5-20-2005

Alternatively Certified Teachers' Perceptions of Principal Support

Reina Bianca Heron Sorapuru
University of New Orleans

ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

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

Reina Bianca Heron Sorapuru

B.A., Xavier University of Louisiana, 1995
M.Ed., University of New Orleans, 2001

May, 2005

DEDICATION

To my family who believed in my aspirations, especially my husband, Huey Sorapuru, and in loving memory of my father,

Samuel Heron, II

and

To my major professor, Dr. Peggy C. Kirby, who laid the pathway to a successful dissertation and gave assistance to remain on it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The realization of my desire to obtain a doctoral degree could not have happened without the support of several people. I must thank first my husband, Huey, who never complained, but instead continued to support me in every step. I thank my daughters, Tamika, Wylene, Candice, Trezan, and Charisse for their constant cheering me to the finish line. Much gratitude goes to my Mother, Wylene Heron, my deceased father, Samuel Heron II, my brothers, Samuel III, Elton, and Spence, my sister-in-laws, nieces, nephew, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who prayed for me, encouraged me, and provided help along the way. I must thank my friend, colleague, and cohort, Jacqueline Mahatha, for all of the days and nights we pulled each other along when the going got tough. My appreciation goes out to my friends Terri Wide and Gerlinda Davis for lifting me up when I felt like giving up.

A very special and heartfelt "thank you" for the completion of this dissertation goes to Dr. Peggy Kirby, my lead professor. I never could have gone through this process without her giving her time, expertise, encouragement, and friendship. For this I will always be grateful.

I would like also to thank my committee members, Dr. Louis Paradise, Dr. Brian Riedlinger, and Dr. Juanita Haydel, and to

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified teachers about the support they receive from their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers to address the challenges of teaching. The importance of those supports as they correlate to teacher satisfaction was determined.

The primary research questions were, 1) Do first and second year alternatively certified teachers perceive that they are supported by their principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers? 2) What are the factors of that support they deem most important? There were two ancillary questions, 1) Is teacher perception of support related to satisfaction with teaching? 2) Is teacher perception of support related to teacher-reported intent to remain at the current school and in the profession?

Support received from principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers were important to early year success and were strong indicators in determining teacher satisfaction. Implications for alternative certification program development, principal, and mentor development, as well as future research suggestions are included.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Teacher preparation and retention is a recurring problem for school systems. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) is requiring States to have "highly qualified" teachers in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005–2006 school year. The highest need for teachers is in the urban school districts. It is a difficult task to fill teacher vacancies if the projections are correct and there is a need of 200,000 teachers a year over the next decade, as reported by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1999). Almost 10 percent of new teachers leave in their first year and 20 percent leave within three years (Recruiting New Teachers). This does not include teachers who are retiring. These factors have some researchers declaring a teacher shortage.

The certified teacher shortage is being addressed partially by hiring "alternatively certified teachers." These teachers come from recruitment programs such as *Teach for America* and *Teaching Fellows,* where they hold degrees in other fields and then pursued alternative routes to educational certification. Programs in Louisiana fall under three categories: Non-

Master's/Certification Only Program, Master's Degree Alternate Certification Program, and Practitioner Teacher Alternate Certification Program. Each program varies in admission requirements, program structure, and hours required to complete the program. However, in order to complete any program successfully, participants are required to pass three parts of the PRAXIS examination and have an overall GPA of 2.50 (Teach Louisiana, 2004).

Urban schools are experiencing increasing student enrollments, class size reduction initiatives, challenging working conditions, and increased teacher retirement. These schools educate 40 to 50 percent of students who are non-proficient in English, approximately 50% minority, and 40% who are economically disadvantaged. Additional challenges of urban schools include lowest levels of student achievement, highest dropout rates, and more students with special needs than other schools. The persons most likely to fill the needed instructional positions in urban schools are alternatively certified teachers (Recruiting New Teachers, 2004).

