

2015

# Understanding the Complexity of Attitudes Toward Public Education: Predicting the Views of Teachers and Parents in France and in the United States Based on Social and Cultural Factors

Madeleine Wills  
*Scripps College*

---

## Recommended Citation

Wills, Madeleine, "Understanding the Complexity of Attitudes Toward Public Education: Predicting the Views of Teachers and Parents in France and in the United States Based on Social and Cultural Factors" (2015). *Scripps Senior Theses*. Paper 591.  
[http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps\\_theses/591](http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/591)

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Scripps Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scripps Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact [scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu](mailto:scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu).

**Understanding the complexity of attitudes toward public education: Predicting the views of teachers and parents in France and the United States based on social and cultural factors**

**by**

**Madeleine Wills**

**Submitted to Scripps College in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts**

**Professor Ma  
Professor Krauss**

**December 12, 2014**

## **Acknowledgements**

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I recognize the countless individuals who have shaped my Scripps experience. My professors, advisors, and mentors have spent immeasurable amounts of energy to help me succeed here, academically and personally, and I owe them all a great debt for their patience and wisdom. My peers have shaped me fundamentally throughout my time at Scripps, challenging me to question my beliefs while supporting me consistently in all of my pursuits. I am deeply appreciative of my friends, who continue to amaze and inspire me, both in and out of the classroom.

It is not an overstatement to say that I would not be nearly as proud of this body of work, nor would I have had the skills to complete it, without the sage advice and guidance of Professor Jennifer Ma. Her support and suggestions through every stage of the thesis process gave me the confidence to research a topic that I find truly engaging and allowed me to realize my vision for this project. I am in awe of her dedication to her students, and I hope I will one day be as passionate and supportive of a teacher as she is.

The French Studies faculty members at Scripps are incomparable in their enthusiasm for their discipline, and I am grateful for Professor Dalton Krauss's thoughtful reflections on the underlying differences between French and American society and culture, which certainly influenced the direction of this project. I also must recognize his hearty recommendation of the IES Nantes study abroad program, which offered me the unique opportunity to engage directly with students in a French classroom, and ultimately sparked my interest in comparing public education systems internationally.

I am indebted above all to my family for their steadfast support of all of my endeavors, academic and otherwise. My time at Scripps has exposed me to myriad ways of understanding one's place in the world, and I have come to recognize how supremely lucky I am to have family members who believe it is their place to use their time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of others. Mom, Dad, and David: I am blessed to have been the recipient of your love and support for 21 years and I look forward to using all of the tools with which my Scripps education has equipped me to contribute to the world in ways that will make you proud. Mom and Dad, I owe my success to your undying belief in my abilities, and I am committed to showing you both the same love and support you have bestowed upon me as I move forward from this place. Confidently, courageously, hopefully.

### Abstract

Extending prior research related to attitude development and intra-attitudinal consistency, the current study aims to evaluate various factors that predict attitudes toward public education and understand how they impact the direction and consistency of participants' attitudes. In an effort to develop our knowledge of the factors that predict these attitudes among members of differing populations, the researcher will administer surveys that assess the three components of participants' attitudes as well as the factors that predict them to public school teachers and parents of students in the United States (US) and in France. It is predicted that considerations like social identity and the structure of the two education systems will affect participants' attitudes differently depending on their role (teacher or student) and location (France or US), while other aspects, such as the status of the profession of the teacher and the public perceptions of public education, will impact all participants' attitudes similarly. This research will allow for an understanding of both the direction and consistency of attitudes toward public education, hypothesizing consistent attitudes among parents and inconsistent attitudes among teachers, based on the number and types of factors each set of the population considers when formulating their attitudes.

Understanding the complexity of attitudes toward public education: Predicting the views of teachers and parents in France and the United States based on social and cultural factors

The image of a high school classroom is not a difficult one for many of us to envision. Regardless of the city where we attended school, the year we graduated, or even the subject being taught, most of us picture a relatively similar scene: a teacher at the front of the room, pen in hand, eager to explain and answer questions; students seated with textbooks and papers spewed across restrictive, uncomfortable desks; analog clocks ticking away the seconds of each class period before the sound of the bell. And most of us have similar memories: the dread of entering a classroom unprepared for an exam; the curiosity sparked by the presence of a substitute teacher; and the joy and restlessness that inevitably arrives the last week (or more) before the end of each school year, as everyone, teachers and students alike, eagerly awaits the summer.

Nearly every adult has had these experiences, having spent over 10,000 hours inside one classroom or another. So nearly every adult considers him/herself capable of critiquing and assessing the job of a teacher, of deciding what changes need to be implemented in the public education system, and of presenting an opinion on the success (or failure) of our schools. Everyone holds these opinions—students, parents, and teachers, alike—but how do they develop, what factors predict them, and how do they differ among populations? Through a consideration of historical perceptions of education systems in both France and the United States (hereafter referred to as US) in conjunction with current perspectives on the purpose, structure, and potential of public schools in each country as well as participants' personal experiences with public education, this study will aim to offer a more complete picture of attitudes toward public education in the two nations.

Multiple factors are expected to influence components of both teachers' and parents' attitudes, including social identity related to education, perceptions of social and institutional support of teachers, and overall perceptions of the profession of teaching. In determining how participants differ according to these factors, it will be possible to predict the ways in which social and psychological factors correlate with both the direction and consistency of participants' overall expressed attitudes.

### **Understanding Attitudes: Components, Consistency, and Evaluation**

In day-to-day life, the word *attitude* is tossed around regularly: we talk about members of sports teams maintaining a positive attitude even after losing a match and we refer to moody teenagers as having perpetual bad attitudes. But in the field of psychology, *attitude* refers to more than just a person's mental state, or the way one feels about something. An attitude, according to psychologists, has three main components: affect, the feelings or emotions a person holds toward something; cognition, the thoughts one carries about something; and behavior, the way one acts in relation to something (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). The "something" referred to in these sentences is the *attitude object*, the person, place, thing, or idea associated with a component of a person's attitude. In the case of this study, public education is the general attitude object, and nearly everyone—from the public in general, to teachers and students, to administration and government officials—holds a specific attitude toward public education (Cafferty, 1992).

Although non-psychologists do not tend to distinguish among the three components of attitudes, these components are, in fact, essential to our understanding of attitudes because they allow for an examination of attitude consistency and inconsistency. The three

parts of a person's attitude toward an attitude object need not always match. One could, for instance, detest the taste of bananas (negative affective component), but know that bananas contain potassium that is important for human health (positive cognitive component), and so eat a banana every morning with breakfast (positive behavioral component). Similarly, it is certainly possible to imagine a teacher with an inconsistent attitude toward public education—s/he could love her job and feel supported by her/his colleagues (positive affective component), but not agree with the new Common Core initiatives forcing her/him to change her/his curriculum (negative cognitive component), and still dedicate exorbitant amounts of time and energy to helping her/his students succeed (positive behavioral component). Or we could consider a parent with an inconsistent attitude—a father feels grateful for his public school education (positive affective component), but does not believe the public schools in his area will properly equip his children for higher education (negative cognitive component), and so decides to send his children to private school (negative behavioral component).

Extensive psychological research has been dedicated to examining attitude components and intra-attitudinal consistency: whether the three components match or not. Even at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers were interested in determining if people's expressed beliefs matched their actions. Richard LaPiere's (1934) landmark study related to prejudice and discrimination toward Chinese communities in America revealed that often people's beliefs and behaviors do not match. His study indicated that intra-attitudinal inconsistency can result from social pressures or a desire to be perceived positively by others. Therefore, people might hold a certain attitude cognitively, but not act on it when given the opportunity to do so.

Intra-attitudinal inconsistency can also seem to appear when attitudes are measured at different levels of specificity. For instance, a person's attitude about the efficacy of Supreme Court justices might be radically different from his/her attitude toward performing jury duty. On the surface, both of these attitudes are related to the concept of justice, but the level at which they are measured differs drastically. If a researcher were interested in determining Americans' attitudes toward the justice system and s/he asked only about participants' attitudes toward jury duty, we would not, or at least should not, accept the conclusions as a valid and accurate representation of Americans' attitudes toward the justice system. In this case, the researcher has measured only one direct, personal aspect in which people interact with the justice system and has ignored other factors that could contribute to their overall attitudes, such as beliefs about the efficacy of the US's Supreme Court justices, views on America's approach to justice in relation to other nations, or the organization of the justice system as a whole. Attitude inconsistencies, therefore, could be perceived in areas where they do not exist, depending on the level of attitude one is measuring (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). By measuring only one level of someone's attitude—be it broad and general or direct and specific—a researcher gains an incomplete picture of the complexity of said attitude.

The current research will aim to determine both the direction and consistency of participants' attitudes. In an effort to avoid uncovering a perceived inconsistency based on assessing only certain levels of participants' attitudes toward public education, this study will measure varying levels of parents' and teachers' attitudes across attitude components. By evaluating many factors that could impact participants' attitudes, ranging from direct, personal experiences and thoughts about one's own school and district, to considerations

about states' approaches to curricula and testing, to views on the education system's efficacy overall, the researcher will aim to gain a valid representation of participants' attitudes. Furthermore, previous research indicates that consistent attitudes are expected in situations where people feel particularly strongly about the attitude object and, therefore, have dedicated a large amount of thought and energy to developing a consistent attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014). Strong attitudes exist especially in circumstances where the attitude object is personally relevant or where people have direct experience with the attitude object, two conditions that usually translate to heightened knowledge about the attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Fazio, Zanna, & Cooper, 1978; Krosnick & Petty, 2014), which both teachers and parents have when it comes to education.

According to these conditions, one might expect public school teachers and parents of students to exhibit consistent attitudes toward public education, due to the vested interest they hold in education. However, while research has suggested that highly vested attitudes typically correlate with consistent behaviors (Crano, 2014), it is hypothesized in this study that due to the large number of factors influencing teachers' attitudes and experiences, and the broad range of topics included under the umbrella of public education, the complexity of teachers' attitudes will contribute to attitude inconsistency, whereas the slightly lower level of personal relevance that public education holds for parents will allow them to develop consistent attitudes because they will not consider as thoroughly every aspect of public education.

While there is evidence in support of the existence of inconsistent attitudes, it has also been found that individuals strive to maintain consistency among components of their attitudes, with various psychologists explaining this phenomenon in different ways. One of

the most well known explanations is Leon Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory, which maintains that inconsistencies among the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of a person's attitude create an aversive emotional state—*dissonance*—that people are motivated to reduce by restoring consistency.

Following from this theory, one would expect people rarely to hold inconsistent attitudes, assuming that feelings of dissonance would motivate them immediately to alter one or more components of their attitude. However, research reveals that people often do not take the most direct route to reducing dissonance, preferring to trick themselves into dissonance reduction rather than actually engaging in any meaningful affective, cognitive, or behavioral alteration (Aronson, 1968). Because true dissonance reduction requires work—altering a thought, feeling, or behavior—it is easier to engage instead in another method of dissonance reduction, such as rationalizing one's decision, attributing the dissonance to a different source, minimizing the consequences of the inconsistent attitude, or distorting one's perception of reality (J. Ma, social psychology lecture, Scripps College, March 25, 2013). In this way, humans actually seem to be masters at maintaining inconsistent attitudes. Therefore, it would not be surprising to expect people to hold inconsistent attitudes toward public education, especially if they are not motivated to engage in true dissonance reduction, which requires altering one or more components of their attitude.

Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1975) expanded on the relationship between various components of people's attitudes in their theory of reasoned action, stating that people's social behaviors are not executed mindlessly, but follow reasonably from the information that they interpret. Not only do individuals' behaviors result from information

in the environment, but the theory of reasoned action also includes intention to execute a behavior as a necessary antecedent to the actual execution of the behavior (Ajzen, 2012). Following this theory's establishment, the researchers recognized that pure intention to perform a behavior is not the only antecedent for a behavior, as there are instances when individuals have the intention to perform behaviors but not the necessary resources. The researchers therefore needed to account for behaviors over which individuals have limited volitional control. Ajzen (1985) filled this gap by proposing the theory of planned behavior. In it, he acknowledged that many factors, both internal and external, can impact an individual's execution of a behavior, but that *perceived behavioral control*, people's beliefs about whether they have the resources to complete the behavior, is another necessary antecedent to behavior. Therefore, individuals with both the intention of performing a behavior and a high degree of control over it will be most likely to perform the behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Furthermore, the more resources and opportunities an individual believes him/herself to have, the greater his/her perceived behavioral control will be, and the greater likelihood it will be that he/she will complete the behavior (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). For example, it is possible that factors such as government restrictions, in the form of standardized testing or uniform curriculum, limit teachers' perceived behavioral control and impact their behavior, despite intentions on the part of teachers to act in ways that will most greatly benefit their students.

Additionally, the theory of planned behavior posits that the subjective norms related to a person's behavior will also impact the likelihood of executing a particular behavior. For example, the amount of social support teachers receive from their colleagues and the administration at their school will set a norm for the kinds of behaviors teachers

should perform, and will likely impact the amount of time and energy that teachers dedicate to their profession. When taken together, these two theories—the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior—lend support to the notion that one’s beliefs and one’s behaviors need not, and often do not, match because of the multiple antecedents required to execute a behavior. Without fulfillment of the necessary antecedents, intra-attitudinal inconsistency may occur.

### **Predictive Factors of Attitudes Toward Public Education**

The origins of attitudes can be traced to many sources, conscious or unconscious (Rudman, 2004). Most commonly, attitudes are gained through direct, personal experience with an attitude object, but they can also be learned from others, particularly caregivers or friends whose attitudes we trust; they can come from the effects of classical and operant conditioning; personal values and morals can inform the kinds of attitudes we hold; and genetic predispositions can also be at the origin of certain attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972; J. Ma, social psychology lecture, Scripps College, March 4, 2013).

It is clear that in establishing an attitude, people consider information from multiple sources. Therefore, when examining individuals’ attitudes toward public education, it would not be surprising for everything from historical perceptions of education to individuals’ personal experiences in or memories of school to the very structure of school systems, to play a role in how people feel about, think about, and act toward public education. Furthermore, it is important to consider how various factors influence attitude formation differently depending on the social groups to which one belongs, the personal relevance of an attitude object, and individual experiences with the attitude object.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the relationship between these many social and cultural factors and components of people's attitudes in order to be able to predict the consistency and direction of attitudes toward public education.

**Social identity: Differences between teachers and parents in relation to public education.** It is expected that teachers and parents, due to their differing experiences with public education, will base their attitudes toward public education on distinct factors, and their resultant attitudes will therefore differ fundamentally. Members of these two groups could interpret the same information quite differently, or members of one group could place more importance on certain information than members of the other group. Therefore, based on their social roles, teachers and parents in France and the US are expected to hold different attitudes toward public education.

First of all, it is important to consider that teachers are employees of the public education system, and their attitudes, therefore, will be based not only on past personal experiences and circumstances, but also on their identification with teaching as a career. Henri Tajfel's (1982) theory of social identity, which posits that individuals derive portions of their self concept from the groups to which they belong, can be applied here in order to predict the attitudes that teachers hold in relation to public education. Because teachers are professionally connected to education, public school teachers likely identify as ingroup members when it comes to public education, whereas parents would be outgroup members, uninvolved in the direct functioning of the system. If teachers indeed hold this ingroup social identity, then it would be expected, according to social identity theory's ingroup bias component (Tajfel, 1982), that they would display some favoritism for other teachers and have an inclination to hold an overall positive attitude toward public education.

Furthermore, when considering theoretical influences on teachers' attitudes, it is also important to acknowledge possible effects of system justification theory, an idea that grew out of perceived insufficiencies in social identity theory and other psychological theories, and which states that people are motivated to see the systems to which they belong as desirable (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). Just as teachers are likely motivated to protect their ingroup social identity related to education despite their relatively low status and social regard, their explicit membership in the overall system of public education could also lead them to want to defend public education and hold it in high esteem. Taken together, social identity theory and system justification theory offer differing views of the effect of membership to the public education system on teachers' attitudes, but both theories support the notion that if teachers in fact do identify with their profession, they will be motivated to defend public education and think, feel, and act positively toward it. However, these aspects of social and professional identity are not the only factors influencing teachers' attitudes. Because there are so many different factors that teachers, hypothetically, want to consider deeply, the opposing views could manifest themselves in inconsistent attitudes with components that are pulled in conflicting directions.

Both social identity theory and system justification theory, however, seem to suggest that parents' attitudes will remain largely unaffected by these social patterns, as parents are not ingroup members of the public education system. Because they do not currently identify personally with public education and are therefore not motivated to defend it, parents are not being forced to reconcile information from conflicting sources. When forming their attitudes toward public education, parents can consider information from fewer sources, specifically from their personal experiences and from the overall

public perception of public education. It would therefore not be surprising for parents to have consistent attitudes.

**The contrasting effects of the structure and function of French and American education systems.** At their basis, the French and American school systems differ in their fundamental beliefs regarding the purpose of education, a difference that is reflected in each system's values and priorities. Public education in the US focuses heavily on "college and career readiness," a phrase repeated endlessly in the new Common Core standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010a & b), educational standards for Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in math and English/language arts that have been adopted for implementation in 43 states and will replace the standards set forth by No Child Left Behind under the Bush administration. The US's obsession with vocational training and career preparedness is emphasized especially in the realm of standardized testing. Though curriculum, teacher preparation, and educational requirements differ among states, the US public education system's aim to encourage all states to adopt the common core standards reflects its insistence that every high school student graduate with skills necessary to enter either higher education or the work force. Beyond student preparedness, though, standardized tests also serve as a method for government and public policy officials to examine the work of teachers. Because of the wide range of teacher preparation programs and the state-specific standards and curricula, standardized tests are used to verify that teachers are, indeed, instructing all students across the nation similarly and effectively (Feuer & Fulton, 1994).

In contrast to the American system, the French education system includes specialized subject matter knowledge among its priorities, with vocational training and

career skills largely excluded from the picture (Feuer & Fulton, 1994), though these priorities are currently shifting. In France, every student chooses an educational track (*filère*) in high school, which determines the type and rigor of his courses as well as the style of his *baccalauréat (bac)*, a cumulative high school exam that determines, in part or in full, university admittance (Miller, Sen, Malley, & Owen, 2007). Historically, the three *filères* have been *sciences*, which emphasizes the natural sciences and math; *économique et sociale*, which focuses on economics and the social sciences; and *littéraire*, which highlights languages and literature, both French and foreign, as well as history and philosophy (Edmiston & Duménil, 2009). But recently, in response to growing pressure to include technical and vocational training, the French government created new technological and professional secondary schools, as well as complimentary *bacs* (Démougin, 2002; Feuer & Fulton, 1994). This recent transformation in France's education system causes it to resemble somewhat more closely America's system, with its focus on career-readiness.

***Impact of the education system on teachers in the both nations.*** The US's state-specific standards and curricula necessitate state-specific teacher preparation. This decentralized approach to education introduces significant variation in the rigor, depth, and breadth of teacher training programs in the US (Tom, 1989). Although every state requires its public school teachers to earn a teaching credential, the requisite courses and examinations vary, to the point where some public school teachers ultimately teach a subject outside of their specialty (Britton & Paine, 2005). As a safeguard against extreme variations in the education of the nation's students, the government has attempted to monitor closely students' successes and failures through standardized exams, putting the

pressure on teachers to ensure that every student receives the same education, and taking away opportunities for teachers to be creative in their own classrooms.

This implied lack of confidence in teachers' abilities will likely impact all three components of US teachers' attitudes. As teachers' perceived behavioral control in relation to the execution of their profession diminishes, their behavioral attitude components will become more negative. Although teachers, in theory, have both the capacity and the resources necessary to execute their intended behaviors, the social norms enforced by the government related to teachers' responsibilities will likely reduce their autonomy, removing a necessary antecedent to the execution of their intended behaviors in the classroom. Furthermore, it is expected that American teachers' feelings of mistrust and frustration toward the government, combined with negative beliefs related to the efficacy of standardized testing and government-enforced curricula will foster negative affective and cognitive attitude components. Rather than being entrusted to accomplish successfully the profession in which they are trained, many teachers are reprimanded for failing to carry out standards that were not created with their specific classroom environment in mind. Therefore, as teachers in the US struggle to reconcile these negative elements with their own self-image as an educator, and as their perceived behavioral control diminishes, inconsistent attitudes are to be expected.

Due to the recent changes in France's education system, one can anticipate that the attitudes of French teachers will begin to shift to resemble the inconsistent attitudes of American teachers, though the differences might not be apparent yet. Now that France no longer administers a single, national exam to all high school candidates, it seems that the government is moving slightly away from a highly centralized system of education. In

addition to standardized testing, this transformation could affect teacher training, which is currently centralized in France. Every public school in France teaches the same curricula, and so every teacher in France can be trained in the same fashion, with subject matter specific training at the forefront of teacher preparation (Britton & Paine, 2005). This method of teacher training stands in stark contrast to the wide variation found in the US, and will likely lead to differences in teachers' attitudes in the two nations. Whereas teachers in France receive thorough training and specialized support in their subject area, often cited as a reason for teachers' success in the classroom, teachers in the US struggle with feeling adequately prepared and supported, especially at the beginning of their careers (Britton & Paine, 2005). It would not be surprising for these differences to manifest themselves through a positive affective component on the part of teachers in France and a negative affective component among American teachers.

Overall, it seems that France's emphasis on consistent curricula and teacher training, made possible through its centralized system, will lead to more positive affective, cognitive, and behavioral components of French teachers' attitudes, as teachers feel supported and prepared as they embark on their careers in education. Because the government expresses more confidence in the preparation and abilities of teachers, there is less pressure for teachers to prove their worth than there is in the US, and the social norms enforced by the government support high levels of perceived behavioral control among teachers in France. Furthermore, the support and training allows teachers the necessary resources to execute their behaviors, leading to a positive behavioral component on the part of teachers in France.

*Impact of the education system on parents in the both nations.* Unlike teachers, parents are more or less left out of the conversation related to curriculum and testing in both nations. Because they are less involved in these practical components of public education, parents have fewer factors battling for attention in their attitudes, allowing them a greater opportunity to develop consistent attitudes. While teachers' attitudes relate to their professional training and development, parents' attitudes are likely based on their personal experiences with education in their respective nations.

However, it is important to note a major difference between each nation's education system, a disparity that likely leads to vastly different experiences with public education. France's system of educational tracking bears no resemblance to US public education, in which students are not required to declare any sort of specialization during high school. The US educational system, therefore, leaves much more room for educational flexibility and personal growth, and it also offers more educational opportunities for students who do not perform well on tests or who need second chances than do many other countries (Feuer & Fulton, 2004). Thus, while many defend the highly centralized education system found in France for its consistent teacher training and reliable national curricula, perhaps the decentralized approach of the US, which currently offers somewhat more flexibility, is not entirely negative. Parents likely internalized these differences, with parents in the US taking advantage of multiple educational opportunities, while parents in France felt boxed in and limited educationally at an early age. It is expected that this difference could explain in part the overall more positive attitudes that parents in the US are expected to hold toward public education, and the more negative attitudes that parents in France are expected to exhibit.

