How Much Does It Cost Now?” Participants were given another break after the macroeconomics mini-lesson. After both mini-lessons, participants were given 20 minutes to complete their post test, which was a test comprised of the same exact questions as the pretest just placed in a different order. After taking the post test participants were shown Social Studies OAE and Praxis Test Preparation books, as well as websites to help them prepare for the Social Studies OAE.

Results









Discussion

The purpose of the pretest and post test was to assess how much each participant learned during the workshop. As seen in the results, a majority of the participants actually scored worse on their post test than their pretest; however, I believe this was due to the workshop being too long. The participants were nearing their third hour as they took their post test, so many of them were taking their tests quickly so they could leave. However, by looking at the data, it shows that many participants answered questions correctly on the pretest and then missed those exact same questions on the post test. Although it cannot be known for sure, it seems that due to participants rushing through the post test their results were not accurately represented. Again, I attribute this to the participants wanting to leave since they had been learning a lot on a Saturday morning. However, even though the results did not directly show improvement, it can be argued that some learning happened due to participants answering questions correctly on the post test that they initially answered incorrectly on the pretest.

Overall, due to the low number of participants it was hard to achieve accurate results. If I were to do this workshop over again I would try to advertise more heavily so more participants would come. I would also hold the workshop in the afternoon or evening on a weekday because a Saturday morning was not very appealing to many people. Although the results were a bit mixed, I hope the participants gained more practice, resources and confidence when it comes to the Middle Grades Social Studies Ohio Assessment for Educators.

Annotated Bibliography

Aikat, D. (2010). *Effective Teaching Strategies*. Retrieved from

http://www.aejmc.com/home/wpcontent/uploads/2010/12/effective_teaching_denver.pdf

This e-book is comprised of a collection of ideas gathered from a workshop put on by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to help teachers learn about effective teaching strategies. However I am not using the e-book to learn about effective teaching strategies, but rather am using it to learn about how to run a workshop. Aikat writes in detail about the layout of the workshop, as well as what each presenter talked about. The workshop was a long planned event that was objective-based and full of resources and activities for attendees to gain knowledge from. With the help of the members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Aikat provided attendees with a day full of learning.

Anderson, D., & Mills, A. (2015). Depth of knowledge of american elementary pre-service teachers' social studies lessons. *Journal of Studies in Education, 5(1)*, 52-64.

Anderson and Mills's study focuses on pre-service teachers' cognitive complexities when teaching. The study points to how pre-service teachers struggle to align what they are teaching in order to make sure state standards are being met. As the study shows, this confusion can be seen within a classroom when teachers require students to use lower order thinking skills while teaching, but higher order thinking when it comes time to take the test. I used this study to emphasis the confusion among pre-service teachers due to standards constantly changing. Although this research was conducted in Michigan, it stills sheds light on the disunity within the education system.

National Council for the Social Studies Task Force on Teacher Education Standards. (2002).

National Standards For Social Studies Teachers. Retrieved from

<http://downloads.ncss.org/NCSSTeacherStandardsVol1-rev2004.pdf>

The National Standards For Social Studies Teachers laid out exactly what educators are to teach in a Social Studies classroom. This document also shed light on how standards are aligned with pre-service teacher assessments. Reading about the national standards came in handy for making sure the OAE was aligned like it said it was with Ohio Educational Preparation Standards. The alignment was accurate, however after looking at the National Standards for Social Studies Teachers I realized the OAE did not encompass all parts of the National Standards. These National Standards were useful for checking the validity of the Ohio Department of Educations documents about the OAE alignment.

Ohio Department of Education: Board of Regents. (2012). *2012 Educator Preparation*

Performance Report Statewide Report. Retrieved from

https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/education-prep/documents/2012_Performance_Report_State.pdf

The Board of Regents for the Ohio Department of Education produced this report to include a lot of valuable data from the Praxis II exam pass rates. I only used this document to cross-reference the data I retrieved from MVNU to make sure their data was correct, which it was.

