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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF INDUCTION SUPPORT OF

FIRST YEAR ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFICATED TEACHERS

by

Tonya E. Steele

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Leadership for Learning

Teacher Leadership for Learning

In the

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Abstract

In response to address teacher shortages, urban schools have begun the practice of hiring alternatively certified teachers to staff classrooms with highly qualified teachers. Alternative certification refers to certification obtained through programs without completing a traditional four- or five-year university-based program. Several studies revealed that alternatively certified teachers normally do not receive in-depth training before beginning sole teaching responsibilities. Therefore, site-based support is essential for first year alternatively certified first year teachers' development and retention. Research also indicated principals who provide one-on-one support as well as various support strategies could affect first year teachers' self-efficacy as well as increase morale.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the extent of support they received from their principals and the support strategies they identified as most effective. The conceptual framework is based on research examining teacher efficacy; this study was designed to identify key areas of teacher support and their effectiveness in assisting novice alternatively certified teachers. Research questions focused on the perceptions of the first year alternatively certified teachers and their principals regarding induction support and their effectiveness during the first year of teaching. Support strategies identified in the study could be used to develop an effective, cohesive teacher induction program. A qualitative case study was used to identify and assess the types of support given to first year alternatively certified teachers from their principals with semi-structured face-to-face interviews. In addition, document analysis was conducted on materials that demonstrated support provided to the teachers. Data analysis involved coding and theme analysis.

Results of the study that there was some variation in the perceptions of the first year alternatively certified teachers in terms of the support that they received. Participants cited

examples of various levels of support from the instructional support team members, school

district and other sources; however, each of the participants noted an infrequent amount from the

principals themselves. The research recommends principals provide direct support to teachers

during the induction period.

This work is dedicated to my mother, LaVerne McGee. Your unyielding work ethic and dedication to making sure I have the best in education will continue to be my inspiration for giving my daughter, Kennedy, the best. Thank you for all of your love, laughter, strength, support, and understanding. Thanks to you and Granny for always working so hard to provide direction for where we are today and giving us a direction for tomorrow.

To my husband, Brian Steele, thank you for always being there to support me, even when I felt I couldn't go on – I love you.

Thanks to my friends, who chose to share this with me by reading it along the way and sharing your thoughts, you made me better. I would not be the person I am today without the love and support I have received from each of you.

All my love to my friends, who have constantly reminded me that life without laughter isn't life at all. I wouldn't have made it without you.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge my family, Brian and Kennedy in particular. Every day you all remind me why I am here and give me a reason to continue. Love you.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Urban schools face a difficult task in attempts in hiring and retaining qualified teachers. Ingersoll (2001) described teacher shortage as the inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with highly qualified teachers. A teacher shortage refers to the result that occurs when the number of effective (highly qualified) teachers a district wants to employ is greater than the number of effective teachers who are willing and able to work (Jacob, 2007). According to Darling-Hammond (2000), shortages occur as some states prepare moderately few teachers but may have increasingly growing student enrollments. School districts may respond to teacher shortages with aggressive hiring and recruiting practices that places new teachers in areas where low-income students receive little to no support from family members. Although the National Charter School Research Project (2010) findings state that the rate of teacher attrition in urban schools has decreased within the last six years, the need for highly qualified teachers to assist struggling students has increased.

The Urban Teacher Collaborative, comprised of Recruiting New Teachers, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Council of the Great City Colleges of Education, formed in 1994 to improve the quality, diversity and cultural sensitivity of the urban teacher labor force. A study conducted in 2000 by the Urban Teacher Collaborative found that almost one hundred percent of 50 urban school districts surveyed expressed an immediate need for teachers in hard to staff schools. Implications from the findings resulted in the urban school systems developed and

implemented several creative ways to recruit and retain teachers, including providing induction

and support programs to keep talented new teachers in the classroom.

Hiring alternatively certified teachers is one method utilized to confront teacher retention.

These teachers obtain certification through an "alternative program either before or after

beginning teaching and for those who reported holding provisional certification given for current

participation in an alternative program" (Cohen-Vogel and Smith, 2007, p. 740). Alternative

certification refers to certification obtained through programs or licensing routes by earning a

standard license or teacher certificate without completing a traditional four- or five-year

university-based program (Humphrey and Wechsler, 2007).

Many urban school districts allocate money and time to recruit teachers from alternative

certification programs in an effort to combat teacher shortages. The school districts implement

induction and support programs with the belief that teachers have been sufficiently prepared to

enter classrooms with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to provide effective instruction

(Ng, 2003). Principals have five key roles during the induction period for novice teachers: 1)

culture builder, 2) instructional leader, 3) "coordinator"/facilitator of mentors, 4) novice teacher

recruiter, 5) novice teacher advocate/ retainer. Wood explained that these roles allow principals

to serve as promoter of professional relationships and morale booster; provide regular systemic

feedback to teachers on instruction; coordinate mentor/mentee activities, as well as facilitate

mentors' assistance of novice teachers; seek novice teachers with deeper commitment to the

teaching profession; and provide support through professional development (Wood, 2005).

The research reviewed indicated there are limited studies of the perceptions of first year

alternatively certified teachers regarding the administrative support received. Principals who

work with new teachers implement a multitude of support strategies to ensure the teachers are

effective during their first years of teaching. Killeavy (2006) noted the purpose of support by principals is to provide opportunities for all teachers to engage in appropriate learning activities that can enhance the induction results. Killeavy also observed that the support from principals also contributes to whole school development and student achievement through the collective and individual improvement of teaching. Principals can promote high levels of classroom practice and ensure the academic success of all students by understanding the issues novice teachers encounter as they assimilate into the work of the school (Roberson and Roberson, 2009). For the purposes of this study, the term *site administrators* and *administrators* are used synonymously with the word *principals*.

Teachers acquire alternative certification through a variety of state and national programs that grant alternative certification, such as Teach for America (TFA) and university-based alternative certification programs. University-based alternative certification programs vary in components and lengths – many university-based programs are similar to one- and two-year masters'-level programs (Ng, 2003). Participation in such programs can range from two to six weeks of training prior to placement in classrooms to two-year post-baccalaureate programs with integrated coursework and up to three years of mentoring during the induction period (Jorissen, 2003). The purpose of utilizing participants in ACPs is to appeal to talented individuals from various occupations that would or would not ordinarily consider teaching, as well as decrease the teacher shortages in urban schools (Wright, 2001).

Background of the Study

One provision of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) requires school districts to place highly qualified teachers in core academic classrooms. The ensuing challenge stemming from this mandate is especially evident in inner-city areas (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The issue

lies with retaining the teachers as well as recruiting highly qualified teachers. According to (Legler, 2002), urban school districts have a great need for highly qualified teachers, yet also experiences great difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers.

Several studies reveal the importance of support during the first years of teachers and the effects of high teacher turnover. Low salary is a factor associated with teachers leaving the profession, however, other factors that consistently rated high among teachers who leave after the first year point to lack of support from administrators as well as poor working conditions (Ingersoll, 2001; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004; and Terry and Kritsonis, 2008; and Voke, 2002;).

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a national advocacy and policy organization designed to support the advancement and implementation of federal and national policies that support effective high school reform and increased student achievement and attainment. In 2005, Alliance for Excellent Education examined teachers who left the profession within five years of teaching and found that teachers who are new to the profession are far more likely to leave than are their more experienced counterparts. Again, two primary factors noted as reasons for leaving the profession were lack of support and poor working conditions. The United States Department of Education cited that the majority of teacher turnovers occur in public schools that contain at-risk students, schools in which half or more of the students enrolled received free or reduced-price lunches (1997).

To reduce the first year attrition rate, principals should provide induction support as soon as the first year teachers enter the classrooms. Salyer (2003) suggested principals should provide support by providing effective induction activities such as teacher orientation, mentoring, developing the pedagogy and instructional skills of the beginning teachers.

Statement of the Problem

The literature suggests teachers do not have the opportunity to participate in apprenticeship programs as do craftsmen, including plumbers, carpenters, and masons. Craftsmen receive on-the-job training and complete tasks under the supervision of a experienced supervisor for an extended period of time before they are allowed to work individually (Staub, West, and DiPrima Bickel, 2006). Alternatively certified first year teachers, in contrast, do not receive an apprenticeship before beginning sole teaching responsibilities. Research shows that alternative certification programs characteristically offer a brief but intense training period than do traditional teacher education programs before sending individuals into the classroom as the teacher of record (Humphrey and Wechsler, 2007).

Instructional support may come from induction and mentoring programs, professional development activities, or administrators. Principals who provide the various types of support could affect the first year teachers' self-efficacy as well as increase morale. The research reviewed identified support from principals as an essential component in retaining first year teachers (Jiang and Chan, 2008; Peterson and Brietzke, 1994; Ross and Gray, 2006; Sayler, 2003). This study will highlight the principals' role in supporting first year alternatively certified teachers as well as the impact the support has on new teachers' development and retention.

Different alternative certification programs have various goals regarding teacher retention (Humphries, Wechsler, and Hough, 2005) and administrators need assistance in determining ways that will provide an effective support system for alternatively prepared teachers; the assistance focused on improving teacher skills and providing quality education. Further examination of the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers is essential in determining the effectiveness of support provided to beginning teachers by principals.

Conceptual Framework

This study investigated the novice alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of the support received during their first year of teaching. Other countries provide intensive support to teaching interns including a reduced workload and assignment of guiding teachers who observe the beginning teachers' instruction, while school districts in the United States provide induction support to new teachers as they begin teaching (Wong, Britton, Galsser, 2005). New teachers in other countries must first pass highly competitive recruitment exams, both oral and written, and then they are assigned to a pedagogical advisor who provides instructional assistance as needed. When principals provide induction programs that are organized and focused on lifelong, sustainable growth, teacher efficacy is increased and there is a greater chance of teacher retention (Wong et al.). This study was designed to identify key areas of teacher support and their effectiveness in assisting novice alternatively certified teachers.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the extent of support they received from their principals and the support strategies they identified as most effective. The duration of training received participating in alternative certification programs may be short and transition may be quick between the time the teachers leave the alternative certification programs and the time they enter the classrooms (Brock and Grady, 2007). Therefore, strategies such as induction programs and mentoring programs are essential to supporting and retaining first year alternatively certified teachers.

Research Questions

This researcher explored first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of support systems. This study addressed the following question: Which induction support strategies were perceived by first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective? In addressing this question, this study attempted to address five sub-questions:

a. What are the perceived needs/concerns of the first year alternatively certified teacher?

b. How are the components of support provided by principals aligned with the perceived needs/concerns of first year alternatively certified teachers?

c. In what contexts (when, where, how frequently) is support provided by principals to first year alternatively certified teachers?

d. How do first year alternatively certified teachers perceive the impact on their teaching of induction activities provided by principals?

e. What additional support do alternatively certified teachers need from principals during their first year of teaching?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that urban school districts employ a substantial number of alternatively certified teachers. In investigating the perceptions of the alternatively certified teachers about induction activities, this study will add to the body of research regarding effective strategies. It is important for the new teachers to be successful in urban school districts and have their professional needs met (Wong, 2002). Support strategies identified in the study can be used to develop an effective, cohesive teacher induction program. The components of the induction program could be adopted by schools and districts to develop, support, and retain quality teachers to address the teacher shortage that exists in urban areas.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, clarification of terms is as follows:

- **Urban schools:** Schools that are considered low-performing, in metropolitan, low-income areas with large numbers of minority students. (Easley, 2006)

- **Alternative certification:** Programs that allow individuals that have no teaching background opportunities to become certified teachers by meeting state requirements through nontraditional routes. (Owen and Song, 2009)

- **Induction:** Support provided to novice teachers that offer mentor support, opportunities for professional development, and include performance evaluation and feedback. (Killeavy, p. 169)

- **Principals and administrators**: School-based leader personnel who provide management, professional development and support for beginning teachers. (Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, 1996)

- **Teacher attrition:** The rate at which teachers leave the profession during the first five years. (Greiner and Smith, 2009)

Possible Limitations of the Study

The following are limitations in this study:

1. The study is set in an urban school district in the southeast may not be generalizable to other districts or settings.

2. The majority of the alternatively certified teachers in this district come from Teach For America (TFA) and may not be generalizable to other certification programs.

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Summary

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Urban school districts are employing more alternatively certified teachers to fill the number of teacher shortages evident in urban areas. Those districts serve poor and minority

students and have turnover rates as high as 50% across the country (Saphier, Freedman and

Ascheim, 2007). Induction activities should increase teacher efficacy and retention of new

teachers, as well as help increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Providing various

opportunities for first year alternatively certified teachers to become skilled educators requires

effective induction support structures to guide their beginning years of teaching in the classroom.

Principals can aid the first year teachers by developing cohesive and consistent induction support

and mentoring components.

Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Introduction

One of the largest areas in which teacher shortages exist is in urban schools. Urban schools are in "culturally, racially and linguistically diverse and economically disadvantaged school settings (James, 2004. p. 15). James suggested that educators must think of urban schools as a space – space that is not just physical, contextual or geographic, but is a social construct based on a system of ideas, distinctions and divisions that provide a way to think, speak, see, feel, and act toward the students (p. 16). According to Erskine-Cullen and Sinclair (1996), urban schools are places where teachers are faced with a plethora of challenges that range from poverty, violence, cultural diversity and a multitude of languages" (p. 1). The Center for Urban Schools, at the State University of New York in Oswego, provides field placements and student teaching experiences at urban schools to encourage pre-service teachers to explore opportunities within urban areas. The Center for Urban Schools (2004) describes an urban school as having the following characteristics:

has a relatively high rate of poverty (as measured by federal free and reduced lunch data); has a relatively high proportion of students of color; has a relatively high proportion of students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP); and also designated as "high need" by state determination. (p.1)

Recruiting alternatively certified teachers is a strategy used by urban school districts to combat teacher shortages. However, a review of literature reveals that retention of beginning alternatively certified teachers is challenging. Carter and Keiler's (2009) indicated many

beginning alternatively certified teachers do not feel adequately prepared to handle

responsibilities they were expected to complete in and out of the classroom. As a result,

principals in urban schools need to pay special attention to the amount and type of support they

provide first year alternatively certified teachers.

The literature review will highlight the need for providing support for first year

alternatively certified teachers, as well as illustrate the purpose of utilizing alternatively certified

teachers in urban schools in order to decrease teacher shortages. The sections included in this

review focuses on the theoretical framework that will drive the current study, alternative

certification, an overview of support, and key components of induction support for first year

teachers. In addition, the definition and purpose of teacher efficacy of novice alternatively

certified teachers are discussed in detail. The literature will also address the roles principals have

in supporting first year alternatively certified teachers. For the purposes of this study, the

descriptors *novice*, *beginning*, and *first year* are used interchangeably and refer to teachers who

have no previous teaching experience. In addition, the terms *site administrators* and

administrators are used synonymously with the word *principals*.

Theoretical Framework

Principals need to provide instructional and psychological support to retain alternatively

certified novice teachers. Four reasons why individuals enter the teaching profession via

alternative certification: wanting to help students and contribute to society, having prior

experience with teaching and training, wanting to have more time with family, and choosing

teaching because of job availability Saylers (2003). These reasons allude to individuals'

motivation for becoming teachers even though their initial work experiences may have been in

other fields. Positive self-efficacy among alternatively certified novice teachers will provide a

rippling effect in which it will create and provide an atmosphere geared towards positive student

achievement and can lead to lowering the attrition rates among novice alternatively certified

teachers (Anthony and Kritsonis, 2007).

        Self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the

courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1986, p. 2). Self-efficacy

can influence mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological or

emotional feedback. Self-efficacy provides the basis for personal accomplishment, motivation,

and a sense of well-being. Since potential motivation and performance are assumed to be a

reinforcer for teaching behaviors, if teachers display a high level of efficacy, they believe can

influence student motivation and achievement. Therefore, Erdem & Demirel (2007) indicated

teacher efficacy can also be a type of self-efficacy that is a process in which people construct

beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of attainment.

