TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS TO ESTABLISH

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, Sabra Rose Battle. I am your wildest

dreams come true. I know you are beaming at all that I have been able to accomplish

since you departed in 2013. GED to Ed.D, Momma! #FavorEd.D

This is also dedicated to my village of family and friends.

"Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands—

establish the work of our hands."

Psalm 90:17 CSB

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ABSTRACT

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS TO ESTABLISH

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Novice teachers are leaving the classroom within five years. Educator preparation programs are preparing teachers, but improvement is needed to meet the culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms of today. Transitioning from pre-service to in-service teacher can feel insurmountable while establishing the classroom environment, managing student behavior, and preserving well-being. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine novice teachers' perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment.

Overall, traditional certified teachers exhibit a higher sense of preparedness than alternative certified teachers due to instructional design incorporating deliberate practice in the field. Certification route influences the pre-service teacher's preparedness to establish the learning environment. Race and ethnicity does influence preparedness to

manage student behavior for both certification routes. In addition, there is a relationship between race and ethnicity and meeting behavioral needs of students with disabilities for the traditional and alternative certified teacher. Qualitive results indicated that the first-year is challenging and filled with harsh realities despite preparation route. Respondents also identified their misunderstanding with establishing a safe and accessible classroom. The most valuable experiences to aid in establishing the learning environment was student teaching, internships, and any time observing and practicing in the field. Teachers of color expressed inequitable practices but were motivated to teach because of special connections with students.

Based on the results of this study, policy makers should uniform the student teaching schedule requiring high impact experiences across all four domains in traditional programs and increase the field-based hours for alternative programs. EPPs must alter instructional design to close the gap in understanding of a safe and accessible classroom. District administrators must enact new teacher academies and mentoring across a three-year span. Campus administrators should implement a scaffolded approach to support novice teacher efficacy, practice, and well-being.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of student needs and diversity in today's classroom makes establishing a positive productive learning environment an arduous feat for a novice teacher. Research indicates that novice teachers are leaving the field of education because of emotional stress and exhaustion, yet they have the most significant impact on student outcomes (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Rasanen et al., 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Shu, 2022). Educator preparation programs have missed the mark in connecting theory to practice through evidenced-based strategies, deliberate practice, and on-going support therefore, thwarting positive outcomes for student and teacher (Booker, 2022; CCSSO, 2018; Cummings & Swindell, 2019; Puteh et al., 2015). Teachers of color lack a sense of belonging, a safe place emotionally and psychologically, while White female teachers dominate the field of education (Bettini et al., 2022; Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; Matthews, 2019). This study is intended to examine first year teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. This chapter will describe the research problem in the study, the significance of the study, the research purpose, and questions, and give the definitions of key terms.

Research Problem

The learning environment, if not established to be a safe and productive place for teacher and student, hinders positive outcomes for teacher and student (Burdick & Corr, 2021; CCSSO, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2018). Classrooms are changing, student needs are more complex due to the dynamics of our world (CCSSO, 2019; Turner 2022). With these changes, societal challenges and student complexities, a novice teacher who is unable to effectively establish a learning community will prevent positive student

1

outcomes from occurring (DePaoli et al., 2017; Grover et al., 2021; Zook, 2020). In extreme cases, teachers without evidenced-based tools and efficacy will victimize their students because they too feel like victims (Lopez et al., 2020). Novice teachers feel victimized by challenging students (Aksoy & Korkmaz, 2020; Kuhn et al., 2021), unendurable working conditions (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Nakajima & Goode, 2019), too much work and too little pay and support (Burkhauser, 2017; Elyashiv, 2019). The learning environment which encompasses classroom culture and climate, should "emanate humanity, dignity, and respect for all" which is the "moral obligation" of educator preparation programs (Carter-Andrews et al., 2018, p. 205). Unfortunately, our novice teachers who bring energy and fresh ideas to the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2018) are leaving the field of education before they fully mature to assuage the dissonance of their pre-service and in-service realities (Doran, 2020; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Paz Tagle, 2019; Shank & Santiague, 2022; Warsame & Valles, 2018).

Much of the research attributes teacher attrition to emotional stress and exhaustion (Goldring et al., 2018; Kaufman et al., 2021; Rasanen et al., 2020). In addition, working conditions, specifically classroom management is one of the predominant reasons touted because it requires advanced student-teacher interaction strategies to create and maintain a positive, productive learning environment where all children feel safe social and emotionally, physically, and academically (AECF, 2022; McCarthy et al., 2016; OSG, 2021). Another prevalent issue is the underrepresentation of teachers of color, being called "one of the most critical equity issues" impacting student belonging and identity (CCSSO, 2019, p. 7). Students, more importantly students of color benefit richly from a teacher of their likeness in the learning environment (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Gershenson et al., 2016, 2017) yet, teachers of color experience disenfranchisement to the point of eroding their ability to belong and be

2

authentic in school settings (Bettini et al., 2022; Jiang et al., 2019). There are ample studies that provide insight as to the perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding classroom management (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Doran, 2020; Powers, 2012; Uribe-Zarain et al., 2019). However, there is a gap in the literature offering the novice teacher's perspective of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to help establish the learning environment with the current issues facing the teacher and the classroom.

Significance of the Study

For all students to thrive and reach their fullest potential, the learning environment must be positive, safe, and affirming with teachers being able to use an arsenal of evidenced based culturally and linguistically responsive strategies (CCSSO, 2018; Center on PBIS, 2022). Educator preparation programs are designed to prepare teachers to be effective on day one to create a positive, productive classroom environment with clear expectations and supportive management (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Pearson, 2022; TAC, 2022) yet, these basic strategies are ineffective to meet the complexity of needs and diversity of students (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Muniz, 2019) Teachers are instrumental and pivotal in helping students succeed but they are reluctantly leaving the field of education due to low job satisfaction, unenduring work conditions, never-ending workload, and lack of leadership support (Haynes, 2022; Rumsey & Milsom; 2019; Turner, 2022; Yang et al., 2018). Disproportionately teachers of color are too exiting the field after efforts to increase their presence in classrooms but, the lack of support, inequitable expectations, diminished sense of belonging overrides their altruistic reasons for becoming a teacher (Bettini et al., 2022; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gist, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Sleeter, 2017).

The findings from this study may positively contribute to the body of research and existing information on how to effectively prepare teachers to be competent and

confident in establishing the classroom environment for all types of learners. Knowledge gathered could be used to identify and mitigate gaps during pre-service and in-service educator preparation to better prepare teachers to create safe and productive environments for students and themselves. Moreover, data gathered could also assist districts and organizations in providing ongoing training, recruitment, and retention for all EC-12 teachers, especially teachers of color.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What are novice teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certification programs?

RQ2: Does certfication route (traditional or alternative) influence teacher perception of preparedness scores in supporting the learning environment?

RQ3: Does race/ethnicity influence teacher perception of preparedness scores in supporting the learning environment?

H_a: Race/ethnicity does significantly impact teacher's perception of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certificate programs.

RQ4: What are novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to face the realities of today's classroom?

Definition of Key Terms

Alternative Certification Program (ACP): Alternative certification programs are defined as a nontraditional route to certification that may allow teaching while completing

4

requirements located in universities, school districts, education service centers, community colleges and private organizations *(TEA, 2022).*

Classroom environment: classroom environment is a construct of the *Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 Standards* which means a teacher knows how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive (Pearson, 2022).

Classroom management: is a construct of the *Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 Standards* which means a teacher understands strategies for creating an organized and productive learning environment and for managing student behavior (Pearson, 2022).

In-service teacher: In-service teacher can be defined as a teacher that has certification or is already teaching in a classroom (Koellner & Greenblatt, 2021).

Learning environment: the learning environment is described as a place where students feel safe and supported while learning; it is the intermingling of social, emotional, and instruction strategies; it is the physical, social, and emotional climate of the classroom where students can take risks, build relationships, explore, and discover new ideas (Pickett & Fraser, 2010; Stadler-Altman, 2015; Tussey & Haas, 2021).

Novice teacher: Novice teacher is defined as teacher who has zero to three years of teaching experience; a newcomer developing their teaching philosophy, style and classroom management (Franklin et al., 2022; Williams, 2020)

Perceptions: Perception indicates the organization, interpretation, and consciously experienced information processed through our senses. Perception impacts our beliefs, values, prejudices, expectations, and life experiences (University of Central Florida, n.d.)

Pre-service teacher: A pre-service teacher is an individual enrolled in a teacher preparation program; receiving training and supervision prior to become a certified teacher (Ibrahim & Johnson, 2021; Lawver, 2022).

Traditional Certification Program: Traditional certification programs are defined as a route to teacher certification while earning a bachelor's degree or higher at the same time (TEA, 2022).

Teacher perception of preparedness: teacher perception of preparedness is defined as an individual's judgment conceptualized as confidence or self-efficacy in their ability to successfully execute a behavior or task for an intended outcome (Bandura, 2012).

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief of their capacity to execute a course of action to achieve an expected outcome (Bandura, 1977, 1997, 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter provides the context for the need to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. Once the impact, if any, is determined, it can be used to identify and mitigate professional learning gaps during pre-service and in-service preparation for teachers to properly address the students in today's classrooms. Teachers are pivotal to successful student outcomes through the establishing of learning environments where safety and belonging is paramount (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Chapter two will provide a discussion of the literature relevant to the topic including learning environment.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

21st century classroom challenges are prompting novice teachers to exit the field before they fully embrace the role, responsibility, and the mindset of a classroom teacher. Educator preparation programs are designed to prepare teachers to be effective on day one to create a positive, productive classroom environment with clear expectations and supportive management (CCSSO, 2018; Center on PBIS, 2022; Darling-Hammond, 2018; Grover et al., 2021; Pearson, 2022; Teacher Standards, 2014); yet there are so many factors that impede an educator's ability to be effective. As schools returned for fall 2022, 44% of schools reported as being understaffed (IES, 2022). This study focuses on novice teachers' perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to equip them with the necessary skills to establish the learning environment. Therefore, this chapter will examine the novice teacher, the issues facing the novice teacher and their classroom, and perceptions of preparedness from the novice teacher. In addition, this chapter will summarize teacher preparation, the learning environment, and finally teacher diversity.

Theoretical Framework

This study will incorporate the underpinnings of Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT), and Self-Efficacy Theory as a dual framework (Arghode et al., 2017; Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1994, 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Stites et al., 2018). Social cognitive learning theory posits that learning is an alteration of mental processes that creates the capacity to demonstrate different behaviors as result of triadic reciprocity or reciprocal interactions between behavioral, environmental, and personal factors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). SCLT acknowledges that between the individual and their environment, structural and social, there is a constant interaction of these three

7

factors that form or influence behavior (Bandura, 1977; Nabavi, 2012; Schunk, 2012).

Schunk & DiBenedetto (2020) stated,

> Each set of influences on human functioning affects the others and is in turn affected by them. What people think can affect their actions and environments, actions can alter their thoughts and environments, and environments can influence individuals' thoughts and actions (p. 2).

The factors that determine a teacher's behavior are:

Cognitive Factors (also called Personal Factors)

- Knowledge

- Expectations

- Attitudes

Behavioral Factors

- Skills

- Practice

- Self-efficacy

Environmental Factors

- Social norms

- Access in community

- Influence on others (ability to change own environment)

Furthermore, Bembenutty et al., (2015) stated that Bandura considered "individuals to be agents of change who develop and adapt with the intention to influence their own functioning and goals while maintaining control over their outcomes and environment" (p. 11).

Using Bandura's reciprocal interactions as detailed in Schunk & DiBenedetto (2020), the personal influences motivate an individual to choose to be a teacher, where to

teach, what to teach and shapes the outcome they hope to have in the lives of children. What a pre-service teacher learns before and after their educator preparation program are the behavioral factors that impact how a teacher establishes the learning environment. Lastly, the environmental factors intertwined with the teacher's behavioral factors influence their initial cognitive factors (Bandura, 1986); Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Schunk and Usher (2019) add that an individual is shaped by personal factors such as the emotions, beliefs, and perceptions while the behavioral factors of influence are choice of task, effort, perseverance, and achievement (Schunk, 2012).

Self-efficacy theory is a subset of social cognitive learning theory (Bhati & Sethy, 2022). Self-efficacy theory as defined by Bandura (1977, 1997, 2006) is a person's belief of their capacity to execute a course of action to achieve an expected outcome. Schunk (2012) continues that "self-efficacy is influenced by the outcomes of behaviors (goal progress and achievement) and by input from the environment (feedback from peers and administrators, social comparisons with peers)" (p. 108). There are four factors that inform an individual's level of self-efficacy: actual performance, nonperformance experiences, persuasion from peers, and physiological and emotional indicators such as stress and anxiety (Flowers III, etal., 2016; Lau et al., 2018). The study of self-efficacy or teacher self-efficacy by Gibson and Dembo (1984) was further expanded by Soodak and Podell (1997) that identified three factors of teacher efficacy: (a) personal efficacy, a teacher's judgement about their capacity to execute a specific activity, (b) outcome efficacy, a teacher's judgement that their skills, actions or strategies impact student outcomes, and (c) teacher efficacy, a teacher's judgement regarding the environmental factors that influence their teaching. Overall, teacher self-efficacy is paramount in teacher's feeling prepared to establish the learning environment plagued with a diversity

of needs and issues, which is a prevalent issue increasing teacher attrition (Ballantyne &
Retell, 2020; Madigan et al., 2021; Perera et al., 2018; Renbarger et al., 2019).

The Novice Teacher

The novice teacher is commonly referred to as a pre-service teacher, beginning
teacher, first-year teacher or a teacher with less than three years of teaching experience
(Britt, 2022; Bettini et al., 2018; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Pritchard, 2017; Wilhelm et
al., 2021). Pre-service teachers are drawn to the field based on intrinsic values (internal
joy for teaching), altruistic values (desire to serve in a noble profession), job benefits
(security and vacations) and meaningful relationships (Bergmark et al., 2018; Struyven et
al., 2013; Thomson et al., 2012). The novice teacher is growing or accumulating
knowledge and schema (Wolff et al., 2020); they are new to the role, responsibilities, and
character of a classroom teacher. Research identifies that novice teachers, all over the
world have shared experiences including low self-efficacy, classroom management
(Shank & Santiague, 2021; Zhukova, 2018), unmanageable workloads, difficulty
adjusting to the role (Cakmak et al., 2019), managing time, little to no administrative
support, dissonance between pre-service and in-service realities, and incongruent values
(Huang et al, 2019; Warsame & Valles, 2018). The transition period of novice teachers
can feel insurmountable with limited experience when trying to manage instruction, the
responsibilities of the classroom, and personal self-preservation (Martinez et al., 2016;
Meyers et al., 2019) which contributes to approximately 50% of novice teachers leaving
the classroom within five years (Coffey et al., 2019; Guthery & Bailes; 2022; Lindquist
& Nordanger, 2016; Maready et al., 2020; Zavelevsky et al., 2022). The beginning
teacher is burdened with little to no support from administrators with insufficient
leadership skills (Gordon, 2020) and high expectations, therefore increasing pressure that
feels unendurable (Nakajima & Goode, 2019) These challenges lead to stress, burnout,

decreased self-efficacy, low job satisfaction, and ultimately an intent to leave the classroom (Goffe, 2020; Baker, 2018; Ismayilova & Klassen, 2019; Meacham et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik; 2016, 2020). The preparation a novice teacher receives from their education preparation program whether traditional or alternative should adequately provide preparation to create a safe, productive learning environment, yet stakeholders believe programs can be more effective and collaborative to support teachers (García & Weiss, 2019; Goldhaber, 2019; Hammond, 2020; Hood et al., 2022; James, 2019; Lederman, 2020; Whitford, 2018). The novice teacher struggles psychologically and instructionally (Rees, 2015) and when they struggle so do their students (Goldrick, 2016).

The Issues Impacting the Novice Teacher in Today's Classroom

The classroom is a complex environment with both the teacher and student having unique needs that must be addressed to have successful outcomes (Geiger & Pivivarova, 2018; Hallman et al., 2022; Hill-Jackson et al., 2022; Mitchell, 2022). The current reality is that the modern-day classroom is a smorgasbord of students from different backgrounds with different needs (Hossain, 2019; Wasserman, 2021) from all socioeconomic levels creating a landscape diversity and complexity for the novice teacher (Tarbutton, 2018). As such, the classroom teacher must be equipped to teach and manage the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of the children all while increasing their own growth and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2018; Simonsen et al., 2021). Although, the intricacies of the classroom were great prior to 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified student needs and the landscape of teaching and learning for the student and the teacher (Allen et al., 2020; Dilberti et al., 2021; Hamilton et al., 2020). Learning gaps, the absence of one-on-one academic support, food scarcity, inaccessible mental health resources, homelessness and a lack of school supplies are the biggest challenges facing students in the 2022-2023 school year, according to a survey of 4,103

11

PK-12 teachers from all 50 states, (Karbowski, 2022). The impact of these challenges adds to the urgency of educators to be responsive and diversified in their direct support to all students (Bartholomay, 2021).

The Issue of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Public schools in the United States are increasingly becoming more diverse racially, ethnicity, socio-economically, culturally, and linguistically (NCES, 2022b; Small, 2021; Wells, 2020). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, from fall 2009 to fall 2020 the number of White and Black students decreased while the number of Hispanic students increased (2022b). The report projects that between fall 2020 and fall 2030, the number of White and Black students will continue to decrease as Hispanic enrollment into U.S. public schools increase (NCES, 2022a). The number of students who identify as English Learners (Els) was higher in fall 2019 than in fall 2010 with three states reporting the highest number of ELs enrolled in public schools: Texas (19.6%), California (18.6%) and New Mexico (16.5%) (NCES, 2022a). 75% of all Els designate Spanish as the home language, 7.9% Arabic, and 2% Chinese (NCES, 2022a).

The novice teacher needs a complex set of skills and abilities to better serve the diverse populations in the classroom today. Currently, there is no consensus on professional standards in teacher preparation in the United States that ensures nationwide measures of accountability and operationalization of a culturally responsive learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 2020; and Muniz (2019) surface the lack. Presently, educator preparation programs vary in "structure, content and quality" across the 50 states in the U.S. (Darling-Hammond, 2020, p. 61) and to meet the diversity of needs in today's classroom there is a call for universal culturally responsive teaching (CRT) standards with "clear metrics, guidance, professional learning avenues, and evaluation strategies" (CCSSO, 2018, p. 10). Taylor et al., (2016) examined 80 novice teacher's

perceptions towards multicultural education and teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. The participants were primarily White females who chose to teach in an area predominately Hispanic area in the state of Georgia. The research findings indicated that the novice teachers recognized the need for multicultural education but were not prepared to be culturally and linguistically responsive (Taylor et al., 2016). Small (2021) studied eight novice teachers' perceptions of preparedness to meet the needs of culturally diverse students after completing their educator preparation program. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher sought to discover how the teachers embodied race and racism from their coursework and how the coursework impacted their interactions with culturally diverse students. Small (2021) concluded that the participant's cultural diversity university coursework took participants "through the motions" or as a participant stated, "they [the university] are just trying to check off a box," instead of providing practical experience to mitigate racial and cultural disparities in education (p. 122).

On the contrary, Bonner et al., (2018) studied 423 K-12 teachers from urban districts in California who had been fully immersed in CRT. Findings indicated because of CRT, teacher participants appreciated and valued cultural diversity, they believed it was their duty to honor, respect and accept the students' culture, community, and family through differentiation of instruction and experiences (Bonner et al., 2018). Teacher participants expressed that their self-efficacy to teach a diverse student population was high which led to students having "higher achievement, greater acceptance and tolerance, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, higher motivation, better future, as well as societal benefits" (Bonner et al., 2018, p. 715). While progress has been made over the years in educator preparation programs to prepare culturally responsive teachers (Chang & Viesca, 2022; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016), research highlights the impact pre-

service training on classrooms, educator preparation programs can increase a teacher's self-awareness, efficacy, and competence to create a responsive environment where culturally diverse students feel like they belong (Brodeur et al., 2020; Goldhaber, 2019; Muniz, 2019; Taylor et al., 2016; Wells, 2020).

The Issue of Adverse Experiences

Currently the novice teacher is wading through a sea of insurmountable issues and influences from outside the classroom affecting the students inside the classroom in meeting mandates of student academic achievement outcomes (Baker, 2018; Goffe, 2020; Ismayilova & Klassen, 2019; Meacham et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik; 2016, 2020). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the news was already riddled with adverse issues of crime, violence, natural disasters, school shootings, food and supply shortages, housing instability, unemployment, and the rising cost of food and gas (Cookson & Darling-Hammond, 2022; Karbowski, 2022). Research examining the effects of these adverse experiences on students call for teachers to be able to pivot with keen insight and instinct to execute culturally responsive strategies to ensure every student feels safe and supported (Attwood et al., 2022; Burdick & Corr, 2021; Cummings & Swindell, 2019; Duane et al., 2021; Korinek, 2021; Muniz, 2019). According to the National Survey of Children's Health 2019-2020 report of children ages 3-17 years of age, 23% had experienced one adverse childhood experience (ACE), and 41% had experienced two or more ACEs (CAHMI, 2022). In support of these claims, the Center for Disease Control (2019) describes the trauma of the adverse experiences experienced by children derive from (a) emotional abuse, (b) emotional neglect, (c) divorce, (d) loss of a loved one, (e) abandonment, (f) traumatic brain injuries, (g) exposure to domestic abuse, (h) incarceration of a family member, (i) maltreatment, (j) bullying, (k) mental health, or (l) catastrophic events such as natural disasters or shootings (p. 7). It is the conflict of

knowing how to adequately and address these issues and the responsibility to teach the content that contributes to novice teachers leaving the field (Carello & Butler, 2015; Cummings & Swindell, 2019; Pomerance & Walsh, 2020).

Adversity influences learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022) and students dealing with trauma exhibit behaviors such as anger, outbursts, difficulty staying calm, irritability, sleepiness, isolation, aggression, self-inflicted injuries, depression (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Educators, novice, and veteran, are expected to remain emotionally constant, de-escalate, and provide coping mechanisms to students without seeking help from administration (Beaman-Diglia, 2018; Hosinger & Hendricks-Brown; 2019). Educator preparation programs typically cover basic classroom management strategies, considered whole-class management (Pomerance & Walsh, 2020) but fail to provide deep content knowledge on how to apply trauma-informed practices that impact the environment, relationships, and student self-regulation (Table 2.1) so that students can thrive (Attwood et al., 2022; Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018; Stites et al. 2021). Table 2.1 depicts the adeptness required from a novice teacher to increase the sensitivity and responsiveness.

Table 2.1
Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Strategies

Environment	Relationships	Self-Regulation
Welcoming, positive signage, daily greeting	Greet students by name every day	Identify and validate emotions
Predictable routine, visual schedule posted each day	Use calm, respectful voice & demeanor (unconditional positive regard)	Teach students how to scale emotions (e.g., on a scale of 1-5 how strong, Zones of Regulation
Communicate clear, consistent expectations for ALL activities and settings	Inquire about students' interests & strengths	Teach / Model a variety of deep breathing techniques
Design of physical environment – organized, defined spaces, etc.	Increase opportunities for humor and fun	Yoga poses (e.g., Yoga Pretzels, Yoga for the Classroom)
Consider lighting, alternative seating, calming music, etc.…	Hold regular class meetings or proactive circles	Mindfulness (e.g., Mind Up Curriculum, Mindfulness for Kids)
Provide a safe space for calming (e.g.,"peace corner," "meditation room," passes to take a break, etc.)	Use behavior specific praise for academic skills and behavior (Identify skill. behavior; not just good job)	Sensory items available for use (stress ball, fidgets, etc.…)
Active supervision; be aware of students' body language, tone of voice, emotional state	Plan activities and move seating frequently to help peers develop connections	Coloring Mandalas, Zentangle, etc.
Prepare students for transitions, give advance notice, use common signal	Use cooperative learning strategies to increase engagement	Movement / brain breaks (e.g., Go Noodle, Move to Learn, CosmicKids, Fuel Up to Play)
Monitor seating arrangements	Provide opportunities for helpful	Incorporate themes of emotion

	participation (jobs, mentor, etc.)	regulation into curriculum / literature
Communicate safety procedures & how you will handle situations	Address issues / concerns in private NOT public	Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Use positive recognition / reward systems and logical consequences NOT systems based on punitive consequences or take away	Assume positive intentions – Often students struggle because of lagging skills (punishment will not create the skills they need)	Establish a safe/quiet place for students who feel overwhelmed (e.g., peace corner, meditation space)
Increase engagement, provide student voice and choice in learning / projects	Collaborative problem-solving - Include the student when developing plan	Talk about, teach, and model stress management

Note. This table explains the teacher actions within the three components of a trauma-sensitive classroom. From "Preparing Trauma-Sensitive Teachers: Strategies for Teacher Educators," by C. Honsinger & M. H. Brown, 2019, Teacher Educators' Journal, 12, pp. 145-146. Copyright 2019, The Teacher Educators' Journal.

Furthermore, the novice teacher has to be knowledgeable of the strategies from Table 2.1, proficient in the strategy's purpose and be able to effectively execute the strategy appropriately (Honsinger & Brown, 2019). Managing behavior and instruction requires a witness to address the behavior, keep instructional pace, and be ever alert to distinguish potential behavior (Mikulec & Hamaan, 2020). Research has indicated that there is a disconnect between theory and practice (Karalis-Noel & Finocchio, 2022) and micro-teaching closes the gap to increase a teacher's efficacy through a minilesson, self-study of one's teaching and the study of a peer's teaching (Reddy, 2019). Mikulec and Hamaan (2020) investigated the impact of micro-teaching to deepen understanding and practice of 79 secondary pre-service teachers to handle classroom/behavior management using evidenced-based strategies. The researchers described that while teachers gain experience managing student behavior as a student teacher, it is merely observational

because mentor teachers typically intervene removing the need for pre-service teachers to autonomously diffuse the situation. As a result of participation in the almost three-week micro-teaching project, participants walked away with a greater understanding that outside events and conflicts influences what is happening in the classroom, making student behavior complex (Mikulec & Hamaan, 2020). The lived experiences of novice teachers highlight the diverse complexities that diminish their initial desires to teach, self-efficacy and value dissonance (Attwood et al., 2022; Dell'Angelo, 2016; Pendharker & Lieberman, 2022; Stites et al., 2021) which research supports as an integral part of pre-service teacher education.

The Issue of Challenging and Disruptive Behavior

According to the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), there is an increase in the number of discipline issues being reported in classrooms (2022). When comparing the from the 2009-2010 and 2019-2020 school years, the research indicated an increase in student racial/ethnic tensions (2.8 versus 3.8); student cyberbullying (7.9 versus 15.9); student verbal abuse against teachers (4.8 versus 9.8); widespread disorder in classrooms (2.5 versus 4.1); and student acts of disrespect for teachers other than verbal abuse (8.6 versus 15.3) in American classrooms (2022). This increase over the last ten years specifically explains why novice teachers have low job satisfaction and higher intent to quit (Skaalvik et al., 2020) due to the working conditions including the management of pervasive challenging behaviors (Karalis-Noel, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2020). The 2022 KIDS COUNT Data Book examined mental health statistics of youth ages 3-17. The report indicated that the number of children suffering from trauma, tremendous loss, stress, anxiety, and depression increased by 1.5 million between 2016 and 2020. The CDC (2022) explains the most diagnosed mental disorders among children aged 3-17 in the U.S. are attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, and

18

behavior problems. For many children aged 3-17, mental health disorders can occur together impacting how these students think, feel and act in the classroom (CDC, 2022). Students with mental health disorders are in classrooms failing to concentrate, often withdrawn from teachers and peers, acting out and struggling to make or cope with the dynamics of friendships (OSG, 2021). Parents and teachers describe challenging behaviors as impulsive, aggressive, noncompliant, exhibiting a short attention span and withdrawing from classmates and adults (Hemmeter et al., 2008, as cited in Kuhn et al., 2021). These prevalent classroom behaviors negatively affect peer-to-peer communication, adversely impact the quality of the learning continuum, and hinder the capacity and satisfaction of the classroom teacher (Aksoy & Korkmaz, 2020). The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) (2017) identifies challenging behaviors within two groups, "internalizing" and "externalizing" behaviors. Internalizing is "inward" and can be expressed as "difficulty concentrating, crying, hiding, persistent withdrawal and avoidance" in the classroom. Whereas externalizing problem behaviors are "outward…such as hitting, spitting, running away, screaming and destruction of property" in the learning environment (p. 2).

The Division for Early Childhood (DEC) also states that "adults decide (a) what learning and engagement look like in a setting and (b) when a child's behavior is interfering with learning and engagement (2017, p. 2). Gilliam et al., (2016) explain how a teacher's biases, culture and beliefs specifically pertaining to gender, race, and ethnicity shape how they interpret a behavior to be challenging or disruptive to the learning environment. Irwin et al., (2022) indicated teachers with less than three years of experience demonstrated significantly lower scores than veteran teachers in controlling disruptive behavior, providing clear student behavior expectations, getting students to follow classroom rules and calming students who were too noisy or disruptive were

issues. When novice teachers do not have the ability to assess the situation and intervene, they will escalate the behavior (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Flower et al., 2017). Without sound pre-service training and practice of evidenced-based classroom and behavior management strategies, novice teachers are reportedly less competent in establishing a positive classroom climate for students with challenging behavior (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Kirkpatrick et al., 2021; Stevenson, 2020).

The Issue of the Inclusive Classroom

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) states that students with disabilities have a right to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) which is the general education classroom. According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2020-2021 report, there were 7.2 million students, nearly 15% of public-school students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (15% White, 17% Black, 14% Hispanic and 19% American Indian/Alaska Native). Students with an IEP are classified within 13 disability categories: Specific Learning Disability (SLD); Other Health Impairments (OHI); Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD); Emotional Disturbance (ED); Speech and Language Impairment; Visual Impairment and Blindness; Deafness; Hearing Impairment; Deaf-Blindness; Orthopedic Impairment; Intellectual Disability; Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); Multiple Disabilities (Heller et al., 2019; Teacher Standards, 2014; Valle & Connor, 2019). The LRE is the optimal place for a student with disabilities needs to be met, which is most commonly the general education classroom (Kenny, 2019). In 2019, The U.S. Department of Education reported, that 65% of students with disabilities were taught in the general education class for 80% or more of the school day (2022) even more why research highlights the importance for special education coursework and practice during pre-service training (Stites et al., 2018, 2021; Rakap et al., 2017). This is the "definition of a wicked problem" (Sailor, 2017, p. 1)

because novice teachers are nascent in their shift away from perceiving students with disabilities as deficit in skills and capacity (Sailor et al., 2018). Novice general education teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and efficacy, to meet the needs of students with disabilities but they feel unprepared and desire professional development (Crisan et al., 2020; Rasskazov & Muller, 2017). As well, Stites et al., (2021) found that novice general education teachers felt anxious and unsuccessful because during pre-service coursework, teachers had not envisioned the classrooms to include students with disabilities. The lack the hands-on experiences, mentoring and special education coursework given to novice general education teachers (Sindelar et al., 2014; Stites et al., 2018, 2021) compared to those specializing in special education, impacts their attitude, growth mindset, competence, and confidence, making them less effective to fostering an inclusive setting (Dunst et al., 2014; Crisan et al., 2020).

