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ARE THE NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS DIFFERENT
BASED ON PREPARATION PROGRAM?

by

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DISSERTATION

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother – Ira Toler- who believed education was the pathway to achieving one’s goals and though she really wanted me to be a lawyer, I think she’d be proud of who I am today.

And to my children – never stop believing in your dreams.

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ABSTRACT

ARE THE NEEDS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS DIFFERENT
BASED ON PREPARATION PROGRAM?

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The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively-certified teachers and to determine if there is a perceived difference in levels of self-efficacy after the first-year of teaching in those teachers who completed a traditional certification program or an alternative certification program. The researcher also examined the perceptions of needs and levels of self-efficacy of first-year teachers who completed an alternative program compared to those of first-year teachers who completed a traditional program for certification. The qualitative data was analyzed to examine what alternatively-certified teachers' perceptions of needs are and what traditionally prepared teachers' perceptions of needs are. This mixed methods study used a survey in order to capture the first-year teachers' level of self-efficacy who went through different types of certification and interviews to examine the perceived needs of first-year teachers. Through the lens of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's Teachers'

Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) and Bandura's social learning theory, this study examined the first-year teachers' beliefs as it relates to their self-efficacy. The participants included fifty-one elementary and secondary first-year teachers in a school district in Texas. The results of the study suggest there is no significant differences between the traditional certification and alternative certification teachers' beliefs on self-efficacy in any of the domains – student engagement, instructional strategies, or classroom management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Research Problem	3
Significance of the Study	5
Research Purpose and Questions	7
Definitions of Key Terms	8
Conclusion	10
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	11
Certification Program Requirements	12
Alternative Certification Programs	13
Traditional Certification Programs	15
First-year Teacher Needs	16
Alternative Certification Teacher Needs	18
Traditional Certification Teacher Needs.....	19
Sense of Identity	20
Life Experiences	20
Self-Efficacy	21
Summary of Findings.....	22
Theoretical Framework.....	24
Adult Learning Theory: Transformative Learning	24
Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory	26
Conclusion	27
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	29
Overview of the Research Problem	30
Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs	31
Research Purpose and Questions	32
Quantitative.....	32
Qualitative.....	32
Research Design.....	33
Population and Sample	33
Participant Selection	34
Instrumentation	35
Data Collection Procedures.....	36
Quantitative.....	36
Qualitative.....	37
Interview Procedure	37
Data Analysis Procedures	38

Quantitative.....	38
Qualitative.....	39
Researcher Identity	40
Privacy and Ethical Considerations	42
Conclusion	43
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	44
Participants' Demographics	44
Quantitative Results	46
Research Question One	46
Research Question Two	46
Research Question Three	48
Research Question Four	49
Qualitative Results	50
Research Question Five	50
Personal Experience/Sense of Calling	51
Classroom Management.....	54
Lesson Preparation and Planning/Time Management	55
Support System the First-year.....	58
Self-Efficacy	60
Summary of Findings.....	62
Conclusion	64
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
Implications.....	68
Implications for Certification Programs	68
Implications for Campus and District Administrators	68
Recommendations for Future Research	69
Research Design Limitations	72
Conclusion	72
REFERENCES	74
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.....	86
APPENDIX B: TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY SCALE	90
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	91

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Sandy Shores Independent School District Demographics	34
Table 2 Internal Reliability	36
Table 3 Participant Demographics	45
Table 4 Teacher Certification Programs and Overall Self-Efficacy of First-year Teachers	46
Table 5 Teacher Certification Programs and Self-Efficacy Subscales of First-year Teachers	47
Table 6 Descriptive Statistics for Relationship Between First-year Teacher's Age/Life Experiences and SE	48
Table 7 Career Order and Self-efficacy	49

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over 30 years ago, the education system responded to the need to increase the number of teachers in the school system because there was a shortage of highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). During the 2015-16 school year, there were over 350 articles written about teacher shortages (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). And still today, in 2021, there is a shortage of experienced, highly qualified teachers. This shortage negatively impacts the quality of public education specifically in the teaching areas of special education, mathematics, bilingual education and science (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). According to the United States Department of Education (2018), at least one district in every state began the 2018 school year with a shortage of teachers. It is a challenge for schools and school districts to be held accountable for student growth and achievement when the same entities struggle to hire and retain highly qualified teachers (Ludlow, 2010). While the U.S. school improvement initiatives focus on teacher quality, teacher quantity has also become a major concern for schools as they try to meet the numerous government mandates (Ludlow, 2010).

As more non-traditional teaching preparation programs emerged, the number of teachers increased through alternative certification as well as traditional teaching programs. Preparing and keeping high quality teachers in the classroom is essential for achieving high standards in education and alternatively-certified teachers are an increasing segment of the teaching force. With an increase in alternatively-certified teachers, there is a need to help prepare first-year teachers so they can, in turn, better handle the challenges and situations they will face in that first-year. Certification alone does not prepare teachers for real classroom experience and the stress and responsibilities

that come with being in the classroom. Alternatively-certified teachers are back in a classroom for the first time since being a student and are finding they need additional professional support (Steadman & Simmons, 2007). And while, time and again, it is discussed that good teaching is important; it is not clear what makes for a good teacher. The most commonly used measures by public schools to screen applicants and determine candidacy are certification, experience and education level. However, none of these actually determine the quality of the teaching nor the needs of the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

There is a growing demand to determine what the needs of new teachers are since teachers can hold one certification that covers several subjects and grade levels, such as a 4-8 generalist or Special Education K-12, as well as certifications that are subject and grade level specific, such as English 8-12 or Business Certification 8-12. More specifically, educators need to ask what types of personalized or individualized induction programs are needed to offer first-year teachers in the alternative teaching programs versus first-year teachers who complete a traditional teaching program. Educators must ask if the support system is meeting all first-year teachers' professional needs to ensure quality of instruction as well as teacher retention (Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

Research suggests that of all the contributing factors to student achievement, the single most influential school-based factor is the quality of the teacher (Hattie, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, Carver-Thomas, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2017). The U.S. Department of Education recognized the need to secure quality teachers in order to increase student gains (A Blueprint for Reform, 2010). Teachers are now required to teach a specific content or grade level as well as social-emotional lessons and character lessons to a population of students who are more diverse and challenging than in years past

(D’Emidio-Caston, 2019). In addition, understanding student racial backgrounds and prior experiences is necessary to positively impact student learning for today’s teachers. A Blueprint for Reform (2010) requires states and districts to publish reports on teacher effectiveness. There is conflicting research about whether a teacher’s effectiveness and retention are directly related to their chosen teacher preparation program (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Delia Stafford, head of Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc. and who spearheaded the Texas State Department mandate regarding alternative certification opportunities, stated that alternative certification was “an initiative to solve a teacher shortage...by developing programs...to [match] mature adults with master teachers mentoring individuals who were engaged in on the job training” (Shaughnessy, 2006, p. 497). However, determining which variables influence a first-year teacher’s effectiveness is difficult. The findings of this study will contribute to former research on first-year teacher preparation and teacher self-efficacy. This chapter will present the research problem, the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, the purpose and research questions and definitions of key terms.

The Research Problem

There is still little research to determine which certification programs better prepare first-year teachers. Research is needed on alternative certification programs versus traditional programs and how these programs prepare first-year teachers based on first-year teachers’ needs. Several states introduced alternative certification programs to solve the teacher shortage problem (Hung & Smith, 2012). There are currently over 100 alternative certification programs approved in Texas (State Board of Education, 2016). However, with so many different alternative routes, there is no consistency in prospective teachers’ course work, supervision, and training periods (Hung & Smith, 2012). Research shows that many teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years

and the teachers who are alternatively prepared are leaving at higher rates than teachers who have been traditionally prepared (Curtis, 2012; Koehler, Feldhaus, Fernandez, & Hundley, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Vesely, Saklofske, and Leschied (2013) found that teaching was one of the most important and demanding occupations in society today. Teachers' self-efficacy influences their teaching behaviors and their students' motivation and achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers with low self-efficacy experience greater difficulties in teaching, higher levels of job-related stress, and lower levels of job satisfaction; whereas, teachers' success and positive student outcomes have been linked to an increased self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Kee (2012) conducted a study of first-year traditionally-certified teachers and alternatively-certified teachers regarding their feelings of preparedness. In the study, the alternatively-certified teachers believed that they were somewhat less prepared than the traditionally-certified teachers (Kee, 2012). The alternatively-certified teachers had less pedagogy coursework and shorter student-teaching/field experiences than the traditionally-certified teachers did in the study which may account for the perceived feelings of preparedness (Kee, 2012). There is a gap in the literature regarding the quality, participant perceptions, and effectiveness of certain aspects of alternative certification programs. There is a need for additional research to identify and better understand motives, purpose, perceived program weaknesses, and/or barriers to first-year teachers' success so that all stakeholders involved can create solutions to overcome those barriers (Dawson, 2007; Koehler et al., 2013). Additionally, in an effort to increase the number of teacher candidates there is now a growing need to ensure the candidates are well equipped to meet the needs for all students in the course they are assigned to teach (Curtis, 2012). In order to ensure first-year teachers can meet the students' needs, the first-year teachers' needs must be met (Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani,

2010; Newman, 2009). In Bandura's (1997) study, he found feelings of repeated success were helpful in managing teaching stress. Studies have found that the student teaching component of traditional certification programs prepares pre-service teachers for their role as a first-year teacher and plays a significant role in teacher retention (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, Carver-Thomas, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Pre-service teachers need to feel connected and have a sense of self-efficacy for the responsibilities they face when teaching (Stephenson, 2012). According to Stephenson (2012), there is a link between burnout and teacher self-efficacy. Teachers who have low efficacy are more likely to quit the profession than those who are highly efficacious.

States have differing requirements for alternative certification in order to attain teaching certification (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The literature does report that alternative certification programs are appealing because they require less coursework and requirements and therefore, appeal to those who may not have the funds to pursue the traditional route or those who are interested in teaching as a second career and do not have the time or means to dedicate to pursuing another degree in order to teach (Bowe, Braam, Lawrenz, & Kirchhoff, 2011).

Significance of the Study

Given that the requirements to obtain teaching certifications differ based on the program completed, teacher candidates have different experiences during their programs. Traditional certification programs often require candidates to complete on average 100 observation hours and 600 student teaching hours whereas the alternative certification programs often do not require candidates to complete any observation or student teaching hours prior to teaching in the classroom with students while working on certification requirements (US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013). Most teachers find the first-year to be challenging regardless of what certification

program they pursue (Curtis, 2012; Unruh & Holt, 2010). Therefore, it is imperative that principals recognize this and develop a plan to meet the needs of all first-year teachers taking into account the first-year teachers' program experience (Elliott et al., 2010; Linek, et al., 2012; Yao & Williams, 2010).

Teachers are the foundational component of the educational system; therefore, it is vital that appropriate attention and effective training is provided to first-year teachers to ensure they are prepared for all aspects of teaching (Beavers, 2009; McDonald, 2014). Not only is the pool of teachers declining, but the number of people pursuing teaching careers has also declined (Sutcher et al., 2016). Specifically, teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs has declined by 35 percent, and the percentage of graduates from teacher preparation programs has decreased 23 percent (Sutcher et al., 2016).

There is a gap in research on alternative certification programs versus traditional programs and how the programs prepare the first-year teachers based on the first-year teachers' needs. Because there is a gap in the literature regarding the quality, participant perceptions and effectiveness of certain aspects of alternative certification programs, there is a need for additional research to identify and better understand motives, purpose, perceived program weaknesses, and/or barriers to success so that all stakeholders involved can create solutions to overcome those barriers (Bell, Coleman, Cihak, Kirk, Barkdoll, Grim, & Benner, 2010; Koehler et al., 2013). According to Bell, more research is needed to evaluate how alternatively-certified teachers are prepared and supported as they transition into a classroom (Bell et al., 2010).