        Hoy and Spero's study of changes in teachers' efficacy judgments from beginning a

teacher preparation program through the induction year suggest the higher amount of support

novice teachers receive in their first year of teaching, the less likelihood their level of efficacy

decreases (2005). The concept of teacher efficacy suggests that individual achievement depends

on interactions between one's behavior, personal factors, and environmental conditions (Schunk,

2007). Perceived self-efficacy influences cognitive development and functioning through four

major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Bandura, 1993). The

teachers' beliefs in their personal efficacy to motivate and promote learning affect the type of

learning environments they create and the level of success their students achieve. Teachers'

beliefs influence the effort they will expend, their ability to persist during challenges, their ability

to recover quickly from failures, and the amount of stress they experience in coping with

demanding situations (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Principals understand that beginning

alternatively certified teachers' self-efficacy can be affected as new teachers are likely to face a

number of challenges in meeting the expectations that are embedded in *show competence in*

teaching skills" (Onafowora, 2004, p. 34). As a result, principals must pay particular attention

when selecting appropriate induction activities.

Self-efficacy provides the basis for personal accomplishment, motivation, and a sense of

well-being. Teachers who display a high level of efficacy believe they can influence student

motivation and achievement. Therefore, teacher efficacy is defined as a type of self-efficacy that

is a process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform at a given level of

attainment (Erdem & Demirel, 2007).

Given the current focus on attracting and retaining competent, alternatively certified

teachers, urban school systems are investigating various strategies to increase teacher retention.

One area many principals are examining is teacher self-efficacy, which has been optimistically

associated with student and teacher outcomes. Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) conducted a study

which examined teacher efficacy within urban elementary schools in one district. The study

found that collective teacher efficacy was positively associated with differences between schools

in student achievement in the content areas of reading and mathematics. The researchers

suggested if schools can increase teacher self-efficacy, then retention of teachers increases as

well as teacher satisfaction.

School leadership can influence increases in individual teacher efficacy. Ross and Gray

(2006) examined the effects of teacher efficacy by comparing two models of transformational

leadership developed from Bandura's social cognitive theory. The researchers found

transformational leadership had direct and indirect effects on teacher commitment to school

mission and commitment to professional learning community. As a result, Ross and Gray determined that principal behavior guides the development of teachers' efficacy by establishing stability and structure. Some actions principals can take to promote teacher efficacy provide opportunities for teachers to acquire new skills to increase the likelihood of mastery experiences. The experiences focused on teacher efficacy can also reduce stress by shielding the first year teachers from environmental factors, whether internal (e.g., parental expectations) or external (e.g., state initiatives).

Principals can contribute to the improvement of teacher efficacy by ensuring opportunities for teachers to acquire new skills, positively manipulating teacher capacity beliefs, further teacher efficacy through effective professional development. High teacher efficacy can also improve student performance when teachers exhibit more effort in organizing learning such as planning and delivering instruction to their students. Principals may assist in promoting high teacher efficacy with the school staff by developing and maintaining a nurturing environment of collaboration with improved or increased instructional attitudes, decision-making, and classroom practices that affect student achievement (Peterson and Brietzke, 1994).

Principals should ensure that specific professional development activities are provided to first year teachers for support since teacher retention is a particular issue for urban school districts. Hoy and Spero (2005) suggested the more support novice teachers (regardless of teacher preparation received) in their induction year, the less likelihood their level of efficacy decreases. Novice teachers who do not receive an appropriate amount of professional development or support are likely to underestimate the intricacies of teaching and managing classroom simultaneously. Therefore, principals need to utilize various support strategies such as induction and mentoring to support beginning alternatively certified teachers.

Alternative Certification

As early as the 1980's states turned to emergency licensure programs to fulfill teaching shortages. For the purpose of this study, *alternative certified teachers* refer to teachers who obtained certification through nontraditional routes specifically designed for individuals with a minimum of bachelor's degrees in fields other than education to complete their teacher preparation while teaching full-time (Saffold, 2006). The term *alternative teacher certification* has been historically used to refer to every licensure venue outside of traditional college-based programs (Vogel and Smith, 2007). The distinguishing characteristic of alternative certification programs is their intent to provide access to a teaching credential that essentially circumvents participation in conventional or traditional college or university-based preparation programs (Fenstermacher, 1990).

Saffold (2006) also suggested that rigorous screening of participants in alternative certification programs with degrees in nonacademic professions will help the participants acclimate to the urban school setting. Familiarity with urban settings provides the participants with a basic understanding of school community needs as well as students. Training enables students to integrate content and pedagogical studies for classroom instruction. Saffold stated that courses included in the alternative certification programs need to take previous experience and training into consideration.

Alternative certification is acquired through a variety of programs, such as Teach for America (TFA) in addition to state and university programs that offer certification through short-term coursework. Traditional teacher preparation programs provide undergraduate students instructional strategies, inquiry-based teaching, including models of teaching over a four-year period (Nuangchalerm and Prachagool, 2010). Participation in alternative certification programs

range from two to six weeks of training prior to teaching placement with two-year post-baccalaureate programs with integrated coursework (Jorissen, 2003). Moreover, alternative certification programs generally include a semester or more of teacher preparation into an intense, abbreviated schedule usually during the summer (Wright, 2001).

According to Feistritzer (2005), teachers from alternate certification programs indicated that "desire to work with young people" and "value and significance of education in society" were their main reasons they decided to become a teacher (p. 21). Carter and Keiler's study (2009) examined alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of teaching and the support first year teachers receive in urban settings. The findings indicated that although there are some programs that are compatible to traditional teacher education programs, the structure of alternative certification could hinder beginning alternatively certified teachers' ability to place their developing practice in a broader context. Upon entering teaching, alternatively certified teachers must possess a range of instructional skills and pedagogy not traditionally incorporated into alternative certification programs. Components of these programs, including mentoring, administration, and summer programs do not adequately prepare first year teachers with realistic expectations and effective preparation for their students. As a result, Carter and Keiler suggested that new alternatively certified teachers have narrow and inaccurate perceptions of their teaching.

Need for Support for First Alternatively Certified Teachers

Alternatively certified novice teachers' perceptions of support systems may assist in identifying problems which can be addressed by designing appropriate strategies and professional development experiences. Alternatively certified teachers generally do not receive special training, orientation, or materials during their first year that may influence the decision to remain in teaching. One-third of novice teachers (alternatively and traditionally certified) will

leave the profession within five years, while others may move from one district to another. As a

result, retention of quality teachers in urban schools has also identified as an issue, with a

turnover rate as high as fifty percent, leaving critical shortages in areas such special education,

math, and science (Sayler, 2003).

Findings from Sorapuru's research (2005) of alternatively certified teachers' perceptions

examine the perceptions of alternatively certified teachers about the support they receive from

their principal, mentors, and peer teachers. The findings from the study suggested that support

received in the first years of teaching, especially from principals is important to the teachers

studied, was found to be particularly valuable. In addition, the participants' satisfaction with their

teaching assignment and teacher retention are related to the level of support received from their

principal. Sorapuru suggested that in order for schools to meet the "highly qualified" teacher

guidelines set by No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, alternatively certified teachers (along with

those who are traditionally certified) must remain in the teaching profession. Principals should

acknowledge their roles and impact on the retention of teachers. Finally, results from the study

also indicated that the alternative certified teachers' peers played a significant role in their choice

to remain in the teaching profession.

Cherubini's study (2007) examines the perceptions of beginning teachers in Ontario that

participated in exemplary induction programs. The results of the survey indicated that the

induction services exceeded the beginning teachers' expectations. Those surveyed reported that

they thrived in the professional environment that provided learning opportunities. Respondents

also felt that their confidence as well as their proficiencies increased, and that they enjoyed

participating in the program. Respondents also acknowledged that they were pleased to have

participated in a program that recognized the first year teachers experienced trying circumstances

and presented a variety of strategies to address them. Another result of the survey indicated that the beginning teachers often emulated the teacher leaders who furthered their own learning.

According to the participants' written responses in Cherubini's study (2007), teachers appreciated the assistance with the job of teaching they received from induction program providers, including administrators, mentors, and colleagues. However, they indicated the induction faltered in aligning their pedagogical and professional needs with district and schools' in-services. Cherubini found that disconnect between the professional development the teachers needed and the in-services they actually received existed.

Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, and Cowan-Hathcock, (2007) examined beginning teachers' perceptions of induction program activities, assistance, and support received within the first two years of employment. The researchers investigated induction program activities, assistance, and support provided in North Carolina and beginning teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the assistance provided. As a part of the qualitative portion of the survey, teachers were asked: "If you are not planning to remain a classroom teacher, what are the reasons for your decision?" The participants' answers to the question were grouped into nine categories: money, time, graduate school, family, lack of support, accountability, unnecessary paperwork, unprofessional treatment, and changing careers. Results from the mixed design study indicated that teachers reported that specific induction activities produced positive outcomes such as understanding of school policies and rules; locating materials, supplies, equipment, or books; incorporating state standards and performance objectives into lessons; planning for instruction with effective use of different teaching methods.

Overview of Support for Novice Teachers

To combat teacher shortages, many states are turning to alternative certification options that allow non-licensed people experienced in a content area to take over a classroom with a minimal instructional background (Danielson, 2002). More of the highly qualified teachers tend to apply for suburban schools, or schools that are perceived to have fewer discipline problems, more active parents, and greater motivation for achievement (Jacob, 2007). However, due to restrictions placed by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), highly qualified teachers who choose to enter the urban districts are more likely to change schools or leave the profession altogether (Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley, 2006). In deciding whether to continue in the profession or leave teaching, teachers make ongoing assessments of the attractiveness of teaching, and the school environment plays a large role in these decisions.

Principals are responsible for developing support systems that influence teachers' decisions. Fox and Wilson (2010) examined principal-designed support systems for novice teachers and suggested that principals need to be cognizant of beginning teachers' support needs. Principals should also be cognizant of the extent to which the novice teachers are able to satisfy those needs within their school environments. Fox and Wilson further suggested principals should produce professional development opportunities, both formal and informal, as well as ensure time is provided for the opportunities to take place inside and outside school. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) noted that although novice teachers participate in combinations or packages of mentoring, some types of induction activities appear to be more effective in reducing turnover. Support is crucial for beginning teachers in urban areas and principals' inclusion of induction activities influence the decision to continue teaching in urban areas, migrate to other schools, or to leave teaching at the end of their first year.

Teacher Induction

Businesses in both the private and government sector use mentoring programs and activities as part of career development. Hansford, Ehrich, and Tennent (2004) found that employees who participate in mentoring programs benefit from career advancement and psychosocial support. They suggest that schools invest considerable resources into induction and mentoring programs. For the purposes of the study, induction is described as programs with activities that include orientation professional development sessions, formal and informal experiences that are designed to guide first year alternatively certified teachers' progression from inexperienced teachers to competent effective teachers.

Principals should develop activities with specific goals and outcomes along with well-matched mentees and mentors to minimize potential problems that could arise and promote retention. Rippon and Martin (2003) proposed developing a person-centered induction program which includes differentiated training and support for all participants, including the mentors and protégés, with greater focus on the characteristics of the induction supporter, and staff development. The researchers also suggested that staff development should concentrate on the principles underpinning the relationships, meaning, respect and trust for the new teachers to address the psychosocial component of beginning teachers' needs. The researchers recommended principals consider beginning teachers as active partners, give the teachers the rights to provide constructive feedback, ensure they are listened to, as well as be held accountable for participation.

Killeavy (2006) noted that the first year of teaching for most first year alternatively certified teachers is the most difficult, and induction offers beginning teachers the opportunities to continually learn, consult with colleagues and become collectively engaged in the learning

profession. Induction programs also offer opportunities for professional socialization, so the

beginning teachers can develop effective professional relationships. Hellsten, Prytuyla, Ebanks,

and Lai (2009) suggested that induction programs provide a transition from preservice to

in-service teaching.

A strategy that can increase teacher retention while providing resources in addition to

emotional support to novice alternatively certified teachers assists in developing an effective

induction program (Feimer-Nemser, p. 25). A strong induction program that also focuses on

retention should include three significant components, as described by Watkins (2005):

1. Strong coaching mentors who can grow professionally as much as those they

   mentor.

2. Activities that support and extend innovative practice through action research.

3. Opportunities for collegial discussion and learning among experienced staff, new

   staff, and the principal through vigorous study groups. (p. 84)

Principals need to include activities that address each of the components in induction

activities in order to help novice alternatively certified teachers make an easier transition to the

profession. Induction activities can reduce some identified teacher stressors such as work

overload, uncertainty of role, pressures of teachers' role, inadequate resources, poor working

conditions, lack of recognition, low salaries, lack of involvement in decision-making, lack of

effective communication, staff conflicts, and poor class management (Betoret, 2006).

Mentoring

Another form of support provided to beginning alternatively certified teachers is

mentoring. Mentoring is a formal relationship between a beginning teacher (mentee) and a

master teacher (mentor) that provides support and assesses the beginning teachers' instruction

(Jones and Pauley, 2003). The purpose of mentoring is to address new teachers' needs and support during the first year of teaching. Haack (2006) identified components of effective mentoring programs which include time; face-to-face contact between mentee and mentor; flexibility and open access; good communication; administrative interest and support; caring colleagues; honesty, understanding, and reasonable expectations; mutual respect; and short- and long-term professional development planning. Haack also indicated time as an important component as it allows the mentor and beginning teacher to develop a relationship through which professional and psychosocial needs are met.

The mentor serves as *educational companion*, working with beginning teachers in translating what was learned during pre-service education into specific situations presented in the classrooms (Fletcher and Barrett, 2004). The mentors serve as *collaborators* within the school, although new teachers tend to work alone and rarely discuss their work with others. Fletcher and Barrett indicated that beginning teachers who had successful mentors are able to improve their instructional strategies and skills, as well as provide assistance with classroom management, assessing student work, lesson planning, and differentiating instruction. Mentors are able to help build self-confidence and develop positive attitudes about teaching, as well as helping their mentees integrate in the school community. Beginning teachers have two tasks when they enter the classroom – to learn to do the job and then to do the job they are hired to do. According to Wildman, Niles, Magliaro, and McLaughlin (1989), mentors' primary function is to help the beginning teacher in any way, therefore, similarly-minded mentors provided the confidence they needed to confront issues involving teaching and learning to teach.

Krull (2005) conducted a survey of approaches in mentor training programs in different countries, then analyzed the process of selecting and preparing mentors. Experienced teachers

should participate in professional development and training to fulfill their roles as mentors, facilitators, and managers in order for the mentors to have an effective impact on the beginning teachers. Preparation for mentoring needs to be based on stages of teacher development, adult learning principles, professional development assessments, interpersonal skills to assist in formative assessment of teachers, and relevant knowledge and skills to assist teachers.

Instructional Coaching

In addition to mentoring as a support strategy for first year teachers, principals need to consider implementing a well-developed coaching program. First year teachers need instructional coaching that allows them to study, to reflect, and to learn their own preferences for teaching. Leshem (2008) stated that first year teachers need support from colleagues and principals, and, traditionally, a veteran mentor-teacher, specifically a cognitive coach. Instructional or cognitive coaching, used in the context of supportive training, benefit newly qualified teachers as they formulate teaching strategies and pedagogy. According to Costa and Garmston (2002), cognitive coaching is a coaching model that compels the coach to be non-judgmental, to encourage reflective practice, and to guide mentees to become self-directed learners. Costa and Garmston also described cognitive coaching as a way for two colleagues to have conversations on planning, reflecting, and/or problem resolving. Fagan and Walter (1982) suggested that mentoring differs from instructional and cognitive coaching in that mentors are veteran teachers who provide professional and personal support to teachers during their first year of work.

Cognitive coaching is the nucleus for building a professional community that honors teacher autonomy, encourages interdependence, and reinforces self-directed learning. In ways that a mentor might not be able to perform, a cognitive coach could provide conversations of

planning, developing, and reflecting with newly qualified teachers. Cognitive coaches may be

able to provide newly qualified teachers assistance in building a repertoire of teaching tools and

strategies. Cobb and Bowers (1999) found that using cognitive coaching to train first year

teachers to become self directed thinkers and learners with a high capacity for performance.

Furthermore, cognitive coaching allows teachers to strengthen professional performance by

enhancing their ability to examine their own practice and pedagogy through reflective

metacognition.