The Issue of Minimal Administrative Support

School leader learning and development is as essential as teacher learning and development (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Much of the research identifies administrative support as a major motivation factor in teachers leaving the field (Burkhauser, 2017) Budde et al., 2021; Farmer, 2020; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Mack et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Grissom et al., (2021) indicated that building administrators need people skills to foster strong relationships of trust, instructional skills to support what is happening in the classrooms, and organizational skills to operationalize and systematize the inner and outer workings of a school. These three skills must then be integrated with behaviors and practices to drive teacher and student outcomes (Grissom et al., 2017). The behaviors and practices are: (a) instructionally focused interactions with teachers, (b) cultivating a positive and productive climate, (c) facilitating a collaborative learning

community, and (d) strategically managing people and resources (Grissom et al, 2021. p. 58).

Previous research also identified that to build leader capacity, skills and behaviors it is best achieved through: (a) job embedded learning, (b) a triangulation of teacher and school improvement with principal practice, (c) an equalization of the instructional and operational aspect of the role, and finally (d) leader development coaches to scaffold learning for any level leader (Crawford et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2022: Meyer-Looze, 2021). Westberry and Horner (2022) contend that the school district's blame principal preparation programs for the deficits seen in leaders but fail to realize that much of the learning and development of a new principal falls on the district. Only 50% of principals reported having had coaching while in-service (Wise & Cavazos, 2017) and to further augment this view, Westberry (2020) adds that from the time a teacher obtains an administrative certification to serve as an assistant principal, they are at least ten years removed from that program training. Much of the preparation prior to sitting in the captain's seat as the school principal is under the district's purview and guidance. The average time a teacher remains in the role after receiving their leader certificate is five years and the average tenure of an assistant principal is an additional five years (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022; Westberry, 2020).

Leaders themselves provide an alternative view to the issue of teacher attrition. Elyashiv (2019) analyzed 131 school leaders' open-ended responses on what should be done to mitigate teacher attrition with 60% of leaders reported improve occupational conditions. Respondents conveyed that increasing teacher compensation, reducing the workload and time required, and improving the status of the teachers could increase job satisfaction. In addition, Elyashiv (2019) revealed that 29% of leaders believed that improving the workplace environment (reducing number of students, increasing teacher

autonomy and voice, and more opportunities to learn and develop) would decrease teacher attrition. Principals have a direct impact on teacher job satisfaction in relation to time and task, resources, and professional development (Burkhauser, 2017) and they can reduce their motivation to leave through sustaining a positive school climate (Grissom et al., 2018).

The Fallout of Issues Impacting the Novice Teacher in Today's Classroom

The current state of teaching is multidimensional, multilayered, and multifaceted in its issues (Wassermann, 2021). Teachers must be equipped with the knowledge of learner, subject, and teaching to effectively support a child (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). The current teaching climate identifies that the workforce has created a dichotomy of less experienced teachers and older teachers (Ingersoll, 2021; 2022). The reigning profile of a 2017-2018 teacher is a White female, who has graduated from a traditional teacher certification program, holds a master's degree, and teaches elementary in a traditional public school located in a town with approximately 10-20 years of experience (NCES, 2019). Research reveals that teachers' have conflict in their perception of their preparedness for the role and responsibility of the educator in today's context (Doran, 2020, Koehler et al., 2013; Powers, 2012; Small, 2021; Uribe-Zarain et al., 2019). Teachers are stressed, burned out (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020), and making the decision with less than five years in the classroom to exit the field of education altogether (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019). Aside from the challenges addressed in the above section focused on variables impacting the novice teacher's classroom, this section of the literature review will examine teacher attrition, teacher stress and burnout, and finally the greening and graying effect impacting the novice teacher in today's classroom.

Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition is defined as the leaving of the profession other than for the reason of retirement (Kelchtermans, 2017). Teacher attrition is the driving force behind the shortage of educators impacting students PK-12 today (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2019; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). There is gap in updated research data post the COVID-19 pandemic on teacher attrition because of a lack of comprehensive national data that is typically released from The National Center for Education Statistics which provides The School and Staffing Survey (SASS) was last released 2011-2012 (Esbenshade, 2022). According to Goldhaber & Theobald (2022) presently, teacher attrition trends are aggregated from state and district reports, associations, and organizations until federal or national data is released. The researchers examined Washington state, despite what major headlines reported, teacher attrition only rose 1% for the state between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. Due to the uncertainty of the economy many teachers remained in their positions and switched schools in greater numbers than leaving the profession, in comparison to the 2006-2007 school year where teachers left the profession in greater numbers than during the pandemic year (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022). The Institute of Education Statistics (2022) reports reasons for staff vacancies as of January 2022 due to resignation (51%) and retirement (21%) for teaching staff (IES, 2022).

The June 2022 Data Collection of the School Pulse Panel, sampled almost 859 public elementary, middle, high and combined schools to examine staffing leading into the 2022-2023 school year (IES, 2022). The data conveyed that 62% of schools were anxious about finding teachers to fill vacancies and public schools were preparing to fill an average of three teaching positions (IES, 2022). In fact, 69% of schools stated there were not enough applicants for open teaching positions and 64% of the applicants did not

meet the qualifications for a teaching position (IES, 2022). The School Pulse Panel August 2022 data collection also identified that the highest vacancies are in special education (65%), general elementary (43%), mental health staffing (49%), and English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual education (33%) (IES, 2022). The impact of these vacancies is forcing public schools to use "non-teaching staff outside of their intended duties" to serve as classroom substitutes and "teachers outside of their intended duties" to cover classes during their planning periods (IES, 2022). Equally important, 69% of schools stated there were not enough applicants for open teaching positions and 64% of the applicants did not meet the qualifications for a teaching position (IES, 2022)

Hall and Giles (2022) studied five levels of teacher experience (< 5, 6 – 15, 16 – 25, 26- 35, and > 36 years) to determine what effected teacher attrition the most. The researcher examined 2011-2012 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-up Survey from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Hall and Giles (2022) found that the largest differences existed between educators with 6-15 years of experience and those with 25 years and more. In addition, the data showed that teachers with 6-15 years of experience departed the profession because of salary, lack of advancement opportunities or the inability to deepen their practice through intentional professional development. Additionally, Hall and Giles (2022) reported that teachers with less than five years of experience were motivated to leave teaching largely due to relocation and moderately due to classes outside of education and a need for job security. The researchers state that the need for novice teachers to take classes outside of the field of education highlights their initial pre-service training and orientation and whether they understood the role and responsibility of teaching at onset (Hall & Giles, 2022; Karalis-Noel, 2020).

Karalis-Noel (2021) further extends the topic of teacher attrition within the K-12 teaching landscape as complex in nature, by indicating the reconciliation of novice teachers' pre-service perceptions with their in-service reality. Pre-service teachers have fantasized what means to educate and are rejecting the harsh realities of the modern-day classroom experience (Karalis-Noel, 2021). The pre-service construction of the teacher identity, role and responsibilities are contributing to novice teachers walking away because the dissonance decreases motivation, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction (Karalis-Noel, 2021; Kelchtermans, 2017). Karalis-Noel (2021) uses the age-old fallacy, "Those who can't do, teach" or "Teaching is an easy career option" to explain the some of the pre-service teacher's mindset. The researcher explains that without intentional intervention and shifts about teaching is viewed and talked about, we will continue to see teachers exit the profession because the fantasy and reality are not congruent (Karalis-Noel, 2021). Karalis-Noel and Finocchio (2022) studied the theories of human, social, structural, and positive psychological capital to examine teacher attrition from five former educators pre-service and in-service experiences. Through the lens of the Human Capital Theory, researchers concluded that insufficient pre-service education influenced teacher attrition because teachers were not prepared to manage classrooms, could not connect theory and practice, and there was a dissension between pre-service ideals and in-service realities (Karalis-Noel and Finocchio, 2022). The Social Capital Theory provided additional teacher attrition insight that top-down culture, interpersonal conflict, and low support and administrator quality was expressed by study participants (Karalis-Noel and Finocchio, 2022). The researchers reported that former teachers explained that cost of living, class size and workload, standardized assessments, and lack of resources were the aspects of Structural Theory that contributed to attrition. Finally, dwindling self-

efficacy, hope for the future, and resilience were the Positive Psychological Theory reasons for never teaching again (Karalis-Noel and Finocchio, 2022).

Teacher Stress and Burnout

Stress, depression, anxiety, and panic disorders are leading to teacher burnout and the motivation to exit the field of teaching (Sandilos, 2015; Mack et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). Greenberg et al., (2016) compares the daily toll of teacher stress to that of an emergency room doctor. According to the School Pulse Panel data, teacher burnout (88%) and teacher health (82%) accounts for the increased concern regarding teachers post the COVID-19 pandemic (IES, 2022). The theory of burnout is characterized in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion; cynicism, and decreased accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Maslach et al., (1986) describe burnout as feeling emotionally overwhelmed by one's work, pessimistic or deeply distrustful of those around the individual, and a lack of feeling competent and confident. Madigan et al., (2021) wanted to understand the exodus of teachers from the field and conducted a meta-analytic examination of (a) the relationship between burnout and teachers' intentions to quit, (b) the relationship between job satisfaction and teachers' intentions to quit, and (c) whether burnout or job satisfaction is more important in predicting teachers' intentions to quit (p. 4). The researchers conducted an exhaustive computerized literature investigation with studies ranging from 1985-2017. The search yielded 1,575 studies that met the search criteria, 59 studies met eligibility, and 24 met the research study criteria. Of the studies reviewed, the sample size of teachers recruited from all over the world was 3,842, average age 37.4 years old, and 72.9% identifying as female. The researchers found that the symptoms of burnout were the strongest predictor of intent to leave the teaching profession over job satisfaction.

The impact of these findings aligns with a seven-year longitudinal study of predictors of teachers' burnout trajectories conducted by Gillet et al., (2022) of 951 teachers with a mean age of 42.7 years and 14.9 years of teaching experience. Participants were 76.2% female and completed the questionnaire at four time periods within their teaching career: initial survey, four months and eight months from initial survey and seven years from initial survey. The quantitative and qualitative data presented three profiles of burnout: (a) Profile 1: Moderate Burnout (46.06%); (b) Profile 2: Low Burnout (39.86%); and (c) Profile 3: High Burnout (14.08%). Participants who presented initially as moderate burnout experienced slight decreasing trajectory over time, low burnout slightly increased over time and high burnout also decreased over time. The findings also conveyed that education level, years of experience, grade level, work schedule, gender, number of children or marital status were not a contributing factor to teacher burnout. Furthermore, Gillet et al., (2022) discovered that High burnout individuals were associated with high initial levels of exiting the teaching field, the use of sedatives and sleeping pills and finally dizziness and fainting but study participants also demonstrated a decrease in burnout over time. Self-efficacy data indicated that a higher sense of self was a mitigating factor against high levels of burnout and that the initial membership into the burnout profiles remained stable over time.

Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2016) attributed teacher stress and the desire to exit the profession to the pressure of time and task. High teacher workload and low teacher time was related to teacher stress and emotional exhaustion increasing the motivation to leave. Previous studies have credited student misbehavior (Nguyen et al., 2020) a lack of administrative support and mentoring (Budde et al., 2021; Farmer, 2020; Gallant & Riley, 2017) and high stakes assessments (Saeki et al., 2018) all to the exodus of novice teachers within five years (Geiger, 2018; Hallman et al., 2022). In 2020, Skaalvik and

Skaalvik, deepened the discussion of the relationships between workload, work resources and the dimensions of teacher burnout of 262 high school teachers. The researchers found that the pressure of reduced time to complete tasks at work or have opportunities of rest and reset was the strongest predictor of emotional exhaustion. Feelings of hopelessness, worry and anxiety were strongly associated with emotional exhaustion.

An additional stress trigger surfacing in the research is misaligned values between the teacher and the school context (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020). Most pre-service teachers enter the field of education in hopes of making their contribution in the well-being of greater society but encounter system values that contend with how they hoped to impact students (Gallant & Riley, 2017). The erasure and censorship of what teachers can teach and expose students to has heightened the value dissonance (Pendharker & Lieberman, 2022).

The Greening and Graying Effect

With 62% of schools reporting an inability to fill teacher vacancies with qualified applicants, there will be an influx of new teachers entering the classroom and an outflux of teachers retiring (IES, 2022). Ingersoll et al., (2021) explained several trends emerging in the field of education, with two of them being the greening and graying of the teacher workforce. The researcher indicated that the data showed that public school teachers "50 years or older increased from less than 500,000 in 1988 to a climax of 1,174,000 in 2008 but decreased to 1,113,000 in 2015-2016" according to Ingersoll (2021, p. 9). After the COVID-19 pandemic, 21% of teacher retention is due to retirement (IES, 2022) The "greening" is characterized by beginning teachers with less than three years of experience, with 2017-2018 showing the average teacher was in their first year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2022). There were 300,000 first-year teachers in 2017-2018 in comparison to 84,000 first-year in-service teachers in 1987-1988 (Ingersoll, 2021).

Podolsky et al., (2019) reviewed 30 studies examining the impact of teaching experience on student outcomes measured by standardized assessments. The researchers found that the number of years teaching is positively associated with increases in student achievement. Podolsky et al., (2019) shared that over time teachers become more effective in their instructional strategies well into their second and third decade of teaching and level off or possibly decline in effectiveness subsequently. The researchers add that supportive, collaborative, and stabile school communities retain effective teachers who then contribute to coaching and mentoring the effectiveness of new teachers (Podolsky et al., 2019). Moreover, Graham et al., (2020) examined whether quality of teaching was influenced by years of experience using the *CLASS*. The observation tool measures the quality of teacher-student interactions in three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (Araujo et al., 2016). Eighty teachers participated with varying years of experience (0-3, 4-5, and >5 years') and in contrast to previous research there was no significant differences in quality of teaching despite the varying years of experience (Graham et al., 2020). The researchers contend that while all three categories show no significant difference in their data, all the age categories of participants were under the threshold of quality, indicating that all could benefit from professional development across all domains. In the end, the greening effect within the field of teaching provides a spring of innovation, hope, and energy while the graying effect leaves our novice teachers absent of the necessary components needed for longevity and sustainability such as leadership and mentoring (Ingersoll et al., 2018).

Novice Teacher's Perception of Preparedness

Teacher perceptions of preparedness from their education preparation programs indicates a dissonance between the training to be "profession-ready and the realities of the profession (Doran, 2020; Koehler, 2013). Attending a teacher preparation program

does not mean one will acquire the necessary skills, ultimately being detrimental to a novice teacher's classroom experience (Lanza, 2020; Paz Tagle, 2019). Greenberg et al., (2014) indicates that many exiting teachers stated they felt prepared but needed more hands-on knowledge and skills in classroom management. In a study on teachers' perceptions of their preparedness, a research participant stated, "Nobody can prepare you for the emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that comes with the first year of teaching" (Paz Tagle, 2019, p. 100) Gaundan & Mohammadnezhad (2018) describe reality shock has as an unsettling and/or jarring experience resulting from a wide disparity between what was expected and what the real situation turned out to be. The difficulty of transitioning from student role to teacher role, causes many teachers to give up on the profession or become discouraged because they were not prepared enough for the diverse roles and responsibilities (Sezen-Gultekin & Sezgin Nartgun, 2018).

Doran (2020) conducted an exploratory study using a qualitative approach describing how first year teachers internalized their program's preparation for work in high-poverty schools. Doran (2020) found that teacher strengths from preparation programs were in the big ideas and principles regarding the necessity of relationship-building, differentiated instruction, and school reform frameworks including Education Teacher Performance Assessments (edTPA), and Common Core curriculum and assessments. Teachers felt the least prepared to handle planning with a curriculum guide, classroom management, general special education issues, strategies for students with academic and behavioral needs, use of informal data to make decisions, and lastly building relationships with students and families which is consistent with existing literature (Bartolome, 2017; Butler & Amaya, 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Graham et al., 2020; Rasanen et al., 2020; Stites et al., 2018).

In a similar study, Powers (2012) studied the perceptions of new teachers' classroom management preparation and their ability to handle classroom management issues during their first year as teacher of record. The results concluded that 40.5% of the participants rated they were unprepared or somewhat prepared in classroom management which previous studies have documented as an area of growth for novice teachers (Booker, 2022; Egeberg et al., 2016; Flower et al., 2017; Koehler et al., 2013; Korpershoek et al., 2016; Shank & Santiague, 2022; Stevenson et al., 2020). Specifically, the data showed that traditionally prepared teachers were 33% more likely to feel prepared to manage their classrooms during their first year than their alternatively prepared peers. The researcher was also able to predict whether the length of the student teaching experience predicted the level of preparation to manage classroom and discovered that first-year teachers with four weeks or less student teaching experience were 42.7% less likely to feel prepared. Student teachers with eight to eleven weeks of student teaching experience were 22.1% less likely to feel prepared in classroom management. Lastly, regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and new teacher classroom management, the results that new teachers were 15.1% less likely to feel prepared as first year teachers managing a classroom. Powers (2012) underlines that classroom management is multifaceted and teacher education programs must juxtapose theory to practice with relationship building with students facilitated by those who can model the best strategies as substantiated by previous studies (Shank & Santiague, 2022; Stevenson et al., 2020).

Uribe-Zarain et al., (2019) studied the differences in perceived issues in teacher preparation between 644 PK-12 first year teachers who completed traditional programs and 497 hosting principals over a three-year survey period. The findings indicated that over three-year interval, the data remained consistent between groups and overall, the

teachers rated themselves more prepared than their principals. Furthermore, teachers' and principals' perceptions of preparedness were congruent in attainment of state standards, positive classroom environment, content, and curriculum. Classroom management, differentiation, and student engagement were the areas where teachers needed more pre-service preparation. The researchers also noted the most challenging for both first-year teachers and principals were student learning, growth, and development and positive classroom environment; specifically, classroom management. Principals explained that teachers needed to effectively manage time to establish classroom protocols and procedures. Principals also stated that teachers didn't know how to manage students were "behaviorally challenged" or dealing "with social-emotional issues" and frequently relied on the front office to assist in these situations (p. 419). Teachers reported that teaching and managing challenging behavior was difficult. First year teachers also highlighted that managing time efficiently was also extremely challenging in establishing and sustaining a positive learning environment. The findings of both the teachers and the principals echo earlier research that first year teacher issues could be mitigated by more pre-service experiences in the classroom to increase understanding in "classroom management, assessment, and differentiation" (p. 425).

Koehler et al., (2013) studied 13 alternative certification science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduate students post clinical teaching experience. The summary of the graduate students' perceived preparation conveyed teachers felt the least prepared in classroom management and educational psychology. All study participants had completed their clinical teaching in urban schools and expressed that administering discipline is not the same as managing all the different issues students exhibit in the classroom while grappling to learn STEM. Moreover, the teachers voiced that handling students with disabilities, assessing the students while

33

"keeping control" was the greatest challenge (p. 50). Koehler et al., posited why these teachers placed in urban schools facing harsh realities such as inadequate resources, low graduation rates, high crime and violence, and a diversity of needs were perceived to be less prepared to effectively manage the classroom.

Small (2021) studied eight novice teachers' perceptions of preparedness to meet the needs of culturally diverse students after completing their educator preparation program. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher sought to discover how the teachers embodied race and racism from their coursework and how the coursework impacted their interactions with culturally diverse students. The research participants included two Black females, three White females, one White male, one Multiracial male and one Multiracial female. The first major finding was six of the participants lacked the lived experience with race and racism whereas the Black females had first-hand experience with race and racism. The second major finding was that teachers were not prepared effectively to teach culturally diverse students. A Black teacher recalled being the only non-White student enrolled and how it impacted the depth of the discussion. The teachers further explained that the cultural diversity classes were missed opportunities of critical engagement because the professors were void of personal experiences with race and racism. The final finding was the need for deliberate practice through practicum, student, or clinical teaching to deepen the understanding and strategies of novice teachers. Despite the hardships of the novice teacher's experiences of preparation, Bloom (2014) highlights there are rewarding times, like meeting new students, becoming a part of and engaging in school community, observing student growth and achievement, engaging with families and developing a professional relationship with colleagues.

Teacher Preparation

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) have been under scrutiny for the lack of high-quality teachers in the classrooms for many years (Goldhaber, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2020; Whitford et al., 2018). To improve EPP quality and accountability, policy makers call for professionalization structures (Ingersoll, 2018a) that dehumanize the field of teaching (Andrews et al., 2016) through high-stakes assessments, fast-track teaching programs without depth, and curriculum with robotic singular focus (Milner, 2013). Currently, there are multiple educator preparation program paths to prepare a teacher to be learner-ready on day one: traditional certification programs (TCPs) and alternative certification programs (ACPs) (Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Matsko et al., 2022; Whitley, 2021). Regardless of the pathway, EPPs are tasked with producing:

> One who is ready on day one of his or her career to model and develop in students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed today, including the ability to think critically and creatively, to apply content to solving real-world problems, to be literate across the curriculum, to collaborate and work in teams, and to take ownership of their own continuous learning. (CCSSO, 2018, p. 2).

Yet, many studies report on the need to improve the effectiveness and quality of teachers because student achievement is dismal (Burroughs et al., 2019; Dunst et al., 2020; Putman et al., 2022). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Nation's Report Card 2019), 34% of 4th graders, 32% of 8th graders and 36% of 12th graders were at or above NAEP proficiency in reading (2019). In math, 40% of 4th graders, 33% of 8th graders and 24% of 12th graders were at or above NAEP proficiency. The Nation's Report Card indicates "Outcomes-Based Evidence About Teacher Education" where EPPs are connected to the capacity of teachers through student test scores. In this case, The Nation's Report Card reflects negatively on institutions that offer

pre-service training; however, Johnston and Young (2019) found in their survey of 3,299

principals and 15,258 teachers, that principals and teachers perceived their preparation

programs to be effective and felt "prepared to lead or teach in a classroom" (p. 9). The

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (2015) allots for districts to use Title II-A funds for "high-quality,

personalized professional development that is evidence-based and focuses on a broad

range of topics to improve teachers' instructional practice". For the 2019-2020 school

year, 81% of districts reported allocating funds toward professional development

(Isenberg & Webber, 2021). Namely, 83% of districts used funds to support instructional

strategies, 75% for data-driven instruction, and 66% for classroom management (Isenberg

& Webber, 2021) Districts (85%) also used Title II-A funds for professional development

of principals to support teachers in improving their classroom instruction (Isenberg &

Webber, 2021).

Goodson et al, (2019) surveyed 3,294 teachers serving grades four through six

from 18 states within 242 large urban school districts, mainly located in the southern

United States. The researchers examined new teachers' experiences from their EPPs in

relation to their effectiveness to improve student test outcomes. The survey characterized

"experiences" through four types of learning experiences: coursework, observation,

practice, and feedback. Goodson et al., (2019) revealed 49% had many experiences with

"Maintaining a Positive Classroom Climate", 42% had many experiences with

"Managing Student Behavior to Maximize Learning Time", and 40% had many

experiences with "Productive Use of Classroom Time" leaving still more than half of

teachers with some too few valuable experiences from their EPPs (p. iv). The survey

revealed that teachers had more coursework (40% had many EPP experiences) to prepare

them in competencies aligned to creating a productive learning environment versus

promoting analytic thinking skills (Goodson et al., 2019). The survey data also demonstrated that much of the pre-service learning experiences were through coursework (40%), observation (31%), practice (30%), and feedback (26%) according to Goodson et al., (2019). Notably, the most valuable pre-service learning experiences that impacted student outcomes came through practice and observation. This aligns to previous research studies that tout pre-service field experiences with observation and practice increase the preparedness of teachers and positive outcomes for their students (Goldhaber, 2019; Kee, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2019; Putman et al., 2022).

The 2017-2018 Pre-service Coursework (Table 2.2) report indicates that most teachers have had the preparation for them to be effective for students (NCES, 2018) although student data falls below average in relation to other countries (OCED, 2018).

Table 2.2
Percentage of teachers who took graduate or undergraduate courses in selected subject areas prior to their first year of teaching, by course subject area and school type

	All Public School Teachers	Traditional School Teachers	Charter School Teachers
Classroom management techniques	74	74.1	69
Lesson planning	79	79.1	72
Learning assessment	77	76	72
Using student performance data to inform instruction	56	56	55.4
Serving students from diverse economic backgrounds	64.5	64.5	65.3
Serving students with special needs	70	70.3	65.5
Teaching students who are limited English proficient (LEP) or English-language learners (ELLs)	41	41	47.5

Teacher Preparation Program Accountability

There are many questions and concerns regarding the effectiveness of educator preparation programs, teacher competency and the growth and achievement of students (Bastian et al., 2018; Goldhaber et al., 2019; Hood et al., 2022; Ronfeldt et al., 2021). The variability in teacher and student outcomes can be attributed to the absence of and variance of accountability measures that address all the education issues (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2018; Hood et al., 2022). To increase the preparedness, job satisfaction, retention, and efficacy of pre-service teachers to have greater student growth and achievement, Darling-Hammond (2022) states that all educator preparation programs should include:

- a common, clear vision of good teaching that permeates all coursework and clinical experiences, creating a coherent set of learning experiences;
- well-defined standards of professional practice and performance that are used to guide and evaluate coursework and clinical work;
- a strong, core curriculum, taught in the context of practice, grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development and learning, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment, and subject matter pedagogy;
- extended, well-supervised clinical experiences that are carefully chosen to support the ideas presented in closely interwoven coursework;
- use of performance assessments and portfolio evaluation that apply learning to real problems of practice;
- shared beliefs and practices among school- and university-based faculty, along with well-established partnerships between the schools and university (Darling-Hammond, 2012, 2022, p. 61).

The lack of EPP accountability increases the variability in program, teacher, and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Hood et al., 2022; Whitford, 2017). With the need for teachers to have:

> Deep knowledge of their content and how to teach it; they understand the differing needs of their students, hold them to high expectations, and personalize learning to ensure each learner is challenged; they care about, motivate, and actively engage students in learning; they collect, interpret, and use student assessment data to monitor progress and adjust instruction; they systematically reflect, continuously improve, and collaboratively problem solve; and they demonstrate leadership and shared responsibility for the learning of all students (CCSSO, 2018, p. 2).

The need for EPP evaluation to be a transparent process places responsibility on teachers, schools, and districts versus operating in isolation (Hood et al., 2022). Cochran-Smith et al., (2017) stated that the Obama Administration raised the standard for EPPs and teachers,

> Obama Administration's Race to the Top policies and proposed federal requirements that states be required to rank teacher education institutions annually according to metrics established by the federal government, especially measurements of their graduates' impact on students' achievement. (p. 3)

It is through evaluation that an "evaluative judgement" is delivered on the EPPs key performance indicators, and an improvement plan can be enacted (Hood et al., 2022). The call for this evaluative process is to ensure "data alignment, consistency, timeliness, access, equity and social justice" to transform the landscape for educator preparation programs (p. 24).

There is an undercurrent calling for professionalization of the field of teaching to increase the quality and accountability of educator preparation like that of law, medicine, and higher education (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018a). Professionalization would include:

1. Credential and licensing levels

2. Induction and mentoring programs for entrants

3. Professional development support, opportunities, and participation

4. Specialization

5. Authority over decision making

6. Compensation levels

7. Prestige and occupational social standing (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018, p. 201).

The positive outcomes of professionalization are said to increase teacher retention, teacher job satisfaction, and ultimately student growth and achievement because teacher efficacy is higher (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018b). The arguments of professionalization and de-professionalization, should teachers be "certified" or "licensed" to practice in their field (Menter & Flores, 2021) either add or detract from the EPP content when the focus should be teacher professionalism "characterized by individual attitudes and beliefs, particularly a commitment to service and the field" (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018, p. 61). Professionalism over professionalization aligns to what teachers account as a factor that decreases their intent to leave the field of education because it supports their initial call to teach and parallels their values and beliefs for education overall (Pendharker & Lieberman, 2022). Notwithstanding the fact that professionalization increases accountability for EPPs (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018b), it likewise dehumanizes teaching through education reform practices like "fast-track teacher preparation and licensure, scripted, narrow curricula (Milner, 2013, p. 201) and through "governmental, institutional, and local demands on teachers" (Andrews et al.,

2016, p. 170) that promote "teaching to the test" (Tanner, 2013, p. 5) over a whole child focus (Andrews et al., 2016). While there is a need for greater EPP accountability to increase teacher impact on student outcomes, it should not detract or dehumanize teachers (Andrews et al., 2016) but "improve its scholarly and professional status or the public perception" (Milner, 2013, p. 18).

Teacher Preparation Pathways

The need to increase access, diversity, and number of individuals desiring to be an educator, has widened the options of teacher preparation to offer traditional, alternative and residency pathways embedded within both program routes (Carmi & Tamir, 2022; Goldhaber, 2019; Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Matsko et al., 2022; Pomerance & Walsh, 2020). In terms of teacher preparation and school type, there is a pattern for charter schools to employ higher numbers of alternatively certified teacher candidates (25%) in comparison to traditionally certified candidates (18%) (Guthery & Bailes, 2022; NCES, 2022). The National Center for Education Statistics (2022) reports, 18% of candidates enter from alternative certification programs (ACP), with higher numbers of numbers of teachers from racial/ethnic minority groups (15% Hispanic, 13% Black, 2% Two or more races, and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native) according to the 2015-2016 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS). The following subsections will explain each pathway and its contribution to the landscape of teacher preparation.

Traditional Teacher Certification

Traditional teacher certification programs (TCPs) are designed to serve undergraduate students in route to a bachelor's degree to teaching certificate, typically with no previous teaching experience (Whitford, 2018). Overwhelming, over 80% of individuals choose to be prepared from a traditional program (83% White, 8% Hispanic and 5% Black) and TCP teachers typically work in traditional over charter public schools

(NCES, 2018). The research into traditional certification programs yield some interesting distinctions in comparison to ACPs. For instance, in Texas, 43% of novice first year teachers are from TCPs in working in traditional schools, 43% attended ACP, and 14% chose other routes (out-of-state transfer, teacher aide to teacher programs, and certification by state exam) according to Guthery and Bailes (2022). When examining data from 175,664 new Texas educators from 2000-2015, the researchers found that:

> Among 170,565 traditional public-school teachers, 82,007 were initially hired in majority non-White and high-poverty settings (48.07%). A total of 43% of all traditionally certified teachers persist 5 years in their initial or placement districts, and 31% persist 5 years in their placement schools. The persistence rates for traditionally certified teachers who start in a charter school are very different. Only 12% of traditionally certified teachers persist in the classroom in the same charter school after 5 years, and only 14% are still in the same district (Guthery & Bailes, 2022, p. 235).

There is a myriad of adverse reasons why new teachers are unable to persist beyond the five-year mark, especially in today's context of schools (DePaoli et al., 2021; Haynes, 2022; Rumsey & Milsom; 2019; Turner, 2022; Yang et al., 2018; VanLone & Barber, 2020). An additional distinction in the research of TCPs, is that traditionally prepared teachers demonstrate perseverance in higher numbers than their alternatively certified peers (Goldhaber, 2019; Guthery & Bailes, 2022; Matsko et al., 2022; Whitford et al., 2018). Matsko et al., (2022) studied 800 pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers within Chicago Public Schools from all pathways. Traditionally certified teachers felt significantly more prepared and had a higher number of years to remain in the field, ascribed to greater alignment between classes and student teaching (Matsko et al., 2022).