Sayler (2003) found that once teachers are hired, principals can provide support for teachers in aiding retention through teacher orientation, assigning mentors, and recognizing and developing the knowledge and skills of teachers. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) concluded that if ways to support teachers are

not addressed, then staffing problems will persist. Addressing salary, student discipline, allowing for participation in decision making, and administrative support can reduce the flight of teachers (traditional or alternatively certified).

Statement of the Problem

Policy makers are giving attention to developing and retaining highly qualified teachers. Though teachers are being prepared nationwide, urban districts still tend to have a higher shortage of qualified teachers for their schools (Jorissen, 2003). New Jersey in 1984 and Texas in 1985 were the first to enact legislation for alternative routes to teacher certification (Feistritzer, 1999).

Alternative certification is gained through a variety of programs, such as Teach for America, TEACH, Teaching Fellows, and university programs. Requirements in these programs range from two weeks of training prior to assigning teachers to classrooms to two-year post-baccalaureate programs with integrated coursework and up to three years of mentoring during the induction period (Jorissen, 2003). These teachers are primarily placed in urban schools with lots of challenges and with expectations to remain in the teaching profession.

The majority of alternatively certified teachers decided to seek certification for positive reasons (the same as traditionally certified teachers). Unfortunately, they generally

do not receive any special training, orientation, or materials in the first year, which impacts the decision to remain in teaching (Sayler, 2003).

According to Darling-Hammond (2003), about one-third of new teachers leave the profession within five years, while others move from one school or district to another; transfers particularly impact schools that serve poor and minority students. Alternatively certified teachers are usually the new, less experienced teachers in those kinds of schools.

Retaining quality teachers is a problem, particularly when district superintendents are reporting that 75% to 100% of teachers who leave are considered highly effective or effective. Again, the urban schools are affected most by the turnover of teachers, with a rate as high as 50% and producing severe deficits in areas such as math, science, and special education. Additional disadvantages with the attrition of teachers are the impacts on budgets and student achievement (Voke, 2002). Therefore, whether one agrees with the researchers who state there really is no shortage in teachers but just in distribution of teachers (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003), or those who view the shortage as caused by high teacher turnover (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003), one must agree that quality teachers are desperately needed, especially in urban schools.

Conceptual Framework

In 1998, the *Standards for School Principals in Louisiana* was adopted. These standards are aligned with the national standards for education and focus on the following principles of leadership: vision, teaching and learning, school management, school improvement, professional development, school community relations, and professional ethics. Principals are expected to be prepared and evaluated using these standards (Louisiana Department of Education, 1998). The standards cover all aspects of what principals should do to create effective school cultures. The standard of professional development puts the responsibility on the principal for helping teachers progress satisfactorily in the workplace.

Many research articles have been written on the retention of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Jorissen, 2003; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Renard, 2003). According to the article, *Keeping Good Teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do* (Darling-Hammond, 2003)*,* there are four major factors that influence whether teachers leave or stay: salaries, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring support in the early years. In the article, *The Schools That Teachers Choose* (Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003)*,* teachers who voluntarily transferred cited dissatisfaction with school administration more often than any other factor. Both articles revealed that teacher retention

is influenced by principal support. Though the participants of these studies were traditionally certified teachers, alternatively certified teachers are entering as first-year teachers and likely have the same factors affecting them.

A study conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1999) showed the importance of an induction program to reduce teacher attrition. Induction is an orientation process to aid teachers with necessary information, skills, materials, and resources to fulfill the requirements of their position. Having quality induction programs eases the shock of the first-year teacher's confrontation between dream and reality. Induction programs generally include mentoring by a veteran teacher.

Spinella (2003) focused on the principal's role in retaining new teachers. Her study was based on Chapman's (1983, 1984) model on the influences on teacher retention, coupled with Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory, to identify factors that generate movement along one career path or another. Elements of administrator support were ascertained from the work of Blase and Kirby (2000).

Spinella (2003) examined the relationship of teacher retention to specific predictor variables: personal characteristics, external factors, quality of first employment, teacher efficacy, and educational experiences. The study used participants currently teaching in their first or second year.

