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Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Alternatively Certified Teachers in New Orleans Public Schools

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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Administration

by

Jacquelyn Lynn Mahatha

B.A., University of New Orleans, 1987
M.Ed., University of New Orleans, 1995

May, 2005

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Dedication

*“On a clear day, how it will astound you that the glow of your being
outshines every star...
Alan Jay Lerner*

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Maya Lynn Flemings,
and the children of
Alfred Lawless High School

Acknowledgements

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains;
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas;
I am strong when I am on your shoulders;
You raise me up to more than I can be.*

--Brendan Graham and Rolf Lovland

One of my favorite quotes is from the teachings of Buddhism: “There is neither being, nor non-being, but becoming.” There are so many people who have helped me as I continue to “become.” I would like to offer my sincerest thanks and gratitude to my major professor, Dr. Peggy Kirby. I will forever be indebted for her support and guidance. She went above and beyond and back again to ensure that I could complete this dissertation. Her professionalism, patience, and commitment are unsurpassed. She challenged and encouraged me when I did not feel the confidence to complete the task. I will always count her as my angel of wisdom and a true blessing in my life. The other angel in my academic life has been Dr. Linda Tillman. If not for her confidence in me and motivation, I would have never applied to the doctoral program. She has always been a mentor and friend.

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"His eye is on the sparrow and I know he watches me."

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	x
Abstract.....	xi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	8
Significance of the Research.....	9
Research Questions.....	10
Overview of Methodology.....	11
Assumptions.....	11
Definitions of Terms.....	12
Chapter Two: Review of Literature.....	13
Teacher Certification.....	15
History of Alternative Certification.....	16
Program Characteristics.....	19
State Programs.....	20
Federal Programs.....	23
Independent Programs.....	24
Louisiana Programs.....	25
New Orleans Programs.....	26
Research of Effectiveness of Programs.....	27

Principals and Accountability.....	35
Teacher Retention.....	37
Summary.....	40
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	41
Purpose.....	41
Setting.....	42
Participants.....	42
Instrumentation.....	42
Validity.....	43
Reliability.....	43
Research Design.....	45
Research Questions.....	45
Procedure.....	46
Data Analysis.....	47
Chapter Four: Results.....	48
Response Rate.....	48
Respondent Characteristics.....	50
Teaching Domains.....	54
Relationships of the Demographic Variables.....	56
Summary.....	59
Chapter Five: Conclusions.....	60
Overview of Study.....	61
Discussion.....	61

Implications for Practice	68
Implications for Teacher Training	70
Implications for Principals.....	72
Implication for Research.....	74
Conclusion	76
References.....	77
Appendices	86
Appendix A. States Offering Alternative Teacher Certification	86
Appendix B. Item Domain Assignment.....	87
Appendix C: Human Subjects Approval Form	88
Appendix D. Survey Instrument.....	90
Appendix E. Cover Letter to Principals.....	94
Vita.....	96

List of Tables

Table 1. Response Rate.....	41
Table 2. School level of Respondents.....	42
Table 3. Gender of Participants.....	42
Table 4. Ethnic Background of Participants.....	43
Table 5. Administrative Experience of Participants	44
Table 6. Number of Alternatively Certified.....	44
Table 7. Size of Teaching Staff	45
Table 8. Comparison of Nusbaum’s Domains.....	47
Table 9. Comparison of Nusbaum’s Domains by Type of Teacher	48
Table. 10 Effects of Gender on Principal Ratings.....	49
Table 11. Effects of Ethnicity on Principal Ratings	49
Table 12. Effects of School Level on Principal Ratings	50
Table 13. Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Instrument Domains.....	51

Abstract

In response to increasing attention to the issues of teacher quality, quantity, and the mandate for highly qualified teachers, alternative approaches to teacher certification have become widespread. Alternative certification allows individuals who typically possess an undergraduate degree in a field other than education to participate in shortened training and/or on-the-job learning experiences that lead to full certification. The number of alternatively certified teachers in urban hard to staff schools is growing.

There are many debates as to the effectiveness of alternative certification. At the core of the arguments are issues surrounding teacher pedagogy, classroom management, and knowledge of the teaching and learning experience in general.

This study sought to determine public school principals' perceptions of alternatively certified teachers. The study asked principals to compare alternatively certified teachers to those teachers who have participated in a traditional university based teacher education program. Both groups of teachers had one to three years of experience in the classroom.

Survey research was used to compare the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers to traditionally certified teachers based upon principals' perceptions. There were five survey domains, including (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations skills, and (5) professionalism.

Results of this study indicated that principals perceived that alternatively certified teachers were perceived as slightly less effective than traditionally certified teachers. Teachers trained in the traditional teacher education programs were viewed as more effective with regard to content knowledge, classroom management, instructional planning, and professionalism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

One of the single most important factors affecting student learning within the control of schools is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. But what produces a high-quality teacher is not easily determined. In response to increasing attention to the issues of teacher quality, quantity, and the No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2000) mandate for highly qualified teachers, alternative approaches to teacher certification have become widespread. Alternative certification allows individuals who typically possess an undergraduate degree in a field other than education to participate in shortened training and/or on- the- job learning experiences that lead to full certification.

Alternative certification programs have grown rapidly across the U.S. In 1983, there were only eight states that had any means of teacher certification other than the typical four-year traditional teacher education program (Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). However, most states did have some type of emergency credentials that required the completion of regular coursework at an approved teacher preparation program in order to become fully certified. The National Center for Education 2002 survey of the states showed that nearly all states--45 of 50--now offer some alternative to the traditional college major in education as the route to becoming a teacher.

There are many debates as to the effectiveness of alternative certification. At the core of the arguments are issues surrounding teacher pedagogy, classroom management, and knowledge of the teaching and learning experience in general. There is a wealth of research regarding alternative teacher training programs, but this research is limited in scope in reflecting the perceptions or experiences of school principals who work with alternatively trained teachers. In a 1983 study, Schlechty and Vance were among the first to introduce major alternative certification research that included apprehension about the quality of preparation offered by traditional and alternative programs and the quality of candidates recruited for the teaching profession. Schlechty and Vance's 1983 study was conducted well before the No Child Left Behind mandate and any governmental discussion about "highly qualified" teachers; yet, during this time period, there was still a decline in the number of college students choosing teaching as a profession. Schlechty and Vance found the waning interest in teaching due in large part to "poor working conditions, lack of career advancement opportunities, increasing numbers of viable options for those most likely to pursue teaching and lack of strong university commitment to the college of education" (p. 106). They found that alternative teacher certification could be a solution to the problem.

A study of the New Jersey alternative teacher certification program, one of the first in the country, looked at recruitment, placement, and retention of alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers (Natriello & Zumwalt, 1992). The researchers used survey data collected over several years and found that the alternative certification program was able to maintain the same level of teacher quality at entry into teaching as traditional programs. Although the New Jersey alternatively certified teachers had lower

grade point averages compared to those participating in traditional teacher education programs, they tended to score higher on the National Teaching Examination (NTE) even though they did not major in education (Natiello & Zumwalt, 1992, p. 76).

The growth of alternative certification programs has increased the amount of research on their composition and effectiveness. Several studies have found positive or mixed results as to the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers. Stoddard and Floden (1995) found that few educators understood the purpose of the alternative certification programs. These educators did not view alternative certification as a means to address teacher shortages or as an improved way of preparing and licensing teachers in lieu of the traditional college-approved program.

Miller, McKenna, and McKenna (1998) designed a series of studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to examine the effectiveness of an alternative certification program. They used data from multiple sources, including observation of teaching behaviors, examination of student test scores, and teachers' perceptions to establish if there were any differences between alternatively and traditionally trained teachers. In their comparison of alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers, they found that alternatively certified teachers were usually equal or better when compared to traditionally prepared teachers. However, the authors did note that due to a variety of methodologies used to study alternative certification programs, a variety of outcome variables examined, and a variety of operational definitions used to define variables, the research on alternative certification was inconclusive and somewhat contradictory (p. 166).

Research comparing the effectiveness of traditional and alternative certification of teachers has had rather mixed results. Lutz and Hutton (1989) evaluated the Dallas Independent School District's alternative certification program and found that those teachers who had been alternatively certified scored high or higher on standard measures of teaching ability/performance and were rated high or higher by their principal/mentor than were those teachers who had been trained through the traditional teacher education program.

Some experts argue that certain alternative routes are little more than emergency teaching certificates by which participants are thrust into the classroom before they are adequately prepared. Such observers contend that those underprepared teachers can hinder student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2002; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). Proponents of alternative routes counter that well-designed alternative programs can increase workforce diversity and attract candidates with subject-matter expertise (Hess, 2001; Roach and Cohen, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Faced with severe teacher shortages, states are looking at new ways to certify teachers. Alternative certification programs were introduced in the 1980s as a short-term solution to the problem but are fast becoming a permanent fix. In the past, colleges and universities took the lead on teacher certification. Now, they are competing with alternative certification programs administered by state education agencies and local school districts (Dahlkemper, 2001). According to the National Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C., public schools will need between 2.2 and 2.7 million teachers-- both veteran teachers and new teachers--to fill classroom positions in the

next decade. That's at least 220,000 teachers a year for the next 10 years. The teacher shortage impacts schools in urban and rural areas the most. Specific subject areas such as mathematics, science, and special education tend to have a higher number of vacancies. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 stipulates that by the end of the 2005-06 school year, all public school teachers of core academic subjects must be "highly qualified." That means all teachers of core academic subjects must meet a set of standards that include demonstrated competency in each subject they teach (McCabe, 2004). This legislation further exacerbates the ability to fill vacancies.

The recruitment and retention of new teachers increasingly is becoming the responsibility of school principals. The movement towards more accountability places an even more significant burden on principals by extending their responsibility for ensuring and developing teacher quality. Whom principals hire to teach is now an administrative priority. This significant change in the candidate pool--and their questionable classroom effectiveness in producing student learning--makes a significant difference in how principals do their jobs.

The largest number of alternatively certified teachers tends to be in large urban districts. Principals of schools in high-poverty urban areas already have a more difficult time recruiting and hiring qualified teachers; this seems to be even more prevalent in schools already at-risk, with many of the teachers not being trained in education. Teacher shortages generally tend to occur for certain populations of students, such as the urban, rural, poor, special education, and bilingual populations (Dill, 1996). No matter how many teachers were being prepared nationally, there has always been a shortage of professionally educated teachers in urban areas (Haberman, 1986).

The typical teacher education graduate prefers to teach in a suburban rather than urban school, leaving the urban schools to depend on uncertified teachers or teachers teaching outside their subject area (Haberman, 1988; Feistritzer, 1993).

Subject areas such as math and science have suffered from teacher shortages for the past two decades (Darling-Hammond, Hudson, & Kirby, 1989). Although there were many able scientists and mathematicians interested in teaching, they were "unable to smoothly enter the field" (Dill, 1994). Similarly, the field of special education has been faced with teacher shortages because of the influx of special needs students in schools. This shortage has prompted educators to explore alternative means of preparing certified and qualified special education teachers (Rosenberg & Rock, 1994).

Under the No Child Left Behind Act's accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. They must produce annual state and school district report cards that inform parents and communities about state and school progress. In most states, schools are given labels based upon progress and can be subject to some form of intervention or possible takeover if improvement is not evident. Many larger urban districts are receiving failing report cards from both state and federal agencies and, in many instances the same push for accountability to close the achievement gap in schools has further widened it.

