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By

Ada Osorio

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Voices from Within: Alternative Certified Teachers' Perspective on Preparedness
Working in High Needs Elementary Schools

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Doctor of Education in Executive Educational Leadership

by

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This dissertation follows the format and style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* except where superseded by directions from the Director of the Doctor of Education in Executive Educational Leadership Program at Houston Baptist University.

Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of alternative routes to teacher certification in urban school districts within Texas. The need for teachers across the United States has increased because current teachers are leaving the profession at high rates. This research analyzes the programs regarding teacher preparation routes, teacher preparedness, and the effect teacher preparation programs have on teacher longevity. This study includes interview data from current teachers to evaluate the perceived preparation of alternative certified teachers based on their authentic voices.

To examine the teacher's perceptions of alternative certification routes and how well they feel prepared, interviews are conducted. The interviews use seven teachers who completed an alternative certification program and work in a high-needs elementary school. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do alternative certified teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career?,
- 2) How do alternative certified teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?,
- 3) How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and the community affect an alternative certified teacher's self-image and effectiveness?,
- 4) What relationships exist between alternative certified teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?, and
- 5) Where do alternative certified teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave (Redman, 2015)?

It is concluded that teachers are leaving the profession due to alternative certification programs not fully preparing them to enter the classrooms of Title One campuses.

Keywords: alternative certification, teacher preparedness, traditional certification, high needs school, Title One school, teacher turnover rate, novice teacher

APPROVED:

Stephanie Free, Ed.D.,
Dissertation Chair

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my daughter, Arabella. As your mother, I strive daily to make you proud and carve a path of success for you. Although you may not fully understand the scope of what is happening now, my prayer is that you value the dedication your father and I make daily to provide you with a happy and healthy life. Although I am carving a path, I want you to set out on your own and discover your dreams and passions. Just know that mama has shattered the glass ceiling for you, so fly high, as you are deserving of it all!

God, you did it again!

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To my participants, thank you for your willingness to speak your truth in my study. Thank you for your bravery and honesty as we detailed your personal journeys as an educator. We know the road as not been easy, but your dedication to provide black and brown student with an equitable education does not go unnoticed. I pray that I portrayed your voice well through this research.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents. Thank you for always providing me opportunities to experience life and dream big. I owe each of you so much, I could never repay. Your encouragement and support has pushed me further than I thought possible. To my extended family, special friends, and continued supporters- I thank each of you from the bottom of my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTERS	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	3
Purpose and Research Questions.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	5
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Limitations.....	7
Delimitations.....	7
Assumptions.....	7
Organization of Study.....	8
II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Demands Control Model.....	9
Role Stress Model.....	12
Self-Efficacy Theory.....	14
Teacher Preparation Program Framework	16
Teacher Certification Route.....	18
Texas Requirements for Teacher Certification.....	21

Alternative vs Traditional Routes.....	23
Teacher Stress	33
Teacher Preparedness.....	34
Summary.....	38
II METHODOLOGY	38
Selection of Participants.....	40
Instrumentation.....	41
Interview Questions	42
Trustworthiness	45
Research Questions.....	46
Context and Settings.....	47
Data Collection.....	49
Data Analysis	50
Summary.....	51
III FINDINGS	53
Demographic Analysis.....	54
Categorized Interview Questions.....	55
Presentation of Findings.....	56
Summary.....	66
IV DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS...	70
Discussion.....	70
Implications.....	74
Recommendations.....	77

Conclusion	78
REFERENCES.....	80
APPENDIX A.....	91

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1 Interview Questions Alignment.....	45
2 Demographic Analysis of Teachers	54
3 Research Questions and Interview Questions Relatedness.....	56
4 Interview Themes.....	63

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	Page
1 Demands Control Model.....	11
2 Role Stress Model.....	13
3 Self-Efficacy Theory	15

Chapter I Introduction

Title One school districts nationwide face a continuing shortage of qualified new teachers willing and able to work in the most challenging classroom environments in the country (Jennings, 2014). The problems associated with underperforming, poorly funded, and understaffed Title One schools affect all of us on many fronts, including economic issues, political realities, quality-of-life questions, and the promise of equal opportunity for everyone (Jennings, 2014, as cited in New York University, 2023). A specific marker tells the story: the rate of students dropping out of high school before graduation, and the problems that result. According to Jennings (2014), one way to improve the ability of Title One schools to take on the issues of decreasing teacher retention rates and falling student success rates is to keep their current teachers and attract new teachers ready and willing to make student achievement their focus (New York University, 2023).

Houston Baptist University upholds a set of ten pillars that are essential to the traditional beliefs and commitments of the university. The Houston Christian Pillar most aligned with addressing low-performing schools due to teacher shortage is Pilar II: A Plan of Restoration. Much like it states, the world is a fallen place; the world of education has been falling drastically over the past five years. There needs to be a movement of restoration to repair the field. Starting with how individuals are being prepared to go into the classroom and teach, the evolution of these programs can change the trajectory of restoring or letting it fall to shambles.

Background of Study

As a nation, we have spent the last few years engaged in partisan political debates that have denigrated teaching as a profession. Debates at the local, state, and national levels around unpopular federally driven programs such as Race to the Top and the Common Core State Standards' intense focus on testing have unfairly made teachers the targets of criticism of these faltering programs and continuing poor student performance (Jennings, 2014, as cited in New York University, 2023). This perception issue is only one factor that has made the education profession far less attractive to undergraduates who might have considered a teaching career – essentially, the new teacher pipeline (Jennings, 2014). With this information in mind, a time of reflection and assessment is needed on behalf of the programs preparing individuals to work in the field. Examining the various factors such as poor student performance, the flock of teachers in their first three years leaving, and the influx of second career professionals rising are needed in consideration.

Even as the number of recent college graduates with teaching degrees drops, the improving economy means districts around the nation that cut teaching positions in recent years are now restoring these positions – but lack candidates (O'Brennan et al., 2017 as cited in New York University, 2023). Specific to Title One schools, this renewed hiring competition by districts of all types further reduces the new teachers qualified in special needs, the sciences, and English- language-learner areas – the subjects and positions that most Title One schools are challenged to fill (New York University, 2023). This study will further examine the preparedness that educators feel working in these environments and how well their programs are equipped and continue to support them.

Statement of the Problem

Schools in the United States have experienced a continuous struggle to find qualified teachers to serve in low-performing schools in urban areas (Viadero, 2010). Today, many teachers will either become certified through traditional methods or an alternative certification program. Various research has analyzed how well these programs are preparing teachers to meet the demand in Title One school settings.

Among the many issues that children in lower economic communities' face, the validity of their opportunity for equal education is questioned (Viadero, 2010). These communities often face high turnover teacher rates in the schools, lack of resources and opportunities for educational experiences, and an ongoing flow of administration in and out of the campuses (Viadero, 2010). The growing need for qualified teachers, that are fully prepared, should be integrated into the challenges of today's classrooms; this is essential in increasing the retention rates of teachers in urban schools and districts. Teachers who have a higher self-efficacy can help curve the fall of the current retention rates.

The problem for this study is that many teachers are entering the profession feeling inadequate due to the lack of preparation they received from their alternative certification programs. From delivering lessons, to the mundane task of organizing their classrooms, these teachers do not feel as though their alternative certification programs fully primed them to tackle the issues of Title One school settings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to gain insight into the effectiveness of alternative certification programs in equipping their interns to work in

high-needs environments. In addition, the study also explored the support being given by the programs to keep teachers thriving in their roles on Title One campuses. Though previous research offers insight into how teacher preparedness is impacted due to the various path of certification, there is limited research examining alternatively certified teachers who specifically work in Title One campuses. To address this gap, this study examined teacher preparedness and its effects on their effectiveness and longevity in the classroom.

Research Questions

The following questions were designed to discover the teacher's perceptions about preparedness of working in Title One settings through alternative certification programs. Using a survey and interviews, the research questions were addressed to provide insight through authentic teacher voices. The research questions which support the purpose of this study to understand teacher's perceptions are as follows (Redman, 2015):

1. How do alternative certified teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career?
2. How do alternative certified teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?
3. How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and the community affect an alternative certified teacher's self-image and effectiveness?
4. What relationships exist between alternative certified teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?

5. Where do alternative certified teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave?

Significance of the Study

Recent data shows that teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates. Teachers are retiring earlier than projected due to a lack of support and stressors from the job (National Education Association, 2022). Stress, burnout, and feeling ill-prepared have been determined to be the leading factors that negatively impact the overall well-being and reasons why teachers leave the profession (Renshaw et al., 2015, as cited in Bradley, 2020). It is crucial that multiple factors are analyzed for the effectiveness of alternative teacher certification programs because it will provide insight into whether these programs are providing adequate support for teachers.

Definition of Terms

Alternative Certification- A state-created program that recruits individuals with bachelor's degrees outside of education into the education field (Reese, 2010). Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree and pass a screening process and engage in job training while working as a teacher (Reese, 2010, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Interns- People who are completing an alternative certification program and working in a school setting (Reese, 2010).

Teacher Preparedness- A teacher's perception of their ability to effectively master instruction, classroom management, planning, and all responsibilities within the education profession (Kee, 2012, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Traditional Certification- Traditional programs are defined as a 4-year bachelor's degree program geared towards preparing individuals for the education

profession. A traditional program is comprised of the following components: a series of general education courses, a set amount of field hours, a semester of student teaching or internship in a school, and a passing score on content and grade level exams (Reese, 2010, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

High Needs School- A school that faces one or more of the following issues: more than 30% of the student population comes from a low-income family, it has more teacher vacancies than 75% of schools statewide, a high percentage of teachers are teaching out of their field or lack certification (NYC Teaching Collaborative, 2019).

Title One School- A school that serves 40% of students that receive free or reduced lunch. (Texas Education Agency, 2022).

Novice Teacher- As defined by the researcher for this study, a teacher new to the profession with less than three years of experience.