Principals' Perceptions of Support

Principals' perceptions may help provide insight on strategies and activities to implement

that may best support and retain novice alternatively certified teachers. Novice teachers working

in schools that have weak levels of instructional leadership are less likely to report a good

experience, do not intend to continue teaching, nor plan to remain in the same schools than

similar teachers at schools with average leadership (Kapadia, Coca and Easton, 2007).

Jiang and Chan (2008) used a qualitative study to examine principals' perceptions of

which strategies the principals used to assist beginning teachers. One of the research question

posed in the study addressed principals' perspectives regarding successful practices for

beginning teachers. Using open-ended survey questionnaires that contained thirteen questions,

the researchers found that principals made a significant difference in inducting novice teachers

and vital in helping to retain the teachers. The participants in the study trained teacher mentors

on how to support novice teachers as well as providing time for the mentors to work with the

beginning teachers. The findings from the study also showed that principals used practices such

as learning from experienced teachers, classroom management, actively participating in

professional development, keeping confidential student records, effectively communicating with

parents, and planning to teach diverse learners.

As the responsibility of recruiting and retaining teachers is placed on the shoulders of

principals, accountability leaves a substantial burden on them. In addition to administrative

duties and meeting school and district goals, principals are now responsible for ensuring and

developing teacher quality (Mulford, 2003). In order to examine principals' perceptions of the

effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers, Mahatha's (2005) study addressed the following

problems: perceived differences of support between alternatively certified and traditionally

certified teachers with regard to subject knowledge, classroom management, discipline,

instruction, and planning. She also considered perceived differences between both types of

teachers with regard to human relations skills and professionalism. Analysis of Mahatha's study

revealed principals perceived that alternatively certified teachers were perceived somewhat less

effective than traditionally certified teachers.

Powell (2004) examined problems in clarifying the principal's role in supporting first-

year teachers. Problems indicated in the study suggest principals' perceptions of the amount of

support provided to new teachers were greater than that described by teachers. She also

acknowledged that a gap existed in when and how administrators are trained to support new

teachers. The underlying assumption of the study was that first-year teachers were not receiving

adequate support from principals, resulting in teacher attrition. Research questions for the study

determined if first-year teachers and principals perceived differently the level and importance of

principals' support during the novice teachers' first year of teaching. Questions addressed

elementary and secondary principals' perceptions of the types and amounts of support provided

to first year teachers and the importance of the support in teacher retention. Other questions

addressed perceptions of support based on gender, race, and teacher preparation route. In

addition, the researcher asked about principals' perceptions of their own training needs to better

support novice teachers. To analyze the problems addressed, the researcher used a non-

experimental research design that included both quantitative and qualitative elements in the both

closed- and free-response survey that included both first-year teachers and principals as

participants. Findings from the survey recommended that first year teachers primarily need

nurturing from principals and support staff for improved support for novice teachers and to

increase teacher retention.

The Roles of the Principal in Supporting Alternatively Certified Novice Teachers

In order to provide effective support for alternatively certified novice teachers, Wood

(2005) indicated that principals must serve in five key roles during the induction period: culture

builder, instructional leader, coordinator or facilitator of mentors, novice teacher recruiter, and

novice teacher advocate and/or retainer. The principal as a culture builder is a promoter of

professional relationships and morale booster. As instructional leader, the principal provides

regular systemic feedback to teachers on instruction. In the role of "coordinator"/ facilitator of

mentors, the principal coordinates mentor/mentee activities, as well as facilitate mentors'

assistance of novice teachers. The principal also serves as the school's novice teacher recruiter

by directly recruiting novice teacher. Finally, principals are novice teacher advocate/ retainer

who provide support through professional development. Each of these roles has an effect on

providing support for novice teachers along with improving teacher efficacy.

Many first year alternative and traditional certified teachers will abandon the profession

within their first five years of service when faced with a number of challenges of beginning their

new teaching job: planning lessons, setting up a classroom, and learning to balance their work

and personal life (Ingersoll, 2004). Teachers often do not separate work from home and report

that school often disrupts their home life. Newly qualified teachers need time and collegial

support (Borko, Davinroy, Bliem, & Cumbo, 2000). First year teachers must maneuver through a

number of environmental difficulties – learning a new curriculum, lacking inadequate resources,

maintaining difficult work assignments, managing multiple preparations, establishing routines

for a successful classroom, interpreting unclear expectations, and succeeding without

succumbing to pressure (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 2005). Professional challenges

such as learning school culture, adapting to school politics, coming under scrutiny of

professional evaluations, and being accountable for their students' success on district and/or state

assessments that leave the first year teacher feeling overwhelmed and underprepared (Bergeron,

2008).

The literature review found limited research on how well principals are prepared to

support the challenges of alternatively certified teachers during the first year of teaching.

However, there is sufficient evidence that suggests that principals utilize various strategies and

methods to serve in each of the principal's roles that contribute to the hiring, support, and

retention of novice alternatively certified novice teachers.

The Role of Principal as Culture Builder.

Principals serve an important function in establishing an environment that sets the stage

for the support by developing a school culture that is conducive to collaboration, continuous

professional learning, along with effective feedback to the novice teachers (Barth, 2002). During

the induction period, the principal establishes a school climate that will support new teachers,

thereby reducing teacher attrition. School principals have influence on school culture, and the

impact of school culture on teachers' functioning and well-being (Engels, Hotton, Devos,

Bouckenooghe, and Aelterman, 2008). A school culture is defined as the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates (Fullan, 2007).

According to Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI, 2006), the principal should function as a Learning & Performance Development Leader, who helps build school culture by helping individuals make full use of their strengths toward personal and organizational goals and works to create a collaborative teaching and learning organization that develops leaders at all levels. Principals assist building school culture by encouraging collaborative, job-embedded professional learning where teachers are able to share their learning as a normal part of the school culture.

Principals should serve as a Relationship Leader. The Relationship Leader's purpose is to develop relationships among stakeholders, which includes teachers, to communicate school goals and priorities focused on student learning (GLISI, 2006). Wood indicated that if "a site administrator organizes and/or supports institutional activities that promote professional relationships among novice teachers and experienced teachers, morale is greatly improved and beginning teachers' self-concept is strengthened" (2005, p. 45). Principals must cope with multiple daily demands as well as a restricted amount of time they are able to spend in the classroom, in addition, allot time to focus on transforming the culture of a school to ensure that teaching and learning are functioning effectively (Engels, et al., 2009).

Principals build culture by modeling and building strong relationships, establishing an environment of trust, and developing a culture of learning for problem-solving and decision-making (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Historically, schools have not been set up to support the learning of teachers, whether novice or veteran (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). If there is no opportunity to collaborate, teachers may feel isolated or unwilling to ask for help. However,

Feiman-Nemser suggested also that providing emotional support is not as important as providing

a collaborative culture such as a professional learning community in which novice teachers have

access to resources as well as practical knowledge, with opportunities to talk about teaching and

learning.

The Role of the Principal as Instructional Leader.

Principals are Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Leaders who demonstrate "the

ability to implement a systematic approach to instruction in a standards-based environment by

leading collaborative efforts to prioritize curriculum, develop aligned assessments, and plan

instruction to improve student achievement (GLISI, 2006, p. 3)." As the instructional leader of

the school, the principal guides the distributed leadership team in aligning instruction according

to the state standards, targeting assessments, activities, and tasks. The principal as instructional

leader is also responsible for providing professional development regarding how to utilize data to

guide instruction (GLISI, 2006). Giovannelli suggested that effective leaders guide teachers in

reflecting on their practice, making necessary changes to their practice (2003).

Principals choose the school's professional development experiences that can assist first

year teachers. The professional development should include workshops or training that focus on

improving specific areas and prove to be easier to use than previous ones, as well as take place

on an on-going basis (Trotter 2006). For principals to affect student success, they need to provide

professional development experiences that develop a professional learning community that

allows teachers to put into practice what they are learning and focus the content of the

professional development around curricular and instructional strategies, as well as

communication skills to help build the relationships between teachers (Joyce and Showers,

2002). The professional development activities support a school climate that is conducive for

change and help the teachers develop skills necessary to implement change for student

improvement. Active principal supervision through frequent classroom observations and

conferences does not directly influence teachers' confidence, trust, or support of the principal

(Ebmeier, 2003). Rather, teacher performance increases when teachers believe the principal is

truly interested and committed to supporting instruction.

The Role of the Principal as Coordinator/Facilitator of Mentors.

The demand for well-trained mentors and coaches increases as beginning teachers begin

their school year. Principals should support their onsite coaches by focusing on school change

initiatives that provide more opportunities for teacher and coach to work together on

interventions that have the highest possibility of impacting student achievement (Knight, 2007).

Principals maintain the quality of mentoring and induction by ensuring that mentors and first

year teachers receive planning time to work together, and focus their efforts toward improving

student learning. Principals should work closely with the mentors to ensure that mentors are

selected appropriately, well-trained, and matched with beginning teachers (Kapadia, Coca, and

Easton, 2007). When schools try to implement new teaching practices, principals must ensure

that the coaches are aware of the new practices, be able to utilize them, as well as, provide

feedback that help assist their protégés.

Training must be ongoing, based on experience, as well as differentiated according to

individual differences and age when planning professional development for instructional coaches

and mentors. Principals, as coordinators of mentors, should facilitate professional development

sessions that provide instructional coaches with experiences that teachers can use immediately in

their classrooms. Through interactive situations within the professional development, the

protégés are able to reflect, grow, and adapt through their teaching careers (Trotter, 2006).

The Role of the Principal as Recruiter of Novice Teachers.

An additional role for principals who support novice teachers is the recruiter who ensures that the schools include staff that are considered knowledgeable, active, and committed (Coble, 2007). Three criteria ranked highest by principals in selecting novice teachers: enthusiasm for teaching; communication skills; and interviewer's evaluation. The most commonly used method for selecting is the interview process. Other methods noted were results from a demonstration lesson as well as information obtained from the applicants' reference letters (Cain-Caston, 1999). Another criterion noted by principals in selecting new teachers is the ability to demonstrate a strong understanding of both content knowledge and a theoretical foundation for instruction (Cherubini, 2007). The ability to demonstrate content knowledge and pedagogy is made evident during the interview process.

An important strategy associated to teacher hiring is the ability to define the position and the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences one would need to teach a class (Clements, 2008). Furthermore, once the position is defined, then the use of rubrics in conjunction with a rigorous screening process which would better screen applicants for evidence that they meet all of the aspects required of the position.

The Role of the Principal as Advocate/Retainer for Novice Teachers.

Principals should develop strategies and plans to assist and retain novice teachers during the induction period. The critical factor for success is the principal and the relationships to mentor teachers and supportive colleagues that the principal fosters on behalf of novice teachers while serving as advocates to ensure novice teachers' success. The principal is considered the critical factor for several reasons. First, the principal serves as the focal point of the school to ensure that all teachers improve professionally and sets the direction for improvement. Next, as

the instructional leader, the principal is accountable for the success or failure of teachers to meet school and district goals. Third, the principal has the power as well as the authority to establish the activities and gather resources novice teachers need to be successful. Finally, the principal has the responsibility to make sure novice teachers are prepared as they work closely with students to lead them to success to meet school and district goals (Roberson and Roberson, 2009). According to Brock and Grady (2007), principals provide support and encouragement for novice teachers by providing frequent, personal communication, keeping an open-door policy, providing constant feedback, and helping the new teachers develop reflective teaching methods. In doing so, the principal is also building the school community and culture.

Summary

A review of the literature indicates that further research should concentrate on the connections between the principals' supportive behaviors and as the needs of first-year teachers. Attention needs to be given to investigating the perceptions of alternatively certified teachers in regards to the types of support provided during the first year of teaching, the importance of support areas, as well as the effectiveness of the support.

Review of the literature investigated alternative certification along with the types of support received from principals. Types of support explored included induction programs, mentoring, and instructional coaching. Principals are considered important factors in each of the types of support as the administrators are responsible for establishing time for the support, providing a school culture conducive for collaboration, facilitating support activities, offering ongoing professional development activities for both novice teachers and their mentors.

The review of the literature signifies that effective support for novice alternatively certified teachers could increase the retention of quality new teachers with the inclusion of an effective induction program that has the support of principals, have mentors who are well

trained, and consistent. If principals can improve the quality of current teachers, attracting and

retaining quality new teachers may increase. The current study will investigate the support

beginning alternatively certified teachers receive during their first year from their principals,

including mentors and instructional coaches. The study will also examine what support strategies

the teachers feel are most beneficial.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

A review of the literature suggests a need for additional investigation of beginning alternatively certified teachers regarding their perceptions of the support provided by their schools' principals. The study investigated the needs and concerns of alternatively certified teachers during their first year of teaching as well as whether induction activities and programs provided by principals addressed those needs and/or concerns. Participants identified support strategies that are successful in assisting beginning alternatively certified teachers during their first year of teaching. This study also examined the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the types and extent of support received from their principals and support strategies identified by the teachers as most effective. Components of the support systems provided by principals and their effectiveness were also investigated. Lastly, the study explored support needs first year alternatively certified teachers may have during their first year of teaching.

Research Questions

This study explored first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of support systems. The research addressed the following question: Which induction support strategies are perceived by first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective? In addressing this question, this study attempted to address five sub-questions:

a. What are the perceived needs/concerns of the first year alternatively certified teacher?

b. How are the components of support provided by principals aligned with the perceived needs/concerns of first year alternatively certified teachers?

c. In what contexts (when, where, how frequently) is support provided by principals to first year alternatively certified teachers?

d. How do first year alternatively certified teachers perceive the impact on their teaching of induction activities provided by principals?

e. What additional support do alternatively certified teachers need from principals during their first year of teaching?

Research Methodology

A qualitative study was used to identify and assess the types of support given to novice alternatively certified teachers from their principals. According to Merriam (2005), qualitative study allows an opportunity for the researcher to attempt to construct meaning from how people make sense of their world as well as the experiences they have in the world. Qualitative study is the best methodology to gain in-depth and detailed analysis of first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of induction support strategies.

Research Design

The researcher conducted a study that included an in-depth analysis of first year alternatively certified teachers' experiences during their induction year, a case study research design was utilized. According to Yin (2008), a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly present. Face-to-face interviews with novice first year alternatively certified teachers were utilized to collect qualitative data. Interviews involved semi-structured and open-ended questions. Qualitative interviews assist with

eliciting views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative interviewing

functions under the assumption that the "perspectives of others is meaningful, knowable, and

able to be made explicit" (Patton, 2002). In-depth conversations draw out accurate and honest

answers from the participants in order to gain understanding of the effectiveness of support

provided to novice alternatively certified teachers by principals.

Setting

The setting of the study was a large urban school district in the southeast U.S. The district

has an enrollment of over 47,000 students with 101 schools – 56 elementary schools, 16 middle

schools, and 23 high schools. Fifteen school sites offer a wide range of educational programs,

including traditional schools, charter schools, with single-gender academies, and nontraditional

programs. Approximately 78% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Ninety-six

schools within the district are Title I schools. The ethnic distribution of the population of the

students in the district is as follows: African-American (80.4%); Caucasian (11.5%);

Latino/Hispanic (3.7%); Multi-racial (1.4%); Asian (0.8%); and American/Alaskan (1.9%).

The study was conducted during 2011-2012 school year. The researcher electronically

stored data collection in order to preserve confidentiality of the participants. The data will be

stored for a period of one year from completion of the study.

Participants

The participants in the alternatively certified novice teachers' group were representative

of the elementary, middle, and high schools and selected through purposeful random sampling

with two teachers from each grade band for a total of six participants. The rationale for utilizing

purposeful random sampling was to randomly select participants in advance of knowledge of

how the outcomes will appear in the study (Patton, 2009). Use of purposeful random sampling

enhances the credibility of the study by reducing doubt as to why participants are selected for the study. According to Creswell (2009), each participant has an equal likelihood of being selected from the population represented in the study (Creswell, 2009). A set of participants was selected from the number of respondents who agree to participate in the study (see Appendix A). A second set of participants consisted of three principals, one from each grade band representative of the district's demographic population. Participants for this group were chosen via purposeful sampling. The criteria for selecting the principals were based on those who had first year alternatively certified teachers on staff who were included in the first set of participants. The purpose of selecting these principals who worked with the selected teachers was to provide credibility through comparison of information presented. Consent forms were distributed to schools identified by human resources and district personnel had first year alternatively certified teachers on staff during the proposed period of data collection. Schools in which at least one teacher and the principal agreed to participate were interviewed. Schools in which one teacher or principal did not agree to participate was not be included in the study.