Conceptual Framework

Two agencies, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), are

the basis for the conceptual framework for this research. The two organizations provide performance-based standards for teacher licensing.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a consortium of state education agencies, higher education institutions, and national educational organizations, provides a set of model performance-based licensing standards for new teacher licensing. According to INTASC, these standards "represent those principles which should be present in all teaching regardless of the subject or grade level taught and serve as a framework for the systemic reform of teacher preparation and professional development" (2004, p. 1). INTASC believes that all education policy should be driven by what we want our P-12 students to know and be able to do. Thus, all aspects of a state's education system should be aligned with and organized to achieve the state's policy as embodied in its P-12 student standards. This includes its teacher licensing system. Teacher licensing standards are the state's policy for what all teachers must know and be able to do in order to help all students effectively achieve the P-12 student standards. The teacher licensing standards become the driving force behind how a state's teacher licensing system (program approval, licensing assessments, professional development) is organized and implemented. Thus, a state's process for approving teacher preparation programs should be designed to verify that a program is aligned with the teacher licensing standards and provides opportunities for candidates to meet the standards. The state licensing assessments should verify that an individual teacher candidate has the knowledge and skills outlined in the licensing standards.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has established rigorous standards for accomplished teaching based on the National Board's central policy statement, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2002), which explains the National Board's "Five Propositions of Accomplished Teaching." The fundamental requirements for proficient teaching are relatively clear: a broad grounding in the liberal arts and sciences; knowledge of the subjects to be taught, of the skills to be developed, and of the curricular arrangements and materials that organize and embody that content; knowledge of general and subject-specific methods for teaching and for evaluating student learning; knowledge of students and human development; skills in effectively teaching students from racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse backgrounds; and the skills, capacities and dispositions to employ such knowledge wisely in the interest of students.

The standards developed by these organizations generate a common professional vision for what teachers should know and be able to do at the various stages of their professional development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gather research on principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of teachers who are alternatively certified compared to those who participate in the traditional teacher education program. Recent policy developments have placed an enormous focus on the quality of classroom teachers and the routes in which they become certified to teach. To achieve its goals for improved school outcomes, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires a highly qualified teacher in all classrooms by the 2005-2006 school year. As a result of this mandate there has been

an increase in the number of alternative certification programs in the United States. Studies on the effectiveness of alternative teacher certification have been limited and rarely focus on principals' perceptions about the teachers produced by these programs. This study aims to examine the perceptions of principals. Principals are the chosen participants in the study due to the large responsibility they have in observing, evaluating and ensuring teacher quality.

Significance of the Research

The knowledge gained from hearing the voice of the principal regarding alternative certification could be useful in determining the effectiveness of alternative teacher training programs in preparing teachers to work in urban schools. The significance of this research would be grounded in teacher quality. Raising teacher quality has become education reform's top priority. Research affirms that teaching quality is the single most important factor influencing student achievement, moving students well beyond the limitations of family background (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The staffing of all classrooms with highly qualified teachers, especially in urban schools, is a vital concern for school districts all across the nation. The schools students attend and what their teachers know and do is a more important influence on student achievement than students' family characteristics and ethnicity (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Haycock, 1998; Kaplan & Owings, 2001).

This research is important in that principals of schools that have large populations of alternatively trained teachers must be supported and their concerns heard as they are charged with the day- to-day observation and monitoring of teachers. Principals can provide insight and possible answers to questions such as:

1. Should pedagogical content knowledge be developed before individuals begin full-time teaching, or can it be developed as they teach?
2. What effect do different teacher preparation programs have on student learning?
3. Do alternative certification programs provide effective teachers?

To not hear the principal's thoughts leaves a void in the research regarding the alternative teacher training programs.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

1. Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through a traditional program with regard to subject area knowledge?
2. Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to classroom management, discipline and instruction?
3. Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to instructional planning procedures, knowledge and methods?
4. Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to human relations skills?

5. Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to professionalism?

Overview of Methodology

A descriptive research design was used to compare the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers to traditionally certified teachers based upon principals' perceptions. The site for this research was a large southern urban district. Participants were public school principals who had experience in the evaluation of teachers. Surveys were sent to 112 principals. Follow-up to secure participation was done via letters and phone calls. A total of 63 principals (56%) responded with surveys from 61 being usable. The research was conducted with regard to ethics based upon the guidelines set forth by the American Educational Research Association and American Psychological Association (2003).

Survey research was used to collect data for this study. Survey research gathers data and is used to learn about people's attitudes, beliefs, values, demographics, behaviors, opinions, desires, and habits, with the goal of understanding the relationships among these variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Using a Likert scale, the survey for this research had five distinct common domains relative to the teaching profession: (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management and instruction, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations skills, and (5) professionalism.

Assumptions

It was assumed that the participants responded to the survey in an open and honest manner, and that their responses were an accurate measurement of the

perceptions of non-responding principals in regard to their perspectives of alternatively certified teachers.

Definition of Terms

To avoid terminology that may potentially be confusing or misleading, relevant terms in the context of this study are defined as follows:

Teacher Certification

A process that ensures that persons entering teaching have met minimum standards of competence and are recommended for licensure by the state.

Alternative Certification

A process by which an individual may acquire a teacher certification through any teacher certification programs other than traditionally or 4-year College based program.

Alternative Certification Program

A teacher preparation program, established as a result of state alternative certification provisions, which offers a non-traditional route to regular certification. Programs such as Teach for America, Teach Greater New Orleans, Pathways Program, and Troops to Teachers Program often recruit candidates from other fields to pursue alternative certification.

Traditional Teacher Certification

An approved teacher training program in a college or institution of higher learning that requires the completion of coursework and student teaching, and offers an undergraduate degree in education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Raising teacher quality has become education reform's top priority. Research affirms that teaching quality is the single most important factor influencing student achievement, moving students well beyond family background limitations (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kaplan & Owings, 2001; Whitehurst, 2002). The staffing of all classrooms with highly qualified teachers, especially in urban schools, is a vital concern for school districts all across the nation. The schools students attend and what their teachers know and do is a more important influence on student achievement than students' family characteristics and ethnicity (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Haycock, 1998; Kaplan & Owings, 2001).

As a result of the demand for teachers, many school districts and states are turning to alternative teacher certification as one approach to expanding the pool of applicants for teaching positions. In the early 1980's only a handful of states had any type of alternative teacher certification program. A listing of states offering alternative certification programs can be found in Appendix A. Due to concern about teacher quantity, alternative teacher certification programs have grown rapidly across the U.S. In 2005, 47 states, plus the District of Columbia, report 122 alternative routes to teacher certification being implemented by 619 providers of individual programs around the country. Based on data submitted by the states, National Center for Education Information (2005) estimates that more than 250,000 persons have been licensed

through alternative routes to teacher certification programs since the mid-1980s, with most of the growth occurring in the last decade. Approximately 35,000 individuals are entering teaching through alternative teacher certification routes each year.

Estimates of the increases in numbers of students and teacher retirements over the next decade have led to the suggestion that there will be a need for over two million new teachers in the next ten years (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). This number jumps to 2.7 million when student/teacher ratios fall due to class-size reduction efforts. While this number is questionable, it has been one of the primary drivers of the alternative certification movement as a means of recruiting teachers compared to the traditional certification procedures.

Traditional teacher certification is based on the premise that in most professions, competency requirements are established by a governing body to ensure that individuals meet minimum standards before they are allowed to practice. In the traditional route, the minimum competency evaluation for initial certification is contingent upon completion of a 4-year college degree program, comprised of academic and professional curricula, and the demonstration of competencies in subject-matter areas through performance on written examinations, as required by each state or school district (AACTE, 1991). To ensure that these requirements are met, national, state, and local regulatory agencies and accreditation bodies implement licensure and certification regulations as a means of educational quality control (AACTE, 1991; Wise, 1991). However, it has been argued that the traditional route does not produce the quality or quantity of teachers that are currently needed to ensure an abundant and diverse teaching force (Zumwalt, 1991).

Teacher Certification

The licensing (certification) of elementary and secondary teachers in the United States is a state responsibility. The regular route for licensing teachers is the approved college teacher education program route. This process means that a college or university submits a plan for a teacher preparation program for each discipline and/or grade level(s), following state-established guidelines, which the state then approves. A candidate for a teaching license applies directly to a college or university, takes the required courses and meets other specified requirements, such as student teaching, passage of tests, and any other requirements specified by the college's approved program. Upon completion of the approved program, the candidate is then granted a license to teach by the accrediting agency, usually the State Department of Education.

The requirements for obtaining a license to teach through approved program routes vary enormously -- not only from state to state but from institution to institution. Some states require passing different tests and differing lengths of time spent student teaching. Some require observation in schools before student teaching. Some institutions of higher education have added a fifth year to their teacher education programs. Others have added internships. Others have done away with undergraduate teacher preparation programs altogether -- and just have a postbaccalaureate program of teacher preparation. Some states require only the initial certificate; other states require a second or third stage certificate -- sometimes with continuing education requirements and sometimes resulting in a life or permanent certificate.

History of Alternative Certification

Alternative certification programs for teachers began in the mid-1980s in two states, New Jersey and Texas. New Jersey's program required candidates to have earned a bachelor's degree, and included 200 hours of instruction, passage of a competency test, district-based supervision, and approval of the candidate by district personnel (Dill, 1996). The state assumed responsibility for training, monitoring, and supervision. Programs in Texas and later in California relied more on local school training and instruction by college faculty (Dill, 1996). Early programs typically included some amount of college course work, supervision of the first year of instruction, and mentoring by principals, college professors, or other professionals.

Alternative certification is a general term for non-traditional avenues that lead to teacher licensure. Alternative teacher certification programs are generally geared towards aspiring teachers who already have a baccalaureate degree, but who require additional education methods coursework and classroom experience. Such programs vary in requirements and sophistication and can be administered at the federal, state or district level. This pool of potential teachers includes those who have decided to change careers, have left the military, have graduated with degrees in areas other than education, or who have received teaching certificates or education degrees years ago and now want to teach.

As regulators of public education in the U.S., state legislatures and departments of education control access to teaching licenses. For decades, state officials have controlled entry by setting standards for new teachers and granting licenses either to individuals who completed coursework meeting those standards or approved programs

that embodied them (Cronin, 1983). Typically, a prospective teacher completed at least one full year of teacher education before attaining certification and assuming full responsibility for a classroom of students. Beginning in the mid-1980's, however, states introduced alternative certification, another means of attaining licensure that required far less pre-service preparation. State officials began to introduce alternative certification programs for two, sometimes related, reasons. First, they were responding to a projected teacher shortage that would require an estimated 2.2 million teachers to staff the nation's classrooms between 2000 and 2010 (Hussar, 1999), far more individuals than were preparing to teach in traditional teacher education programs. States sought to meet this anticipated staffing demand by recruiting large numbers of teaching candidates and licensing them quickly. Second, some state officials and members of the public were dissatisfied with the quality and extended length of teacher education programs sponsored by colleges and universities. Those critics contended that a streamlined pre-service program might better meet the needs of prospective teachers. Some officials linked these two reasons by arguing that a shorter, more efficient preparation program might serve to attract a larger pool of strong candidates for teaching. Alternative routes to certification proved to be very attractive.

By 2003, 46 states and the District of Columbia had instituted or approved at least one such program (Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). Today, many states authorize local school districts, consortia of school districts, or non-profit organizations to sponsor those programs and award teaching licenses. There is tremendous variation among the alternative certification programs that operate today. Programs exist within a range of settings, and have diverse goals, requirements, and available resources. Feistritzer

(1994) observes that the term “alternative certification” has been used to describe an assortment of programs, and every method of becoming licensed to teach, from emergency certification to “very sophisticated and well-designed programs” (p. 132). All of these programs, however, move prospective teachers into full-time paid teaching positions before they have completed the requirements for professional, or permanent, licensure (Hawley, 1990). Alternative certification, once seen as a “last resort” strategy to fill gaps in the teaching force and replace emergency certification, has evolved into a widely accepted model of recruiting, training, and certifying qualified new teachers (Feistritzer, 2003).

Since 1985, an estimated 200,000 candidates have taken alternative routes to become certified teachers, with more than 130,000 receiving certification in the last five years. Driven by teacher shortages and changing requirements resulting from the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, close to one-third of all new teachers certified annually in the United States, enter the field via alternative certification programs.