Theoretical Framework

As tied to this study, self-efficacy theory lays the foundation for the issues teachers face and offers solutions to high turnover rates, equal opportunities for learning, low student achievement, and other problems plaguing our school system. Although there are concerns about alternative certification programs as a system, there are other factors that affect the growing disparities in the education profession.

Limitations

Limitations are factors in the study that may influence the results (Creswell, 2013). The study was limited in the following ways:

- Participant willingness to discuss their teaching experience truthfully

- Participants understanding the questions asked and how they relate to their teaching situations

Delimitations

Boundaries defined within research that might influence the generalization of study's findings as delimitations (Creswell, 2013). This study contains the following delimitations:

- Participants must be certified through an alternative certification program
- Participants must work in a Title One school setting
- Participants must work in a densely populated area located in Texas

Assumptions

An assumption is defined as “the act of taking for granted or supposing a thing without proof; supposition, unwarrantable claim; something taking for granted; a supposition” (Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 2003). The following assumptions were made for this study:

- The alternative certified teacher participants involved in the study were open and honest in their responses to interview questions.
- The participant has at least three years working on a high-needs elementary school campus
- The participants were representative of alternative certified staff and employed under Title One school settings as defined by the research

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I included the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose and

significance, research questions, definition of terms, theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and organization of the study. In Chapter II, the researcher provides a review of the literature. Chapter III includes the methodology used in this study, which explains the research design, participants, context and setting, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV contains the findings of the study. Chapter V includes a discussion of the findings, implications, recommendations, and conclusions.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

This review will include information about the history of alternative certification programs, teacher certification requirements in Texas, and factors that contribute to teacher stress and burnout. The framework that was chosen for this research will be reviewed to understand these concepts. The review of current literature on alternative certification pathways revealed some of the concerning developments and importance of these programs to address the low retention rates of teachers in high-needs elementary schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this qualitative study includes demands control model, role stress model, self-efficacy theory, and teacher preparation program theoretical framework. Demands control and role stress model predicts that extensive demands on the job creates strain, while self-efficacy theory states that one's belief in their abilities influence how well they are successful (Bandura, 1977). Gates shares a vision with the teacher preparation program framework that if programs are providing sustainable and quality programming, this will impact Black and Latino scholars positively. The said models are explained to provide greater understanding on how each are applied in this research.

Demands Control Model

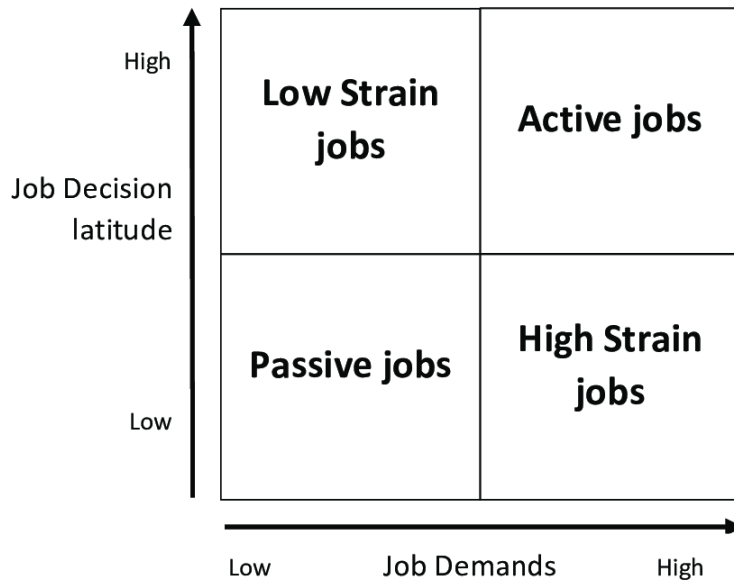
The demand control model was developed by Karasek and Theorell (1979) to explain how job control and job demand interrelate to create strain and stress in the workplace. Job demand is referred to as the aspect of the job that requires extensive effort psychologically, physically, and emotionally. Job strain speaks to the physical and

psychological hardship that matches with a person's inability to meet the demands of the job. Lastly, job control speaks to an individual's capability of controlling the demands of their job (Karasek & Theorell, 1979, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Researchers have examined the demand control model and offered criticism or support of the model. Fernet et al (2004) also examined job demand, job control, and self-determination through the model and found that each factor was related to burnout, including emotional burnout. Personal accomplishment and depersonalization for employees with higher levels of self-efficacy are all results from job control moderating job demands (Fernet et al., 2004, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Kwakman (2001) decided that work related variables and other tasks should be considered to decide if learning results from high demands and high job control.

Emotional labor consists of the following schemes: emotional consonance and suppression (Näring et al., 2006). Results from the study showed that when individuals display surface acting, feelings they do not feel, because they deem it appropriate, work stress occurs (Näring et al., 2006). Näring et al.'s (2006) findings offer additional perspective than the demand control model to understanding work stress.

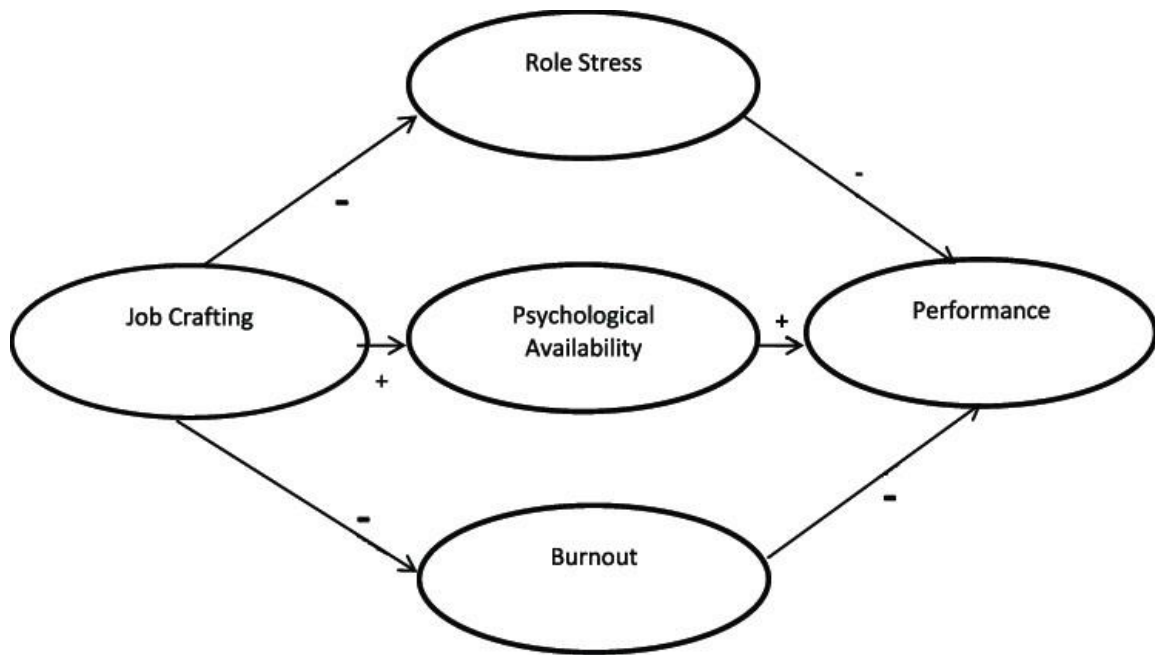
Job demands of teacher preparedness including: instruction, planning, classroom management, and professionalism, has been researched with a focus on certification route and lack of preparedness (Bradley, 2020). Alternative certification programs were analyzed by Torres and Chu (2016), and it was found that teachers going through these programs felt ineffective due to the rigor of teaching and limited time in training (Adcock et al., 2005).

Figure 1***Demands Control Model***

Note. The figure displays how job demand impacts job decision.

Role Stress Model

Role stress model is connected to the demands control model as it analyzes the different levels of stress presented in the workplace . Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991) hypothesized that stress occurs when role conflict and role uncertainty are present. Role conflict occurs when two or more work demands are conflicting. Role uncertainty occurs when the responsibilities and functions are not clear. Role conflict and role uncertainty drive the role stress model which proposes that role conflict is related to role overload (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). Role overload occurs when the ability to meet responsibilities of the job is influenced by the lack of resources (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Figure 2***Role Stress Model***

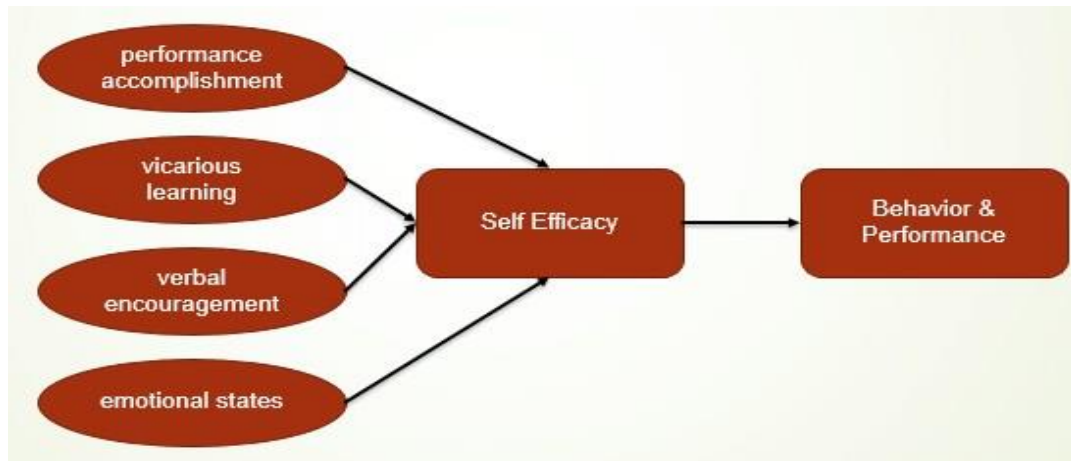
Note. The figure shows how the stress from roles is impacted by the factors of performance, burnout, psychological availability, and job crafting.