The researcher solicited participants by contacting district-assigned instructional mentors. District-assigned instructional mentors are designated veteran teachers who provide beginning teachers for instructional support and have access to contact information of potential participants. Instructional mentors are chosen by the district in consideration of their years of teaching experience and pedagogical knowledge. The mentors receive extensive training as coaches as well as participate in numerous content-specific professional development sessions throughout the school year. The researcher consulted with the mentors to select participants who matched the criteria for the study.

The participants chosen for the study were representative of demographics of school district be alternatively certified and teaching their first year of school. Each set of participants, teachers and principals, was identified via using the assistance of the district's human resources department. After consent via verbal acknowledgement or email, participants received a consent form to sign, which acknowledged their agreement to participate in the interviewing process.

Instrumentation

The researcher served as the primary instrument used to collect the data. According to Merriam, understanding is the goal of the qualitative study, and the researcher, as the instrument for data collection and analysis, is immediately responsive and adaptive (2009). Merriam also stated that as the data collection instrument, the researcher could expand her understanding through nonverbal and verbal communication, process data quickly, ask clarifying questions and summarize responses, check with participants for accuracy of interpretation, as well as explore unanticipated replies.

According to Patton (2002), the role of the researcher in qualitative research is to utilize "empathetic neutrality" to describe the balance between subjectivity and objectivity in collecting data (p. 50). The researcher of this study maintained a nonbiased approach to documenting the experiences and perspectives of the first year alternatively certified teachers and the description of the support provided by the principals. The qualifications of the researcher for this study include twenty years of experience in education as teacher, with seven years as a professionally-trained instructional coach. A number of teachers the researcher supports are alternatively certified, and the researcher is interested in seeking strategies to facilitate effective induction support strategies.

Qualitative Validity

Since the primary source of data collection and analysis for this study is based on human subjects' experiences and their interpretations of those experiences, internal validity was utilized to ensure the credibility of the findings. Two strategies were employed to support the data collection: triangulation and member checking. Triangulation is a strategy used for improving the validity of research or evaluation of findings (Golafshani, 2003). Three different data sources were triangulated: audio-recorded interviews of the teachers and principals, and supporting documents of beginning teachers. The data collected were compared to note any commonalities and/or differences of the first year alternatively certified teachers' and their principals' perceptions of support provided during the first year of teaching. Creswell (2012) asserts that utilization of triangulation allows researchers to make use of various multiple and miscellaneous sources, methods, investigators, and theories in an attempt to offer substantiating evidence of data. Furthermore, Creswell emphasizes triangulation involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (p. 251). To improve the analysis and understanding of the data collected, triangulation provided a process by which interpretation of the data strengthens the validity and reliability of the study, comparing and contrasting data, themes, and commonalities.

Member check was used to validate the interview questions. In quality research, a member check is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Member checking provides an opportunity to volunteer additional information which may be stimulated by the playing back process (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). Cohen and Crabtree also describe this procedure as an opportunity to understand and assess what the participant intended to do through

his or her actions as well as an opportunity to correct errors and challenge what are perceived as wrong interpretations. Member checking was implemented after the interview process to increase the credibility and validity of a qualitative study. The interviewer strove to build rapport with each interviewee in order to obtain honest and open responses. During the interviews conducted with each participant – teachers and principals, the researcher asked the questions, restated as necessary, and then participants responded. The participants affirmed that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences, providing credibility to the study. After completion of the study, an opportunity to review the findings was provided with the participants involved to allow the participants to analyze the findings and comment on them.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection lasted approximately three weeks beginning in January 2012. Interviews were the main source of data for the study. Interviews in qualitative data are a key foundation needed for understanding the phenomenon under the study (Merriam, 2009). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) notes that in qualitative research, interviews assists in gathering "descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 103). Data collection consisted of two sets of interview questions that were developed in a semi-structured, open-ended format. Semi-structured interview guide contains a mixture or more and less structured interview question (Merriam, p.89). Merriam contends that person-to-person interviews provide opportunities for one person to elicit information from the participant. The questions for each group were written in advance with the "exact wording and sequence" (Patton, p. 342) for each group of participants and developed based on the theoretical framework of the study. All of the participants in each group were asked the same basic questions in the same order, with an open-ended design, with one set of questions

for the first alternatively certified teachers and a separate set of questions for the principals. The

purpose of utilizing standardized open-ended interviews was to provide the same open-ended

questions to all interviewees. Standardized open-ended question interviews allow interviewees to

contribute as much detailed information as they wish as well as allow the researcher to ask

probing questions as a means of follow-up (Turner, 2010). The interviews lasted between one to

one-and-a-half hours per participant and were audio-recorded for verbatim transcripts. Responses

to the interview questions are provided in Chapter 4 and the findings are discussed at length in

Chapter 5.

Interviews of Teachers.

Researcher-developed semi-structured standardized interviews of beginning alternatively

certified teachers were the primary source of data. The interview questions for the semi-

structured interviews were developed and aligned to the research questions to gather in-depth

information regarding support provided by their principals. The questions focused on the needs

and concerns of the teachers as well as the types of support and extent to which support provided

by their principals. The following questions guided the interviews with the first year alternatively

certified teachers:

1. What types of support do you consider that you need as a first year teacher? Do your

   support needs focus on a) administrative work (grading, paperwork, etc.), b)

   instructional strategies, c) school culture, or d) classroom management?

2. What types of support is your principal able to provide you?

3. What do you believe principal support should look like?

4. On the average, how much contact do you have with your principal? Under what

   circumstances do you interact? How would you describe your relationship with him/her?

5. Do you feel comfortable turning to your principal for support? Why or why not?

6. In what ways does the support provided affect your teaching?

7. Do you feel more confident about next year?

8. What types of additional support do you feel is needed?

Interviews of Principals.

A semi-structured standardized open-ended interview guide for interviewing the principals was utilized in gathering information regarding the types of support provided to the new teachers. The set of questions for the principals were aligned to the questions presented to the first year alternatively certified teachers, focusing on the principals' perceived needs of their teachers, types of support provided to their teachers, along with the extent (when, where, how often) of support provided to their teachers. The following questions guided the interviews with the principals who support the first year alternatively certified teachers:

1. What types of support do you feel first year alternatively certified teachers need?

2. What types of support do you provide?

3. Do you feel the support you provide to first year teachers is helpful?

4. What types of support do you provide in the areas of a) administrative work (grading, paperwork, etc.), b) instructional strategies, c) school culture, or d) classroom management?

5. How often do you meet with your first year teachers? Under what circumstances? How would you describe your relationship with your first year teachers?

6. Do you think your first year feel comfortable approaching you for support? Why or why not?

7. Do you feel the support provided has impacted the performance of the teacher(s)? In

what ways?

Document Analysis.

Butin (2010) defines document analysis as the "analysis of text through a specific, standardized, theoretically informed protocol" (p. 99). Supplementary information was acquired through documents. Documents from school-based mentoring programs, along with any formal or informal induction program materials were collected. Site-based documents, such as meeting agendas, handbooks, notebooks, and other supporting documents that addressed areas such as the induction support for the first year alternatively certified teachers were also analyzed. By evaluating the support structure provided to the first year teachers, a framework for improvements for site-based support induction process may be modified for usage within school districts to increase and enhance existing programs. According to Creswell (2009), analyzing documents allows the researcher to "obtain the words of the participant" and "represents data which are thoughtful in that participants have given attention to compiling them" (p. 180). Analysis of the documents completes the triangulation of data and is presented in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis Procedures

ATLAS.ti was used to code the data collected in the interviews. ATLAS-ti is a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software that is used as a tool in the data analysis process (Friese, 2012). Friese asserts using ATLAS.ti utilizes a systematic approach to analyzing data, as well as increasing the validity of the research results. ATLAS.ti includes tools for working with data that cannot be analyzed using formal, statistic approaches, allowing the user to uncover complex phenomena hidden in data (GroupHealth Cooperative, 2005). The data analysis provides tools for selecting, coding, annotating, and comparing segments in text analysis and interpretation.

Open coding was used to analyze participants' responses to utilize a constant comparison process between the collections of data. Saldaña (2009) defines a code as a "word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). Using open coding, the researcher must identify and name the theoretical categories into which the participants' responses and documents will be grouped. The goal is to create descriptive categories that form an introductory framework for analysis. Words, phrases or events that appear to be similar can be grouped into the same category which may be modified or replaced during data analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Summary

Chapter 3 focused on the purpose of the study and provided an overview of the research design of the study, including the research questions, research design, instrumentation, participants, data collection and analysis techniques. The researcher collected interview data from six participants in a large southeast urban school district, who were in their first year of teaching as alternative certified educators, along with secondary data collected from three principals, one from each grade band representative of the district's demographic population. The participants were comprised of first year alternatively certified teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools. Each first year alternatively certified teacher responded to a brief semi-structured open-ended interview that generated data regarding his or her perceptions of the principal support of first year alternatively certified teachers. The participants were able to identify support strategies that are effective in assisting first year alternatively certified teachers during their first year of teaching. The study also examined first year alternatively certified teachers' needs and concerns during the first year of teaching and whether induction activities and programs addressed their needs and/or concerns.

Findings from the study provided in Chapter IV are organized by responses to interview questions from both the first year alternatively certified novice teachers and the principal who supervise and support those teachers. The findings also include a document analysis of materials provided by the participants. Finally, Chapter IV will conclude with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

The central purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the extent of support they received from their principals and the support strategies they identified as most effective. More specifically, this chapter focuses on the data analysis and findings of the study based on the interviews of the first year alternatively certified teachers and their principals, along with the documents provided by the principals that demonstrate support given to the teachers. The study was guided by the following question: Which induction support strategies are perceived by first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective? Data collected helped determine and analyze the following elements of the study:

a) the perceived needs/concerns of the first year alternatively certified teachers;

b) the components of support provided by principals and their alignment with the perceived needs/concerns of first year alternatively certified teachers;

c) the contexts (when, where, how frequently) of support provided by principals to first year alternatively certified teachers;

d) the first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of the impact on their teaching of induction activities provided by principals; and

e) additional support alternatively certified teachers perceive are needed from principals during their first year of teaching.

Interviews were conducted with first year alternatively certified teachers employed in the school district and one principal from each grade band. Criteria for selecting these participants included being alternatively certified in education with a bachelor's degree or higher in a field other than education working in their first year of teaching at the time of the interviews. A secondary set of participants consisted of three principals, one from each grade band representative of the district's demographic population. The principals were selected based on who had first year alternatively certified teachers on staff who were included in the first set of participants and their agreement to participate in the study. The researcher triangulated the data by conducting interviews with teachers and principals from each grade band as well as examining important documents from each participating school. The documents collected during the investigation included public documents such as agendas, meeting minutes, new teacher orientation materials.

This study employed a qualitative case study methodology to gain a better understanding of the mentoring, resources, and site-based support required by and provided to the beginning teachers. Merriam (1998) defined a qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). The primary social units in the study are the first year alternatively certified teachers. Focusing on a small number of research subjects allowed the researcher to explore the mentoring and induction process of beginning teachers, their perceptions of the support received, and an analysis of the support provided by the principals to the first year alternatively certified teachers. The educators in the three grade bands shared common concerns about first year support, which provided an opportunity to focus on the strategies deemed most effective in supporting the teachers. The data collection also included responses from principal interviews, along with and documents that

detail the support provided to the teachers. The triangulation of the interviews and document

analysis allows the reader to analyze the experiences of the teachers and the principals.

Interviewees were a culturally diverse group of teachers in their first year of teaching and

alternatively certified with a bachelor's degree in a field outside of education. The second set of

interviews included principals who lead the schools where the teachers taught. The interviews

were used as a guide to help teachers reflect on their first-year teacher support from their

principals. Interview questions were designed to assist the teachers and principals to reflect on

the amount and types of support provided to the first year alternatively certified teachers. The

interview questions (see Appendix C) focused on the teachers' perceptions of the site-based

support provided by the principals, types of support needed according to the teachers'

perceptions, along with induction activities that assisted them during their first year of teaching.

The interview data, which was audio recorded, employed member checking to validate responses

as well as to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study

(Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006) and notes taken during the interview. In addition, the

transcribed notes were peer reviewed and verified. Interview transcripts were reviewed several

times, during which time data was organized to develop research question themes. The

researcher scrutinized and coded each transcript for themes based on administrative support,

including positive or negative comments regarding the support. Using ATLAS.ti, transcripts

were coded by theme to obtain a better understanding of the interviewees' perspectives on

support structures and their effectiveness.

Protection of Participants' Rights

District-assigned instructional mentors were utilized in order to identify first year

alternatively certified teachers for instructional support. The district mentors also assisted

identified potential participants for the study. The mentors receive extensive training as coaches as well as participated in numerous content-specific professional development sessions throughout the school year. The researcher consulted with the mentors to select participants who matched the criteria for the study. Teachers and principals who agreed to take part in the study were then given a consent form (see Appendix B) which outlined activities for participating, requests for demographic information, and their rights as participants. All participants were notified their names, personal information and/or data was used for research only, and the researcher provided assurances to participants to make certain the data was kept confidential and the participants would not be identified by name. To protect the anonymity of the participants, this chapter will refer to the teacher respondents as Sarah (elementary teacher A), Erika (elementary teacher B), Aaron (middle school teacher A), Nicki (middle school teacher B), Zoe (high school teacher A), and Jack (high school teacher B). The principals are identified as Elementary School Principal, Middle School Principal, and High School Principal. The findings are organized by interview questions and themes that emerged from the interviewees' responses.

School Profiles

Data was collected from subjects working in one of the three following schools:

Elementary School A. The three research subjects comprised a trio, including the principal and two elementary school teachers, who were both alternatively certified and in their first year of teaching. The school is located in an urban area in a large city. The school serves about 550 students in grades kindergarten through fifth, with approximately 99 percent of the students in the school participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch program, which qualifies the school as a Title I school. The school's staff includes a principal, assistant principal, two instructional coaches, and 32 classroom teachers.

Sarah (Elementary Teacher A). Sarah is a 25-year-old Caucasian female who graduated recently with a bachelor's degree in Business and Behavioral Science with a minor in Graphic Communications. After graduating, Sarah joined Teach for America as a Core Member (teacher in training). Prior to teaching at her current assignment, she spent the previous summer at the Teach for America Institute, teaching third grade reading at an urban school with demographics similar to her school.

Erika (Elementary Teacher B). Erika, a 25-year-old African-American teacher, graduated from a local private college in May 2011, and started working with Teach for America and began teaching at her current school soon after her summer training. She is enrolled in another university's program for a Master's of Art in Teaching in Early Childhood Education. She holds a bachelor's degree is in Psychology, but initially also majored in Elementary Education, unfortunately, the school's funding limited the courses needed to complete her degree, therefore she was unable to complete the Education program.

Elementary Principal. The elementary school principal is an African-American female serving her fifth year at the school. She previously served as an elementary school teacher, curriculum specialist, instructional coach, and a professional development specialist with a combined total of 24 years of instructional experience before becoming a principal. The principal holds an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership and is completing a doctoral degree in Reading and Literacy Education at a local university.

Middle School A. The three research subjects includes the principal and two middle school teachers, who were both alternatively certified and in their first year of teaching. The school is located in the southwest area of an urban area in a large city. The school is one of 15 middle schools and serves 650 students from 6th grade to 8th grade, with approximately 89

percent of the students in the school participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch program, which qualifies the school for Title I status. The school's staff includes a principal, three assistant principals, three instructional coaches, and 37 classroom teachers.

   Aaron (Middle School Teacher A). Aaron is a 26-year-old African-American male who graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Statistics with a minor in Business Administration. Similar to Sarah and Erika, Aaron received his probationary teaching through a state-sponsored certification program. He currently teaches mathematics in a 6th grade boys' single-gender class.

   Nicki (Middle School Teacher B). Nicki is a 25-year-old African-American female who teaches English Language Arts for 7th grade students. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering. She is a Core Member for Teach for America and is pursuing of Master of Arts degree in Education.