Recent numbers from alternative certification programs across the nation show that significant interest in teacher training exists among professionals outside education. The first year that New York offered an alternative certification program (ACP), 2,300 applied for 250 spots; in the second year, 7,800 applied for 1,500 openings. Similarly, a Massachusetts ACP had more than 900 applicants for 105 slots. In Texas, a Houston-based regional education service center has offered an alternative certification program since the 1980s.

The requirements for obtaining teacher certification can vary enormously from state to state as well as from institution to institution. Some states require passing different tests and differing lengths of time spent student teaching. Some require observation in schools before student teaching. Some institutions of higher education have added a fifth year to their teacher education programs. Others have added internships. Others have done away with undergraduate teacher preparation programs altogether -- and just have a post-baccalaureate program of teacher preparation. Some states require only the initial certificate; other states require a second or third stage certificate, sometimes with continuing education requirements and sometimes resulting in a life or permanent certificate.

One of the most common alternative certification approaches is the “fast-track” program, which delivers all pre-service preparation within one summer. Often these programs are intended to accommodate individuals from other careers who want to become teachers. The summer program includes abbreviated coursework (5-8 weeks) and a field experience that involves either student teaching or classroom observations. On completion, participants are provisionally licensed to assume full-time teaching positions. Candidates in fast-track programs, who typically begin their training in late June or early July, assume full responsibility for their own classes in September.

Program Characteristics

In a study of nine alternative certification programs, Darling-Hammond and others (1989) reported that some programs included guided field experiences while others did not; the length of the programs varied from 16 weeks to two or more years; and the number of course credits ranged from 9 to 45.

More recently the length of some of the alternative certification programs has become even shorter, with some only requiring five weeks of training before sending prospective teachers into the classroom as the teacher of record (Berry, 2001). Most alternative certification programs focus on the pragmatic aspects of teaching rather than the theoretical or philosophical aspects of education and may prepare graduates to work with procedures and curriculum in specific districts (Stoddart & Floden, 1995).

State Programs

Alternative routes for certifying teachers continue to grow in the United States. Every state in the nation is seeking to create alternatives to the traditional undergraduate college teacher education program route for certifying teachers. Some states are proposing to meet NCLB requirements by lowering certification standards even further. For example, bills introduced in the 2002-2003 legislative sessions in Texas, Florida and California would have allowed prospective teachers who have no preparation to teach to become certified as long as they have a bachelor's degree and passing scores on the state test. The state comptroller in Texas proposed that Texas should eliminate teacher education entirely from certification requirements, citing as her primary supporting evidence the United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige's education's report to Congress and speeches at a conference sponsored by the department (Strayhorn, 2003).

What began in the early 1980s as a way to ward off projected shortages of teachers and replace emergency certification has evolved into sophisticated means for recruiting, training, and certifying people who already have at least a bachelor's degree and want to become teachers (NCEI, 2005). In 1983, when the National Center for

Education Information (NCEI) first began asking state certification officials the question, “What is your state’s status regarding alternatives to the traditional college teacher education program route for certifying teachers?” only eight states said they were implementing some type of alternative route to teacher certification. In 2005, 47 states and the District of Columbia report they have at least one type of alternate route to teacher certification. All told, 122 alternative routes to teacher certification now exist in these 47 states. In addition, these states identify 619 sites within their states that offer alternative teacher certification programs.

The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) ranked state alternative certification programs using the following criteria:

- (1) The program has been specifically designed to recruit, prepare and license talented individuals for teaching who already have a bachelors degree.
- (2) Candidates pass a rigorous screening process that includes assessments such as entry tests, interviews, and demonstrated mastery of content.
- (3) The programs are field-based.
- (4) The programs include coursework or equivalent experiences in professional education studies before and while teaching
- (5) Candidates for teaching work closely with trained mentor teachers.
- (6) Candidates meet high performance standards for completion of programs.

Based upon these criteria the states with the best alternative teacher certification programs include: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

The National Center for Education, through *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis* (1996), delineated that eight types of Alternative Teacher Certification may be found nationwide:

Class A is the category reserved for those programs that meet the following criteria:

The program has been designed for the explicit purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree in a field other than education into elementary and secondary school teaching.

The program is not restricted to shortages, secondary grade levels, or subject areas.

The alternative teacher certification programs in these states involve teaching with a trained mentor, and formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year--and sometimes in the summer before and/or after.

Class B: Teacher certification routes that have been designed specifically to bring talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree into teaching. These programs involve specially designed mentoring and formal instruction. However, these states either restrict the program to shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas.

Class C: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-

taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design.

Class D: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. An institution of higher education has major responsibility for program design.

Class E: These post-baccalaureate programs are based at an institution of higher education.

Class F: These programs are basically emergency routes. The prospective teacher is issued some type of emergency certificate or waiver which allows the individual to teach, usually without any on-site support or supervision, while taking the traditional teacher education courses requisite for full certification.

Class G: Programs in this class are for persons who have very few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditionally approved college teacher education program route, e.g., persons certified in one state moving to another; persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another.

Class H: This class includes those routes that enable a person who has some "special" qualifications, such as a well-known author or Nobel Prize winner, to teach certain subjects.

Class I: These states reported in 1995 that they were not implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers.

Federal Programs

Program development at the federal level increased with provisions in NCLB that recognized alternative certification programs as an effective method to train teachers and encouraged states to become involved in this effort. Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: *Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals*, supports programs to recruit qualified professionals from other fields and provide them with alternative routes to teacher certification, including *Transition to Teaching* and *Troops to Teachers*.

In the 2003 federal fiscal year, Congress appropriated \$41.65 million for the *Transition to Teaching* program to enable mid-career persons to pursue alternative routes into the classroom. *Troops to Teachers* provides support to military personnel who have a bachelor's degree to become a teacher through alternative certification programs. In addition, the Department of Education created the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). ABCTE has developed exams and professional development to provide nontraditional candidates a way to become certified as a teacher. The first tests were administered in the summer of 2003 (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Independent Programs

Teach for America is the most recognized teacher recruiting organization in the country. Teach for America nationally recruits recent college graduates of all academic majors who commit to teach two years in public schools in low-income communities. Teach for America has placed 7,000 teachers in 16 urban and rural areas. Preparation for the program consists of a five-week training program (Retrieved October 20, 2004 from: http://www.teachforamerica.org/how_works.html). School districts hire Teach For

America corps members through state-approved alternative certification programs, whereby corps members must meet specific requirements and demonstrate proficiency in the grades and subject areas they will teach.

Louisiana Programs

The Louisiana Alternative Certification Program provides opportunities for individuals with non-education degrees to become certified public school teachers. It began as a pilot 2001-02, with nine approved providers and was fully implemented in Summer 2002 with twelve approved providers.

Individuals seeking teacher certification under the alternative certification program follow one of three alternative certification paths: Practitioner Teacher Program; Master's Degree Program; or Non-Master's/Certification-Only Program. Candidates for admission to any one of the programs must possess a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited university and must pass the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) on the PRAXIS and the content specific examinations for the PRAXIS. Candidates with an earned Master's Degree from a regionally accredited institution may qualify for exemption of PPST requirements. Individuals seeking certification under the Practitioner Teacher Program must submit an official transcript for evaluation to a Louisiana college or university with an approved teacher education program or to a state-approved private practitioner program provider. Individuals seeking certification under the Master's Degree Program or the Non-Master's/Certification-Only Program must submit an official transcript for evaluation to a Louisiana college or university with an approved teacher education program. Universities offering Practitioner Teacher or Master's Degree alternative certification programs were required to begin

implementation of the newly adopted paths on or before July 2002. The Non-Master's/Certification-Only alternative certification programs must have been implemented on or before July 2003.

New Orleans Programs

Teach Greater New Orleans is a program sponsored by the University of New Orleans. Instead of following the traditional path of completing education coursework prior to entering the classroom, Teach Greater New Orleans teachers participate in pre-service summer training and complete other academic requirements to become certified as they teach. These teachers work under a special license until they complete the coursework and assessment to qualify for their formal Louisiana Teaching Certificate. (UNO.edu, 2004).

Another alternative certification program in New Orleans is Xavier University's Fast Track to Teaching. A project of the Pathways to Teaching Careers Program; a focus is on recruiting and training teachers, especially minorities, to teach in urban school districts in Louisiana. The Division of Education at Xavier University of Louisiana received a \$1.2 million grant from the United States Department of Education to increase the number of highly qualified teachers in the areas of mathematics, science and special education. The Division of Education offers fast track (21 credit hours) post-baccalaureate programs of study in biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and special education that meet certification requirements to teach in Louisiana (XLU.edu, 2004)

Southern University at New Orleans recently implemented an alternative certification program called *Teach SU-New Orleans*. Participants in the program are permitted to

pursue certification while working full-time teaching. Requirements include a Bachelor of Arts Degree, 2.5 GPA of a 4.00 scale, passing scores on the Praxis I and II tests. Participants who hold a Masters Degree are exempt from the Praxis I requirement.

Research on Effectiveness of Alternative Certification Programs

One of the first evaluations of alternative certification training reviewed a program in Houston and reported three positive outcomes. First, survey results of principals and administrators showed interns' abilities were perceived as equal to those of certified first-year teachers. Second, a high proportion of interns planned to return the following year. And third, student achievement scores were similar for interns and certified, first-year teachers (Goebel, 1986). However, another study of alternative certification in Dallas showed mixed results, finding that, while the program would not have a significant impact on the teacher shortage, it did produce some qualified teachers in shortage areas (Lutz & Hutton, 1989). Lutz and Hutton (1989) evaluated the Dallas Independent School District's alternative certification program and found that alternative certificants scored high or higher on standard measures of teaching ability/performance and were rated high or higher by principals/mentors than were traditionally prepared teachers. In addition, results showed that sufficient screening of applicants contributed to intern quality and that the participation of principals, supervising teachers, and advisors was crucial.

An early review of studies of alternative certification programs provided further positive evidence of their effectiveness. Darling-Hammond, Hudson, and Kirby (1989) reviewed 64 math and science certification programs and found that these programs were successful in increasing the number of minorities and the number of female

teachers of math and science. This review also found that a substantial portion of the participants in these programs had prior teaching experience of some kind, in contrast to the expectation that alternative certification programs would recruit primarily candidates from outside the field of education.

Further empirical evidence to support alternative certification programs was found in a Texas study that examined the GPAs of traditional and alternative certification teaching candidates (Brown, Edington, Spencer, & Tinafero, 1989). This study found that the GPAs of alternative certification candidates were actually higher than traditionally prepared candidates or teachers with emergency permits, and that classroom performance of teachers in these three groups was similar.

A study of one of the first alternative certification programs—in New Jersey—looked at recruitment, placement, and retention of alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers (Natriello & Zumwalt, 1992). The researchers used survey data collected over several years, and found that the alternative certification program was able to maintain the same level of teacher quality at entry into teaching as traditional programs: "Although the New Jersey alternate-route teachers had lower grade point averages than their college-based counterparts, they came from more selective colleges and also scored higher on NTE tests despite being less likely to have majored in the teaching area" (Natriello & Zumwalt, 1992, p. 76). The researchers also found that the alternative certification program contributed substantial numbers of teachers to urban schools. As with many studies of alternative certification programs, however, other findings clouded the authors' conclusions. For example, even though the alternative certification program helped fill positions in urban schools, over time many of

these teachers left those schools, as a result their retention levels ended up being similar to those of traditionally prepared teachers who left after only a few years of teaching. In addition, a lower proportion of alternative certification math teachers reported greater long-range interest in staying in teaching than did those teachers prepared in schools of education.