A third distinction was the dissonance between theory to practice is lesser for TCP candidates in comparison to those who attended ACPs because of the implementation of deliberate practice (NCTQ, 2020). Dunst et al., (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of meta-analyses which encompassed 118 meta-analyses and 12 other studies regarding pre-service preparation practices (Figure 2.1) within higher-education (typically a traditional college/university) including roughly 5000-6000 studies investigating approximately 2.5 to 3 million pre-service and beginning teachers. The researchers found the "highest impact program practices" were: (a) clinically-rich practices, (b) coaching and feedback, (c) teaching practices instruction, (d) type of instruction, and (e) course-based learning practices (Dunst et al., 2020).

Figure 2.1

Types of Practices Used in the Preparation of Teachers

Degree of practice impact	Types of preservice and beginning teacher preparation practices
Very high impact practices	
Clinically-rich practices	Extended student teaching (10+ weeks), simulated instruction with deliberate practice
Coaching and feedback	Faculty coaching, workplace coaching, school-based coaching, performance feedback
Teaching practices instruction	Critical thinking instruction, microteaching, *peer-facilitated student instruction*
Type of instruction	Peer instruction
Course-based learning practices	Inquiry-based learning
High impact practices	
Student teaching	Limited student teaching (5-9 weeks)
Clinical supervision	Clinical supervision, clinical supervisor performance feedback
Teaching practices instruction	Mini-courses, modeling teaching practices
Course-based learning practices	Problem-based learning
Cooperative learning practices	Small group learning, peer tutoring
Medium impact practices	
Mentoring and feedback	Faculty feedback on student performance, faculty mentoring, school-based mentoring, workplace mentoring
Student field experiences	Course field experiences, service learning
Teaching practice instruction	Simulation-based practices
Student directed learning	Student self-directed learning, student note-taking practices
Types of course instruction	Virtual reality instruction, personal system of instruction learning courses, intelligent tutoring instruction, simulation-based instruction
Types of courses	Blended courses, audio tutorial self-directed courses, distance education courses *(limited and fully interactive)*
E-learning methods and practices	Computer-assisted learning, information and communication technology learning, technology-assisted learning, internet-based learning
Low impact practices	
Teacher degree	Teaching degree *(MA/BA vs. CDA/AA/HS)*
Education classes	Number of education classes
Course-based learning methods	Explanation-based learning, visually-based learning
Course-based instruction practices	Student feedback on faculty instruction, simulation-based instruction
Practices with no impact	
Teacher certification	In-field certification, *alternative certification (Teach for America Certification, National Board Certification)*
Type of preservice program	Extended teacher preparation program
Preparatory practices	First year teaching seminars
Teacher induction programs	School-based induction programs, *induction program practices (group seminars, group teacher support networks, group collaborative planning)*

NOTE. Practices in italics include the specific types of practices associated or not associated with preservice student and beginning teacher outcomes.

Note. This figure describes the types of practices used to prepare novice teachers and delineates which yields the highest impact in a teacher's competence and confidence in the classroom. From "Research Synthesis of Meta-Analyses of Preservice Teacher Preparation Practices in Higher Education," by C.J. Dunst, D.W. Hamby, R.B. Howse, H. Wilkie, & K. Annas, 2020, Higher Education Studies, 10(1), p. 40 (https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v10n1p29).

44

Research has indicated the need and benefits for connecting theory and practice (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Karalis-Noel & Finocchio, 2022; Stevenson et al., 2020; Shank & Santiague, 2022) providing frequent feedback (Goodson et al., 2019; Schunk, 2012), and learning from others (Redding & Smith, 2016). Furthermore, Pomerance and Walsh (2020) attest that traditional programs lead the way in providing clinical practice specifically in establishing the learning environment. Clinical practice is a strategy that preparation programs can use that yields the highest impact according to Dunst et al., (2020). Through an investigation of clinical practice and classroom management from over 1,000 programs across the United States for pre-service teachers, the researchers detailed that 78% of programs examined offer a semester or more (14-16 weeks) of clinical practice (Pomerance & Walsh, 2020). The researchers also found that 71% of traditional programs investigated provide four or more observations during the clinical practice phase. Wages (2021) qualitatively studied five pre-service teachers' self-efficacy regarding classroom management strategies through clinical practice. The study identified that teacher self-efficacy can be developed through rich experiences where scaffolding of management strategies moves through a cycle of "practice, observation and reflection" (Wages, 2021, p. 180). The final distinction identified for TCP teachers were that they have a greater probability of persisting in traditional schools (67.5%) and charter schools (55.9%) over the alternatively prepared teacher using the five-year retention rates (Gutherie and Bailes, 2022).

Alternative Teacher Certification

Alternative teacher certification programs were designed to offer an entry-point into the profession for non-education majors, through a fast-track program initially designed to mitigate the issue of teacher shortages (Consuegra et al., 2014; Moffett & Davis, 2014; Mulvihill & Martin, 2019). Due to the increase of teacher candidates

entering the field through ACPs, through ESSA, introduced in 2015, the U.S. Department of Education has implemented more measures of quality and innovation for states to establish new teacher academies that allow pre-service teachers to compete year-long residencies with veteran teachers (ESSA, 2015). NCES (2018) describes characteristics of the 18% of public-school teachers who chose the ACP route, the 2015-2016 report indicated teachers identified mostly as Black and Hispanic, female, and served as teacher of record most in "career or technical education (37%), natural sciences (28%), foreign languages (26%), English as a second language (24%), mathematics and computer science (22%), and special education (20%). Additional characteristics for ACP teachers are that prior to teaching, 30% worked in an occupation outside of education, 23% worked in other educational roles other than teacher, 13% worked as a substitute teacher, and 3% were teaching at a college or university (NCES, 2022).

Research studies depict ACPs as lacking the pedagogy and cultural training teachers need to be successful in the classroom compared to the traditional education path teachers (Fox & Peters, 2013; Pazyura, 2015). Matsko et al., (2022) described that novice teachers who are alternatively certified usually gain employment in lower-performing schools classified as having significant achievement gaps which aligns with previous research (NCES, 2022). This Matsko et al., (2022) noted the teacher demographic in Chicago Public Schools tends to be "Black, [they] prioritize working with minoritized students (Black, low-achieving, and/or low-income), and hold noneducation undergraduate majors" (p. 235). Comparably, Redding and Smith (2016) examined four cohort years of ACP teachers and found significantly higher teacher attrition rates when compared to TCP candidates if ACP teachers experienced more organizational supports such as inductions programs, new teacher academies, professional learning communities, frequent support from leadership, and additional assistance from a paraprofessional.

Given their entrance in to teacher programming and expedited format (Redding & Smith, 2016) prior research substantiate that ACP teachers need differentiated support and professional development to address their unique needs to increase retention and efficacy (Rose & Sughrue, 2020; Wilhelm et al., 2020). The unique needs of ACP participants were identified in a study by Newton et al., (2020) who studied 58 ACP participants within six cohorts to explore program or teaching attrition and found many left the program or field of teaching due to non-school related factors. Of the participants who identified as Black (68.4%), left the program, and did not become teachers due to personal factors (finances, struggles with program content, efficacy, conflictual family commitments, classroom management struggles, and work conditions), 26.3% stayed and taught for a year or more, and 5.3% finished the program but did not teach the entire year (Newton et al., 2020). The researchers also highlight that although White teachers persevered in higher numbers to Black teachers, they still exited the field of teaching for the same reasons (Newton et al., 2020). High-quality traditional and alternative certification programs can significantly benefit teacher effectiveness and efficacy in the "construction of positive, equitable learning environments" (Darling-Hammond, 2020, p. 69) when coursework and clinical experiences are integrated in-depth (Pommerance & Walsh, 2020; Wages, 2021).

In a study of second-career alternatively certified first year teachers, Brindley and Parker (2010) sought to draw out the distinctions of these participants from their traditionally certified peers. This study specifically focused on the beliefs three purposefully selected second-career teachers held prior to starting their first year of teaching and whether they changed or persisted as they faced the realities of the classroom. Additionally, the researchers wanted to know after reflection of their initial beliefs, "what shaped their beliefs about teaching and actions." Over two years,

47

participants were prompted to reflect on their beliefs regarding teaching and learning, classroom environment, students as learners, teaching methodology, families and communities and collaboration at the beginning, middle and end of the program. One of the teacher participants conveyed that the school prescribed plans (persistent new students, lack of parental involvement, and excessive meetings) overrode her initial plans therefore eroding her initial beliefs. The researcher explained that this teacher saw maintaining one's ideals and catering to student needs as "mutually exclusive" (Brindley & Parker, 2010, p. 584). Another teacher participant stated that they felt the university withheld the "realities of teaching" preventing an opportunity to bridge theory and practice (Brindley & Parker, 2010). The teacher participant stated:

> I think there's so much more to teaching than you could ever put on paper and you don't even know what you are going to believe until you are in the situation … You can always say, 'I'm going to change my students' lives', but what does that even mean? How are you going to do that? It's not something you can put on paper, it's something you have to go through the whole day, week, and year and then look back and say, 'Did I do it or not?' (Brindley & Parker, 2010, p. 586).

The final teacher participant expressed 'it's not as flowery as I thought it would be' because the novice teacher participant felt "unsupported, uncomfortable, irritated, angry, and ultimately disheartened" (Brindley & Parker, 2010, p. 589). Despite unfavorable first year experiences, all three teachers returned to teach the following year (Brindley & Parker, 2010). Nonetheless, in the end due to the demands and realities of the first year of teaching, all three participants curbed their initial beliefs and were no different than their traditional prepared peers in experiencing the opposing realities (Brindley & Parker, 2010).

The Learning Environment

Whether an individual chooses to be prepared as an educator through traditional or alternative routes, the requirements are the same. Establishing the classroom environment and managing classroom behavior are essential to positive student outcomes in behavior and academics and are challenging issue raised by pre-service and in-service teachers (Aung, 2018; Doran 2020; Egeberg et al., 2016; Garcia & Weiss, 2020). Scholars describe the learning environment as a place where students feel safe and supported while learning; it is the intermingling of social, emotional, and instruction strategies; it is the physical, social, and emotional climate of the classroom where students can take risks, build relationships, explore, and discover new ideas (Pickett & Fraser, 2010; Stadler-Altman, 2015; Tussey & Haas, 2021). To summarize the overall construct of the learning environment, for the purpose of this study it includes the physical classroom environment and the management of the classroom environment (Teacher Standards, 2014).

Children learn best when they feel safe and supported in an atmosphere that fosters social and emotional skills and academics (Brackett et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; DePaoli et al., 2017). Our current world context has students grappling with trauma, stress, bullying, racial and cultural tensions, food instability, housing issues, immigration disputes, crime, violence, natural disasters, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic that infringe upon student safety and support in the classroom every day (DePaoli et al., 2021; Haynes, 2022; Rumsey & Milsom; 2019; Turner, 2022; Yang et al., 2018). In light of recent school shootings, Carter-Andrews et al., (2018) contends that all teacher preparation programs have a "moral obligation" to equip novice teachers to foster a learning environment (classroom culture and climate) that "emanates humanity, dignity, and respect for all" (p. 205). In fact, the researchers

propose that courageous discussions of "controversial and sensitive topics" foster student well-being versus avoiding addressing the events impacting student psychological safety (Carter-Andrews et al., 2018). Despite all society's issues, it is the work of the classroom teacher to create and sustain a responsive, supportive, and inclusive learning community for all children (Conradson, 2021; Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Reimers, 2020). For an environment to be optimal for all students, some studies indicate that the learning environment must be culturally responsive (CCSSO, 2022; Hill-Jackson et al., 2022; Muniz, 2019; Small, 2021; Wells, 2020). In addition, it is said that teachers must understand and implement trauma-informed practices (Berardi & Morton, 2019); whole child education (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019); social and emotional learning (Jones & Kahn, 2017); and classroom environment and management (Pearson, 2022) for it to be deemed an optimal learning environment.

The Physical Classroom

Özyildirim (2021) adds that a classroom environment that efficiently addresses its purpose, provides the foundation for the dimensions of classroom management. Other studies affirm that the classroom environment is to provide a positive classroom climate, emotional and physical safety (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; NSCC, n.d.), procedures and routines (Panda, 2018), and a physical layout that is accessible to all children (Özyildirim, 2021). Puteh et al., (2015) explains that the classroom environment "is not just a physical space, but also consists of a variety of materials and sources of information, interaction, relationship between and amongst students and teachers, and expectations and rules for learning and behavior" (p. 237). Weinstein and Novodvorsky (2015) propose that the quality and number of teacher-student interactions are controlled by the classroom environment. Harris et al., (2015) enlightens that the physical environment implicitly gives "messages about learning and social expectations" (p. 763)

while the deliberate delivery of classroom procedures and routines put children at ease to redirect their energy to the task of learning (Responsive Classroom, 2015). Although there is a gap in the literature regarding the overall topic of classroom environment, as it relates to this construct, Roskos and Neuman (2011) elaborate that the classroom environment,

> informs and documents the social interactions and learning that that will go on there…it shapes how teachers and students will feel, think, and behave. The classroom environment can either work for us or against us, which is why it is first, last, and always among pedagogical concerns. (p.110)

Özyildirim (2021) investigated the perception of 12 elementary teacher's classroom environment from 4 different campuses. Using the six functions of a classroom environment (Steele, 1973), the researcher examined: shelter and security, social contact, symbolic identification, task instrumentality, pleasure, and growth (Özyildirim, 2021). Through semi-structured interviews and observations, the researcher found that students felt safe and comfortable but there were limited interactions between teacher and children or child-to-child interactions because of room arrangement. Özyildirim also found that symbolic identification, a "teacher's goals, values, and beliefs on education, as well as students' products, activities, and achievements" was not prominent in the classroom environment (2021). Furthermore, how the classroom was organized misaligned with the approach of teaching, resulting in task instrumentality also being limited. Lastly, the classroom environments were void of pleasure, namely the teachers were unable to recreate the space for fun or the function of growth that allowed the setting to support the development of students (Özyildirim, 2021). Blundell (2016) concludes that the learning environment can be interpreted as an "ingredient for constructing human meaning" or a

setting designed to be instrumental "in developing health, well-being and personal development beyond academic standards" (Kellock & Sexton, 2017).

Classroom Climate

The classroom climate is a dynamic that is comprised of "instructional, social and organizational interactions" (Wang et al., 2020, p.2); it is the "structure and nature of teacher-student interactions [that] affect child development, emphasizing the role of instructional support, emotional support, and classroom organization" (Wang et al., 2020, p. 2). Classroom climate can be conceptualized as three basic attributes related to the interactions between teacher and student: instructional support, socioemotional support, classroom organization and management in the form of routines, procedures, rules, and consistent behavior supports (Wang et al., 2020). The National School Climate Council describes a positive classroom as a space that:

> Supports people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families, and educators work together to develop, live and contribute to s shared school vision. Educators model and nurture am attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment (2021, "How Do We Define School Climate?" section).

Additionally, the National School Climate Center (2021) identifies key dimensions of school climate that are grouped into five dimensions that directly impact the classroom: (a) Safety: rules and norms; sense of physical security; sense of social-emotional security; (b)Teaching and Learning: support for learning; social and civil learning; (c) Interpersonal Relationships: respect for diversity; social supports from adults; social supports from students; (d) Institutional Environment: school connectedness/engagement;

physical surroundings; and (e) Social Media. Wang and Degol (2016) examined 327 studies on school climate focused on the four of the five dimensions named by the National School Climate Center and concluded that school climate is multi-dimensional. Schools and classrooms that address most, if not all dimensions increase the well-being of students. The researchers also concluded that school climate predicts academic, behavioral, and mental health outcomes of students. All the dimensions are places of intervention and access points for school staff to ensure students have a "high-quality place to learn, socialize, discover and explore," (p. 343).

In emphasis, Franklin and Harrington (2019) explain that the teacher plays a significant role in classroom climate by being understanding, kind, and empathetic. The researchers add that by serving as serving as the model of all social interactions, they encourage strong and enduring relationships as the effective manager of the classroom environment. Yet, Garcia and Weiss (2020) identify classroom climate as a key factor contributing to the teacher shortage. The researchers highlight that an unhealthy school climate plays into teacher dissatisfaction, low morale, and longevity in the field of teaching (Franklin and Harrington, 2019). Establishing a classroom with a positive climate is challenging for novice teachers that have not had sound pre-service training and practice of evidenced-based classroom and behavior management strategies, nor themselves have experienced a healthy school climate (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Kirkpatrick et al., 2021; Stevenson, 2020).

Emotional and Physical Safety

Classrooms are communities; they can be impactful communities where children are successful when they feel safe, know they matter, know they belong, know what to expect, and that their needs will be met (Grover, 2021; Byrd & Nez, 2019). Emotional and physical safety according to Honsinger and Brown (2019) are the foundational pillars

to mitigating the trauma experienced by children. Students who lack psychological and physical safety remain in a state of survival (Dorado et al., 2016); they are unable to be at ease to engage or take academic risks (Grover et al., (2019). Classroom communities without emotional and physical safety fail to promote mental well-being (Aldridge & McChesney, 2018) and social emotional competence.

Chafouleas (2020) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) align to define social, emotional and behavioral (SEB) as the interlacing of three ideas: "how students interact (social), feel (emotional), and act (behavioral) that are critical components of overall wellbeing and mental health (Chafouleas, 2020). Supporting a student's SEB is achieved through establishing a positive learning environment that includes: (a) safe environment; (b) positive relationships; (c) predictable routines and procedures; (d) established expectations; and (e) appropriate instruction (Center on PBIS, 2022). Additionally, Burdick and Corr (2021) explain that the essential attributes of a safe classroom community are organization and the consistency and predictability of routines and procedures. Durlak et al., (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 213 school-based social and emotional (SEL) programs comprised of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020). The researchers' work touted that of the 270,034 K-8 students, those who participated in SEL programs demonstrated "demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement" in comparison to those who did not participate (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405). More recently, Taylor et al., (2017) complimented that research by conducting a meta-analysis of 82 programs including 97,406 K-8 students. Researchers concluded that students who participated in the school-based interventions to increase social and emotional

competence had better outcomes (Taylor et al., 2017). Taylor et al., revealed that student well-being increased (positive social behavior, academic success, reduced behavior issues, decreased emotional distress, and less frequent drug use) and sustained positive results post-intervention 6-18 months later despite socioeconomic status or racial groups (2017).

As the previous SEL studies indicate, safety emotionally and physically can be promoted by establishing social and emotional programs in the classrooms. Yet, the establishing is typically initiated by the teacher who has had little to no personal experience with dealing with their own emotional and physical safety (Jiang et al., 2019) Muchenje and Kelly (2021) propose that teachers would benefit from problem-solving, circle and consultation groups (PSGs) over traditional professional development after a systematic literature review of 14 studies examining the framework. The researchers identified through their synthesis that "PSGs create a safe space for learning, reflection and problem-solving…allowing for a cathartic, validating, and containing [belonging] experience" (Muchenje and Kelly, 2021, p. 109). This 'safe space' in turn shows up in the classroom because teachers have first-hand experience of the process and the result. Caspary (2021) conducted a qualitative study of five teachers' experiences with SEL program implementation and extrapolated the issue of teacher awareness of their competence in each of the five components as a barrier to student success. Teacher awareness was defined as one's ability to "recognize their own emotions, emotional patterns, and tendencies" (Caspary, 2021, p. 14). The researcher concluded that teachers with greater awareness and competence in SEL skills can "effectively guide their students and model skills appropriately" (Caspary, 2021, p. 95). Jennings (2018) upholds this idea by adding "consider the possibilities if teachers…could demonstrate problem solving, compassion, and empathy in the classroom. And think of the impact of embedding self-

care and resilience in our teachers' professional development programs" (para. 11).
Jennings (2018) and Muchenje and Kelly (2021) offer that by providing a safe space for
teachers we therefore provide safe learning environments where children feel supported
emotionally and physically.

Jiang et al., (2019) substantiates teacher's expression of emotions through a
qualitative study using semi-structured interviews of six middle and high school teachers.
Participants expressed anger by dropping books, hitting desks and yelling. In addition,
students interpreted these behaviors as "aggressive, inappropriate and unacceptable"
(Jiang et al., 2021, p. 14) and if not addressed, teachers slowly deteriorate the emotional
and physical safety of children (Caspary, 2021). On the contrary, Lopez et al., (2020)
contributes that learning environments are not safe emotionally and physically because
there is bidirectional victimization. The researchers explain that teachers respond
aggressively to thwart student aggression toward the teacher therefore perpetuating an
abusive volleying between teacher and student (Lopez et al., 2020). For students and
teachers to feel psychologically and physically safe, social emotional learning should be
promoted as a "path forward" (Lopez et al., 2020. p. 11) for improved well-being of all
(Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). For example, a "path forward" is to mitigate negative
climate is to implement school-wide SEL practices for teachers and students (Lopez et
al., 2020). An additional "path forward" is state mandated policies requiring PK-12
teachers demonstrate the understanding of SEL appropriate practices through evaluations
(Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017). The last example suggested by the researchers was the
need for additional studies of the positive contributions to reduce teacher stress and
burnout when SEL practices are implemented to leverage evidenced based practices
(Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

Classroom Procedures and Routines

Routines and procedures promote social, emotional, behavioral, and academic growth for all students (Sutherland et al., 2019; Collier-Meek, 2019). Engaging in consistent procedures efficiently and effectively with attention signals and preciseness increases structure and predictability therefore creating a routine (Wong et al, 2018). There is a gap in the literature pertaining specifically to classroom routines and procedures because most studies use classroom routines and procedures to describe components of effective classroom management. However, according to Lemov (2021) (a) procedures provide a method or way of doing things within a classroom, (b) procedures provide a predictable pattern for how to complete a task, (c) procedures provide students with a vision and criteria for success, and finally in time, when reinforced, procedures help students meet classroom expectations.

Procedures and routines are characteristic of highly effective classroom management. Oliver and Reschly (2014) assert teaching rules and incorporating routines for procedures such as turning in homework, transitions, arriving and departing from class, centers and workstations, and engaging in small-group allow the classroom to run efficiently and organizes the classroom to minimize disruption. Blazar and Pollard (2022) studied 53 upper-elementary math teachers' practices that improved math test outcomes versus engagement. One of the themes discovered by the researchers was that teachers considered high engagement educators (students enjoyed or were happy in the math environment) had established routines and procedures. Blazar and Pollard stated that when observing classroom instruction, teachers encouraged "efficiency and order" to improve student math scores (p. 26). Classroom routines and procedures provide structure and stability in world that is always shifting, allowing students dealing with

trauma to learn in a predictable and consistent environment (Burdick & Corr, 2021; Kher et al, 2014).

Classroom Design and Organization

A positive and productive learning environment is one that is neat, well-decorated and organized to promote efficient and expedient routines and procedures (Aung, 2018; Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009; Panda, 2018). The physical environment or the design or layout of the classroom impacts student engagement and active learning (Flynn, 2022; Pundak et al., 2009). How a student intermingles within the physical environment is correlated to student achievement (Burch et., 2015) and more importantly it is in the engagement of the social, emotional, and physical domains that propels a student to acquire new learning and comprehension (Burch et al., 2016). Classroom design affects student stress and their ability to attend (Eysel-Gosepath et al., 2012; McDowell & Budd, 2018; Zazzi & Faragher, 2018). As well, classroom disorganization as also shown to impact student stress and attention (McDowell & Budd, 2018; Zazzi & Faragher, 2018).

Barrett et al., (2015) studied the impact of the three dimensions of classroom design specifically, naturalness (light, sound, temperature, air quality and links to nature), individualization (ownership, flexibility, and connection), and appropriate level of stimulation (complexity and color) on student learning. The researchers examined 27 schools, totaling 153 classes of grades first through sixth grade. Classrooms and whole schools were evaluated, and teachers were interviewed investigating their perceptions of their teaching spaces. In comparison to previous research, Barrett et al., (2015) found that light, precisely daylight free of glare had the highest impact overall design principles correlated to learning. Good sound acoustics, easy to control temperature, and flexible child-centered spaces with student contributed artwork enhanced learning outcomes. The level of stimulation seemed to be negatively impacted by rooms with more visual clutter.

Rooms that were sparce , free of visual and physical clutter yielded higher learning outcomes because students were less off-task and rooms with a balance of white walls and light color also correlated with learning progress. Previous studies substantiate the belief that classroom layout and organization either add or deduct from student learning acquisition, stress and attention (McDowell & Budd, 2018; Zazzi & Faragher, 2018). The physical layout of the classroom should be maximized to increase student-teacher interactions while allowing flexible learning groups (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009; Mandel, 2009)

Expectations for Establishing the Learning Environment in Texas

The Texas Administrative Code (2022) defines the learning environment as a place where teachers "interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning" (p. 4). According to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), there are three dimensions that detail the Learning Environment: (3.1) Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures; (3.2) Managing Student Behavior; and (3.3) Classroom Culture.

The first of the three Learning Environment Dimensions is 3:1: Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures (Figure 2.2) which measures a teacher's ability to organize a safe, accessible, and efficient classroom (2022, p. 10). A distinguished teacher has moved along the continuum of actions from teacher-centered to student-centered to: (a) establish and use effective routines, transitions, and procedures, (b) use students to take major leadership and accountability for management, (c) create a space where students can safely and intentionally be engaged, inspired, and challenged (T-TESS,

2022). The following figures depict the actual criteria for what is necessary to organize a classroom that is safe, accessible to all children, and efficient.

Figure 2.2.
T-Tess Rubric for Establishing the Learning Environment – Dimension 3.1

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION 3.1
Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures

The teacher organizes a safe, accessible and efficient classroom.
Standards Basis:
1D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS				TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS
• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that primarily rely on student leadership and responsibility. • Students take primary leadership and responsibility for managing student groups, supplies, and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and thoughtfully designed to engage, challenge and inspire students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives.	• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that she or he implements effortlessly. • Students take some responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students.	• All procedures, routines and transitions are clear and efficient. • Students actively participate in groups, manage supplies and equipment with very limited teacher direction. • The classroom is safe and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to most students.	• Most procedures, routines and transitions provide clear direction but others are unclear and inefficient. • Students depend on the teacher to direct them in managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment. • The classroom is safe and accessible to most students, but is disorganized and cluttered.	• Few procedures and routines guide student behavior and maximize learning. Transitions are characterized by confusion and inefficiency. • Students often do not understand what is expected of them. • The classroom is unsafe, disorganized and uncomfortable. • Some students are not able to access materials.

The TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 Preparation Manual (2022) explains that an entry level teacher must know "how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity, and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive" (p. 6).

The second Learning Environment Dimensions is 3:2: Managing Student Behavior (Figure 2.3) which measures a teacher's ability to establish, communicate, and sustain student behavior through clear expectations (T-TESS, 2022). Along the continuum of teacher-centered to student-centered actions, behavior is consistently monitored, positive behavior is reinforced while misbehavior is intercepted (T-TESS, 2022). The distinguished teacher and their students have co-created and co-maintain the standards of classroom behavior (T-TESS, 2022).

Figure 2.3.
T-Tess Rubric for Establishing the Learning Environment – Dimension 3.2

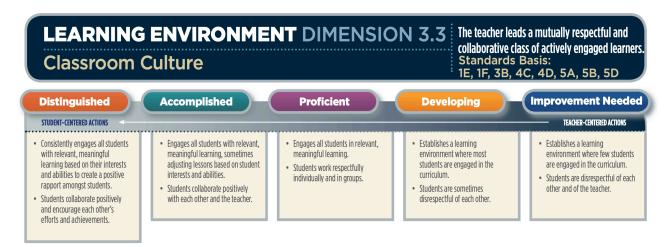**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** DIMENSION 3.2 : The teacher establishes, communicates and maintains clear expectations for student behavior.

Managing Student Behavior

Standards Basis: 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D

Distinguished	Accomplished	Proficient	Developing	Improvement Needed
STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS ←				→ TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS
• Consistently monitors behavior subtly, reinforces positive behaviors appropriately and intercepts misbehavior fluidly. • Students and the teacher create, adopt and maintain classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently encourages and monitors student behavior subtly and responds to misbehavior swiftly. • Most students know, understand and respect classroom behavior standards.	• Consistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system proficiently. • Most students meet expected classroom behavior standards.	• Inconsistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system. • Student failure to meet expected classroom behavior standards interrupts learning.	• Rarely or unfairly enforces campus or classroom behavior standards. • Student behavior impedes learning in the classroom.

The final Learning Environment Dimension is 3:3 Classroom Culture (Figure 2.4) where a teacher is appraised on their ability to facilitate a climate of mutual respect and collaboration from actively engaged learners. The continuum of teacher-centered to student-centered actions, requires a distinguished teacher to use student interests and abilities to maximize positive teacher-student and student-student interactions with "relevant, meaningful learning" (T-TESS, 2022, p. 12).

Figure 2.4.

T-Tess Rubric for Establishing the Learning Environment – Dimension 3.3

The Council of Chief State Officers (CCSSO), states that teachers are to be "learner-ready" on day one in the classroom to "understand the differing needs of their students, hold them to high expectations, and personalize learning to ensure each learner is challenged" (2022, p. 2). For the purposes of this study, the following section will explain the learning environment being comprised of the following two constructs: the classroom environment and classroom management as identified and defined by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 149 Subchapter AA: Teacher Standards. According to TAC, the Learning Environment (Table 2.3) is described as a place where "teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning" (p. 5).

Table 2.3
Standard Four—-Learning Environment

Competencies	Description of Competencies
4.1. Teachers create a mutually respectful, collaborative, and safe community of learners by using knowledge of students' development and backgrounds.	4.1.1. Teachers embrace students' backgrounds and experiences as an asset in their learning environment. 4.1.2. Teachers maintain and facilitate respectful, supportive, positive, and productive interactions with and among students. 4.1.3. Teachers establish and sustain learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and respond to students' needs, strengths, and personal experiences.
4.2. Teachers organize their classrooms in a safe and accessible manner that maximizes learning.	4.2.1. Teachers arrange the physical environment to maximize student learning and to ensure that all students have access to resources. 4.2.2. Teachers create a physical classroom set-up that is flexible and accommodates the different learning needs of students.
4.3. Teachers establish, implement, and communicate consistent routines for effective classroom management, including clear expectations for student behavior.	4.3.1. Teachers implement behavior management systems to maintain an environment where all students can learn effectively. 4.3.2. Teachers maintain a strong culture of individual and group accountability for class expectations. 4.3.3. Teachers cultivate student ownership in developing classroom culture and norms.
4.4. Teachers lead and maintain classrooms where students are actively engaged in learning as indicated by their level of motivation and on-task behavior.	4.4.1. Teachers maintain a culture that is based on high expectations for student performance and encourages students to be self-motivated, taking responsibility for their own learning.

	4.4.2. Teachers maximize instructional time, including managing transitions.
	4.4.3. Teachers manage and facilitate groupings in order to maximize student collaboration, participation, and achievement.
	4.4.4. Teachers communicate regularly, clearly, and appropriately with parents and families about student progress, providing detailed and constructive feedback and partnering with families in furthering their students' achievement goals.

Classroom Management

According to Wong et al. (2018) classroom management is comprised of the "practices and procedures that a teacher uses to maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur" (p. 8). Classroom management is the elusive skill that maturates in time and studies have shown that new teachers do not feel adequately prepared and therefore use ineffective methods, become stressed and frustrated and ultimately exit the field (Flower et al., 2017; Freeman et al., 2014; Kirkpatrick et al., 2021; Shook, 2012). Classroom management is the set of skills, practices, and strategies teachers use to maintain productive and prosocial behaviors that allow students to remain on task (Nisar et al., 2019; Stevenson et al., 2020). Classroom management contributes to the emotional and physical safety of children (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Hosinger & Brown, 2019; Ozyilidirim, 2021) and reduction of stress and burnout of teachers (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017) by providing what is permissible and impermissible (Roskos & Neuman, 2011). Classroom management is the enacting of:

procedures and routines that have been deliberately established in the first few weeks of school [that] stabilize [the environment] when teachers adhere to a small set of well-defined expectations [that] provide reinforcement when expectations

are met, and swiftly apply stated consequences when they are not (Roskos &
Neuman, 2012, pp. 311-312).