Research shows that high teacher self-efficacy is linked to effective classroom management and instructional focus which leads to improved student achievement (Ingersoll, 2012; Tournaki, Lyublinskaya, & Carolan, 2009; Wahlstrom & Lewis, 2008). Identifying factors that lead to first-year teachers' stress and low self-efficacy is vital to

school administrators to be able to prevent teacher burnout and retain highly effective teachers.

There has been much debate whether one entering the profession through alternative certification is as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012; Hung & Smith, 2012). The current research is not conclusive whether one certification program better prepares first-year teachers than others. However, it may be concluded that the first-year teachers need different mentorship programs based on the teaching certification programs the candidates completed. This study may improve teacher preparation and induction programs by igniting discussions on the challenges new teachers, traditional and alternatively-certified, experience as they enter the classrooms.

Research Purpose and Questions

This study examined if first-year teachers who completed an alternatively-certified program's perceptions of their needs and sense of self-efficacy are different from first-year teachers who completed a traditionally-certified program. The following research questions were explored for this study:

1. Is there a difference in overall self-efficacy of teachers who complete traditional certification compared to those who complete alternative certification?
2. How do the levels of self-efficacy for the subscales of Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management and Student Engagement of teachers who complete traditional certification compare to those who complete alternative certification?
3. Is there a relationship between the first-year teacher's age/(life experiences) and sense of self-efficacy?

4. Is there a difference in the first-year teacher's sense of self-efficacy based on career order?
5. What are the perceived needs and challenges of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification and those who completed alternative certification?

Using mixed methods research, this study provided necessary information to determine whether one entering the profession through alternative certification feels as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs. The study was completed in the spring semester. The information obtained through this study can be utilized to improve the professional development provided to first-year teachers based on their needs. Furthermore, this study can inform federal, state and local policymakers as well as school leaders how to better assist first-year teachers in classrooms.

Definitions of Key Terms

To assist in clarifying meaning and creating common language within the bounds of this study, the following are key terms used throughout the study:

Alternative Certification: “an initiative to solve a teacher shortage..., by developing programs...to [match] mature adults with master teachers mentoring individuals who were engaged in on the job training” (Shaughnessy, 2006, p. 497). Programs that vary in length from a few weeks of face-to-face training or online course completion that allow teaching candidates to teach in the classroom with full responsibility for students (Shaughnessy, 2006). A teaching certificate issued by a federal, state, or local agency that is earned through a nontraditional teacher program (Ravitch, 2007).

Alternatively-Certified Teacher: An individual who has a college degree in a field other than education and is earning a professional teaching certificate through a nontraditional teacher preparation program while simultaneously being employed as a teacher by a school district (Ravitch, 2007).

Content knowledge: Expertise in the subject area being taught (Allen, 2009; Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010).

First-year teacher: an individual, who is currently employed in a school district, with one year (or less) of total teaching experience.

Formal Observation: an observation that concludes with the teacher candidate receiving written feedback (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014).

Highly Qualified Teacher: The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required teachers to be “highly qualified” by meeting certain conditions. However, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), does away with the term “highly qualified” and federal standards; instead each state determines its own qualification standards for teachers. In Texas, TEA determines the requirements for the Texas teacher certification. ESSA has replaced the term “highly qualified” with “effective.” ESSA states for a teacher to be “effective,” the teacher must meet all applicable state certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), beginning with the 2016-17 school year, schools and teachers will only need to meet state requirements for certification. The federal term of “highly qualified teacher status” no longer applies (tea.texas.gov).

Induction program: A professional support system designed to support first-year teachers which includes orientation, mentoring, professional learning opportunities and professional support (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010).

Mentor: Teachers who provide guidance, training and support to first-year teacher candidates to assist in the development and improvement of professional skills and understanding (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014).

Pedagogy: Expertise in instructional strategies, learning theories, foundations of education and classroom management techniques for students in the K-12 setting that are typically taught in traditional teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

Teacher self-efficacy: The degree to which teachers feel they can influence students and their learning (Bandura, 1994).

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TES): a tool to explore the construct of teacher efficacy. This assessment provides an analysis of the teacher's assessment of his or her competence with various teaching tasks (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Traditional Program: A university-based program where participants receive bachelor's degree and certificate showing they have completed the program (Hung, 2011).

Conclusion

The education system is still trying to respond to the need to increase teachers in the school system because there is a shortage of highly qualified teachers who are willing to teach the youth. As more non-traditional teaching preparation programs emerge, the market of teachers has increased. There has been much debate whether one entering the profession through alternative certification feels as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

First-year teachers assume the role of educating students, learning how to educate the diverse learners in their classroom, and trying to learn the multi-faceted responsibilities assigned to them. Examining the current research on traditional routes and alternative routes to becoming a teacher is necessary in order to ensure their success as a teacher.

The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively-certified teachers and to determine if there is a difference in levels of self-efficacy after the first-year of teaching in those teachers who completed a traditional certification program or an alternative certification program. The researcher also examined if there were different perceptions of needs based on the program the teachers completed.

The literature review includes an exploration of multiple issues. The literature discusses program requirements for alternative certification and traditional certification as well as describes characteristics of those who choose alternative certification compared to traditional certification. Finally, this review identified the needs of first-year teachers who are alternative certified in comparison with the needs of first-year teachers who are traditionally-certified. This is relevant because the United States finds itself with a serious teacher shortage (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Still today, there are districts that are struggling to recruit and retain effective educators (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, Carver-Thomas, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Certification Program Requirements

Over 30 years ago, the education system responded to the need to increase teachers in the school system because there was a shortage of highly qualified teachers. This teacher shortage dilemma has forced states to rely more on the alternate routes to teacher certification to fill their classrooms (Ludlow, 2010). Feistritzer (2009) reported that an estimated 33% of all teachers were certified through alternative routes. As more non-traditional teaching preparation programs emerged, the number of teachers increased but there has been much debate whether one entering the profession through alternative certification is as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs. Too often, teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years (Curtis, 2012; Koehler et al., 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

No Child Left Behind was introduced in 2001; however, in 2010, *Renee v. Duncan*, where appellants challenged the federal regulation permitting teachers who are participating in alternative-route teacher training programs, but have not obtained State certification, to be characterized as "highly qualified teachers" under the No Child Left Behind Act, proves that there is still debate on the definition of highly qualified teachers and a concern of teacher quality with using the teaching certificate as a valid and reliable indicator of teacher quality (Hanna & Gimbert, 2011). In 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). The purpose of ESSA was to create a better law that focused on preparing all students for success in college and careers. During this time, the U.S. Department of Education recognized the need to secure quality teachers in order to increase student gains (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013). Increasing the number of certification options for teacher candidates has highlighted the need to ensure the candidates are well equipped to meet the needs for all students in the course they are

assigned to teach. In order to ensure the first-year teachers are able to meet the students' needs, the first-year teachers' needs must be met (Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010; Newman, 2009).

In 2009, the United States Department of Education predicted 54 million students will be enrolled in public schools by 2018 and that the United States would need an additional four million teachers to fill classrooms due to retirement, attrition and increased student enrollment (A Blueprint for Reform, 2010).

Alternative Certification Programs

Alternative certification programs have been a part of education for over 30 years. Alternative certification programs fall into the following categories: national, state or school district programs. The national, state, and school district alternative teacher certification programs vary greatly in entry requirements, length, agency responsibility, delivery mode, program components, and support that is provided throughout the program (Feistritzer, 2009). Furthermore, the agencies responsible for the certification training range from local school districts, region service centers, universities or businesses and the time frame to become certified ranges from one month to two to three years.

National Models. There are three national programs that assist potential alternative route teaching candidates. American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), Teach for America and Troops to Teachers are recruitment programs that assist individuals in each state's eligibility process without the requirements and cost of a traditional teacher preparation program (Donaldson, 2012). ABCTE assists current teachers who want to earn certification in additional subject areas (Tuttle, Anderson, & Glazerman, 2009). Teach for America (TFA) program recruits high achieving college graduates to teach for two years in low income schools and fulfills the

greatest need of vacancies (Donaldson, 2012). In 1994, the Department of Defense established Troops to Teachers (TTT) to assist veterans in becoming teachers (Feistritzer, 2009).

State Models. The first statewide alternative teacher certification program was implemented in New Jersey in 1984 and served as a model for other states alternative certification programs (National Center for Education Information, 2003). The alternative certification program's structure is similar to that of today's programs. The individual attends classes to learn how to be a teacher during the first-year of employment (National Center for Education Information, 2003). The school district assigns a mentor and after the successful completion, the individual is eligible for a teaching license/certification recommendation (National Center for Education Information, 2003). Texas State Department of Education established alternative teacher certification programs in 1990 (Inspire Texas-Region 4 Alternative Certification Program, n.d.).

There is little research to determine which alternative certification programs better prepare first-year teachers. Each state is responsible for defining its own teacher certification program requirements. Most states differ greatly on the requirements of alternative certification in order to attain teaching certification (Feistritzer, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Alternative certification programs are appealing because they require less coursework and requirements thus appealing to those who may not have the funds to pursue the traditional route or those who are interested in teaching as a second career and do not have the time or means to dedicate to pursuing another degree in order to teach (Bowe et al., 2011; Feistritzer, 2009; Ingersoll 2012; Ingersoll, Miller, & May, 2012; Shaw, 2008). Since its beginning, educational stakeholders designed alternative certification programs to reduce teacher shortages and increase the quality of instruction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Shaw, 2008). Over the past twenty years, nearly one-third of

all new teachers entering the classrooms participated in an alternative certification program (Feistritzer, 2010). For this study, alternative certification program was defined as: alternative programs that vary in length from a few weeks of face-to-face training or online course completion that allow teaching candidates to teach in the classroom with full responsibility for students (Shaughnessy, 2006).

Alternative routes to teacher certification are reportedly attractive because of the opportunity to work as a paid teacher while completing the program's certification requirements (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Alternative certification programs decrease the cost and preparation time in order to meet the demands of teacher shortage (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Because of the shortened preparation time, alternatively-certified teachers are often unfamiliar with pedagogy, classroom management tools and instructional strategies which may present challenges during the first-year teaching experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). When the alternatively-certified, first-year teacher lacks the field experiences, he or she is not afforded the opportunity to observe interactions of the experienced teacher with students or to practice teaching in the presence of an experienced teacher to gain feedback (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

Traditional Certification Programs

This study focused on first-year teachers who completed a traditional certification program that was offered through a college of education four-year undergraduate degree. Typically, undergraduate students are required to complete content specific courses, methodology, pedagogy courses, as well as observation and student teaching opportunities. Students who complete the traditional certification programs also have examination requirements in order to receive their bachelor's degree (US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013).

In Texas under the traditional certification route, universities require their students to have a certain GPA, which is at least a 2.5 GPA, mastery of the general knowledge examination, complete field observations and clinical/field experiences which are at least one semester prior to becoming certified (tea.texas.gov).

First-year Teacher Needs

Since the requirements to obtain teaching certifications differ based on the program completed, the candidates have different experiences during their programs. Traditional certification programs often require candidates to complete on average 100 observation hours and 600 student teaching hours; whereas, the alternative certification programs do not require candidates to complete any observation or student teaching hours prior to teaching in the classroom with students while working on certification requirements (US Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2013). Teachers choose education as a career because of what they view as the role of the teacher (McDonald, 2014). Teachers experience satisfaction in their role because of their compassion for teaching students as well as their chosen subject field (Curtis, 2012). However, despite the fulfillment and satisfaction of teaching others, approximately 40-50% resign within the first three years with alternative certification teachers leaving at a significantly higher rate than traditionally-certified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014; Irwin, NCES, Zhang, Wang, Hein, Wang, Roberts, York, AIR, Barmer, Bullock Mann, Dilig, & Parker, 2021; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

All teachers find the first-year to be challenging regardless of what certification program they have chosen (Unruh & Holt, 2010). There is often a “clash between expectations and reality” for first-year teachers as they try to balance what their initial expectations of teaching would be versus the reality once in the classroom alone (Davis & Higdon, 2008; DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013; Le Maistre & Paré, 2010, p. 560).