**Role of the teacher in an evolving school structure.** It seems that education systems in both France and the US will have to demonstrate their ability to adapt in response to recent societal changes. Confronted with twenty-first century dilemmas, such as the question of technology in the classroom and the desire to educate global citizens, school systems worldwide are altering their approaches to education to keep up with the changing times (Démougin, 2002). These shifting expectations will likely lead to fluctuations in attitudes, mostly on the part of teachers, as the demands made of education evolve.

**Impact on teachers in France.** In France, teachers' roles are shifting from the autonomous role of educating within a single classroom to one that emphasizes interdependence among colleagues. For instance, teachers are being expected to engage in more group work with colleagues, planning school activities and working through issues as a team, rather than addressing problem areas within one's own classroom and ignoring outside contributing factors (Eurydice, 2003). Many teachers in Europe have insisted that this change would be more welcome if teachers were compensated for this additional work, or if additional group work and meetings supplemented a less rigorous teaching schedule (Eurydice, 2003). In order to meet the many demands on their time—from students, administration, and parents—teachers are chronically overworked (Maroy, 2005). Overall, these difficult teaching situations lead many teachers to feel devalued, because as their already-high amount of work increases and their autonomy in the classroom decreases, their recognition, both socially and financially, has stagnated (Maroy, 2005). This feeling could certainly contribute to a less positive affective attitude component among teachers in France. It would not be surprising for these unreasonable demands on teachers' time and

perceived lack of appreciation to overpower the aforementioned positive feelings of support and trust from the government related to teachers' abilities.

***Impact on teachers in the US.*** The most significant recent reform in the US education system is an ideological one. While the focus on standardized testing and rote memorization that was ushered in at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first (Shanker, 1989) still exists in the US education system, a greater appreciation for the development of higher order thinking—including reasoning, critical thinking, and problem solving—has also emerged. At the forefront of this movement has been the induction of the common core state standards, educational standards for language arts and math that prioritize “in particular, problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and critical-thinking skills” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., pg. 6) over the rote memorization encouraged by standardized testing under No Child Left Behind. With these standards already fully implemented in 43 states and the District of Columbia, many teachers across the nation have been forced to adjust their practices accordingly.

Depending on personal views related to the effectiveness and value of these standards, this change could affect US teachers' attitudes differently. It is difficult to predict a specific direction of change as teachers have differing opinions on the worth and efficacy of the common core standards. However, it is possible to predict that this change will likely influence elementary (K-5) teachers and secondary (6-12) math and English teachers more than secondary teachers of other subjects that are not directly impacted by the new standards. However, the national conversation related to the common core standards has likely caught the attention of all teachers, and could certainly impact their attitudes as well.

**Status of the profession.** Historically in the US, teachers have been held in relatively low regard. Several factors contribute to this overall negative public perception. First of all, historically, there have been low standards set for teachers, many of whom taught without degrees in their subject matter, or any secondary degree at all, until the mid-twentieth century (Adams & Garrett, 1969). Even when teachers have undergone post-high school training in education, the wide range of teacher preparation programs leads to a great disparity in the training and pedagogical knowledge of teachers (Britton & Paine, 2005; Cornbleth, 1989; Tom, 1989).

French teachers admit to many of the same feelings of poor public perception, with nearly 60 percent expressing that they feel they are not held in high regard, and only six percent conveying that they are certainly held in high regard, with an additional third saying they are held more or less in high regard (“Le guide des profs,” 2002). Furthermore, over three-quarters of teachers in France said that their professional training was unrelated to their job on a daily basis (“Le guide des profs,” 2002). It is no secret that teachers in both nations struggle with low social status, and this status will almost certainly impact their attitudes.

***Impact of salary on teachers’ and parents’ attitudes.*** Teachers in both nations have nearly always earned a low salary (Adams & Garrett, 1969). In comparisons of seven G8 countries—England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scotland, and the US—the US paid an average starting salary of approximately \$32,000 to primary and secondary public school teachers with minimum training, the second highest offered among the seven nations, with only Germany offering a higher starting salary for similarly trained teachers (Miller, Sen, Malley, & Owen, 2007). France offered the lowest starting salary to primary

teachers and the third lowest to secondary teachers (Miller et al., 2007). When comparing salaries of teachers with minimum training and 15 years of experience, the US paid the third lowest average salary and France the second lowest, with Germany again offering the highest average salary (Miller et al., 2007). Only teachers' starting salaries in Germany were above the per capita GDP of the nation, but all seven of these G8 nations offered salaries of at least their nation's per capita GDP to teachers with minimum training and 15 years of experience (Miller et al., 2007).

These data seem to indicate the relatively low status of teachers in both France and the US, considering their inferior financial compensation despite their professional degrees. While the US pays teachers slightly more than France does, neither country is excessive in its compensation of teachers, especially considering that neither country's starting salary for teachers is above the nation's per capita GDP. The relatively low amount that teachers earn correlates with the public perception that their work is not difficult and therefore not worthy of high compensation (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006) and it is therefore expected that low compensation will negatively impact the cognitive attitude components of teachers in both nations.

Additionally, many teachers' salaries are inadequate to support a family, requiring teachers to work second jobs during the evenings or on weekends (Adams & Garrett, 1969). In fact, most teachers list compensation as their main source of dissatisfaction, with nine out of 10 teachers in the US claiming that their salaries are too low, and nearly this same proportion offering inadequate pay as their reasoning for leaving the profession (Gallup, 1984). And just as in the US, teachers in France feel underpaid, with one third stating that they are unsatisfied with their salary ("Le guide des profs," 2002).

If salary is a generally accepted measure of the social status of a profession, then it is understood that teachers are of somewhat low status. Both teachers and the public can interpret low salaries as an indication of the lack of value accorded to teaching and education in general. Therefore, it is not surprising to expect this low perceived status to influence the cognitive component of both teachers' and parents' attitudes negatively.

**Public perception.** In 1902, Charles Cooley proposed the theory of the looking-glass self, which posits that we form our self-concepts based on the information we gather through evaluations from others in our environment. According to this theory, it would not be surprising for the views that the public holds in relation to public education to impact teachers' attitudes in particular. However, parents are also aware of the overall negative reputation of public education, both in the US and France, and as social learning is one factor at the origin of people's attitudes, it can be expected that parents will also interpret the public perception of the profession of teaching and of public education in general when forming their attitudes.

***Impact on teachers in both nations.*** Nearly all US teachers have struggled with low feelings of respect and support (Adams & Garrett, 1969). Many citizens are under the false impression that teachers work minimal hours: at most 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. during the week, and not at all during the three summer months (Adams & Garrett, 1969). This point of view neglects to take into account the time that teachers spend preparing their lessons, evaluating their methodology, grading students' work, and engaging in professional development. These misunderstandings among community members lead to frustration among teachers and cause the profession of teaching in the US to be viewed in a negative light overall (Adams & Garrett, 1969).

When considered in relation to Cooley's (1902) theory of the looking-glass self, it would not be surprising for these negative public perceptions of teaching as a career to impact teachers' personal attitudes related to their profession. Because the theory refers to others' evaluations as mirrors that reflect our understandings of ourselves back to us, teachers will likely take into account the negative public perception of their profession when forming their attitudes. When confronted daily with the notion that one is incapable of properly executing his/her profession, that the entire education system is flawed, and that one's aims to help are proving worthless, it is expected that teachers would be unable to avoid internalizing these strong public views. Furthermore, the overall public perception creates a set of social norms that, according to the theory of planned behavior, will impact teachers' perceived behavioral control, ultimately impacting not only their affective and cognitive attitude components, but also their behavioral components.

As it turns out, many of the negative impressions held in the US translate internationally. Though policies and practices in France are certainly different from those in the US, teachers in France struggle with many of the same issues of compensation and status as teachers in America (Britton & Paine, 2005). When asked if they thought society considered the profession of teaching in an overall positive light, a majority of teachers in France responded either "hardly" or "not at all" ("Le guide des profs," 2002).

On the other hand, 93% of teachers in France feel supported by their colleagues, 77% feel supported by the administration in their school, and 48% feel supported by the parents of their students ("Le guide des profs," 2002). Although the overall perception of teaching in France can still be seen as negative, feelings of support on the part of teachers in France could be indicative of a more positive affective attitude component. With social

support acting as a positive social norm in France, it would not be surprising for teachers in France to exhibit slightly more positive attitudes, especially in the affective and behavioral components, than teachers in the US.

***Impact on parents in both nations.*** Parents are also aware of the overall negative image that teachers have garnered in both the US and in France, and their attitudes will be impacted by this type of social learning. No one's attitudes exist in a void, and the overall negative public perception of public education in both nations will negatively impact parents' attitudes as well. With fewer factors directly influencing parents' attitudes than teachers' attitudes, it is expected that the negative public perception of the profession will play an especially strong role in shaping parents' attitudes.

Overall, school rankings suggest that private education is viewed as superior to public education in both nations, but the disparity is especially strong in France. As more parents in France become disgruntled with the public education system, they turn increasingly toward private education for their children ("Private Preferences," 2006). When the French newspaper *Le Figaro* ranked the nation's schools in 2005 according to the success rate of students on the *baccalauréat* exam, all but one of the top 29 schools were private ("Private Preferences," 2006). In 2014, the rankings were similar, as 70 of the top 100 schools were private institutions (Pech, 2014). The choice of increasing numbers French parents to send their children to private schools suggests an overall lack of confidence in the public school system, despite former president Nicolas Sarkozy's efforts to revitalize it (Pech, 2014; "Private preferences," 2006).

However, the fact that teachers in France report feeling supported by the parents of their students ("Le guide des profs," 2002) also suggests that parents play an important role

in their child's education and, at least for those parents whose children attend public schools, likely hold positive affect and cognition in relation to the public education system, in addition to positive behaviors, manifested in their involvement and connection with the teacher.

In the US, parents of children who attend public schools express overall positive reviews of public education, with over three-quarters of these parents grading the public school system with an A or B (following the traditional A, B, C, D, F grading scale) (Lopez, 2010). Although parents tend to rate the quality of education that their own child receives at local public schools more positively than that of the quality of education at public schools across the country, they do still indicate that the quality of education in the US overall is improving (Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013). However, parents whose children attend private school consistently rate the quality of education at public schools in America lower than parents whose children attend public school (Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013).

These statistics present an intriguing inconsistency on the part of parents, with positive affect, cognition, and behavior toward public education on the part of parents who choose to send their children to public schools, but negative affect, cognition, and behavior on the part of parents who prefer private education. Taking into consideration the attitudes of parents whose children attend public school as well as those whose children attend private school, it would not be surprising to find parents in both nations expressing slightly negative attitudes, with those of parents in France significantly more negative than those of parents in the US.

**Current Findings on Attitudes toward Education**

While examining the social and cultural factors that play a role in predicting the direction and consistency of attitudes toward public education, it is important to consider research that has already studied attitudes toward education, including some predictors that affect attitudes, as well as the ways in which attitudes toward public education can predict other factors. In research conducted mostly in the US, psychologists have already discovered some factors that predict our attitudes toward education (e.g., Gorman, 1998; Schmeck & Nguyen, 1996), but the research remains quite limited, indicating the value of understanding more deeply the origins of people's attitudes toward public education and the relationship they have with other areas of our lives.

In a study related to the impact of parental experiences with education on their attitude development, Gorman (1998) examined the relationship between parents' experiences with and attitudes toward education and their children's educational goals. By studying working-class and middle-class families, Gorman discovered different attitudes toward education and their ramifications for future generations. Whereas approximately half of working-class parents responded negatively to college-educated, white-collar workers, thereby instilling in their children a negative view of higher education, the other working-class parents lauded higher education, hoping that their children would experience upward mobility through a college degree (Gorman, 1998). Almost all middle-class parents assumed that their child would earn, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree, which they find necessary to survive in today's economy (Gorman, 1998). Overall, it can be expected that children's understanding of the meaning and purpose of higher education would be impacted by the attitudes of their parents toward higher education. While higher education

is not necessarily public education, these findings do support the notion that others' opinions and views impact one's own attitudes toward education.