   Middle School Principal. The middle school principal has worked in education for 17 years previously in the areas of mathematics, instructional coaching, and professional learning specialist. She is currently in her third year as principal. She was alternatively certified as a mathematics teacher, with an initial dual degree of Mathematics and Computer Science.

   High School A. The three research subjects from this high school includes the principal and two high school teachers, who were alternatively certified and serving in their first year of teaching. The school is located in the downtown area of an urban area in a large city. The school is one of 21 high schools and serves 1440 students from 9th grade to 12th grade, with approximately 86 percent of the students in the school participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch program, which qualifies the school for Title I status. The school's staff includes a principal, four assistant principals, four instructional coaches, and 83 classroom teachers.

Zoe (High School Teacher A). Zoe is a 31-year-old Indian American who previously pursued a career in the medical field after graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience. She received a probationary teaching certification though a state-approved, classroom-based teacher preparation program. She currently teaches Advanced Placement Biology for 11th grade students. She is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching degree in Mathematics.

Jack (High School Teacher B). Jack is a 28-year-old African American male who teaches Calculus to 12th grade students. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and previously worked in technology retail before receiving prior to participating in a local college's teacher preparation program. Like Zoe, he is pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching degree in Mathematics.

High School Principal. The high school principal has worked in education for nine years as a mathematics teacher and technology education specialist before beginning his career as a principal. He has served as principal for four years.

Findings from the Interviews

Teachers' Responses to Interview Questions.

What types of support do you consider that you need as a first year teacher? Do your support needs focus on a) administrative work, b) instructional strategies, c) school culture, or d) classroom management?

Mentoring. For the purpose of this study, instructional *coaches* refer to educational support staff who assist teachers with planning, developing, and reflecting on their instructional practices (Knight, 2005). The term *mentors* refer to experienced teachers who work with beginning teachers while they continue to work in classrooms (Odell and Huling, 2000). Both

terms are used interchangeably throughout the participants' responses during the interviews. First

year teachers have support from the school principal through orientation and monthly meetings.

The participants indicated they did not have as many opportunities to interact with their

principals as initially thought. The teachers instead were assigned to work with other teachers.

All of the respondents indicated they did not receive direct support from their principals.

Teachers either received support from the schools' coaches, assistant principals, or other

mentors. Jack stated, "I would say that I need a mentor teacher, someone that I can pretty much

lean on for any and everything – just to help me get through that first year." Aaron voiced

frustration with the lack of mentors:

> I think if they would allow me to sit in a few classes, you know, and get some type of
> experienced teacher to kind of, you know, bring me in into what's going on with the
> school and how they like to structure their lesson. Then I think that would help and stuff.
> I was assigned a mentor who came once. She came in the classroom and came like a few
> weeks after I started. And after that one time, never saw her again. Never saw her again.

Sarah also indicated that a mentor was provided from both the school district and the

alternative certification program provided a mentor, yet found both to be ineffective, particularly

with the mentor provided by the university's alternative certification program:

> I mean I definitely think that it was my [district] mentor and my [alternative certification
> program] mentor. Because at [university], they had a lot of idealistic… yeah, idealistic
> free- choice, type of ideas. For me, like I do think that there are a lot of good strategies,
> but at the beginning of the year. Like, my mentor had never taught!

Nicki described the abundance of support received during the summer months of the

alternative certification program before school started, and expressed frustration with the lack of

support provided after the start of school:

> I did my internship, or my student teaching during the summer, and everything was just
> kind of given to us or there for us: lesson plans, some were coming in doing observations
> and giving us growth feedback, so I think I felt really comfortable. And then, when the

school year started, I felt like I didn't have anything. So, at this point, I feel like I need

some support, whether somebody coming in and looking at my classroom management or

helping with lesson plans, I just feel like I'm kinda out there by myself.

Ericka spoke of the issue of having too many mentors:

For me, I had a lot of different coaches and it was a little bit overwhelming for me. I had [a district] mentor. I had a [alternative certification program] MTLD [Manager of Teaching Leadership and Development], and I had a [university] mentor. So there was a lot of different feedback. I think like having a mentor who comes in, one mentor, with definite one idea because it was a lot of different teaching ideas. And well now, I know my teaching philosophy. I mean I have a feel and my own ideas, my own teaching philosophy not knowing that in the beginning of the year was a real struggle for me, and was really changing the way I was teaching.

Meetings with the principal. In addition to mentors, some of the teachers suggested that

having regular meetings would be an effective strategy for support if provided. When the

participants were asked how often they were able to meet with their principals, the teachers

appeared to have varying times. Ericka said that meetings the school principal took place during

staff meetings once every week after school. Aaron stated the principal was visible during

monthly meetings. Jack discussed his time and access to his principal:

I guess if I were to do it by the week, maybe twenty, thirty minutes because typically, what we would have is a faculty meeting every other week. But, despite those meetings, you know I would either see him in the morning and/or I'll see him at lunch. I'll see him after school. And you know, I usually talk [to him]. He'll usually ask me how things are going and things of that nature. So I would say, within a week, probably a good thirty minutes of an hour if I stay with him talking about, you know, my day & how things can be better or worse, or things that I found useful and helpful.
Nicki acknowledged that the beginning of the year there was access to the principal

during the week prior to the start of school. At that time the principal "sat down with the new

teachers in the building and kind of got together and went over the handbook and expectations

and where to find different resources and things the district was providing as well as going over

our [the district's] initiatives. But, as far as sitting down, one on one, talking to, the principal – I

did that at the beginning of the year and I haven't had that opportunity to do that again."

     Instructional strategies. Another topic which surfaced during the discussion of what

support was needed was instructional strategies. The teachers asserted that as new teachers, they

needed support in helping improve their instruction to assist their students. Strategies cited by the

teachers as being effective in improving their instruction included modeling, monitoring,

observation, feedback, professional development, and resources. Although the teacher

participants specified these strategies as supportive, there were varying degrees of

implementation within the schools. Sarah confirmed support was needed to improve her

instruction, "I think my support needs to be more focused on instructional strategies. I am always

striving to get better with my instruction and creating engaging lessons for students."

     Jack stated, "I would just say [support with] instructional strategies. Being a first year

teacher, you know we did have an induction program and that was pretty decent. However you

know, within a week or so, I don't if that is exactly enough time to prepare me as an instructional

guru or content guru. So, again, just having somebody to work with throughout the year would

definitely be helpful to me." Ericka cited professional development provided during after school

meetings were supportive. Some of the participants mentioned modeling as a desired strategy for

support in the classroom. Sarah said, "One thing [the assistant principal] did do for me was, she

modeled a couple of things for me that was helpful. I am a visual learner, so seeing people

actually model was great." Zoe stated, "The first thing I need is the model support. This is, like,

the school system would have the model support from the administration and the

schoolteachers." Aaron spoke a great deal concerning monitoring, asserting that monitoring

would be supportive in both the areas of instruction and classroom management:

I think, maybe sending someone down every now and then to monitor exactly what's going on in the classroom. I think they could do a little bit better with that, coming in monitoring. Making sure the lesson is correct. Making sure the instruction is correct. Make sure the classroom management is correct. And, then, before all of that, let them see what it looks like. Go in there and let them sit in the back of the class. Let them see what a good teacher looks like. You know because, you are going to make some mistakes – a whole lot of mistakes for a whole year, if you do not have anybody coming down in there monitoring you.

Nicki stated, "I know that I can go to my coaches and ask them for anything. We have teachers in the building that are very open. So I guess I could say that [for support] the principal put the coaches in place."

Classroom management support. To respond to students' needs and to be accountable for student achievement, the first year alternatively certified teachers are expected to attain a certain level of proficiency early in their teaching, particularly in terms of classroom management, and knowledge of curriculum and instruction. All of the participants in this study indicated that they faced challenges in terms of classroom management. Several of the teachers mentioned that they would have preferred to spend more time being assisted with classroom management strategies at the beginning of the school year. Aaron noted:

Classroom management has always been a big issue. Classroom management would be a little better if you could, you know, I guess train teachers. We do have, classroom management classes, you know, we get lessons [on] classroom management. That is a general thing you know when you come to a school like the [urban] school I am at now.

Administrative management support. Regarding administrative work, such as grading student papers and submitting lesson plans, the teachers felt confused and overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork which needed to be completed on a daily basis. Ericka stated:

I am still kind of struggling with a lot of paperwork and what's needed and what's not. I am very confused at times. But as far as like paperwork stuff; it is very confusing to me. And sometimes, I don't even know what I would ask. I don't. Sometimes, I don't know when I should be asking questions which actually create a big problem for me. When I do

something, I do not want to do it wrong. But, I thought I was doing it right? So, why would I ask a question?

Nicki acknowledged confusion as well:

You know they [administrators] would go in a classroom and they [administrators] would want lesson plans and all that stuff. But, you are not exactly telling me what I am doing in here - especially when I came in during the middle of the year. And that is even harder.

Observations. On the subject of observations, the teacher participants mentioned both having the principal or other support conduct observations of their instruction as well as being allowed to observe veteran teachers' classrooms. Ericka shared, "[Principals should be] in the classrooms so you can see what's going on and then kind of hear what you are pushing to teachers to what you see. I would really need to do more of the observations [myself] - teacher observations." Aaron disclosed a desire to observe other teachers' classrooms:

I wish they could let you watch. Look in on someone's class, you know, have you to sit in someone's class and see exactly how they structure their lessons and deal with classroom management. I think if they would allow me to sit in a few classes, you know, and get some type of experienced teacher to, kind of, you know, bring me in into what's going on with the school and how they like to structure their lesson. Then, I think that would help and stuff.

Consistent feedback. Feedback was another strategy the first year alternatively certified teachers pointed to as desired or existing support. Aaron affirmed feedback as a desired strategy, saying, "More feedback. I think as a new teacher, especially coming in, in the middle of the year. They need to give us more feedback. I need that feedback to make sure I am doing exactly what my job calls me to do. I do not really think I got that much feedback being a new teacher." Sarah stated, "My feedback from my observations has been really good. The beginning of the year [the feedback] was not as great as I wanted it to be, but I feel it has helped me grow as a teacher."

Availability of resources. An area of concern for the participants was the lack of adequate resources. Shortages of teaching resources appeared to be crucial for some of the teachers. As first year teachers, the participants in this study depended on the principal to secure appropriate resources and materials for their area of instruction. Some teachers assumed that materials needed for instruction would be provided by the school at the beginning of the year. Jack shared, "I definitely need to have resources such as materials that I can pull materials from, like text books, websites, scope and sequence documents – things of that nature, as far as my curriculum needs so that I can enhance my instructions as much as possible. Technology equipment would be nice, like a laptop." Nicki indicated the coaches assisted with planning lessons was helpful, however, it was presupposed that materials would be given to all teachers for instruction, as work materials are provided for other professional occupations.

Adaptability to school culture. Some of the respondents noted that principal support and resources to assist with adapting to the school culture would also be beneficial. For the purpose of the interviews, school culture refers to the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths understood, in varying degrees, by members of the school in how they think and act (Stolp, 1994). Ericka responded:

> School culture mostly because, sometimes there can be a discrepancy between what is not right to do in my classroom. But then, what is not right to do in the whole entire school? So, I think that there should be more of, should be more cohesive. Meaning that if this is not allowed here, it should not be allowed in the whole entire school. So, if I have to send a kid out for doing something extremely inappropriate. I do not want them coming right back to me because that creates difficulties.

Zoe felt more comfortable adapting to school culture saying:

> It [the school culture] really makes you feel comfortable so you can go ahead with your classes. Because this school culture will lead you for other things, like, instructional strategies and grading. If you are really good with this one [instructional strategies], then there will be no problem with the other one.

What types of support is your principal able to provide you? The majority of the participants' responses indicated that they received indirect support from their administrators. The participants revealed that the principals provided opportunities to attend professional development, time to meet with coaches and mentors, along with instructional resources. Sarah stated, "Well, actually [my assistant principal] at the beginning of the year came into my classroom a lot and would help me out with specific things I needed help with." Erika also spoke of indirect support from her principal: "We've had professional developments… [they] have been very helpful just in kind of breaking down what is expected of us when, um our coaches have been very helpful to me. We also [had] experienced teachers, where we can go into their classrooms and make observations." Aaron asserted that his principal provided some direct support with classroom management: "The principal does back me up on a lot of things as far as discipline. That I think, [because] I am a new teacher." Nicki declared,

> No. There was a time at the beginning of the year and [principal] sat down [with the new teachers], and I guess like all the new teachers in the building kind of got together and we went over the [hand]book and expectations, and where to find different resources and things. But like sitting down, one-on-one, really talking to the principal – I did that at the beginning of the year and I have not had that opportunity to do that again.

Zoe indicated that although she does not meet with her principal on a one-on-one basis frequently, "just his support and checking on us, and having that open door policy have definitely made it feel abiding to be a part of the organization." Jack, referred to his mentor, stated, "Basically my department chair has really helped me a lot in just having all my materials, and all of the rulers and everything."

What do you believe principal support should look like? The participants' responses to this question were based on their initial perceptions of support as first year teachers. Each of the participants implied their principals were not available to provide individualized support

themselves. The majority of the teachers felt that they had received a range of support, however, assistance was not provided by the principals themselves, but through individuals assigned by the principals. Participants' answers were similar to the support needs identified in Interview Question 1.

Sarah responded, "It's like so many people [who provide support], that I really didn't need the added support [from the principal]. But, one thing [the assistant principal] did do for me was modeled a couple of things for me that was helpful. I am a visual learner, so seeing people actually model." Erika stated that she realized that principal was "too busy" to provide support, however, she added, "We've had professional development… [and] staff meetings afterschool. She has been very helpful, just in breaking down what is expected of us. [And]our coaches have been very helpful to me. She has been very open in providing support." Aaron felt that, as a first year teacher, his principal should have provided more support with classroom discipline: "Maybe sending someone down every now and then to monitor exactly what's going on in the classroom. I think she could do a little bit better with that." Nicki revealed she was unclear as what principal support should look like, responding, "I honestly don't know how to answer that question because this is my first year, you know, in the school." Zoe felt that principals should provide moral support: "Switching from my background – that would make it very easy to transition in my first month of teaching." Jack indicated that he did not know what to expect from his principal in terms of support, however, in describing the assistance given to him from his principal, he stated:

> I think the model that we have here has been pretty good. For example, I have a mentor teacher that is my content area. And then, in addition to that, having a department chair has been very helpful. So, I think that even if you don't have a department chair, someone in your area of expertise that can help you with those things that you may not know and need to know.

On the average, how much contact do you have with your principal? Under what

circumstances do you interact? How would you describe your relationship with him/her?

Participants' responses indicated they had limited contact with their principals due to the

principals' responsibilities and schedules, although the principals were available if needed for

support beyond what was provided by other staff members. Sarah said, "[The principal] was

always there when I needed her. But I didn't, really. I mean I interacted with her, but, I didn't

really have her in my classroom one on one helping me in that sense." Erika also described

limited contact with her principal, though she also felt she had a good relationship with her

principal:

> Monthly, but that varies. It could be like a situation where I had a very serious issue with
> a student that I needed to talk to her about, I've had some health issues this year, and she
> has been very supportive. So, I have actually had to talk to her a lot. I pretty much can
> talk to her and there is a mutual respect. We have never had any issues where I felt
> uncomfortable going to her about anything, or anything like that.

Aaron explained his principal's frequency of visits: "A month on the average – she really

could have been really busy. But as far as seeing her in the building, I would say like two or

three times a week in the hallways monitoring. She would speak and she's a very nice lady, but

not really coming around to the classroom too much. I think I saw her once or twice in my

semester I was there." Nicki expressed that she did not see her principal as often as she initially

assumed, "I see her in the morning when we are signing in and in the afternoon, I'll see her

during dismissal. When she comes into the classroom, it is for an observation. So, when I see

her, it is she is coming in doing observations, it is not so much as support, it's to evaluate what I

am doing." Zoe and Jack both explained that although their principal conveyed his availability to

all of the teachers, they normally interacted with him twice a week during staff meetings and on

an as needed basis. Zoe stated that she interacted with her principal "when you have problems, or

depending on if there was something you really want to share with the principal." Jack

emphasized, "The only structured time [we see the principal] is during faculty meetings, but that

would be every other week, typically for about an hour. When I see him in the hallways outside

of that, he'll usually ask me how things are going and things of that nature."