Experts in the education field have stated that underprepared and ineffective teachers hinder student learning and performance (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Research suggests that first-year teachers have a limited view of curriculum, how to effectively plan instruction to meet the learners' needs, and how to effectively manage a classroom (Bradley & Gordon, 1994; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Garza & Wurzbach, 2002). The education profession is often a more complex career than first-year teachers realize. Many teachers describe their first-year as a time of survival (Ingersoll, 2012).

The alternatively-certified teacher may need even more support than a traditionally-certified first-year teacher because alternatively-certified teachers, in addition to the struggles all first-year teachers face, have not yet experienced leading a classroom and facing all the normal challenges so they don't know what they about to experience (Allen, 2009). The retention of first-year teachers is of great concern to school and district leaders due to the impact on student performance as well as the amount of finances and time invested in professional development to better prepare new teachers (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012; Sokal, Smith, & Mowat, 2003). Although first-year teachers may have the required content knowledge on a state exam, researchers agree that content knowledge alone does not ensure high-quality instruction in a classroom (Linek et al., 2012). Some new teachers have had numerous courses in pedagogy, opportunities to observe other teachers, a semester or more of student teaching, and the opportunity to receive feedback on their own teaching. While other new teachers may have never had a course involving pedagogy and teaching methods, no student teaching practice, minimal to no observations of other teachers' classrooms and no feedback on their teaching. Yet, first-year teachers

from various certification programs often teach on the same campus making it imperative to provide the appropriate supports for each first-year teacher.

Alternative Certification Teacher Needs

Alternative Certification programs offer shorter pathways to teaching careers for those who hold a bachelor's degree in an area other than education. Alternatively-certified teachers are often employed in the high need areas such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), special education and foreign languages in inner cities and rural areas with a higher percentage of alternatively-certified teachers in secondary (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Morettini, 2014). Research indicates that these teachers need more training and preparation in the areas the traditional certification programs provide such as observation opportunities, how to teach content and provide feedback, classroom management and organization (Allen, 2009; Caprano, Caprano, & Helfeldt, 2010; Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Therefore, the alternatively-certified teacher may have a high content specific knowledge but still not know how to teach in a manner for students to learn nor may the teacher know how to assess the students in multiple ways other than what the teacher experienced when in K12 schools (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012). However, these are often the areas where teachers receive less pedagogical training because they are alternatively-certified (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). Alternatively-certified teachers begin the school year in multiple roles- the role of teacher of record and student of teaching. Additionally, the alternatively-certified teacher may struggle with classroom management more than the traditionally-certified teacher because he or she has not had any prior preparation in observing how to manage a group of students' diverse behaviors and learning needs (Morettini, 2014). Without pedagogical knowledge and field experiences, alternatively-certified teachers may lack self-efficacy in managing student behavior, teaching

strategies and developing curriculum which can have a negative impact on student academic performance (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Luft, Roehrig, & Patterson, 2003). According to Boe, Cook and Sunderland (2008), even with the development of mentoring programs and induction programs, first-year teachers express the loneliness and overwhelming feeling of being the adult in the classroom who is solely responsible for the students' learning.

Traditional Certification Teacher Needs

Traditional certification programs focus on a wide range of areas; therefore, those who complete the traditional route understand what to expect in the classroom but sometimes lack the deeper content specific knowledge because they are not required to take as many advanced courses in their content area (Bowe et al., 2011). Therefore, when faced with the first-year of teaching, those who completed the traditional route may not feel they know the content and curriculum well enough to teach it to the students in a way where the student will learn.

Previous research has yielded mixed results regarding whether administrators believe alternatively-certified teachers are as prepared as traditionally-certified teachers as well as the reason/link between high turnover among alternatively-certified teachers is a result of the lack of pre-service experience and pedagogical training (Humphrey, Wechsler & Hough, 2008). In a 2000 study by Ovando and Trube, 134 Texas principals indicated they perceived traditionally-certified teachers had greater capacity and working knowledge than alternatively-certified teachers. Additionally, a study examined campus and district level administrators' perceptions of hiring alternatively-certified teachers and found that campus administrators were more apt to question if alternatively-certified teachers were prepared to traditionally-certified teachers (Ganter, Jenkins, & Layton 2006).

Sense of Identity

First-year teachers' sense of identity originates from a theoretical approach combined with their own school experiences (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). However, as the first-year teacher gains field experience and is struck with the reality of accountability, managing a class, teaching the curriculum, assessing students and building relationships, the teaching identity morphs and may become fragile depending on the first-year teacher's efficacy in multiple areas (Roberts, 2000). Secondary teachers may struggle with their sense of identity more than elementary, in part, due to the coursework required for secondary teachers is mostly about curriculum content rather than pedagogy, instructional strategies and relationships (Luft et al., 2003; Wood, Jilk, & Paine, 2012).

Life Experiences

Some attention should be given to examining the life experiences of first-year teachers and how their life experiences shaped their decision to become a teacher. Second-career teachers come from a wide range of career backgrounds from military, where there are specific programs to assist the transition of careers, to agriculture, business, information technology, engineering or technical fields where the individual has decided to switch careers to education (Kee, 2012; Koehler et al., 2013; Morettini, 2014).

According to Troesch and Bauer's study of job satisfaction and stress in second career teachers compared to first career teachers, those teachers who are in their second career have higher self-efficacy beliefs and higher job satisfaction compared to the first career teachers; therefore, the second career teachers tend to remain in the education field once they have made the decision to teach (2017). Additionally, the study found that for second career teachers the teaching proved to be more meaningful work than their first career choice (Troesch & Bauer, 2017).

Self-Efficacy

Regardless of the certification route, schools may benefit from hiring teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy. According to Stephenson (2012), there is a link between a teacher's sense of self-efficacy, student achievement, teacher effectiveness and teacher retention. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have also been linked to student achievement through classroom behavior and teacher practices. When teachers' self-efficacy levels are high, they may be more likely to have a positive influence on a learner's motivation and achievement (Schwartz, 2010). Those who have a greater classroom management self-efficacy or greater instructional strategies self-efficacy have greater on the job satisfaction and are less likely to quit. They practice pedagogical strategies that bring about student improvement and academic growth. When instructional leaders understand and are able to articulate what they know about themselves in the area of teacher self-efficacy, they are better able to seek specific assistance needed to bring about instructional improvement in the classroom (Schwartz, 2010).

In addition to the prior life experiences, teachers' self-efficacy perceptions may hinder academic development of student learners. Self-efficacy is based on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Bandura's theory encourages learning from observation. Additionally, Bandura purports self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to achieve a goal or objective. Self-efficacy has an influence on the way people think, feel, and act (Bandura, 1997). In direct contrast to teachers with high self-efficacy, low efficacy teachers are more likely to place the blame for their students' lack of success on sources external from themselves. The students' lack of motivation, the administration's lack of support, and the parents' lack of involvement all become excuses for poor student performance. Self-reflection and continuous improvement do not register as possible

solutions. Teachers with low self-efficacy do not believe their practice directly impacts student achievement as much as students, their parents, and the administrative staff. According to Schwartz (2010), teachers with low perceived self-efficacy are more likely to burnout and leave the profession altogether. They correlate the low efficacy with an increased stress level and exhaustion.

A teacher's self-efficacy provides the framework for evidence-based practices and decisions within the classroom environment. These perceptions have influenced their attitudes and beliefs about their ability to teach effectively (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). When teachers believe they have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to address the needs of children in their classrooms, they seem more likely to commit to instructional activities that help students learn. A teacher's self-efficacy leads to their ability to meet the needs of the students

Summary of Findings

The quality of the teacher is the most important school-based indicator for student achievement; therefore, it is vital that appropriate attention and effective training is provided to first-year teachers to ensure they are prepared for all aspects of teaching (Beavers, 2009; Hattie, 2008). First-year teachers who choose the alternative certification route often enter the classroom for the first time since being a student with no prior course work in the field of education. First-year alternative teachers are met with the challenge of meeting the requirements to earn a teaching certificate while simultaneously learning to teach while in a classroom setting teaching. Alternative certification programs lack the field experience opportunities that help prepare candidates for their own classroom experience. Without the opportunity to observe and practice leading classes, alternatively-certified teachers are not exposed to the diverse classroom demands until they are in the teaching role as a first-year teacher. Due to the lack of classroom

exposure, alternatively-certified first-year teachers may experience a lower sense of self-efficacy as a teacher as well as affectively student achievement and behavior and possibly higher attrition rates (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010). Teachers who have low self-efficacy are more likely to experience burnout when compared to teachers with high self-efficacy. According to Bandura, the ability to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning depends on the self-efficacy of teachers (Bandura, 1998). Education experts believe it takes approximately three to seven years for teachers to reach proficiency and maximize student achievement (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008; Callahan, 2016). However, many teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching. Alternatively-certified teachers are leaving at higher rates over the first five years than teachers who have been traditionally prepared (Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, the “certificate” is not what is preparing teachers to remain in the field. The challenges associated with increased accountability and public scrutiny have impacted the role of the teacher (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Because there is a gap in the literature regarding the quality, participant perceptions and effectiveness of certain aspects of alternative certification programs, there is a need for additional research to identify and better understand motives, purpose, perceived program weaknesses, and/or barriers to success so that all stakeholders involved can create solutions to overcome those barriers (Dawson, 2007; Koehler et al., 2013).

Furthermore, first-year alternatively-certified teachers participate in the same district induction program as traditionally-certified teachers. Although the alternatively-certified teacher may have the content knowledge, they may not have the necessary pedagogical knowledge due to being simultaneously in the certification program while experiencing their own classroom for the first time (Allen, 2009; Dawson, 2007).

Additionally, according to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), teachers who were provided multiple supports and engaged in comprehensive mentoring programs were more likely to remain in the teaching field. According to research, it takes teachers approximately three to seven years to become highly effective in the classroom (Dillon, 2009). By having an effective induction program, schools could address the individual needs and challenges of first-year teachers as well as provide strategies to better support teachers during their most critical developing years. However, less than 1% of first-year teachers are placed in schools with fully developed, comprehensive induction programs (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

The researcher incorporated two theoretical frameworks, Mezirow's transformative learning theory and Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, to examine teacher perceptions and inform and guide the study.

Adult Learning Theory: Transformative Learning

According to Illeris, transformative learning focuses on the cognitive process of meaning making. Mezirow (1978) is considered to be the main architect of this theory when he studied the experiences of women returning to college (2018). According to Mezirow, the shift, or catalyst, causes a 'consciousness raising' and occurs through a series of steps. The necessary steps are as follows: (1) disorienting dilemma, (2) self-examination, (3) sense of alienation, (4) relating discontent to others, (5) explaining options of new behavior, (6) building confidence in new ways, (7) planning a course of action, (8) knowledge to implement plans, (9) experimenting with new roles, and (10) reintegration (Cranton, 2016).