Another early study examined the assumption that teachers prepared through alternative certification programs can learn on-the-job what they need to know about teaching (McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991). This research consisted of the analysis of survey data from alternative certification and traditionally prepared teachers over the course of their first several years of teaching. In examining the extent to which teachers learned math concepts while teaching math, the authors found that alternative certification teachers may learn some concepts, but that others are not easily learned through teaching. Moreover, results from the examination of a sub-sample of alternative certification elementary teachers showed that these teachers possessed limited knowledge of math concepts upon entry into teaching, and their knowledge did not increase substantially by teaching it.

Darling-Hammond (2000) has been a staunch supporter of the need for sound and thorough preparation of teachers that includes rigorous academic course work at the undergraduate level, highly structured and supervised internships, and full licensure before a teacher candidate is given control of a classroom, and ongoing professional development. Many critics of alternative certification programs would contend that assigning students to teachers who have entered through shortened preparation

programs is as inconceivable as entrusting them to the care of a doctor who has had six months of intensive course work and a mentor in the next room.

A review of one of the most well-known alternative programs, Teach for America, was very critical (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Darling-Hammond cited several anecdotes of Teach for America recruits entering classrooms entirely unprepared to teach on their own, with substantial negative consequences for both the teacher and the students. She went on to criticize the costs, training, and quality control of the project, and argues that, far from being equal to teacher education programs, Teach for America does not come close to adequately preparing participants to teach.

Quantitative research studies of Teach for America are not nearly as pessimistic. One study conducted by Kane, Parsons, and Associates examined the ratings of Teach for America teachers by the principals who supervised them. Teach for America teachers were rated as "good" or "excellent" on 23 indicators of successful teaching by over 90% of the principals surveyed (Kopp, 2000). Another study, conducted by CREDO (formerly the Center for Research on Education Outcomes), looked at the effects of Teach for America teachers in the Houston school system on student achievement as compared to other teachers. The results of this research suggested that students of Teach for America teachers achieved at slightly higher (although not statistically significantly higher) levels than the students of other teachers (Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001). One factor that was not addressed in this study was attrition. While the Teach for America program is specifically designed to recruit new teachers to teach for two years, analysis of attrition rates prior to completion of the two-year period

would be informative. This issue is another area in which research on alternative certification programs might be strengthened.

In a broader review of the general research on teacher preparation and its relationship to teaching and learning, Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Kline (1999) cited substantial research linking preparation in education and subject matter with a number of school-related outcomes, including ratings by students, effectiveness of instruction in specific fields such as math and science, ratings of instructional effectiveness at the elementary level, and students' reading achievement. The authors also reviewed several studies that found that teachers from alternative programs have problems with curriculum development, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and attention to learning styles.

As the number of alternative certification programs continued to increase during the 1990s, research on their structure and effectiveness became more intensive and pervasive. Today there exists a substantial body of literature on alternative certification that includes discussions of research, policy, and practice. Overall, the research to this point has been unable to clearly substantiate the effectiveness of these programs. Several studies have found positive or mixed results, but a significant portion of the research on alternative certification programs has arrived at negative conclusions.

One recent study that compared alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers began with a review of research, and cited a substantial body of research that found either better or similar results for alternatively certified teachers when compared to traditionally prepared teachers (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998). However, the authors stated that, overall, the research on alternatively certified programs is

"inconclusive and somewhat contradictory" (p. 166). This is due to the fact that a variety of methodologies has been used to study alternative certification programs, a variety of outcome variables has been examined, and a variety of operational definitions has been used to define variables.

Other problems that tend to confound studies of alternative certification programs include inappropriate comparisons of alternative certification teachers to non-equivalent groups from different regions or states. Comparisons of the qualifications of alternative certification teachers to those of traditionally prepared teachers are somewhat disingenuous; teachers in alternative certification programs may in fact, for example, have higher GPAs than traditionally certified teachers, but this is usually due to high screening standards and high ratios of applicants to openings. Studies that attempt to compare the teaching of alternative certification teachers to that of regular teachers often employ weak or non-systematic approaches to the assessment of teacher performance, rely on state or district measures, or have extremely small sample sizes (Hawley, 1990). Reliance on district or state data to assess classroom teaching is inappropriate because these data are typically measures of student, not teacher, performance. In addition, these types of data are typically standardized, aggregated test score data that are difficult to use in assessing individual teacher behavior. Finally, studies that compare alternative certification teachers to other, traditionally prepared teachers are problematic because the teachers used for comparison most likely graduated from schools of education before the recent shift toward an emphasis on standards and outcomes. Studies that conclude that alternative certification teachers differ little from other teachers beg the question of the quality of those other teachers.

In attempting to address some of the methodological weaknesses of the alternative certification research, Miller, McKenna, and McKenna (1998) designed a series of studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to examine the effectiveness of an alternative program. They used data from multiple sources, including observation of teaching behaviors, and the examination of student test scores and teachers' perceptions to determine if there were any differences between groups of alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers. The results showed that, after three years of experience and mentoring, the two groups were basically the same. While this study provided solid evidence for the effectiveness of the alternative certification program, it was unusual in several ways. First, it purposefully set out to address some of the weaknesses in the methodology that has been seen in studies of alternative certification programs. Second, it compared the two groups after three years. Many critics of alternative certification programs are more concerned about the impact on students of teachers with little training during the first year. The authors suggested that, in order to see similar results in other programs, the intensive three-year mentoring and support that were central to the program should be a model for other alternative certification programs. This begs questions regarding the costs associated with such thorough mentoring, and is an example of a variable of interest in the study of alternative certification programs that requires further research.

Data on the characteristics of alternative certification teachers and their impact on the diversity of the teaching force also are mixed. An examination of survey data from over 14,000 teachers compared the responses of traditionally and alternatively prepared teachers (Shen, 1998). Results of this study showed that more minorities

enter teaching through alternative certification programs than through traditional ones, and teach in urban schools with high percentages of students of color. Results of this study also indicated that alternative programs are effective at recruiting math and science teachers who have degrees in those fields. On the negative side, the researcher found that while alternative certification programs recruit and prepare minority teachers with high education levels, they also bring in minority teachers without college degrees.

Studies of teacher performance are no more conclusive than the research discussed above. A review of the literature on the performance of alternatively certified teachers in comparison to graduates of teacher preparation programs found several studies that supported the idea that regularly certified teachers outperformed those from alternative certification programs (Jelmsberg, 1996). This review also found studies that provided evidence for the quality of alternative certification teachers, and still others that had mixed results. In an attempt to sort out the issue, the author analyzed survey data from 136 recently certified teachers and ratings of performance by those teachers' principals. He found no differences between alternative certification and traditionally prepared teachers in terms of academic credentials. The author did find that, even after three years of teaching experience, the overall ratings of teacher performance were higher for the graduates of traditional teacher preparation programs than for the alternatively certified teachers.

In terms of student outcomes, the effect of teacher ability on student performance has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Several studies have documented the relationship between teacher ability and student achievement (Ehrenberg & Brewer,

1995; Ferguson, 1998; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). One study that researched the link between licensure and student outcomes examined data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. Researchers employed statistical regression models to determine the effects on students of teachers with full, emergency, or out-of-subject certification. Results showed that students of teachers who are not certified or who hold private school certificates do less well than students whose teachers hold standard, probationary, or emergency certification (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). The fact that students of teachers with probationary or emergency licenses did no worse than students of teachers with standard certification provided support for the position that alternatively prepared teachers can be equal in quality to traditionally prepared teachers. In their conclusion, the authors state, "Although certification is pervasive, there is little rigorous evidence that it is systematically related to student achievement" (p. 141). It should be noted that this somewhat controversial finding has been called into question through a critique of the study's methodology (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001).

Principals and Accountability

The need for high quality teachers in urban schools is paramount. Students in urban, high-poverty school are more likely to have uncertified or non-qualified teachers in front of the classroom. There are a disproportionate number of students at-risk and in-need in urban schools. Urban schools educate over 40 percent of students without English proficiency, three-quarters of minority students, and 40 percent of the nation's low-income students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). Schools in

urban areas tend to have low levels of student achievement and high levels of dropouts, as well as poor attendance in general.

The role of the principal includes many responsibilities from site management to curricular issues, but the new accountability places an even more significant task on principals by extending principals' responsibility for ensuring and developing teacher quality. Under new and stricter accountability guidelines and laws, school principals are charged with the task of ensuring that the classrooms are staffed with quality teachers. With a shift towards developing professional learning communities, the principal's leadership role is even more significant in that principals must focus on the development of teachers' knowledge and skills, professional community, program coherence, and technical resources (Fullan, 1988).

Whom principals hire to teach is now a priority for principals. Slosson (1999) maintained that hiring teachers is the most important thing that principals do. Hiring the best candidates for a position are the first consideration. Whether or not the person has participated in a traditional teacher education program or an alternative program is usually not a decisive factor in the hiring process. However, the significant change in the candidate pool--and the questionable classroom effectiveness of some new hires in producing student learning--makes a significant difference in how principals do their jobs and, as a result, all aspects of a teacher's background may need to be considered when hiring.

Principals of schools in high-poverty urban areas have a more difficult time recruiting and hiring highly-qualified teachers. Effective school principals understand the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. They understand the

importance of recruiting, hiring, and retaining those teachers who are effective. A principal may select a certified teacher, a former private school teacher, or a career changer with alternative certification; making such decisions is a key part of the principal's job. Typically, the principal is in the best position to assess how well an individual matches the school's vision and meets the students' needs (Ballou & Podgursky, 2001; Cawelti, 1999).

Principals particularly play an essential role in the development of new teachers, whether traditionally or alternatively certified. While some new teachers are fortunate enough to have a veteran teacher serve as a mentor or advocate, it is most times the principal who has the resources to provide supervision relative to curriculum development, teaching style, relationship building, and classroom management.

The research on principals' ratings of alternatively and traditionally certified teachers is limited. Previous studies have focused on local programs and have yielded mixed results. Ovando and Trube (2000) conducted small-scale studies implying that, based upon principals' ratings, alternatively certified teachers are less effective in the classroom than their traditionally certified counterparts. In their survey of 134 Texas principals, Ovando and Trube found that principals perceived traditionally certified teachers to have greater instructional capacity than alternatively certified teachers, though they sometimes attribute those differences to individual characteristics rather than preparation. The authors cautioned that their data suggest that principals also may have examined the performance of alternative certified teachers more than they did those teachers who were certified through traditional teacher education programs.

Teacher Retention

Teacher turnover is a problem in general, with most new teachers leaving the profession within the first three to five years. Between one-third and one-half of all teachers entering the profession are no longer practicing teachers 5 years later (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing & Californian Department of Education, 1992; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; God, 1996; Harris, 1992). The problem of teacher retention is further magnified for teachers who are trained through alternative certification.

Barnett Berry (2001) , managing director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future in Washington, D.C. contends that teachers who are certified through nontraditional avenues abandon classroom teaching sooner. Based upon limited data those who go through short-cut programs with no mentoring and no support are the first to leave the profession. Teachers who graduate from traditional university-based programs have lower attrition rates than teachers with other, non-traditional forms of preparation (Harris, Camp, and Adkison 2003). A large percentage of alternatively certified teachers also report that the teacher preparation programs they went through did not provide enough help for them to cope with their first-year experience, which intensifies the need for proper mentoring, professional development, and administrative support in their working environment (Tapper,1995). Berry (2001) argues, that alternative certification provides teachers who may have good academic credentials, but they have no training in how to teach literacy, no training in how to assess student work, and no training in how to work with parents and families

In a study of the Dallas Independent School District's alternative certification program, Hutton, Lutz, and Williamson (1990) found that only 81% of the interns returned to the district the year following their internship. In Lutz and Hutton's (1990) study of the same district, the alternatively trained teachers reported a lower commitment to teaching than first year teachers in a traditional certification program.