Self-Efficacy Theory

The self-efficacy theory was developed by Bandura (1977) to explain how an individual's own belief in their abilities influences how they succeed in situations. Self-efficacy describes a variety of characteristics related to people who have high and low self-efficacy. Bandura proposed that individuals with low self-efficacy look at tasks to be harder than what they are, which results in elevated stress. He also proposed that those with low self-efficacy are quicker to give up on tasks when presented with obstacles (Bradley, 2020). On the other hand, those with high self-efficacy are confident and show greater effort when presented with obstacles.

In relation to teaching experience, researchers have noted differences in self-efficacy in first year teachers; depending on their certification route and whether teaching was their first career choice. Fox and Peter (2013) studied the first-year experience of alternative and traditionally certified teachers and found that traditionally certified teachers rated their experience as more satisfying than the latter. Troesch and Bauer (2017) also studied job satisfaction and self-efficacy between first career choice teachers and second career choice teachers (Bradley, 2020).

Results showed that second career choice teachers were more satisfied with their jobs and experienced less stress within the profession than first choice career teachers (Troesch & Bauer, 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Since second choice career teachers develop well into their new careers, they are able to create higher rates of self-efficacy and manage the demands of their job; original career paths were moderating factors (Troesch & Bauer, 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020). The research questions in this study are built on the theory of self-efficacy theory by analyzing the effectiveness of alternative certification routes and its impact on self-efficacy in the teaching profession.

Figure 3***Self-Efficacy Theory***

Note. The figure shows how various factors are intertwined to build self-efficacy with an individual.

Teacher Preparation Program Theoretical Framework

In 2015, Gates made an investment to assist programs that provide teacher preparation with quality programming. With supports from experts in the field, a set of outcomes and indicators were developed that is believed to result in a diverse, effective teaching workforce that is well prepared to service Black and Latino students.

This framework is built on four domains: scale, impact, sustainability, and quality (Gates, 2022).

Quality is described as quality programming implemented with fidelity. The following four objectives fill this domain (Gates, 2022):

- Programming builds teacher candidate competency to meet the needs of Black and Latino students, students from low-income backgrounds
- Program demonstrates commitment to using data for continuous improvement

- Program ensures teacher educators are effective
- Programming is responsive to K-12 school systems and the communities they serve

Sustainability is defined as quality programming is sustainable beyond philanthropic support. The following objective falls under this domain (Gates, 2022):

- Quality scaled programming can be sustained.

The outcomes and indicators indicate stakeholders having a shared understanding commitment to the work and programs maintaining quality and impact beyond grant funding.

Scale is defined as quality programming implemented by trained teacher preparation programs. The following objective is under this domain (Gates, 2022):

- Quality programming is scaled within teacher preparation programs

The outcome and indicator in this domain is centered around quality objectives provided to candidates by trained personnel indicated by the percentage of candidates trained in the model reflecting all aspects of quality programming.

Impact is outlined as diverse, effective new teachers are employed and retained in schools that service Black, Latino, and low-income students. The following objectives falls under this domain (Gates, 2022):

- Teacher candidates are diverse and effective
- Program completers are diverse, effective, and retained

This domain strives to recruit diverse participants for programs with candidates having a positive mindset in relation to teaching minority students. This is shown through enrollment statistics and feedback from participants.

Teacher Certification Route

The U.S. Department of Education has reorganized the pathway for individuals to become certified teachers in response to the shortage of teachers. Traditional programs were the only option for one to become certified, which are defined as a four-year Bachelor of Arts or Science degree geared towards preparing individuals for the profession. Traditional programs consist of several components: a series of education courses, a sum total of field experiences, a semester of student teaching or internship within a school, and a passing score on a content related praxis exam (Bradley, 2020).

Teachers completing the program have several areas of certification they can choose from, including but not limited to: elementary education, physical education, special education, high school education, and more. This traditional certification route is governed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Together, these entities ensure that colleges and universities are creating awareness that teacher education is grounded in defined standards and appropriate assessments (Reese, 2010, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Every state in the U.S. has a different procedure for candidates to become certified. However, the commonalities exist with the ability to move teachers directly into the classroom versus having them complete the necessary training and education before becoming employed; therefore, closing the gaps (Kee, 2012; Shaw, 2008, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Traditional and alternative certification routes differ significantly. The question comes about if alternative certification programs equally prepare teachers to enter their careers the same as those who took the traditional route.

Bainbridge and Macy (2008) researched and showed that individuals who completed traditional programs reported that the student teaching internship was vital because it allowed them the opportunity to take information from the feedback and relate it to real-world practice. Robinson (2014) examined student teaching in traditional certification programs and deemed it essential for teacher preparedness. This study found that more awareness and preparedness was gained with longer field placements for student teachers. Research also showed that traditional certified teachers displayed higher levels of pedagogical competency and showed greater confidence in their teaching ability (Schonfeld & Feinman, 2012, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

The difference in preparedness found in individuals who have been traditionally certified and those who sought alternative routes is that teachers from alternative certification programs reported an insufficient opportunity to apply practices as reason for overall difficulty with preparedness (Koehler et al., 2013, as cited in Bradley, 2020). These teachers also reported issues with connecting theory to reality when placed in the teaching workforce (Koehler et al., 2013). Elliott et al., (2010) reviewed alternative and traditional certification programs and concluded that alternative certification programs produced poor quality teachers. Teachers certified alternatively expressed issues with lack of experience and reported that they had to learn as they teach (Elliott et al., 2010, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Elliott also found that these teachers were more likely to leave the profession after 3 short years of teaching, compared to those who were certified traditionally.

Texas Requirements for Teacher Certification

Per Texas Education Agency (TEA), there are five requirements to become a certified teacher (Texas Education Agency, 2022):

1. Obtain a bachelor's degree- must be obtained from an accredited college or university.
 - a. Health Science Technology and Trades & Industrial Education certifications are exempt from the bachelor's degree requirement.
2. Complete an Educator Prep Program
 - a. University-based or alternative route
3. Pass certification exams
4. Submit a state application
5. Complete fingerprinting

TEA has also outlined the steps to traditional and alternative routes to becoming certified for with the state. First, looking at the traditional route, the state requires the following (Texas Education Agency, 2022):

1. Decide what you would like to teach
2. Select an approved Texas university
3. Meet the screening criteria of the program
4. Develop a certification plan with your program
5. Complete the Program, Including student teaching or a teaching internship
6. Obtain a teaching position apply for probationary certificate
7. Apply for a probationary certificate
8. Register and complete the appropriate examinations
9. Complete all requirements for a standard certificate
10. Apply for a standard certificate

Additionally, the alternative certification route requires the following steps (Texas Education Agency, 2022):

1. Decide what you would like to teach
2. Select an approved Texas ACP
3. Meet the screening criteria of the program
4. Develop a certification plan with your program
5. Obtain a teaching position
6. Apply for a probationary certificate
7. Complete all requirements for a standard certificate
8. Apply for the standard certificate

Varying in processes, the end goal remains the same; putting effective individuals in the classroom. Texas has 122 approved programs to choose from to become alternatively certified, and the requirements and guidelines will be discussed further in this section.

Traditional Routes Requirement

Teacher certification through the traditional route has been designed to meet the needs of undergraduate students. Traditional programs are defined in this research as university-based programs that assume pedagogical content knowledge needs to be developed in a professional atmosphere before allowing a teacher into the classroom setting (Stoddart & Floden, 1995, as cited in Spann, 2019). Teachers in training typically complete a period of student teaching, which is unpaid, and are required to take a list of assessments before receiving their degrees. Some programs are designed where you can complete a bachelor's degree and earn your license while maintain a full-time job. Historically, universities were given the authority to educate then provide credentials to

teachers based on meeting state requirements (Stoddart & Floden, 1995, as cited in Spann, 2019). According to the Digest of Education Statistics (2017), data showed 83% of teachers went through traditional routes while 66% went through alternative certification (Spann, 2019).

Alternative Routes Requirement

Alternative teacher certification programs allow teachers to teach in the classroom and complete a class or classes at the same time. With the increasing costs of college, these programs have become very popular for career changers who already hold a degree (Preston, 2017, as cited in Spann, 2019). However, some lacked pedagogical skills in classroom management and instruction. Policymakers have put policies into practice intended to establish more teachers through alternative routes (Birkeland & Peske, 2004, as cited in Spann, 2019). The main goal being to fill content area shortages, increase teacher applicants, and decrease the need for emergency certification, which allows applicants to enter the classroom immediately as a non-certified teacher (Woods, 2016, as cited in Spann, 2019).

Qualities of an Effective Teacher

The characteristics of an effective teacher is being characterized as factors that help students learn. One factor associated with student achievement is teacher self-efficacy. Albert Bandura defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997)”. Effective teaching can mean different things in a variety of environments (Spann, 2019).

The director of the California BTES, David Berliner (1990), mentions six teacher behaviors that are characteristics of an effective teacher (Brandt, 1982; Seifert & Beck, 1984):

1. Time allocation
2. Engagement rates

3. Time management
4. Match of instructional materials to goals within the school
5. Classroom management and discipline
6. Politeness and kindness

In summary, of the six skills mentioned by Berliner, half were related to time. Most education reformers agree that effective teaching is defined by student learning improving. Wenglinsky (2022) reported that the single most important factor affecting academic growth was the differences in teacher effectiveness (Spann, 2019).

Student relationship to the teacher seems to overcome many challenging learning opportunities (Goldhaber, 2002). Support that is provided to the teacher contributes to the learning experience can affect those learning outcomes as well. MetLife survey finds that teachers “at-risk” of leaving the profession are also more likely to be teaching in urban, low income schools with high concentrations of minority students (MetLife, 2005, as cited in Spann, 2019).