Transformative learning is more than just adding information to an adult's brain; rather it is learning to make sense of the experience and as a result, could cause a change

in belief, attitude or perspective. According to Mezirow, transformative learning “enables [oneself] to [recognize] and reassess the structure of assumptions and expectations which frame [one’s] thinking, feeling and acting.” (Illeris, 2018). The first-year of teaching is filled with teaching challenges, defining preparation and organizational skills, balancing professional life with personal life, extracurricular activities, mentoring and professional learning which causes the first-year teacher to grow through these transformational experiences. One must not only practice the art of teaching to improve, it is important to receive quality feedback through the process and have time to reflect on the various experiences in order to grow. It takes time to progress through the transformative learning process. Critical reflection and critical self-reflection are central to Mezirow’s transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2016). A first-year teacher must utilize transformative learning theory in order to create his or her own classroom realities based on his or her experiences prior to and during their first-year of teaching (Brigham, 2011; Raue, Gray, & O’Rear, 2015). A first-year teacher’s initial perceptions of classroom management and instructional strategies are often met with shock, isolation and feelings of failure within the first semester of teaching which is why supports need to be in place to help frame the first-year teacher’s experiences (Kroth & Cranton 2014). Mezirow (1991) believed that every individual has their own view of the world based on theory upbringing, life experience, culture, or education.

According to Mezirow (1997, 1998), as adults learn new information, they see where it fits within their existing beliefs; however, when the new information does not readily fit within their beliefs, this causes a disruption and they begin to question their beliefs and values to determine what is not aligned (King, 2009). Mezirow’s transformative learning theory has themes focusing on adult education and the learning

process, and is therefore appropriate as a foundation for considering first-year teachers' perceptions through their learning journey.

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

According to Bandura (1994), a person's belief in his or her own abilities provides more successful outcomes in situations. The more the person believes in his or her abilities, the greater the connection is between the person's ability and the outcome of the situation. Bandura noted that an individual's belief of his or her own abilities and capabilities is his or her self-efficacy. Furthermore, a person's self-efficacy beliefs are responsible for influencing behaviors such as motivation, perseverance, resiliency and vulnerability. Self-efficacy can be attributed to a person's success and failures. People will attempt tasks they feel they are capable of completing but will not undergo tasks that they feel they have no chance of success. People with high perceived efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to them (Bandura, 1997). On the contrary, those who doubt their ability to accomplish difficult tasks view these tasks as threats (Bandura, 1977). A first-year teacher's sense of self-efficacy may influence his or her classroom interactions. Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy produce learning environments that promote "students' intrinsic interests and academic self-directedness" (Bandura, 1993, p. 140). The opposite also exists - teachers with low self-efficacy are critical, quick to give up, and spend less time on academic accomplishments (Bandura, 1993). According to Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), a teacher's judgment about his or her abilities to affect student achievement can have significant implications for the students. Efficacy affects the effort teachers exert in their goalsetting, planning and preparation as well as their aspirations (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). According to Hughes (2012), self-efficacy may be defined as the level of effectiveness a teacher perceives in him or herself with students. Self-efficacy

may be developed through experiences, and it can dictate the actions individuals take when faced with a difficult task (Bandura, 1994). When a teacher has a high level of self-efficacy, the teacher is successful in student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management as well as creating a positive learning environment (Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010). Although there are many reasons why someone chooses to enter the teaching profession, the decision to remain in the teaching profession depends on the person's perception of effectiveness with his or her students (Hughes, 2012).

Bandura's (1993) theory on self-efficacy, coupled with transformative learning theory, provides the framework guiding this study. Self-efficacy encompasses personal, behavior, and environmental influences. These influences are important factors when considering teacher perceptions. Based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, people act on the belief of what they can do; therefore, their perceptions of themselves are critical. These perceptions and levels of efficacy may influence the teacher's ability to be persistent and effective in stressful or challenging environments especially during their first-year. The focus on first-year teachers' experiences through transformative learning theory served as the framework for the qualitative reflections through the use of questionnaires and interviews to investigate first-year teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach.

Conclusion

There has been much debate whether one entering the profession through alternative certification is as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional certification programs (Cuddapah & Burtin, 2012; Hanna & Gimbert, 2011; Hung & Smith, 2012; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). The current research is not conclusive whether one certification program better prepares first-year teachers than others. However, it may be hypothesized that the first-year teachers need different

mentorship programs and professional development based on the teaching certification programs the candidates completed. This study examined if the needs of first-year teachers who completed an alternatively-certified program are different from the needs of first-year teachers who completed a traditionally-certified program.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively-certified teachers and to determine if there was a difference in levels of self-efficacy after the first-year of teaching in those teachers who completed a traditional certification program or an alternative certification program. The researcher explored if teachers' perceptions of their needs are different based on the program the teachers completed. The researcher compared the teacher self-efficacy scores of traditionally and alternatively-certified teachers while using the demographics from the survey to analyze additional variables such as age and description of careers or jobs held prior to entering the teacher preparation program and past work experience with children. All first-year teachers were given the Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy survey in the spring and at the end of the survey they were solicited to volunteer to be interviewed. The qualitative data was taken from a purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was used to select teacher participants who met the following criteria: (a) completed the survey; (b) first-year teacher; (c) a mix of alternative certification and traditional certification programs; (d) inclusion of participants from ages 22-60; (e) teach grade levels K-12. Then the researcher used an inductive coding process.

This study used a mixed methods design where the qualitative data was collected independently of the quantitative data. The quantitative data was collected using a survey on teacher efficacy in the spring. The participants completed the survey towards the end of their first-year of teaching. At the end of their first-year of teaching the participants were presented with the 12-item Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES), a Likert-type scale created by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001).

Participants were solicited to be interviewed; those who volunteered were interviewed in order to gain a better understanding of first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy. This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, operationalization of theoretical constructs, research purpose, research questions, research design, population and sample selection, instrumentation employed, data collection procedures, data analysis, validity, privacy and ethical considerations, and limitations to the study

Overview of the Research Problem

Recent changes in education put an even greater focus on the importance of well-trained teachers (Irwin et al., 2021; MET Project, 2012; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). How to best meet the needs of first-year teachers or which preparation program best prepares teachers has yet to be identified; therefore, there is still no consistency in the course work, supervision, and training periods for the different teacher preparation programs (Hung & Smith, 2012; Viadero, 2010; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Research shows that alternatively-certified teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years at a higher rate than teachers who have been traditionally prepared (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Curtis, 2012; Feldhaus et. al., 2013; Koehler et al., 2013; Sokal et al., 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). One study found that alternatively-certified teachers' attrition rate is eight percent higher than traditionally-certified teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016). Additionally, research shows that a teacher's self-efficacy influences teacher's effectiveness (Allen, 2009; Ludlow, 2010; Tschannen- Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teacher self-efficacy and retention are also found to be closely correlated according to the research (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Pfitzner-Eden, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). A possible solution to the teacher attrition problem is to prepare teachers in a way that increases their self-efficacy through teacher preparation programs (Addison, 2010). In a meta-analysis of 33 studies including 16,122 pre-service

teachers and current teachers, findings indicated that self-efficacy beliefs are positively correlated to the teachers' commitment to the profession (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). Specifically, teacher self-efficacy in the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement may influence a teacher's decision to remain in education (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

This study consisted of four constructs: the overall sense of self-efficacy and the subscales a) student engagement, b) instructional strategies and c) classroom management (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teacher certification is the program the first-year teacher completed in order to gain certification (alternative certification or traditional certification). Efficacy in student engagement is defined as the extent to which teachers believe that they can engage students in learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Efficacy in instructional strategies is defined as the extent to which teachers believe they can employ sound instructional practices to bring about student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Efficacy in classroom management is defined as the extent teachers believe they can employ effective classroom management strategies in order to create opportunities for learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). For this study, teacher self-efficacy is defined as a "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated." (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p.783). All four constructs are measured using the short form of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2001) Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine if first-year teachers who completed an alternatively-certified program have different perceptions of their needs and sense of self-efficacy from first-year teachers who completed a traditionally-certified program. This study explored the following questions

Quantitative

1. Is there a difference in overall self-efficacy of teachers who complete traditional certification compared to those who complete alternative certification?
2. How do the levels of self-efficacy for the subscales of Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management and Student Engagement of first-year teachers who complete traditional certification compare to those who complete alternative certification?
3. Is there a difference between the first-year teacher's age/life experiences and sense of self-efficacy?
4. Is there a difference in the first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy based on career order?

Qualitative

5. What are the perceived needs and challenges of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification and those who completed alternative certification?

Using mixed methods research, this study provides necessary information to determine whether one entering the profession through alternative certification feels as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs. The

information obtained through this study can be utilized to improve the professional development provided to first-year teachers based on their needs.

Research Design

For purposes of this study, a mixed methods design was used to capture the first-year teachers' level of self-efficacy and it involved collecting quantitative data independently of the qualitative data collection. The qualitative phase was conducted to help explain the teachers' perceptions of their needs. Qualitative data consists of interviews collected to gain a better understanding of teachers' self-efficacy perception. This study was designed to utilize both quantitative and qualitative data to examine what alternatively-certified first-year teachers' perceptions of needs are in comparison to what traditionally prepared first-year teachers' perceptions of needs are (Creswell, 2013).

Population and Sample

For this study, the population was first-year teachers from Sandy Shores Independent School District (pseudonym). Sandy Shores Independent School District is located in the Southwest region of the United States. Sandy Shores Independent School District serves over 41,000 students. The student population is approximately 48.1% white, 29.4% Hispanic/Latino, 9.8% Asian, 8.1% Black or African American, 0.2% American Indian, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. The school district is comprised of five comprehensive high schools, two alternative high schools, ten middle schools and twenty-seven elementary schools. The student body at each comprehensive high school is approximately 2,500 students. The student body at each middle school is approximately 900 students and the student body at each elementary school averages 750 students. There are approximately 150 teachers on each comprehensive high school campus, 80 teachers on each middle school level campus, and an average of 30 teachers on each elementary campus (tea.texas.gov). First-year teachers are identified as all those

who are newly employed with the district and do not have any prior teaching experience. After agreeing to participate in the survey, the first survey question responses ensured that only first-year teachers were included in this study. Table 1 displays the school district's demographics regarding student population.

Table 1

Sandy Shores Independent School District Demographics

Student population	Number	Percent (%)
White	19,749	48.1
Hispanic/Latino	12,071	29.4
Asian	4,009	9.8
Black/African American	3,329	8.1
American Indian	96	0.2
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	57	0.1

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling was used to select teacher participants. The purposeful selection criteria include teachers in Sandy Shores ISD who are first-year teachers. The participants are highly qualified and certified in the areas they teach according to Texas Education Agency requirements. Additionally, teacher participants met the following criteria: (a) completed the survey; (b) first-year teacher; (c) a mix of alternative certification and traditional certification programs; (d) inclusion of participants from ages 22-60; and (e) teach grade levels K-12. The target number of first-year teachers to interview was 8 to 10; approximately 4-5 who participated in a traditional certification program and 4-5 who participated in an alternative certification program.

Instrumentation

The participants were first-year teachers who had taught for one school year when surveyed; therefore, the 12-item instrument *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSES) was used to measure the first-year teacher's perception of his or her ability to be effective in a classroom. The TSES was created in 2001 by Tschannen- Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). There are two forms of the scale, the short form (12-item scale) and the long form (24-item scale).

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy indicated that the short form is sufficient in length and is as valid and accurate a measure of self-efficacy as the long form based on reliability and validity data from three separate studies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The efficacy scale was tested for both reliability and validity by multiple research studies which included item development, item selection and factor analysis (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The 12-item instrument was used in this study and includes three subscales that were developed through factor analysis. The three subscales in the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* are a) efficacy in student engagement, b) efficacy in instructional strategies, and c) efficacy in classroom management. Teachers were asked to rate themselves on a 9-point Likert scale (1= *nothing*, 3 = *very little*, 5 = *some influence*, 7 = *quite a bit*, 9 = *a great deal*). For the short form, the higher the composite score the higher the teacher self-efficacy. The short form Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were 0.90 for overall, 0.81 for student engagement, 0.86 for instructional strategies, and 0.86 for classroom management. The TSES has been examined in three separate studies. The construct validity was examined by assessing the correlation of TSES to other existing measures of teacher efficacy. The TSES is found to be reliable and valid.