Additional research exists on the difference between parents with academic or vocational education and their children's attitudes toward education. Overall, academically educated parents held consistently more positive attitudes toward education than did vocationally educated parents, and the parents passed these attitudes down to their children (Räty, 2003). Räty (2003) also found that parents' attitudes were strong predictors of children's attitudes and behaviors. Children of parents who are vocationally educated were more likely to pursue secondary education if their parents' attitudes toward education were positive than if their parents' attitudes were negative. Similarly, children of academically educated parents were more likely to hold negative attitudes toward education if their parents held negative attitudes as well.

It is clear from these studies that our attitudes toward public education do not exist in a vacuum, but are linked to our past experiences, and even our parents' experiences, with education systems. However, this area of research represents only one origin of attitudes, and it is important to study other factors that impact the development of attitudes toward public education.

### **Overview of Current Study**

As the aforementioned research in this field is fairly uniform, the current study will aim to diversify our understanding of the factors that impact attitudes toward public education, especially among members of varying populations. Previous examinations of attitudes toward education have neglected to consider multiple types of predictors that

influence attitude development, and have overlooked cross-cultural accounts that could call into question findings that might seem obvious within an American population. The current study attempts to fill these gaps by highlighting how multiple factors predict attitudes toward public education, and how the same factor can impact attitude development differently for members of distinct populations. For example, social and cultural differences between France and the US may act as factors that influence the perception of the public education systems in these two nations, ultimately predicting the direction and consistency of attitudes.

Furthermore, this study will examine how attitudes toward public education vary according to one's experience with public education—either as an ingroup member, as in the case of a teacher, or an outgroup member, as in the case of a parent. No study has directly compared populations that differ based on role and location, and a direct comparison would add to our knowledge about how different groups of people process information to form an attitude. Additionally, this research will highlight the complexity of individuals' attitudes. While previous research acknowledges differences in the direction of attitudes, there has yet to be substantial research on the factors that could lead to inconsistent attitudes. The current research explores the many competing factors at the origin of participants' attitudes, recognizing that not all factors merit equal weight among all people, leading in many cases to inconsistent attitudes.

The current study will utilize explicit attitude measures to evaluate participants' attitudes toward public education. After recruiting parents and teachers in the US and in France online, the participants will complete a survey that begins by measuring the three components—*affective, cognitive, and behavioral*—of their attitude toward public

education at varying levels of specificity, ranging from very specific questions about personal experiences at one's school to general questions related to overall beliefs about public education as a whole. Participants will also complete measures related to factors expected to predict their particular attitudes, such as agreement with the negative public perception of the profession of teaching (both teachers and parents), feelings of social support and identification with their profession (teachers), and whether one's child attends public or private school and the child's level of academic success (parents), in addition to demographic characteristics that are expected to play a role, such as whether one lives in France or the US.

Parents both in France and the US are expected to exhibit consistent attitudes toward public education because, as outgroup members not directly associated with public education, it is expected that they will not feel as strong an inclination to defend public education, and their attitudes therefore will be strongly influenced by the negative public perception of education in the two nations. However, personal experience is expected to correlate with differences among parents' attitudes. Specifically, it is hypothesized that parents of public school students will hold more positive attitudes toward public education than parents of private school students, with the child's level of academic success acting as a moderating factor, such that parents of academically successful children at public schools will hold the most positive attitudes toward public education, parents of successful children at private schools will hold the most negative attitudes toward public education, and parents of unsuccessful children will hold less extreme attitudes toward public education. Additionally, it is hypothesized that the extent to which parents agree with the negative public perceptions of the profession of teaching will also affect their attitudes, such that

there will be a negative correlation between parents' agreement with negative public perceptions and the direction of their overall attitudes. This relationship is expected to impact parents in both countries.

Conversely, teachers' attitudes in both nations are expected to be inconsistent due to the many competing factors involved in the formation of teachers' attitudes. Because teachers evaluate not only their personal experiences and behaviors in relation to the profession, but also the public perception and general status of teachers when forming their identity as an educator, it is expected that all of these factors will impact teachers' attitudes to varying degrees. It is hypothesized that the extent to which teachers identify with negative public perceptions of their profession will predict differences in the affective components of their attitudes, as well as their occupational self-esteem. Specifically, it is expected that teachers in the US will exhibit a more negative affective component of their overall attitude, and will exhibit lower occupational self-esteem than teachers in France. Furthermore, differences between the two nations in terms of teacher support and preparation, which is stronger in France than in the US (Britton & Paine, 2005), and in terms of public views of public education, which seem to be more negative in France than in the US ("Private Preferences," 2006), will lead to differences in the components of teachers' attitudes. On the other hand, factors such as low salary and overall feelings toward the profession will likely impact the attitudes of teachers in both nations similarly. For all of these reasons, inconsistent attitudes among teachers are expected.

Taking all of these factors into account, it is expected that social and cultural differences between the two nations will act as predictors of the direction and consistency of participants' attitudes, while impacting each set of participants uniquely.

## **Proposed Method**

### **Participants**

Public elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as well as parents of elementary, middle, and high school students in France and the US will be recruited to participate in this study on attitudes toward public education. The researcher will aim to gather a sample that reflects the heterogeneity of the populations in France and the US, with a mixture of males and females from varying ethnic backgrounds and reflecting a wide range of ages. The researcher will aim to gather data from 400 participants in total, with a quarter coming from each subset: 100 teachers in the US, 100 teachers in France, 100 parents in the US, and 100 parents in France.

All participants will be recruited online. Teachers will be recruited through national professional organizations related to education: the National Education Association (NEA), a national labor union for educators, for teachers in the US, and the French chapter of the Association Européenne de l'Education (AEDE) [European Education Association] for teachers in France. All public school teachers with Internet access who are members of the NEA/AEDE-France will be invited directly to participate, but all public school teachers will be eligible to participate, regardless of their membership to these organizations. Parents will be recruited in both countries through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a website on which individuals can post tasks or jobs that they would like completed in exchange for compensation, so as not to exclude any parents who do not directly demonstrate interest in education by joining an association such as the PTA, or parent-teacher association. Because MTurk is a general recruitment website that does not require a

direct interest in education, the researcher will gain a broader representation of parents in both nations. Both parents and teachers will be compensated minimally for their participation. Because MTurk requires individual compensation, parents will each be compensated 10 cents (either in US dollars or Euros). Teachers will be compensated by being entered into a raffle to win one of five \$20/20€ Amazon gift cards.

### **Materials**

Participants will complete explicit survey measures aimed at assessing the various components and levels of their attitudes toward public education. Teachers' surveys are 52 items long (see Appendix A for complete surveys for teachers in English; see Appendix B for teacher surveys in French) while parents' surveys are 29 items long (see Appendix C for English and Appendix D for French). Participants in each country will complete surveys in their country's national language. The researcher translated all items in both surveys from English to French and a French professor at the researcher's institution back-translated the documents to ensure consistency between the items in both languages.

Teachers and parents will complete unique surveys due to their differing perspectives toward public education. While teachers are associated with education through their profession, parents are associated with education through their past personal experiences and the experiences of their children as students. Therefore, teachers will complete measures to assess all four of the following constructs—direction and consistency of their attitudes, their internalization of the negative public perception of teaching, occupational self-esteem, and identification with the profession of teaching—whereas parents, as individuals who do not necessarily work in education, will complete

only the first two sets of measures, related to their outside perspective of the public education system and their personal experiences, factors that will impact their particular attitudes toward public education.

**Direction and Consistency of Attitudes.** In order to assess the direction and consistency of parents' and teachers' attitudes toward public education, participants will complete a self-designed attitude measure. Because teachers and parents have different experiences with public education, and these experiences will uniquely predict their attitudes, it is necessary for teachers and parents to complete surveys that differ slightly in the exact questions that they pose, but that assess the same constructs. For example, teachers' surveys will ask about the amount of time spent preparing lessons outside of class, while parents' surveys ask about the amount of time spent volunteering at their child's school or helping with class assignments. Both questions assess the behavioral component of their attitude, but they approach the construct from different perspectives due to the participants' disparate roles in relation to public education.

Both parents' and teachers' sets of attitude measures will be inspired from Glassey's (1945) Attitude Toward Education scale, the reliability and validity of which were confirmed in a study that evaluated a slightly modified version of the scale (Askew, et al., 2008). Because Glassey's measures are outdated, the current researcher altered them so they would be relevant to the current experiences of teachers and parents. All 24 scale statements will be used to assess the direction and consistency of teachers' attitudes toward public education, while all 15 scale statements and an additional free response question will be used for parents. For the scale items, the participants will read a statement related to a thought or feeling they might hold toward education, or a behavior they might engage in,

and they will be asked to indicate their agreement with the statement on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Because of teachers' more complicated role in relation to public education, the researcher required more information related to teachers' attitudes than parents' attitudes, and teachers' surveys therefore include more items than parents' surveys.

The surveys will aim to assess teachers' and parents' attitudes at various levels of specificity, as there will be questions related to their attitudes on a personal level—their direct experiences with their specific school—as well as on a global level—their attitudes toward public education systems overall and national implementations. The questions will also aim to assess the three components of participants' attitudes: affect, cognition, and behavior. Thus, some scale statements will refer to the participants' feelings about certain aspects of public education, such as “as a teacher, I feel supported by my school's administration.” Other statements will refer to their thoughts and beliefs about public education, such as “too much money is spent on education” and “when I think about the public education system in France/the US, I think of it as a success.” Finally, some statements will relate to participants' actions toward public education, including “I often spend money beyond what my school budgets on supplies for my classroom” or “I often volunteer at my child's school.” The responses to this survey allow the researcher to gain insight into the direction of participants' attitudes by averaging the directions of their individual responses, as well as the consistency of their attitudes, based on whether or not all three components share the same direction.

**Internalization of the Public Perception of the Profession.** Both parents and teachers will complete an eight-item self-designed measure related to the public perception

of the profession of teaching. For teachers, this measure is designed to assess the extent to which they have internalized negative public perceptions of their profession. For parents, this measure is intended to reveal the extent to which they agree with the negative public perceptions of teaching. The self-designed measure (see Scale 2 in Appendices A through D) includes statements to which participants will indicate their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Some of the statements include “teachers are hardworking individuals” and “teachers are just people who can’t get real jobs.”

**Occupational Self-Esteem.** Teachers will complete Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item measure of self-esteem modified to relate to occupational self-esteem. Responses will be recorded on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale has been shown to be reliable with internal consistency of 0.77 and test-retest reliability of 0.85 (Rosenberg, 1965). While the scale has been modified to reflect occupational self-esteem in place of overall self-esteem, it is still expected to be a reliable measure. This measure has been included to determine if a correlation exists between the extent to which teachers have internalized public perceptions of their profession and their occupational self-esteem.

**Identification with the Profession of Teaching.** Teachers will also complete Lammers, Atouba, and Carlson’s (2013) 4-item professional identification scale on a 7-point Likert-type scale. This scale has been found to have strong face and content validity, in addition to being reliable with an alpha of .80 (Lammers, Atouba, & Carlson, 2013). This measure will be used to determine the extent to which teachers identify with their profession, in order to establish an ingroup social identity that can be used to explain the direction and consistency of their attitudes toward public education.

**Demographics.** Both teachers and parents will complete differing sets of demographic questions. Teachers will complete six demographic questions and parents will complete five. While the age, gender, ethnicity, and location of every participant will be recorded, parents also will be asked if they belong to any parent-teacher organizations, if their child attends public or private school, and how academically successful they consider their child to be, all factors that are expected to impact parents' attitudes toward public education. Teachers, on the other hand, will be asked to confirm that they teach in a public institution, and they will be asked whether or not they have children, in order to determine if a teacher's status as a parent impacts the results. If there is no difference between the two sets of participants, then the data of teachers who are also parents and teachers who are not parents will be combined.