Preparation of Teachers to Manage the Classroom

Pre-service training is the essential ingredient in ensuring that novice teachers are
day one ready to establish a positive, productive learning environment that produces
favorable student outcomes (NEA, 2013; Pearson, 2022). Teachers are expected to be
able to create and maintain a classroom environment where students feel safe emotionally
and physically in the appearance of clearly defined expectations of what is acceptable and
unacceptable behavior, an organized space that is flexible for all learner's needs, and
efficient routines and procedures that maximize time for learning (Teacher Standards,
2014). However, research indicates that controlling students who misbehave is an
arduous task for the novice teacher (Nagro et al, 2020). Korpershoek et al. (2016)
conducted a meta-analysis of 47 studies using classroom management programs and
strategies that significantly impacted primary students' social-emotional, behavioral,
motivational, and academic achievement outcomes. The data indicated that classroom
management programs and strategies have a significant effect on several student outcome
measures (Korpershoek et al., 2016). Neppl (2019) using mixed-methods, studied if
classroom management decreased unwanted student misbehavior with one classroom
teacher and their 23 students. The researcher found that as a result of implementing
classroom management strategies 75% of students were more engaged, accountable for
their learning, more on-task, and exhibited more desired behaviors (Neppl, 2019).
Building relationships are also an effective strategy for managing behavior. Yassine et
al., (2020) investigated two kindergarten students who demonstrated tantrums, defiance,
and aggressive behaviors. Interventions of positive behavior, positive student-teacher
interactions, positive praise and corrected feedback and relationship building were

introduced over four phases. When relationship building was introduced, both students'

challenging behavior decreased prompting researchers to contend that student-teacher

relationships are an effective approach to influencing positive student behavior.

To feel confident in giving clear behavior expectations, implementing campus-

wide behavior systems, and providing support to all students exhibiting appropriate or

inappropriate behavior, teachers must have proper pre-service training and support their

first year in the classroom (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Kirkpatrick et al., 2021;

Stevenson, 2020). In a phenomenological study of five first year elementary teachers,

Smith (2021) reported that teachers found it challenging to effectively manage disruptive

behavior despite their training from their educator preparation programs. Furthermore,

teachers did not recognize their schools as a contributing factor in helping them increase

their competence and confidence in effectively managing defiance, aggression, excessive

talking and other mental health related behaviors. Teachers expressed that their pre-

service training was inadequate and added that the lack of support, understanding and

training from administration increased their frustration and reliance on reactive strategies.

Participants identified their training needs as strategies and techniques for classroom

management, cultural competency and diversity and how mental health disorders impact

student learning and behavior (Smith, 2021). Furthermore, reactive strategies are

ineffective and cause more damage to the learning environment; resulting in decreased

student learning outcomes, more disruptive behavior that increases teacher stress and

burnout and ultimately teacher attrition (Flower et al., 2017; Freeman et al., 2014; O'Neil

& Stephenson, 2012; Smith, 2021).

Similarly, Souza (2022) studied the self-efficacy of first year teachers in an urban

midwestern state during the months of November to February and found that classroom

management of challenging student behavior was the highest negative influence on

teacher self-efficacy. Teachers felt that administrators could support teachers by providing ongoing training and support in classroom management and handling disruptive student behavior. In a study of seven high school teachers in a rural district with less than five years teaching experience who departed the teaching field, Fortenberry (2020) further added that even after the first year of teaching, teachers still do not feel competent and confident in their training to effectively establish and maintain a positive, productive learning environment. Participants explained that the lack of classroom management strategies and support from administration contributed to their departure from the field. All seven teachers conveyed that quality professional development training could have been a mitigating factor in their stress and untimely exit.

General education teachers consistently report that they feel the least prepared in comparison to special education teachers in the management of pervasive behavior challenges (Butler & Monda-Amaya, 2016; Flower et al., 2017). Samudre et al., (2022) conducted a systematic review of 74 literature articles on behavior management training for general education teachers and found that of the 2,938 general education participant teachers, most were trained for low-intensity, tier-one and tier two behaviors focused towards the whole group. The work of Stevenson et al., (2020) supports previous research and highlights a distinction of where educator programs are missing the mark; a lack of training for addressing the individual student. Classroom management are strategies for the whole group whereas behavior management is for the individual student exhibiting behavior outside the norm, typically tier two to tier three behaviors. The researcher further explains that behavior management employs the teacher to be competent in functional behavior assessment and analysis, and direct observation. An average of 54% of teacher certification programs teach assessing behavior in general education programs (Flower et al., 2017). There is a disconnect and absence of specialized training for the

pre-service teacher to handle challenging behavior that is reportedly the norm to be addressed in the general education classroom (Stevenson et al., 2020). This disconnect between theory and practice of classroom and behavior management contributes to the prevalent issues we are facing in schools today.

Further highlighting the disconnect between theory and practice in classroom and behavior management, Shank and Santiague (2022) conducted a qualitative study of eight novice teachers. Novice teachers were defined as having fewer than three years of teaching experience. They conducted interviews, reviewed participant educator program transcripts and program course descriptions from websites and discovered the following themes from the data analysis. First, teachers were given books to read but no realistic toolkit of strategies. Teachers wanted practice of the theory. Secondly, inadequate training methods, teacher participants explained that training of evidenced-based strategies were sporadic or not at all. Lastly, the novice educators explained that managing student behavior, communicating with parents and strategies to reduce misbehavior were missing from their preparation. The researchers found that the educators programs represented were absent of classroom management courses or offered them during short-term sessions. The strategies that had been taught, teachers didn't feel competent or confident to execute the strategies. Classroom management is a complex skill that novice teachers can be confident and competent to facilitate a positive and productive learning environment with intentional training, practice, and mentoring (Kirkpatrick et al., 2021; Shank and Santiague, 2022).

According to the Iris Center (2022) Rules are used to clarify what is the desired and expected behavior; rules help to establish boundaries so that the classroom can be safe and productive. There are five expectations when creating classroom rules: (a) state the desired behavior positively, (b) limit the number of rules to no more than five, (c)

68

ensure the rules are simple and clear, and finally (d) rules should be able to be observed and measured (Iris Center, 2022). Classroom rules provide a framework of choices for students to self- their classroom behaviors. According to the National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), the benefits of classroom rules are promotion of school readiness, development of self-regulation, problem-solving, and an ability for teachers to focus more on instruction (2012) which would in turn decrease teacher stress and burnout according to research (Fortenberry, 2020; Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

Campus Behavior Systems

Promoting a positive classroom environment can be achieved when teachers systematically implement and sustain School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (SWPBIS). According to the Center on PBIS, "absence of positive and proactive practices, students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline (e.g., suspensions, expulsions), lost instruction, and poor outcomes associated with a negative overall trajectory (Center on PBIS, 2022, p. 2). Student success is contingent upon teachers supporting and responding to the SEB and academic needs of the student. According to OSEP Technical Assistance on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (2019) it is a framework of explicit schoolwide rules and expectations to promote consistency and collaboration. When established and sustained, it focuses on giving students the desired behavior and reinforces the positive behavior (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). Teaching and reinforcing expectations while using evidenced-based methods for responding to problem behavior are core components (Center on PBIS, 2022). PBIS is used in over 26,000 schools in the United States and 21 different countries to impact school and classroom climate and culture by reducing problem behavior and increasing student achievement (Sugai, 2018)

Teacher Diversity or Teacher Disservice

Educator preparation programs continue to remain White dominant student enrolled institutions that tend to reflect the workforce of education (Snyder et al., 2019). While the nation is becoming more diverse, the educators guiding the minds of the most culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms remains a White female (IES, 2022; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Wells, 2020). Currently, 79% of teachers are White, with less than 20% identifying as BIPOC (9% Hispanic, 7% Black, 2% Asian, <2% Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native and Two or More Races) according to the National Center of Education Statistics (2022). The White female accounts for 81% of traditional public-school educators, educators teaching in rural (89%), towns (88%), and suburban areas (82%), has approximately 10 to 20 years of teaching experience and holds a master's degree (48%) (NCES, 2019). Furthermore, 76% of the teaching force (89% elementary and 64% secondary) are females (NCES, 2022) and the number of women entering the field has been increasing incrementally since 1980-81(Ingersoll et al., 2018). Although, districts have tried to assuage the reigning teacher profile, the efforts to recruit Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) does not match current the diversity of our classrooms (Ingersoll et al., 2019). Efforts over the previous decades has been to increase the number of BIPOC teachers to serve as role models, identify with the lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of students, and are motivated to serve in marginalized communities (Gist, 2017; Haddix, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2019; Sleeter, 2017).

Research identifies that recruitment of teachers of color is not the prevalent issue but rather retention (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2017). Specific to Black female teachers, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) attributes low retention to inadequate pre-service preparation, due to so many Black women choosing alternative

certification routes (Hood et al., 2022) in addition to the systemic inequity they experience once within a school setting. Teacher disservice is perpetuated by inadequate preparation and systemic inequity experiences from within the school setting exacerbating the present issues of the novice teacher (Bettini et al., 2022; Matthews, 2020). Using a qualitative approach, Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) described the lived teacher preparation experiences of 12 Black female teachers. The researchers found collectively, despite being prepared through a traditional or alternative certification, the black female teachers did not feel adequately prepared, therefore hindering their desire to remain in the field. Themes that arose from the study participants were inadequate knowledge of how special education protocols, student support, and documentation, a lack of teaching strategies that were culturally responsive, the emotional readiness to handle all the issues in working with students within marginalized communities, and the overall intensity and pace of the ACPs which focused on breadth over depth added feelings of unpreparedness (Farinde-Wu and Griffen, 2019).

Blackmon (2020) interviewed six black male K-12 novice teachers lived journeys to become educators. Using a qualitative, critical narrative inquiry approach, the researcher identified four themes: personal journey to become educators, Black male support system, desire to support students and triumphs and hurdles to becoming a certified teacher (Blackmon, 2020) The researchers stated that many of the participants expressed their K-12 journey was filled with challenging coursework, inadequate schools with low student achievement but helpful teachers who assisted along the way. The research participants also indicated it was their desire to give back, mentor, serve as a role model and the support of Black male mentors that kept them encouraged to stay the course to becoming a certified teacher. Blackmon (2020) also stated the participants expressed struggling to pass the certification exams, but professors aided them through

the process. The Black male novice study participants also conveyed their first year was difficult because of classroom management and an ineffective leadership support (Blackmon, 2020).

Bettini et al., (2022) conducted a systematic narrative review of 72 studies from 1996 through present to investigate novice teachers of color K-12 experiences. To be included, studies had to include pre-service teachers or teachers with no more than three years of teaching experience, specifically examining "the experiences of novice teachers of color in K–12 education institutions" (Bettini et al., 2022, p. 498). The researchers found no studies before 1996 that met the criteria. Between 1995-1999 there were six studies, 2000-2004 there were seven studies, 2005-2009 there were 16 studies, 2010-2014 there were 16 studies and 2015-2019 there were 25 studies (Bettini et al., 2022). 68 of the 72 studies indicated novice teachers of color totaling 606, but only 454 novice teachers of color could be categorized by identity: 186 Black, 84 Hispanic, 35 Asian, 9 biracial or multiracial, 1 American Indian and 134 used other identifiers Filipina, Trinidadian, Haitian, Mexican American) according to Bettini et al., (2022).

Bettini et al., (2022) found that novices could not be their authentic selves forcing them to "double-bind" where their personal identities and commitments to students and communities of color conflicted with professional expectations as teachers" (p. 526). Novice teachers also conveyed a commitment to provide "critical and culturally sustaining practices to support students in understanding their own histories and the systems of power that shape their lives in the United States" which also placed them in a double-bind because it was typically not sanctioned by the schools (Bettini et al., 2022, p. 526). The researcher explained that novice teachers experienced social isolation to avoid mistreatment. Many novice teachers reported they sought to work at other schools "where their identity would be valued and understood, where the double bind was less

prominent" to experience community and belonging (Bettini et al., 2022, p. 526). Emotional and physical safety, in addition to a sense of belonging must be experienced by the teacher as well as the student (Jiang et al., 2019). Previous studies contend that a teacher who does not possess a place to be safe and thrive will be unable to provide the same for a child to flourish socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically (Caspary, 2021; Jiang et al., 2019; Muchenje & Kelly, 2021).

Matthews (2019) using a qualitative method studied the common perceived challenges of pre-kindergarten through fifth grade Black teachers. The researcher found that Black teachers felt: (a) a lack of mentorship; (b) a lack of support and guidance as novice teachers; (c) their lived experiences contrasted from non-black colleagues; (d) they worked harder than their White peers; (e) their professional growth was slow or was going to be slow. Matthews (2019) also stated that despite teacher's hardships as Black female educators they felt it was important for Black teachers to be represented in education. Vilson (2015) found the following:

> Educators of color can also make a positive impact on White students. Often, the onus of developing cultural competence falls solely on teachers of color. A more diverse teaching population can help White students interact with and understand people of different races and cultures. It would also enable them to see people of color in positions of authority. Exposure to peers and adults with different experiences and worldviews helps all children develop empathy for others and assess their own humanity. (p. 30)

In summary, teachers of color in the learning environment provide an opportunity for students of color to make the greatest gains across all developmental domains (Goldhaber et al, 2019). There are several theoretical urgings that substantiate the impact of teachers of color. Villegas & Lucas (2004) convey the power of a role model

representative of the students they serve demonstrates what is attainable. Ferguson (2003) explains that teachers of color expect more and refrain from lowering standards therefore increasing student self-efficacy. Gregory et al., (2010) also substantiated the presence of teachers of color in reducing disproportionate disciplinary actions given to students of color because teachers are better able to identify and interpret the triggers of misbehavior. Teachers of color are driven to this work because they want to represent (Matthews, 2019) and make a difference through culturally responsive practices (Bettini et al., 2022; Blackmon, 2020). Intentional pre-service preparation and retention of teachers of color can make all the difference for children and more specifically children of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018; Goldhaber et al., 2019, Hood et al., 2022).

Conclusion

A review of the literature on novice teachers' perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them for the learning environment highlights the issues plaguing teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The novice teacher, typically a pre-service teacher or in-service teacher with less than three years of experience is at the beginning of the learning continuum. Research states that many novice teachers are exiting the field of education before they can acquire the skills to effective for all types of learners. Teacher stress and burnout due to the prevalent societal issues creating trauma for students has decreased job satisfaction and increased the motivation to quit teaching. EPPs are not adequately preparing novice teachers to be culturally and linguistically responsive diverse classrooms. The learning environment is complex and multi-faceted, require novice teachers to skillful and savvy in creating a safe and productive environment that promotes student achievement. Despite the efforts to increase teachers of color, the reigning teacher profile is a White female teacher. The

following chapter will include an overview of the research problem, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethics considerations, and limitations for this study.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. Quantitative data, from a purposeful sample of novice EC-12 teachers, was analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, Chi-square of independence tests, and one-way ANOVAs. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose and questions, research design, population and sampling selection, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations of the study.

Overview of the Research Problem

Fifty percent of novice teachers are leaving the classroom within five years (Coffey et al., 2019; Guthery & Bailes; 2022; Lindquist & Nordanger, 2016; Maready et al., 2020; Zavelevsky et al., 2022). The transition period of novice teachers can feel insurmountable with limited experience when trying to manage instruction, the responsibilities of the classroom, and their self-preservation (Martinez et al., 2016; Meyers et al., 2019). Classrooms are changing, student needs are more complex due to adverse issues of crime, violence, natural disasters, school shootings, food and supply shortages, housing instability, unemployment, and the rising cost of food and gas (Cookson & Darling-Hammond, 2022; Karbowski, 2022). Public schools in the U.S. are increasingly becoming more diverse racially, ethnicity, socio-economically, culturally, and linguistically (NCES, 2022a; Small, 2021; Wells, 2020). Teachers without evidenced-based tools and efficacy will victimize their students because they too feel like victims (Lopez et al., 2020) of unendurable working conditions (Ingersoll et al., 2018),

too much work and too little pay and support (Burkhauser, 2017; Elyashiv, 2019). EPPs have a "moral obligation" (Carter-Andrews et al., 2018) to help novice teachers establish a safe productive learning environment yet novice teacher "reality shock" questions the effectiveness teacher preparation (Gaundan & Mohammadnezhad, 2018; Greenberg et al., 2014). The underrepresentation of teachers of color, is being called "one of the most critical equity issues" impacting student belonging and identity (CCSSO, 2019a, p. 7). Students of color benefit richly from a teacher of their likeness (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Gershenson et al., 2016, 2017) yet teachers of color experience disenfranchisement to the point of eroding their ability to belong and be authentic in school. Therefore, the knowledge gathered from this study could was used to identify and mitigate gaps during pre-service and in-service educator preparation to better prepare teachers to create safe and productive environments for students and themselves.

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study aimed to examine first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness from their educator preparation program on three constructs: (a) classroom environment; (b) classroom management; and (c) teacher perception preparedness. Classroom environment is defined as a learning community where the teacher fosters mutual respect, collaboration and safety using student development, experiences, and backgrounds (TEA, 2022; Teacher Standards, 2014). Classroom management is defined as the teacher's ability to maximize learning by way of organization, routines, procedures, and an accessible environment (TEA, 2022; Teacher Standards, 2014). Teacher perception preparedness is defined as an individual's judgment conceptualized as confidence or self-efficacy in their ability to successfully execute a behavior or task for an intended outcome (Bandura, 2012). Classroom environment, classroom management, and teacher perception of preparedness will be measured using the *New Teacher Satisfaction Survey.*

<h1 style="text-align:center">Research Purpose and Questions</h1>

The purpose of this study was to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. The following questions guided this research study:

Quantitative

RQ1: What are novice teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certification programs?

RQ2: Does certfication route (traditional or alternative) influence teacher perception of preparedness scores in supporting the learning environment?

H_a: Certification route does significantly impact teacher's perception of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certificate programs.

RQ3: Does race/ethnicity influence teacher perception of preparedness scores in supporting the learning environment?

H_a: Race/ethnicity does significantly impact teacher's perception of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certificate programs.

Qualitative

RQ4: What are novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to face the realities of today's classroom?

<h2 style="text-align:center">Research Design</h2>

For this study, sequential mixed methods approach (QUAN→qual) was used. The design consists of two phases: first, a quantitative and second, a qualitative phase. The implementation of this design allowed for a more thorough and in-depth exploration to support the quantitative results. Archival quantitative data from a sample of 3,595 novice,

first year EC-12th grade teachers with a standard teaching certificate in Texas during the 2020-2021 school year was analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, Chi-square of independence tests, and one-way ANOVAs. Semi-structured interview responses were analyzed using an inductive and deductive coding process to draw out themes from a purposeful sample of eight novice EC-12th grade teachers in Texas.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of EC-12th grade regular classroom teachers (not including those defined as substitute teachers) assigned as the teacher of record for the 2020-2021 school year in the State of Texas. The State is home to 1,247 public school districts, divided into 254 counties across the state serving 5,371,586 students (12.7% African American, 52.9% Hispanic, 26.5% White, 0.3% American Indian, 4.7% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, 2.7% Two or More Races; 48.9% female and 51.1% male) in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2021). Table 3.1 displays the teacher demographics for the state of Texas.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the state of Texas employed 375,222 teachers. Of the state teacher population, 76.1% were female and 23.9% were male. Of the total, 11.1% African American, 28.3% Hispanic, 57.1% White, 0.3% American Indian, 1.8% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, and. 2.5% Two or More Races. For the 2020-2021 data collection, there are 118 educator preparation programs enrolling students within alternative (62.0%) and traditional (34.0%) and post-baccalaureate programs (39.0%). A purposeful sample of novice Texas EC-12th grade teachers in Texas during the 2020-2021 school year was used for this study.

Table 3.1
2020-2021 State of Texas Teacher Demographics

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Total Teachers	375, 222	100.0
Male	89,513	23.8
Female	285,709	76.1
African American	41,737	11.1
Hispanic	106,212	28.3
White	214,242	57.1
American Indian	1,282	0.3
Asian	6,735	1.8
Pacific Islander	627	0.2
Two or More Races	4,387	2.5

Participant Selection

A purposeful sample of Texas EC-12th grade teachers completing their first year while holding a standard teaching certificate in Texas during the 2020-2021 school year was used for this study. The qualitative criteria for inclusion, was to be classified as a novice (1-3 years of experience) teacher of record. Secondly, if appropriate to their educator preparation program, they must have completed student teaching, clinical practice despite COVID-19 restrictions. The inclusion of these teachers ensured that they had similar experiences establishing the learning environment as novice teachers. A research flyer was created, emailed, posted on social media, and sent via text to anyone who met the criteria. Participants who met the criteria were sent a Calendly link explaining the purpose of the research and a brief demographic survey to ensure they met the criteria. Teachers were then able to select an interview date that aligned to their

schedule. Efforts were taken to gather a sample that was demographically representative of the entire population. Furthermore, to ensure their participation and comfort, the purpose of the study, time commitment, benefits, potential risks, consent, the assurance of confidentiality was stated and included in the initial contact. The use of pseudonyms was used to protect their identities, schools, and school district in all materials recorded and transcribed.

Instrumentation

The *New Teacher Satisfaction Survey* is one of seven performance indicators that speak to the efficiency of the preparation administered by educator preparation programs (EPP). In 2009, the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) was authorized by the 81st Texas Legislature with the passing of Senate Bill 174. This allowed new teachers to weigh in on the quality of their EPP. The survey is emailed to first year teachers in April and expected to be completed by mid-June. The *New Teacher Satisfaction Survey* is a scale used to measure how well the educator preparation program prepared the teacher to be an effective new teacher (TEA, 2019). Items from this scale were derived from and aligned to the Texas Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities EC-12 Standards that are divided into four domains: (I) Designing Instruction and Assessment to Promote Student Learning; (II) Creating a Positive, Productive Classroom Environment; (III) Implementing Effective, Responsive Instruction and Assessment; and (IV) Fulfilling Professional Roles and Responsibilities.

The New Teacher Satisfaction scale is divided into four sections: (a) Planning, (b) Instruction, (c) Learning Environment, and (d) Professional Practices and Responsibilities. The survey consists of 4-point Likert-scale items: 3 = Well Prepared, 2 = Sufficiently Prepared, 1 = Not Sufficiently Prepared, and 0 = Not At All Prepared. The scale has 49-items and 13 subscales. For this study, nine items were selected by the

researcher that represented all survey items pertaining to classroom environment, classroom management, and overall teacher perception of preparedness. Three of the eight survey items can be found in Subscale Seven: Classroom Environment. Four of the eight survey items can be found in Subscale Eight: Classroom Management. One item for examination can be found in Subscale Eleven: Students with Disabilities. And the final item is in Subscale 13: Overall Evaluation. Cronbach's alphas were computed for Learning Environment (7-items; 0.945), Classroom Environment (3-items; 0.905), and Classroom Management (4-items; 0.940).

Table 3.2
Teacher Survey Subscales

Subscales *(Dependent Variables)*	Survey Items
1. Classroom Environment	26, 27, 28
2. Classroom Management	29, 30, 31, 32
3. Students with Disabilities	40
4. Overall Teacher Perception of Preparedness	49

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative

Prior to data collection, the researcher gained approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's (UHCL's) Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). Archival data of the 2020-2021 *New Teacher Satisfaction Survey* was downloaded from the TEA Website under the Educator Preparator Data Dashboard. Survey data is publicly available, and all identifiers were removed. Data were imported and coded for analysis using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Science software.

Qualitative

Prior to identifying participants and collecting data, the informed consent form and interview protocol was included with the submission of the (CPHS) application form. Flyer invitations to participate detailing the purpose of the study, time commitment, benefits, potential risks, consent, the assurance of confidentiality were emailed, posted on social media platforms, and sent by text to teachers who meet the criteria. Interview participants had the opportunity to use Calendly to select a time and date of their preference to ensure their comfort and availability to answer questions. Informed Consent was collected from all participants by electronic signature through Adobe Sign. Before the start of the interviews, verbal consent was requested again. The semi-structured interviews included questions designed in a non-biased and non-judgmental manner regarding their perceptions of their EPP's effectiveness to prepare them to handle the realities of the classroom environment. Remote video sessions were recorded via ZOOM and Otter. Interview sessions lasted approximately 45-60 minutes. Prior to beginning the interviews, the researcher showed gratitude for participation, restated the purpose, and requested participant consent for their contribution to be recorded, transcribed, and kept confidential. All data collected was stored on the cloud within the ZOOM, Otter and iCloud platforms by pseudonyms. All data stored in the cloud platforms is password protected.

Brinkman and Kvale (2015) explain that "qualitative inquiry allows world phenomena to be described, understood, and perceived as tangible qualities before it is theorized, explained, and changed into abstract quantities" (p. 15). During the semi-structured interviews, novice teachers discussed their preparation and its effectiveness to establish a safe, accessible, and organized classroom in our current reality. In addition, teachers conveyed their preparation to establish and maintain clear behavior expectations,

systems, and support in our current educational reality. The interview protocol was created with open-ended questions extrapolated from the quantitative data and literature that addressed educator preparation to establish the learning environment (see Appendices A and B).

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Quantitative

The survey data were entered and analyzed using IBM SPSS. To answer Research Question 1, *What are the overall first year teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certification programs*?*, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To answer Research Question 2, *Does certfication route influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?,* was analyzed using an independent t-test and a Chi-square of independence test to determine if there were group differences for each of the 4-subscales listed on page 7. To answer Research Question 3, *Does race/ethnicity influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?,* data were analyzed using one-way ANOVA and Chi-square of independence test to determine if there were group differences for each of the 4-subscales listed on page 7. The independent variables, certification route and race/ethnicity, are categorical. The dependent variables, classroom environment, classroom management, students with disabilities and overall teacher perception of preparedness, are continuous in nature. Effect size was measured using Cohen's d and coefficient of determination (r^2) and a significance value of .05 was used for this study.

Qualitative

To answer Research Question 4, *What are first year teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to support the learning*

environment?, was analyzed using inductive and deductive thematic coding process. Following the quantitative data analysis, findings were used to draft open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of their EPP's effectiveness to handle the realities of the classroom environment. The open-ended questions allowed for deeper thought and an emergence of themes and patterns. The interviews were then uploaded into DEDOOSE Coding Software for transcription and analysis. An inductive coding process was used to draw out themes of teacher's perceptions of their program's effectiveness to prepare them to handle the realities of the classroom environment. The process of inductive coding requires analyzing by taking data apart for surfacing before putting the data back together in a significant way (Creswell, 2016, p. 156). An open coding process identified distinct ideas and themes for grouping (Williams & Moser, 2019) The researcher sought to contextualize an overall perspective and connect it to the literature. Upon identifying these themes, the researcher exhibited the findings using charts, tables, and narratives.

Role of the Researcher

It is the goal of a researcher to remain objective during the process to ensure that the true experiences of participants are captured. The researcher serves as an instrument and must operate with self-awareness during the qualitative process (Lofland et al., 2005; Ravitch & Carl, 2015). Given that the researcher is closely related to this topic as an educator, mentor to novice teachers, and teacher of color, it is imperative that the researcher considered how this may have impacted synthesis of the participant's responses. Despite the experiences of the researcher, there were no prior relationships with any of the participants. Researcher bias was mitigated using an interview protocol. Notes were taken during the interview sessions to capture verbal and non-verbal communication (Stans et al., 2018). Therefore, reflexive journaling, member checking,

85

and theory triangulation was necessary to understanding the perceptions of novice teachers.

Qualitative Validity

To increase validity and reliability of this study, interview questions were reviewed by content experts for alignment feedback to constructs and approved by CPHS. The data was triangulated with member checking, peer debriefing and journal logs from the interview sessions. Interview questions were written neutral and objective. During the interviews, questions were displayed using Google Slides, recorded and transcribed for alignment. The researcher also restated the questions and clarified responses to ensure accurate understanding. ZOOM and OTTER transcriptions were reviewed to evaluate and select the most accurate capture of responses and sent to respondents for member checking. The researcher also kept a journal log to capture the research process.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

The quantitative portion of this study used archived data with non-identified data. The researcher obtained permission to conduct the study from the UHCL's CPHS. Study participants completed and signed the informed consent detailing the purpose of the study, time commitment, benefits, potential risks, and the assurance of confidentiality. The researcher explained that their participation was voluntary, and their identities would be protected through the use of pseudonyms in the transcribing and reporting phase. During the qualitative coding phase, the researcher remained objective as themes emerged. All data collected was stored on the ZOOM, OTTER, and iCloud platforms. All platforms are password protected. Data collected was closely examined to remain as objective as possible to lessen the influence of researcher bias.

Limitations

In terms of limitations, the New Teacher Satisfaction Survey is intended to measure the novice teacher's perception of their preparedness by their EPP across 49 items. The quantitative portion of this research study may be limited because it represents a fraction of teachers who were classified as a first-year teacher in Texas for the 2020-2021 school year. Moreover, sample sizes of teachers of color specifically those who identified as African American, were significantly lower than other race-ethnicity groups reporting. Furthermore, this study was limited because respondents self-reported and were nascent in their understanding at the point of survey collection. New teachers are growing in their self-awareness and self-reflection over the three years they are classified as a novice teacher. This poses an additional limitation, the moment in time the survey was completed. Depending on the respondent's emotional state and what's happening on their campus in their classroom, the survey results could vary based on the circumstance. A bad day where a teacher did not feel prepared to handle any harsh reality could alter their responses in comparison to a good day where they felt more competent and confident.

Another limitation is the survey is only collected one time in April of their first year. There are no comparisons of growth over time or opportunities to evaluate if new teachers needed knowledge and skills that were not provided from their EPP after they deepened their self-awareness and reflection. An additional limitation is it only the teacher's perception of preparedness, without expounding or the input of an administrator relating to their perceived preparedness. In addition, the selective use of the subscale, only measured novice teacher's perceptions relating to the Learning Environment subscale categories. Lastly, the survey collection tool did not require teachers to indicate their geographic location (urban, suburban, rural or town) of where they were teaching.

This additional information could have been triangulated to determine if there was a relationship between geographic location and novice teacher's perception of preparedness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. This chapter illustrated an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose, questions, hypotheses, research design, population and sampling selection, instrumentation to be used, data collection procedures, data analysis, privacy and ethical considerations, and the research design limitations of the study. This study used a sequential method to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. To better understand novice teacher perceptions, quantitative and qualitative data will be used. Quantitative data were analyzed using means, standard deviations, and independent t-tests. The qualitative phase of this study used semi-structured interviews to gather teacher's perceptions of their program's effectiveness to prepare them to handle the realities of the classroom environment. Response data were analyzed using inductive and deductive thematic coding to covey an overall narrative of experiences. Chapter IV reports the survey and assessment findings, as well as interview data.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. This chapter begins with a detailed description of the demographic characteristics of the participants followed by the findings illustrated for each of the four research questions. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the study's findings that guided this research.