Table 2

<i>Internal Reliability</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Coefficient α</i>
TSES overall	7.1	.98	.90
Engagement	7.2	1.2	.81
Instruction	7.3	1.2	.86
Management	6.7	1.2	.86

*(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to collecting data, the researcher gained approval from the Committee for Protection of Human Services (CPHS) for the University of Houston-Clear Lake and the Institutional Review Board from the participating school district.

Quantitative

The researcher was provided a list of first-year teachers and method of certification by the district's Human Resource's office. The researcher emailed the first-year teachers stating the purpose of the study, that participation is voluntary, the timeframe for taking the survey (30 minutes) and provided assurances that identities would be kept confidential. The researcher administered the survey using Qualtrics, a survey software program, and inputted data directly into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The survey contained a cover letter and a consent to participate in the study for all participants. Then, the researcher used purposeful sampling to select first-year teachers in Sandy Shores Independent School District. The researcher obtained informed consent from the participants. The participants were made aware of the need for the study and assured the survey data would be analyzed in a way

that supports the study only and would not be reported in a manner that would put them at risk of being identified.

Qualitative

The researcher conducted a 45-minute semi-structured interview with first-year teachers. The interview questions were open-ended to ensure that the participants had an opportunity to express their experiences in their own words. The researcher conducted face to face or virtual interviews in the location of the first-year teacher's choosing such as their classroom or neutral office area and noted participant's body language and tone. The interview questions consisted of: *What kind of support do you find most helpful? How did the beginning teacher supports affect your perception of teaching as a career? How did those supports affect your sense of efficacy as a teacher? Tell me about your preparation in becoming a teacher. What other significant events, people, experiences contributed to your desire to be a teacher? How did your degree (content) prepare you for the classroom? What elements of preparation make you feel most confident in your content area? Describe yourself as a teacher in the classroom. Describe how you know when students understand what you are wanting them to know.*

The interviews were video recorded or audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The researcher provided an opportunity for member checking to increase the validity of the findings. The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were used to identify the first-year teachers' perceptions of their teaching experiences and examine the needs of first-year teachers.

Interview Procedure

Using the interview protocol, the researcher explored the similarities and differences within the stories of the ten first-year teachers from the Sandy Shore School District. This study was intended to investigate the needs and perceptions of first-year teachers.

Creswell (2013) stated that interviewing allows participants to voice their experiences unconstrained. Patton (2015) specified that the purpose of interviewing is to find out those items that researchers cannot directly observe such as feelings, thoughts, perceptions, intentions and behaviors. The interview data were collected many ways since the COVID pandemic created issues. Two interviews were conducted face-to-face in a conversational manner and recorded, two interviews were conducted virtually through a meeting channel and recorded, and six interviews were collected via email correspondence and follow up phone calls and emails. The interview questions were open-ended, allowing the participant to share their individual experiences. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the qualitative data took longer than expected to gather. Teachers were interviewed their second year of teaching with questions phrased for teachers to focus on their first-year of teaching experience. The researcher added a question asking about how the teacher's experience changed before and during the COVID-19 pandemic to gain more insight into their successes, needs and challenges as well as to provide insight into how campuses and school districts might better support first-year teachers.

The interviews were approximately forty-five minutes each. After transcribing the interview sessions, the field notes were written and the researcher began highlighting and grouping into possible themes.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative

In the quantitative phase of the study, Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy data was collected using a Qualtrics survey on teacher efficacy from first-year teachers at Sandy Shores Independent School District to test Bandura's self- efficacy theory. The instrument was administered in the form of an electronic survey. The quantitative data was inputted into SPSS from the Qualtrics Survey software program.

To address research question one, independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference between alternatively-certified first-year teachers and traditionally-certified first-year teachers in their levels of self-efficacy. Cohen's *d* was calculated to assess effect size (Cohen, 1988). Participant demographic data was calculated by frequencies and percentages.

To address research question two, independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference in the three types of self-efficacy measured by the TSES between the alternative teaching preparation programs and the traditional preparation programs.

To address research question three, one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference between age/life experiences and self-efficacy of first-year teachers.

To address research question four, independent t-test was conducted to see if teaching as a second career predicted self-efficacy.

Qualitative

To address research question five, the researcher analyzed the data to identify the first-year teachers' perceptions and examine what alternatively-certified teachers needs and challenges are compared to the perceived needs and challenges of traditionally-certified first-year teachers. After each interview was conducted, the researcher applied inductive thematic coding to the interviews (Lichtman, 2013). The researcher manually coded and reviewed the transcripts for emerging themes. The researcher sorted the interview ideas based on common ideas and looked for themes to emerge and grouped interesting ideas or statements for further review. After transcribing the interview sessions, the field notes were written and the researcher began highlighting and grouping into possible themes. After reading each transcript, the researcher noted areas to review

with the participant to illicit further information and possibly ask clarifying questions in the future.

By utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to have a better understanding of first-year teachers' self-efficacy needs. The researcher transcribed the interview sessions and conducted member checking by sending the preliminary results back to the interviewees for confirmation that it fairly represented the opinions expressed during the interviews. Throughout the research process, the researcher kept a journal recording the impressions and thoughts about the process. The researcher examined the journal as a form of data to consider bias in the data collection process.

Researcher Identity

As a classroom teacher, I came to appreciate the enormous impact that encouraging my students to set high expectations for their own learning had on them as learners. In the eight years I taught, my principals encouraged me to pursue my master's in educational leadership. After five years as a 6-8 grade campus administrator and twelve total years in one district, I was called to be a high school administrator in a neighboring district. Because of my experiences and mentors during my first twelve years, I wanted to give back to the community where I live. After eight months as one of the high school assistant principals, I was appointed and accepted the challenge of serving as the high school principal. I served as principal for three years. Working with teachers to analyze and correct our instructional programs helped me develop a sharper focus on school improvement and a tougher skin for situations that required me to confront issues where change was an unwelcome reality. Through it all, learning to listen effectively has been an outcome that I treasure most.

Through different career opportunities, I worked alongside other educators to increase the focus on learning and rigor through innovative ideas and personalizing the

learning experience for students and teachers. I facilitated campus and district professional development, led a team of educators through Learning Forward's Learning School Alliance to improve student performance, and increased the passing rates for at-risk students. I reached out to the neighboring districts that had only one high school and started building professional development and collaboration with high schools in other districts to better support our teachers and students. I have written about "Building Teacher Capacity" for Learning School Alliance's blog. Learning Forward featured an interview with me about how we built teacher capacity. I have presented district professional development on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), data analysis, and collaborative conversations and have facilitated campus book studies. Having the experience as a high school principal allowed me to seamlessly transition into a leader to help facilitate the PK-12 Community Collaboration, professional development that is personalized to the area in which the teacher wants to grow and building the leadership opportunities for students and teachers, and then return to lead a campus where I began my administrative career. I have twenty-four years of professional education experience and have been a campus administrator for eighteen years at the secondary campus level. I am interested in the areas of school-community relations, assisting at-risk students- specifically the ESL population and their performance in high school and achievement on college ready tests, building teachers' efficacy and strengths both in and out of the classroom, and educational leadership as it pertains to professional ethics and program evaluation.

Having the opportunity to work in two different school districts and work directly with new teachers, I have seen the need to provide a better support system for them their first-year. I believe the first-year teachers are doing the best that they know how but often get overwhelmed in the first-year where they question whether or not they chose the right

profession. Because of my work with first-year teachers, I want to find a way to help them grow professionally. However, first, I need to find out what their needs are by determining what foundation their program has provided and where the gaps are that need to be filled. Because it appears that the teachers who completed an alternative certification program struggle more than those who completed a traditional certification program, this may cause bias in my findings. My assumptions are that those who completed an alternative certification program may struggle more than those who completed traditional certification because that appears to be what my experience with first-year teachers has been. I also think that it may have more to do with the “person” than the actual “program”.

Privacy and Ethical Considerations

Prior to collecting data, the researcher gained approval from the Committee for Protection of Human Services (CPHS) for the University of Houston Clear Lake and the Institutional Review Board from the participating school district to ensure the participants were informed about the study procedures and that there are no ethical concerns that the researcher may have overlooked. First-year teachers received an email stating the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary and assurance that identities would be kept confidential. The email contained a cover letter outlining informed consent to participate. The survey contained a consent to participate in the study, an overview of the project, the efficacy test instrument and a questionnaire to gather demographic and background information.

The researcher took precautionary measures with the qualitative data as well. Prior to the interviews, the participants received an informed consent letter in order to participate in the interview process (Appendix A). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Participants were able to review and amend as necessary. Participants were

given pseudonyms to protect their identities. All data will be kept confidential and stored under password protection on a laptop and external drive for five years before it is destroyed.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed the purpose and research questions as well as described the research design utilized in the study. The purpose of the study was to provide necessary information to examine whether one entering the profession through alternative certification feels as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs. The quantitative data were collected using an online survey, while the qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The researcher collected information about the first-year teachers' educational experiences, formal induction programs, mentor programs and classroom experiences before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 4 will report the findings of the data analysis and will align them with each of the research questions.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived needs of first-year teachers who completed an alternative program and the perceived needs of first-year teachers who completed a traditional program. The study examined if there are different needs based on the program the teachers completed. This chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study as well as the demographics of the participants, instrument reliability, and a summary of the findings.

Participants' Demographics

During the spring semester of 2020, the researcher sent an email to new teachers soliciting their assistance in the research by completing the survey and volunteering to be interviewed. Demographic information was collected to determine if the alternatively-certified teachers and the traditionally-certified teachers were similar to each other in this study.

Sixty first-year teachers responded but nine were discarded due to having incomplete answers, which left fifty-one qualified participants. Demographic data on the participants can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

	N	Percent
Program		
Alternative Certification	27	52.9
Traditional College Prep Program	24	47.1
Total	51	100.0
Participant Age Groupings		
22-26	27	52.9
27-33	18	35.3
34-44	4	7.8
≥ 45	2	3.9
Total	51	100.0
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	37	72.6
Hispanic/Latino	10	19.6
Other	4	7.9
Total	51	100

Note. Beginning teacher is defined as a teacher who has less than one-year experience.

The sample size was disproportionately white. Participants who completed alternative certification preparation programs accounted for 52.9% of the data while

participants who completed traditional college preparation programs accounted for 47.1% of the data.

Quantitative Results

Research Question One

Research question one, *Is there a difference in overall self-efficacy of teachers who complete traditional certification compared to those who complete alternative certification*, was answered by conducting an independent samples t-test to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference in the overall levels of influence of the three types of self-efficacy measured by the TSES between the alternative teaching preparation programs and the traditional preparation programs.

Table 4

<i>Teacher Certification Programs and Overall Self-Efficacy of First-year Teachers</i>			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall Levels of Influence			
Alternative Cert	27	6.28	.585
Traditional Cert	24	6.09	.653

The findings suggest that there is no significant difference between overall self-efficacy for first-year teachers who complete alternative certification and traditional certification $t(49) = 1.13, p = .27$, Cohen's $d = .32$

Research Question Two

Research question two, *How do the levels of self-efficacy for the subscales of Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management and Student Engagement of first-year teachers who complete traditional certification compare to those who complete alternative certification*, was answered by conducting independent samples t-test to

determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference in the three types of self-efficacy measured by the TSES between the alternative teaching preparation programs and the traditional preparation programs. Table 5 provides descriptive information regarding the certification program type and their influence on self-efficacy.