Teacher Shortage and Burnout

Theoretical foundations support the assumption that job demands, role conflict, and self-efficacy influence an individual’s job performance and stress levels, which can be attributed to the prevalent teacher shortage across the United States. The need to bring teachers into the profession becomes essential as so many teachers are leaving the field. However, fewer individuals have entered the teaching profession, and over the last decade, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has dropped 35% nationwide (Berry et al., 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Researchers have found that approximately 30% of teachers who complete teaching programs leave the profession within their first three years of teaching (Elliott et al., 2010, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

There have been many reasons related to teacher shortage that researchers have

identified. Teachers often leave the profession because they fail to adjust to the demands of teaching (Ewing & Smith, 2003, as cited in Bradley, 2020); classroom management is a leading factor teachers struggle with. Burnout has also been considered as a leading reason for teachers leaving the profession (Steiner, 2014). Burnout prevails in two dimensions: emotional fatigue and reduced personal accomplishment (Steiner, 2014). Emotional fatigue occurs when one feels emotionally drained by work frequently during the standard work week (Steiner, 2014). Reduced personal accomplishment occurs when individuals undervalue their work performance. Teachers lack confidence in their ability to teach when they experience a crisis in self-efficacy (O'Brennan et al., 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Teacher stress and burnout are acknowledged as key factors that contribute to the absence in the teaching profession (Steiner, 2014, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Teachers also reported that they left the profession because they were under constant stress and didn't feel as valued as they once did (Berry et al., 2017). Researchers argue that until teacher preparation is improved, and working conditions become bearable, states will continue to experience teacher shortages (Berry et al., 2017). Increasing teacher preparation will increase teacher effectiveness, which will reduce stress and shortages (Berry et al., 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Teacher Stress

Stress is defined by Tahseen (2015) as a connection between a person and the environment that when threatened with a difficult situation, a physical or emotional response occurs. For the purpose of this study, stress was examined in the work environment of teachers.

Performance of a company and the wellbeing of its employees comes as a crucial concern as it comes to work related stress (Tasheen, 2015). Stress has been categorized into two categories: positive and negative stress. For example, negative stress could stem from anxiety or disappointment, whereas positive stress could be promotion or challenge. An

individual's perception determines whether the stress is positive or negative, which dictates the response (Tasheen, 2015, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Research has shown that classroom, administrative, and personal stressors were likely the root causes of teacher-related stress (Tasheen, 2015, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Regarding administration, teachers' perception of them within the school and with administrators was discovered to be important in predicting job stress (Tasheen, 2015). Personal stressors stem from time management, shift in policies, and heavy workloads were discovered to be key factors that contributed to teacher stress (Tasheen, 2015, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Feeling that constant pressure of always being held accountable for students and teaching students with demanding needs were also factors that contributed to teacher stress (Richards, 2013).

Prilleltensky et al (2016) also studied the effects of stress and found that teachers reported keeping up with documentation, grading work, and handling student conflict as reasons for stress occurring (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Student misbehavior was the number one stress factor for teachers (Prilleltensky et al., 2016). Prilleltensky et al (2016) also discovered that feelings of insufficient job preparation and doubts and worries about personal competence were reasons for stress.

Teacher Preparedness

Cassel (1984) discovered that inadequate teacher preparation and ineffective school management contribute to burnout and stress occurring in teachers. Due to this, it is important to analyze teacher preparation programs and their impact (Bradley, 2020). Torres and Chu (2016) analyzed alternative certification programs and discovered that due to the limited time and training, these programs are found inadequate at preparing teachers for the rigor of the classroom and teaching (Bradley, 2020). Torres and Chu sampled 1,076 teachers and found that 18% of the teachers who were alternatively

certified reported that their preparation

programs were poor at preparation. In contrast, only 9% of the traditionally certified teachers agreed (Torres & Chu., 2016, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

Consuegra et al. (2014) conducted research on first year teachers with a focus on those who completed alternative certification programs. It was found that teachers from these programs reported that their work environments were not a stimulating learning environment. Discoveries from Consuegra et al. (2014) are important because alternative certification programs are perceived to prepare teachers well as they work in the profession. If teachers are stating there's an absence of stimulating learning environments, then adequate preparation from these programs becomes questionable (Consuegra et al., 2014, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

The four domains assessed by the evaluation team in each school district are planning, classroom management, instruction, and professionalism (Texas Department of Education, 2022, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Instruction is defined as a transfer of learning from the teacher to the student (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). The process for delivering instruction requires a lot of planning, which is why planning and instruction go hand in hand.

Instruction involves content and deciding which teaching strategy works better to teach the content (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). Bainbridge and Macy (2008) revealed that teachers who completed a student teaching internship deemed it as essential because it allowed them the opportunity to take information learned in the coursework and transform that information into practice (Bradley, 2020). Teachers from traditional programs were more experienced in providing instruction to meet the needs of their students since they received the training before entering their career. Whereas teachers who were not allowed that opportunity, those who went through alternative certification programs, struggled.

Koehler et al. (2013) discovered that those teachers who completed alternative certification programs were highly skilled in their content and lesson planning was less of an area of weakness. In contrast, Wayman et al. (2003) found that teachers who completed alternative routes highlighted more concerns regarding lesson planning than teachers who were certified traditionally (Bradley, 2020).

Classroom behavior management is deemed by Flower et al. (2017) as critical elements of being a highly qualified teacher because they both contribute to a positive learning environment. Learning environments should include spaces where students feel safe and secure (Flower et al., 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Studies have shown that teachers who have been highly trained in their programs are more effective at conquering classroom management (Flower et al., 2017). On the other hand, teachers who lack the adequate training struggle with using effective strategies to manage the classroom (Flower et al., 2017).

Koehler et al. (2013) reported that alternative certification teachers experience more issues with classroom management than traditionally certified teachers. Those teachers who complete alternative certification programs reported they received little to no coursework or discussions on classroom management; therefore, making it more difficult to tackle these skills once employed (Koehler et al., 2013, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Additionally, it was also reported by these teachers that it was more difficult managing a classroom in urban schools and classrooms that contained students with special needs (Koehler et al., 2013). It was also discovered that due to the differences in preparation routes, alternative and traditionally certified teachers have different attitudes about classroom management (Koehler et al., 2013, as cited in Bradley, 2020).

In contrast, Moffett et al. (2014) found that there wasn't a difference in classroom management success between traditional and alternatively certified teachers. It was concluded that the training alternatively certified teachers received from moving directly into the profession was equivalent to the training and coursework that traditionally certified teachers received (Moffett et al., 2014, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Researchers argued that to improve behavior and classroom management, it is fundamental to incorporate evidence-based classroom management practices (Flowers et al., 2017). They discovered that universal concepts such as routines, rules, student management, parent communication, and positive climate were being taught as a way to manage the classroom versus actual appropriate strategies for managing more challenging behaviors (Flowers et al., 2017, as cited in Bradley, 2020). Flowers et al. (2017) argued that classrooms with more intense behaviors are not being addressed by these concepts.

Professionalism is the final domain of teacher preparedness. Having professionalism in the workplace is defined as the way an individual conducts themselves on the job. As we examine professionalism in the realm of education, we can look at the areas of attitude, ethics, professional development, and knowledge of duties. Attitude reflects how the teachers interact with not only their students, but all stakeholders. Ethics involves the educator ensuring they uphold laws in confidentiality, respect others, and treat everyone with fairness, honesty, and integrity. Professional development includes educators being lifelong learners and staying abreast of current trends in education. This includes attending conferences, furthering their education, and obtaining additional certifications.

Summary

In summary, in response to the nationwide teacher shortage, alternative certification programs have become a part of the solution. Policies affirm the need to fill classrooms, diversify the teaching force, and certify large numbers of individuals. The emergence of these programs served as a response to mitigate teacher shortages.

Alternative certification routes also focused on short-term goals such as enrollment and district satisfaction, rather than long-term goals like improving teacher competence (Heinen, 2004, as cited in Spann, 2019). Over the years, these programs have improved to assure teachers are as highly qualified as traditional certified teachers.

Researchers take a stance that regulations should be restructured in alternative programs to reach more individuals interested in licensure, rather than focusing on undergraduate cohorts; to make entry into the profession easier for individuals at other ages and stages in their careers (Spann, 2019). Effective teachers have always known their impact and what it takes to make a difference in their student's learning. Multiple studies have shown how increased preparedness in teachers lead to higher achievement rates in students.

Teaching effectiveness relies upon the instructor's subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical ability. Effective teachers continue to have high expectations for their students and reinforce efforts of good work through hard tasks (Spann, 2019). Healthy teacher-student relationships are the focus of effective teachers as well. Decisions constructed around an effective teacher should continue

to be based in evidence and data.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this case study was to gain teacher's perspective on how Alternative Certification Programs (ACP) fully prepare them to work in high-needs elementary schools. This research was used to gather insight into the classroom on campuses with underserved populations. The researcher focused on high-needs elementary campus up to 3 years.

The outline of this qualitative research in Chapter III includes the introduction, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and summary. A qualitative approach was suitable in this study to gather the perceptions of alternative certified teachers' preparedness on working in high-needs elementary schools. The Narrative Model was used because the information from the interviews served as the raw data which was analyzed.

Selection of Participants

The individuals interested in being a part of the study were identified under four criteria via a questionnaire:

1. Did you complete an alternative certification program?
2. Do you work on a high-needs campus?
3. Have you been teaching for up to 3 years on a high-needs campus?
4. Are you open to being interviewed?

The online questionnaire used to gather participants is given to individuals through Google Forms.

Due to the number of individuals who completed the questionnaire, an online randomizer (*Online Randomizer Picker*) was used to enact a simple random sampling approach to choosing participants. The researcher identified participants from the randomizer who then signed consent to join the interview via *Zoom*. From the participants selected, they were notified of their autonomy to exit at any time. The participant was asked to provide personal information but remained anonymous to the public. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant for transcribing purposes. The researcher selected seven participants for the initial phase of the research. For the participants who were not chosen to move forward to the interview, the researcher emailed to inform them that their information was immediately erased and was not used in the study. The participants were expected to provide honest responses on their perceptions and experiences as a teacher who has completed an Alternative Certification Program.