### **Procedure**

After being recruited and invited online to participate in the study and giving their informed consent, participants will complete the relevant questionnaire related to their attitude toward public education. After completing the entire survey, which should take between 15 and 20 minutes, participants will be debriefed and compensated.

### **Ethics**

This research on attitudes toward public education offers the benefit of additional knowledge in the field of psychology related to attitudes and the social and cultural factors that predict them, filling a gap in the existing research related to intra-attitudinal consistency. While previous work has examined the factors that contribute to the formation

of attitudes and to the consistency or inconsistency of their components (i.e., Ajzen & Fishbein, 1997; Eagly & Chaiken, 1998), there is no research yet related to how differences in these factors predict different attitudes between populations. Furthermore, the current research extends the research on attitudes toward public education by examining how social and cultural factors predict consistent or inconsistent attitudes. In addition to the societal benefit of increased knowledge, the participants will also receive the benefit of compensation. Parents will earn 10 cents on MTurk and teachers will be entered into a raffle to win one of five \$20/20€ Amazon gift cards. This compensation is sufficient because participation in this study will take no more than 20 minutes and will not be physically, emotionally, or psychologically difficult for participants to endure.

The current research will bridge the existing gap in the literature through a survey design. Due to the non-sensitive nature of the topic being studied and the low-risk setting in which the study will be conducted—online, such that participants can take the survey in the comfort of their own home or workplace—it is clear that this study poses very little risk to participants. Furthermore, all data will be collected anonymously. Participants will not be asked for their name or be personally identified in any other way in order to ensure their anonymity. After determining that participants are eligible to complete the study (over 18 years of age for both sets of participants, and ensuring that the teachers are employed at a public institution), the only other demographic information that will be collected is the participants' age, gender, ethnicity, and the state (U.S.) or region (France) in which they work/in which their child attends school, in addition to whether they are a member of a parent-teacher organization (for parents) or whether they have a child (for

teachers). No sensitive information will be collected. Participants' responses will be kept secure online, in a password protected SurveyMonkey account with limited access.

In addition to taking steps to protect the anonymity of participants and the confidentiality of their responses, the study is also below minimal risk because the participants are not members of a protected population. All participants will be above the age of 18 and participation in the study will be completely voluntary. Both parents and teachers will always have the option of discontinuing their participation at any time and may skip any questions that they prefer not to answer. Although teachers will be recruited through national education associations, it will be made clear that their membership does not require them to complete this study, nor will it be affected in any way by their decision to participate or to decline participation. As such, recruitment of participants avoids coercion. Furthermore, this study does not involve deception. The participants will be told that they are participating in a study conducted by an undergraduate student who is interested in investigating attitudes toward public education in different countries.

Overall, as a study that is below the level of minimal risk to participants, the knowledge that psychologists would gain related to attitudes and the factors that predict them cross-culturally far outweighs any potential risk to participants. In all of these ways, the proposed study represents ethical research and fair treatment of participants.

## **Proposed Results**

### **Data Cleaning**

Prior to hypothesis testing, the items will be reverse scored and composite scores created as needed. Specifically, composites will be computed for the direction of

participants' overall attitudes toward public education, the direction of each component (affective, cognitive, or behavioral) of participants' attitudes, the extent to which parents and teachers agree with and have internalized public perceptions of the profession of teaching, teachers' occupational self-esteem, and teachers' identification with the profession. All composites will be created by averaging the items from the relevant scales.

### **Attitude Direction**

It is expected that participants' attitudes will differ based on their location, either in France or the US, and their role, either as a parent or a teacher. While parents in the US are expected to express overall positive attitudes, parents in France are expected to express overall negative attitudes. Teachers in the US are expected to exhibit moderately negative attitudes, and teachers in France are expected to express moderately positive attitudes. In order to understand the effect of both role and location on each component of participants' attitudes, a factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be conducted. It is expected that based on the many different factors influencing participants' attitudes in the two nations, there will be significant mean differences in participants' attitudes based on their location and role (see Figure 1).

**Overall Attitudes.** It is expected that parents in France will be significantly more likely to hold overall negative attitudes than parents in the US. The direction of parents' attitudes will be largely informed by their personal experiences and interpretation of the public perception of education. Because many French parents express dissatisfaction with public education in France, increasingly preferring to send their children to private schools ("Private Preferences," 2006), it is expected that parents in France will express

significantly more negative attitudes. Conversely, it is not expected that there will be significant differences in the overall attitudes among teachers, but only in some individual components. As such, it is expected that there will be a significant interaction between role and location, but no significant main effect of role or location in relation to the direction of participants' overall attitudes.

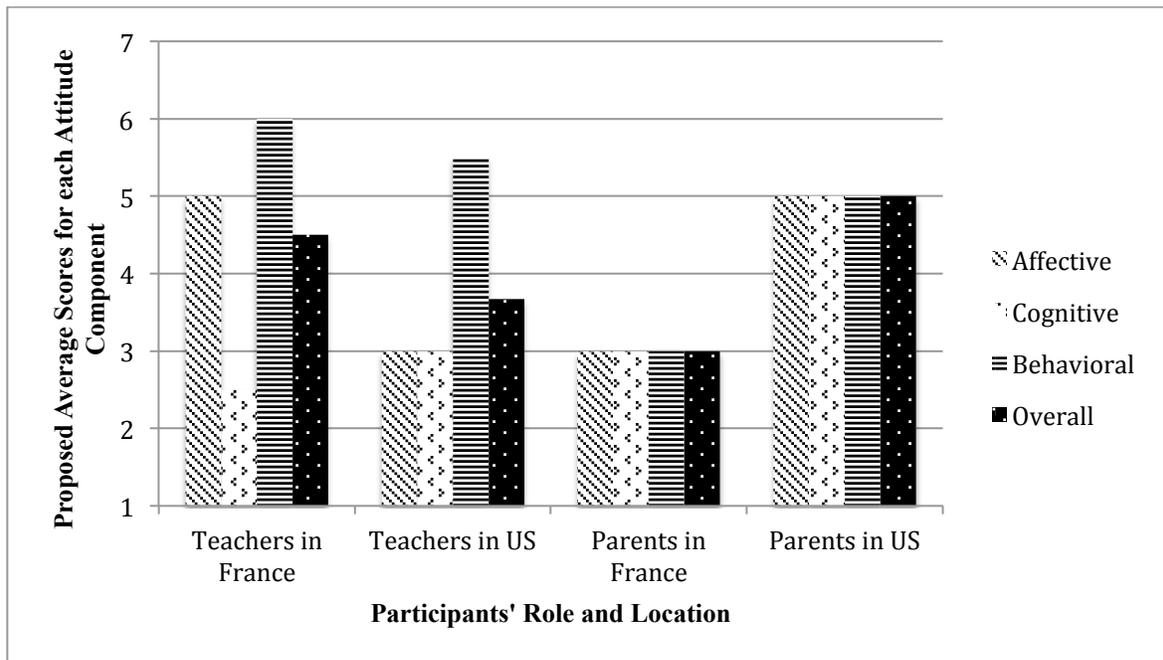


Figure 1: Proposed mean results for components of attitude toward public education across teachers and parents in France and the US.

**Affective Component.** With regard to the affective component of participants' attitudes, teachers in France are expected to express significantly more positive affect than teachers in the US. This difference is expected due to differences in feelings of social support among teachers in the two nations. Because teachers in the US are expected to express lower feelings of support, their affective attitude component will be significantly

lower than that of teachers in France, who tend to report high feelings of social and institutional support, contributing to their positive affect.

On the other hand, it is expected that parents in the US will express significantly more positive affect than parents in France, due again to French parents' overall dissatisfaction with public education, as opposed to US parents' tendency to rate public education in America, and especially the education their child receives, fairly highly (Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013). Once again, it is therefore expected that there will be a significant interaction between role and location in relation to participants' affective attitude components, but no significant main effects of role or location are expected.

**Cognitive Component.** While parents will again express significant differences in their cognitive attitude components, with those of parents in the US significantly more positive than those of parents in France, no significant differences in the cognitive component of teachers' attitudes are expected, as teachers in both nations will likely hold negative cognitive attitude components due to the notion that the profession of teaching is viewed in a negative light in both countries. Additionally, French teachers share complaints with many teachers in the US regarding their dissatisfaction with their salary ("Le guide des profs," 2002). These issues will reveal themselves in all teachers' negative cognitive attitude components. Therefore, it is hypothesized that there will be a significant main effect of role, but not a main effect of location, in addition to a significant interaction between role and location in relation to the cognitive component of participants' attitudes.

**Behavioral Component.** Finally, the behavioral component will remain positive for both sets of teachers and no significant differences in the behavioral component of teachers' attitudes are expected, as teachers will feel the need to defend public education

and justify their involvement in the education system, an idea supported by system justification theory (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). While the behavioral component is expected to be slightly more negative for teachers in the US, due to their lower levels of perceived behavioral control, this difference is not expected to be significant.

For parents, there will again be significant differences, with the behavioral attitude components of parents in the US significantly more positive than those of parents in France. This difference is expected due to the increasing choice of private education on the part of parents in France. As such, there will be a significant main effect of role, but not a main effect of location, in addition to a significant interaction between role and location in relation to participants' behavioral attitude components.

### **Attitude Consistency**

The next hypothesis to be tested relates participants' role to the consistency of their attitudes toward public education. Consistency of the attitudes will be determined by comparing the directions of the three components of participants' attitudes. When participants' scores for the affective, cognitive, and behavioral component of their attitude match (i.e., are all negative [scores of 3 or under], or are all neutral [score of 4], or are all positive [scores of 5 or above]), then it will be determined that they have a consistent attitude. If a single attitude component does not match the others, it can be said that the participant holds an inconsistent attitude toward public education. As such, the consistency of participants' attitudes is a dichotomous variable.

A chi-square test of independence will be used to determine if there is a relationship between participants' role in relation to education and the consistency of their

attitude toward public education. It is expected that there will be a significant pattern of relationship between participants' role and the consistency of their attitude, such that teachers will be more likely to exhibit inconsistent attitudes, while parents are expected to be more likely to exhibit consistent attitudes. A second chi-square test of independence will be used to test the effect of location on the consistency of participants' attitudes. It is hypothesized that there will be no significant effect of location, as participants in both nations will express attitudes that vary in consistency based on their role in relation to education.

The differences in attitude consistency can be largely attributed to social identity theory. While teachers are interpreting information from many different sources, and are ultimately expected to feel a desire to defend public education, parents' attitudes will remain largely unaffected by these factors, due to their outgroup status in relation to education. Therefore, parents will not struggle to reconcile conflicting sources of information—the kind that contribute to inconsistent attitudes among teachers—and will instead exhibit consistent attitudes.

### **Identification with the Profession**

Identification with teaching as a profession is expected to represent teachers' ingroup social identities in relation to education. A Pearson correlation will be computed in order to determine if teachers' identification with the profession of teaching is related to the overall direction of their attitudes. Consistent with predictions based on Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory, a positive correlation is expected for teachers in both nations, such that as identification with the profession of teaching increases, teachers will hold more

positive attitudes toward public education. Additionally, a logistic regression will be conducted to determine if teachers' identification with teaching as a profession is related to the consistency of their attitudes. Because highly identified teachers are expected to be struggling to reconcile opposing sources of information in forming their attitudes, it is expected that teachers who identify strongly with the profession of teaching will be more likely to hold inconsistent attitudes than those who identify weakly with the profession.