Table 5

Teacher Certification Programs and Self-Efficacy Subscales of First-year Teachers

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Student Engagement			
Alternative Cert	27	6.27	.661
Traditional Cert	24	6.18	.813
Instructional Strategies			
Alternative Cert	27	6.13	.702
Traditional Cert	24	5.99	.895
Classroom Management			
Alternative Cert	27	6.42	.711
Traditional Cert	24	6.06	.605

None of the results show significant differences between the two groups on self-efficacy. The findings suggest that teacher preparation programs do not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in student engagement. Alternative certification programs ($M = 6.27$, $SD = .661$) and traditional certification programs ($M = 6.18$, $SD = .813$); $t(49) = .44$, $p = .66$, Cohen's $d = .12$. With a Cohen's d of .12, which is a small effect size. The findings suggest that teacher preparation programs do not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in instructional strategies.

Alternative certification programs ($M = 6.13$, $SD = .702$) and traditional certification programs ($M = 5.99$, $SD = .895$); $t(49) = .63$, $p = .55$, $d = .18$. With a Cohen's d of .18, which is a small effect size. The findings suggest that teacher preparation programs do not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in classroom management. Alternative certification programs ($M = 6.42$, $SD = .711$) and traditional certification programs ($M = 6.06$, $SD = .605$); $t(49) = 1.90$, $p = .06$, Cohen's $d = .53$. With a Cohen's d of .53, which is a small effect size. There are no significant differences for all subscales but descriptively the averages for each subscale were higher for alternatively-certified first-year teachers.

Research Question Three

Research question three, *Is there a difference between the first-year teachers' age/(life experiences) and sense of self-efficacy*, was investigated by using one-way ANOVA because the independent variable was treated as categorical.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Relationship Between First-year Teacher's Age/Life Experiences and SE

Age Range	n	M	SD
22-26	27	6.10	.563
27-33	18	6.20	.729
34-44	4	6.42	.531
45+	2	6.63	.530

Because the independent variable was treated as categorical, the mean differences in overall self-efficacy by age was investigated using one-way ANOVA. There were no significant differences for all groups $F(3, 47) = 0.70, p = .56, \eta^2 = .04$; however, it is noted that as the respondents' age increased, so did their overall self-efficacy.

Research Question Four

Research question four, *Is there a difference in first-year's teacher sense of self-efficacy based on career order*, was answered by conducting independent samples t-test to determine if there was a statistically significant mean difference in the three types of self-efficacy measured by the TSES.

Table 7

<i>Career Order and Self-efficacy</i>			
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall Influence			
First Career	35	6.10	.661
Second Career	16	6.35	.494
Student Engagement			
First Career	35	6.15	.803
Second Career	16	6.39	.524
Instructional Strategies			
First Career	35	6.00	.874
Second Career	16	6.20	.579
Classroom Management			
First Career	35	6.16	.692
Second Career	16	6.45	.627

None of the results show significant differences between the two groups on self-efficacy. The findings suggest that career choice order, whether first career or subsequent career choice, do not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy overall or in any subscale category. There is no significant difference between overall self-efficacy for first career and second career first-year teachers $t(49) = -1.33, p = .19$, Cohen's $d = .40$, which is a small to medium effect size. The findings suggest that career choice order does not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in student engagement, $t(49) = -1.11, p = .28$, Cohen's $d = -.33$, which is a small effect size. The findings suggest that career choice order does not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in instructional strategies, $t(49) = -.85, p = .40$, Cohen's $d = -.25$, which is a small effect size. The findings suggest that career choice order does not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in classroom management $t(49) = 1.46, p = .15$, Cohen's $d = -.44$, which is a small effect size.

Findings suggest there were no significant differences for first career choice or second career choice first-year teachers. There were no differences by subscale nor overall, however, for those whose teaching is a second career, their self-efficacy was descriptively higher on all measures.

Qualitative Results

Research Question Five

Research question five, *What are the perceived needs and challenges of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification and those who completed alternative certification*, was answered by interviewing first-year teachers.

The participants for this study were selected through purposeful sampling. Interviews took place between January and May 2021. Data analysis took place February through May 2021. The participants consisted of five elementary first-year teachers, two

intermediate first-year teachers, and three high school first-year teachers totaling ten teachers willing to be interviewed. In the survey, fourteen indicated willingness to be interviewed. However, when scheduling interviews eleven confirmed interviews and one of the eleven shared he had been teaching in the private sector for eleven years so was not technically a first-year teacher and did not qualify for the purposes of this study; therefore, his answers were removed from the data.

Of the ten teachers from a suburban district, six were first-year teachers from alternative certification programs and four were first-year teachers from traditional certification programs. All first-year teachers interviewed taught a core academic area, special education or a required academic class for graduation. The participants include five elementary-level and five secondary-level first-year teachers. The participants interviewed were eight females (80%) and two males (20%). Eight participants were in their 20s, two participants were in their 30s; six were Caucasian (60%) and four were Hispanic (40%). The research took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic and state social distancing mandates, some of the interviews occurred virtually through recorded video calls and email.

During the qualitative analysis, five major themes emerged from the interviews with alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified first-year teachers: Sense of Calling, Classroom Management, Lesson Preparation and Planning, Support Systems and Self-Efficacy entering and through the first-year. Additionally, because the interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher included the participants' COVID-19 Teaching Experiences.

Personal Experience/Sense of Calling

The first theme is based on participants' personal experiences that drew them to become teachers. All the participants discussed the impact that their own educational

experiences had on their choice to pursue education and some spoke to the disconnect of what they perceived was going to happen versus the reality of the first-year of teaching.

The following responses illustrate this theme. One participant shared:

The alternative certification training was a small part of my experience. Prior to teaching, I tutored students, was a substitute teacher and a paraprofessional/aide for Special Education. While I was in school, I was a Pre-AP kid. It's definitely different teaching Special Education but I think I connect with them. I was a studious kid but I asked a lot of questions and I did like to talk a lot. Actually, I think I still ask a lot of questions. That's how I learn and make sure I am doing what I'm supposed to.

One participant stated many experiences brought her to teaching, but the most impactful was being a mother. She states, "I absolutely love working with children and I strive to give my students the same love and care that I give to my own children."

Another participant shared how, through her experiences, she realized that teaching was a calling for her:

In my masters, I got to teach and it was my favorite part. I went out going to work professionally. I lived in several different states...getting married to my husband brought me back to Texas. I loved running conferences and being around people all day, [this is when] I learned I was missing the people component so at that point my boss explained that I needed to pursue my passion. Every female in my family has been a teacher at some point...it was a calling for me.

Another participant remembers wanting to teach as early as 1st grade and believes teaching is "what I was made for." Three participants shared how their struggles brought them to teaching so they could help others who may experience similar struggles, shape their community and help children achieve success and love school.

Many of the participants felt that the opportunities they had working with students in classrooms prior to their first-year helped prepare them. Opportunities for experience were substitute teaching, student teaching, supporting students as an educational paraprofessional (aide), and tutoring. The participants shared that their prior experiences helped shape them into becoming a teacher and understanding what teaching involves.

The participants shared several examples of significant events in their learning experiences to becoming a teacher. The participants cited personal experiences such as growing up and learning with cultural struggles, academic struggles, and having family members who have had struggles with school whether academically or socially. Sample responses provided by participants in the study are highlighted below to show how the participants' personal experiences guided them into becoming a teacher:

One participant shared how she became a teacher because she wanted to help shape the future of [her] community. She shared how as a student, she struggled with reading, so that led her to want to help young readers achieve success and love school. Another participant discussed her struggles in school and how it shaped her.

I am bilingual and it was hard finding a place in school. Learning was important to my parents and I wanted to learn and make them proud. Now, I believe I am able to help other children who may have similar struggles as me and hopefully make their way a little easier for them.

Lastly, one participant shared how having a family member with special needs helped mold her into wanting to teach, “[My] brother has special needs and working with him at home and then learning the Special Ed side as a teacher and as a sister has really helped.”

Regardless of certification program, both alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified participants spoke to becoming a teacher due to the personal struggles they faced while growing up.

Classroom Management

All of the participants interviewed discussed their struggles with classroom management during their first-year of teaching. Participants shared similar struggles regardless of which preparation program completed. Some common areas where the participants struggled were routines and procedures, how to utilize the whole class period effectively, how to know if students understand what is being taught and managing student behavior. One participant described the challenges she faced in the first months of teaching, “The first few months were difficult just to figure out how to run my own classroom and, honestly, I did not feel confident at all in my ability to teach or run my own classroom.” A few participants shared how they had begun to establish control of the classroom prior to COVID-19 and then had to readjust everything to be able to teach during COVID which was very stressful. One traditionally-certified teacher illustrated the realization about the challenges of classroom management with high school students and his mastery of the situation:

There were times where I felt like I was over my head trying to manage twenty-nine to thirty-three students in a class but what truly helped me was when I decided to stop comparing myself and trying to live up to the teachers on my team and content area who have been teaching for years. I also tried to limit asking questions and just figure it out on my own but when I did reach out and ask, I would always get help

Alternatively-certified teachers had similar responses. One of the alternatively-certified teachers shared how even though she missed seeing the students when the

schools went to distance learning due to COVID-19, it was a relief because student behavior was no longer an issue. Another alternatively-certified participant shared that through her struggle and reflection, she learned how to work with an instructional coach to gain better classroom management, “I was struggling with differentiation and my class set up and was utilizing [my instructional coaches’] input to test alternative classroom management techniques.”

Most of the participants shared struggles of being able to reach each learner. However, one participant describes it best when he discusses being in survival mode:

The first few months were hard. It's kind of like survival. Coming from a private tutoring background, I was used to working with students 1 on 1. But you can't really do that in a classroom environment. You have to address all the students at once, and that's kind of difficult to do, so you have to tailor your lesson, or how you explain the lesson, to kids that are really high up here and they get it really fast, and kids that are really low. So you have to kind of like hit a middle point, and that's sometimes difficult to do

Regardless of the certification route, all first-year teachers shared similarities in their struggles with student behaviors, classroom management and reaching all learners in the classroom.

Lesson Preparation and Planning/Time Management

Another theme that emerged was the amount of time everything took to be able to teach. This included the overall preparation and planning such as parent contacts, grading, creating lessons and accommodations that are required. All of the first-year teachers shared struggles with lesson preparation and planning as well as time management. Throughout the interviews, many shared stories of feeling overwhelmed as

they learned their new role. However, one alternatively-certified teacher describes it best when he discusses his expectation versus the reality:

I thought there would be time to work in your room and then there were a ton of meetings...it was my first introduction to all the behind the scene stuff...I would get here at 6 and I would leave at 6...consistently working between 70-75 hours per week.... When I did my observations and “teaching”, I had not been exposed to the administrative side such as accommodations, paperwork, etc....it was a lot more of behind the scenes/logistical stuff than I was not prepared for...I figured it out...but there were a lot of nuances and systems and acronyms to learn.

Another alternatively-certified teacher described learning the beginning of the year processes as “drinking from a firehose” and that she had never appreciated or knew how much actually happened behind the scene of teaching.

Similarly, one of the traditionally-certified teachers shared how her expectation and reality clashed in the beginning.