Alternatively certified teachers who sometimes receive limited training prior to taking over classrooms quit the teaching profession at high rates. Recent studies have documented such outcomes for recruits from the Massachusetts MINT program, nearly half of whom had left teaching within three years (Fowler, 2002) and the Teach for America program, an average of 80% of whom had left their teaching jobs in Houston, Texas, after two years (Raymond, Fletcher, & Luque, 2001). During the past decade, Teach for America has placed 7,000 recruits in classrooms. Teach for America recruits are only required to honor a two-year commitment and most tend to leave the teaching profession after the two year commitment (Darling-Hammond, 1994). This departure creates constant turnover in those schools that choose Teach For America recruits.

The value of student teaching and teacher internships is important. Individuals who enter teaching without student teaching leave teaching at rates twice as high as those who have had such practice teaching (Henke et al., 2000; NCTAF, 2003). Those who enter teaching without preparation in key areas such as instructional methods, child development and learning theory also leave at rates at least double those who have had such training (NCTAF, 2003, p. 84).

Teachers entering the profession through alternative routes often leave in greater numbers than traditionally certified teachers. Reasons for this attrition include less

preparation for dealing with the daily demands of public schools, and less formal preparation in teaching prior to entering the classroom. There is also evidence to indicate that those teachers who are the most academically talented leave in the greatest numbers (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). This becomes a huge problem for principals in that they have to continue to deal with the turnover of teachers, no consistency in certain subject areas and the in many cases the loss of a vested interest in developing and mentoring these teachers.

Summary

Alternative teacher certification has been developed as a means of addressing proposed shortcomings in traditional teacher education's ability to meet the demand for an increased teacher workforce, specifically in certain urban and rural areas, and subject areas, as well as to create more diversity in classrooms. More than teacher shortages, alternative certification now has to address issues such as teacher quality and accountability.

Research to date about alternative teacher certification programs yields mixed results. Some evaluative studies that compare traditional and alternative certification routes have produced inconclusive results, whereas others have been definitive in their stance for one certification route over another. Still, more and more private organizations, states, and the federal government are joining in the business of teacher education.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to compare the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers with traditionally certified teachers as assessed by principals in the New Orleans Public Schools. A review of literature determined that research in this area is limited with regards to the experiences of principals and their beliefs and opinions regarding alternative teacher certification. This chapter contains the methodology used for conducting the research for this study. It begins with the purpose of the research, continuing with a description of the setting where the study will be conducted, a discussion of the population studied, methods of data collection, development and administration of the survey, validity and reliability issues associated with the instrument, and the plan for data analysis.

Purpose

School districts across the country are finding it more difficult and challenging to meet the growing need for “highly qualified” teachers. In urban school districts, the task of placing certified teachers into classrooms is much larger. The use of alternative teacher certification programs to increase the teaching ranks is a trend that bears discussion as to their effectiveness in providing quality teachers. Although there is a profusion of research about alternative certification programs, research is limited in examining principals’ perceptions of the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers.

The purpose of this study was to provide valuable information from principals who work with alternatively certified teachers.

Setting

The setting of the study was a large urban school district in the South. The district has an enrollment of over 70,000 students. There are 130 schools in the district, including 77 elementary schools, 23 middle/Jr. high schools, and 30 high schools, offering a wide range of educational programs, including traditional schools, fundamental schools, and specialized schools for the arts, sciences, and mathematics. Surveys were sent to 112 schools. All schools were not sent surveys because some schools are listed as separate schools but have one administrator and some have low number of teachers on staff and the requirements to teach are often skills or vocational based.

Participants

The participants in this study were all principals with experience in evaluating teachers. The sample provides an array of principals from various settings, including primary, middle, and secondary schools. The utilization of a sample including principals from all backgrounds and educational settings offered an opportunity to strengthen the generalizability of the study. Principals in the district are required to have an advanced degree and administrative certification from the State Department of Education. Supervision and evaluation are primary job responsibilities of principals.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was developed by Michael Nusbaum (2002) in a study that compared traditionally and alternatively certified teachers as determined by

their principals in Hampton, Virginia. Nusbaum utilized survey construction as recommended by Gall et al. (1996) and Babbie (1990).

Competency statements were used to develop five survey domains. The domains established were (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management and instruction, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations skills, and (5) professionalism. Each domain is a separate dependent variable in the study. The survey is comprised of 40 questions designed to allow independent evaluation of alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers (Nusbaum, 2002).

Validity

The creator of the instrument used an expert panel to determine content validation. Specific domain descriptions were developed to explain what each domain purported to measure. During a period from September through October 2001, experienced administrators who had evaluated teaching personnel classified each statement into domains and rated each statement for its level of association and clarity. The educators also made recommendations for rewording of statements for clarity or accuracy. Means and standard deviations were computed for the level of association of statements with domains and the clarity of survey statements. Using this information, the survey was enhanced in content validity by reallocating statements to different domains or by rewriting, rewording, or deleting statements. Each domain became a separate dependent variable in the study (Nusbaum, 2002).

Reliability

Reliability of the instrument was measured by the instrument developer by use of a reliability coefficient. If competency statements in a given domain were highly

correlated, it was probable that the survey participants viewed the construct associated with the domain statements similarly. High levels of internal consistency were deemed supportive of the reliability of the instrument (Nusbaum, 2002). Survey statements were assigned to each of the five domains (See Appendix B).

In the present study, the first section of the survey requested demographic information from the principals such as gender, ethnicity, years experience as a principal, school level and type (i.e., elementary, magnet), approximate number of current alternatively certified teachers, principal's role in selection of alternatively certified teachers, and total number of teachers supervised during the current school year.

The second section of the survey asked respondents to evaluate alternatively certified teachers in one column and traditionally certified teachers in another column, using Nusbaum's (2002) items. Principals answered questions by selecting a number on a Likert scale with five available responses ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree." Scores in the range of 2.51 to 3.5 were viewed as favorable in terms of effectiveness. The Likert scale was used because it is suitable for measuring evaluative beliefs. The final section of the survey provided a space for any additional comments regarding the observations of alternatively certified teachers or certification programs in general.

Scoring of Instruments

The survey produced 10 scores—one for each of the Nusbaum (2002) domains for traditionally certified teachers, computed as the mean of the item responses within

the domain, and one for each of the Nusbaum domains for alternatively certified teachers, also computed as the mean of the item responses within the domain.

Research Design

Survey research was used to collect data for this study. Survey research gathers data and analyzes the results to obtain an accurate description of an existing status and to draw generalizations that will advance knowledge (Van Dalen, 1973). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) viewed descriptive studies as primarily concerned with finding out “what is,” although survey research often measures characteristics of samples and makes inferences about the larger populations. Survey research is often used to learn about people’s attitudes, beliefs, values, demographics, behavior, opinions, desires, and habits, with the goal of understanding the relationships among these variables (McMillan and Schumacher, 2000). Because it is the goal of this study to find out perceptions of public school principals relative to alternatively certified teachers, survey research is the appropriate method for this study.

According to Isaac and Michael (1989), survey research systematically describes the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest. Such results can assist those involved in future planning and decision-making for that given population.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study were:

- (1) Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional program with regard to subject area knowledge?

- (2) Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to classroom management, discipline and instruction?
- (3) Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to instructional planning procedures, knowledge and methods?
- (4) Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to human relations skills?
- (5) Do principals perceive differences between teachers certified and licensed through an alternative program and teachers certified and licensed through traditional programs with regard to professionalism?

Procedure

Following dissertation committee approval, a letter was submitted to the University of New Orleans (UNO) Human Subjects Review Committee requesting permission to conduct the proposed research. Once permission was granted (see Appendix C), the president of the Principals Association was contacted to assist in securing principal participation.

Surveys were mailed to 112 principals (see Appendix D). A cover letter explaining the purpose and importance of the research, and its benefits was included in the package (see Appendix E). All responses were kept confidential. The names of the

principals and the schools were not on the instrument. However each instrument was identified by a numerical code to help in identifying non-respondents. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included with each survey.

An e-mail was sent to participants one week after the initial mailing of the survey to thank those who already completed the survey and as a reminder to those who needed to complete the survey. A third e-mail was sent as a follow-up to remind non-respondents two weeks after the initial e-mail. In an attempt to increase the number of responses the president of the principal's association was contacted to encourage more principal participation. Numerous phone calls were made to non-respondents seeking their participation. Principals who responded to the survey were asked to persuade their colleagues to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Once the surveys had been collected, all data were organized and entered into a database. SPSS 12.0 statistical software was used. Descriptive statistics on the demographic data were used to describe the characteristics of the sample. A mean score for each domain of the Nusbaum (2002) instrument for alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers was calculated. Final analysis compared the means of each domain relative to the responses principals gave to alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers. The alpha levels for the *t*-tests were adjusted using Bonferroni's Adjustment for multiple comparison ($.05/5 = .01$). Further exploratory analysis was used to determine if there was any relationship between demographic variables and the domains established by Nusbaum (2002).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This study was designed to collect and assess public school principals' perceptions of alternatively certified teachers compared to teachers who are certified through traditional means. Perceptions were measured by a 40-item survey designed to allow independent evaluation of alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers with one to three years experience (Nusbaum, 2002). There were five survey domains, including (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations skills, and (5) professionalism.

Response Rate

The participants in this study were drawn from a sample comprised of principals in a large urban school system. This system was chosen due to the large number of alternatively certified teachers hired each year and the growing number of alternative teacher certification programs in the area.

Although there are 130 schools in the district studied, all do not have principals or the principal is the same person at two sites and some do not require teacher credentials but vocational licenses in order to teach. As a result a mailed survey was sent to only 112 public school principals. The initial goal was a return rate of 75% or higher. The return rate two weeks after the initial mailing resulted in a return of only 32% of the surveys. An email reminder and second issuance of surveys was

sent to non-respondents. Within the next two weeks this resulted in an additional 27 surveys being returned, bringing the total return to 56%. Two of the surveys were not useable because the respondents had never evaluated alternatively certified teachers. There were no other exclusions from the sample other than the two principals who had never evaluated alternatively certified teachers. The final response rate for the study was more than half of the surveys mailed. Descriptive data on the response rate are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Response Rate

Surveys Mailed		Surveys Returned		Unusable		Useable	
n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%*
112	100.0	63.0	56.2%	2	3.2%	61	96.8%

* % of returned surveys

One hundred twelve (112) surveys were mailed to various levels and configurations of schools. Principals were asked to describe their school as elementary, middle, or high school. Combination configurations such as K-8 and 7-12 were described as other. Elementary schools are the largest type of school in the district studied. Of the approximately 75 elementary schools, almost half of the principals responded and slightly less than two-thirds of high school principals responding. Only one-third of the middle school principals participated in the study (see Table 2).

Table 2
School Level of Respondents Who Evaluated Alternatively Certified Teachers

School Level	n	%
Elementary School	33	54.1
Middle School	9	14.8
High School	14	23.0
Other	5	8.2

Personal Characteristics

Principals were asked to complete a demographic section of the survey to determine gender, ethnic background, administrative experience, level of school, number of alternatively certified teachers, total number of teachers, and whether or not they had evaluated alternatively certified teachers. The majority of schools in the district studied were led by females. About two-thirds of the respondents in this study were female and slightly less than one third of the principals participating were male (see Table 3).

Table 3
Gender of Respondents

Gender	n	%
Female	42	68.9
Male	19	31.1

The school district used for this research is in an urban area with a diverse ethnic make-up. However, the majority of schools in this public school system are led by

African-American principals. Over three-fourths of the respondents for this study described themselves as being Black. All but one of the remaining principals were white (see Table 4).

Table 4
Ethnic Background of Respondents

Ethnic Background	n	%
White (not Hispanic Origin)	10	16.4
Black (not Hispanic Origin)	50	82.0
Hispanic or Latino	0	0
Native American (American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut)	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	0	0
Other	1	1.6

The survey asked principals to indicate the number of years of administrative experience they had. Over one fourth of the principals surveyed had 10 to 19 years experience as an administrator. Another one-fourth of the principals had less than five years and only two principals who responded to the survey had more than 30 years administrative experience. The actual frequency and distribution can be found in Table 5.