Instrumentation

This study used semi-structured interviews to conduct the study. According to Cresswell (2012) the advantage of a semi-structured interview is that it allows for open-ended responses from participants for more in-depth information. The researcher used an open questionnaire to keep the research unbiased for the participants who are chosen. The researcher then used a *Random Picker* to choose participants for the semi-structured interviews. Once the group of interviewees is selected, the researcher called the participant to notify them they were selected for an interview. A formal set of questions are posed to the prospective participants (Redman, 2015).

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself and your job?
 - a. What do you teach?
 - b. How long have you been teaching?
 - c. What type of certification do you have? (ie EC-6, EC-3, SPED k-12, etc)
 - d. How many of those years have been on a high-needs campus?
2. How do you see yourself as a teacher?
 - a. What do you like about being a teacher? Why?
 - b. Dislike? Why?
 - c. What adjectives or labels best describe you and why?
 - d. How do you think others see you? Why?
3. Why did you become a teacher?
 - a. Why a high-needs elementary school?
4. Describe the preparation program and process you experienced in becoming a teacher.
 - a. What parts (experiences, classes, interactions) were important in helping prepare you for teaching?
 - b. Did you experience anything in your preparation for being a teacher that was not helpful or even harmful?
 - c. Can you describe experiences that might have helped you be more prepared? Or what if anything would have helped you be better prepared for being a teacher?

- d. Did you receive specific guidance with working on a high needs' campus in your program?
 - e. What classes did your ACP provide to work on high needs campuses?
5. Describe your experiences after completing your formal training in finding a teaching position and the things done within the district to prepare you for your work?
- a. Do you have a mentor?
 - a. Was this mentor assigned by the district?
 - a. Someone who offered to help.
 - a. Someone with whom you just developed a relationship.
 - b. Is your mentor helpful? How?
 - b. What kinds of training, in-service, and professional development have you experienced since you started teaching?
 - a. Has it been useful? How?
 - c. What do you think could have been done differently by the district to help you transition into your current position?
 - d. After you completed your ACP, which supports were given to you from the program for the next three years, if any?
6. How would you describe the relationships with teachers and others in your school?
- a. Relationships with teacher peers
 - b. Relationships with principal and other administrators

- c. Relationships with students
 - d. Relationships with parents
7. Thinking about your work and all of the people in your professional life, who and what have really helped you develop as a teacher?
 8. Who or what do you feel has interfered with your work and development as a teacher?
 9. What do you think your future will be?
 - a. Are you planning to stay in teaching?
 - b. How have your teaching experiences compared to what you anticipated?
 - c. Do you want to remain in the same teaching position? School? District?
 - d. Do you wish you had chosen another career? If so, what?
 10. Do you think your perceptions of the questions asked during this interview have changed since you started teaching? In other words, if interviewed with the same questions during your first year of teaching would your responses have been different? If yes, then how so?
 11. Is there anything else you would like to add for now concerning your experiences so far?

The following table shows how the interview questions align with the research questions of this study.

Table 1

Interview question alignment to research questions

RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5
Interview Question 4	Interview Questions 4, 5, 5	Interview Questions 6, 7, 8	Interview Questions 2, 10	Interview Question 9

Note: Interview questions one and three are used to gain greater insight into the participants.

Trustworthiness

The purpose of qualitative research was to describe or understand a phenomenon of interest. Issues surrounding qualitative research are more concerned with dependability, transferability, and faithfulness rather than validity and reliability (Tracy, 2010, as cited in Redman, 2015). Qualitative validity is the process by which a researcher checks accuracy from data findings by using specific procedures, while qualitative reliability reveals a researcher's approach being consistent among varied projects and researchers (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007, as cited in Redman, 2015). Credibility relates to the fit between the participants; responses and views and the researchers' interpretation, and how it is represented authentically and credibly (Neergaard & Ulhoi, 2007). Credibility was obtained in this research by validating the qualitative instrument by reviewing the open-ended questions with Subject Matter Experts (SME). Additionally, interview and research questions were designed by Dr. Suzanne Redman in her study completed in 2015 titled *Self-Efficacy and Teacher*

Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job Support, and Job Satisfaction (Redman, 2015).

Generalized research can be transferred to other contexts and settings to further research in other areas; it is up to that person to determine the sensibility of the transfer. To provide means of transferability, this research seeks to give in-depth details regarding the research method. Aspects were communicated in steps that included each participant was privately interviewed in a secure area. Dependability is sought in this research through a detailed explanation of the research design. Additionally, confirmability refers to results that can be confirmed by others (Taylor, 2001). Confirmability is gained by documenting the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions are used to guide this study (Redman, 2015):

1. How do alternative certified teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career?
2. How do alternative certified teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?
3. How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and community affect an alternative certified teacher's self-image and effectiveness?
4. What relationships exist between alternative certified teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?

5. Where do alternative certified teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave?

Context and Setting

The researcher used a simple random sampling to study the perceptions of teachers who have completed an ACP to obtain their teaching certification. The individuals who expressed interest in the interviews identified as being a teacher, completed an ACP, worked on a high-needs elementary campus, and had completed up to three years of teaching on a high-needs campus. The researcher defines a high-needs elementary campus as a school that faces one or more of the following issues: more than 30% of the student population comes from a low-income family, it has more teacher vacancies than 75% of schools statewide, a high percentage of teachers are teaching out of their field or lack certification (NYC Teaching Collaborative. 2019).

The recruitment flyer laid out the criteria needed for prospective participants, along with a link and QR code for those individuals interested in providing more information. The link and QR code led individuals to a questionnaire to fill out their demographics and contact information. This information was used to ensure the volunteers meet the criteria, and if so, their names were put into the randomizer to create the interview group.

Social media was used to gather data and find participants. For this study, the researcher obtained seven authentic perspectives for analysis. With permission from Houston Baptist University Institutional Review Board (I. R. B approval email), both the questionnaire and interviews were promoted through a flyer (Appendix A) posted on social media platforms. The participants remained anonymous to the public but were

known to the researcher. To keep participants anonymous, the researcher used pseudonyms followed by a number; for example: Participant 1.

The interviews were conducted via password-protected *Zoom* technology. To ensure privacy, the participant was given a password and held in an online waiting room while the researcher secured the room. Eleven questions were asked of the participants to facilitate an open-ended discussion, which allows for an open-ended discussion. Once the interview *Zoom* meeting is transcribed, the recording was destroyed and deleted to protect the identity of the participants.

Perceptions are different due to differences in programs and campus cultures within the various responses. Within the instrument, the researcher analyzed the commonalities between each program and the campus on which the teacher is teaching on. The researcher aimed to identify best practices that the ACP programs provide to find beneficial ways to enhance the support for these specific teachers.

The findings from the interview were analyzed based on common themes that emerge through the participants' responses. The interview took approximately one hour. The study results were made available to all participants who requested it. If any participant had a question, they were asked to contact the researcher before or after the interviews were held. The researcher read the full disclosure at the beginning and end of the session to remind participants that they may decline participation at any time during the study. The disclosure states the following:

“Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to withdraw at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw

from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. You cannot withdraw information collected prior to your withdrawal.”

Open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were comprised of ten questions answered by the participants. The participants answered the questions based on their own personal experiences. The open-ended responses provided the similarities and differences in experiences amongst the participants who provided their feedback. The responses create common themes that were analyzed to see which similar practices were implemented within each certification program (Putman, 2021).

Data Collection

In this qualitative study, simple random sampling was used to gather data for this research. The researcher used simple random sampling to identify a specific group of possible participants from those who completed the questionnaire. The interviewees are teachers who obtained their certification through an Alternative Certification Program and work on a high-needs elementary school campus in the greater metropolitan areas of Texas.

Data collection was done in two phases. In phase one, the teachers that volunteered to participate were recruited via social media. The flyer, questionnaire, and interview questions were approved by Houston Baptist University IRB and the researcher’s committee members. The flyer was posted on social media, with a link and QR code that led the individual to the questionnaire and placed them into a pool of participants.

In phase two, participants were selected for the interviews at random. The questions provided greater insight into the mindset of teachers who completed alternative certification programs. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. This data was collected and analyzed for common themes and misconceptions.

Data will be stored in the following three ways: on a password-protected laptop, a flash drive, and password-protected cloud storage. This will be done in accordance with the following Houston Baptist University policy:

“All data used for either graduate theses or dissertations must be turned in to the Center for Research and Doctoral Studies (CRDS) within a week of a successful defense. This data will be kept by the CRDS for no more than five years. The purpose of this storage is to make sure there is a record of the research in case any questions are raised regarding it.”

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in qualitative phenomenological research can have several components and has been referred to by qualitative researchers as a process equated to peeling back layers of an onion (Creswell, 2009). According to Creswell, creating a plan for analyzing data for a qualitative research study involves a process that includes preparing the data for analysis, conducting the different analyses, moving deeper into an understanding of the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Redman, 2015).

The raw data of this qualitative study includes data being collected and analyzed. The data analysis began with information collected from the questionnaire followed by information from the interview. The following data was collected to be analyzed:

- Interview guide with open-ended questions
- Notes from participant responses
- Video recording of interview
- Notation to any verbal, physical, or observed emotional reaction from participant

All pieces of information from individual interviews were organized and prepared for analysis beginning with the interview transcripts coded by participant pseudonym. Keywords were identified from each question of the interview, along with reading the transcripts and handwritten notes to reveal common themes. The researcher read each transcript several times to identify themes and subthemes. The aim of a phenomenological strategy was to transform lived experiences into a description of their essence through reflection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, as cited in Redman, 2015).