Well, at the beginning I have like this pretty picture that everything was perfect and beautiful and flowers, just everything, but then it's like reality hits whenever you're on your own. And it's like, okay, now you have to do it. And you're like, okay, what am I doing? So at the beginning I feel like it's so, so hard. I remember staying like at the school to like seven or eight at night for like a week straight is trying to understand, trying to get what it's like. I have like this, I had to be perfect that first-year. I felt like there had to be some type of perfection. But then as the year went by, I realized, I looked around me and I was like, wait, nobody is feeling like how I'm feeling. So why am I trying to like, kill myself, doing all these things? And then slowly I got into the flow of our schedule and just

everything and everything just started to fall into place, but then COVID happened.

Another traditionally-certified teacher shared how she was not expecting the paperwork that teaching required.

I had no idea how much paperwork. I feel like there's minimal time for teaching, and most of the time is spent on all the other stuff like parent contacts, grading, curriculum, and student behavior. There were so many different trainings I wasn't sure how I was going to be able to do everything

One of the traditionally-certified teachers shared his feelings of being overwhelmed with trying to learn so many new operating systems as well as the curriculum, behavior system, and student names, that he was unsure when he would have time to actually teach or even arrange his class for his students.

One participant describes the Texas Teachers' Preparation program as online courses with modules in pedagogy sections and classroom management; however, she felt it was more common sense rather than classroom applicable. She shared she had to read theory based on how children learn, then do exams and quizzes online about the material read. She felt what better prepared her was being a classroom paraprofessional and working in the classroom and with students prior to teaching.

Although there were some differences when asked how the certification program prepared the participants for how to prepare lessons and manage their time, the responses overwhelmingly stated they were prepared to teach but not all contributed their preparedness to the certification programs but rather to the different experiences they had gained. Additionally, all participants desired more student interaction and understanding of the paperwork requirements prior to beginning teaching.

Support System the First-year

Each of the participants interviewed, whether traditionally-certified or alternatively-certified, discussed having a strong support system in place the first-year and attributed some of their success to the supports they had. Though those who were alternatively-certified believed it would have been beneficial to have student-taught or at least had more field observation prior to teaching, each commented on the positive support that was in place their first semester.

One participant shared how she has the support of her content teaching team weekly planning meetings, the instructional coach and her administration and how the supports helped build her self-efficacy.

I was able to become a presenter in an area that I quickly learned and helped the others with the technology component. Because the atmosphere had been about sharing resources and learning together, it allowed me to step out as a first-year teacher and lead so I think the supports helped strengthen my ability.

Similar sentiments came from another alternatively-certified teacher when she shared the supportive role of one of her instructional coaches.

I relied heavily on the ELA coach because teaching reading was challenging to me. She assisted me with understanding how to push students to the next level and grade their work. She also helped model classroom management, read alouds, shared reading, and golden hour stations to ensure I was providing the best opportunity for growth with my students.

In the same light, traditionally-certified teachers shared how the supports they received helped them grow as an educator and better support their students, thus, building their own efficacy.

One of the participants shared how the grade level team and administration both offered important support. “The grade level team plans together and discusses curriculum and learning progressions. My administrator has been helpful when I need support on student behavior or how to handle certain situations with parents.” Another participant elaborated on her partnership with her administrator. She shared how her administrator helped guide her through and give her the support she needed:

I sat down every day, me and my [administrator] would talk about what we could do differently. How can we do this different? How can we do that different? I would try and try and try. Through the semester, I figured out what I needed to do but trying to change classroom management after you lost it the first week is so difficult.

Another first-year teacher discusses his support came from other teachers, an instructional coach and administration. His advice for first-year teachers:

I can’t imagine trying to have done my first-year alone. I was able to stay afloat because of other teachers who helped me. I think I am a better teacher because of my experiences with my team.

All ten participants reported being overwhelmed and sometimes on the verge of tears during the first few months of school and again, the last few months of school due to the pandemic. Each participant indicated that as the semester went on, they gained a better understanding of expectations and how to work with students, parents and paperwork due to the adult relationships and professional learning the campus and district provided. All participants indicated a sense of belonging and belief that they were positively impacting student learning; however, they also all communicated their belief that their ability to connect and teach students dramatically decreased when students did not return to campus due to the pandemic.

While the participants shared their spectrum of feelings due to teaching in a year with a pandemic in addition to all the 'normal' first-year feelings, they all pointed out the positive supports they received from administration, campus, teachers and instructional coaches. Additionally, all ten participants felt more confident in their abilities due to the supports received. Whether traditionally-certified or alternatively-certified, all participants agreed that having a strong support system was critical to their first-year of teaching.

Self-Efficacy

An increase in self-efficacy was identified by most participants and many contributed teaching prior and during a pandemic to the self-efficacy increase. Examples of higher self-efficacy included learning how to adjust classroom instruction, increased technology skills, and self-awareness of their abilities and strengths. One participant shared how having to experience her first-year teaching during the pandemic helped her grow and develop more than she would have normally the first-year:

I believe that teaching during COVID during my first-year has taught me so much more than I would have learned otherwise. I have not only learned how to teach in a brick and mortar classroom, but I have also learned to take that same concept and present it to an online audience.

One participant's interview revealed a sense of pride in how he supported his students during the sudden shift to remote learning while simultaneously coping with a level of uncertainty he had never experienced before.

While transition to distance learning after finally feeling as if I had found my "groove" in the classroom was challenging, I gained valuable skills that will enhance my teaching. I was able to set the tone for my classes as we shifted to online learning and I think it helped calm my students in the process.

One of the participants discussed how she was grateful for having been on a campus where she was able to develop a strong team feeling prior to COVID so that the transition was less stressful for her and her students.

Another positive I've taken from the current teaching situation is the versatility and adaptability I've had to employ. This situation has shown me that I can overcome extreme learning obstacles, with the help of my team and staff of [my] Intermediate, and still reach my students to give them the learning experience they deserve.

The qualitative results confirmed that participants did have a transformative experience during their first-year of teaching. Participants had different experiences that led them to teaching but through those experiences and the unique experiences they had as being first-year teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic helped shape the transformative learning process for them.

Several participants reported a desire to help others as they grew through their own first-year experiences and the transformative learning process. Some participants were able to find ways to grow professionally and build their self-efficacy. The following quote is representative of these views:

I was able to become a presenter in an area that I quickly learned and helped the others with the technology component. Because the atmosphere had been about sharing resources and learning together, it allowed me to step out as a first-year teacher and lead so I think the supports helped strengthen my ability.

Another participant shared how he is always looking for feedback (constructive or praise) and the coaches and administrative staff were willing to provide it...he shared "this allowed me to immediately change, improve, and implement new/different techniques with my class."

This chapter described the demographics of the participants, as well as the results found to not be statistically significant for each research question examined in this study. The quantitative data for this study were collected by using the responses to the questionnaires of fifty-one first-year teachers in Sandy Shore School District. The qualitative data were collected by using the responses to the interview questions as well as some of the responses to the questionnaires. A discussion of the results will follow in Chapter V.

Summary of Findings

The first research question examined the overall levels of efficacy of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification programs compared to those who completed alternative certification programs. After the quantitative data were analyzed, no significant differences were found between the two types of teachers (alternative vs. traditional) in their efficacy scores. Even though no significant differences were found, it is interesting that the first-year teachers who completed an alternative certification program had a higher mean efficacy score than the first-year teachers who completed traditional certification programs.

The second research question examined the levels of efficacy for each of the subscales reported by first-year teachers who completed traditional certification programs compared to those who completed alternative certification programs. After the data were analyzed, no significant differences were found between the alternative and traditional teachers in their subscale efficacy scores. Even though no significant differences were found, it is interesting that the first-year teachers who completed an alternative certification program had a higher mean efficacy score in all sub-factors than the first-year teachers who completed traditional certification programs.

The third research question examined the difference between the first-year teachers' age/life experiences and self-efficacy. After the data were analyzed, there were no significant differences; however, as the respondents' age increased, so did their overall self-efficacy.

The fourth research question examined the difference of first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy and age/career order. After the data were analyzed, there were no significant differences for first career choice or second career choice teachers. Additionally, there were no differences by subscale nor overall; however, it is interesting to note that for those whose teaching is a second career, their self-efficacy was descriptively higher on all measures.

The final research question focused on the sources of efficacy reported by the two types of teachers during semi-structured interviews. All the participants interviewed shared similar struggles and challenges and there did not appear to be a difference regardless of which certification the first-year teachers held. Eight of the ten participants expressed how at least one former teacher positively influenced them to become a teacher. Six of the ten participants accredited their journey to parents or family members guiding them. All participants shared a genuine love for teaching but realized they did not always know how to break the content into deliverable chunks to the students. The participants also shared feelings of being overwhelmed with the amount of planning, preparation and daily responsibilities of teaching. The Texas Teachers' lack of field experience was mentioned as well as a desire to have more time to observe and learn from master teachers. The support that was given by colleagues, supervisors, mentors and administrators was discussed by all participants as being beneficial and positive to their first-year experience.

The participants believed in their abilities and through the interviews, the researcher was able to identify common themes that were challenging for the first-year teachers: Classroom Management, Preparation and Planning/Time Management, Support Systems. Additionally, the researcher was also able to identify themes of Personal Experiences/Sense of Calling to teaching and Self-Efficacy. Emotional feelings related to the first-year of teaching were also shared in each of the interviews. The participants shared their vulnerability with the researcher as they expressed the headaches, tears and surviving the COVID-19 pandemic experience as well as the laughter and excitement of success.

Conclusion

The results of this study provide important information regarding first-year teachers' preparation programs, self-efficacy and their first-year teaching experience. The study suggests there is no significant difference in the self-efficacy of first-year teachers who are alternatively-certified and those who are traditionally-certified. The first-year teachers interviewed shared how teaching brings them personal satisfaction and how some have found their life's calling. However, first-year teachers also shared how they struggled with classroom management, lesson planning and time management to take care of all the various paperwork required.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived needs of first-year teachers who completed an alternative program and the perceived needs of first-year teachers who completed a traditional program. The study examined if there might be different needs based on the program the teachers completed.

The literature comparing alternatively-certified teachers to traditionally-certified teachers has reported mixed results. Alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified teachers have been compared on a variety of variables such as student achievement, classroom climate, exam scores, retention rates and teacher efficacy (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Campus administrators have been more apt to question the preparedness of alternatively-certified applicants over traditionally-certified teachers (Ganter, Jenkins, & Layton 2006; Ovando & Trube, 2000).

The present study attempted to identify the needs of first-year teachers who were alternative certified in comparison with the needs of first-year teachers who were traditionally-certified because in order to ensure the first-year teachers are able to meet the students' needs, the first-year teachers' needs must be met (Elliott, Isaacs, & Chugani, 2010; Newman, 2009). The present study adds to the findings of similar studies comparing alternatively-certified teachers to traditionally-certified teachers.

The quantitative data collected in this study were obtained via Qualtrics and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis techniques included descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAS). The qualitative data was taken from a purposeful sampling.

Research question one dealt with the overall comparison of the first-year teacher self-efficacy of alternatively-certified teachers and traditionally-certified teachers. When the data was compared on the two groups mean scores using the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale*, no statistically significant differences were found. The alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified first-year teachers were found to be similar on their perceived efficacy. This is similar to Ludlow (2010) and Tournaki et al. (2009) findings that teacher efficacy was related to other factors and not a teaching certification. However, this is different than what Darling-Hammond (2017) and Kee (2012) found during their studies of first-year traditionally-certified teachers and alternatively-certified teachers regarding their feelings of preparedness where the alternatively-certified teachers believed that they were somewhat less prepared than the traditionally-certified teachers.

Research question two dealt with the comparison of the subscales for first-year teacher self-efficacy of alternatively-certified teachers and traditionally-certified teachers. None of the results show significant differences between the two groups for any of the subscales. The findings suggest that teacher preparation programs do not have a significant effect on first-year teacher's self-efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies nor classroom management. There are no significant differences for all subscales but descriptively the averages for each subscale were higher for alternatively-certified first-year teachers. These findings also differ from what Darling-Hammond (2017) and Kee (2012) found during their studies where the traditionally-certified teachers believed that they were better prepared than the alternatively-certified teachers.