Table 5
Administrative Experience of Respondents

Administrative Experience	n	%
Fewer than 5 years	14	23.0
5-9 years	17	27.9
10-19 years	18	29.5
20-29 years	10	16.4
30 years or more	2	3.3

Respondents indicated the number of alternatively certified teachers they currently had at their schools. Over one-half of the principals reported between one and five alternatively certified teachers. Approximately one fourth of the principals surveyed said that they had six to 10 teachers who had been trained alternatively. Only two respondents indicated that they had more than 20 alternatively certified teachers. The distribution of number of alternatively certified teachers is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Number of Alternatively Certified Teachers

Number of Alternatively Certified Teachers	n	%
1-5	36	59.0
6-10	16	26.2
11-15	4	6.6
16-20	3	4.9
20 or more	2	3.3

Principals were asked how many total teachers were currently in their schools. Approximately one-third responded that they were principals at schools with teaching staffs between 31 and 40 teachers. About one-fourth of the principals surveyed currently worked in schools with more than 41 teachers. As noted in Table 8, only nine principals worked in schools with more than 50 total teachers.

Table 7
Size of Teaching Staff

Total Number of Teachers	n	%
1-20	12	19.7
21-30	14	23.0
31-40	19	31.1
41-50	7	11.5
50 or more	9	14.8

Summary of Respondent Characteristics

Sixty-one respondents participated in this study. About two thirds of the participants were female and over three-fourths were African-American. About one half of the schools they represented were elementary schools. These characteristics are all reflective of the district studied in that the majority of the principals are in elementary schools and are African-American females.

Teaching Domains

There were five identified domains of effective teaching used in the research (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations, and (5) professionalism. Items from the survey were assigned to each domain and a mean was calculated for each of the domains for principals' responses regarding alternatively and traditionally certified teachers. A paired sample t-test was calculated to compare the traditional teacher score to that of the alternative teacher for each domain. Descriptive statistics representing principals' perceptions of alternatively certified teachers compared to traditionally certified teachers are presented in Table 8.

Domain 1, Content Knowledge, consisted of 9 comparative statements. This domain is defined as teachers understanding the central concepts, methods of inquiry, and structure of a particular discipline. The mean for alternatively certified teachers was about one third point lower (on a 5-point scale) than for traditionally certified teachers.

The second domain, Management, reflected criteria used to describe a teacher's ability to manage the classroom, including discipline and procedures. There were also nine items specific to this domain. The mean showed that alternatively certified teachers had a mean about two thirds of a point lower than traditionally certified teachers.

Instructional planning was the third domain and had the fewest number of items. Principals were only asked to respond to five items relative to instructional planning. Instructional planning included the teacher having the ability to understand and use a variety of instructional strategies in meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Alternative teachers had a mean score about one half point lower than traditionally trained teachers.

The teacher understanding the role of the community in education and developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with colleagues, parents/guardians, and the community are all measured in Domain 4, Human Relations. This domain rated the highest of all domains with mean scores of 3.9 for alternative teachers and 4.1 for traditional teachers.

The fifth and final domain, Professionalism, was the closest in mean scores. Both alternative and traditional teachers received a mean score of 3.9. A total teaching score for alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers also was computed by taking the mean of the five domain scores. Traditionally certified teachers scored about one third point higher overall on a scale with a possible range of 1 to 5.

Table 8
Comparison of Nusbaum's Domains

Domain	Traditional Teachers			Alternative Teachers		
	Mean	n	SD	Mean	n	SD
Content	3.94	61	.56	3.59	61	.75
Management	3.95	61	.84	3.28	61	.81
Planning	3.77	61	.72	3.32	61	.82
Relations	4.11	61	.55	3.89	61	.74
Alternative Professionalism	3.89	61	.87	3.90	61	.74
Total	3.93	61	.57	3.60	61	.68

Research questions concerned the differences in mean scores for alternatively and traditionally certified teachers for each teaching domain. Dependent samples *t*-tests were computed. Because there were five dependent variables, Bonferroni's Adjustment was used. The alpha with Bonferroni's adjustment is the desired alpha level ($p < .05$) divided by the number of dependent variables ($n=5$); therefore, the alpha level used to test the differences was .01 ($.05/5$) or less. While the standard was set at .01, any differences were considered significant at the .05 level. All but one of the *t*-tests was statistically significant ($p < .05$). Only the Human Relations domain had statistically equal means for traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers (see Table 9).

Table 9
Comparison of Nusbaum's Domains by Alternative versus Traditionally Certified Teachers

Domain	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Adj. <i>p</i> *
Content Knowledge	-3.69	.00	.00
Classroom Management	-5.62	.00	.00
Instructional Planning	-3.71	.00	.05
Human Relations	-2.60	.00	>1
Professionalism	0.07	..94	.00
Total	-3.81	.00	.00

*Bonferroni's Conservative Alpha for Pairwise Comparisons

Relationship of the Demographic Variables to the Teacher Ratings

To determine whether various demographic characteristics of the principals, including gender, ethnicity, experience, or school level might affect their ratings of alternatively versus traditionally certified teachers, additional comparisons were

analyzed. Independent samples *t* – tests showed no differences in ratings of teachers by gender of the principal (see Table 10).

Table 10
Effects of Gender on Principal Ratings of Teachers by Type of Certification

Teacher Certification	Principal Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	Female	42	3.64	.69	0.69	.50
	Male	19	3.51	.67		
Traditional	Female	42	3.96	.51	0.52	.60
	Male	19	3.87	.70		

Independent samples *t*-tests showed that White principals rated alternatively certified teachers significantly higher than did Black principals, but that White and Black principals rated traditionally certified teachers about the same (see Table 11).

Table 11
Effects of Ethnicity on Principal Ratings of Teachers by Type of Certification

Teacher Certification	Principal Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	White	10	4.02	.95	2.19	.03
	Black	50	3.52	.59		
Traditional	White	10	3.95	.73	0.02	.99
	Black	50	3.95	.53		

The experience level of the principal was correlated to the perceptions of both alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers. The Pearson *r*'s ($r=.04$, $p=.76$

for alternative, $r=.06$, $p=.67$ for traditional) were not statistically significant, indicating no relationship between experience and teacher ratings.

Teacher ratings given by principals at different school levels were comparable. An analysis of variance revealed no statistically significant differences (see Table 12). Five multi-levels were not included in the analyses.

Table 12
Effects of School Level on Principal Ratings of Teachers by Type of Certification

Teacher Certification	Principal Ethnicity	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Alternative	Elementary	33	3.61	.63	0.35	.71
	Middle	9	3.40	.94		
	High	14	3.55	.68		
Traditional	Elementary	33	3.91	.50	0.36	.70
	Middle	9	3.88	.80		
	High	14	3.83	.54		

Validity and Reliability of the Nusbaum Domains

Because the Nusbaum (2002) instrument has been used in only one other study, the researcher elected to calculate the alpha reliability coefficients for this sample. Using all principal responses about their alternatively certified teachers, Cronbach alpha coefficients were computed for each domain and the total score. As shown in Table 13 below, all alphas exceeded .80 except the alpha for Professionalism. The alpha of .54 suggests that items in this domain may not all be measuring a uniform construct. All other alphas are deemed appropriate verification of the internal consistency reliability of the domains.

Table 13

Alpha Reliability Coefficients for the Instrument Domains

Domain	Alpha
Content knowledge	.849
Classroom management	.849
Instructional planning	.827
Human relations	.862
Professionalism	.535
Total	.901

n=61

Summary

Based on the data from 61 principals, it appears that alternatively certified teachers are viewed as somewhat less effective in content knowledge, classroom management, instructional planning, and professionalism than traditionally certified teachers. These differences are perceived by principals at all school levels and equally by male and female principals, more experienced and less experienced principals. White principals rated alternatively certified teachers significantly higher than Black principals but the differences by principal ethnicity were not found for traditionally certified teachers.

The use of the Nusbaum instrument to assess teacher quality along five domains was supported by reliability analyses with the study sample. Only the professionalism domain had a less-than-acceptable Cronbach alpha. These findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purposes of this chapter are to provide a general summary of the study and to present discussions and conclusions drawn from the findings in Chapter IV.

Additionally, recommendations for further study are made and a discussion of the implications of alternative teacher certification for practice and policy is presented.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this research was to compare the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers with traditionally certified teachers as assessed by principals in one urban district. The number of alternative teacher certification programs is increasing in response to the urgency to get a skilled teacher into every classroom, in compliance with the federal “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.”

While there was a plethora of research about teacher education and teacher certification, the research was limited in scope as to the thoughts and perceptions of school principals relative to the effectiveness of alternative certification. This study attempted to answer five research questions regarding principals’ perceived effectiveness of alternative teacher certification programs compared to teachers who have been trained through traditional teacher education programs.

The survey for this research had five distinct domains relative to the teaching profession: (1) content knowledge, (2) classroom management, (3) instructional planning, (4) human relations skills, (5) and professionalism. Conclusions were based

upon participants' responses to a 40-item Likert-response survey. Surveys were mailed to 112 principals in a large southern urban public school district. Sixty-three participants returned the survey and two were deemed unusable because the participants had never evaluated alternatively certified teachers. The responses to the survey were input into a statistical software program and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results of this study indicated that principals perceived that alternatively certified teachers were perceived as slightly less effective than traditionally certified teachers. Teachers trained in the traditional teacher education programs were more effective in regards to content knowledge, classroom management, instructional planning, and professionalism.

Discussion

Findings of this study indicated that while principals thought that alternatively certified teachers were sufficiently effective, they were not perceived to be as skilled as those teachers who had attended traditional teacher education programs to become certified. The data from this study clearly favored traditionally certified teachers in four of the five teaching domains. The domain including items relative to human relations skills showed no difference in the comparison of the alternatively certified teacher to the traditionally certified.

Previous research on alternatively certified teachers has offered mixed results, with the majority arguing that alternatively certified teachers were equal or more effective than teachers who participated in teacher education programs. Several studies have been conducted comparing and contrasting traditional and alternative teachers, with varying results.

Miller, McKenna, and McKenna (1998) compared alternatively and traditionally certified teachers and cited a substantial body of research that found either better or similar results for alternatively certified teachers when compared to traditionally prepared teachers. Other studies have shown that the abilities of alternative teachers are comparable to traditional teachers. Lutz and Hutton (1989) evaluated the Dallas Independent School District's alternative certification program and found that alternative certificants scored high or higher on standard measures of teaching ability/performance and were rated high or higher by principals/mentors than were traditionally prepared teachers.

However, other studies have shown that alternatively certified teachers are not adequately prepared to teach due to a lack of pedagogical skills (17). Although these teachers were knowledgeable about their subject matter, they were not able to explain concepts to students. Therefore, alternatively certified teachers may lack adequate pedagogical skills, which are normally acquired from formal teacher training--skills that are relevant to effective teaching (McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991). Because these teachers are certified largely based on competency in the subject-matter area, the pedagogical knowledge base is weak and narrowly focused to the extent that it could limit the learning horizon of the students, and adversely affect the quality of the students' overall educational experiences (Ball & Wilson, 1990; Schram, Feiman-Nemser, & Ball, 1990; Kennedy, 1991).

Other researchers reported that studies of teachers admitted through quick-entry alternate routes frequently noted that the candidates had difficulty with curriculum development, pedagogical content knowledge, attending to students' differing learning

styles and levels, classroom management, and student motivation (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990; Grossman, 1989; Lenk, 1989; Mitchell, 1987). Novice teachers without full training showed more ignorance about student needs and differences, and about teaching basics than trained beginners (Rottenberg & Berliner, 1990) (Darling, Hammond, 1992, p. 131).