Most of those teachers followed a baccalaureate degree program; had greater than or equal to a 3.0 grade point average; and were satisfied with their preparation, early field experiences, and success in the classroom. The majority of the participants were teaching in elementary schools in a small town or city.

Four characteristics of the first employment experience predicted retention of new teachers (Spinella, 2003). Those predictors were respect from the principal, teacher support, principal concern, and protection from bureaucracy. The author suggested that support from the principal and other teachers was significant in determining whether teachers stayed in the profession or not.

The predictors in Spinella's (2003) study were identified by Blase and Kirby (2000) as behaviors of effective principals. Blase and Kirby determined the behaviors of effective principals through a phenomenological study employing teachers' views of effective and open principals. The study explored both why teachers viewed the behaviors to be effective and the goals teachers ascribed to principals who used those behaviors. The behaviors identified were: praise of teachers' efforts; communicating high expectations for teacher and student performance; actively involving teachers in decision making; providing autonomy; providing materials; training and supporting (backing) teachers in student discipline decisions; nudging

teachers to find solutions; prudently evoking authority; and consistently modeling effective practice. Teachers found these principal behaviors to have positive effects on their behaviors, attitudes, and thinking.

The study attempts to identify the characteristics of principal support for alternatively certified teachers, using the framework developed by Spinella (2003) and Blase and Kirby (2000), but also including possible sources of administrative support other than the principal, such as the assigned mentor, and other teachers. It is intended to determine to what level alternatively certified teachers perceive they are supported in their early years as teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified teachers about the support they receive from their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers to address the challenges of teaching. Many research articles on retention of teachers affirm that challenges are either lessened or worsened by the leadership at the school. The findings will inform teacher education programs and school administrators on needed changes to aid in the retention of "highly qualified" alternatively certified teachers.

Rationale

Alternatively certified teachers are filling the urban teacher shortages. Some researchers find that these teachers generally are mature, diverse, able, and willing to teach in more challenging settings, that is, urban schools. They are generally more successful and will remain in teaching (Jorissen, 2003).

These teachers are also new teachers encountering the same challenges as traditionally certified new teachers. Although Jorissen (2003) finds alternatively certified teachers to be successful in general, there is no evidence that they will remain in urban schools. However, in a Texas study, Harris, Camp, and Adkison (2003) found that alternatively certified teachers left in greater proportions than traditionally certified teachers. Contrasting this finding, Fox and Certo (1999) found no differences in attrition for alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers in Virginia. Studies have shown the need for principal support in retaining novice and veteran teachers. Sayler (2003), for example, argues that the principal plays a major role in creating the culture for induction and professional development of new teachers in their schools (p. 16).

Given the increased teacher shortage and the need for highly qualified, certified teachers in Louisiana and the

nation, research that focuses on principal and/or other support factors that make the greatest difference on retention could provide valuable information for the selection and training of principals and the development of induction/orientation, mentoring, and professional development programs.

Research Questions

The primary research questions are:

(1) Do alternatively certified teachers perceive that they are supported to succeed by their principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers?

(2) What are the factors of that support they deem most important?

The ancillary questions are:

1) Is teacher perception of support related to satisfaction with teaching?

2) Is teacher perception of support related to teacher-reported intent to remain at the current school and in the profession?

Overview of Methodology

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design was used to assess the kinds of support given to alternatively certified teachers from their school principal, assigned mentors, and other teachers. A cross-sectional survey design

collects data to examine personal attitudes, beliefs, and opinions at one point in time (Creswell, 2002).

Data were collected from a sample of alternatively certified middle school teachers within one large urban school system. This system has a high concentration of non-certified teachers in classrooms (with the highest teacher vacancies in middle and high schools), as reported in the District Composite Reports and the Summary of Reported Personnel and District Salaries (Louisiana Department of Education, 2003). Middle schools with alternatively certified teachers were contacted. This setting was chosen because for the 2003-2004 school year, 1) there had been an increased hiring of alternatively certified teachers in the middle school, 2) the highest percentage of non-certified teachers was at the middle school level, and 3) as a principal in the system, the researcher had access to this population (New Orleans Public Schools, 2004).