Participant Demographics

Archived Survey Data

Participants for this study consisted of EC-12 grade Texas teachers completing their first year while holding a standard teaching certificate in Texas. A standard certificate certifies that a person has met the standards to be eligible to teach in Texas (Certificate-Issuance, 2020). Of the novice teachers, 4,250 teachers completed the survey and of that population 4,084 responses met the criteria of alternative or traditional certification program. Responses were deleted if they stated post-baccalaureate (166 responses) or were missing values for any of the questions (489 responses) leaving 3,595 valid responses. Table 4.1 displays participant demographics from the archival *New Teacher Satisfaction* survey data regarding gender, race/ethnicity, educator preparation program type, and grade level certification. The teachers participating in the quantitative portion of this study consisted of 78.6% female (n = 2,827) and 21.4% male (n = 768). The race/ethnic majority was White representing 51% (n = 1,850), Hispanic/Latino 30% (n = 1,077), Black/African American 13% (n = 465), and Other 6% (n = 203). Within the sample, 65.8% (n = 2,365) completed an alternative educator program and 34.2% (n = 1,230) completed a traditional educator program. The teacher participants were

distributed between the grade level certifications bands with 36.1% (n = 1296) in EC-6 grade levels, 25.1% (n = 904 in EC-12 grade levels, 17.3% (n = 623) in 7-12 grade levels, 15.7% (n = 564) in 4-8 grade levels, 5.5% (n = 199) in 6-12 grade levels, 0.2% (n = 6) in 8-12 grade levels, and 0.1% (n = 3) did not classify a grade level certification band.

Amy is a fourth-grade Emerging Bilingual English Language Arts teacher. She is traditionally certified from a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with a bachelor's degree in Education. She transitioned to a new school this year and is completing her third year of teaching in a large Texas district (see Table 4.1).

Bella is a first-year special education teacher in a small charter network. She transitioned from a career in accounting to become a teacher. She is still completing her certification requirements while enrolled in an alternative certification program. Prior to enrolling in the alternative educator preparation program, she was paraprofessional.

Carla is a middle school music teacher in a small district in Texas. She is traditionally certified from a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with a bachelor's and master's degree in Music Education This is her second school in three years.

Danielle is a first-year seventh grade Texas History teacher in a small Texas district. She graduated with a bachelor's degree from a large public university. She is alternatively certified and had no prior experience working with children before teaching.

Elaine is in her third year of teaching as a fourth-grade English Language Arts teacher. She also serves as the Bilingual and Gifted and Talented teacher. She graduated from a large Texas public university with a bachelor's degree in education. While completing her alternative certification program she served as a substitute teacher. Elaine has taught general education students and bilingual students at her school.

Frank is a first-year teacher. He recently moved to Texas from another state to become a teacher after completing his bachelor's degree. He teaches third grade reading language arts. Prior to enrolling in the alternative certification program, Frank served as a long-term substitute teacher.

Gabby is a self-contained second grade teacher in her second year as the teacher of record. She completed her bachelor's degree from a large public university in Texas with a traditional certification

Hope is a high school dance teacher in her third year. This is her second school in three years. She graduated from a Texas University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and is alternative certified to teach dance.

Table 4.1

Teacher Participant Demographics: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Educator Preparation Program Type, and Grade Level Certification

	Total n = 3,595	Traditional 34.2% (n = 1,230)	Alternative 65.8% (n = 2,365)
1. Gender			
Female	78.6 (n = 2,827)	38.0 (n = 1,070)	62.0 (n =1,757)
Male	21.4 (n = 768)	21.0 (n = 160)	79.0 (n = 608)
2. Race/Ethnicity			
White	51.0 (n = 1,850)	34.0 (n = 637)	66.0 (n = 1,213)
Hispanic/Latino	30.0 (n = 1,077)	42.0 (n = 449)	58.0 (n = 628)
Black/African American	13.0 (n = 465)	17.0 (n = 78)	83.0 (n = 387)
Other	6.0 (n = 203)	33.0 (n = 66)	67.0 (n = 137)
3. Grade Level Certification			
EC-6	36.1 (n = 1,296)	50.0 (n = 652)	50.0 (n = 644)
EC-12	25.1 (n = 904)	28.0 (n = 257)	72.0 (n = 647)
4-8	15.7 (n = 564)	19.0 (n = 105)	81.0 (n = 459)
6-12	5.5 (n = 199)	19.0 (n = 38)	81.0 (n = 161)
7-12	17.3 (n = 623)	28.0 (n = 174)	72.0 (n = 449)
8-12	0.2 (n = 6)	0.5 (n = 3)	0.5 (n = 3)
N/A	0.1 (n = 3)	33.3 (n = 1)	66.6 (n = 2)

Table 4.2

Teacher Interview Participant Demographics: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Certification Route, and Years of Teaching

Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender		
Female	7	87.5
Male	1	12.5
2. Race/Ethnicity		
African American	3	37.5
Hispanic	4	50.0
White	1	12.5
Asian	0	0
Two or more races	0	0
3. Certification Route		
Traditional	3	37.5
Alternative	5	62.5
4. Years of Teaching		
1	3	37.5
2	1	12.5
3	4	50.0

Research Question One

Research Question 1, *What are the overall first year teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certification programs*? was answered using frequencies and percentages of responses to the *New Teacher Satisfaction* survey. Participants rated their level of preparedness from their educator preparation program using a 4-pt rating scale (3 = Well Prepared, 2 = Sufficiently Prepared, 1 = Not Sufficiently Prepared, and 0 = Not At All Prepared). The 9-items in this section of the survey pertained to classroom environment, classroom management, and overall teacher perception of preparedness related to Learning Environment.

Tables 4.3-4.4 illustrate the results of novice teacher participants to three-items measuring *Classroom Environment*. Overall, traditional certification teachers reported higher percentages of novice teacher preparedness than the alternative certification route

teachers. Traditional teachers feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to organize a safe

classroom (95.2%, n = 1,169). Almost all traditional teachers feel "well

prepared/sufficiently prepared" to create a learning environment that is accessible to all

students (95.1%, n = 1,171). Novice teachers who attended traditional preparation

programs also feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to structure a classroom with

clear and efficient routines and procedures (94.0%, n = 1,150).

Table 4.3
Classroom Environment Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
Item 26 To what extent did your educator program	Alt	57.0 (n = 1,349)	37.2 (n = 882)	4.9 (n = 115)	0.8 (n = 19)
prepare you to organize a safe classroom?	Trad	67.0 (n = 821)	28.2 (n = 348)	4.0 (n = 50)	0.8 (n = 11)
Item 27 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to organize a	Alt	54.5 (n = 1,291)	39.1 (n = 925)	5.4 (n = 130)	0.8 (n = 19)
classroom learning environment that is accessible for all students?	Trad	61.7 (n = 760)	33.4 (n = 411)	4.0 (n = 49)	0.8 (n = 10)
Item 28	Alt	55.3 (n = 1,310)	38.1 (n = 902)	5.5 (n = 131)	0.9 (n = 22)

To what extent did your educator program prepare you to organize a classroom in which procedures and routines are clear and efficient?	Trad	61.0 (n = 749)	33.0 (n = 401)	6.0 (n = 75)	0.4 (n = 5)

Table 4.4
Collapsed: Classroom Environment Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared/ Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared/Not at all Prepared
Item 26 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to organize a safe classroom?	Alt	94.2 (n = 2,231)	5.7 (n = 134)
	Trad	95.2 (n = 1,169)	4.8 (n = 61)
Item 27 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to organize a classroom learning environment that is accessible for all students?	Alt	93.6 (n = 2,216)	6.2 (n = 149)
	Trad	95.1 (n = 1,171)	4.8 (n = 59)
Item 28 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to organize a classroom in which procedures and routines are clear and efficient?	Alt	93.4 (n = 2,212)	6.4 (n = 153)
	Trad	94.0 (n = 1,150)	6.4 (n = 80)

Tables 4.5-4.6 depict the results of novice teacher participants to 4-items considering *Classroom Management*. Largely, novice teachers who chose the traditional certification route feel more prepared to manage the classroom than the novice teachers who completed an alternative certification program. Traditionally prepared novice teachers feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to establish clear behavior expectations for students (92.0%, n = 1,133). In addition, both traditional (91.9%, n = 1,131) and alternative (91.7%, n = 2,167) certified novice teachers feel "well

prepared/sufficiently prepared" to maintain clear behavior expectations within the learning environment. Almost all alternatively prepared novice teachers feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to implement campus-wide behavior systems consistently and effectively (99.0%, n = 2,091). With a 1.0% difference, novice teachers who attended traditional programs also reported to feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to support students to meet the behavior standards expected (89.0%, n = 1,095).

Table 4.5
Classroom Management Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
Item 29 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to establish clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?	Alt	53.0 (n = 1,254)	39.0 (n = 923)	7.0 (n = 166)	1.0 (n = 22)
	Trad	57.0 (n = 700)	35.2 (n = 433)	6.8 (n = 84)	1.0 (n = 13)
Item 30 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to maintain clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?	Alt	51.7 (n = 1,223)	40.0 (n = 944)	7.5 (n = 178)	0.8 (n = 20)
	Trad	54.7 (n = 673)	37.2 (n =458)	6.9 (n = 84)	1.2 (n = 15)
Item 31 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to implement campus behavior systems consistently and effectively?	Alt	45.0 (n = 1,057)	44.0 (n = 1,034)	10.0 (n = 245)	1.0 (n = 29)
	Trad	47.0 (n = 580)	40.0 (n = 488)	12.0 (n = 144)	1.0 (n = 18)
Item 32 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to provide support to students to meet expected behavior standards?	Alt	44.0 (n = 1,051)	44.0 (n = 1047)	10.0 (n = 236)	1.0 (n = 31)
	Trad	46.0 (n = 571)	43.0 (n = 524)	10.0 (n = 118)	1.0 (n = 17)

Table 4.6
Collapsed: Classroom Management Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared/ Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared/ Not At All Prepared
Item 29 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to establish clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?	Alt	92.0 (n = 2,177)	8.0 (n = 188)
	Trad	92.2 (n = 1,133)	7.8 (n = 97)
Item 30 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to maintain clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?	Alt	91.7 (n = 2,167)	8.3 (n = 198)
	Trad	91.9 (n = 1,131)	8.1 (n = 99)
Item 31 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to implement campus behavior systems consistently and effectively?	Alt	99.0 (n = 2,091)	11.0 (n = 274)
	Trad	87.0 (n = 1,068)	13.0 (n = 162)
Item 32 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to provide support to students to meet expected behavior standards?	Alt	88.0 (n = 2,098)	11.0 (n = 267)
	Trad	89.0 (n = 1,095)	11.0 (n = 135)

Tables 4.7-4.8 display results from one-item considering preparedness for *Students with Disabilities*. Contrary to previous data tables presented, alternative certification teachers feel more prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities to the 1,230 traditional certified teachers. Teachers who were prepared through alternative certification (79.0%, n = 1,866) feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" to differentiate

instruction to meet the behavior needs of students with disabilities over those who attended a traditional program (74.0%, n = 905). Tables 4.9-4.10 illustrate results from one-item considering overall preparedness for the realities of the classroom as they exist on the campus. Overall, more traditional certified teachers felt "well prepared" for the realities of the classroom than did the alternative certified teachers. Both traditional (89.0%, n = 1,098) and alternative (89.0%, n = 2,107) certified novice teachers feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" for the realities of the classroom on their campus.

Table 4.7
Students with Disabilities Survey Item

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
Item 40 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to differentiate	Alt	34.0 (n = 807)	45.0 (n = 1,059)	19.0 (n = 442)	2.0 (n = 57)
instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities?	Trad	32.0 (n = 394)	42.0 (n = 511)	23.0 (n = 286)	3.0 (n = 39)

Table 4.8
Collapsed: Students with Disabilities Survey Item

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared/ Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared/Not At All Prepared
Item 40 To what extent did your educator program prepare you to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities?	Alt	79.0 (n = 1,866)	21.0 (n = 499)
	Trad	74.0 (n = 905)	26.0 (n = 325)

Table 4.9

Overall Teacher Perception of Preparedness Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
Item 49 What is your overall evaluation of how well you were prepared for the realities of the classroom as they exist on your campus?	Alt	36.0 (n = 852)	53.0 (n = 1,255)	10.0 (n = 225)	1.0 (n = 33)
	Trad	38.0 (n = 470)	51.0 (n = 628)	10.0 (n = 124)	1.0 (n = 8)

Table 4.10

Collapsed: Overall Teacher Perception of Preparedness Survey Items

Question	Educator Preparation Program	Well Prepared/ Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared/Not At All Prepared
Item 49 What is your overall evaluation of how well you were prepared for the realities of the classroom as they exist on your campus?	Alt	89.0 (n = 2,107)	11.0 (n = 258)
	Trad	89.0 (n = 1,098)	11.0 (n = 132)

Research Question Two

To answer Research Question 2, *Does certfication route influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?* was answered using independent t-tests and a Chi-square tests of independence. The independent variable, certification route, is categorical. The dependent variables, classroom environment and classroom management, are continuous in nature, while students with disabilities and overall teacher perception of preparedness are categorical in nature.

Results of the independent t-test indicated certification route did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment, $t(3,593) = 4.102$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.146$ (small effect size), $r^2 = 0.073$ (see Table 4.11). Novice teachers who attended traditional certification programs ($M = 7.71$) indicated feeling more prepared to establish the classroom environment versus those who attended an alternative certification program ($M = 7.46$). Findings indicated a 7.0% variation in teacher perceptions of preparedness to establish the classroom environment can be attributed to certification route.

Table 4.11
Independent t-test: Teacher Perception of Preparedness to Establish the Classroom Environment Between Traditional versus Alternative Certification Programs

Program Type	N	M	SD	t-value	df	p-value	d	r^2
Alt	2,365	7.46	1.77	4.102	3,593	001*	0.146	0.073
Trad	1,230	7.71	1.64					

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

Table 4.12 displays the mean difference of teacher perception of preparedness to manage the behavior in the classroom per certification group. The findings suggested that certification program type did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage student behavior, $t(3,593) = 4.102$, $p = .667$. However, teachers who attended traditional certification programs ($M = 9.60$) reported slightly higher perceptions of preparedness than those who attended alternative certification programs ($M = 9.50$).

Table 4.12

Independent t-test: Teacher Perception of Preparedness to Manage the Classroom Between Traditional versus Alternative Certification Programs

Program Type	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Alt	2,365	9.50	2.54	1.080	3,593	.667
Trad	1,230	9.60	2.53			

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

The results of Chi-Square Test of Independence suggested that a statistically significant relationship existed between the type of certification program attended and teacher's perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities, X^2(3, N = 3,595) = 13.067, p = .004. Thirty four percent of alternative certification teachers felt "well prepared" to differentiate for students with disabilities versus the 32.0% who attended a traditional program. On the other hand, 54.0% of alternative certification teachers felt their program did not prepare them to differentiate for students with disabilities versus 46.0% who attended a traditional program.

The results of Chi-Square Test of Independence suggested a statistically significant relationship did not exist between the type of certification program attended and overall novice teacher perception of preparedness, X^2(3, N = 3,595) = 2.151, p = .542. However, 37.8% of traditional program attendees felt "well prepared" overall to face the realities of the classroom versus 36.6% of the alternative program attendees. Eleven percent of the alternative program attendees reported not feeling prepared overall to face the realities of the classroom versus 9.8% of traditional program attendees.

Research Question Three

To answer Research Question 3, *Does race/ethnicity influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?*, was answered using one-way

ANOVAs and Chi-square tests of independence. The independent variables, certification route and race/ethnicity, are categorical. The dependent variables, classroom environment and classroom management, are continuous in nature, while students with disabilities, and overall teacher perception of preparedness are categorical in nature.

All Participants

The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that race/ethnicity did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment, $F(3, 3591) = 2.289$, $p = .076$. However, teachers who identified as Hispanic/Latino had the highest mean average for preparedness to establishing the classroom environment (see Table 4.13)

Table 4.13
One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Environment

Race/Ethnicity	N	M	SD	F-value	df	p-value
White	1,850	7.48	1.70	2.289	(3, 3591)	.076
Hispanic/ Latino	1,077	7.66	1.69			
Black/African American	465	7.53	1.96			
Other	203	7.58	1.70			

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

The results of the one-way ANOVA (see Table 4.14) indicated that race/ethnicity did influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom, $F(3, 3,591) = 9.913$, $p < .001$, omega-squared $= .007$, eta-squared $= .008$. The proportion of variance explained in teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom by race/ethnicity ranges from 0.7% to 0.8%. The results of the Tukey Post Hoc indicated that the largest mean difference was between White and Black race/ethnicity groups ($M_d = -.4907$). Additionally, there are statistically significant mean differences between the Hispanic/Latino and the White groups ($M_d = -.4689$).

Table 4.14

One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Management

Program Type	N	M	SD	F-value	df	p-value	w^2	n^2
White	1,850	9.32	2.56	9.913	(3, 3,591)	<.001*	.007	.008
Hispanic/ Latino	1,077	9.79	2.44					
Black/African American	465	9.81	2.58					
Other	203	9.51	2.48					

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

Table 4.15 indicates the that a statistically significant relationship did exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction for the behavior needs for students with disabilities, $X^2(9, N = 3,595) = 32.198$, $p < .001$. Overall, 47.6% of White novice teachers feel "well prepared" to meet the behavior needs of students with disabilities compared to 31.5% of Hispanic/Latino and 15.2% of Black/African American novice teachers.

Table 4.15

Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Teacher Perception of Preparedness to Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities

		Race/Ethnicity			
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/ African American	Other
Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities	Well Prepared	47.6% (n = 639)	31.5% (n = 427)	15.2% (N = 182)	5.7% (N = 83)
	Sufficiently Prepared	52.5% (n = 1007)	29.4% (n = 536)	12.9% (n = 236)	5.2% (n = 104)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	56.0% (n = 181)	28.8% (n = 102)	8.2% (n = 39)	6.9% (n = 16)
	Not At All Prepared	47.9% (n = 23)	28.1% (n = 12)	19.8% (n = 8)	4.2% (n = 0)

The Chi-square test of Independence (see Table 4.16) indicated a statistically significant relationship did not exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher's overall perception of preparedness, $X^2(9, N = 3,595) = 14.533$, p = .105. Overall, 48.0% of White novice teachers feel "well prepared" to handle the realities of today's classroom compared to 32.1% of Hispanic/Latino and 13.7% of Black/African American novice teachers.

Table 4.16

Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Overall Teacher Perception of Preparedness

		Race/Ethnicity			
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/ African American	Other
Overall Perception of Preparedness	Well Prepared	48.0% (n = 639)	32.1% (n = 427)	13.7% (n = 182)	6.2% (n = 83)
	Sufficiently Prepared	53.5% (n = 1,007)	28.5% (n = 536)	12.5% (n = 236)	5.5% (n = 104)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	53.6% (n = 181)	30.2% (n = 102)	11.5% (n = 39)	4.7% (n = 16)
	Not At All Prepared	53.5% (n = 23)	27.9% (n = 12)	18.6% (n = 8)	0% (n = 0)

Traditional Certification

Table 4.17 results of the one-way ANOVA indicated that race/ethnicity did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment for those who attended a traditional certification program, F(3, 1,226) = .159, p = .924. However, teachers who identified as Black/African American had the highest mean average for establishing the classroom environment.

Table 4.17

One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Environment - Attended a Traditional Certification Program

	N	M	SD	F-value	df	p-value
White	637	7.7206	1.63	.159	(3, 1226)	.924
Hispanic/ Latino	449	7.7038	1.63			
Black/African American	78	7.7692	1.97			
Other	66	7.5909	1.49			

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

The results of the one-way ANOVA (see Table 4.18) indicated that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom for those who attended a traditional certification program, $F(3, 1,226) = 2.849$, $p = .036$, omega-squared = .010, eta-squared = .016. The proportion of variance explained in teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom by race/ethnicity ranges from 1.0% to 1.6%. The results of the Tukey Post Hoc indicated that the largest mean difference was between White and Black race/ethnicity group ($M_d = -.7904$).

Table 4.18

One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Management - Attended a Traditional Certification Program

	N	M	SD	F-value	df	p-value	w^2	n^2
White	637	9.48	2.54	2.849	(3, 1226)	.036*	.010	.016
Hispanic/ Latino	449	9.70	2.53					
Black/African American	78	10.27	2.62					
Other	66	9.30	2.19					

*Statistically Significant (p < .05)

The results of Table 4.19 indicated a statistically significant relationship did exist between novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the

behavior needs for students with disabilities and race/ethnicity for those who attended a traditional certification program, X^2(9, N = 1,230) = 17.782, p = .038. Overall, 49.2% of traditionally certified White novice teachers feel "well prepared" to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities compared to all Hispanic/Latino (37.3%), and Black/African American (8.4%).

Table 4.19

Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Teacher Perception of Preparedness to Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities of Traditional Certified Novice Teachers

		Race/Ethnicity			
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/ African American	Other
Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities	Well Prepared	49.2% (n = 194)	37.3% (n = 147)	8.4% (N = 33)	5.1% (N = 20)
	Sufficiently Prepared	51.3% (n = 262)	37.8% (n = 193)	5.7% (n = 29)	5.3% (n = 27)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	57.7% (n = 165)	32.5% (n = 93)	3.5% (n = 10)	6.3% (n = 18)
	Not At All Prepared	41.0% (n = 16)	41.0% (n = 16)	15.4% (n = 6)	2.6% (n = 1)

The results of Table 4.20 indicated a statistically significant relationship did not exist between overall novice teacher perception of preparedness who attended traditional programs and race/ethnicity, X^2(9, N = 1,230) = 2.307, p = .986. Overall, 52.5% of White teachers feel "well prepared" to handle the realities of today's classroom compared to 35.5% of Hispanic/Latino and 6.9% of Black/African American novice teachers that attended traditional programs.

Table 4.20

Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Overall Teacher Perception of Preparedness of Traditional Certified Novice Teachers

		Race/Ethnicity			
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/African American	Other
Overall Perception of Preparedness	Well Prepared	52.5% (n = 244)	35.5% (n = 165)	6.9% (N = 32)	5.2% (N = 24)
	Sufficiently Prepared	50.9% (n = 328)	37.6% (n = 242)	5.9% (n = 38)	5.6% (n = 36)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	52.7% (n = 58)	35.5% (n = 39)	6.4% (n = 7)	5.5% (n = 6)
	Not At All Prepared	63.6% (n = 7)	27.3% (n = 3)	9.1% (n = 1)	0% (n = 0)

Alternative Certification

The results of the one-way ANOVA (see Table 4.21) indicated that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment for those who attended an alternative certification program, $F(3, 2{,}361) = 3.279$, $p = .020$, omega-squared = .002, eta-squared = .004. The proportion of variance explained in teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom by race/ethnicity ranges from 0.2% to 0.4%. The results of the Tukey Post Hoc indicated that the largest mean difference was between White and Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity groups ($M_d = -.2632$).

Table 4.21
One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Environment - Attended an Alternative
Certification Program

	N	M	SD	F-value	f	p-value	w^2	n^2
White	1,213	7.3578	1.73	3.279	(3, 2361)	.020*	.002	.004
Hispanic/ Latino	628	7.6210	1.73					
Black/African American	387	7.4806	1.95					
Other	137	7.5766	1.79					

The results of the one-way ANOVA (see Table 4.22) indicated that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom for those who attended an alternative certification program, $F(3, 2,361) = 9.490$, $p < .001$, omega-squared = .010, eta-squared = .011. The proportion of variance explained in teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom for those who attended an alternative certification program by race/ethnicity ranges from 1.0% to 1.1%. The results of the Tukey Post Hoc indicated that the largest mean difference was between White and Hispanic/Latino race/ethnicity groups ($M_d = -.6168$). Additionally, there were statistically significant mean differences between the White and Black/African American groups ($M_d = -.4810$).

Table 4.22
One-Way ANOVA Results: Classroom Management - Attended an Alternative
Certification Program

	N	M	SD	F-value	df	p-value	w^2	n^2
White	1,213	9.2399	2.58	9.490	(3, 2361)	.001*	.010	.011
Hispanic/ Latino	628	9.8567	2.38					
Black/African American	387	9.7209	2.57					
Other	137	9.6058	2.61					

The results of Table 4.23 indicate the that a statistically significant relationship did exist between novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities who attended alternative certification programs and race/ethnicity, $X^2(9, N = 2,365) = 21.243$, p = .012. Overall, 46.8% of alternatively certified White novice teachers feel "well prepared" to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities to Hispanic/Latino (28.6%), and Black/African American (18.6%).

Table 4.23
Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Teacher Perception of Preparedness to Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities of Alternative Certified Novice Teachers

| | | Race/Ethnicity | | | |
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/ African American	Other
Differentiate Instruction for Students with Disabilities	Well Prepared	46.8% (n = 378)	28.6% (n = 231)	18.6% (N = 150)	5.9% (N = 48)
	Sufficiently Prepared	53.1% (n = 562)	25.4% (n = 269)	16.4% (n = 174)	5.1% (n = 54)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	55.0% (n = 243)	26.5% (n = 117)	11.3% (n = 50)	7.2% (n = 32)
	Not At All Prepared	52.6% (n = 30)	19.3% (n = 11)	22.8% (n = 13)	5.3% (n = 3)

The results of Table 4.24 indicated a statistically significant relationship did exist between overall novice teacher perception of preparedness who attended alternative certification programs and race/ethnicity, $X^2(9, N = 2,365) = 23.399$, p = .005. Overall, 45.6% of White novice teachers feel "well prepared" compared to 30.3% of Hispanic/Latino and 17.3% of Black/African American novice teachers that attended alternative certification programs.

Table 4.24

Cross-tabulation Results: Race/Ethnicity and Overall Teacher Perception of
Preparedness of Alternative Certified Novice Teachers

		Race/Ethnicity			
		White	Hispanic/ Latino	Black/ African American	Other
Overall Perception of Preparedness	Well Prepared	45.6% (n = 395)	30.3% (n = 262)	17.3% (N = 150)	6.8% (N = 59)
	Sufficiently Prepared	54.8% (n = 679)	23.7% (n = 294)	16.0% (n = 198)	5.5% (n = 68)
	Not Sufficiently Prepared	53.9% (n = 123)	27.6% (n = 63)	14.0% (n = 32)	4.4% (n = 10)
	Not At All Prepared	50.0% (n = 16)	28.1% (n = 9)	21.9% (n = 7)	0% (n = 0)

Research Question Four

To answer Research Question 4, *What are first year teacher's perceptions of their*
educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to support the learning
environment?, was analyzed using inductive thematic coding process. The data were
closely examined to identify common ideas, topics, and patterns among the response of
the participants (Broom, 2021). Eight participants completed individual semi-structured
interviews and nine distinct themes arose from the teacher's perceptions of their educator
preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to support the learning environment:
(a) first-year experiences, (b) motivation for becoming a teacher, (c) most valuable
aspects of their educator preparation programs, (d) least valuable aspects of their educator
preparation programs, (e) overall sense of preparedness, (f) the aftermath of Covid on the
students, (g) misunderstanding of what it means to establish the classroom environment,
(h) harsh realities of the classroom and (i) experiences as a novice teacher of color.

First-Year Experiences

      Year One Teachers. The first theme, first-year experiences, included perspectives from novice teachers related to their first year as the teacher of record. Teachers used metaphors or phrases to describe year one, whether the phrase and metaphor stayed the same, and in what ways did the sentiment change as time as progressed. Bella said, "willing to learn", Frank said, "harder than it looks", and Danielle said, "trying to be positive" to describe their first year in the seat. Bella further expressed, "I have to be willing to be open to being new, you know, and be willing to absorb so that at least I can I can do better as time goes by." Frank elaborated,

> So, I just recently graduated, graduated last year. So, my thought process on doing it, I didn't think it was going to be easy, but also didn't think it was going to be that difficult for like my first year. So getting into it now seeing like you know, as far as like, all the organization, the class management, behavior management that I have to, you know, do and like, as far as, like, trying to be like, I guess, less firm with the students, I see that like, a lot of the teachers, they start off from square one as being like, firm with them, they gotta, you know, put their foot down on them. It was easier than it looks. I didn't like start off with that firm foot. So, it's like, got like, a little loose, but then when I when I started putting my foot down more, it's like, okay, now we got a handle on what's going on. Yep, yeah.

Frank explained the dissonance between his pre-service reality and his in-service reality. Although he had served as a substitute teacher in the same school, his first year as the teacher of record establishing the learning environment is harder than it looks. Danielle explained that trying to be and stay positive as she transitioned into the role mid-year, in the month of January, after the class had already experienced three teachers required a positive outlook. She illuminated further,

113

I went into a class that the teacher left. I was like, I like inherited everything. So, I

definitely, definitely, I think just like be like be gentle with myself and the kids,

you know, since they had like three teachers that left them… so it's just trying, to

try to learn… seeing what I kind of what I needed more, which is to be like have a

more positive outlook.

Classroom management is elusive. Being willing to learn while remaining positive is the

work of a new teacher. Year two teachers added additional context by having more

schema.

Year Two Teacher. Gabby, a second-year teacher who completed a traditional

certification program used the phrase, "keep moving forward" to describe her first-year

teaching. She expounded,

Because there would be times that I'd be stuck on something or be upset about

something or how a lesson went, but I just needed to realize that I just needed to

keep going and change what I thought I needed to change and that was, you

know, just keep going.

Gabby's response also reflects the positive state of mind a novice teacher needs as they

move along the continuum. All of the responses allude to the inevitability of struggle but

a positive attitude helps a new teacher to persevere. Third year teachers have schema and

are better able to contextualize their feelings from the last two years in the seat.

Year Three Teachers. Likewise, the third-year teachers extended the phrases or

metaphors to describe the first year. Amy, a traditional certified teacher used the phrase,

"mind blowing" and further justified,

College teaches you the test. It doesn't necessarily prepare you for what you will

experience in the classroom. Um, and the reason why I say that is because you

have so many aspects of the curriculum. Before you even get over to the

classroom management. I mean, for me, I've always taught fourth grade. So, fourth grade is a STAAR grade. And it was so much pressure on me for a STAAR, STAAR, STAAR, STAAR, STAAR, and the word STAAR you never even hear the word STAAR in college. You know, we're going yeah we're going over you know like the foundational pieces that a student, that any student needs to learn. And so that was definitely mind blowing for me because I didn't even understand my goal or my end game until the end of the year. It was like the need for backwards planning. But I started at the beginning, you know what I'm saying?

Again, dissonance surfaces between pre-service and in-service realities. Amy also explains a disconnect between her EPP programming and her perceived primary role as a fourth-grade teacher. She had not been adequately prepared for the responsibilities of the state mandated assessment. Carla, another traditional certified teacher added the phrase, "someone please help me" to describe her first-year as the teacher of record. She explained that it has changed over the last two years,

I will say, actually being in the classroom and getting that experience from that first year, it kind of prepares you for what's to come. You know, years after that, you know, things may change, but that first year definitely built the ground surface for you know, structure and how you would like to present your class, your lessons and all that good stuff. So, the first year is definitely, I don't know how to put, I'm just gonna say it's just building blocks.