### **Feelings of Support**

Furthermore, in order to determine if feelings of social and institutional support are related to teachers' affective attitude component, a Pearson correlation will be computed, using teachers' responses to the statement "As a teacher, I feel supported by my school's administration" as an indication of their feelings of support. It is expected that feelings of support will be positively correlated with teachers' affective attitude components, such that as teachers' feelings of support increase, they express more positive affect toward public education. This correlation is based on the notion that feelings of support give teachers the resources they need to feel comfortable and confident in performing their jobs, leading to an overall more positive attitude, especially in the affective component as these resources are related to teachers' feelings.

### **Parents' Public vs. Private Preferences**

It is expected that parents' preference for public or private education, as evidenced by whether their child attends public or private school, will act as a mediator in the relationship between parents' location and the overall direction of their attitudes (see

Figure 2). The mediating relationship will be tested according to Baron and Kenny's (1986) model for mediation. Having already established a relationship between parents' location and the direction of their attitudes, as well as a relationship between parents' location and their public vs. private preferences, a one-way ANOVA will be conducted in order to determine if there is a relationship between parents' preference for public education and the overall direction of their attitudes. Coding responses to the "Does your child attend public school? Why/why not? Would you consider your child successful at his/her school?" item will allow the researcher to determine if parents have a preference for public or private education. It is expected that there will be a significant mean difference in participants' attitudes based on whether they express a preference for private or public education. Overall attitudes will be significantly more positive for parents whose children attend public school than for those whose children attend private school.

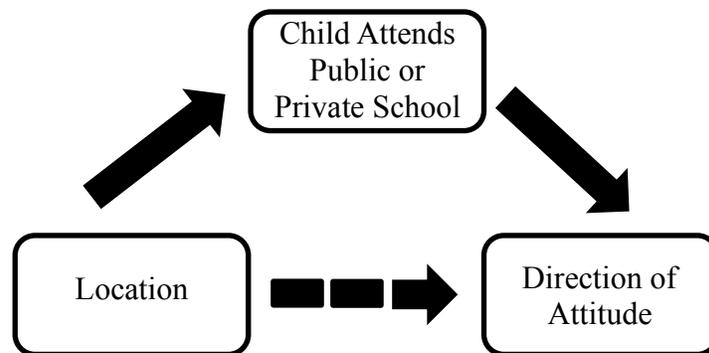


Figure 2: Relationship among predictive factors of parents' attitudes toward public education.

With the necessary relationships established, a multiple regression will be used to test whether parents' preference for public or private education acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between location and attitude direction. It is expected that parents' preference for public or private education will become more significant as that of location lessens in significance, as it is expected that French parents' private school preference will

be associated with parents in France exhibiting a more negative attitude toward public education than parents in the US, who are generally satisfied with the effectiveness of their children's teachers and hold an overall positive view toward their local public schools (Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013). Research indicates that parents in the US of children who attend public school rate the quality of the education their own child receives more highly than that of education in public schools overall, while parents of children who attend private school find the quality of education offered at US private schools to be higher than that of education at public schools across the nation (Tompson, Benz, & Agiesta, 2013). It is expected that these sentiments will translate to a French population. Considering the increasing preference for private school education in much of France ("Private Preferences," 2006), it is expected that attitudes among French parents will be particularly negative.

Furthermore, it is expected that the child's level of academic success will act as a moderating factor in the relationship between parents' preference of public or private school and the direction of their attitudes, and this relationship will be tested using a factorial ANOVA. Child's academic success will be determined from parents' responses to the free response question on Scale 1. It is expected that there will be significant mean differences in the direction of parents' attitudes according to whether their child attends public or private school, and that the child's academic success will act as a moderating factor in the relationship, such that parents of public school students with academically successful children will express the most positive attitudes toward public education, and that parents of private school students who are academically successful will express the most negative attitudes toward public education.

**Internalization of the Public Perception of the Profession**

Pearson correlations will be used to determine the relationship between the extent to which participants have internalized negative public perceptions of the profession of teaching and the overall direction of their expressed attitudes. For teachers, it is expected that there will be a negative correlation between internalization of public perception and the overall direction of their expressed attitudes, such that as the internalization of the public perception of teaching increases, their overall attitudes will be more negative. In addition, it is expected that occupational self-esteem will act as a mediating factor in this relationship (see Figure 3), and a multiple regression analysis will be used to test this possibility. Based on Cooley's (1902) theory of the looking glass self, it is expected that teachers will internalize these public perceptions and incorporate them into their self-concept, an impact that would be reflected in both their occupational self-esteem and in the expression of their attitudes toward public education.

Following Baron and Kenny's (1986) model for testing mediation, a relationship between the extent to which teachers have internalized public perceptions of their profession and the direction of their attitudes has been established. Pearson correlations will be used to determine the relationship between teachers' internalization of the negative public perception of the profession and their occupational self-esteem, as well as between their occupational self-esteem and the overall direction of their attitudes. The multiple regression analysis is expected to reveal that as occupational self-esteem rises in significance, the internalization of the negative public perceptions of the profession lessens in significance. It is expected that this relationship will be strongest among teachers in the

US, whose attitudes will be impacted not only by the negative public perception of the profession, but who are also affected by the low amounts of support and compensation that teachers in the US receive, factors that are expected to impact their occupational self-esteem.

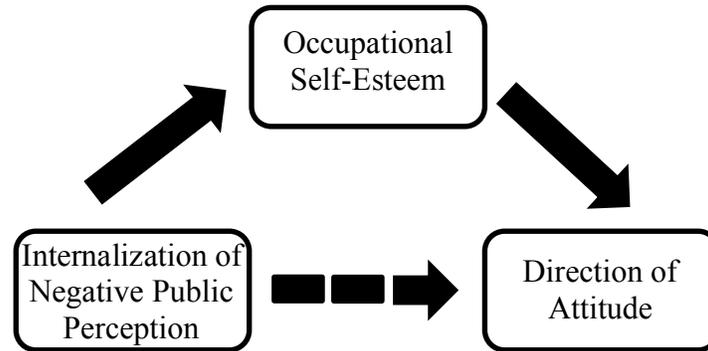


Figure 3: Relationship among predictive factors of teachers' attitudes toward public education.

Furthermore, a Pearson correlation will be used to test the relationship between parents' internalization of negative public perception and the overall direction of their attitudes. It is expected that there will be a negative correlation, such that as parents express higher levels of internalization of the negative public perception of the profession of teaching, their attitudes will become more negative. Based on parents' outgroup social membership in relation to public education, it is expected that they will not feel as much conflict when interpreting negative information related to public education, and their internalization of the negative public perception of the profession will therefore impact their attitudes strongly.

When taken together, these data indicate the complexity of attitudes toward public education and offer an idea of how factors such as the area in which one lives, where one's child attends school, and the overall relationship one has in relation to public education can all correlate with the direction and consistency of one's attitude toward public education.

### Discussion

The proposed results of this research highlight differences between the two nations in the kinds of attitudes that are fostered based on public perceptions of education, the status of teachers, and personal experiences with the education system overall. Considering first the differences in teachers' attitudes, the proposed inconsistencies illustrate how differences in each nation's education system contribute to discrepancies in teachers' attitudes. The differences in the affective and cognitive component of teachers' attitudes in both nations can be explained through the varying experiences of teachers in France and the US. While teachers in both nations are granted low salaries, an implicit indication that their work is not particularly valued by society, teachers in France are able to combat this negative effect on their self-concept through their feelings of institutional and social support, leading to a higher affective score. These feelings of support also foster social norms that lead to higher levels of perceived behavioral control among teachers in France, thereby enforcing their positive behavioral attitude component. Teachers in the US, however, seem to feel less valued across the board, findings that contribute to their negative affective and cognitive attitude components. And though US teachers are still expected to exhibit positive behaviors, their behavioral component is lower due to the social norms negatively impacting their perceived behavioral control.

However, it is interesting to note that despite varying levels of negative affect and cognition among teachers, and despite differences in their perceived behavioral control, teachers both in France and the US are still expected to demonstrate positive behavioral components of their attitudes. While recognizing that society in general and even the

families whom they serve do not necessarily appreciate their work, teachers are still committed to the profession of teaching and demonstrate their commitment by spending time and money beyond what is required in their contract to help their students succeed. Many teachers find fulfillment in helping their students succeed, making teaching more of a calling than a job. It is therefore not surprising that teachers remain dedicated to it despite the negative obstacles that present themselves through low salary, low support (in the case of teachers in the US), and negative public perception (to be discussed further).

Overall, these results reveal some interesting implications for the future of public education. These findings support the notion that teachers feel overworked and undervalued, suggesting that if we want to develop more positive attitudes toward public education, either in the US or internationally, it is first necessary to alter the structure of the profession of the teacher. Rather than continuing to hope that teachers will dedicate themselves to the important work of educating students despite these emotional and psychological obstacles, this research highlights some areas of public education that could change in order to make teaching a more desirable profession. For example, differences in the strengths and weaknesses of the education systems in France and the US hint at possible areas for change. The extended teacher training used in France, which focuses on offering new teachers support from other teachers in their subject area (Britton & Paine, 2005), could be implemented in the US with the goal of increasing teachers' feeling of support. A strong preparation program could likely make a difference between a teacher who feels as though s/he is struggling to be successful and one who feels competent and able, with increased behavioral control. While a passion for teaching seems to be the main factor that is sustaining teachers in the US, this passion by itself is rarely adequate for the

formation of effective teachers. Additionally, raising entry-level salaries for teachers in both nations sends the message to teachers, as well as to other members of society, that their work is difficult, important, and valued. Low salaries currently suggest to everyone that teachers' work is not worthy of high compensation. Changing this aspect of the profession could impact both teachers' and parents' attitudes toward public education by improving the overall status of the profession.

In contrast to teachers' attitudes, parents' expected consistent attitudes indicate how parents have fewer opposing sources of information battling for attention in their attitude formation than teachers do. Parents especially base their attitudes on their personal experiences with their child's school and teacher(s), as well as on their agreement with the negative public perception of teaching. Unlike teachers, issues related to professional preparation and institutional support are not expected to influence parents' attitudes. These findings highlight the importance of personal experience as a major factor in attitude development. Especially when other sources of information are unavailable, individuals rely heavily on their personal experiences to inform their attitudes.

Furthermore, the public perception of the profession of teaching is expected to influence the attitudes of teachers and parents in both nations, as the public in both nations holds a fairly negative view toward public education. Consistent with the theory of the looking-glass self (Cooley, 1902), teachers' interpretation of these perceptions will negatively impact their overall attitude directions. While parents' understanding of the negative perception of public education will also be at the origin of their attitude development in both nations, negatively impacting the overall direction of their attitudes, parents are not expected to interpret the public perception of the profession as directly

related to their self-concepts, but are expected to engage in social learning that will inform the direction of their attitudes.

Additionally, when considering parents' attitudes, it is interesting to note the expected trend between parents whose children attend public school and those whose children attend private school. In both nations, parents of public school students are expected to hold more positive attitudes toward public education, a finding that could be integrated with Tajfel's (1982) social identity theory. While this research has previously considered all parents as outgroup members in relation to public education systems, perhaps it is better to consider this model as a continuum rather than an ingroup-outgroup dichotomy. While it is expected that parents' identities will relate to public education less than those of teachers, perhaps not all parents are equal outgroup members. These findings can be explained by considering a continuum in which teachers are ingroup members in relation to public education, parents of children who attend public schools are moderate outgroup members, and parents of children who attend private schools are extreme outgroup members. This reasoning would also account for the proposed differences between parents in France and the US—because many parents in France prefer to send their children to private school and are increasingly dissatisfied with public schools (“Private Preferences,” 2006), their expected negative attitude toward public education can be explained both through their overall extreme outgroup membership as well as through the negative public perception of public education in France, whereas parents in the US base their attitudes more on the negative public perception of public education and less on their outgroup membership.