The researcher used a modified version of the Spinella (2003) survey to determine what alternative teachers view as the most important factors of support needed from principals, mentors, and other teachers to be successful in the beginning years. The survey was modified to collect data not only on the levels of support perceived but also on desired levels of support from the various sources.

Participants were contacted by letter (See Appendix A).
Guidelines for participants set by the American Educational
Research Association and American Psychological Association
(2003) were followed during the research process.

Assumptions

The study was based on teacher perceptions of the support
they receive. It was assumed that participants would answer the
surveys in an honest, open, and concise manner and that their
perceptions would reflect the levels of support they actually
receive. Based on Spinella's (2003) work, the survey was assumed
to be clear, reliable, and valid.

Definitions of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following terms are used:

Alternatively certified – certified in another discipline
and obtained or seeking to obtain certification in the
discipline of education.

Attrition – the rate of teachers choosing to leave the
profession.

Certification – authorization for an individual to teach in
a particular area, such as math, science, or language arts.

New or novice teacher – traditionally certified teacher who
is in the classroom for the first or second year.

Retention – the rate of teachers choosing to remain in the
profession (same school or within/outside of district).

Traditional Certification Program – an accredited program of study in a college or university that requires completion of coursework and student teaching, and will produce an undergraduate degree in education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the 1990s, more teachers have left the profession than those entering. This effect is felt throughout the nation. Hence, a larger problem of retaining teachers than preparing them exists (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Alternatively certified teachers are included in the number of new teachers hired annually by districts. Even with developing programs to increase the number of qualified persons for the teaching profession, there is still a problem of retention which leaves districts understaffed. It becomes imperative that teachers, traditionally or alternatively certified, be given whatever supports they need to remain in the profession.

A review of the literature reveals the need for staffing school districts with alternatively certified teachers. More importantly, it shows that retaining teachers for a period greater than three years is challenging. The literature also identifies several factors that affect teacher retention, with support being a major factor.

The Need for Alternatively Certified Teachers

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 requires school districts to staff every classroom with a highly qualified teacher by the year 2006. Policymakers and teacher educators view alternative routes into the teaching profession as one valuable tool for recruitment and the reduction of the teacher shortage (McCabe, 2003).

NCLB authorized $3.175 billion for the fiscal year 2002 and, if necessary, for each of the five succeeding fiscal years, to prepare high quality teachers (and principals). The Act includes provisions for establishing programs for alternative certification of individuals from other qualified professional fields (Feistritzer, 2002).

Increasing the size of the teaching force is only one reason to support alternative certification. Proponents also suggest that the quality of teachers prepared in traditional educational programs in universities and colleges has been less than adequate. They argue that hiring persons from other careers, who hold degrees in areas other than education, or who have developed real-world experiences with subject matter will improve the quality of the teaching force (Legler, 2003).

The NCLB Act under Title II calls for a Teacher Quality State Grants Program to support activities for improvement to teacher quality by changing teacher certification or licensure

requirements, alternative certification, payment systems (bonus, merit, differential), tenure reform, and mentoring programs (Feistritzer, 2002). Offering alternative certification as an option to enter the teaching field has attracted numerous professionals. Colleges and universities have had alternate certification programs for fifteen to twenty years. According to a report by C. E. Feistritzer (1999), the National Center for Education Information has been obtaining information on teacher certification and education, found rapid development of alternate certification programs since 1983. According to a report by Kwiatkowski (1998), over 50,000 teachers from 1983 to 1996 were alternatively certified nationwide and indications are that this trend will accelerate. But do alternative certification programs meet the needs of quantity and quality they were created to accomplish?

Improving Quantity and Quality of the Teaching Force through Alternative Certification

Quantity

The results of numerous studies are mixed when it comes to alternative certification programs addressing the issues of quantity and quality of the teaching work force. Some studies suggest that there is not a shortage of teachers nationally, but only in specific fields (such as math, science, and special

16

education) and in low-income, large urban schools (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Legler, 2003). Supporters of alternative certification claim to provide for the shortage areas in urban and rural schools, and in science and mathematics (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002).