Carla affirmed Amy's sentiment that educator preparation programs are just preparation, the building blocks for additional learning to take place. The necessity of the first-year is to learn and build onto the teacher's knowledge and skills. Elaine, an alternative certified teacher labeled her first year as "crazy and very overwhelming"

So, I went in to teaching virtually. So that alone was just, you know. I was so

excited, like, Oh, I'm gonna, finally you know, first year teaching. And then it's

like, Oh, just kidding, you're gonna teach through a computer. So that alone was

like, well how am I even supposed to do this. I'm barely learning how to teach in

the classroom. Let alone now let me teach in front of a computer. So that was very

crazy and overwhelming. I also was in the process of I wasn't fully certified. So, I

still had an exam, or actually two to three exams to pass, because I was getting my

bilingual certification as well. So I was, you know, getting a hold of learning how

to really do lesson plans, how to put grades, and just all of the teaching things. As

well as going home, being a wife, and doing like all of the studying for exams.

And then I was the GT teacher, so I had to do hours. And then I was also a guinea

pig for the reading academies. So, then I had to do reading academies. And then I

was told, Oh hey, you're also going to have to take your STR. So, here's yet

another exam you have to study for. So, that's what I mean by crazy

overwhelming. Just a very overwhelming year.

Furthermore, Elaine added the complexity of COVID and being a first-year teacher

teaching virtually. She provides another disconnect between educator programming and

reality that no EPP could have accounted for that every teacher all over the country

would experience. In the same way, Hope, also alternatively certified, described the

inaugural year,

Okay, um, I feel like my first year of teaching was almost, this is gonna sound so

bad, but I feel like it was kind of like a hurricane. Like it was just… just a mess

and I know that probably 98% of it had to do with starting during COVID. So, it

was just a mess for everybody and not having the best experience as a first-year

teacher. But there was still like light at the end of the tunnel. So, it was really, it

was really good to have. And I do feel like it has changed. I do think that the more experience I have, the easier it has gotten. So, and although it's still learning and there's still like damage done, like I feel like it has gotten easier and there's less and less damage every year.

Hope expounded that her experiences as a first-year teacher damaged her mental state and her home life. Amy and Hope had both switched schools by their third years due to the school climates being uncomfortable settings. Hope indicated,

If I would have stuck it out any longer in my other district, I wouldn't have lasted very long in the teaching world. I feel like I would have been done after a year two, but because I was given the opportunity to come to a different district and experience it… my experience has been all positive experience thus far. It's definitely been a good thing to like rekindle my love for teaching dance and just being around the kids again. It's just a different, it's a different experience and it's a positive experience. It even positively affected like my home life as well because I was not in a good mental state for two years being at home, like I just was struggling here as well. So now coming home and actually like, loving what I do. Coming home happy 98% of the time, rather than coming home frustrated and upset 98% of the time. It's a big difference. A big big difference.

All the participants used phrases or metaphors that summed up their first-year teaching to be hard and yet they never gave up hope that it could get better in time.

Fears. An additional response expressed to describe their first-year teaching was fear. Bella explained that she feared becoming too emotionally attached, specifically becoming emotionally invested in things that she had no control over. Carla was afraid of students being resistant. Danielle was fearful of managing the classroom. Elaine stated

she was anxious about being observed and having to communicate to a family that she had concerns about their child that would prompt a need for special education testing. Notably, three teachers voiced their fears regarding their impact on children not being effective. Specifically, Hope and Gabby feared not doing enough or not giving students what they needed. Amy expressed,

> I didn't know what to fear. Honestly. I didn't know what to fear. What I fear now. Is losing a kid. I fear losing them. I fear… I fear not being able to reach them. You have… you have your what do they call them, your at-risk kids. And it's like, even throughout my personal life, I see… I see the full circle and that is my greatest fear, not being able to reach them. My greatest fear is for my delivery to not be as effective as it should be. Or not in a way that touches them, that changes them, molds them, and redirects them to a different direction. That's...I fear that.

Different from the female novice teachers, Frank, the only male respondent explained his fear of being targeted as an elementary teacher,

> It's like… If people see something that's not really like, what's going on. You know, like, try to push into any of that stuff. I just want to, you know grow the youth and do that stuff. So, I guess, making me like a stereotype.

In all, the novice teacher responses encapsulate that the first year is challenging, but in time it improves. In addition, for some it can greatly improve even if you must transition schools or districts for a more comfortable school climate.

Motivation for Becoming a Teacher

Desire to Make an Impact. Most of the teachers entered the field because they desired to make an impact in the lives of the children they serve. They wanted to form relationships, share life lessons learned, and help students discover passions. Carla, a music teacher shared,

I was passionate about music. You know, I was passionate about art, you know, and passionate about history. So, I just wanted students to find something that they enjoyed and something that could help them overcome a lot of situations that they were going through.

Similarly, Elaine wanted to change the lives of children and stated,

I just couldn't imagine not being able to… like bring them all home with me and just like love on them. And like, let them know, like hey, I'm here for you. I'm here to hear you out. Like I just want to be a person that like can change your life, you know. And I love the fact that like the kids, they can just look up to you. And a lot of my kids now like, [ask] can we call you mom… like we're with you so much of the time? Like, I'm literally like their mom, I spend most of my time with them. But just, um, you know, just changing lives and like being a support for kids that I know, possibly don't have it at home, even if they don't tell us that.

Hope wanted to dance students to understand how being on the drill team had transferable life skills and that it was not just about dance. She stated,

Dance in general, it teaches you life skills, it teaches you time management, how to be respectful, how to talk, just how to be a people person, how to be a leader, and all of that. So I think that that was what I was most looking forward to. It's just showing those kids that this is something that will last you a lifetime. This is not something that only sticks with you in the four years that you're in high school, you will continuously refer back to all of these things that we have taught you and it'll be with you for the rest of your life.

The motivation to teach to have an impact was mentioned by all respondents. The hope of building strong bonds with students, exposing them to new experiences, passing on the love of the subject, and helping them see how this knowledge connects to life fueled their

intent to teach. Other interview respondents went on to share how meaningful relationships of former teachers, administrators, professors, and family members motivated them to become teachers.

Impacted by Other Teachers. Other teachers influenced the study participants to become educators. Some stated that it was because of good teachers that they wanted to emulate what they had experienced as students. Hope wanted "to go back and say I did it because of them", while Danielle explained that she teaches social studies because of all the "good social studies teachers" and the "impact you could have" as the driving force to becoming a teacher. Amy spoke of how her 4th grade teacher saw what she possessed and channeled that to mold her,

> I was bossy. I was bossy because I had a lot of responsibility at home. So, she gave me a sense of responsibility in the class instead of condemning me for my bossiness. And so, I basically just wanted to be that light in someone else's life. I thought [of] the importance of that and how much it changed me… I just wanted to be that for someone else.

Additionally, Carla, a music teacher in her third year, explained that her band teachers and directors were role models that impacted her "in a very strong way" and she wanted to be just like them. Uniquely, Frank, a first-year teacher explained how his current principal started influencing and affirming his choice to become a teacher while he was subbing. The desire to teach initially had been prompted by his high school teacher, Frank explained,

> The reason I got into teaching is because of my background, with my family and stuff. So, I lost my dad young... he passed away. One of my basketball coaches, also my teacher, he like, you know, he didn't try to step in to be a father figure. But, you know, he was always there if I needed something. Gave me money for

120

prom and stuff like that. So, in my mind, I realized that, you know, teachers… a

lot of teachers are there, like for students… you know, that don't have anything or

they're going through some life's troubles, or you know, depressed or anything

like that. It helped me realize that I could also do that too.

All these responses show the impact and long-term influence teachers have in the lives of

students buy more importantly in recruiting the next generation of students.

      Shared Cultural Understanding. Most of the teachers who identified as teachers

of color stated that sharing cultural identity of students was an additional motivating

factor that led them to become a teacher. Elaine recounts,

I am an ELL learner. So, I came here, and my parents only knew Spanish. So, I

went to school only knowing Spanish. I was a bilingual student, and it was so

hard to learn English. And you know, at home, the only support I had was my

brother. He was the only other person that knew English, and my parents tried,

they really did but it was hard. So, I always knew I wanted to teach kids that were

like me. So, it was one goal to become a bilingual teacher and I knew it was going

to be hard because the… the exams are no joke. But um, I just always knew I

wanted to help bilingual students learn a language that I know is very difficult.

Together with Elaine, Danielle affirmed that it was easier to connect with students that

shared her heritage, students would say, "Oh, you're Spanish? You can speak Spanish?

Do you understand what I'm saying? And I'm like yes. You know, in a way, kind of

like… [it's] easier to relate to each other." Equally, Amy explained that she wanted to

teach to help expand the purview of students. She grew up classified as an at-risk student

because of her low socioeconomic status and struggled to believe that she could live up to

all the hopes and promises that teachers foretold. For better educational opportunities,

Amy was transported out of her community to attend schools in high socioeconomic neighborhoods. She shared,

It was different for me. And I knew that I was different in those environments. And I never felt like I had advocate for me. I felt like an outsider. I felt like… I felt like I was less than because I could see all the stuff that I don't have. I want to be that light. I want to be that light. You know the kid, when you tell the kid, and their environment is this big (she motions her fingers to show a small circle) and you tell them you can be anything you want. It's… it's condescending. It is because it's like, I see my options. You could probably be [anything you want], you know what I'm saying? But I feel like you're insulting me. So, for a child to have a person in their environment that come from where they come from and is a true example [of] be more and have more, that's me.

Carla provided a different perspective on shared cultural understanding,

At my second school, dealing with students of different heritage, who, who might look like me, be the same color as me, but speak something totally different. Don't really understand anything culturally about the music that I'm trying to teach them. It was a challenge, but it was a, it was a growing one that transpired into something great. I think that was like the best experience for me because we couldn't speak the same language, but we spoke the same language musically, because that kid, those kids, a few of them understood the feel rhythms, patterns beat. They were locked in. Um, but yeah, just seeing how they would connect with the teachers of their heritage, reminded me of how I connected with the students in my heritage. Yeah. So yeah. So, it wasn't that hard to, you know, adapt and work with them.

Carla's response shows that a shared cultural understanding can be more comfortable for the novice teacher of color, however she used music to create connection and exposure. Frank also offered an alternative view on shared cultural understanding. He wanted students who had experienced hardships like him as a young person to see themselves in him. He stated what he would say to his students and how that impacted him,

> "You can always come to me for help, or if you need anything, you know, I'll always be there for you, you know." Like that, that really, like, touched my heart. So like, you know, I really wanted to pursue teaching more, because of what my basketball coach did for me. It helped me realize that I could also do that too. I could change lives, like for some of the students because you know, they could be going, like thinking that they can't do anything in life.

Frank, in addition to all these responses, speak to why an individual decides to become a teacher. The choice to be an educator can be motivated by altruism, the influence of great teachers and the desire to give back and serve one's community. A teacher's motivation to teach can also be to expand how a student views the world and how learning transfers as life skills.

Overall Sense of Preparedness

Overall, most of the teachers felt prepared to be a teacher on day one. Using a scale of one to ten, all the teachers rated themselves at a five or above. Conversely, only one novice teacher divided her score to be a five for content preparedness and zero for classroom management preparedness. Two of the three traditional certified teachers rated their sense of preparedness as an eight and nine. Whereas, the remaining traditional certified participant explained that she was a perfectionist with high standards and could only rate her sense of preparedness as a five.

There was more variation of ratings amongst the novice teachers who obtained certification through alternative certification routes. Bella, a first-year teacher felt she was too new to the role to rate her preparedness. Although Danielle indicated her sense of preparedness rating to be a five for content and zero for classroom management, Frank conveyed, "an eight as of now because they follow along with you know. I get all the resources and help I can get" as a first-year teacher.

Interestingly, Elaine rated her overall sense of preparedness between a five and a seven. Her undergraduate studies were in education, but she was unable to pass her exams before graduation, opting to enroll within an alternative certification program. Her prior knowledge combined with her experiences as a substitute teacher attributed to her sense of preparedness. She expressed,

> Um, you know, merging them both together. I would say I was between a five and a seven. I felt really prepared but more so because of my university experience than with Texas Teachers. I was able to go into the role of being a substitute since I could do everything online. So that allowed me to gain experience as well in the classroom. As a daily sub, I would always ask my principal like, "Hey, can I go observe a teacher and see like, how they run their classroom?"

The novice teacher responses indicate that their overall sense of preparedness is moderate to high despite the certification route.

Most Valuable Aspects of Their Educator Preparation Programs

Despite educator preparation route, all teachers were able to identify valuable aspects of their program that helped them establish the learning environment.

Traditional Certified Teachers. Teachers communicated that student teaching, internships, clinical practice, or any time in the field were the most valuable aspects of their EPPs. Carla said the most valuable aspect of her program was,

The amount of time that we got to go out and do real in classroom work. So, we

had to do student observations. Since freshman year, [you were] assigned a school

or we could choose a school. And we would work with that department, whether

it was English, math, um, you know, PE, band, or whatever. We were always able

to be hands on and to have a mentor to help us with any questions or help to mold

us. And to help us be sure that this is what we want to do. So, always being able

to be in the field actively.

Carla explained the impact of the variety of experiences her EPP provided in the field to

observe and have deliberate practice. Having the addition of a mentor to provide context

also shaped her pre-service reality.

Gabby agreed that internship and having a mentor were valuable program aspects,

Being in the classroom, that was the most valuable thing that I could get out of it

and having a mentor and my supervisor there… and all the support that I got at

the time really helped me to transition into the classroom, myself. So, I would say

internships, especially my second one. I did intern one, which was just one day a

week and then internship two was going to the school every day, you know, for

the whole semester.

Traditional program teachers also indicated that the felt prepared to pass the certification

exams. Amy said that she passed all exams the first time. Moreover, Amy and Carla felt

they were prepared to be professionals in the field with interviewing skills, a sense of

urgency, and responsibility.

Alternative Certified Teachers. All the novice teachers identified the videos and

field observation hours as the most impactful aspects of their EPP. Hope, a novice teacher

in her third year, further elaborated,

So, I really appreciated when Texas Teachers had me watch videos of lessons.
And so I really appreciated that because I'm a visual learner… I need to see it and
I need to see how this works in order for me to figure out my life, so I really
appreciated their videos that they sent. I really liked it because it was like
somebody was actually in the classroom and just like, set up a video camera and
just like let the teacher go to town.

Frank added that he enjoyed the videos that featured seated principals the most. He
stated,

Yeah, they showed a lot the principals. I don't remember the names; I know they
had this is a male with glasses. And so, he was saying something about, you
know, what, what he expected. Like what he looks for in class, like not only like
small group sessions, but like, you know, those students interacting, socializing
with each other. Because you know, a lot of students teach, teach each other.

Frank's response indicated the value of learning from others even if it is through
watching a video. Bella agreed that the videos in the module were helpful too, but she
added, "

Most valuable aspects… um okay. There's a portion that tells us how diverse your
classroom is and what you need to do and how to assess different students. How
important assessment is. Oh, and another thing is, there's a bit that I wasn't too I
mean, I just thought that it will come along as you're in the classroom with the
students. But then I learned that you have to know the students like beforehand,
you know. This student is this. This is the household. They're coming with data.
You know what I mean? This is what they experience in their home, you know,
for you to really know the student. That I found was interesting.

Bella indicated that the overall content related to establishing relationships with children and explaining the diversity that exists in the classroom today was impactful.

Least Valuable Aspects of Their Educator Preparation Programs

Overall, all the novice teachers hesitated to identify anything that was least valuable within their EPPs. The teachers expressed in some way or another, most of the program aspects impacted their instructional practice directly or provided general knowledge. Bella, a first-year alternative certified teacher was unable to identify any least valuable aspects of her EPP. She expressed, "I think… I think so far, everything has helped. Some maybe more... like how we talked about knowing the student. Can't think of anything right now that was just totally useless." Elaine, an alternative certified high school dance teacher, felt that the content applied more to elementary and junior high school teachers. She explained that relevant content for an elective teacher was little to none,

So, I don't think that when it came to being prepared for my level that it wasn't a lot of things on high school. It was a lot of elementary and junior high level. And so high school was very selective in the choices that I could do. I was going into the dance teacher world; it was kind of opposite of what I needed to do because it's [the dance class] not a general education classroom. I'm not a core teacher.

Although he hesitated for a long while, Frank, another first-year alternative certified teacher explained this least valuable aspect,

I don't know if this way happens in any other program or something. But the time that I have to wait for, like, have a like approval to take, you know, a test. I don't know if that's just like something that they do in Texas or something, but I have to like request to take a certain test. And then like, it'll be like maybe two, two days

for it to come back. So I'm like, okay, I'm trying to get this date. You know, you

know, I'm trying to get it done as soon as possible.

Frank were too many delays within the process. He said program administrators took too

long to respond to requests.

The Impact of COVID

All the teachers expressed the impact of the pandemic on student learning and

behavior. Many expressed the struggle to manage the environment with so many children

not on grade level and exhibiting disruptive behavior. Some of the teachers attributed the

number of students struggling academically and behaviorally to the two unprecedented

years. Frank described his classroom dynamics, "I will say, for third grade, it's dealing

with the, you know, COVID babies. A lot of them are behind, and like, you know, not

getting that interaction socially." Elaine stated earlier that she started her first-year

teaching virtually without much preparation and it was overwhelming. Two teachers

within alternative certification programs pointed out that aspects of their program

switched to online only without ZOOM. Danielle emphasized they were instructed to just

complete the modules and complete the discussion boards. She furthered added that she

hoped for more interaction with instructors during COVID while completing the

program. Hope summed up the sentiment of many of the teachers yet expounded on how

she perceived the lack of social interaction during COVID to affect her students,

So, I think a lot of students are dealing with the aftereffects of COVID. And I

think that they are a lot stronger on the kids than a lot of parents or community

members realize. These kids were just shut off from all socialism, and anything

that had to do with seeing their friends, getting away, getting out of the house and

they were just all of a sudden cut off with no preparation for it. So now I think

we're dealing with all of the repercussions, repercussions of that. So, it's a lot of…

just a lot of… these kids have a lot of built up anger and a lot of built up, like aggression from just being locked, basically locked up. For what felt like an eternity. So, I think we're dealing with a lot of that… because kids were not social for these two years, a year and a half. They… they lost the way to speak. They lost the way of how to approach adults or how to approach their peers or their friends and they've just decided to come up with their own way and it's not necessarily the best way that they could approach these situations or these conversations. I think we're also dealing with the repercussions of them not being in an actual classroom face to face for two years or a year and a half. They're so far behind in their school and it's something that you can tell, you can tell the difference between like the kids that they were on the right track, they were on the path and now these kids are two years behind and so they have a lot of catching up to do and I think it's also catching up to them like emotionally and mentally.

The novice teachers explain that the two unprecedented years of the COVID-19 virus impacted student learning. The two years of social isolation has also impacted peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher interactions adversely. The pandemic also impacted EPP instructional delivery for some alternative certified students. Overall, the novice teacher responses substantiate that COVID has impacted educator preparation, the academic and behavioral state of today's students.

Misunderstanding of What It Means to Establish the Classroom Environment

Safe and Accessible Classroom. Overwhelmingly, the novice teachers misunderstood what it meant to establish the classroom environment, specific to it being safe and accessible despite the certification route. Six of the eight respondents needed explanations before they could declare if they were prepared efficiently. One teacher said, "An accessible classroom? I feel like… to me it sounds like how did you make it to

where people can… I don't know. I guess for students to have what they need. Um." Another responded, "Um, for university, I did take classes specifically on how to set up, like a safe classroom as far as, you know, setting like, good classroom rules letting the students join in on that." An alternative certified teacher stated, "So, establishing a safe classroom, I will say, as far as like, I guess, as far as, like the management of the students, I will say, because you never know what type of students you may have." On the other hand, Hope was able to recall, "Basically the gist of it was just to have an open heart and open mind and just be aware of all of the kids are going through." She expanded her understanding of safe to explain that her EPP covered lockdowns, fire drills and intruder drills but also told them to always refer to their campus and district instructions. Overall, the teachers needed support of the terms to answer. Once the terms were explained, they were unable to declare if and how their EPPs increased their knowledge and skills according to these subscale items.

Organized Classroom. Notably, there was more clarity of what it meant to establish an organized classroom. Teachers felt their programs provided ample examples, experiences, and the help of mentors or veteran teachers to increase their sense of preparedness to establish an organized classroom. Gabby voiced,

> I was in a class that we had to come up with like a classroom layout and different things we would want to do to help the kids with their social emotional learning. So, I feel like getting to come up with plans of how I wanted my room to look and how I wanted to address different social emotional things with my kids like a calm down corner or affirmation stations. I felt like being able to create that and know that I wanted to use that in my future classroom helped me. So, I think just having different assignments that allowed me to kind of think about it before I had my own classroom.

Gabby felt she was prepared with how to layout her classroom to meet the emotional safety for children. She understood the physical organization of the classroom interplayed with the emotional and physical safety of children.

Although the class wasn't geared toward her traditional program focus, Carla recalled a class,

> We took this one class. I cannot remember the name of that class, but it dealt with specifically, um, early, early learners or something like that. So, basically elementary teachers, and we learned so much about like, color, like the color scheme of the classroom, and just the first weeks of school. And it was just so much in that classroom that helped me to become more organized.

However, many of the teachers alluded to being prepared to create an organized layout but were not adequately prepared for their own personal organization. Frank, the first-year teacher alluded to not having a clear system for managing all the papers.

> It's kind of hard for me. I'm still like trying to get the, like kick of it. Like trying to get the kick of staying organized in the classroom. So, I got like a bunch of papers. I'm trying to keep all papers organized, which I'm still trying to figure that out for myself. I read, read something that said like, keep folders, file cabinet. But it's like, I just get thrown off, you know, being organized. And usually at the end of the day, I stay afterwards. And like, I do like some of the stuff they tell me as far as like, you know, keep labeling, labeling everything.

Frank is willing to stay late and implement everything he has been told to be organized. The system and structure of organizing overwhelms him. He understands that he needs to assemble papers, label, keep folders, and have a filing cabinet.

Similarly, Amy, a third-year teacher expressed,

Okay, listen, I don't know… because I'm still learning that for myself. I don't

know. I feel like my kids are organized like I have them where they need to be,

but as far as myself, my personal organization I don't know, I'm not gonna say

that they not preparing folks. Maybe I just didn't catch that. I don't know.

Amy is in her third-year teaching and has difficulty with personal organization. She

further highlighted an opportunity for EPPs, districts and campus administrators to assist.

Instead, Elaine expressed that she was provided examples for classroom and personal

organization,

So, they gave a lot of examples of just different ways to stay on top of your stuff

so that way things didn't get lost. So, when it came to grades and if kids were

turning in paperwork, like any of that kind of stuff, even virtually, because that

was becoming a popular thing. They started showing more ways to become

virtually dependent, they did a lot of really good examples of like just different

organizations. We have seen teachers organize their classroom and make sure that

nothing was missing. And they didn't miss any student's papers or they couldn't

say that they lost a student's paper or anything like that.

Elaine felt prepared for classroom and personal organization. It is unclear if this could be

attributed to her undergraduate coursework, alternative certification, or her experience as

a substitute. Elaine elucidated that she used her opportunity as a substitute teacher to

deepen her understanding by seeking permission to observe strong teachers.

Managing the Classroom

All the novice teachers expressed that their EPPs had been prepared some or

extensively to manage behavior in the classroom. Amy stated, "I have very strong

classroom management." Carla agreed that she was well versed in classroom

management. She felt her time in the field further increased her preparedness,

Being in the classroom. And we didn't have so many issues. You know, but seeing how those veteran teachers handled their students, how they handled, you know, disturbances in the classroom. Um, if a student didn't do good that day in school, and the principal had to talk to the band director, students couldn't play… students could come to the football game. So I just implemented that in my class.

Carla explained although as a student teacher she did not observe many issues, it was however helpful to see how veteran teachers handled the situations. She was able to use the models in her classroom management as a music teacher. Carla also explained her understanding of campus behavior systems and rewards, she stated, "I give my students awards, certificates and parties when they meet school expectations." Gabby asserted that her EPP addressed the various types of student behaviors through activities, "I remember doing case studies on different children… different types of learners and different types of students with behavior concerns. Hope pointed out,

So, they really talked about enforcing things from the beginning… creating habits for the kids because kids like habits and they like schedules. They don't really do well with a whole lot of change. When it comes to like daily routines or anything like that. So, they really emphasized staying true to your routine and sticking to your routine on a daily even when kids were trying to be pushy and trying to get out of doing something. Just always sticking to what you started from the beginning and following through all the way to the end.

In the same way, Frank clarified,

If you're teaching, talking, or reading, or anything like that. If you're going over a problem on the board, make sure that pencils are down or something like that. You know, you space, you know, space them out. Don't put everyone who will talk a lot at like one table, you know, make sure, you split them up. Split the

friends up to where the ones that chitter chatter most, you have at this table, the

other one at this table and have him like facing away from each other that'll help,

like, you know, pull back from that behavior.

Unlike the *Classroom Environment* construct, novice teachers were able to name the

tangible ways their coursework prepared them for *Classroom Management*. Teachers

understood the components of clear behavior expectations, campus behavior systems, and

support students with behavior concerns. On the contrary, Danielle, a first-year

alternative certified teacher said,

I think the management if they could have, you know, taught something with that.

Okay it would have been nice if we would have had zoom meetings over that. I

think just hearing, hearing somebody with experience kind of talk about it in their,

their thoughts and the content.

Danelle rated her sense preparedness in *Classroom Management* on a scale of one to ten,

a zero. She clarified that the topic was covered superficially and was a missed

opportunity for instructors to go deeper via the ZOOM platform. The content was only

covered through modules without discussion or extension.

Harsh Realities of the Classroom

Every novice teacher could recall a harsh reality that they wished their programs

had better prepared them for as pre-service teachers. Be that as it may, teachers

overwhelming stated that they understood EPPs could not account for every situation.

Teachers were able to elicit challenging experiences and state recommendations for how

they could have been better equipped. Amy described an incident she experienced after

she returned from maternity leave her second year,

So, there was one student, he had severe behavior problems. However, he was not

in his least restrictive environment. He would, he would just antagonize and like

consistently disrupt the learning environment daily. And he was very disrespectful as well. I tried reaching out to his mom on several instances. On this particular day, he was antagonizing one of my other students. And he walked up to him, you know how the boys get heated. I tried to de-escalate this issue, the issue, the situation before it became physical, I was unsuccessful. The student did become physical with another kid. And everything from that point just kind of… had to break up a fight in the classroom, I was the only one there. I didn't have a system in my classroom.

Amy recommended that her EPP prepare teachers to perform appropriate holds because one improper hold or grab of a student could cause a teacher to lose their job. She further stated that teachers need to be "knowledgeable about triggers, like the psychology behind why students can sometimes do the things that they that they do."

Carla identified not knowing how to properly document instances as a harsh reality. She brought attention to the following,

Whether it's virtual or physical, future educators need to know how to keep a record of instances that have happened in the classroom. How many times you've contacted the parent and why the student grade is like that.

Carla used her schema from the last three year to explain the necessity of knowing how to document properly as a novice teacher. In addition, Carla recommended EPPs to make sure that teachers know that leadership is not going to handle everything. She recalled an instance,

They gave us a like a discipline ladder. And when I'm looking at it, I'm like, "What is this? How do I fill this out?" You know, I had to sit there and try to debunk that. They [EPPs] should be clear and precise in letting us know that the principal is not going to fix everything. Yeah, the dean of discipline, culture,

instruction, is not going to fix everything. They're going to tell you to set up those parent teacher conferences. They're going to tell you, "Hey, we're sending this kid back to the classroom." It's up to you, it's up to the future educator to you know, plan out their disciplinary actions accordingly. How are you going to handle that student who comes to class late every day? And there's no one doing anything about it? All his teachers are complaining, how are you going to try to fix that? You know, and how are you going to do it in the most ethical way possible? You know, that won't put you in a in a tough spot legally. Yeah. So yeah, just basically thinking, critical thinking. Because we think that the principal is going to save us from these horrible students, you know, but that doesn't happen that way.

Carla surfaced a harsh reality of dealing with student behavior and not always have support. She highlighted the need for novice teachers to be able to think critically and problem solve on their own. Lastly, Hope shared the challenge of facilitating an inclusion dance class,

I had several special education students, it was a combined class. I had a student that was not very welcoming to the special education students, and just had a lot of negative things to say and they weren't afraid to say it loudly in front of everybody. So it's very disruptive and it was very heartbreaking to have to. This is something that I had to… I hate to say put up with, it's not the best words, but you know what I mean? Like this is something that I had to unfortunately, I had to deal with, and I had to take control over. So, I think what made it so challenging is that it's not something anybody can really prepare you for. I think that's something that's very hard for people to accept. Unfortunately, students in the special education department just aren't fully supported by their peers, and it's very sad to see. Although, Texas Teachers does tell you some of the best ways to

136

combine your students and combine your general education classroom with your

special education classes, like but I was not prepared for the repercussions of what

would happen if these kids don't mix. They always think perfect worlds and

unfortunately, we live in the complete opposite of a perfect world. So, I do wish

that Texas Teachers… I would recommend that they not always put everything in

the perfect world sense. Because we definitely do not live in that.

Hope further provided a recommended for her former EPP, she said,

So, I would like to see more like real, real-world problems or difficulties that

teachers have to go through. Not necessarily this kid had a bad day. Moving on,

but more like real life things that could actually happen in your classroom, and

maybe an updated version because a lot of it has changed now with COVID.

Refer to the way that students are and the way that teachers are when it comes to

life after COVID.

Novice teachers recalled harsh realities and made recommendations for EPPs. Novice

teachers understood their programs could not teach them everything but surfaced ways

that educator preparation programs could improve.

Experiences as a Novice Teacher of Color

There were seven of the eight interview participants that identified as a teacher of

color. Elaine shared regarding her stronger connection to students who shared her cultural

background, she highlighted,

So, my first year, I got to teach bilingual students, and I felt like I really could

connect to them. I was able to speak to them in their language, especially with

parents. I love being able to be a Spanish speaking teacher, because parents knew

they could come to me, they could ask me questions, it was going to be Spanish,

English or you know, however they wanted, we were going to be able to

137

communicate. Now my second year, I went into a general ed classroom, very different, super, super different, I felt like I was a… I could connect more to, again, bilingual parents than I could to the other parents. And I felt like bilingual parents, were more supportive than any of my other parents. And like, I was worried about the kids with other parents than I was with my bilingual students. So that made it very difficult. I actually had one student that I felt like, if I called the parent and I told them, like, hey, you know, this is happening, just being… because I was a teacher of color, you know, like, they would not really take it well. And I had another teacher call that was the same race and everything. And it was crazy to hear how different the conversations went. So in that aspect, you know, I got to, within that experience, I got to see like, okay, it really does sometimes matter, you know, who's saying what. And this year, again, I'm back with my bilingual students. So, I 100% know… I feel like I thrive more with my bilingual students than in a general ed setting.

Elaine explained how shared cultural understanding with her students and families aided her in feeling more connected, comfortable, and altruistic. She also described a situation where she felt her identity prompted deferential treatment in comparison to a colleague. Frank expressed his feelings about being a Black male teacher with a Black male principal,

I never had, you know, I never had a principal like that. So, I think it really changed, like the culture, I guess, around the school. It's a lot of different things that I normally would, I guess, wouldn't be used to. That I haven't seen, like, I don't know, as far as like, with, you know, having a principal that's of color. It feels like different, you know, like, you feel like, I feel like more like, I guess welcome. I feel like, you know, he like believes in me. Because at first, you

138

know, I started off as a sub and you know he wanted, you know, he wanted for like the students to come in and see like, "Wow, we got a male third grade teacher."