      Do you feel comfortable turning to your principal for support? The themes that

emerged from interview question two were approachability and comfort level. In this study,

comfort level refers to the degree at which teachers feel at ease when asking and answering for

support from their principals, their self-perception of how well they are performing, and self-

efficacy for teaching. Approachability refers to the principal's ability to be approached for

support, questions, and/or concerns.

      Approachability and comfort level. While the participants indicated concerns with the

types and amount of support provided by the school principals, the majority of the respondents

felt the principals were approachable. The teachers were also comfortable in reaching out to the

principals for support, whether professionally or personally. According to Sarah, "I feel like from

a principal's standpoint, I know [they have] has so many things to look after and to be in charge

of. So, I feel like for now looking, just being able to go up to [the principal] if I have a problem

and feeling comfortable. I mean, there have been points when one of my students was left after

school. I didn't know what to do. [The principal] literally went with me to his house to drop him

off with me."

      Ericka gave another example of comfort level with the principal: "Well, I feel

comfortable teaching the way I feel comfortable teaching. So, I know what works for my

students, and what works well for me, and I am allowed to do that. I don't feel like, 'Oooo, if

somebody comes into my room at this point that I am gonna, that I need to change up my, what I

am doing.' I don't feel like that, so, because of the communication that we have, if I have a
question about if this is okay or not. I can just ask."

Responding to how comfortable they feel in approaching the principal for support, Zoe
stated, "Perfectly fine, not a problem because he is a very good person – very good professional.
[He is] supportive to the staff and everything. I really like my principal. If I were to rate my
principal, I would give him ten out of ten." Jack asserted, "I feel as though I can talk to him
about anything that is going on in the classroom and that he will support me and ask, 'What's
going on?' The good and the bad – I do not feel like I have to keep anything from him. So, I
think definitely, you know, he is supportive in that regard." Aaron said, "Oh yeah, I definitely do
feel comfortable. Like, the administrative team was really good. I mean, I do feel comfortable
going to [the principal]." Nicki felt unsure about approaching the principal for support because
other teachers have made discouraging remarks about speaking with the principal for fear of
reprimand. Overall, the teachers stated they felt comfortable about speaking with the principals,
but did not have many opportunities to approach them to inform them of the types of support and
resources needed to feel effective with classroom instruction and management, paperwork, and
planning.

In what ways does the support provided affect your teaching? Each of the teachers
responded that support provided a positive impact on their confidence level, although individuals
other than the principals provided support. According to Nicki, "I will say the coaches helped
with planning the lesson. One of the coaches came in and modeled. She came in and kind of
showed me how to do a lesson. So, I can't say that it [principal support] hasn't had an impact."
Aaron agreed with the lack of support stating, "I would say this year did get a little better. But,
my instruction was still a tad bit off because I did not get much feedback on instruction." In

contrast, two of the participants indicated that principal support was effective. Sarah stated, "They [principal and assistant principal] have been very helpful with strategies on how to deal with behavioral issues. Jack asserted, "It's allowed me to not be afraid to try new things. For example, I am not just teaching out of the textbook, and I know that I am not supposed to anyway. But, I'm more inclined to try to relate everything to real world applications as I should. I am just trying to get at different learning styles of all my students and so I am not just being a traditional teacher the way I was taught. I feel free to do that."

Do you feel more confident about next year? Each of the teachers interviewed stated that the support received and the experiences acquired during their first year of teaching would not deter them from teaching next year. When asked if she felt more confident about next year, Sarah replied, "Very confident, like I feel so much more confident. Even just going in with one set plan [for teaching], thinking over the summer. Having my unit planned out for the year, and just knowing what I am going to do it. I am so excited." Ericka implied her confidence level would improve if expectations for teaching were outlined. She answered, "I would just like to see expectations laid out a little bit better. Sometimes it gets confusing with what they [the administration] need from us, and if I don't know then, it is difficult for me to really give you what you are really looking for." Aaron felt his confidence level would increase along with the principal's:

> I do feel more comfortable about next year since a year has gone by since the principal has come in. I feel like she feels more comfortable. I feel like I've gotten to know her a little bit better. So, I guess coming to her would be a lot easier. I also feel like the school will run a tighter ship than it did this year because [the principal] is still learning. I think next year will possibly be much better, because her experiences are growing.

> Nicki alluded that her career in teaching may not continue. She stated:

> It's just not what I thought it was going to be. You know, with so many children and the paperwork, it's just a lot to do. The atmosphere between my past job and working here

with the principal is completely different. It's kind of intimidating. I honestly came in thinking that teaching was going to be fun, that I was going to make an impact. I feel not necessarily bad, but I do feel some type of way because I can't see the fruits of my labor. It's not immediate and everything kind of goes by this end of year test. I am anxious to wait until the end of the year to see if I have been an effective teacher or not. So, I don't know how to feel about that.

Zoe indicated she feels more confident about teaching next year as long as she continues to receive moral and academic support from her principal and support staff. Jack also felt confident returning next year, especially if he were to receive additional time to plan for instruction.

What types of additional support do you feel is needed? Data sources revealed that while some of the first year teachers received adequate resources and materials, instructional coaches, teacher leaders, and other administrators provided the majority of the support. The teachers indicated the support provided was not aligned to the support desired, although some forms of instructional support was provided to the first year teachers. Needs for support included securing resources, classroom management, instructional strategies, feedback, monitoring, and opportunities observe veteran teachers as well as to be observed. Providing first year alternatively teachers with support specific to their needs is essential for a successful first year of teaching along with being less stressful for the teachers and administration.

Principals' Responses to Interview Questions

What types of support do you feel first year alternatively certified teachers need? The interview questions for the principals were developed to correlate with the teachers' interview questions to solicit comparative responses. The responses given by the principals helped to authenticate the types of support provided to the teachers. The principals were asked to describe their observations regarding the types of support they considered essential for their first

year teachers. The elementary school principal named classroom management and instructional

strategies as areas of concerns for the teachers she supports.

> Well, first of all, I feel like they need support with classroom management. So more than likely, the support would be in classroom management and just implementing the curriculum looking at the pedagogy. Most of them come in pretty strong in the content area as well. So, it is classroom management and pedagogy. It is in classroom management, and it's with actually implementing the curriculum. And because a lot of times, they may have all these different activities. Because the classroom management is not where it needs to be, sometimes those activities turn into chaos. So it is usually my direct support is the classroom management and the pedagogy being implemented.

The middle school principal felt that the first year alternatively certified teachers need "a

lot of hands on, one-on-one attention. They need to have someone check on them daily as well as

weekly and monthly to help them transition. Many of them come into education because of the

days off, so they're really not, they don't understand what it takes to become a teacher… The

level of accountability is different and they don't understand that." The high school principal's

concern was contradictory from the elementary and middle school principals interviewed. The

high school principal felt that assimilating to the building logistically was the main support the

teachers needed as they entered the school year.

> The first thing being is not so much as things being in order, but one of the things in being like a geographical understanding of the building. Where are things located? If it is their class, the discipline office, kind of a tour of the building so they know where things are. The second thing is to find out how paper is ordered. Where do you order paper & supplies, pencils? If it is a science teacher-lab materials and all those things to find out how they do that and what's the process. Then, we have them talk with our front office personnel-our secretary, who handles a lot of those orders or they will talk with one of the academic leaders to find those logistics out as well. So, that is the whole process in itself. So, we offer that to them. I talked about the introductory meeting. And the third thing I would like to discuss with them is their process as far as any discipline referrals. Some are informal where they would just send me a letter or note to me, but, we also give copies of our disciplinary forms and pretty much tell them of the process of what to do filling it out, delivering it, because we do have separate the discipline offices.

What types of support do you provide? Describing the types of support provided, the principals provided comparable responses, specifying that they do not have opportunities to work with the teachers one on one, however, they try to implement some site-based form of coaching or mentoring program as support for the new teachers. The elementary school principal stated that although there was no opportunity for individual support provided, other support team members were placed with the first year alternatively certified teachers and meetings are held with the team members for follow-up support.

> Every Monday when I meet with my Administrative team, I start off with, 'What are the student concerns?' because we always want to stay focused on the students. The next piece is teacher concerns and falling under that teacher concerns are always our new teachers. Whether they are alternatively certified, all of them speaking with the different coaches about going in and modeling. I lend support a lot of times if I go by the classroom and see maybe they are struggling with a student. Then I'll go in and I'll just talk them through some things or after an observation. However, I honestly don't get in and support them as much as I would like to. But indirectly, but I make sure the support is there.

On providing support for the first year alternatively certified teachers, the middle school principal spoke of site-based programs and mentors provided by the district, but was not able to offer personal support.

> Well, there are some site-based and district programs. Our site-based mentors meet with the first year teachers once a month, It's like a gripe session it they want it to be, they hear about their concerns, their successes, and the types of things that they need, as well as my coaches meet with them on a monthly basis. It was my desire at the beginning of the year to meet with them for the first thirty days because I really wanted to hear what was something that we could do to support them. I meet with them one on one as much as possible, but I basically send my coaches out to provide the support that they need. Basically, I can think of a three month period where I may have met with them one time.

The high school principal referred to support which was provided at the beginning of the school year in trying to facilitate relationship-building among the first year alternatively certified teachers and other teachers and support staff in the building.

At the beginning of the year we meet, around the second week of school, we all together meet – the mentors, the teachers, all the administrators in the building, and the veteran teachers or mentor teachers would go ahead and give their little stories on how they got into teaching. They might talk about an experience they may have had, or as a new teacher that kind of turned things around or made them appreciate the profession more. Then, after that, the mentees are introduced. Basically, in high school, we assign a content area based teacher with a new teacher coming in. They could be new as far as a new profession, fresh out of college. Or they could be new from another district coming to [the] high school. As far as those teachers who, let 'say transferring in from one high school to another, they receive a mentor too. But, it is more or less on an as-needed basis.

The principals expressed they gave support for the first year teachers indirectly, and all three agreed that indirect support was beneficial in assisting the teachers. The middle school principal felt that the support was successful as the support structure provides "someone who the teachers can go to about their concerns on a frequent basis and if they need something they can get it immediately."

The elementary school principal also assisted the teachers in assimilating to the school culture in addition to provided indirect support in the areas of classroom management and instructional strategies:

The wonderful thing about [the elementary school] is that we have a great culture and in terms of grade levels, of course there is always one grade level team lead who is always supportive. I would never have anybody in their position if they weren't, if they did not have the patience and want to lend support, not only to the brand new teachers, but to all the teachers on that grade level.

The middle school principal confirms that the coaches and site-based mentors who are teacher leaders in the building provide the different types of support with emphasis on instructional support and culture.

Many of the alternatively certified teachers come straight out of college, so they really don't have an understanding of what the culture is like and my school is 100 percent black and many of them have not come into contact with that kind of culture, so therefore they do not know how to approach the parents, the children. In many ways the children need structure, and they are not willing to provide stern structure because they don't know how to give it or not accustomed to it.

The high school principal believed the focus for supporting first year alternatively certified teachers should be placed in instructional support.

> Instructional support, a lot of times, is not necessarily comes from me, but it will come from their mentor teacher. That is why we, again try to do a good job in pairing them up with veteran teachers in that particular subject area. They are going to be real familiar about what is expected on the EOCT [End of Course Test], what parents are looking for, what standards needs to be covered or should be more familiarized with, yet again, going back to the EOCT and where a teacher should be, what curriculum-wise. What they should have been covering by a certain period throughout the year – a certain block throughout the year.

In describing the frequency of meeting with all of the principals indicated the meetings are informal, unstructured or on an as-needed basis. Teacher leaders, instructional support team members, or other administrators (i.e. assistant principals) usually conduct meetings with the first year teachers. The school leaders also noted that they are able to meeting with the instructional support personnel more often than with the teachers.

How would you describe your relationship with your first year teachers? The elementary school principal described the relationship with the first year alternatively certified teachers as professional and personal.

> I think it is a great professional relationship. I hope that they feel like we care about them as people as well as professionals. I definitely feel that they feel comfortable. I do think a lot of times when they see me; they usually see me really busy and I have to say, 'Do you need something?' You know they are looking like, 'Can I stop and talk to you?' So even though I think they feel comfortable once they get with me, I think a lot of times they, you know, they will see me running and doing things and not want to stop me.

The middle school principal also meets with the teachers on an infrequent basis, mainly to check in or put out fires, because "they may have sent out letters to parents, or violated FERPA [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act] and crossed confidentiality." Due to this type of support, the principal felt that the relationship was similar to a parent and a child, stating, "They know that if they need something, they can come to me, but there are

things they should not share with me. I think it is the appropriate balance – we're not too

comfortable with each other, but we are comfortable enough." The high school principal felt

that the teachers are comfortable approaching for support.

> I like to know, is they can talk to me. Yeah. I know I do not display or have that, 'I am too busy,' I just want folks to feel real comfortable. I want them to feel how I would like to feel if I needed that same type of support and, I'm hoping they would appreciate that. I am pretty genuine about what they do in the classroom and giving the support they need from me in many capacities, not just discipline, but just kind of knowing they have an advocate. Whether it is parental concerns, or a parent concerned about a grade that they either feel like the child either did not deserve or should have gotten. The teacher has got all their documentations, then, I am going to back them up on that. I am pretty supportive about that.

Do you feel the support provided has impacted the performance of the teachers?

The principals all believed that because of infrequent direct support on the issue of whether the

support provided has affected the performance of the teachers. The elementary school principal

revealed, "I think I have not done anything to particularly to impact their performance. To be

honest, I wish that I could say I did. But, I think they both are very innate teachers." The middle

school principal I think so, I'm not looking at support I individually provide, but the support

structures that I put in place which will impact teacher instruction and student achievement over

the long haul." The high school principal felt positive about the support provided.

> I think because I try to create an environment where that is not the case. When you see me, yeah, you know who I am. But, I am more of an ally to you. I am a colleague to you. I am also supportive to you. I think that helps out in your performance in the classroom, with a level of comfort and then, being comfortable enough again to come and talk to me about concerns. Be it private, personal, or professional.

Document Analysis

An analysis of the documents collected from the teachers and principal participants

demonstrated the infrequent support of provided to the first year alternatively certified teachers.

Five documents collected from the schools who participated in the study included meeting

agendas, which mentioned bulleted items "Teacher Support Needs" or "New Teachers", along

with instructional support logs from mentor teachers and instructional coaches. The elementary

school provided a calendar of mentor/mentee meetings and each of the schools included

handbooks that incorporated information not specific for first year teachers, but necessary for all

staff members. A syllabus and calendar of district support for the first year teachers detailed

topics of support for all beginning teachers – not specific to alternative certified teachers. The

topics ranged from the school discipline policy to using the lesson plan template. Once the

themes were developed, spreadsheets were created for each theme; specific occurrences of the

themes were cut and pasted from the interview transcripts. The development and refinement of

an organizational system of analyzing documents helped shape future data collection and

provided a structure for ongoing and progressively deeper analysis.

The Elementary Principal described the documents as "not as detailed as they should be."

She also added, "Every Monday, when I meet with my administrative team, we discuss teacher

concerns, and falling under teacher concerns are always our new teachers. Whether they are

alternatively certified or not, all of them [new teachers] speak with the different coaches about

coming in and modeling instruction for them." When asked about documents that demonstrate

the principal support given to the new teachers, the Middle School Principal replied, "I'm sorry. I

don't have anything that I use specifically with the new teachers. That [support] is something I

assign my instructional coaches and mentors to do." The High School Principal replied that he

discusses briefly teacher support during meetings with his administrators, which are reflected on

the agendas, however, leaves specific support to the instructional coaches and district mentors

that are assigned to his school.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the perspectives of alternatively certified beginning teachers and the support they received from their principals. The study also examined the perceptions of the principals who work with the teachers interviewed in the study and the support they provided to the first year alternatively certified teachers. This research was conducted over the 2011-2012 school year in an urban school district. The participants in the alternatively certified novice teachers' group were representative of the elementary, middle, and high schools and selected through purposeful random sampling with two teachers from each grade band for a total of six participants. Three principal participants consisted of one from each grade band representative of the district's demographic population. The purpose of selecting these principals who worked with the selected teachers was to provide credibility through comparison of information presented. All nine voluntary participants remained part of the study for its entirety.