Researcher Bias

The researcher, like participants in the study, completed an Alternative Certification Program and then began working on a higher-needs elementary school campus. The flyer was shared with people who potentially knew the researcher due to social media connections. The researcher aimed to keep bias from influencing the research and data obtained, as the goal was to improve the programs. This will help create validity within the study to ensure the research is sound.

Summary

In Chapter III, the researcher identified all factors of the methodology section of the study. The participants are alternatively certified teachers working in high-needs elementary schools. The trustworthiness of the interview questions was confirmed to

conduct the research with the Subject Matter Experts. Confidentiality was provided to all participants.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The objective of this study was to investigate the perspective of teachers who completed an alternative certification program and how well-prepared they felt to enter the profession. This chapter describes the authentic perceptions of seven teachers in Texas.

Utilizing a case study methodology, I examined the following research questions to guide my study:

RQ1. How do alternative certified teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career?

RQ 2. How do alternative certified teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?

RQ 3. How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and community affect an alternative certified teacher's self-image and effectiveness?

RQ 4. What relationships exist between alternative certified teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?

RQ 5. Where do alternative certified teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave?

The presentation of the findings was grouped into the following sections: (a) demographic analysis, (b) research questions, and (c) summaries of the findings.

Demographic Analysis

Demographic information reported in this chapter describes the characteristics of the teachers who participated in the interviews. Demographic data presented in Table 1 relates to teacher's gender (male or female), years of service on Title One campus (0-6 years or more), and ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, Caucasian).

Table 2

Demographic Analysis of Teachers

Categories	Description	Number
Gender	Male	0
	Female	7
Years of Experience	0-2	3
	2-4	2
	4-6	0
	6+	2
Ethnicity	African American	5
	Hispanic	1
	Caucasian	1

Teachers were selected using a simple random sampling method and subsequently interviewed. Teachers who taught on a Title One campus were carefully recruited for this study based on several criteria. First, the teachers must have completed an alternative certification program. Teachers must have worked on a Title One campus. Lastly, participants have taught on a Title One elementary campus for three years or more.

For this study, teachers were selected from school districts within Texas. Data analysis from the interviews for each research question revealed four themes. The rest of the chapter explains the analysis of the data, as well as the results according to the research questions guiding the research.

The interview process was semi-structured with ten open-ended questions and sub-questions. The questions were prewritten, flexible, and gave teachers the autonomy to lead the conversation, allowing it to speak to their perspectives. As qualitative research is constructed to be emergent, sub-questions were used to delve deeper into their replies and requested examples for clarification. In most cases, teachers were engaged in the discussion and offered a plethora of insight into their personal experiences of completing the ACP and entering the teaching profession.

Categorized Interview Questions

Before analyzing the data, the researcher created categories to place interview questions to ensure each research question was addressed (Table 2). After completing the interview, the researcher reread the transcript to review for accuracy before beginning the coding process. The transcripts were reviewed again to ensure accurate coding throughout the process. The themes were the words, ideas, or thoughts that demonstrated emerging patterns from the responses given.

Table 3

Research Questions and Interview Questions Relatedness

RQ1	RQ2	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5
Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview	Interview
Question 4	Questions 4, 5, 6	Questions 6, 7, 8	Questions 2, 10	Question 9

Note: Interview questions one and three were used to gain greater insight into the participants.

Presentation of the Findings

The teachers took part in a semi-structured interview to discuss their perceptions. The dialogue uncovered ideas and areas that were further analyzed. The responses provided from participants were grouped based on the research questions and various perceptions from interviews.

Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze teachers' responses to each interview question. This method allowed the researcher to search the data sets to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns in responses. Thematic analysis involves observing and recording patterns through coding, sorting, and deciphering meaning from qualitative data (Clark & Veale, 2018, as cited in Putman, 2015).

Interview Question 1: Can you tell me about yourself and your job?

This question was used to gather initial information about the participant to help support demographic information. Participants informed me of the districts they taught in; all within the state of Texas.

What do you teach? Participants had various teaching backgrounds which gave a variety of data. Two teachers taught Special Education (k-5), two taught third grade, one taught fourth grade, one fifth grade teacher, and the last one taught pre-kindergarten.

How many of those years have been on a high-needs campus? The majority of participants had zero to two years of experience, which was three out of seven teachers. Two individuals were in the two to four range, and two teachers had six or more years of experience working in a Title One school.

Interview Question 2: How do you see yourself as a teacher?

Question 2 answered the question of the perception the participants had of themselves and of those around them. Additionally, it touched on the likes and dislikes of the profession. Responses to self-perception ranged from nurturing, innovative, and caring. The participants were jovial when describing themselves and answered confidently. All teachers noted that they love to see the growth in their students and the impact their teaching has over the course of the year.

What do you like about being a teacher? Why? Notably, participant #6 stated:

You know, I really love the students. I love that I'm able to communicate and make connections with the students and able to see where the weaknesses are and help build on your strengths. And that also helped them grow and watch them grow. I think that's important for them, as well as me to know that I'm actually helping children grow and helping them reach their goals.

This answer highlighted the encapsulated the responses of all seven participants. Each teacher mentioned enjoying the moments of seeing student growth and achievement in

their classrooms. This is when the researcher saw the most pleasant body language during the interview process.

What do you dislike about being a teacher? Why? Five of the seven teachers stated that they did not enjoy the time constraints and extra expectations placed on teachers. Participant # 7 mentioned a lack of flow in lessons due to specific structures or styles required by support staff, which stifles authentic teaching. While Participant #4 mentions “The joy of teaching being taken away by the outside demands of the job.”

Interview Question 3: Why did you become a teacher?

Participants 4 and 7 mentioned how they come from a family of educators, and it simply made sense for them to join the profession. Additionally, in response to this question, all of the responders paused to reflect on their reason why. Participant #3 said:

I’ve always liked helping people, and being a teacher, you're going to help and I think it's natural for me to help and I like to serve. And when I think of a teacher, I think of a servant leader. You're a servant and you're serving your students. You may serve your co-workers, but at the same time, you're a leader. So I like the servant leader role in the aspect of teaching.

Each participant mentioned that there was someone close to them that suggested becoming a teacher and encouraged them to complete the proper training to become one.

Why a high-needs elementary school? Upon reflection on choosing a high-needs campus, phrases such as “making a change”, “betterment of the communities”, and “feeling needed” were used. This showed the participants have the heart to teach in Title One schools and have an understanding of the various factors that contributed to these students’ learning.

Interview Questions 4: How well prepared were you for your teaching assignment?

Question four brought varying perspectives to the forefront. Participants took the time to reflect on their answers to provide accurate responses. Five of the seven participants stated they did not feel “well-prepared” to enter the teaching profession.

Describe the preparation program and process you experienced in becoming a teacher. There were a variety of programs discussed: web-based, hybrid schedules, local county programs, as well as college based. One participant completed a web-based program, four mentioned a hybrid model, and two stated their program was in-person. Each participant noted that they were required to complete courses and assignments as well as attend classes or seminars. Every participant highlighted the emphasis of content exam preparation, also mentioned a boot camp or additional resources to help prepare them to pass their exams.

Did you experience anything in your preparation that was not helpful or even harmful? In response to the coursework not helping prepare the participants for the field, the following responses were expressed. Participant # 2 stated:

There was nothing to prepare me, it just gave us a lot of ‘what if’ situations and how would you handle it. It was basically as if it was a perfect classroom, like there was no preparation and I wouldn't say I just feel like I learned a lot but rather more of um, just a course to take.

Participant # 4 stated:

Um, honestly, some of the courses might have helped, but some of them are very lengthy. They're very long and sometimes they just repeat themselves so much. It's the same exact thing over and over and some of them don't have anything to

do with what you are experiencing in the classroom whenever you go to the school. So they basically try to prepare you for these exams. But then when you go and take exams, or whenever you come into the classroom, it's a totally different scenario.

Can you describe experiences that might have helped you be more prepared? In response to the coursework helping prepare the participants for the field, Participant # 5 expressed, “ I felt like there were some good things that stuck out but also, I felt like my program very heavily focused on classroom management and diversity and culture which really helped me once I was actually able to teach on campus.”

Participant # 6 noted:

Yes, so there are a lot of courses pertaining to being an effective teacher. And that is one thing that I really enjoyed because they actually show you two clips. I remember this one particular clip, I forgot the gentleman's name, but he was an excellent teacher. He did a video blog of his first year of teaching, and he so happened to teach at a Title One school and so he would talk about classroom management. He talked about the systems that he put in place in his classroom, and it was very intriguing because he was one of those students that the teachers marked him as not being successful and likely to be a dropout, but he turned that negative into a positive and he became a teacher. And just to see him in motion, running his class, and all you know, his transitions and just everything he does as a teacher. It was very encouraging to me.

Lastly, participant #7 said, “Yeah, I think basically, they give us certain in course assignments over what to do in classrooms or what not to do in classrooms, or

how to deliver a certain lesson. So I think those are the things that's kind of prepping us for once we start.”

These responses show impactful moments in each journey of the teachers who participated in the study.

Interview Question 5: Describe your experiences after completing your formal training in finding a teaching position and the things done within the district to prepare you for your work? Do you have a mentor?

Question five spoke to the support the participants received after completing their coursework via mentors and additional training or professional development. All participants mentioned being assigned a mentor through their programs, some being effective while others were not. Participant #4 stated that her mentor stopped mentoring her because she had “too much on her teacher plate”. Also, four of the seven participants said their mentor was neither helpful nor accessible.

Was there someone who offered to help? All seven participants exclaimed there were others on campus, their team members or an outside encourager, who assisted them in their first few years of teaching.

Interview Question 6: How would you describe the relationships with teachers and others in your school?

Question six created another moment of reflection for the participants. This question spoke to their perception of themselves as it pertains to others around them. All participants mentioned having a “healthy working relationship” with all of their peers. When asked about their relationship with their administration, I heard phrases such as “admin not being accessible”, “admin too busy for help outside of observations”, as well

as some participants barely speaking to their administration team. Lastly, when asked about their relationship with the families and students they serve, five of the participants noted thriving connections, while two mentioned needing to “work on nurturing that relationship.”