Frank further detailed the impact of his presence on students, he shared,

I had a student last week, like, say I want to be a teacher too. You know, there's like a little black kid, he just came up to me, like, you know, "Mr. F, I want to be a teacher just like you." You know, that's, that's pretty cool. I guess. Yeah, I will say mostly, I guess they don't see, they don't see like a male like, especially male black men. They… they're not usually supposed to be in like schools.

As a Black male teacher, Frank understood the power of his presence for all children but especially for Black boys. He further illustrated how his motivation to teach came full-circle.

In sum, Amy characterized her experience as a novice teacher as a weight, she asserted,

Being black is a responsibility. You have to be the best. You can't just show up. You have to always be the best, because you have to be better than the best. Like for real, not even like "Oh, you know, I'm showing up and my stuff look better than yours." Like no, I have to show and prove that I am better than your best you have brought to the table, to be included or acknowledged as being here. Um, it's challenging.

Amy shared the weight of being Black and the pressure to excel. She discussed how comparison to a non-person of color is implicit to everyone other than the person of color. Amy went on to describe how racial tensions can also exist and intricate the school climate. She shared,

I came from a school that was predominant, well the student body was a mix of a Hispanic and Black student body. However, the staff was a predominantly

139

Hispanic staff. And it was very challenging, because it's like they… it was, it was almost as if I was at a White school, and the school was like white and black. I felt like we were in like segregation or something. Like it was a joke. For real like, on down to Black History Month and Cinco De Mayo, like the hallways were looking like a quinceanera. And in Black History Month, they were literally playing negro spirituals on the announcements. Like I'm not playing, wade in the water. I'm very serious.

The opposing approaches of cultural cerebrations resonated with Amy. She expanded on this by recalling how changing schools fostered a healthier climate as a teacher of color within a marginalized community. She stated,

You know, where is in this school? It's a, it's a culture. That they create of inclusion, to where we are all in this together. And we did this year, this month for Hispanic Heritage Month, my kids were able to develop an appreciation for a Hispanic heritage and participate. We did. It was… I saw principals' month, we did a mariachi, am I pronouncing that right? Mariachi? We did one of those for the principal. And of course, the kids, the the monolingual kids, they didn't know the words to the song, but they were still able to dance and participate and get exposure to those types of things and celebrate their culture with them. And that's something that I can't wait till February, you know, so that the Hispanic kids are being able to do the same thing with us, you know, they're able to learn things about our culture, and celebrate with us and be included within it.

These responses indicate that school communities are integral in helping novice teachers thrive, belong, and impact students all students, especially students of color.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study provided an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected during the study to address four research questions. The purpose of this study was to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. The archival quantitative data collected from a purposeful sample of 4,250 Texas EC-12th grade teachers completing their first-year teaching during the 2020-2021 school year indicated that overall teachers felt prepared to establish the learning environment.

Analysis of the overall first year teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between certification programs indicated that traditional certification teachers reported higher percentages of novice teacher preparedness than the alternative certification route teachers. In addition, novice teachers who chose the traditional certification route feel more prepared to manage the classroom than the novice teachers who completed an alternative certification program. In contrast, alternative certification teachers feel more prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities to the 1,230 traditional certified teachers. Traditional certified teachers also felt "well prepared" for the realities of the classroom than did the alternative certified teachers.

Additional quantitative data analysis also indicated certification route did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment. Certification program type did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage student behavior. On the other hand, there was a statistically significant relationship between the type of certification program attended and teacher's perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Conversely, a statistically significant relationship did not exist between the type of certification program attended and overall novice teacher perception of

141

preparedness. Furthermore, race/ethnicity did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment. However, race/ethnicity did influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom. Similarly, a statistically significant relationship did exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction for the behavior needs for students with disabilities. A statistically significant relationship did not exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher's overall perception of preparedness.

Analysis of traditional certified novice teachers indicated that race/ethnicity did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment for those who attended a traditional certification program. Conversely, race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom for those who attended a traditional certification program. Likewise, a statistically significant relationship did exist between novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities and race/ethnicity for those who attended a traditional certification program. However, a statistically significant relationship did not exist between overall novice teacher perception of preparedness who attended traditional programs and race/ethnicity.

Analysis of alternative certified novice teachers indicated that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to establish the classroom environment for those who attended an alternative certification program. Additionally, race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom for those who attended an alternative certification program. A statistically significant relationship did exist between novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities who attended alternative certification programs and race/ethnicity. Finally, a statistically

significant relationship did exist between overall novice teacher perception of preparedness who attended alternative certification programs and race/ethnicity.

Qualitative data analysis of eight novice teachers interviewed illustrated that overall teachers feel prepared to well-prepared from their EPP to establish the learning environment. Novice teachers identify that their reasons to become teachers were because of other great teachers directly nudging or indirectly influencing. Teaching fueled the desire to be the change or make a difference in a child's life, further intensifying the power of shared cultural understanding between teacher and student. Traditional certified teachers reported that student teaching, internships, clinical practice, and any time dedicated to observing or practicing in the field were the most valuable aspects of their EPP. Teachers who were alternative certified also felt that videos of teachers teaching in their classrooms and principals stating their expectations for teachers helped. In addition to field observation hours, these were the most valuable aspects of their program alternative certified teachers.

The aftermath of COVID-19 revealed that although schools have returned to some level pre-COVID normalcy, the long-term effects on teachers and students is yet to be fully comprehended. For both traditional and alternative certified teachers, the collapsed results of *Overall Sense of Preparedness* indicated that equally 89% feel "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" for the realities of the classroom as they exist on their campuses. Although, novice teachers wished they were better prepared for examples ranging from severe behavior, to the inability to document instances appropriately required for referring a student, and the complexities and challenges of facilitating an inclusive classroom. Noticeably, novice teachers overwhelmingly understood the construct of Classroom Management and were able to identify how they were prepared by their EPP. On the other hand, interviewees misunderstood what it meant to establish

the *Classroom Environment* as safe, accessible, and organized. Novice teachers had a better understanding of organized relating to classroom layout but expressed a desire to be better prepared in their personal organization.

In relation to the lived experiences of teachers of color, respondents expressed a special connection to the students that shared their cultural identity. They explained how they could see themselves within their students which propelled their desire to witness young people overcome and triumph their personal hardships and challenges. Notably, other teachers of color significantly impacted their decision to teach and increased their self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a qualitative analysis of novice teacher perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to handle the harsh realities of today's classroom. Overall, novice teachers despite certification route feel a moderate to high sense of preparedness to handle what is happening in today's classroom. In contrast, novice teachers highlighted that the reality should not be desensitized. Teachers should have practice and understanding of the tools to be successful when facing challenging situations. Chapter V will include a discussion of the findings detailed in this chapter, in conjunction to the findings stated in Chapter II, implications of findings derived from this study, and the recommendations for future research studies.

CHAPTER V:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Fifty percent of novice teachers are leaving the classroom within five years (Coffey et al., 2019; Guthery & Bailes; 2022; Lindquist & Nordanger, 2016; Maready et al., 2020; Zavelevsky et al., 2022). The transition from pre-service to in-service teacher can feel insurmountable with limited experience when trying to manage instruction the responsibilities of the classroom, and their self-preservation (Martinez et al., 2016; Meyers et al., 2019). Classrooms are changing, student needs are more complex due to adverse issues of crime, violence, natural disasters, school shootings, food and supply shortages, housing instability, unemployment, and the rising cost of food and gas (Cookson & Darling-Hammond, 2022; Karbowski, 2022). EPPs have a "moral obligation" (Carter-Andrews et al., 2018) to help novice teachers establish a safe productive learning environment that mitigates novice teacher "reality shock" which erodes their sense of preparedness (Gaundan & Mohammadnezhad, 2018; Greenberg et al., 2014).

This chapter includes a major discussion of the findings related to literature, the implications that may be useful for policy makers, educator preparation programs, districts, and campus administrators. In addition, a discussion of the findings related to the theoretical framework is included. The chapter concludes with the limitations of this study, areas for future research, and conclusion. The purpose of this study was to examine novice teachers' perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. This study examined first-year teacher perceptions of preparedness from their educator preparation program on three constructs: (a) classroom environment; (b) classroom management; and (c) teacher perception preparedness.

Quantitative data was analyzed using archived data from a sample of novice, first year EC-12th grade teachers with a standard teaching certificate in Texas during the 2020-2021 school year. The sample included 4,250 teachers who completed the survey and of that population 3,595 responses met the criteria of alternative or traditional certification program. The teachers participating in the quantitative portion of this study consisted of 78.6% female (n = 2,827) and 21.4% male (n = 768). The race/ethnic majority was White representing 51% (n = 1,850), Hispanic/Latino 30% (n = 1,077), Black/African American 13% (n = 465), and Other 6% (n = 203). Within the sample, 65.8% (n = 2,365) completed an alternative educator program and 34.2% (n = 1,230) completed a traditional educator program. The teacher participants were distributed between the grade level certifications bands with 36.1% (n = 1296) in EC-6 grade levels, 25.1% (n = 904 in EC-12 grade levels, 17.3% (n = 623) in 7-12 grade levels, 15.7% (n = 564) in 4-8 grade levels, 5.5% (n = 199) in 6-12 grade levels, 0.2% (n = 6) in 8-12 grade levels, and 0.1% (n = 3) did not classify a grade level certification band.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Texas novice EC-12th grade teachers. The demographic information for teachers participating in this study consisted of 87.5% female teachers (n = 7). The racial/ethnic majority were Hispanic/Latino representing 50% (n = 4) of the sample with Black/African American representing the next largest racial/ethnic group at 37.5% (n = 3). Most of the teacher participants, 62.5% (n = 5) completed alternative certification. Fifty percent of the novice teachers were in their third year of teaching (n = 4), 37.5% of the sample size were in their first year, and only one was a second-year teacher. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, and Chi square of independence tests and one-way ANOVAs. Semi-structured interview responses were analyzed using an inductive thematic coding process to draw out themes. This chapter presents a detailed

discussion of the summary of the findings, implications and recommendations for future research, and conclusion.

Summary of Findings

Research question one addressed the overall first-year teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between certification routes. Research question two focused on whether the certification route influenced teacher perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment. Research question three examined whether race/ethnicity influenced teacher perceptions of preparedness in supporting the learning environment. Finally, question four utilized semi-structured interviews to provide insight of teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to support the learning environment. In addition, where appropriate results from the qualitative aspect of the research will be used to support or contrast the qualitative findings.

Research Question One

Research Question 1, *What are the overall first year teachers' perceptions of preparedness to support the learning environment between traditional and alternative certification programs?,* was answered using frequencies and percentages of responses to the *New Teacher Satisfaction* survey, which required participants to rate the effectiveness of their EPP using a rating scale (zero representing not at all prepared to three representing well-prepared). The findings of this study concluded that traditional certified novice teachers reported a higher sense of preparedness from their EPP relating to *Classroom Environment.* They feel more prepared than alternative teachers to establish a classroom that is safe, accessible, organized. Matsko et al., (2022) substantiates this finding by stating, traditional certified teachers feel significantly more prepared, have higher retention rates, and ascribe greater alignment between their program classes and

147

their student teaching experiences. Interestingly, qualitative findings from this study purported teachers did not feel they were prepared to organize themselves. Many of the teachers mentioned they needed personal organization support, specifically efficient and organized teacher systems. Teachers who do not have clean and clear personal systems to organize all the administrative aspects of the teacher role can feel overwhelmed leading to burnout (Madigan et al., 2021; Maslach et al., 1986). Research substantiates that the degree of a teacher's workload, specifically managing the planning, prepping, instructing, administrative aspects, and minimal work resources provided drive feelings of overwhelm and burnout, therefore decreasing work motivation and increasing teacher intent to quit (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020).

In addition, this study found that traditional teachers reported feeling more prepared than alternative teachers in *Classroom Management*. This is not comparable to previous studies that indicate managing the classroom is a universal challenge for novice teachers despite certification route (Booker, 2022; Greenberg et al., 2014; Powers, 2012; Shank & Santiague, 2022). Samudre et al., (2022) states that most general education teachers are trained for low-intensity, tier-one and tier two behaviors geared towards the whole group which substantiates the interview findings from this study. Furthermore, traditional teachers have had more opportunities managing student behavior through student teaching and clinical practice (Mikulec & Hamaan, 2020). In this study, traditional teachers also felt they were "well prepared" to establish clear behaviors, maintain classroom management, implement a campus behavior system, and support students with behavior concerns. This is not congruent with previous studies that assert that establishing and maintaining classroom management is an area of growth for the novice teacher (Booker, 2022; Flower et al., 2017; Koehler et al., 2013). However, Powers (2012) explains this context, it is the juxtaposition of theory and practice offered

148

through student teaching that increases teacher preparedness. Although, survey results indicated that teachers, despite certification route were "well prepared" the overall numbers decreased relating to campus behavior systems and supporting students to meet behavior expectations in comparison to other items. Qualitative results from this study shared narratives that aligned to Samudre et al., (2022) findings, that more disruptive behavior was harder to handle and required leadership intervention. Mikulec and Hamaan (2020) explain that although traditional teachers have had more in the field practice in comparison to alternative certified teachers, they had the benefit of mentor teachers to step in and diffuse the situation.

Overall, despite certification route, fewer teachers felt "well prepared" to support the behavioral needs of *Students with Disabilities*. Most teachers reported feeling "sufficiently prepared" to differentiate instruction to support the behavioral needs of *Students with Disabilities* whether they completed an alternative program (45%, n = 1,059) or a traditional program (42%, n = 511). Existing studies have revealed that novice general education teachers feel unprepared and desire professional development to increase their knowledge, skills, and efficacy in special education (Crisan et al., 2020; Rasskazov & Muller, 2017). Contrary to the previous results of this study, alternative certified teachers reported a higher sense of preparedness over traditional certified teachers related to this item. NCES (2018) suggests that 39% of ACP teachers have worked in other educational roles, been a substitute teacher, or were teaching in higher education. Qualitative responses also denote that most of the alternative prepared teachers had previous experiences with students or had been substitute teachers. Markedly, alternative certified teachers (53%, n = 1,255) expressed feeling "sufficiently prepared" to traditional certified teachers (51%, n = 628). Again, this could be associated to the

39% of alternative teachers who have had experience in schools prior to becoming the teacher of record (Sezen-Gultekin & Sezgin Nartgun, 2018).

Research Question Two

To answer Research Question 2, *Does certification route influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?,* was answered using independent t-tests and a chi-square tests of independence. Findings from this study suggested that certification route does influence teacher perceptions of preparedness to establish the *Classroom Environment*. Although results indicated a small effect size, similar to previous findings within this research study, traditional over alternative certified teachers exhibit a greater sense of preparedness to establish the *Classroom Environment*. This premise is supported by The National Council on Teacher Quality which states deliberate practice lessens the dissonance between theory to practice for traditional certified teachers (2020). The results of this current study also suggested a statistically significant relationship existed between certification route and teacher's sense of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of *Students with Disabilities*. Research affirms that special education coursework and practice is essential during pre-service training (Stites et al., 2018, 2021; Rakap et al., 2017) which is more prevalent with traditional programs that provide coursework (40%), observation (31%), practice (30%), and feedback (26%) in comparison to alternative programs (Goodson et al., 2019).

On the contrary, certification route did not influence a teacher's sense of preparedness in *Classroom Management*. This finding aligns to teacher's interview responses from both certification routes that indicated more traditional and alternative teachers feeling "sufficiently prepared" to manage student behavior. Prior research substantiates the belief that classroom management is an elusive skill that maturates

causing new teachers to not feel adequately prepared (Flower et al., 2017; Freeman et al., 2014; Kirkpatrick et al., 2020; Shook, 2012). This study also found that a statistically significant relationship did not exist between program type and *Overall Perception of Preparedness*. Most respondents felt "sufficiently prepared" with 65.1% of alternative certified teachers feeling a greater sense of preparedness over the 34.2% of traditional certified respondents. Goodson et al., (2019) substantiated this finding by stating that more than half of teachers have "too few valuable experiences from their EPPs" (p. iv). Additionally, Isenberg & Webber (2021) proffer that districts had to allocate funds to better prepare teachers. The researchers documented that for the 2019-2020 school year, 83% of districts used funds to support instructional strategies, 75% for data-driven instruction, and 66% for classroom management. The substantial allocation of funds by districts to better prepare teachers challenges the effectiveness of educator preparation programs to yield "learner-ready" teachers (CCSSO, 2022).

Research Question Three

To answer Research Question 3, *Does race/ethnicity influence teacher perception of preparedness in supporting the learning environment?,* was answered using one-way ANOVAs and chi-square tests of independence. The participant responses were then broken down by all participants, traditional certification, and alternative certification. The independent variables, certification route, and race/ethnicity are categorical. The dependent variables, classroom environment, classroom management, students with disabilities and overall teacher perception of preparedness, are continuous in nature. Effect size was measured using Cohen's d (r^2) and a significance value of .05 was used for this study.

All participants. The results of this study indicated that race/ethnicity did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the *Classroom Environment*.

This study identified that teachers had to be explained the difference between the two constructs to answer how their EPPs supported their preparation. Semantics could have contributed to the misunderstanding of the construct *Classroom Environment*. In the state of Texas, the overall Learning Environment is broken into two different categories for the novice teacher to establish and support, which are *Classroom Environment* and *Classroom Management* (Pearson, 2022; TAC, 2022). However, in day-to-day practice teachers commonly hear classroom management as the catch-all phrase for both categories. This was justified in interview responses where novice teachers would answer the question by explaining components of managing the classroom.

Uribe-Zarain et al., (2019) note that building a positive classroom environment specifically, classroom management is difficult for novice teachers. Furthermore, Ferguson (2003) indicates that teachers of color have high standards and increase student self-efficacy by not lowering them. There were findings from this study that were consistent with previous studies on the impact of teachers of color. Specifically, the results of this study indicated that race/ethnicity did influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage the classroom. In addition, there was a statistically significant relationship between race/ethnicity and novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction for the behavior needs for students with disabilities. Teachers of color account for the majority of pre-service teachers enrolled (NCES, 2018). Coupled with the fact that teachers of color increase "student social-emotional development, academic performance, and school behavior" despite the race/ethnicity of the student (Blazar, 2021, p. 33). On the other hand, a statistically significant relationship did not exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher's overall perception of preparedness. These results corroborate that the novice teacher's psychological and instructional struggles is universal despite race and ethnicity (Rees, 2015).

Traditional Certified. Race/ethnicity of traditional certified teachers did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to establish the *Classroom Environment*, safe, accessible, and organized. This finding was also congruent to the qualitative interview responses where teachers misconstrued what it meant to establish an accessible classroom. Misunderstanding of this construct, *Classroom Environment*, could be related to the fact that there is a lack of literature related to the topic as a whole. Puteh et al., (2015) explained the complexity of establishing the classroom environment as not just being "a physical space, but also consists of a variety of materials and sources of information, interaction, relationship between and amongst students and teachers, and expectations and rules for learning and behavior" (p. 237).

Conversely, this study concluded that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness in relation to *Classroom Management* for those who attended a traditional certification program. Throughout most interviews, respondents who attended traditional programs corroborated that they had extensive coursework and practice in managing student behavior. Additionally, all these findings echo the findings of Pomerance & Walsh, 2020, that indicate educator preparation programs typically cover basic classroom management strategies, considered whole-class management. Likewise, a statistically significant relationship did exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities for those who attended a traditional certification program. This current study however emphasizes the importance of teachers of color impacting all types of learners (Blazar, 2021). Yet it misaligns with Stites et al., (2021) who concluded that novice general education teachers feel anxious and unsuccessful because they had not envisioned their classrooms to include students with disabilities. Research has suggested that it is the specialized courses typically geared towards those

153

seeking special education certification that impacts a novice general education teacher's attitude, growth mindset, competence, and confidence, making them less effective to fostering an inclusive setting (Dunst et al., 2014; Crisan et al., 2020). Prevalent literature commonly cites that the first year of teaching can feel insurmountable with limited experience when trying to manage instruction, the responsibilities of the classroom, and their self-preservation (Martinez et al., 2016; Meyers et al., 2019). This study is consistent with those findings, a statistically significant relationship did not exist between race/ethnicity and overall novice teacher perception of preparedness.

Alternative Certified. The findings of this study concluded that race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness to establish the *Classroom Environment*. Again, qualitative responses contradict this finding. Interview respondents struggled to understand and name how their EPP prepared them to establish the *Classroom Environment* as safe and accessible. Previous research posits, to establish an optimal classroom environment, teachers must understand and implement trauma-informed practices (Berardi & Morton, 2019); whole child education (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019); social and emotional learning (Jones & Kahn, 2017); and classroom environment and management (Pearson, 2022).

Notably, race/ethnicity did have an influence on teacher perception of preparedness in *Classroom Management* for those who attended an alternative certification program. The participants in this study felt that their EPPs had adequately prepared them to manage classroom behavior. Given that some respondents had previous work experience in schools paired with their EPP learning, it cannot be distinguished which variable most predominately contributed to their sense of preparedness. It is also important to note that most of the interview respondents did identify as teachers of color (87.5%, n = 7) and 62.5% (n = 5) completed alternative certification programs. With

classrooms becoming increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse (NCES, 2022b; Small, 2021; Wells, 2020), coupled with ACP programs primarily enrolled by teachers of color, this could account for these results. This is parallel to the findings of Gregory et al., (2010) which suggested that the presence of teachers of color reduces disproportionate disciplinary actions given to students of color because teachers are better able to identify and interpret the triggers of misbehavior.

This study's results also indicated a statistically significant relationship did exist between race/ethnicity and novice teacher perception of preparedness to differentiate instruction to meet the behavior needs for students with disabilities who attended alternative certification programs. In agreement, a statistically significant relationship did exist between overall novice teacher perception of preparedness who attended alternative certification programs and race/ethnicity. These premises could be attributed to the fact that most students classified as a special education student are students of color (NCES, 2021) and most ACP teachers are teachers of color (NCES, 2018). Ferguson (2003) further explains that teachers of color expect more and refrain from lowering standards therefore increasing student self-efficacy. Research contends that more ACP teachers tend to be employed within charter schools (NCES, 2018) and charter schools tend to higher more ACP teachers (Guthery & Bailes, 2022; NCES, 2022). There was an example from this study where an interview respondent indicated that while her EPP did address inclusion, it did not prepare her for the reality of inclusion with high school students who did not meet behavior expectations or allow emotional and physical safety for students with disabilities.

Research Question Four

To answer Research Question 4, *What are first year teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to support the learning*

environment?, was analyzed using inductive thematic coding process of eight semi-structured interviews of Texas EC-12th grade novice teachers. From the interviews, responses were assigned into nine themes: (a) first-year experiences, (b) motivation to teach, (c) most valuable aspects of their educator preparation programs, (d) least valuable aspects of their educator preparation programs, (e) overall sense of preparedness, (f) the aftermath of Covid on the students, (g) misunderstanding of what it means to establish the classroom environment, (h) harsh realities of the classroom and (i) experiences as a novice teacher of color.

       First year experiences. Qualitative results indicated that the first year of teaching is challenging and filled with so many unknowns regardless of preparation route. Wolff et al., (2020) contends that the novice teacher is growing or accumulating knowledge and schema; they are new to the role, responsibilities, and character of a classroom teacher. Previous studies identify that universally, teachers have shared experiences including low self-efficacy, managing the classroom (Shank & Santiague, 2021; Zhukova, 2018), unmanageable workloads, difficulty adjusting to the role (Cakmak et al., 2019), managing time, little to no administrative support, dissonance between pre-service and in-service realities, and incongruent values (Huang et al, 2019; Warsame & Valles, 2018). This parallels how teachers characterized their first-year challenges as being hard but hopeful that it would improve in time. The dissonance between pre-service expectations and in-service reality compelled the participants in this study to consider all that they had been inadequately prepared to handle in the learning environment.
Motivation to teach. The teachers in this study also indicated that their reasons to become teachers were because of other great teachers directly nudging or indirectly influencing, the desire to be the change or make a difference in a child's life, and finally the shared cultural understanding between teacher and student. Prior research confirms

that pre-service teachers are drawn to education for its intrinsic and altruistic values, and because of meaningful relationships with previous teachers, administrators, mentors, and family (Bergmark et al., 2018; Thomson et al., 2012). Understanding why an individual opts to be a teacher aids in the retention and job satisfaction of novice educators (Struyven et al., 2013).

Most Valuable Aspect of Their Educator Preparation Program. In addition, traditional novice teacher respondents explained that the most valuable aspects of their educator preparation were student teaching, internships, clinical practice, and any time they were able to observe or practice in the field. Prior research underlines this, pre-service learning experiences that include practice and observation, increase the preparedness of teachers and positive outcomes for their students (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Goldhaber, 2019; Kee, 2012; Podolsky et al., 2019; Putman et al., 2022). Alternative certified teacher responses aligned with this research too. Interviews from this study elevated that video of teachers in their classrooms and principals sharing their expectations for teachers, along with field observation hours were the most valuable aspects of their program.

Least Valuable Aspect of Their Educator Preparation Program. Qualitative data analysis from this study further indicated that novice teachers found their overall program offerings to be effective. Interview respondents struggled to find any aspect that was least valuable. Novice teachers expressed that overall, most of the program offerings impacted their instructional strategies or general knowledge. The novice teacher's cognitive factors (knowledge, expectations, and attitude) during pre-service preparation shaped their in-service actions and behavior to perceive all content as useful and adding value to their identity as a teacher (Bandura, 1977; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). This

tendency to perceive most of the content as valuable supports the interview respondents' expressions of optimism despite their challenging first year as a teacher.

The Aftermath of COVID. Novice teacher interviews from this study also revealed that despite some return of pre-COVID normalcy, the COVID aftermath on teachers and students is yet to be fully comprehended. Respondents alluded to stakeholders not fully grasping how far reaching the pandemic has been on students and teachers. The diminished learning and increased need for students to be social after two unprecedented years impacted how students returned to school (Meincket al., 2022). Chanduvi et al., (2022) reported data from the UNESCO Global Monitoring of School Closures, stating that those two pandemic years resulted in "an estimated two trillion hours of in-person learning" and socialization missed from school-aged children worldwide (p. 8). Interview responses from this study also indicated that students were on different academic and behavioral levels demanding that the novice teacher be proficient in differentiating instruction and managing the classroom. This is congruent with previous research that specified when students transitioned back to school, they were eager for socialization but found re-acclimating to the school setting arduous (Meincket al., 2022).

Overall Sense of Preparedness. Collapsed quantitative data results of *Overall Sense of Preparedness* indicated that equally 89% of traditional and alternative certified teachers reported feeling "well prepared/sufficiently prepared" for the realities of the classroom as they exist on their campuses. According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2017-2018 Pre-service Coursework (see Table 2.2), pre-service teachers have been exposed to preparation from their programs for them to be effective in the classroom. Moreover, interview respondents supported this by struggling to find a least valuable aspect from their program offerings. During interviews novice teachers

rated themselves as average to above average with scores ranging from five and above. Coupled with the fact that many respondents mentioned their pre-service experiences as the student teacher or work experiences as paraprofessionals and substitute teachers impacting their preparedness. It was difficult for interviewees to isolate program offerings and prior experiences working with children. These prior experiences provided a foundational knowledge, an insider-view, and transferable skills that also increased overall sense of preparedness (Delgado et al., 2021).

Interestingly, the findings from this current study challenges existing research that states novice teachers are not adequately prepared to be learner-ready because of dismal student achievement outcomes (Burroughs et al., 2019; Dunst et al., 2020; Putman et al., 2022). In addition, as stated previously within this study, districts are having to allocate substantial funding to increase the effectiveness of novice teachers in the areas of instructional strategies, data driven instruction, and classroom management (Isenberg & Webber, 2021). The notion that one can feel prepared and not be prepared for the realities of today's classroom can possibly be explained by Bong & Skaalvik (2003). The researchers suggest that an individual's wholistic view of themselves is shaped from environmental experiences (skills and abilities possessed) and significant others contributing to one's perception of self. (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). On the other hand, self-efficacy is predicated on one's belief in what they do with said skills and abilities. This research broaches the interplay of self-concept and self-efficacy in a novice teacher's perception of preparedness to be learner-ready.

Misunderstanding of Classroom Environment Kirkpatrick et al., (2021) purports that establishing a classroom with a positive climate is challenging for novice teachers that have not had sound pre-service training and practice of evidenced-based classroom and behavior management strategies. This aligns to an interesting finding of

159

this study, where most interviewees misunderstood what it meant to establish a classroom environment that is safe and accessible. Even when explained, interview respondents still struggled to recall classes or experiences that covered topics related to safe and accessible. In addition, T-TESS, the evaluation system for Texas teachers, uses three different dimensions to distinguish these two constructs (see Figures 2.3 – 2.5). This lack of alignment in how the constructs are codified and explained may add to the novice teacher's misunderstanding.

On the contrary, teachers overwhelmingly understood the construct of *Classroom Management* and were able to identify how they were prepared by their EPP. This finding does not align with previous studies that indicate classroom management, even after the first full year of teaching is one of the most difficult skills for a new teacher to acquire (Fortenberry, 2020). It is reasonable to suggest that teacher self-efficacy can be increased with rich experiences where scaffolding of management strategies moves through a cycle of "practice, observation and reflection" (Wages, 2021, p. 180). Interview responses from this study provided examples from coursework, student teaching, field observations and prior work experiences as contributing to their increased preparedness in classroom management. Markedly, novice teachers had a better understanding of organization relating to classroom layout but expressed a desire to be better prepared in their personal organization. Interview participants explained they had inefficient systems which caused them to work late, work weekends, and feel under pressure often. This current research study identified a gap in understanding and practice of efficient teacher systems that contributes to why teachers feel exhausted and burned out. Interview respondents despite preparation route, explained how they worked late and on weekends to address the administrative aspect of the role because of a lack of efficiency during the school day.

Harsh Realities. Novice teachers elaborated on harsh realities they wished they were better prepared for ranging from severe behavior, the inability to document instances appropriately when referring a student, and the complexities and challenges of facilitating an inclusive classroom. Although pre-service teachers have been exposed to programming designed to increase their effectiveness, educator preparation program improvements can be implemented (NCES, 2018). Novice teachers from this study indicated they want their EPPs to provide hands-on practice handling disruptive behavior. They want their preparation programs to adequately address how to properly document for contexts. Novice teachers want to leave their EPPs better prepared as general education teachers to facilitate an inclusive classroom. The narratives of the respondents' confirms that there is more that EPPs can do to increase the competence and efficacy of teachers through teacher preparation program reliability and accountability (Darling-Hammond, 2022).

Experiences as Teachers of Color. Seven of the eight semi-structured interviews extract the lived experiences of teachers of color. Novice teachers of color in this study wanted to show students of color they understood, had beat the odds, and returned to help them achieve the same. This emphasizes the study of Villegas & Lucas (2004) regarding the urgings of teachers of color to serve as role models to students of color. Teachers also expressed a special connection to the students that shared their cultural identity. This aligned to Matthews (2019) findings that indicated teachers want to represent for their race/ethnicity within the school community. Vilson (2015) echoed that teachers of color could see themselves within their students and students could in turn see the possibilities through them. Teachers in this study agreed that drove their decision to teach within communities that reflected their upbringing. Moreover, respondents explained how other teachers and leaders impacted their decision to teach and increased their self-efficacy.