The schools included in this study offered strategies for site-based mentoring and induction support for first year alternatively certified teachers, however, the research identifies gaps in the types and amount of support provided by the school principal. Gaps from the study demonstrate the types of support the principals view as significant for a successful first year – including classroom management and instructional support are briefly addressed in the beginning of the school year and are based on what the principals perceived or deemed as necessary support. There is no indication or documentation that confirms a needs-assessment survey was administered to the first year alternatively certified teachers to individualize support. In addition, the first year teacher's mentors and/or instructional coaches often provided additional support and feedback in lieu of the principals.

The data indicated that there was some variation in the perceptions of the first year alternatively certified teachers in terms of the support that they received. Participants cited examples of various levels of support from the instructional support team members, school district and other sources; however, each of the participants noted an infrequent amount from the principals themselves. While the teachers indicated their principals were approachable and they felt comfortable in speaking with them, they were not able to obtain the support they felt was necessary for teacher success. The interview data also identified the types of support the first year alternatively certified teachers desired or found to be effective were not included as part of received. The types of support the teachers identified as beneficial include: mentoring, meeting with the principal, classroom management support, feedback, resources, and assistance with adapting to the school culture.

Chapter 5
Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter contains an overview of the study, practical implications for school-level leaders and instructional support providers, and recommendations for future research and improved practice. The summary re-examines the purpose of the study and the research questions that guided it, as well as address the study's key findings. Practical implications are intended for individuals at the school level who are charged with providing support and assistance to first year alternatively certified teachers.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of first year alternatively certified teachers and induction support that identified the problem, purpose, and significance of this research study. Chapter 2 included a discussion of the theoretical framework used and a review of the literature on alternative certification, induction support and retention. The review of literature highlights the need for effective support for novice alternatively certified teachers could increase the retention of quality new teachers with the inclusion of an effective induction program. Chapter 3 focused on the purpose of the study and provided an overview of the research design of the study, including the research questions, research design, instrumentation, participants, data collection and analysis techniques. Chapter 4 presented a description of the findings from the first year alternatively certified teachers' and principals' interviews, along with documentation analysis. This study explored first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of support systems. The research identified which induction support strategies were perceived by the first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective, along with identifying the

perceived needs/concerns of the first year alternatively certified teacher. The study also sought to identify the types of support and frequency of support provided by principals to first year alternatively certified teachers as well as how the support provided has impacted their teaching. Based on the analysis of the data collected, major findings are presented and discussed, followed by implications. Recommendations for future research and practice are also presented.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the extent of support they received from their principals and the support strategies they identified as most effective. This study also examined the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the types and extent of support received from their principals and support strategies identified by the teachers as most effective.

This study explored first year alternatively certified teachers' perceptions of support systems. The research sought to determine which induction support strategies were perceived by first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective. The research addressed the following: Which induction support strategies are perceived by first year alternatively certified teachers as most beneficial and effective? In addressing this question, this study attempted to address five sub-questions:

a. What are the perceived needs/concerns of the first year alternatively certified teacher?

b. How are the components of support provided by principals aligned with the perceived needs/concerns of first year alternatively certified teachers?

c. In what contexts (when, where, how frequently) is support provided by principals to first year alternatively certified teachers?

    d. How do first year alternatively certified teachers perceive the impact on their teaching

        of induction activities provided by principals?

    e. What additional support do alternatively certified teachers need from principals

        during their first year of teaching?

A qualitative study was used to identify and assess the types of support given to novice alternatively certified teachers from their principals. Face-to-face interviews with novice first year alternatively certified teachers was utilized to collect qualitative data. The participants in the alternatively certified novice teachers' group were representative of the elementary, middle, and high schools and selected through purposeful random sampling with two teachers from each grade band for a total of six participants. Using semi-structured open-ended interviews, first year alternatively certified teachers were able to identify support strategies that are effective in assisting first year alternatively certified teachers during their first year of teaching.

Challenges described in this study are similar to those found in the literature on self-efficacy and support of alternatively certified teachers as participants reported difficulties in the following categories: instructional planning, content knowledge, managing the volume of administrative work, managing classroom discipline and management, and adjusting to the school culture. Several teacher participants also reflected on the emotional challenges of frustration and isolation. Participants cited examples of various levels of support from the instructional support team members, school district and other sources; however, each of the participants noted an infrequent amount from the principals themselves. While the teachers indicated their principals were approachable and they felt comfortable in speaking with them, they were not able to obtain the support they felt was necessary for teacher success.

Participants cited examples of various levels of support from the instructional support team members, school district and other sources; however, each of the participants noted an infrequent amount from the principals themselves. While the teachers indicated their principals were approachable and they felt comfortable in speaking with them, they were not able to obtain the support they felt was necessary for teacher success. The interview data also identified the types of support the first year alternatively certified teachers desired or found to be effective were not included as part of received. This chapter discusses the practices that will increase the prospects of a successful first year teaching experience. The findings have been translated into detailed recommendations for principals to develop effective support structures for first year alternatively certified teachers.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The results of this case study demonstrate that the first year alternatively certified teachers are provided with various levels mentoring and induction support. However, the study found that the types of support the first year alternatively certified teachers identified as beneficial and effective are not provided by their principals but by individuals assigned by the principals. This summary examines the beginning teachers' perceptions of the support that is offered by the principals. The types of support the teachers identified in the study as beneficial include: mentoring, instructional coaching, modeling, feedback, classroom management support, comfort level and approachability, and assistance with adapting to the school culture. Following each type of support is a summary of the major conclusions of the types of support provided.

Mentoring. Interview data indicated that the first year alternatively certified teachers are provided with mentors. All of the respondents indicated they did not receive direct support from their principals; instead, they were assigned individuals who were experienced teachers. Five of

the six teachers interviewed stated that they felt the support provided by the mentors was inadequate due to lack of mentors, infrequency of mentor visits, or lack of planning time with mentors. One of the participants discussed the frustration of having too many mentors – presenting diverse instructional strategies. According to Erika, "For me, I had a lot of different coaches and it was a little bit overwhelming for me… there was a lot of different feedback." Aaron also noted, "I was assigned a mentor who came once. She came in the classroom and came like a few weeks after I started and after that one time, never saw her again." The middle school principal stated that, although she is not able to meet with them on a frequent basis, "Our site-based mentors meet with our new teachers every month… They hear about their concerns, their successes, and the types of things they need…" Mentor support for the participants in this study included such areas as classroom management, understanding curriculum and instruction, and obtaining resources.

These findings correlate with the review of literature, which stress the importance of effective mentors during a teacher's first year. Fletcher and Barrett's (2004) study, which indicated that beginning teachers who had successful mentors are able to improve their instructional strategies and skills, as well as provide assistance with classroom management, assessing student work, lesson planning, and differentiating instruction. Mentors are able to help build self-confidence and develop positive attitudes about teaching, as well as helping their mentees integrate in the school community. Killeavy's (2006) findings that the first year of teaching for most first year alternatively certified teachers is the most difficult, and induction offers beginning teachers the opportunities to continually learn, consult with colleagues and become collectively engaged in the learning profession. For an effective mentoring program, Haack (2006) identified several components of effective mentoring programs which include

time; face-to-face contact between mentee and mentor; flexibility and open access; good

communication; administrative interest and support; caring colleagues; honesty, understanding,

and reasonable expectations; mutual respect; and short- and long-term professional development

planning. This research aligns with the participants' suggestion that as first year teachers, they

need opportunity and time to meet with their mentors.

The interview responses also demonstrate mentoring as having a positive effect on

teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers' beliefs influence the effort they will expend, their ability to

persist during challenges, their ability to recover quickly from failures, and the amount of stress

they experience in coping with demanding situations (Erdem & Demirel, 2007). Jack stated,

"Having that content area person-department chair has shown me a lot of content resources that

are very helpful." The principals acknowledged they did not provide individual support for the

first year teachers, instead, offered support structures they felt would benefit the teachers' needs

and positively affect student achievement. The elementary school principal asserted, "I lend

support a lot of times if I go by the classroom and see maybe they are struggling with a student,

then I'll go in and I'll just talk them through some things or after an observation. However, I

honestly don't get in and support them as much as I would like to, but indirectly, but I make sure

the indirect support is there." Research regarding principals' support of beginning teachers found

that principals are responsible for developing support systems that influence teachers' decisions.

Fox and Wilson (2010) added that principals should also be cognizant of the extent to which the

novice teachers are able to satisfy those needs within their school environments.

Instructional Coaching. In addition to mentoring, interviews of the teacher participants

mentioned instructional coaches as another type of support. The middle school principal said that

with coaches, "They have someone who they can speak to about their concerns on a frequent

basis and, if, they need something, they can get their needs met immediately." Nicki indicated

the coaches assisted with planning lessons was helpful, however, it was presupposed that

materials would be given to all teachers for instruction, as work materials are provided for other

professional occupations. She stated, "The coaches come in to help plan, but like nobody comes

back to say, 'Hey you're doing a great job' or 'you suck at this' or "try this.' This reflects the

review of literature which found that induction activities can reduce some identified teacher

stressors such as work overload, uncertainty of role, pressures of teachers' role, inadequate

resources, poor working conditions, lack of recognition, low salaries, lack of involvement in

decision-making, lack of effective communication, staff conflicts, and poor class management

(Betoret, 2006).

Feedback. Interview data also indicated that the first year alternatively certified teachers,

whether provided by principals, mentors, or coaches, deem effective feedback beneficial. Sarah's

assertion regarding from her principal "has been really good. The beginning of the year [the

feedback] was not as great as I wanted it to be, but I feel it has helped me grow as a teacher."

Aaron stated, "I need that feedback to make sure I am doing exactly what my job calls me to do.

I do not really think I got that much feedback being a new teacher." This reflects the study's

literature review, which found that principals provide support and encouragement for novice

teachers by providing frequent, personal communication, keeping an open-door policy, providing

constant feedback, and helping the new teachers develop reflective teaching methods (Brock and

Grady, 2007). The high school principal stated, "We [principal and teacher] have [a conference]

one to talk about what is observed… at least three times a year. On a monthly basis, we [talk]

two to three times a month. Informally, [feedback] is infrequent."   Research also implies that in

the role of instructional leader, the principal provides regular systemic feedback to teachers on

instruction (Woods, 2005). The teacher participants' responses imply that systemic feedback may positively self-efficacy. Aaron stated, "I need that feedback to make sure I am doing exactly what my job calls me to do. I do not really think I got that much feedback being a new teacher." Effective feedback may increase self-efficacy by creating and providing an atmosphere geared towards positive student achievement and can lead to lowering the attrition rates among novice alternatively certified teachers (Anthony and Kritsonis, 2007).

Each of the principals indicated they were not able to provide individual support to the first year teachers. The Elementary School Principal indicated that although there was no opportunity for individual support provided, other support team members were placed with the first year alternatively certified teachers and meetings are held with the team members for follow up support. She stated, "As much as I would like to go in and provide the teachers with a lot of one-on-one support, I really don't have the time to do it. But, I make sure they have support from the [administrative] team." The Middle School Principal felt that the first year alternatively certified teachers need "a lot of hands on, one-on-one attention" on a daily and monthly basis, stating, "[The first year alternatively certified teachers] need to have someone who checks in on them daily, as well as weekly and monthly to talk about their experiences to help them transition." The High School Principal felt that assimilating to the building logistically was the main support the teachers needed as they entered the school year. He declared, "There are some weeks we may not meet for whatever reason, but maybe two or three times a month." These responses align with Powell's study (2004), which suggested that principals' perceptions of the amount of support provided to new teachers were greater than that described by teachers.

Modeling. Many of the teachers said they would have benefitted from having mentors and instructional coaches model effective instructional strategies in their classroom. Zoe

asserted, "The first thing I need is the model support. The school system would have the model

support from the administration and the schoolteachers." One of the participants revealed that her

assistant principal modeling some activities at the beginning of the year, stating, "One thing [the

assistant principal] did do for me was, she modeled a couple of things for me that was helpful. I

am a visual learner, so seeing people actually model was great." However, Aaron stated that he

received no modeling and felt that having someone to model would have been supportive at the

beginning of the year. He stated, I think if they would allow me to sit in a few classes and get

some type of experienced teachers to kind of bring me in into what's going on with the school.

[For instance] How they like to structure their lesson – I think that would help." The principals

interviewed for the study felt they provided adequate support structures, which also included

personnel to model lessons, but each of the principals also indicated that time was a factor that

prevented the teachers from receiving adequate support. The middle school principal stated, "I

meet with them one-on-one as much as possible. But, I basically send my coaches out to provide

the support that they need."

Classroom Management. Responses from all of the participants are consistent with the

current study's findings which indicate that first year alternatively certified teachers receive little

support with classroom management. Nikki declared, "At this point, I just feel like I need some

support. Whether somebody is coming in and looking at my classroom management or helping

with lesson plans. I just feel like I am kind of out there by myself. According to Wong and Wong

(2005), support for first year alternatively certified teachers should include training on classroom

management that demonstrates how to manage their classrooms, discipline students, and develop

effective teaching techniques. The principals in the study acknowledge that first year

alternatively certified teachers need more assistance with classroom management than with

content areas training. The elementary principal observed, "It is in classroom management, and it's with actually implementing the curriculum… because a lot of times, they may have all these different [instructional] activities. Because the [the first year alternatively certified teacher's] classroom management is not where it needs to be, sometimes those activities turn into chaos." The high school principal stated, "The classroom management piece is my biggest role. [My] part is to support them when they have a student in which they have tried to use some of their own management styles [using] information they may have received from their mentor teacher on how to handle certain conflicts." In addition, they felt that the support structures provided to the teachers should focus on improving the teachers' classroom management skills by monitoring and providing feedback on techniques, which are considered effective.

Comfort Level and Approachability. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Cordeau's study (2003), which found that emotional support and feedback are considered significant since those topics have a direct impact on teacher performance. Although principals in the study noted that providing one-on-one support for first year alternatively certified teachers is difficult due to administrative duties, the support structures provided were to assist the teachers in becoming comfortable in discussing their needs for support. The elementary school principal stated, They know I am approachable, but, a lot of times I think they feel like, 'You're so busy, but can I talk to you?' I try to make time for them." Smith's study (2007), found that when teachers are comfortable talking with each other about their teaching, "the school's capacity to identify and address problems in student learning and other important issues rises dramatically" (p. 5). According to Erika, "I pretty much can talk to her and there is a mutual respect. We have never had any issues where I felt uncomfortable going to her about anything." A majority of the teacher participants in the current study acknowledged they felt comfortable in

approaching their principals and other administrators to ask for support and would like to have

more one-on-one conversations with principals focusing on feedback. As Middle School

Principal stated, "They know that if they need something, they can come to me, but there are

things they should not share with me. I think it is the appropriate balance – we're not too

comfortable with each other, but we are comfortable enough."

       School Culture. Developing a school culture that is conducive to professional learning

and growth for first year alternatively certified teachers requires a working relationship between

the principal and teacher. Previous research states that indicated that if "a site administrator

organizes and/or supports institutional activities that promote professional relationships among

novice teachers and experienced teachers, morale is greatly improved and beginning teachers'

self-concept is strengthened" (Wood, 2005, p. 45). The elementary school principal asserted,

"The wonderful thing about [the elementary school] is that we have a great culture and in terms

of grade levels, of course there is always one grade level team lead [person] who is always

supportive. I would never have anybody in their position if they weren't, if they did not have the

patience and want to lend support, not only to the brand new teachers, but to all the teachers on

that grade level." Five of the six teacher participants interviewed for the current study described

their relationship as comfortable and professional. Erika indicated that her comfort level with her

principal had improved since the start of the school year due to opportunities to communicate her

need for instructional support. Erika asserted, "Some things I would like some clarity on. But I

do feel like I have been receiving support. I feel very comfortable. If anytime I am not sure, I'll

just ask the vice principal and she directs me to them immediately." Her response aligns with

research that establishes the principals' impact on school culture. According to Engels, Hotton,

Devos, Bouckenooghe, and Aelterman (2008), school principals have influence on school

culture, and the impact of school culture on teachers' functioning and well-being.