Data from this study were aligned with previous studies that indicated that there is a difference between the effectiveness of teachers certified through traditional programs and those certified through alternative programs. Using the five domains of teaching, principals in this research perceived that there was a difference between traditionally certified teachers and teachers with alternative certification in all but one of the domains. There were two demographic considerations to be made in terms of how principals scored the teachers. White principals tended to have a more positive perception of alternatively certified teachers than Black principals. Without further investigation it would be hard to come to a concrete conclusion as to why this perception exists, but a consideration could be made in that most of the white principals who participated in the study were in leadership positions at schools with selective admission criteria or that are high-performing in terms of school performance scores and accountability. They were not truly representative of the typical urban setting in which alternative teachers are usually assigned.

Similar to the perception differences by race, middle school principals were more apt to give lower scores to alternatively certified teachers. There was not a significant statistical difference, but there was an evident difference in that in this particular district study, a large number of alternatively certified teachers are assigned to the middle

schools in the district studies. The majority of the teachers in the middle schools are either elementary or secondary certified. It is harder to staff the middle schools with certified teachers due to there not being a true middle school teacher certification program in the area.

In review of the study's data, it is evident that principals in general somewhat agreed that alternatively certified teachers were competent, but they did not believe that they were as competent as traditionally certified teachers. A major argument for the creation of alternative certification programs is that these teachers will bring a wealth of knowledge and content-specific expertise into the classroom, much more than teachers who are trained in teacher education programs. No evidence in this study indicates that principals felt that the alternatively certified teachers were better prepared in terms of content knowledge, in fact they were ranked lower.

Studies show that knowledge of both subject matter and of teaching and learning acquired in teacher education is strongly correlated with teacher performance in the classroom (Guyton & Farokhi, 1987). Teacher education is sometimes more influential than additional subject matter preparation (Monk & King, 1994). While content knowledge is essential, many alternatively certified teachers lack the wide range of knowledge and skills that research has identified as necessary for effective teaching: understanding subject matters in ways that allow them to organize it and make it accessible to students, and understanding how students think and behave.

Alternatively certified teachers were scored lower than traditionally certified teachers in terms of classroom management. This finding may be due in large part to the alternatively certified teacher not being provided with the training or skill necessary

to maintain a classroom environment conducive to learning. Traditional teacher education programs typically provide potential teachers with opportunities to be prepared for the challenge of classroom management through student teaching and internships which provide knowledge of the many factors that affect student behavior, such as the arrangement of the classroom, establishment of class rules, choice of instructional activities, managing conflict and compromise, and improving students' social skills.

Principals' responses to the instructional planning domain reflected that alternatively certified teachers were not as prepared as traditionally certified teachers. Being able to plan for long-term instruction, make appropriate assessments, and individualize instruction were areas of weakness identified by the principals. Having a mastery or expertise in a subject area does not automatically transcend into being able to be effective in the classroom. Proponents of alternative certification programs tend to disparage the importance of classroom teachers being able to prepare long-term objectives and goals relative to instruction.

The domain in which there was the most significant statistical difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers was human relations. Research on teachers' personality traits and behaviors has produced few consistent findings (Schalock, 1979; Druva & Anderson, 1983), with the exception of studies finding a recurring positive relationship between student learning and teachers' flexibility, creativity, or adaptability (Berliner & Tikunoff, 1976; Schalock, 1979; Walberg & Waxman, 1983). Successful teachers tend to be those who are able to use a range of teaching strategies and who use a range of interaction styles, rather than a single, rigid

approach (Hamachek, 1969). This finding is consistent with other research on effective teaching, which suggests that effective teachers adjust their teaching to fit the needs of different students and the demands of different instructional goals, topics, and methods (Doyle, 1985). Principals showed more confidence in the ability of traditionally certified teachers to show enthusiasm for content and learning, use different methods to communicate, and build relationships with students and parents.

Making decisions regarding a student's instruction would include the development of relationships. The experience of student teaching or a teaching internship may foster the development of the ability to build and sustain relationships with fellow educators, parents, and students. Teachers must be aware of how their own thoughts and feelings about students may prevent them from meeting the students' needs. With an increased awareness of students' potential, teachers are able to make productive changes in their interactions that can contribute to their growth and development. The teacher must focus on communicating the belief that all students can learn. Interpersonal skills are used by the teacher to involve students in the learning process and to communicate high expectations. Emphasis is placed on demonstrating genuine caring and concern for students, allowing cultural elements that are relevant to students to enter the classroom, and adapting curriculum and instructional practices for culturally responsive teaching. It would not be fair to assume that just because a person has chosen teaching as a career that they are by nature caring and willing to develop such relationships. The importance of relationships in the classroom cannot be minimized. Teacher training plays an essential role in understanding what is

developmentally appropriate or culturally relevant in setting high expectations for students.

The use of different strategies occurs in the context of "active teaching" that is purposeful and diagnostic rather than random or laissez faire and that responds to students' needs as well as curriculum goals (Good, 1983). Teacher education appears to influence the use of these practices. Teachers who have had formal preparation have been found to be better able to use teaching strategies that respond to students' needs and learning styles and that encourage higher order learning (Hansen, 1988; Perkes, 1967-68; Skipper & Quantz, 1987).

Alternatively certified teachers were scored the highest in the domain discussing professionalism. Principals perceived alternative teachers as being professional in terms of the manner in which they conducted themselves relative to meetings, maintained student records, and responded to district policies. The level of professionalism may be due in some part to teachers who are alternatively certified usually enter the teaching profession from another career or profession and these may be traits learned previously. Teaching is a profession where practitioners usually enter the field with preconceived beliefs and conceptions about teaching and learning based upon their experiences as students in a classroom. Lortie (1975) calls these prior experiences, where students form their ideas of what should go on in the classroom, the "apprenticeship of observation."

Limitations

This study was limited to a large urban district in the south. The results may not be generalizable to other school systems or regions. The actual response rate could pose a limitation to the study in that it could not be guaranteed that any non-respondents are similar to principals who did respond. The small sample size is also a limitation of the study.

The findings of this study indicate that principals surveyed believe that alternative certification programs are providing no more or less quality of teacher than traditional programs. In fact, based upon principals' responses, traditionally and alternatively certified teachers are performing quite well. This may be a contextual issue relative to what is going on in the particular district, especially the dismantling of the middle schools which had a large number of alternatively certified teachers.

Implications for Practice

The number of alternative teacher certification programs will continue to increase. In urban schools there will continue to be a shortage of highly qualified teachers, yet it cannot be assumed that fast track, alternative teacher certification programs will be the remedy to solve the problems. It should not be assumed that teacher education programs need no longer exist in a charge to place teachers in classrooms. Effective teachers must know more than subject matter. They must be more than "experts" in an area. Without adequate preparation many alternative teachers lack the wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching. It is important that they understand how students think and behave, and how to motivate them. Research shows that knowledge of both subject matter and of teaching and

learning acquired in teacher education is strongly correlated with teacher performance in the classroom (Berry, 2001). The public seems to agree. In a recent opinion poll by Louis Harris, 89 percent of those surveyed cited having a well-qualified teacher in every classroom as an important measure for lifting student achievement. Three-quarters of those surveyed opposed allowing those with college degrees to enter teaching without also requiring preparation in the field of education.

Implications for Teacher Training

The U.S. federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation requires that teachers participating in federally funded programs must be "highly-qualified." This has raised the issue of quality in teacher preparation. It seems that colleges and universities providing teacher training are being widely criticized while at the same time they are being called upon to deliver potential candidates whose performance will result in increased student achievement.

Many people believe that anyone can teach, or, that knowing a subject is enough to allow one to teach it well. Current teacher education programs may leave a lot to be desired in terms of the preparation of new teachers entering classrooms, but there are important elements that these programs provide that teachers are generally better rated and more successful with students than teachers without prior training. Linda Darling-Hammond found that teacher preparation is a stronger correlate of student achievement than class size, overall spending, or teacher salaries and accounts for 40% to 60% of the total achievement variance after taking students' demographics into account.²² In fact, studies show that both subject- matter knowledge and knowledge of teaching and learning strongly correlate with teachers' classroom performance.²³

Policymakers, state departments of education, and schools and colleges of education providing teacher preparation programs must help assure that teachers who are alternatively certified will be prepared to enter the teaching profession. Findings from this study indicate a need for more collaborative efforts among those preparing teachers and those hiring them. These findings will assist those responsible for state certification policy in reviewing existing procedures and modifying pre-service and in-service programs. It is anticipated that state departments of education will continue to confront new challenges as the availability of alternative certification increases.

This study has yielded information that may benefit state departments of education as they focus on teacher quality in response to the No Child Left Behind call for highly qualified teachers. Federal criteria for a highly qualified public elementary school or secondary school teacher requires that each teacher has "obtained full state certification as a teacher (including alternative certification) and has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on a emergency, temporary, or provisional basis" (United States General Accounting Office, 2003, p. 7). The No Child Left Behind Act endorses alternative certification as a means of providing quality teachers, but does not require that these teachers have any background in pedagogy. There is no short-term solution or quick fix to the issue of teacher quality. What we do know is that research offers that teacher quality can be the most significant determinant in student achievement.

Proponents will continue to argue that alternative certification programs provide a fast track for midcareer professionals and retirees who may be less inclined to return to college and pursue a traditional education degree. Advocates say alternative

certification programs offer districts more flexibility to recruit and hire teachers, especially in the urban districts with large minority populations that have been hardest hit by the teacher shortage. However, these programs do not guarantee that quality teachers will be placed in the classrooms that need the best and brightest teachers. It is recommended that more stringent standards be put in place for performance assessments for prospective teachers who are enrolled in traditional and nontraditional programs alike.

Quality alternative route programs can put new teachers in classrooms rapidly, but they need to pledge the support they need to succeed. These quality programs should have tightly supervised internships, extensive mentoring by expert teachers, and corresponding coursework in teaching and assessment strategies as well as in child and adolescent psychology. All teachers need to know not only subject matter but how to organize it and make it accessible to students, many of whom learn in different ways. Alternative teacher certification programs can help to alleviate critical teacher shortages. However, these programs must offer high quality preparation so that newly certified teachers can be effective in the classroom and will want to stay in the field. The NCLB legislation should help to begin initiatives to assure that alternatively certified teachers are fully qualified and are ready for the challenges of classroom teaching.

Measures to improve teacher education programs will do little to improve teacher quality if states allow schools to hire teachers without preparation. States that do not hire unprepared teachers have developed successful strategies for boosting the supply of qualified teachers. These strategies require states and districts to make investments to improve teachers' access to high-quality preparation and their incentives for

becoming well prepared. Until these investments are made, many students will continue to be taught by teachers who are inadequately prepared to help them learn. If our society really expects all students to learn to high levels, as federal mandates require, a more conscious set of strategies for ensuring that their teachers are trained will be needed.

A significant, if not the most important implication for teacher training, would be the collaboration of state agencies, the local education authority and colleges and universities working together to develop a system of teacher certification including alternative certification that focuses on teacher quality. In the state of Louisiana, The Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Quality was created by the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education with the sole purpose being to improve teacher quality in Louisiana in K-16 schools. The panel came about out of an awareness of the need for universities and school districts to work together to improve teacher quality. Data provided by this Commission that help set it in motion included: (1) 13.1% of Louisiana teachers did not have certification in the areas in which they taught; (2) universities were not producing enough teachers to address areas of need for the districts; (3) 33% of the teachers who did become certified through Louisiana universities did not end up teaching in public schools in Louisiana; and (4) 27% of new teachers left the profession by the end of their fifth year of teaching (Burns, 2000). The concerns in Louisiana exemplify the problems across the nation.