Interview Question 7: Thinking about your work and all of the people in your professional life, who and what have really helped you develop as a teacher?

For this question, all participants reflected to the teachers on campus who corralled together to assist when the mentors were not responsive. Participant #5 said, “if it had not been for my team helping me transition into the classroom, I would not have survived.” Two other participants also mentioned family members assisting their development as a teacher. These responses highlighted the lack of support provided to interns during their internship year, and how outside factors had to influence the retention of those teachers.

Interview Question 9: What do you think your future will be?

When asked this question, all seven participants declared that they would not stay in the classroom. The teachers mentioned avenues outside of teaching such as counseling, training, and coaching. All were consistent that they would remain in the field of education.

How have your teaching experiences compared to what you anticipated? Participants mentioned phrases such as “different expectations”, “coursework being unrelated to actual experiences”, and “not much was comparable”. Participant # 6 spoke to the related factors of teaching and said:

Teaching is more than going into a classroom, opening up the book and the children are being on task. Now there's a lot of emotional factors, there are a lot

of social factors. You know, these children come with a lot of baggage and need to take care of their emotional needs. Sometimes, before you actually get to say open your book, see if they are hungry. They have things going on at home, you know, they have many needs. And so, once you break through all those barriers, you actually see learning taking place

Summary of the Findings

The following section includes teachers' responses to their perception of preparedness through their alternative certification program. The researcher considered keywords, recorded the finding, and developed hypotheses about the nature of the phenomena. Interview questions two through nine conceptualized teacher's responses. The term and phrases most used were "teacher burnout/stress", "unprepared", and "unrelatable content". Table 4 shows the themes of the research.

Research Question 2-7: Interview Themes

Significant Themes	Number of times word/keyword stated
Teacher Burnout/Stress	9
Unrelatable Content	15
No Mentor Support	7
Unprepared	13

Teacher Burnout/Stress. The first theme mentioned identifies the overall feeling of teachers' experience in schools. When participants were asked about what they do not like about teaching, all participants mentioned the cumulative unrealistic expectations placed on teachers that lead to burnout and stress. Participant number 7 mentioned talking

to teachers who are stressed and have seen five individuals quit this year due to burnout. This speaks to the high volume of teachers that have left the profession. Participant #1 also mentioned:

I do know a lot of people leave teaching after a certain amount of time. I guess now flipping on as far as the counseling side of just dealing with the self care of education, because yes, they taught a whole lot about you know, the protocol reading the books, but not how to balance between life home and you know, just work in general. This would help combat burnout, because oftentimes when we're placed in those high-needs areas, you have a whole lot of burnout.

When teachers spoke about the stress the job brings, their faces became exasperated and their voices low at times. Every teacher gave personal details on what is contributing to the stress, and a few mentioned how it could be alleviated. All agreed that their programs did not prepare them for the amount of stress they would face.

Unreliable Content. When asked to describe their program, four of the seven participants said that it was a hybrid model that required online coursework and in-person meetings. One participant had a fully online program, while two had in-person models. A common theme that presented itself was the lack of reliability in the coursework. Five of the seven participants drew the same consensus that what was required of them to complete did not translate to the classroom. Participant # 3 mentioned the idea of the material presenting 'perfect world' scenarios:

I guess I just wanted more of what's going to happen when we really get into this class or this is what's going to happen in a Title One school. This is how you will handle this when you have a class with low babies. I wish I had more things like

that and not the imagination of a perfect class. For example, what do I do with the struggle class or what do I actually do with behavior class? How do you actually handle talking to a parent? How do you actually handle talking to a parent that doesn't want to help their child? What is your next step? There was really no direction.

This response is representative of the overall responses from the participants and how they needed more relatable content to assist in transitioning to the classroom. Participant #3 even mentioned some of the curriculum being 'pointless'.

No Mentor Support. Interview question 5 asked about the support being provided to teachers via their ACP's or through the district. Each participant stated they were provided a mentor upon completion of their coursework and passing their exams. Phrases such as "unreachable", "minimal communication", and "lack of support" were used. Although their mentors may not have been helpful, each participant excitedly told of stories about how others in their building, mostly veteran teachers, supported them and assisted where they could. There was a distinct change in expression when speaking of their mentors versus those who stepped in to fill the gap.

Unprepared. Interview question 4 involved questions about preparedness. Each participant spoke to their programs fully preparing them to take their content exams. Every program had specific guidance on steps to pass the tests, including extra resources, classes, and boot camps. On the other hand, when asked about being prepared to work in a Title One school, participant #5 stated, "I think the culture diversity and classroom management piece helped in that area for sure. But nothing specifically geared towards Title One." The other participants shared the same sentiment. For overall preparedness,

phrases such as “not prepared at all”, “expectations were not the same”, “sought outside help”, and “repetitive or unrelated coursework” were common.

The participants also mentioned the content using ‘perfect world’ examples and videos which were harmful to their preparedness. Participant #4 noted:

I remember the first year that I came in, I was always thinking perfect world. And I know that I had already worked in the school system as an aide and as a paraprofessional, but it's not the same thing when you come from a paraprofessional to a teacher. Everybody in the program tells you ‘Oh, everything's going to be great. You're going to have all the support in the world, and then you don't have any support because there's so many teachers, there's so many students and it's hard for them to come and help. So I just kind of learned on my own and I just kind of learned from other teachers and I just kind of had to develop on my own and come up with different things that could help me.

Every participant affirmed they could not see themselves in the classroom in the future. Some mentioned gaining additional education through degrees and professional development to increase chances of finding opportunities outside of the classroom. Each of them confirmed the value in staying in education to be a part of changing a child's life. Returning back to their reason for entering the profession, despite feelings of being ill-prepared, not one teacher mentioned feelings of regret for joining the field.

Summary and Organization of the Study

Chapter IV described the demographics, statistics, and case study findings to investigate the perspective of preparedness of teachers who completed an alternative certification program and work on a high-needs campus. Chapter IV includes the

demographic descriptions, presentation of the findings, and the summary of the findings.

Chapter V includes the discussion, implications, recommendations, and conclusions relating to this study.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The primary purpose of this case study was to investigate the perspective of alternative certified teachers on their preparedness of working in high-need elementary schools. While much literature outlines how stress and burnout has led to teacher shortages, the authentic voice of the educator has not commonly been displayed. Although surveys have been used to support recent data, interviews allowing participants to voice their experiences were not common practice. Using a case study methodology allowed the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge about the critical meanings and implications of the problem studied.

Summary of the Study

The study included investigating the teacher's perspective of their preparedness, particularly on a high-needs elementary campus. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to gain insight into the effectiveness of alternative certification programs. The study explored the support provided to interns as they completed each program. The primary framework tied to this study is self-efficacy theory. It lays the foundation for the issues educators are facing in the workplace and offers solutions for the problems plaguing the school system. Additional models that helped support this research are demand control model and role stress model. These two models build upon each other and assist in the analysis of the data gathered from the study.

The following research questions were used to guide the study and support the purpose to understand the teacher's perspectives: a.) How do alternative certified teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career? b.) How do alternative certified teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities? c.) How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and the community affect an alternative certified teacher's self-image and effectiveness? d.) What relationships exist between alternative certified teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals? e.) Where do alternative certified teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave (Redman, 2015)?

Participants were selected using four criteria via a questionnaire that was posted on a flyer. Teachers were recruited using social media platforms, enacting a simple random sampling to choose participants to interview. Semi-structured interviews collected perceptions of the teacher's insight as they shared their experiences, described their programs, and self-reflected on how they are perceived by those around them. The interviews consisted of eleven open-ended questions which gave room for participants to delve deeper into their experiences. The data analysis process included reflecting on critical themes gathered from the data, compiling the findings, and creating an explanation based on the nature of the case study (Putman, 2021). The study revealed important information that will inform educational leaders of the implications of teacher self-efficacy on preparedness through alternative certification programs. The result of the study informs program personnel on the importance of support and relevant content within the programs.

Discussion of the Findings

The results from this case study indicated that, from the teachers' perspective, alternative certification programs did not fully prepare them to enter the education field; nonetheless a high-needs elementary school. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy can be influenced by environmental factors and alternative program's structure greatly influence the perspective of preparedness which impacts their capacity. Participants agreed that although there was some insightful content provided through the program, the lack of support, miscommunications, and lack of relatability stunted their growth in developing as a teacher. An in-depth analysis of the data is discussed for each theme found in the data set through the lens of the study's theoretical framework.

Karasek's Demands Control Model

Jobs with environments that have high demand, low control, and low social support, have workers that exhibit more prevalent job strain. The demands control model also suggests that individuals learn and grow when job demand and control are high (Karasek, 1979, as cited in Bradley, 2020). With the findings in this research, high demand and low social support was found across all participants' experience. According to the National Education Association (2022), 55% of educators are planning to leave the profession earlier than anticipated. The research states that educators are under "unprecedented levels of strain" and this is "preventing educators from giving them the proper education they need and deserve." (National Education Association, 2022). As teachers are not feeling fully prepared to enter the profession, the job demand, stress, and strain will continue to drive the percentage up of educators leaving the profession.

Increasing Relatable Content

A theme found in the study's results is that teachers in the study greatly emphasized how unrelatable or unrealistic the content of the programs were. One participant deemed the content "perfect world scenarios" which was harmful to her development. For teachers who have no prior experience of working in schools, providing scripted videos and material of interactions in the classroom can falsely create expectations. It is critical to provide samples of real teachers in real classrooms maintaining classroom structure and providing lessons to interns in ACP's so realistic expectations can be set. What happens when you have a lesson that isn't going well?