Research question three sought to determine if there was a difference between the first-year teachers' age/life experience and sense of self-efficacy by using one-way

ANOVA. There were no significant differences; however, it is noted that as the respondents' age increased, so did their overall self-efficacy. Mezirow's Adult Learning Theory is based on the belief that every individual has their own view of the world based on theory upbringing, life experience, culture, or education (Mezirow, 1991) which may be why there is an increase in overall self-efficacy as the respondents' age increased.

Research question four used independent samples t-tests to see if there were differences in self-efficacy by career order. Findings suggest there were no significant differences for first career choice or second career choice first-year teachers. There were no differences by subscale nor overall; however, for those whose teaching is a second career, their self-efficacy was descriptively higher on all measures.

The final research question dealt with the perceived needs and challenges of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification and those who completed alternative certification and was answered by interviewing first-year teachers. The results of this research indicate that there are more similarities than differences in the needs of first-year alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified teachers. Both groups reported overall positive reactions with their current support systems. Most teachers in both groups found that their teaching experiences were more difficult than their expectations. All participants reported similar experiences regarding the unexpected workload demands. For the first time in history, the educational system had to shift to different modes of online instruction. In some ways first-year teachers were on an equal playing field to veteran teachers because no one had experienced such a vast shift in the educational system.

Implications

The findings of this study provide support for alternative certification as being a viable solution to the teacher shortage. Findings also provide support that alternative certification programs do not significantly impact a first-year teacher's sense of self-efficacy. Regardless of the certification program, first-year teachers had similar self-efficacy. This study adds to the findings of similar studies comparing alternatively-certified teachers and traditionally-certified teachers.

Implications for Certification Programs

Findings from this study have several practical implications for educational stakeholders. Specifically, for the certification programs, it is important to include classroom management techniques and allow the candidates to practice the techniques during the program. In addition to classroom management, the certification program should provide instructional strategies and best practices for students to practice. This could be done by videoing mini-lessons, partnering with a district to provide small group tutoring as part of their classroom experience, or partnering with a local church or outreach organization where students could receive assistance and certification candidates could receive real-time experience and guidance. This would allow certification candidates to gain more experience prior to their first-year of teaching.

Implications for Campus and District Administrators

Hiring processes should include interview questions about classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement as well as an opportunity for the candidate to teach a lesson so the administrators know where the candidate might need support. This would help administrators as they are assigning mentors to first-year teachers because then the teacher will be matched to someone who is better suited to meet his or her needs as a first-year teacher.

First-year teachers, regardless of their certification program, need support all year. The support needs to be personalized to each teacher's needs. Administrators need to map out coaching cycles for all first-year teachers as part of the campus culture. First-year teachers need to be able to meet at least weekly with someone to ask the day-to-day questions, procedural questions as well as the instructional strategies and delivery of content questions. First-year teachers need to be able to observe other teachers during their first-year. It is important to help build the first-year teacher's efficacy and one way to do this is by taking the first-year teacher on learning walks to other teachers' classrooms and learning together through structured conversations. Campus administrators need to ensure this support is built into their campus time in order to make sure first-year teachers are supported. Literature confirmed that the more successes a teacher encounters, the higher the teacher's efficacy becomes. Thus, when a teacher has high self-efficacy, the higher the retention rate (Callahan, 2016).

Another area that campus administrators need to assist first-year teachers in is the art of parent communication. It is important to provide samples of how to communicate with parents during tough conversations as well as offering to be a part of the first few phone calls the first-year teacher makes to help build his or her confidence. This helps build the teachers self-efficacy and it builds positive relationships between staff and parents.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are some recommendations for future research. The study found no significant differences between the alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified first-year teachers. These findings add to the research that alternative certification prepares participants for the first-year in the classroom; the preparation might look different than the traditionally-certified route, but it may still be equitable for first-year teachers.

Due to the limited research regarding how COVID-19 pandemic affected first-year teachers, this study can be used to guide future research. One consideration of this research is that it was undertaken during the pandemic and at a time when participants' experiences with suddenly shifting to remote teaching in spring of 2020 were able to be recalled with a certain degree of clarity. Similar research in the future may not have this ability, depending on the nature of the research. Additionally, this research focused on first-year teachers only. Future research might include self-efficacy for veteran/experienced teachers during the COVID pandemic.

Future researchers should consider a much larger sample size, continuing to focus on first-year teachers, in order to gain a deeper understanding of factors predictive of self-efficacy. Using a larger sample size might provide more diversity in the participants and the teacher preparation programs to add to the body of literature. While this study attempted to investigate if the needs of first-year teachers are different based on their preparation programs, this study also highlighted the need for several areas of future research. Future research could also focus on retention of alternatively-certified and traditionally-certified by content specific and/or grade specific to determine if there is an area that is leaving the profession more rapidly and what has historically been the certification route of those teachers in the high turnover areas. It would be interesting to look at the data for first-year teacher retention and the mentor programs provided to see what areas better supported first-year teacher needs. Tracking the teachers over several years would reveal those who stay in the profession successfully and those who leave because of their low teaching efficacy.

Another direction for future research might be encompassing the various alternative certification programs and comparing the requirements, then surveying and

observing teachers from the various programs to gather data to see if teacher perception is the same as the researcher's observations.

The purpose of this study was to examine the teacher self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively-certified teachers and to determine if there is a perceived difference in levels of self-efficacy after the first-year of teaching in those teachers who completed a traditional certification program or an alternative certification program. This study showed that there is no significant difference in the levels of self-efficacy for teachers regardless of their certification program.

This chapter provided a discussion of the data analysis. It also provided a section on implications for practice and recommendations for future research. The findings from this study were consistent with the TSES framework which states first-year teachers tend to struggle in the three dimensions of teaching: instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. The findings of this study support the research that developing a teacher's confidence in his or her teaching ability correlates to his or her decision to remain in the teaching profession and will positively impact student performance (Callahan, 2016). The hope is that these findings will assist school administrators with relevant professional development and support for first-year teachers as they transition from being the student to being the teacher and provide opportunities for first-year teachers to build their self-efficacy so they remain in the teaching profession. When first-year teachers receive relevant and 'real-time' professional learning and opportunities for them to be successful and effective in the classroom, they become valuable resources that need to be nurtured and supported if schools are to become effective.

Research Design Limitations

There are limitations to this research design. First, the participants were from one large suburban school district in Texas. Therefore, the findings may be similar when compared to participants who are in similar settings with similar supports but it cannot be generalized beyond that, thus limiting external validity. Secondly, not all teacher preparation programs are the same, and this may have limited the accuracy of the teacher's perceptions related to the constructs measured. There was a low response rate on the survey which is also a limitation. There were no African American participants who responded to the survey. Teachers who left the profession after one year were not included in the study. Additionally, the nature of self-reported data presents a threat to validity since the researcher cannot determine if the participants' responses were accurate. It is possible that the first-year teachers who were interviewed had an inflated perception of their knowledge and expertise due to lack of teaching experience. While valuable data were collected for this study, they were only collected from first-year teachers in one district. Therefore, these data are not considered representative of all first-year teachers. Finally, this study was conducted during a pandemic, so there were many additional stressors the first-year teachers endured during the COVID-19 pandemic and the findings may not be able to be applied to a broader population or time period. Lastly, there were limited preparation programs represented. Despite the study's limitations, the findings have important implications and can be used to inform hiring practices.

Conclusion

The impact a teacher has on students has been well researched. This study examined first-year teachers' perceptions of their needs to determine if there were different needs based on the certification route. The alternative certification route has become more popular than in the past. Throughout the study, while conducting interviews

and analyzing the survey data, the results showed that first-year teachers, regardless of the certification, positively discussed how their needs were being met at the campus and district levels through mentor support, team collaboration, instructional coaches and administrators.

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APPENDIX A:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: Are First-year Teachers' Needs Different based on Preparation Program Completed

Principal Investigator(s): Mandy Scott
Student Investigator(s): Mandy Scott
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Renée Lastrapes

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of needs and levels of self-efficacy of first-year teachers who completed an alternative program compared to those of first-year teachers who completed a traditional program for certification. The qualitative data will be analyzed to examine what alternatively-certified teachers' perceptions of needs are and what traditionally prepared teachers' perceptions of needs are. This mixed methods study will use the Qual → Quant design to examine the perceived needs of first-year teachers, in order to capture the first-year teachers' level of self-efficacy (Bray & Howard, 1980). This study will research the following questions:

1. How do the levels of overall self-efficacy of teachers who complete traditional certification compare to those who complete alternative certification?
2. How do the levels of self-efficacy for the subscales of Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management and Student Engagement of teachers who complete traditional certification compare to those who complete alternative certification?
3. Is there a relationship between the first-year teacher's age/(life experiences) and sense of self-efficacy?
4. Does teaching as a second career predict the first-year's teacher sense of self-efficacy?
5. What are the perceived needs and challenges of first-year teachers who completed traditional certification and those who completed alternative certification?

Using quantitative and qualitative research, this study will provide necessary information to determine whether one entering the profession through alternative certification is as prepared as one who enters the profession through traditional teaching programs. The information obtained through this study can be utilized to improve the professional development provided to first-year teachers based on their needs. Furthermore, this study can inform federal, state and local policymakers as well as school leaders how to better assist first-year teachers in classrooms.

PROCEDURES

First, the researcher will gain approval from the Committee for Protection of Human Services (CPHS) for the University of Houston Clear Lake. First-year teachers will be interviewed and their responses will be audiotaped and transcribed. Interviews will be used to identify the first-year teacher's perceptions and will be analyzed to determine what alternatively-certified teachers perceptions of their needs are versus what traditionally prepared teachers perceptions of their needs are. The researcher will conduct interviews with each participant towards the end of the school year. The interview questions will be open ended to ensure that the participants have an opportunity to express their experiences in their own words.

EXPECTED DURATION

The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately 2 hours throughout the school year which includes up to 2- 30-minute interviews.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this project.

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 professional needs of first-year teachers.

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 Faculty Sponsor 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, Mandy Scott, at 409-789-7243 or by email at scottma@uhcl.edu. The Faculty Sponsor Dr. Renée Lastrapes, Ph.D., may be contacted at phone number 281-283-3566 or by email at lastrapes@uhcl.edu.

SIGNATURES:

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 _____ Mandy Scott
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____
Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE # FWA00004068)

APPENDIX B:
TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹ (short form)

Teacher Beliefs

How much can you do?

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

(1) = Nothing

(2) = Very Little

(3) = Some

(4) = Quite A Bit

(5) = A Great Deal

1. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

2. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

3. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

4. How much can you do to help your students value learning?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

5. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

6. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

7. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

8. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

9. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

10. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

11. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)

APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you come to be a teacher? What experiences have brought you to this point in your career?
2. Tell me about your preparation in becoming a teacher?
3. What kind of support do you find most helpful?
4. How did the beginning teacher supports affect your perception of teaching as a career?
5. How did those supports affect your sense of efficacy as a teacher?
6. What other significant events, people, experiences contributed to your desire to be a teacher?
7. What has it been like teaching the first few months compared to the last few months?
8. How do you feel your degree (content) prepared you for the classroom? What types of courses did you take that best reflect connection in the classroom?
9. What elements of preparation make you feel most confident in your content area?
10. Describe yourself as a teacher in the classroom. Describe how you know when students understand what you are wanting them to know.
11. How has teaching during COVID affected your first-year teaching experience?
12. What else may have helped prepare you for this past year's experience?