According to Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003), since the early 1990s, more teachers are leaving than are entering teaching; this trend is causing hiring problems throughout the nation. Retirements only comprise about 14% of this outflow. Some leave to take new jobs, while others leave because of dissatisfaction. The majority of teachers leaving was newer teachers dissatisfied, or under-prepared.

Teacher effectiveness does not rise until after the first few years of teaching. With teachers having an influx and output of almost equal rates, educational productivity is at a decline. Access to qualified teachers is disproportionate across the nation, both across districts and in schools within districts, for non-white, low socio-economic status, and low-performing students in urban areas. Teachers generally transfer out of schools where the student population fits the afore-mentioned description (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). The early departures of teachers have an impact on schools which include financial investments, as well as investments of time, relationships, and professional growth. Districts or individual

schools are drained with trying to re-teach new teachers because others leave before they are fully trained (Darling-Hammond & Sykes).

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (2004) was created in 1986 for the purpose of increasing the pool of qualified teachers, and improving the nation's teacher recruitment, development, and practices. The organization reports that student enrollment is on the rise, teacher retirement is accelerating, and educational reforms are calling for class-size reduction. Some facts to support their report: the median age of teachers is 44; in the year 2003, total public and private school enrollment was expected to rise to 54.3 million, and the nation will need to hire about 2.2 million additional teachers within the next ten years. The report further states that there will be shortages in the most critical areas of math, science, and special education.

According to Feistritzer (2002), most states have created or are creating licensing and training programs for professionals wanting to enter the teaching profession thorough non-traditional routes. Approximately 25,000 teachers from alternatively certified programs have been certified and hired each year, which could mean a contribution of one-third of the new teaching force. Many of these teachers fill positions in urban schools and are qualified people of color (Legler, 2003).

Some states/districts undermine the recruitment and hiring of alternatively certified teachers. They hire late or have disorganized hiring practices. Some states have requirements that are redundant and make it nearly impossible to enter the local teaching force. Yet, there are other reasons for hiring alternatively certified teachers, a fear that more qualified teachers are going to leave and less likely to follow orders, a desire to save money, and patronage.

In Orleans Parish, Teach for America (2004) has 160 alternatively certified teachers in 52 schools. These teachers are in schools with high populations of economically disadvantaged students. According to their website, more than 12,000 persons have joined them since 1990. Teach for America currently has 22 regional sites across the nation.

Why be concerned about the shortage? As Voke (2002) points out, the quality of teachers impacts the education our children receive. If high quality teachers cannot be found, teachers less qualified are accepted, teachers out of their field of certification, or substitutes are used extensively.

Quality

The types of programs vary for alternative certification. Two large nationally-recognized programs are Teach for America and Troops to Teachers. These programs place recent college graduates and military personnel in low-income, urban schools.

Some states have developed or given universities and colleges the charge to develop their own programs for alternative certification. An example from New Orleans, Louisiana is Teach for Greater New Orleans. The preparation, support, and length of these programs are different. These factors fuel the debate of the quality of teachers coming from alternative certification programs (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Feistritzer, 1999, 2002; 1999; McCabe, 2003; Shepherd & Brown, 2003).

Teacher quality is generally defined as having adequate skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors. The specific criteria for measuring good teaching are not readily agreed upon (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). These factors alone may explain the discrepancies in requirements across teacher preparation programs. More alternative programs are needed that are good programs which include closely supervised internships and classes on child and adolescent psychology. Teachers need more than content knowledge to be prepared (Berry, 2001). Thus, alternatively certified teachers may be under-prepared if adequate pedagogical skills were not imparted to them in their programs. The lack of skills by alternatively certified teachers could greatly impact the quality of student learning (Otuya, 1992).