Ohio Department of Education. (2013). *Ohio Assessments For Educators(OAE) Pass Rate Analysis– Spring 2013*. Retrieved from

[ftp://ftp.ode.state.oh.us/StateBoardBooks/2013%20-%20Board%20Books/2013%20-%20June/ODE_OAE_passrate%20analysis_for%20SBOE_June%2010+11%202013%20\(2\).pdf](ftp://ftp.ode.state.oh.us/StateBoardBooks/2013%20-%20Board%20Books/2013%20-%20June/ODE_OAE_passrate%20analysis_for%20SBOE_June%2010+11%202013%20(2).pdf)

This pass rate analysis document gives very in depth research of OAE results and represents examinees that took the OAE in states other than Ohio. This research includes the Standard Error of Measurement in order to get the most accurate data possible. I used this information to see the difference between the results of examinees who took the OAE outside of Ohio to those who took the assessment inside Ohio. The results suggest that those tested outside of Ohio do not have nearly as hard of a time with the assessment as those within Ohio.

Pearson Education, Inc. (2013). *Study Guide: Assessment Design and Framework for Field 031: Middle Grades Social Studies*. Retrieved from

http://www.oh.nesinc.com/CONTENT/STUDYGUIDE/OH_SG_OBJ_031.htm

Due to the change of pre-service teacher assessments, The Pearson Education, Inc. created a website that gives a general overview of the Ohio Assessment for Educators. This document is a study guide that gives a broad outline of what to expect during the Middle Grades Social Studies assessment. The study guide breaks down the test into four parts with economics being 12% of the content. The study guide also provides a breakdown of what to study for topics within each content area. I plan on using this to help build my knowledge about the OAE layout, as well as the content. I will use the breakdown of

topics within the economics domain to have a better idea of what should be taught at the workshop.

Pearson Education, Inc. (2013). *Alignment of OAE Middle Grades Social Studies Assessment Framework with Ohio-specified Standards*. Retrieved from

[http://www.oh.nesinc.com/Content/Docs/OAE_SocialStudies\(4_9\)_AlignmentTable.pdf](http://www.oh.nesinc.com/Content/Docs/OAE_SocialStudies(4_9)_AlignmentTable.pdf)

Pearson Education, Inc. (2013) created this alignment document to show how the OAE is meeting all of the necessary criteria among educators standards, Ohio educational preparation program standards and student learning standards. Since the National Standards For Social Studies Teachers specifies the Ohio educational preparation program standards for pre-service Social Studies teachers, I used those standards to see how aligned they really are with the OAE. This alignment document shows that the are very aligned, but it also shows that some standards are much more heavily hit than others. I used this document to see how fair Pearson Education, Inc. was with the creation of the OAE.

School of Education and Professional Studies at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. (2014).

MVNU Praxis II Pass-Rate Data Academic Year: 2012-2013. Retrieved from

<http://mvnu.edu/academics/eduprofstud/education/ohiorept2014.asp>

Mount Vernon Nazarene University School of Education and Professional Studies has been publishing their school's pass rate data since 2001. This document shows the pass rate data for the Praxis II exam that the pre-service teachers at MVNU took during the 2012-2013 academic year. The pass-rate was 90% for MVNU students who took the Middle

School Social Studies Praxis II. I plan to use this data to show the difference between pass rates before and after the change to the Ohio Assessment for Educators.

School of Education and Professional Studies at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. (2015).

MVNU Ohio Assessment For Educators (OAE) Pass-Rate Data Academic Year: 2013-2014. Retrieved from

<http://mvnu.edu/academics/eduprofstud/education/ohiorept2015.pdf>

Similarly to the above, this document shows the pass rate data for the Ohio Assessment for Educators that MVNU pre-service teachers took during the 2013-2014 school year.

Unlike the above document, the pass rate for MVNU pre-service teachers who took the Middle Grades Social Studies assessment was 38%. This data shows that more Ohio college students than just BGSU pre-service teachers are struggling with this test. I plan to use this data to show the difference between pass rates before and after the change to the Ohio Assessment for Educators.

Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. (2014).

Section 4: Conducting a Workshop. In *Developing a Strategic Plan and Organizational Structure* (Chapter 12). Retrieved from Community Tool Box at <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

This Community Tool Box e-book was created to help give advice on how to organize an event.

Section 4 specifically focused on conducting a workshop, while managing to hit on every area possible. I will be using this document as a guideline for what to include in the workshop I am carrying out in the fall.

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EconEdLink. (2010). How much does it cost now? New York, NY: Council for Economic Education.

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Mometrix Media LLC. (2014). OAE middle grades social studies (031) secrets study guide: Your key to exam success.