All in all, this research is limited in multiple ways. First of all, it is important to note that this study consists of proposed results. Therefore, the most important action to take next is to run this study and discover what findings the results ultimately support. Second, this research is limited by its methodology: self-report questionnaires can be influenced through social desirability factors and other biases. It is important to be cognizant of the fact that participants, especially teachers, might not want to seem too critical of public education or might present their attitudes in a less extreme way. Furthermore, the correlational design does not allow for causal inferences. For instance, while the data indicate relationships between variables such as internalization of the negative public perception of the profession of teaching and participants' attitudes, the data do not allow for the declaration that such an internalization of public perception *causes* participants' attitudes. In the future, an experimental or quasi-experimental design would allow researchers to draw causal conclusions.

Third, the surveys used in this research tended to address factors that could influence participants' attitudes toward public education in broad and general ways. Because this study was one of the first of its kind to measure these particular attitudes in a cross-cultural context, it was important to begin generally in order to gain an overall picture of the direction and consistency of participants' attitudes. However, in the future, it would be interesting to examine specific components of participants' attitudes in order to gain insight not only into the factors that impact them, but also into the degree to which certain factors play a role and why. The current researcher had a broad undertaking—examining the many components of participants' attitudes and the factors that predict them—but did not want to discourage participants from completing the survey. Therefore,

the survey was not as extensive as it could have been in order to gain a complete picture of the complexity of participants' attitudes. In the future, various surveys could be used to assess multiple components of participants' attitudes. Having different participants complete different surveys would offer researchers the large amount of data they need without relying on participants to overcome fatigue and complete lengthy surveys.

Finally, further research should include students as participants, in order to understand how attitudes toward education develop among a younger subset of the population. Students would be particularly interesting to study because they likely identify as ingroup members in relation to education, but they do not explicitly choose this ingroup membership in the way that teachers do, as students are required by law to attend school. It would therefore be interesting to examine how social identity theory might integrate students' unique attitudes.

All things considered, this research offers insight into the complexity of attitudes toward public education, including how they differ among populations, which factors impact them, and how those factors are considered in forming a complete attitude, whether it be consistent or inconsistent. With this strong background information, it is possible to improve attitudes toward public education by altering some of the influencing factors, changes that would benefit both teachers and society as a whole. While this research offers a solid foundation for the literature related to attitudes toward public education, it is important for future work to expand on the ideas related to intra-attitudinal consistency and attitudes in a cross-cultural context.

## References

- Adams, S., & Garrett Jr., J. L. (1969). What is the status of teachers? In *To be a teacher: An introduction to education* (82-94). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhland & J. Beckman (Eds.), *Action-control: From cognitions to behavior* (pp. 11-39). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Ajzen, I. (2012). The theory of planned behavior. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *The handbook of theories of social psychology: Volume 1* (pp. 438-459). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *84*(5), 888-918.
- Aronson, E. (1968). Dissonance theory: Progress and problems. In R. P. Abelson, E. Aronson, W. J. McGuire, T. M. Newcomb, M. J. Rosenberg, & P. H. Tannenbaum (Eds.), *Theories of cognitive consistency: A sourcebook* (pp. 5-27). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally and Company.
- Askew, J., Jones-Wiley, D. G., Lewis, J., Restori, A. F., & Lee, H. B. (2008). A psychometric evaluation of an existing attitude scale toward education. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *10*(2), 413-424.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*(6), 1173-1182.

- Britton, T., & Paine, L. (2005). Applying ideas from other countries. In H. Portner (Ed.), *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond* (pp. 225-239). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Cafferty, T. P. (1992). Measuring and changing attitudes in educational contexts. In F. J. Medway, & T. P. Cafferty (Eds.), *School psychology: A social psychological perspective* (pp. 25-46). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (n.d.). *Frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/FAQs.pdf>
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010a). *Common core state standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Retrieved from [http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards.pdf)
- Common Core State Standards Initiative. (2010b). *Common core state standards for mathematics*. Retrieved from [http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Standards.pdf)
- Cooley, C. H. (1902). The social self—1. The meaning of “I”. In *Human nature and the social order* (pp. 136-178). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- Cornbleth, C. (1989). Cries of crisis, calls for reform, and challenges of change. In L. Weis, P. G. Altback, G. P. Kelly, H. G. Petrie, & S. Slaughter (Eds.), *Crisis in teaching: Perspectives on current reforms* (pp. 9-30). Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Crano, W. D. (2014). Attitude strength and vested interest. In R. E. Petty, & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 131-157). New York: Psychology Press.
- Démougin, J. (2002). L'École racontée. [School recounted.] In J-F. Chanet, J-P. Debaere, J. Démougin, J-M. Gaillard, D. Meiller, A-G. Slama, & P. Vannier (Eds.), *L'Abécédaire de l'école de la France [The ABCs of school in France]* (pp. 7-25). Paris: Flammarion.
- Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (1998). Attitude structure and function. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (pp. 269-322). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Eagly, A. H., & Chaiken, S. (2014). Attitude strength, attitude structure, and resistance to change. In R. E. Petty, & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 413-432). New York: Psychology Press.
- Edmiston, W., & Duménil, A. (2009). L'éducation. In W. Edmiston & A. Duménil (Eds.), *La France contemporaine* (4th ed.) (pp. 242-259). Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning.
- Eurydice. (2003). *Communiqué de presse. La profession enseignante en Europe : Profil, métiers et enjeux, Rapport III: Conditions de travail et salaires.* [Press communication. *Teaching in Europe: The profile, the job, and the stakes. Report III: Working conditions and salaries.*] Brussels: Eurydice.
- Fazio, R. H., Zanna, M. P., & Cooper, J. (1978). Direct experience and attitude-behavior consistency: An information processing analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 4(1), 48-51. doi: 10.1177/014616727800400109

- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Feuer, M. J., & Fulton, K. (1994). Educational testing abroad and lessons for the United States. *Educational Measurement, Issues and Practice*, 13(2), 31-39.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1972). Attitudes and opinions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 23, 487-544. doi: 10.1146/annurev.ps.23.020172.002415
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, attention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Retrieved from <http://people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html>
- Gallup, A. (1984). The Gallup poll of teachers' attitudes toward the public schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97-107.
- Glassey, W. (1945). The attitude of grammar school pupils and their parents to education, religion and sport. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 15, 101-104. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8279.1945.tb01567.x>
- Gorman, T. J. (1998). Social class and parental attitudes toward education: Resistance and conformity to schooling in the family. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 27(1), 10-44. doi: 10.1177/089124198027001002
- Guarino, C. M., Santibañez, L., & Daley, G. A. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(2), 173-208.
- Jost, J. T., Banaji, M. R., & Nosek, B. A. (2004). A decade of system justification theory: Accumulated evidence of conscious and unconscious bolstering of the status quo. *Political Psychology*, 25(6), 881-919.

- Krosnick, J. A., & Petty, R. E. (2014). Attitude strength: An overview. In R. E. Petty, & J. A. Krosnick (Eds.), *Attitude strength: Antecedents and consequences* (pp. 1-24). New York: Psychology Press.
- Lammers, J. C., Atouba, Y. L., & Carlson, E. J. (2013). Which identities matter? A mixed-method study of group, organizational, and professional identities and their relationship to burnout. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 27(4), 503-536. doi: 10.1177/0893318913498824
- LaPiere, R. T. (1934). Attitudes vs. actions. *Social Forces*, 13(2), 230-237.
- Le guide des profs au service du métier d'enseignant : La classe, l'établissement, la profession, le temps libre, le système éducatif. [The teachers' guide in service of the profession of teaching: the class, the establishment, the profession, free time, the educational system.] [Special issue.] (2002). *L'Étudiant*, 4-84.
- Lopez, S. J. (2010). Americans' view of public schools still far worse than parents'. *Gallup*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/142658/americans-views-public-schools-far-worse-parents.aspx>
- Madden, T. J., Ellen, P. S., & Ajzen, I. (1992). A comparison of the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18(1), 3-9. doi: 10.1177/0146167292181001
- Maroy, C. (2005). Les évolutions du travail enseignant en Europe. Facteurs de changement, incidences et résistances [The evolution of the work of teaching in Europe. Factors contributing to change, their impact, and opposition]. *Les Cahiers de Recherche en Education et Formation*, 42, 1-35.

- Miller, D. C., Sen, A., Malley, L. B., & Owen, E. (2007). *Comparative indicators of education in the United States and other G-8 countries: 2006*. Washington, D. C.: National Center for Education Statistics.
- Pech, M-E. (2014, April 5-6). Dans la fabrique des bons lycées. [In the fabric of good high schools.] *Le Figaro*, 9.
- Private preferences. (2006, March 9). *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/5611327>.
- Räty, H. (2003). The significance of parents' evaluations of their own school for their educational attitudes. *Social Psychology of Education*, 6(1), 43-60.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rudman, L. A. (2004). Sources of implicit attitudes. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 13(2), 79-82.
- Schmeck, R. R., & Nguyen, T. (1996). Factors affecting college students' learning styles: Family characteristics which contribute to college students' attitudes toward education and preferences for learning strategies. *College Student Journal*, 30(4), 542-546.
- Shanker, A. (1989). Reform and the teaching profession. In L. Weis, P. G. Altbach, G. P. Kelly, H. G. Petrie, & S. Slaughter (Eds.), *Crisis in teaching: Perspectives on current reforms* (99-110). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1982). Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual Review in Psychology*, 33(1), 1-39.

- Tom, A. R. (1989). A critique of the rationale for extended teacher preparation. In L. Weis, P. G. Altbach, G. P. Kelly, H. G. Petrie, & S. Slaughter (Eds.), *Crisis in teaching: Perspectives on current reforms* (55-68). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tompson, T., Benz, J., & Agiesta, J. (2013). Parents' attitudes on the quality of education in the United States. *The Associated Press—NORC Center for Public Affairs Research* (pp. 1-18). Retrieved from [http://www.apnorc.org/PDFs/Parent%20Attitudes/AP\\_NORC\\_Parents%20Attitudes%20on%20the%20Quality%20of%20Education%20in%20the%20US\\_FINAL\\_2.pdf](http://www.apnorc.org/PDFs/Parent%20Attitudes/AP_NORC_Parents%20Attitudes%20on%20the%20Quality%20of%20Education%20in%20the%20US_FINAL_2.pdf)

## Appendix A

## Survey for Teachers in the United States

This appendix includes the complete survey to be administered to public school teachers in the United States.

**Scale 1 (Direction and Consistency of Attitudes Toward Public Education).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

- | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7                 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Strongly<br>Disagree   |   |   |   |   |   | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 1. I feel that education is useful to society.   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 2. I feel I am useful to my students.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 3. I enjoy teaching.   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 4. When I think about the public education system in the U.S., I think of it as a success.                         |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 5. I often find myself thinking that public education in the U.S. is a mess.*                                      |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 6. I spend a lot of time ensuring that my students achieve their full potential.                                   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 7. I often spend money beyond what my school budgets on supplies for my classroom.                                 |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 8. The majority of my out-of-class time is spent thinking about the needs of my students.                          |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 9. My school is fulfilling its duties to educate students.   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 10. I could teach my students so much more if I weren't restricted by government regulations regarding education.* |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 11. The education system does more harm than good.*  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |

- 12. Education does not matter provided that people can earn enough to live well.\*
- 13. Too much money is spent on education.\*
- 14. As a teacher, I feel supported by my school’s administration.
- 15. As a teacher, I feel respected.
- 16. Education is valuable for society.
- 17. Education is valuable for the individual.
- 18. My teaching makes a difference in the lives of my students.
- 19. I feel satisfied with my job.
- 20. There are many other jobs I would rather do than teach.\*
- 21. I could not imagine doing anything other than teaching as a career.
- 22. I feel fulfilled by my job.
- 23. I regularly attend meetings and conferences aimed at improving my skills as a teacher.
- 24. I would be disappointed if I were forced to change jobs.