What do you do when you have a student walk out of class angrily? How do you handle an angry parent during a parent-teacher conference? These are a few questions that should mold the curriculum to fit the needs of teachers navigating their first few years in the profession. As the study completed by Torres and Chu (2016), it was found that due to limited training, alternative certification programs were inadequate at preparing teachers for the rigor of the classroom. Therefore, programs providing unrelatable content would not assist in the proper development of teachers.

One of the seven teachers interviewed stated that she vividly remembers watching a vlog in her program that showed the progression of a first-year teacher working at a Title One school. It showed his failures, his wins, and his overall growth over a span of a few months. The participant said it stuck out to her because she could relate to this video as it was a very similar environment, she was working in. Having the connection of relatability provided her the motivation to make changes and continue to grow in the profession. When teachers are provided with the proper content, real expectations will be

built, and self-efficacy can thrive. This concept is presented using Bandura's Theory on self-efficacy.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

The overall influence on the teacher's self-efficacy was determined by the value of the material and overall support provided during their first years of teaching. Self-efficacy describes a variety of characteristics related to people who have high and low self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) proposed that individuals with low self-efficacy look at tasks to be harder than they are, which results in elevated stress (Bradley, 2020). He also proposed that those with low self-efficacy are quicker to give up on tasks when presented with obstacles. In alignment with Bandura, this research provides further context that due to lack of preparedness, teachers are experiencing elevated stress and struggling to keep up with the demands of the position (Bradley, 2020).

Closing the Gaps on Lack of Support

When discussing the themes of providing support to interns in their first year, concerns of accessibility, consistency, and lack of communication were frequently mentioned. As interns complete the required content and pass their exams to receive their eligibility to teach, it is their understanding that a mentor or coach will be provided to assist them. The coach or mentor is required to observe the intern, provide feedback, and support in any way the teacher may need. It was consistently reported from the participants I interviewed that their mentors were not supportive. As O'Brennan et al (2017) stated, teachers lack confidence when they experience a crisis in self-efficacy. This can be overcome with consistent communication and support provided to teachers in the first three years.

During interview discussions, one participant mentioned that her coach did not communicate certain deadlines to her clearly which meant she would need to extend her program and cost more money. Another mentioned that her coach had the option to visit her in person for observation but opted for her to record and send it in instead, which the teacher felt wasn't good practice for feedback. Lastly, one participant stated that she had not heard from her coach after multiple failed attempts to reach out.

Not only are the programs failing to provide proper, consistent support, it ultimately fails the students taught by the teacher. It is suggested that programs and schools should work together to close the gaps in lack of support. When teachers feel supported, having a stable source of guidance can increase stability and develop a positive classroom environment for both teacher and students.

Overcoming Teacher Burnout and Stress

Another topic discussed was the teachers experiencing stress and burnout from the profession. Teachers believed that the compounding tasks, lack of support, and unrealistic expectations contributed to the stress and overall burnout either they themselves were feeling or someone they knew. One suggestion was making sure teachers had outlets and resources to manage their stress and were well-equipped to do so. Teaching is perceived to be a stressful job, and not having the foundation of support can lead to burnout. Concerning prior research, Steiner (2014) states burnout as the leading cause of teachers leaving the profession. Assuring that a healthy balance is created, and proper skills are developed can maintain a campus culture of retention and help increase stable teachers in the classroom.

Implications for Practice

The study's findings contributed to the body of knowledge about alternative certification programs and their effects on teacher preparedness. A plethora of literature examines alternative programs, but very few discuss the perspective of the teacher working in a high-needs elementary school. Despite being solely from the teacher's perspective, data from the study provided valuable information regarding issues surrounding preparation. Evaluating structure of the programs, content provided, and support given to interns may benefit stakeholders (e.g., teachers, administrators, and alternative certification program personnel) who could all benefit from this study's findings. According to a poll conducted by National Education association (2022), there are 62% of Black and 59% of Hispanic educators, who are already underrepresented in education, looking to leave the profession. Delving into these areas could help alleviate the crisis.

Implications for Evaluating Structure of the Programs

The varying structures of the programs investigated in this study were purposeful in learning how teachers were developing. Most of the programs discussed were either hybrid or online based; with only two participants reporting they completed their program in-person. Teachers indicated that the learning material was done online and were required to attend monthly in-person seminars on various topics. This portion of the program was only up until the individual passed their content exams. Of the seven participants interviewed, the two who reported feelings of preparedness were the two who attended fully in-person programs. That said, teachers benefited from programs that

predominately provided in-person instruction with minimal online activity. The outcomes of this study may influence program personnel to examine how the structure of their programs impacts intern learning.

Implications for Misaligned Content

Teacher self-efficacy can be greatly impacted by the expectations set forth before entering the profession. Misaligned content can mislead teachers to experience a false sense of preparedness and lead to role stress and burnout. It is the program's responsibility to offer relatable and accurate content for the effective and efficient development of teachers. The outcome of this study may also assist with the restructuring of the curriculum provided in alternative programs. Ensuring content is aligned and relevant will create more confident teachers with applicable skills and knowledge.

This will also benefit administrators as they will have effective teachers in classrooms that can set realistic goals and opportunities for growth within the classroom. Education research has shown that teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in raising student achievement (Putman, 2021). Because classroom management impacts student achievement, teachers and administrators must align with expectations to implement best practices needed in the classroom.

Implications for Support of Interns

Alongside providing proper content, levels of appropriate support can shape the outlook of teachers in alternative programs. Teachers can benefit from observations, professional development, seminars, webinars, and other resources provided by alternative programs to help them navigate their first year (Putman, 2021). Additionally, alternative certification personnel should understand the effects of support on their interns. In doing

so, programs may better understand how providing proper support can benefit the success of teachers and students. The outcomes of this study may also prompt program personnel to examine the structure of support their coaches provide interns during their first year.

This study's primary objective was to investigate and describe the experiences of teachers who completed alternative programs and how well-prepared they felt to work in high-needs elementary schools. The results from this study are relevant to how individuals perceive themselves as teachers and their perception of how others may perceive them. These outcomes may be accomplished by program personnel and teachers working together to discuss detailed outcomes to improve program structure.

By interviewing teachers, the researcher found that there can be ways to collaborate and achieve the outcomes outlined. Each participant provided insight based on their perspective and was authentic in their responses. This research prompts a discussion on the perceived lack of preparedness among teachers who complete these programs. That discussion should be held on a continuum to diminish the negative connotation of alternative certification programs.

To summarize, the implications of this study included evaluating structure of the programs, content provided, and support given to interns. Program personnel should assess structures of programs and how teachers are learning and developing from their programs. Program personnel should also review the curriculum provided to ensure it is relevant and relatable to what teachers will experience in the classroom. Additionally, program personnel should investigate the expectations of support given by the coaches and mentors provided through the programs to adhere to the needs of the interns.

Recommendations for Programs

The findings of this research acknowledged there were areas of improvement needed in programs to foster confidence in interns. The researcher recommends that all programs evaluate and revise their overall structure, if needed, to fit the needs of individuals completing the program. The researcher advises teachers and administrators to collaborate and express their areas of concern with the programs to enable change. The researcher suggests this not only be done through surveys but allow interviews for participants to be able to express themselves fully. Doing so allows for the authentic voice of the educator to be heard and leaves little room for misinterpretation.

Overall, teachers' perceptions of preparedness were influenced by their programs. The findings revealed that teachers felt the content provided didn't translate over into their real work experiences, the supports given were minimal and inconsistent, and the unrealistic expectations led to teacher stress and burnout of the profession. Unfortunately, that notion might lead to declining numbers of teacher retention and program credibility.

Other recommendations include (a) establish committees to collaborate with programs on a quarterly basis, (b) develop curriculum that speaks to working in Title One schools, and (c) provide lessons to develop skills for work-home-life balance to reduce stress and increase teacher longevity.

In conclusion, the researcher encourages programs to implement strategies to create a source of communication between programs and districts employing their interns. To create an environment that benefits all stakeholders, programs should prioritize supporting interns during their first year. Finally, when teachers, administrators,

and programs collaborate and create strategies, they should implement established strategies so that programs can aid in preserving prepared teachers (Putman, 2021).

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study provide alternative programs with additional reasons to reassess their structure and collaborate with teachers to find strategies for improved support. Due to the impact of programs on teacher's perceptions of preparedness, it is vital to look at strategies to enable better outcomes of teacher development.

The first recommendation suggested is to conduct a similar study and include the perception of school administration. Not only should support be given from the programs, but there should also be an element of school support. Knowing their perceptions would acquire a more comprehensive perspective of the development of alternatively certified teachers. The second recommendation would be to include the perspectives of program personnel to allow insight into the reasoning of choices made by the program itself. The final recommendation is to include student achievement data to determine the effectiveness of teachers who complete the programs. The primary instrument was interview questions, and the use of multiple methods to research the same issue to triangulate the data may improve the research findings.

Conclusion

The intention for undertaking this study was fueled by the researcher's passion for providing black and brown students a fair and equal education opportunity which begins with providing them with a well-prepared teacher. The goals were to: (a) highlight the authentic voice of the educator who completed an alternative certification program, (b) understand their perceptions of preparedness, (c) offer solutions that may increase the

self-efficacy of teachers, and (d) identify concepts that might be used in programs that may enhance teacher retention.

In the research, it was found that there are various tools and programs that schools can use to ensure they are providing resources to produce well-prepared teachers. It is a goal that this study would give programs useful information on the issues teachers face and suggestions to overcome them. By completing this study, the researcher has gained a better understanding on the needs of alternative teachers as well as the challenges and complexity related to it. As the journey continues, the researcher will strive to adhere to these findings and help shape alternative certification programs to better meet the needs of the teachers who complete them.

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APENDIX A



**Title One
Educators**

**RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
NEEDED!**

Do you work on a Title 1 Elementary Campus?
Did you complete, or going through, an ACP in
Texas? If so, please complete the
questionnaire with the link below for the
chance to participate in an interview and earn
a gift card!

<https://forms.gle/8R71EpftH9j87Ks69>
osorioaa@hbu.edu