Previous research also suggests principals are responsible for establishing the climate for

collegiality and learning by modeling strong relationships. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) found

that principals who build and model professional relationships affect school culture by

establishing an environment of trust, and developing a culture of learning for problem solving

and decision-making. One of the participants indicated that she felt she was not comfortable

speaking with her principal and therefore did not request needed support. According to Nikki, "I

am kind of afraid to go in and let my principal know that there is something I don't know or

asking for help. I guess you can say I am intimidated by her." Previous research indicates that the

critical factor for success is the principal and the relationships to mentor teachers and supportive

colleagues that the principal fosters on behalf of novice teachers. In doing so, principals provide

support and encouragement for novice teachers by providing consistent professional and

personal communication, which is the basis for an effective and supportive school culture.

Summary

The disparity of the perceptions of the first year alternatively certified teachers and their

principals regarding the support provided was consistent with the findings in the literature.

Research recommends principals provide direct support to teachers during the induction period.

However, during their interviews, the principals cited time as a barrier in providing one-on-one

support due to various administrative responsibilities. Instead, they provided support structures

such as mentors and instructional coaches to provide support in their stead. Prior research

illustrates principals are responsible for providing assistance for first year teachers.

Document Analysis

Triangulation of the data collected included document analysis. The collection of data using multiple sources and methods supported and clarified major themes and findings. According to Lightfoot & Davis (1997), when themes emerge through such methods and sources of data collection, it creates a "layering of data" that scaffolds and supports the construction of these themes in greater depth (p. 204). Documents collected for this study included administrative team meeting agendas, Campus-Based Mentor (CBM) action plans, mentoring/ coaching logs, calendar of events from regional trainings, evaluation of support provided.

Once the themes were developed, spreadsheets were created for each theme; specific occurrences of the themes were cut and pasted from the interview transcripts. The development and refinement of an organizational system of analyzing documents helped shape future data collection and provided a structure for ongoing and progressively deeper analysis. Findings from the documents demonstrated inconsistency and lack of support from the administrators; however, it also demonstrated support structures designed by the principals, which were provided at the beginning of the school year by mentors and instructional coaches. Again, even with those structures, support was inconsistent and did not specifically address the first year alternatively certified teachers needs. The agendas and action plans were brief and did not appear to include input from the teachers. Support notated on the collected documents appear aligned to what the principals perceive as needed for the teachers.

Recommendations

Each of the principals conceded that although they did not have formal mentoring or induction activities, they instead they utilized mentors and instructional coaches to provide support for the first year alternatively certified teachers. As stated by the middle school principal,

"Our site-based mentors meet with our new teachers to the profession every month. I meet with

them one-on-one as much as possible. But, I basically send my coaches out to provide the

support that they need." The high school teacher The problems faced by first year alternatively

certified teachers and the need for assistance by these teachers have been solidly acknowledged

by research. Based on findings and conclusions from this study, the following recommendations

are offered as suggestions for principals to develop effective systems of support for first year

alternatively certified teachers:

    1.   The findings of this study also emphasize the need to offer support that is pertinent to

    first year alternatively certified teachers' individual, content and context-specific

    challenges. The needs of support of first year alternatively certified teachers vary with the

    individual teachers. The types of support provided should be modified according to the

    needs of the teachers, not generalized for all of the teachers on the same school site.

    Principals should ensure that the perceptions of the needs of their teachers are correct

    before designing support for each of the teachers. Principals should consider themselves

    to be the primary person responsible for providing support for the first year alternatively

    certified teachers.

    2.   Principals should ensure that they meet their commitment in providing the

    appropriate types of support. This includes acknowledging their role as facilitator of

    instructional leader, in which the principal provides regular systemic feedback to teachers

    on instruction; the role of "coordinator"/ facilitator of mentors where the principal

    coordinates mentor/mentee activities, plus facilitate mentors' assistance of novice

    teachers; also as a novice teacher advocate/ retainer who provide support through

    professional development (Wood, 2005).

3.   Principals should clearly communicate to their first year alternatively certified teachers which types of support are available. According to the responses in the teachers' and principals' interviews, principals are confident that the types of support principals are provided on a consistent basis and are deemed effective by the teachers.

4.   In the study, some of the first year alternatively certified teachers acknowledged their administrators demanding schedules and as a result, reported that they were often hesitant to seek support with problems or concerns. Due to the potential impact on first year alternatively certified teachers, principals should set aside regularly scheduled times that are reserved specifically for communicating and collaborating with new teachers. Principals should seek ways to change how they are perceived in order to foster more supportive relationships through which their knowledge and expertise can be shared. Principals should consult with the districts to ensure that mentor teachers, coaches, and other support staff should be made available to assist first year alternatively certified teachers with consistent support.

5.   First year alternatively certified teachers should be assigned mentors who are content or grade-level specific. Additionally, mentors should be aware of the expectations of their roles and able to provide both formal and informal support. Principals should ensure that structures are in place to train and support mentors and other support providers so their roles and responsibilities are clear.

Based on the literature and findings in this study, there is a need for principals to generate an initiative in providing first year alternatively certified teachers the help and support their desire and need. Commitment and resources should be provided by school districts and

supervised by the principals to assist teachers in having a successful first year experience. These

actions will also help to retain novice teachers beyond the induction period.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the findings and conclusions of this study, an identical study should be

performed which uses the same research process and questions to explore the experiences of

traditionally- certified teachers who are in their first year of teaching. The same research method

should then be used to explore the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers and

traditionally certified teachers perceptions of the support received during their first year. A

comparison of the responses would further illuminate the person-to-person dynamics within the

context of the school that are perceived to be effective, ineffective, or lacking altogether for both

groups. Additionally, researchers would be able to explore differences and similarities between

the two groups.

One of the key findings of this study was that participants described regular

communication and collaboration with their colleagues as a perceived effective support strategy,

although mentors and instructional coaches rather than the principals provided communication

and collaboration. As a part of instructional support, professional learning communities include

groups of teachers who meet on a regular schedule to collaborate to plan instruction and

assessment. Research that explores the experiences of first year alternatively certified teachers

who have the opportunity to participate in school-based professional learning communities

would be helpful in determining if collaboration opportunities can be designed to provide

support that is useful for this group of teachers.

Implications for Practice

The significant findings of this study have several implications for the development and implementation of school-based support structures specifically designed to assist first year alternatively certified teachers. In addition, the findings provide opportunities to discuss the foundation, frequency, and periods of support that should be offered. The following suggestions are intended to inform principals and assigned support providers of how to effectively serve first year alternatively certified teachers:

1. As indicated earlier in this chapter, the findings of this study stress the need to offer support that is relevant to first year alternatively certified teachers' individual, content and context-specific challenges. It is imperative that principals avoid a general approach to teacher support by acknowledging that first year alternatively certified teachers possess both skills and challenges that are distinctive and require support structure that is according to their individual needs.

2. Communication should be made with content and/or grade level teachers and support personnel prior to the beginning of the year so the first year alternatively certified teachers become familiarized with the instructional and non-instructional responsibilities of the job.

3. A variety of support components should be included in the support structures for first year alternatively certified teachers. Practices such as communicating with parents, modeling sample lessons, incorporating technology, as well as self-assessment and reflection on their practices. Utilizing such practices may result in a successful first year for the alternatively certified teachers.

4. The principal should set aside time to demonstrate practices that promote better teaching and learning for first year alternatively certified teachers. Support for this group of teachers should be deemed significant. Principals should prioritize their responsibilities to serve as an instructional leader whose focus is on supporting teachers in curriculum and instruction.

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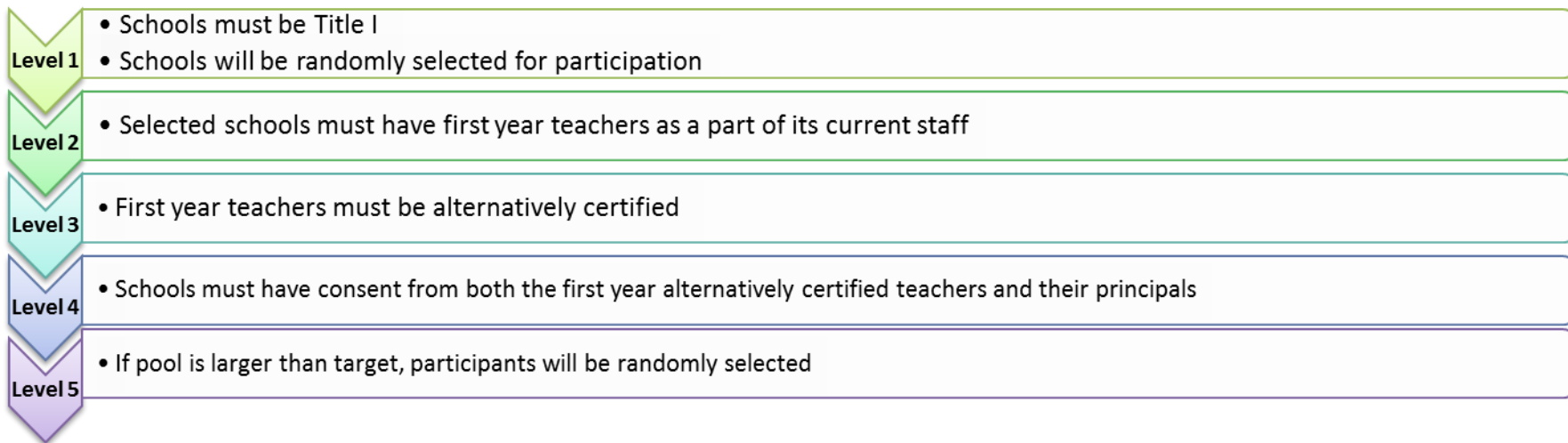Publications.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT SELECTION PROCESS

Participants Needed for Study

School/ Grade Band	Number of Teacher Participants	Number of Principal Participants
Elementary	2	1
Middle School	2	1
High School	2	1

Participant Selection for Dissertation Study

Goal: *Total number of first-year alternatively certified teachers* – **six (6)**, two from each grade band (two elementary, two middle school, and two high school teachers)

Total number of principals – **three (3)**, one from each of the schools from which the teachers have been selected (one elementary, one middle school, and one high school principal)

Level 1
- Schools must be Title I
- Schools will be randomly selected for participation

Level 2
- Selected schools must have first year teachers as a part of its current staff

Level 3
- First year teachers must be alternatively certified

Level 4
- Schools must have consent from both the first year alternatively certified teachers and their principals

Level 5
- If pool is larger than target, participants will be randomly selected

Random Selection Process

| Identify qualified participants | Print off the list of participants who have completed consent forms; have two separate piles for principals and teachers | Assign participants numbers | Tear numbers into separate strips; put the strips in a bag and mix them up | Blindly pull out the first 6 teachers | If teachers selected do not match principals who consented and were selected, restart process until 2 elementary teachers match elementary principal, 2 middle school teachers match middle school principal, and 2 high school teachers match high school principal. |

Timeline for Data Collection

| February Submit KSU IRB Application | March Begin selection process for participants; collect consent forms; start data collection | April Continue data collection (transcription of audio, collection of documents) | May Analyze (code) data |
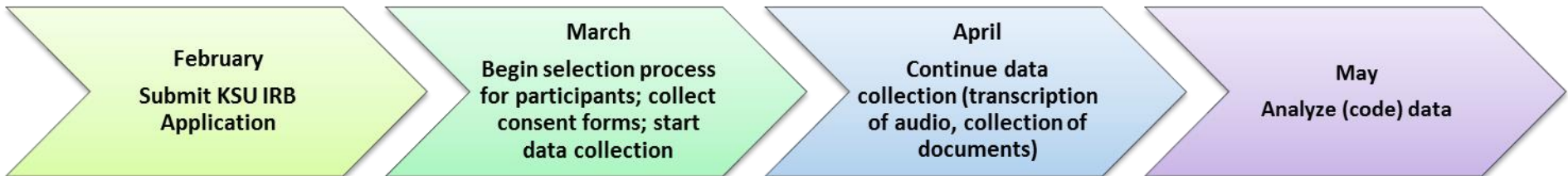
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM – KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the research project entitled **"An Investigation of the Perceptions of Induction Support of First Year Alternatively Certificated Teachers"**, which is being conducted by Tonya Steele, primary investigator of a dissertation study, Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA 30144. Principal Investigator contact information: Tonya Steele, 1000 Chastain Road, Kennesaw Hall, Kennesaw, GA 30142. Email: tsteele@atlanta.k12.ga.us or tsteele7@students.kennesaw.edu; Phone: 404-802-3665.

I understand that this participation is voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at any time and have the results of the participation returned to me, removed from the experimental records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The reason for the research: The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified beginning teachers regarding the extent of support they received from their principals and the support strategies they identified as most effective. This study is designed to identify key areas of teacher support and their effectiveness in assisting novice alternatively certified teachers. The research will involve asking eight to ten interview questions about your views and experiences of providing support to first year alternatively certified teachers. It will also involve asking you about your experiences in regard to providing site-based instructional and administrative support. Finally, documents related to support provided to alternatively certified first year teachers will be analyzed. Although there will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researcher may learn more about support strategies identified to develop, support, and retain quality teachers to address the teacher shortage that exists in urban areas.

2. The procedures are as follows: You will be given a list of eight to ten possible questions about your beliefs, experiences, and expectations of induction support. The researcher will arrange a convenient time to ask participants the questions. The interview is scheduled to last approximately 30-45 minutes and will be audio-recorded. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or all questions.

3. The discomforts or stresses that may be faced during this research are: None

4. Participation entails the following risks: None foreseen

5. The results of this participation will be <u>confidential</u>. Your name will not be linked in anyway with the results and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without the prior consent of the participant unless required by law. Access to personal information will be

restricted to the researcher and will be secured electronically and physically in a locked office away from public access. No staff from Kennesaw State University, Atlanta Public Schools, or communities will have direct access to your personal information. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name and only the researcher will know what your number is. To protect your identity within the completed study, pseudonyms will be used for the names of you and your school.

6. Inclusion criteria for participation: All participants receiving this consent document must be a first-year alternatively certified teacher or a principal that has a first-year alternatively certified teacher on staff participating in the study. All participants must be 21+ years of age to take part in this study.

7. Participants will not receive any compensation to take part in the research. However, you may be given a gift card (valued up to $15) for time and travel expense (if applicable).

☐ I agree to participate.   ☐ I do not agree to participate.

_____
Signature of Investigator, Date

_____
Signature of Participant (or authorized representative), Date

_____

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES, KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 1000 Chastain Road, #0112, Kennesaw, GA 30144-5591, (678) 797-2268.

Demographic Information

If you agree to participate, you will be assigned a number, and only the following demographic information will be coded with that number:

A. Role: ☐ Principal ☐ Teacher

B. Grade Band: ☐ Elementary School (K-5) ☐ Middle School (6-8) ☐ High

School (9-12)

C. Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

D. Ethnicity:
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black (not of Hispanic origin)
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Native American

E. Age:
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 61 or over

F. Degree/Educational Information:
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Specialist degree
- ☐ Doctorate degree

- ☐ Graduate of a teacher education program
- ☐ Received alternative teacher license

Degree area: _____

Career background (if not in education): _____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What types of support do you consider that you need as a first year teacher? Do your support needs focus on a) administrative work (grading, paperwork, etc.), b) instructional strategies, c) school culture, or d) classroom management?

2. What types of support is your principal able to provide you?

3. What do you believe principal support should look like?

4. On the average, how much contact do you have with your principal? Under what circumstances do you interact? How would you describe your relationship with him/her?

5. Do you feel comfortable turning to your principal for support? Why or why not?

6. In what ways does the support provided affect your teaching?

7. Do you feel more confident about next year?

8. What types of additional support do you feel is needed?

Principal Interview Questions

1. What types of support do you feel first year alternatively certified teachers need?

2. What types of support do you provide?

3. Do you feel the support you provide to first year teachers is helpful?

4. What types of support do you provide in the areas of a) administrative work (grading, paperwork, etc.), b) instructional strategies, c) school culture, or d) classroom management?

5. How often do you meet with your first year teachers? Under what circumstances? How would you describe your relationship with your first year teachers?

6. Do you think your first year feel comfortable approaching you for support? Why or why

not?

7. Do you feel the support provided has impacted the performance of the teacher(s)? In

what ways?