**Scale 2 (Internalization of the Negative Public Perception of the Profession).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

- 1. Teaching is a valuable profession.\*
- 2. I am a teacher simply because I needed to get a job.
- 3. Anyone can be an effective teacher.
- 4. Teachers are just people who can’t get real jobs.
- 5. Teachers have a poor reputation in society.

6. Teachers do not deserve to be seen in a negative light.\*
7. Teachers are hardworking individuals.\*
8. Teachers should be paid more for the work they do.\*

**Scale 3 (Rosenberg's [1965] measure of self-esteem, modified to relate to one's occupation).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

1. At my job, I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with my colleagues.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities to offer to my field.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure at my job.\*
4. At my job, I am able to do things as well as most of my colleagues.
5. At my job, I feel I do not have much to be proud of.\*
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself at my job.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself at my job.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself at the workplace.\*
9. At my job, I certainly feel useless at times.\*
10. At times, I think I am no good at all at my job.\*

**Scale 4 (Lammers, Atouba, & Carlson's [2013] measure of identification with one's profession).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

1. I feel I have a lot in common with others in my profession or occupation.
2. I find it easy to identify with my profession/occupation.
3. I view the problems of my profession as my problems.
4. My values and the values of my profession are very similar.

**Scale 5 (Demographic questions).**

Please complete the following information.

1. How old are you? (Free-response)
2. With which gender do you identify? (male, female, other)
3. What is your ethnicity? (Caucasian/White, African American/Black, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latin@, Other)
4. In which state do you teach?
5. Are you a public school teacher? (Yes or no)
6. Do you have a child/children? (Yes or no)

\* Indicates an item that would be reverse-scored.

## Appendix B

## Survey for Teachers in France

This appendix includes the complete survey to be administered to public school teachers in France. Note: the scale items are identical to those presented in Appendix A, but they are translated into French.

**Scale 1 (Direction and Consistency of Attitudes Toward Public Education).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pas du tout d'accord						Tout à fait d'accord
1. J'ai l'impression que l'éducation sert à la société.						
2. J'ai l'impression que je suis utile pour mes élèves.						
3. J'aime enseigner.						
4. Quand je pense au système éducatif public en France, j'y pense comme un succès.						
5. Je pense souvent que l'éducation publique en France est en désordre.*						
6. Je consacre beaucoup de temps à m'assurer que mes élèves réalisent leur potentiel.						
7. Souvent, je dépense de l'argent au-delà du budget de l'école pour fournir des matériaux pour ma classe.						
8. Je passe la majorité de mon temps quand je ne suis pas à l'école à penser aux besoins de mes élèves.						
9. Mon école répond à son obligation d'éduquer des élèves.						
10. Je pourrais enseigner beaucoup plus à mes élèves si je n'étais pas contraint(e) par les réglementations du gouvernement en ce qui concerne l'éducation.*						
11. Le système éducatif fait plus de mal que de bien.*						

12. L'éducation n'est pas importante pourvu que les gens puissent vivre bien.\*
13. On dépense trop d'argent sur l'éducation.\*
14. En tant qu'enseignant(e), je me crois soutenu(e) par l'administration de mon école.
15. En tant qu'enseignant(e), je me sens respecté(e).
16. L'éducation a de la valeur pour la société.
17. L'éducation a de la valeur pour l'individu.
18. Mon enseignement change la vie de mes élèves.
19. Je suis satisfait(e) de mon travail.
20. Il y a beaucoup de métiers que je préférerais plutôt que d'enseigner.\*
21. Je ne pourrais pas imaginer faire un autre travail que celui d'enseignant(e).
22. Je me sens comblé(e) dans mon métier.
23. J'assiste fréquemment à des réunions pour améliorer ma préparation en tant qu'enseignant.
24. Je serais déçu(e) si j'étais forcé(e) à changer de métier.

**Scale 2 (Internalization of the Negative Public Perception of the Profession).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pas du tout d'accord					Tout à fait d'accord	

1. L'enseignement est une profession qui a de la valeur.\*
2. Je suis devenu(e) enseignant(e) parce que j'avais besoin d'un travail, tout simplement.
3. N'importe qui peut être un(e) professeur efficace.

4. Il n'y a que les gens qui ne peuvent pas obtenir un vrai travail qui choisissent le métier d'enseignant(e).
5. Les enseignants ont une mauvaise réputation auprès du public.
6. Les enseignants ne méritent pas leur réputation négative.\*
7. Les enseignants sont très travailleurs.\*
8. Les enseignants doivent être payés davantage pour leur travail.\*

**Scale 3 (Rosenberg's [1965] measure of self-esteem, modified to relate to one's occupation).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pas du tout d'accord					Tout à fait d'accord	

1. A mon travail, j'ai le sentiment d'être quelqu'un qui a une valeur, au moins égal(e) à celle de mes collègues.
2. J'ai l'impression que j'ai beaucoup de bonnes qualités à offrir dans mon domaine.
3. Dans l'ensemble, j'ai le sentiment d'avoir échoué dans mon travail.\*
4. Dans mon travail, je peux faire des choses du même niveau que la majorité de mes collègues.
5. Dans mon travail, j'ai le sentiment qu'il n'y a pas grand-chose dont je suis fier(ère).\*
6. J'ai une attitude positive envers moi-même au travail.
7. Dans l'ensemble, je suis satisfait(e) de moi-même dans mon travail.
8. Je préférerais être traité(e) avec plus de respect dans mon travail.\*
9. Dans mon travail, j'ai le sentiment d'être inutile de temps en temps.\*

10. De temps en temps, je pense que je suis nul(le) dans mon travail.\*

**Scale 4 (Lammers, Atouba, & Carlson's [2013] measure of identification with one's profession).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pas du tout d'accord						Tout à fait d'accord

1. J'ai le sentiment d'avoir des choses en commun avec les autres membres de ma profession.
2. Je trouve que c'est facile de m'identifier avec ma profession.
3. Je considère les problèmes de ma profession comme mes problèmes à moi.
4. Mes valeurs et les valeurs de ma profession sont très similaires.

**Scale 5 (Demographic questions).**

Veillez compléter l'information suivante.

1. Quel âge avez-vous ?
2. Avec quel genre vous identifiez-vous ? (homme, femme, autre)
3. Quelle est votre race ou votre ethnicité ? (Blanc(he), Noir(e), Asiatique/Polynésien(ne), Hispanique, Autre)
4. Dans quelle région de la France enseignez-vous ?
5. Etes-vous enseignant(e) dans une école publique ? (Oui ou non)
6. Avez-vous un/des enfant(s) ? (Oui ou non)

\* Indicates an item that would be reverse-scored.

## Appendix C

## Survey for Parents in the United States

This appendix includes the complete survey to be administered to parents in the United States.

**Scale 1 (Direction and Consistency of Attitudes Toward Public Education).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

- | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7                 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Strongly<br>Disagree  |   |   |   |   |   | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 1. I feel that education is useful to society.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 2. I feel my children's teachers are useful to their students.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 3. When I think about the public education system in the U.S., I think of it as a success.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 4. I often find myself thinking that public education in the U.S. is a mess.*   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 5. I spend a lot of time helping my child with his/her homework.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 6. I often volunteer at my child's school.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 7. I am frequently in contact with my child's teacher(s) about his/her progress in class.   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 8. My child's school is fulfilling its duties to educate students.  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 9. My child's teachers could teach my child so much more if they weren't restricted by government regulations regarding education.* |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 10. The education system does more harm than good.*   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 11. Education does not matter provided that people can earn enough to live well.*   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
| 12. Too much money is spent on education.*  |   |   |   |   |   |                   |

13. Education is valuable for society.
14. Education is valuable for the individual.
15. I would never send my child to public school.\*

Please answer the following question in your own words.

1. Does your child attend public school? Why/why not? Would you consider your child successful at his/her school?

**Scale 2 (Agreement with the Negative Public Perception of the Profession).**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

1. I would be disappointed if I had to be a teacher.
2. Teaching is a valuable profession.\*
3. Teachers have a poor reputation in society.
4. Anyone can be an effective teacher.
5. Teachers do not deserve to be seen in a negative light.\*
6. Teachers are just people who can't get real jobs.
7. Teachers are hardworking individuals.\*
8. Teachers should be paid more for the work they do.\*

**Scale 3 (Demographic questions).**

Please complete the following information.

1. How old are you? (Free-response)
2. With which gender do you identify? (male, female, other)

3. What is your ethnicity? (Caucasian/White, African American/Black, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latin@, Other)
4. In which state do you live?
5. Are you a member of a parent-teacher association? (yes or no)

\* Indicates an item that would be reverse-scored.

## Appendix D

## Survey for Parents in France

This appendix includes the complete survey to be administered to parents in France. Note: the scale items are identical to those presented in Appendix C, but they are translated into French.

**Scale 1 (Direction and Consistency of Attitudes Toward Public Education).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

- | 1   | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7                       |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------------|
| Pas du tout<br>d'accord   |   |   |   |   |   | Tout à fait<br>d'accord |
| 1. J'ai l'impression que l'éducation est utile pour la société.   |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 2. J'ai l'impression que les enseignants de mon enfant sont utiles aux élèves.  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 3. Quand je pense au système éducatif public en France, j'y pense comme un succès.  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 4. Je pense souvent que l'éducation publique en France est en désordre.*  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 5. Je consacre beaucoup de temps à aider mon enfant avec ses devoirs.   |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 6. Souvent, je fais du bénévolat à l'école de mon enfant.   |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 7. Je contacte souvent le/la/les professeur(s) de mon enfant pour discuter du progrès de mon enfant.  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 8. L'école de mon enfant répond à son obligation d'éduquer des élèves.  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 9. Le/la professeur de mon enfant pourrait enseigner beaucoup plus aux élèves s'il/elle n'était pas contraint(e) par les réglementations du gouvernement en ce qui concerne l'éducation.* |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 10. Le système éducatif fait plus de mal que de bien.*  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |
| 11. L'éducation n'est pas importante pourvu que les gens puissent vivre bien.*  |   |   |   |   |   |                         |

12. On dépense trop d'argent sur l'éducation.\*
13. L'éducation a de la valeur pour la société.
14. L'éducation a de la valeur pour l'individu.
15. Je n'enverrais jamais mon enfant à l'école publique.\*

Veillez répondre avec vos propres mots.

1. Votre enfant, va-t-il/elle à l'école publique ? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas ? Pensez-vous que votre enfant est un(e) élève brillant(e) à son école ?

**Scale 2 (Agreement with the Negative Public Perception of the Profession).**

Veillez indiquer votre niveau d'accord avec les postulats suivants.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pas du tout d'accord						Tout à fait d'accord

1. Je serais déçu(e) si je devais devenir un enseignant(e).
2. L'enseignement est une profession qui a de la valeur.\*
3. Les enseignants ont une mauvaise réputation auprès du public.
4. N'importe qui peut être un(e) professeur efficace.
5. Les enseignants ne méritent pas leur réputation négative.\*
6. Il n'y a que les gens qui ne peuvent pas obtenir un vrai travail qui choisissent le métier d'enseignant.
7. Les enseignants sont très travailleurs.\*
8. Les enseignants doivent être payés davantage pour leur travail.\*

**Scale 3 (Demographic questions).**

Veillez compléter l'information suivante.

1. Quel âge avez-vous ?

2. Avec quel genre vous identifiez-vous ? (homme, femme, autre)
3. Quelle est votre race ou votre ethnicité ? (Blanc(he), Noir(e),  
Asiatique/Polynésien(ne), Hispanique, Autre)
4. Dans quelle région de la France habitez-vous ?
5. Etes-vous membre d'une association de parents d'élèves ? (oui ou non)

\* Indicates an item that would be reverse-scored.