Implications for Principals

As a result of the dilemma imposed by the federal No Child Left Behind Mandate to supply all classrooms with Highly Qualified teachers, alternative certification

programs more than likely will become a permanent part of the pathway into classrooms. The teacher education departments in colleges and universities will no doubt continue to develop fast track programs in an attempt to what might ultimately be their only means of survival. One of most important voices in this discussion will have to be that of the principals. In the district studied for this research, New Orleans Public Schools, principals problems similar to other large urban districts in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. Often teachers are assigned or transferred to particular schools with the principal having limited input. Principals of schools with at-risk populations are sometime left to fill vacancies with under-prepared teachers. Principals have to deal with the quality of a teacher regardless of teacher training. The results of this research indicated that overall while principals rated traditionally certified teachers higher than alternatively certified teachers in most teaching domains; alternatively certified teacher's performance was rated somewhat favorably compared to research cited in the review of literature. Principals in this study tended to rate teachers high in general. This is in direct contrast to the nationwide cry that there are serious issues with teacher quality. Principal's responses may be due in larger part to the fact that in this study they were evaluating the effectiveness of the teachers at their schools and they perceived that lower teacher ratings may in some way speak to their ability as the instructional leader.

Principals will have to play a greater role in the mentoring and supporting of beginning teachers whether they are alternatively or traditionally certified. The notion of principals being instructional leaders must come to fruition. Principal are charged with being instructional leaders, yet are still inundated with managerial tasks which take

them away from working with teachers and ensuring that teacher quality is the number one priority in school.

Principals must have real authority to select promising candidates from a diverse applicant pool, assess their classroom strengths and weaknesses, ensure that they receive whatever training they need to be effective, and replace bad teachers with good ones. Such leadership is already highly prized in private and charter schools. In most public schools across the nation, however, the principal is more middle manager than CEO, particularly when it comes to staffing. Teachers are assigned by the superintendent's office; their job security is protected by tenure laws and collective bargaining contracts; their pay is fixed by uniform salary schedules; and their workplace preferences are honored by "seniority" rules that let veteran teachers choose their schools whether the current staff wants them or not.

Implications for Research

Research about the characteristics of successful and unsuccessful alternative programs would be beneficial, so that those that do arise or continue can be as effective as possible. Researchers should continue to study the relationship between types of teacher certification and teachers' intentions to remain in the field. Equally important would be research on which components of teacher preparation influence retention. Within this area of study, it would be helpful to better understand the factors influencing retention of teachers in urban and rural settings, where many alternatively certified teachers find their first jobs.

Some states have as many as 27 different alternative licensure programs. Little data have been collected about these programs, leaving policymakers with little

information with which to make sound funding decisions. Research on the effectiveness of the alternative teacher certification programs should be a priority. A standard set of criteria should be used to determine the effectiveness of current alternative certification programs. A longitudinal study should be conducted to compare the retention of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers with varying levels of preparation. The impact of improved preparation in these areas may be demonstrated in retention data. A study of this type would reveal concerns of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers, provide guidance for potential teacher candidates, and assist in providing information about what types of support and mentoring are needed to keep these teachers in the profession.

The review of literature provided several qualitative studies about alternative teacher certification and traditional teacher education programs; however, the research is limited in terms of quantitative studies that could measure the effectiveness of alternatively certified teachers in terms of student achievement and this is ultimately what the focus should be surrounding the discussion of teacher effectiveness, not so much in which program a teacher was trained in, but its effectiveness. It will be important to conduct thorough research on the impact that alternatively certified teachers are having on student achievement.

Conclusion

There will probably never be a consensus regarding the effectiveness of alternative teacher certification and their impact in classrooms. Yet, there should be a consensus among proponents and opponents of alternative certification that we must move toward placing quality teachers in our classrooms. As teacher shortages increase due to retirement or attrition, and greater emphasis is placed on educational accountability it will be pivotal to ensure that the focus is not misplaced in increasing quantity of teachers rather than the quality of teachers.

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APPENDIX A

States Offering Alternative Teacher Certification

Alabama	Louisiana	North Carolina
Arkansas	Maine	Ohio
California	Maryland	Oklahoma
Colorado	Massachusetts	Oregon
Connecticut	Michigan	South Carolina
Delaware	Minnesota	Tennessee
District of Columbia	Mississippi	Texas
Florida	Missouri	Utah
Georgia	Montana	Vermont
Hawaii	Nebraska	Virginia
Idaho	Nevada	Washington
Illinois	New Hampshire	Wisconsin
Iowa	New Jersey	Wyoming
Kansas	New Mexico	
Kentucky	New York	

Appendix B

Item Domain Assignment

Survey Questions Domain Assignments

Domain Name	Survey Item Numbers								
Domain I: Content Knowledge	1	2	3	6	9	13	14	20	21
Domain II: Classroom Management	8	10	11	17	18	19	29	35	40
Domain III: Instructional Planning	4	5	7	15	16				
Domain IV: Human Relations	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
Domain V: Professionalism	30	31	32	33	34	36	37	38	39

Appendix C
Human Subjects Approval

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
COMMITTEE ON THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Form Number: 1JUN04 (please refer to this number in all future correspondence concerning this protocol)

Principal Investigator: Jacquelyn Mahatha Title: Graduate student

Department: ELCF College: Education and Human Development

Name of Faculty Supervisor: Peggy Kirby if PI is a student)

Project Title: Middle school principals' perspectives and experiences working with alternatively certified teachers

Date Reviewed: May 18, 2004

Dates of Proposed Project Period: From 6/04 to 6/05

*approval is for one year from approval date only and may be renewed yearly.

Note: Consent forms and related materials are to be kept by the PI for a period of three years following the completion of the study.

Full Committee Approval

Expedited Approval

Continuation

Rejected

The protocol will be approved following receipt of satisfactory response(s) to the following question(s) within 15 days:

1/14/05

Committee Signatures:

Scott C. Bauer, Ph.D. (Chair)

Anthony Kontos, Ph.D.

Betty Lo, M.D.

Jayaraman Rao, M.D. (NBDL protocols only)

Laura Scaramella

Laura Scaramella, Ph.D. Chair

Richard B. Speaker, Ph.D.

Gary Talarchek, Ph.D.

Appendix D
Survey Instrument

Evaluation of Alternative and Traditionally Certified Teachers

Demographic Information

1. What is your gender? _____female_____male

2. What best describes your ethnic background? (please check the best option)
_____White(not of Hispanic Origin)
_____Black (not of Hispanic Origin)
_____Hispanic or Latino
_____Native American (American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut)
_____Asian or Pacific Islander (Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Samoan, other)
_____other (please specify)

3. How many years of administrative experience do you have?
_____fewer than 5 years_____5-9 years_____10-19 years_____20-29 years_____30 years or more

4. What level school are you at?
_____elementary school_____middle school_____high school_____other

5. Approximately how many alternatively certified teachers do you currently have?
_____1-5_____6-10_____11-15_____15-20_____20 or more

6. Approximately how many total teachers do you currently have?
_____1-20_____21-30_____31-40_____41-50_____50 or more

Do you now or have you evaluated alternatively certified teachers? (if "no" please complete only this demographic portion of the survey.

Evaluation of Alternately and Traditionally Certified Teachers

Directions: Please select the most appropriate number on the following scale to indicate your level of agreement for alternately certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers:

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Undecided (4) Somewhat agree (5) Strongly agree

		Alternately Certified					Traditionally Certified				
1.	Exhibits mastery of instructional subject and instructed grade level.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Keeps current in instructional field and applies new knowledge in their classroom instructional program.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Utilizes current curriculum guides/competency lists.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Shows evidence of long-range planning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Plans for individual instructional differences among students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Plans for appropriate assessment strategies for student progress.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Utilizes instructional assistants and resources appropriately and effectively.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Maintains classroom environment conducive to learning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Implements division and state curriculum objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Focuses students to tasks at the beginning of the lesson and maintains the focus.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Communicates instructional objectives, reviews previous learning, and makes lessons relevant.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Presents concepts and skills in a clear, coherent, and logical manner using correct and appropriate techniques and professional practices.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Assigns appropriate amounts of homework and practice assignments.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Plans and initiates a variety of resources into units of study.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Evaluates student achievement using a variety of techniques.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Modifies instruction based on the needs of challenged students.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Evaluates classroom student achievement and provides feedback to the student and parents.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation of Alternately and Traditionally Certified Teachers

Directions: Please select the most appropriate number on the following scale to indicate your level of agreement for alternately certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers:

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Somewhat disagree (3) Undecided (4) Somewhat agree (5) Strongly agree

		Alternately Certified					Traditionally Certified				
18.	Varies instructional activities to address student-learning styles.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Conveys a belief in high expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Reteaches for mastery of instructional content.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Communicates personal enthusiasm for content and learning.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Demonstrates acceptance of each student regardless of socio-economics, diversity, religion or disabling condition.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Uses different methods and strategies to communicate and build positive relationships with co-workers, students, parents and administrators.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Effectively communicates in an effective manner.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Works with peers to accomplish a group goal. Is a team player.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Uses decision –making processes, which allow for quality decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Handles educational situations with poise and good judgment.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Treats all students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29..	Establishes routines, which keep students, involved in the task at hand and which prevents potential behavioral problems.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30..	Attends school related meetings in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Keeps school administrations informed about pertinent issues.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Upholds the district and school’s policies and regulations.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Seeks to improve self and performance.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Includes the community and its resources (partnerships, mentors, etc.) in their instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Prepares organizes, and maintains accurate records.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Assists in extra-curricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Conducts self in a manner, which serves as a positive role model.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Schedules personal obligations outside contract hours	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Dresses and conducts self in a professional manner.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Effectively address classroom discipline.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix E
Cover Letter to Participants

5601 Christian Lane
New Orleans, Louisiana 70126

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the University of New Orleans conducting research on *Principals' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Alternatively Certified Teachers in New Orleans Public Schools*. Raising teacher quality has become education reform's top priority. In response to increasing attention to the issues of educational accountability and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate for highly qualified teachers, alternative approaches to teacher certification have become widespread. New Orleans Public Schools have a large number of teachers certified through alternative programs.

The new accountability plan places a significant task on principals by extending their responsibility for ensuring teacher quality in classrooms. The principal is responsible for the development and evaluation of teachers. As a result it is important to hear the voice of the principal, the practicing expert in regards to teacher effectiveness. The purpose of this proposed research is to provide insight from the school principal regarding the experience of working with alternatively trained teachers specifically related to five domains: (1) Content Knowledge; (2) Classroom Management; (3) Instructional Planning; (4) Human Relations Skills; and (5) Professionalism

The knowledge gained from the surveys would be beneficial and significant in determining the effectiveness of alternative certification programs and the design of future programs. Your responses to the survey will be held in the strictest confidence. No responses will be identifiable with an individual or school.

Completion of the survey should take no longer than 15-20 minutes. Please return the completed survey and consent form in the enclosed stamped envelope within ten working days. I look forward to your participation. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (504) 246-9891 or via email at mahatha@aol.com. Again, thank you for your participation and support.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn Mahatha

VITA

Jacquelyn Lynn Mahatha was born in Brooklyn, New York. As a young adolescent her family moved to Pensacola, Florida where she attended elementary school. A later family move brought her to Gulfport, Mississippi where she attended middle school and graduated from Gulfport High School in 1981.

After High School she accepted an offer of a basketball scholarship to the University of New Orleans. She earned an undergraduate degree in Drama Communications with a minor in Sociology from the University in 1987. She later returned to UNO and enrolled in the alternative teacher certification program and continued her studies by earning a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 1995. A recipient of the Marcus B. Christian Doctoral Scholarship, Jacquelyn received her Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration from the University of New Orleans in 2005.

Jacquelyn has worked for the New Orleans Public Schools since 1989 as a middle school math and science teacher, a staff development teacher and most recently the interim principal at Alfred Lawless High School where she has worked for more than 15 years.

She is the proud mother of a daughter, Maya who attends New Orleans Public Schools.