161

Blackmon (2020) substantiated the impact of meaningful relationships on novice teacher's motivation to teach. It is reasonable to suggest that great teachers beget great teachers. Two participants identified feelings of inequity and differential treatment as teachers of color. However, their experiences did not deter their desire to teach but propelled them to seek alternative settings to thrive and maintain a positive impact on students.

Relation to Theoretical Framework

This study used the underpinnings of Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory (SCLT), and Self-Efficacy Theory as a dual framework (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1994, 2019; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Stites et al., 2018). While altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic values have been linked to a novice teacher's motivation to teach (Bergmark et al., 2018; Struyven et al., 2013; Thomson et al., 2012), self-efficacy has been identified as a determinant for their intent to remain in the profession (Bonner et al., 2018; Shank & Santiague, 2021; Zhukova, 2018.) Self-efficacy theory is a person's belief of their capacity to execute a course of action to achieve an expected outcome (Bandura, 1977, 1997, 2006). Schunk (2012) expounds that "self-efficacy is influenced by the outcomes of behaviors (goal progress and achievement) and by input from the environment (feedback from peers and administrators, social comparisons with peers)" (p. 108). The pre-service construction of the teacher identity, role and responsibilities coupled with the in-service harsh realities shapes a novice teacher's perceptions about their own capacity and effectiveness (Yilmaz, 2010). Moreover, their self-efficacy paired with Bandura's reciprocal interactions: behavioral, environmental, and cognitive factors determines a teacher's behavior. Specifically, it will increase or decrease the dissonance between the pre-service and in-service realities of the role.

Social cognitive theory posits that what a teacher thinks about their capacity or self-efficacy impacts their actions and the learning environment (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Furthermore, a novice teacher's actions can determine their thoughts and the learning environment, all the while influencing the children, families, faculty, and staff within a school's ecosystem (Bandura, 1977; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). The purpose of this study was to examine teacher's perceptions or thoughts about their preparedness or efficacy to establish the learning environment from their educator preparation program. Bandura's reciprocal interactions substantiate the qualitative responses of teacher's motivation to teach (1977); these are the personal factors. Interview responses indicated that environmental factors like other teachers, school administrators, mentors, former professors, and any deliberate practice within the community also influenced their motivation to teach and intent to remain in the field. Cognitive intertwined with behavioral factors further shaped the emotional and physical aspects of their identity as a teacher. Novice teachers interview respondents who self-identified with higher efficacy had pre-service experiences, deliberate practice, knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude because they had worked with students in various capacities before. Social cognitive learning theory and self-efficacy provide a window to the factors that impact a novice teacher's motivation to teach and successfully remain in the field. This insight provides many implications to all stakeholders in the field of education.

Implications

As a result of this study's examination of novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment, implications developed for multiple stakeholders including policy makers, education preparation programs, school districts, and campus administrators. Policy makers should enact greater measures of accountability for EPPs and mandate a

uniformed student teaching schedule and structure through intentional field-based experiences and practice. Educator Preparation Programs should add personal organization as required coursework and ensure that instructional design effectively addresses the components of *Classroom Environment.* All districts should enact new teacher academies and mentoring support at a minimum of three years. Furthermore, districts should be more intentional in recruiting and retaining teachers of color by elevating their voice through focus groups, surveys, and interviews. Lastly, campus administrators should implement a scaffolded approach to professional development coupled with mentoring in-person and through video.

Policy Makers

Overall, educator preparation programs need measures of accountability and operationalization of a culturally responsive learning environment. To meet the diversity of needs, EPPs must systematize in structure, content, and quality (Darling-Hammond, 2020, p. 61). The Department of Education should design universal culturally responsive teaching (CRT) standards with "clear metrics, guidance, professional learning avenues, and evaluation strategies" (CCSSO, 2018, p. 10). Texas State Board of Education could examine Utah, New Mexico, and Massachusetts as exemplars ensuring alignment in teacher expectations and state standards for culturally responsive teaching (Muniz (2019). Addressing measures of accountability and operationalization of a culturally responsive learning environment would help to dissuade the theory to practice dissonance between pre-service and in-service realities. Furthermore, after analyzing the New Teacher Satisfaction Survey data, Texas novice teachers' self-ratings were high in comparison to the national ratings. The Texas State Board of Education must ensure that there is alignment in the tool and the measure intended. This could be an issue of semantics; however, the response descriptors allude to the novice teacher's perception of their skills

164

or performance versus whether they were satisfied with how their EPP prepared them according to the domain. The current construction of the questions and response descriptors could negatively impact a novice teacher's self-concept and self-efficacy (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). The New Teacher Satisfaction survey should promote honest reflection and evaluation of the EPP thwarting the need for teachers to inflate their responses in concern of who may see their responses.

Traditional Certification. There has been much research on the benefits of deliberate practice for pre-service teachers (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Dunst et al., 2020; Karalis Noel & Finocchio, 2022; Matsko et al., 2022) and the variability in how teachers experience this practice is pivotal (Darling-Hammond, 2012, 2022). The data from this research study indicated that traditional certified teachers found student teaching, clinical practice, and field observations to be the most valuable experiences of their preparation programs but there was no uniformity in what was experienced. In addition, traditional certified teachers who experienced a gradual release allowing them to have deliberate practice in the following four domains: (a) Planning, (b) Instruction, (c) Learning Environment, and (d) Professional Practices and Responsibilities felt the most prepared. Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education should mandate a uniformed student teaching schedule detailing the high impact experiences that all pre-service teachers should have over the minimum 14-week period across all four domains. Student teaching can be impacted by length of time, time placement (spring or fall), and the student teaching program structure (Smith & Rayfield, 2017). According to Variela et al., (2020), student teaching must be "immersive and intentional" (p. 4), while providing "engaging practical field experiences in real classroom settings wherein candidates can build a diverse repertoire of instructional strategies" (Varela et al., 2019, p. 112). Texas Administrative Code requires 30 hours of field-based observations with 15 of those hours

being completed by watching videos (2019). The State Board of Education, however, does not provide the videos which allows for variability in quality and depth of content (Variela et al., 2019). Furthermore, EPPs can stipulate how the 30 hours will be implemented adding variance to the pre-service experience. Ensuring all EPPs provide equitable experiences to connect theory to practice aligned to T-TESS would greatly benefit the novice teacher (Variela et al., 2019).

      Alternative Certification. Pre-service teachers need frequent feedback (Goodson et al., 2019; Schunk, 2012) and the opportunity to learn from others (Redding & Smith, 2016). The biggest areas of improvement for alternative certification programs are enhanced, deliberate practice, and rich field observation experiences. While participants noted that the standard modules utilized in preparation were helpful, alternatively certified respondents from this study indicated learning from others was the most valuable aspect of their programs. Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education should mandate that all the 30 hours of field-based observations be done in person with comparable prerequisite intentionality required for field-based site supervisors applied to the mentor teachers observed. Variela et al., (2019) substantiates the need for "engaging practical field experiences in real classroom settings" (p. 112). Moreover, an additional 15 hours of field-based video observation paired with reflective practice should be required using a database of Texas teachers classified as Distinguished according to T-TESS. Reflective practice allows the pre-service teacher to identify their strengths and weaknesses, acquire new skills and knowledge, and deepen their capacity to make instructional decisions (Nagro & deBettencourt, 2019). McFadden et al., (2014) contends that video observations should be paired reflective video annotation embedded throughout the video. Santagat and Angelici (2010) proports that probing questions should be embedded while Horvits and Vellom (2012) said online peer discussions with

video evidence should be used to foster deep thought and collaboration. Although, Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education supplies a suggested resource of videos that can be used for field-based experience, it fails to meet all four domains. Strengthening the quantity, quality, and engagement of the field-based experience for the alternative certified teacher would dissuade pre-service and in-service dissonance and radically inform a novice teacher's instructional prowess and efficacy.

Educator Preparation Programs

Novice teachers interview respondents identified personal organization as an area of growth. Many explained they had inefficient systems to manage the administrative aspect of the teacher role, which caused them to work late, work weekends, and feel overwhelmed often. This gap in understanding and practice of efficient teacher systems contributes to why teachers feel exhausted and burned out. Educator preparation programs should add personal organization to required coursework and field-based observation topics and strategies to note. Pre-service teachers should be expected to demonstrate an understanding of teacher-facing routines and procedures for an organized teacher along with practical examples categorized by grade bands.

In addition, this study identified that traditional and alternative certified teachers struggled to understand what it meant to establish the *Classroom Environment* as safe and accessible. Programs must be intentional in identifying and addressing topics covered under *Classroom Environment* equally explicit as *Classroom Management*. It is essential that the instructional design make connections of this area to the Texas Teacher Standards, T-TESS, and evidenced-based practices for the diversity of needs teachers will encounter in their classrooms.

Teachers also need strategies beyond the basic whole class management. Teachers are faltering on one-on-one de-escalation of disruptive behavior. It is imperative that

EPPs provide more evidenced-based strategies to help deescalate disruptive students one-on-one and provide training on the appropriate holds or ways to intervene when a student has become disruptive. In 2019, EPPs became required to provide training and preparation in several areas including learning environment and instruction in detection of students with mental and emotional disorders (19 Tex Adm Code Ch, §229.4,2019). However, the variability in which this standard is met adds to the variance in which interview respondents stated they had been prepared. In addition, quantitative results indicated that certification did not influence teacher perception of preparedness to manage student behavior. Traditional certified had only slightly higher perceptions than alternative certified teachers. These findings suggest that EPPs need more intentional programming to increase the competence and efficacy of teachers in handling misbehavior.

District Administrators

Novice teacher dissonance of theory to practice is exacerbated within the first year of teaching without development and support. All school districts should enact a new teacher academy and mentoring to properly on-board a novice teacher to district culture and community while providing comprehensive support through a mentor. Mentor teachers should be required to meet comparable prerequisites of field-based site supervisors. Currently, some districts offer new teacher academies and mentors only for the first year. Additionally, there is also great variance in how districts equip their new teachers to be learner-ready. Novice teacher support should span the three-year period implementing a gradual release when a teacher demonstrates proficiency. Furthermore, since new teachers are growing in their self-awareness and ability to critically self-reflect, ongoing support would perpetuate the understanding that becoming a proficient to

distinguished teacher as indicated by such measures of effectiveness as the T-TESS takes time (2022).

In addition, teachers of color from this study shared the positive impact of being supported by another person of color. District administrators and campus leaders can be intentional in diversifying the school community (Carver-Thomas, 2018). On every level race, racism, and systemic oppression in schools must be addressed and literature supports the immense degree of intentionality involved to transform inequitable practices (Dixson & Rousseau-Anderson, 2018; Edwards, 2021; Grooms et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leonardo et al., 2021). This sets the foundation for rich conversations that dismantle practices that inhibit a person of color from living in authenticity, experiencing a sense of belonging, and ultimately feeling welcome (Andrews et al., 2018;). Teachers of color are a wealth of information on how their school communities can best serve them (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Champion, 2022; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Garrett, 2022; Patrick & Santelli, 2022). Districts should convene focus groups and conduct surveys from teachers of color (Dixon et al., 2019; Edwards, 2020). In addition, exiting teachers should be interviewed (Dixon et al., 2019). Data should be analyzed to increase recruitment, retention, and support of novice teachers (Dixon et al., 2019). Finally, districts should provide mentoring and coaching to leaders to better support teacher efficacy and well-being. Leader development through communities of practice and transformative learning strategies will deepen understanding and execution of a transformational leadership style (Thomas et al., 2020). Leadership styles that foster and maintain emotional and physical support are highly valued attributes of novice teachers (Podolosky et al., 2019).

Campus Administrators

Moving along the continuum of actions from teacher-centered to student-centered takes time (T-TESS, 2022). School administrators further and deepen a novice teacher's knowledge and skills by supplying a mentor, targeting on-campus professional development, and providing an instructional coach to support instruction. Teachers desire help, empathy, and support from their on-campus administrators (Souza, 2022). Administrators should be empathetic to the plight of novice teachers and implement a scaffolded approach to support their efficacy, practice, and well-being (Rahma et al., 2020; Roumell, 2019). Moreover, there are distinguished teachers who could mentor and assist by creating exemplar videos of their instruction, organization, and classroom culture to allow new teachers to visualize the various approaches to the school's culture and expectations.

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Recommendations for Future Research

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Future research should dive deeply into the prior experiences of pre-service teachers working as paraprofessionals or substitute teachers. Participants commonly alluded to these prior experiences with children in their responses as contributors to their increased preparedness. It is recommended that future research examine prior experiences of pre-service teachers, triangulate these findings with teacher perceptions of preparedness, and compare this data against teachers with no prior work experiences with children.

The *New Teacher Satisfaction Survey* is intended to measure the novice teacher's perception of their preparedness by their EPP across 49-items and 13 subscales. For the purposes of this study, only nine subscales were used. Future research, using a mixed methods approach could examine teacher's perception of preparedness from their EPP across all subscales. Layering quantitative and qualitative with probing questions directed

toward what contributes to feeling "well prepared" could provide depth to the high self-ratings. Overall, a wholistic view of all 13 subscales would better inform novice teacher satisfaction of their educator preparation program related to the four domains.

Teachers of color had insightful things to say regarding their educator preparation experiences and lived experiences while teaching. Two additional research agendas could be explored in the future. Teachers who attended a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) had unique experiences that directly impacted their motivation and commitment to teaching. A qualitative study could dig deeper into this distinction and compare findings between those who attended other traditional certification institutions. Likewise, a qualitative study could examine discriminatory practices experienced by teachers of color to provide context for how to better foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within school communities.

Conclusion

Novice teachers have chosen this profession because they desire to impact children. Novice teachers of color have accepted the call to teach and give the back agency, opportunity, support bestowed upon them. The voices of novice teachers are rising to convey what they need to be better prepared to impact a generation of students recovering from an unprecedented world phenomenon. The question is, will their voices be heard?

Overall, this study identified that novice teachers feel prepared by their educator preparation programs to establish the learning environment. Using the data from this study, novice teachers can be better prepared to create a learning environment that is safe, accessible, and organized by lessening the dissonance between theory and practice. In this case, less is not more. Less deliberate practice means a less prepared teacher in the domain that matters most for children; safe and accessible. Less field-based experiences

171

and observations for alternative certified teachers means less examples of evidenced-based strategies impacting students in seats. Continuing the less is more idiom, less diverse school communities, means that students, especially students of color miss the benefit and benevolence of teacher of color. Moreover, teachers of color fail to thrive, belong, and replicate other teachers of color.

Novice teachers from this study have risen and given voice to how policy makers, district administrators, and campus administrators can decrease their attrition numbers. The data collected from this study contributes to the existing research of how to better prepare novice teachers and novice teachers of color. This study's findings help all stakeholders create viable solutions and sustainable practices for novice teachers in the areas of knowledge, skills, efficacy, and well-being to establish the Learning Environment. Therefore, the findings of this study increase the retention and recruitment of novice teachers beyond the five-year threshold. We need teachers to remain in the seat thriving beyond the five-year threshold so that students succeed. A thriving teacher cultivates a thriving environment where children flourish. To teach the whole child, we must prepare whole teachers equipped to provide the present-day educational demands of an equitable, culturally, and linguistically responsive learning environment. Students must feel safe emotionally and physically first before they can engage in rigorous learning. Every time we fly, we are always told to put on our oxygen mask first before we can help others. Educator preparation programs oxygenate first, so that the teacher has the capacity to enable children to live to their fullest potential. The power and reach of a teacher who is fully equipped to handle the realities of today's classroom is limitless in preparing students for tomorrow.

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APPENDIX A:

CPHS APPROVAL FORM

University of Houston Clear Lake

Office of Sponsored Programs

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (CPHS)
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

REVIEW ACTION

DATE: October 25, 2022

TO: Elizabeth Beavers, Ph.D. and Precious Parks

PROPOSAL TITLE: Teacher perceptions of preparedness to establish the learning environment.

REMARKS: Protocol 23-024

The Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) for the University of Houston-Clear Lake has reviewed the research protocol and approves the project as written. The research may now be initiated.

This study involves **minimal risk**, is assigned to **research category 2,** and is **exempt** from further CPHS review except in the case of modifications in the study procedure. In that case, it must be reviewed and approved prior to implementation. Any changes to the nature of the study or adverse events encountered during the study must be reported promptly by calling 281.283.3015. Written documentation of the adverse event must be received by the IRB/CPHS via Sponsored Programs within five (5) working days.

The UHCL CPHS is organized and operated according to the US Code of Federal Regulations and operates under Federalwide Assurance No. 00004068.

Sincerely,

Kathryn I. Matthew, Ph.D.
Institutional Signing Official
FWA00004068
Office of Sponsored Programs
sponsoredprograms@uhcl.edu

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW COVER LETTER AND FLYER

University
of Houston
Clear Lake

November 1, 2022

Dear Teacher:

As a doctoral student at the University of Houston Clear-Lake, I am conducting a research study to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. At this point in the dissertation process, I have completed chapters 1, 2, and 3, and I am now looking to gather the necessary data to complete my study. Because you are a novice teacher with 0-3 years of experience in the State of Texas, you are being solicited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The data obtained from this study will not only allow UHCL's Educational Leadership Department to track the preparedness of novice teachers but will also provide feedback on educator preparation programs that may produce teachers who feel well prepared to establish safe and productive learning environments.

This semi-structured interview will take 45-60 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be kept completely confidential. No obvious undue risks will be endured and you may stop your participation at any time. In addition, you will also not benefit directly from your participation in the study.

Requested Actions:
- You will receive an email from *Docusign* containing the Informed Consent Document. The document will ask for your electronic signature as a participant in this study. Please complete at your earliest convenience.
- Click the link below to schedule your interview for the study.
  - bit.ly/noviceteacherinterview

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your willingness to participate in this study is not only greatly appreciated, but invaluable. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Precious Parks at parksp6149@uhcl.edu.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Precious Parks
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership

MIXED-METHODS DISSERTATION STUDY

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS TO ESTABLISH THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Purpose of Research: To examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR THE STUDY?

You can participate in the study if you are:
- A certified EC-12 Texas Teacher
- In your 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year as the teacher of record
- If applicable, completed student or clinical teaching despite COVID-19 restrictions

This will be a confidential 45-60 minute ZOOM interview with video and audio recorded.

Interested?
Schedule
bit.ly/noviceteacherinterview

Please call or email:
Precious Parks
(281) 310-1147
parksp6149@uhcl.edu

219

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Welcome to the "Novice Teacher Perceptions of Preparedness to Establish the Learning Environment" a study intended to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. Please read the consent form carefully before taking part in this study. If you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in this study, please sign/date the form.

Title: Novice Teacher Perceptions of Preparedness to Establish the Learning Environment

Student Investigator(s): Precious Parks

Faculty Sponsor: Elizabeth Beavers, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment.

PROCEDURES
The research procedures are as follows: Participants will be asked to participate in a remote semi-structured video recorded interview using ZOOM. The interview guide used for the qualitative portion of the study is entitled interview protocol. The video recorded interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Questions are open ended which allows for novice teachers to provide more elaborate responses on their perceptions of preparedness. Interview participants will have the opportunity to use Calendly to select a time and date of their preference to ensure their comfort and availability to answer questions. Interviews will be transcribed and kept confidential.

EXPECTED DURATION
The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately 45-60 minutes to complete the interview.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION
There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project. Participants will remain anonymous.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT
There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand the preparedness of novice

teachers from their educator preparation programs to establish a safe and productive learning environment.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the student researcher for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Student Researcher, Precious Parks, at phone number ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛ or by email at parksp6149@uhcl.edu. The Faculty Sponsor Elizabeth beavers, Ph.D., may be contacted at by email at beaversEA@uhcl.edu.

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name:

Signature of Subject: _____

Date:

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D:

NEW TEACHER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Welcome to the TEA Teacher Satisfaction Survey!

The purpose of this survey is for teachers completing their first year teaching under a standard certificate to provide information about their preparation.

These survey questions should be answered by reflecting on how well your education preparation program (EPP) prepared you to be an effective new teacher. The EPP that you are evaluating is the EPP that recommended your standard teaching certificate regardless of other EPPs in which you may have been enrolled.

Please answer all survey questions unless directions offer the opportunity to skip a section that does not apply to the students that you have been teaching this year. Within each section of the survey, you will find useful definitions and other prompts that may be helpful for completing the survey. To move around within the survey, use the navigation buttons at the bottom of each page. Do not use the browser buttons to navigate within the survey because answers may not save.

Thank you for your participation!

TEA
Texas Education Agency

Participant Agreement: I verify that I am [$ \{m://FirstName\} $ \{m://LastName\}] and that my survey responses are an accurate representation of my preparation as a new teacher.

○ Yes
○ No

You are completing this survey because you have been identified as a teacher completing your first year of teaching while holding a standard teaching certificate. Please verify your status by selecting one of the options below.

○ I am completing my first year teaching while holding a standard teaching certificate. (Continue with survey)
○ I do not hold a standard teaching certificate. (Survey ends)
○ I did not receive my teaching certificate through an EPP in Texas. (Survey ends)
○ I previously taught for a full school year while holding a standard teaching certificate. (Survey ends)

Identify the length of time you have been teaching this school year.

○ I have been teaching 5 months or longer on this campus. (Continue with survey)

○ I have been teaching less than 5 months on this campus. (Survey ends)

You have reached the end of the survey. If you submit the survey you will not be able to go back into the survey to change any answers. If you want to submit the survey now, select "Submit Survey" and then the "Next" navigator button. (Note: When you submit the survey you will not be able to return to the survey.) If you want to go back and change a previous answer choice, use the "Back" navigator button to return to a previous page.

Submit Survey

Planning: Standards and Alignment

Answer the survey questions with one of the following answer choices.

RESPONSE DESCRIPTORS

WELL PREPARED

All, or almost all, of the time I was able to demonstrate a thorough understanding and had the required knowledge and skills.

SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED

Most of the time, I was able to demonstrate a general understanding and had the required knowledge and skills.

NOT SUFFICIENTLY PREPARED

I demonstrated limited understanding and had partial required knowledge and skills.

NOT AT ALL PREPARED

I demonstrated little to no understanding and had minimal required knowledge and skills.

PLANNING

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to plan instruction for students. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

1. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that align with state content standards?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

2. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that are appropriate for diverse learning needs?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

3. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that reflect research-based best practices?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

4. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that are relevant to students? [relevant: there are connections between the lesson and the students' world]

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

5. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that integrate technology when appropriate to the lesson (to the extent technology is available at the school)?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Planning: Data and Assessments

PLANNING (Continued)

6. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to plan appropriate methods (formal and/or informal) to measure student progress?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

7. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to use a variety of student data to plan instruction?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

8. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to provide appropriate feedback to students, families, or other school personnel? [appropriate: specific, timely, and confidential]

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Planning: Activities

PLANNING (Continued)

9. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to plan lessons that encourage students to persist when learning is difficult?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

10. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to plan engaging questions that encourage complex or higher-order thinking?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

11. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to plan lessons that use student instructional groups to meet the needs of all students?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

12. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to make sure all instructional resources, materials, and technology are aligned to instructional purposes?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Instruction: Content Knowledge and Expertise

INSTRUCTION

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to implement instruction in the classroom. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

13. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to use content-specific pedagogy to deliver lessons aligned with state standards?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

14. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to explain content accurately to students in multiple ways?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

15. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to demonstrate connections between the learning objectives and other disciplines?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

226

16. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to provide opportunities for students to use different types of thinking such as: analytical, practical, creative, or research-based?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

17. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to use technology when appropriate to the lesson (to the extent technology was available at the school)?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not at All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

Instruction: Differentiation

INSTRUCTION (Continued)

18. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to differentiate instruction?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

19. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to consistently monitor the quality of student participation and performance?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

20. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to work with a diverse student population?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

21. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to work with a diverse parent and school community population?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

Instruction: Monitor and Adjust

INSTRUCTION (Continued)

22. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to collect student progress data during instruction?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently Prepared   Not At All Prepared

○   ○   ○   ○

23. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to adjust the lesson in progress based on data gathered during instruction? *[data: evidence generated during instruction such as formal/informal, observational, formative, etc.]*

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

24. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to maintain student engagement by adjusting instruction and activities based on student responses and behavior?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

25. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to give appropriate time for the lesson from introduction to closure?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Learning Environment: Classroom Environment, Routines, and Procedures

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to establish a positive classroom environment that encourages learning. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

26. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to organize a safe classroom?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

27. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to organize a classroom learning environment that is accessible for all students?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

28. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to organize a classroom in which procedures and routines are clear and efficient?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Learning Environment: Managing Student Behavior

228

29. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to establish clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

30. To what extend did your educator preparation program prepare you to maintain clear expectations for student behavior in the classroom?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

31. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to implement campus behavior systems consistently and effectively?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

32. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to provide support to students to meet expected behavior standards?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

Professional Practices and Responsibilities: Professional Demeanor and Ethics

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES & RESPONSIBILITIES

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to meet the professional responsibilities associated with your role as an educator. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

33. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to find and follow district expectations for professional standards? [expectations: such as district guidelines, operating policies, or campus procedures]

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

34. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to understand and adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

229

35. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to advocate for
the needs of the students in the classroom?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently   Not At All Prepared
                                                    Prepared
○   ○   ○   ○

Professional Practices and Responsibilities: Goal Setting

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES & RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

36. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to reflect on your
strengths and professional learning needs?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently   Not At All Prepared
                                                    Prepared
○   ○   ○   ○

37. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to use data from
self-assessment, reflection, and supervisor feedback to set professional goals?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently   Not At All Prepared
                                                    Prepared
○   ○   ○   ○

38. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to prioritize goals
to improve professional practice and student performance?

Well Prepared   Sufficiently Prepared   Not Sufficiently   Not At All Prepared
                                                    Prepared
○   ○   ○   ○

Students with Disabilities

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to address the needs of
students with disabilities. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the
teaching assignment in the current school year.

A student with disabilities as defined in TEC 29.003: "A student...has one or more of the following
disabilities that prevents the student from being adequately or safely educated in public school
without the provision of special services:
(A) physical disability;
(B) mental retardation;
(C) emotional disturbance;
(D) learning disability;
(E) autism;
(F) speech disability; or
(G) traumatic brain injury."

Did you have students with disabilities as determined by the Texas Education Code Section 29.003 in your
classroom?

○ Yes
○ No

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

39. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of students with disabilities?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

40. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to differentiate instruction to meet the behavioral needs of students with disabilities?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

41. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to develop and/or implement appropriate formal and informal assessments for students with disabilities to demonstrate their learning?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

42. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to make appropriate instructional decisions based on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)? [decisions: modifying instructional activities such as pacing, additional support or time, lesson delivery, assessment design, etc.]

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

43. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to collaborate with other relevant staff to meet the academic, developmental, and behavioral needs of students with disabilities? [staff: individuals in key roles with specialized knowledge to meet the needs of the student]

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

44. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to understand and adhere to the federal and state laws that govern special education services?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

English Language Learners

This section asks questions about how well you were prepared by your EPP to address the needs of students who have limited English language proficiency as determined by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 89.1203. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

TAC 89.1203: "English language learner--A person who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the first native language. The terms English language learner and limited English proficient student are used interchangeably."

Did you have English language learners (ELLs) as determined by the TAC Section 89.1203 in your classroom?

○ Yes
○ No

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

45. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to design lessons that adequately support ELLs to master the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

46. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to develop and/or implement appropriate formal and informal assessments for ELLs to demonstrate their learning?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

47. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to support ELLs in mastering the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

48. To what extent did your educator preparation program prepare you to understand and adhere to federal and state laws that govern education services for ELLs?

Well Prepared	Sufficiently Prepared	Not Sufficiently Prepared	Not At All Prepared
○	○	○	○

232

OVERALL EVALUATION

This section asks a question about how well you were prepared by your EPP to be an effective new teacher. Remember to think about your preparation at the beginning of the teaching assignment in the current school year.

49. What is your overall evaluation of how well you were prepared for the realities of the classroom as they exist on your campus? Select the one statement that most closely matches your current perspective on your overall readiness.

○ Well prepared for the first year of teaching
○ Sufficiently prepared for the first year of teaching
○ Not sufficiently prepared for the first year of teaching
○ Not at all prepared for the first year of teaching

Congratulations! You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation!

To submit survey responses now, use the "Next" navigator button. (Note: Once responses are submitted, you will not be able to go back into the survey to review responses or make changes.)

To review and/or change responses use the "Back" navigator button to return to a previous page.

Questions about this survey should be submitted to: teachersurvey@tea.texas.gov.

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APPENDIX E:

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

Informed Consent gained: Yes   No

Interview Script:

I'd like to thank you once again for gracing me with your time and space in the interview phase of my study. Again, the purpose of this study is to examine novice teacher's perceptions of their educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare them to establish the learning environment. Specifically, I want to know your perception of your educator preparation program's effectiveness to prepare you to handle the realities of today's classroom. Our time together today will take up to 60 minutes where I will ask you general demographics and your experiences as a novice teacher. Through email, you completed a consent form indicating that I have your permission (or not) to video and audio record this interview (Zoom platform for video recording only). Are you still okay with me audio and video recording (or not) our conversation today? ___Yes ___No
If yes: Thank you!

If at any point you want me to turn off the recording, keep something you said off the record, or not answer any of the questions, please let me know. I will also be taking written notes of our conversation. Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]. If any questions arise at any point in this interview (or after the interview), feel free to ask or contact me via email at any time. I would be more than happy to answer your questions. First, I will ask general demographic questions that will be followed by 18 open-ended questions. If you prefer not to answer any of these general questions, please let me know.

What gender do you identify with?

Male	Female	Neither of those

What is your age range?

18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74+

What describes your race the best?

Hispanic/Latino	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Asian	Two or more races

What is your novice teaching year?

Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**

<u>Open-ended interview questions:</u>

1. If you had to pick a phrase or metaphor for your first year of teaching, what would it be? Please explain?
    a. Does that phrase or metaphor still apply, or has it changed?
    b. If applicable, why and in what ways has it changed?

2. What led you to want to become a teacher?
3. What were you looking forward to most about becoming a teacher?
4. What did you fear most about becoming a teacher?
5. What preparation did you choose?
    a. Why did you choose that certification route?
6. What is the reality of a teacher teaching in today's classroom?
    a. If applicable, why are these impactful to you and your classroom?

7. Describe your sense of preparedness to be a teacher based on your teacher preparation experience.

8. In general, what were the most valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program?

9. In general, what were the least valuable aspects of your teacher preparation program?

10. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to establish the classroom environment specific to establishing a safe classroom?
11. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to establish the classroom environment, specific to establishing an accessible classroom?
    a. How was the class structured to support your learning and practice?
    b. What were the classes/topics?
12. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to establish the classroom environment, specific to establishing an organized classroom?
    a. How was the class structured to support your learning and practice?
    b. What were the classes/topics?
13. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to manage the classroom specific to establishing clear behavior expectations,
14. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to manage the classroom specific to implementing campus behavior systems?
15. In what ways did your EPP prepare you to manage the classroom specific to support to meet behavior concerns of your students?
16. When you reflect on your classes offered through your program, what classes helped you feel most prepared to establish the learning environment?
    a. How was the class structured? Why was this impactful?
17. Describe a time when you experienced a major challenge or challenges with a student or students that disrupted the learning environment's safety and productivity. What made it so challenging?
    a. In terms of the preparation you received from your EPP, were you prepared or unprepared?
        i. In what ways were you prepared or unprepared?
        ii. What recommendations would you make to your EPP to better prepare teachers?
18. Tell me about your experiences as a novice teacher of color or novice teacher.

OR

Tell me about your overall experience as a novice teacher