In Louisiana, the list of approved program providers includes 20 universities and three private providers. There are

three alternate certification programs which have different requirements in admission, program elements, and certification. The programs are Non-Master's/Certification Only Program, Master's Degree Alternate Certification Program, and Practitioner Teacher Alternate Certification Program. Each program requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university. GPA requirements range from 2.20 – 2.50 on undergraduate work. Total hours in the program vary (Non-Masters – 24 to 33 hours; Masters – 33 to 39; and Practitioner – 21 to 30). All programs include instruction in methodology and teaching and student teaching or internship. In order to successfully complete any of the programs in Louisiana, the candidate must pass the Praxis (PPST component, specialty, and pedagogy examinations) and have an overall GPA of 2.50 minimum (Teach Louisiana, 2004). The requirements for being "highly qualified" under NCLB are included in the programs, but is enough time allotted to develop real competence?

A review of literature by Humphrey, Wechsler, Bosetti, Wayne, and Adelman (2002) revealed that the quality of alternatively certified teachers was measured by the principal or mentor, the behavior of the teacher through observations, professional knowledge tests, student achievement, and the teacher's own sense of competence. They concluded that the results of the studies were mixed on the comparison of

21

alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers, and provided little information about teachers' skills. The authors also noted that some studies showed traditionally-trained teachers outperformed alternatively trained teachers, and some studies showed very few differences, if any. The use of NTE scores as a measure produced mixed findings as well.

In the area of content knowledge, studies have found both traditional and alternative programs lacking. Regardless of preparation, the lack of sufficient knowledge of subject matter hinders competent instruction of youth, especially in the areas of math and science (Haycock, 1998; Humphrey et al., 2002; Otuya, 1992). Several studies found teachers from alternative programs lacked curriculum development, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and understanding of learning styles which impact instructional effectiveness (Legler, 2003).

In the article by Emerick, Hirsch, and Berry (2004), *Does highly qualified mean high-quality?*, the authors state that there is a divide between highly qualified and high quality. They point out that the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) views alternatively certified teachers as highly qualified. However, many of these teachers may lack preparation needed for the first days of school, content knowledge, and other necessary skills. The leaders in the U. S. Department of Education have chosen to focus on content knowledge. Instructional practice is not in the

forefront.

In fact, the two principles the U. S. Department of Education chose were requiring teachers to pass content knowledge tests and finding ways to ease entrance into the teaching profession for persons seeking alternative certification. By focusing on those principles, states have lowered pedagogical standards for teachers. Additionally, the lack of funding for NCLB has left states struggling to implement the law's requirements (Emerick et al.).

Teacher quality is being touted by university educators, parents, state education officials, business leaders, and legislators nationwide as the best way to improve students' academic achievement (Recruiting New Teachers, 2004). Because of the costs to districts (in terms of both finances and student achievement) in recruiting and hiring teachers, a solution to retaining newly hired, trained teachers must be discovered. Both traditional and alternative teaching programs must improve quality of teaching for students.

Retention of Alternatively Certified Teachers

There is no argument that children must have teachers to teach them. There also is no argument that teacher turnover (with a rate of 40% for public schools in the first three years) costs districts millions of dollars each year and reduces

productivity in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Feistritzer, 2002).

Feistritzer (2002) reports that approximately one-third of the new teaching force is alternatively certified annually, and Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) report that approximately one-third of the teaching force leaves within five years. If these estimates are correct, then factors that impact retention need to be discovered and possible solutions found.

In her study, *Alternatively and traditionally certified teachers: the same but different,* Sayler (2003) found persons entering the profession through alternative certification had motivations similar to teachers from traditional programs. They wanted to help students, spend more time with their families, and contribute to society. The study also found the majority of those with alternative certification had little or no induction or mentoring in their first year, in spite of the fact that they were more likely to be placed in challenging schools.

Administrative Support

Support is critical to the survival and retention of new teachers whether traditionally or alternatively certified. Darling-Hammond (2003) cites four factors affecting teacher retention: salaries, working conditions, preparation, and mentoring support.

Salaries of teachers are below the salaries of other professionals. Teachers must be offered attractive salaries when entering the profession and to remain in the profession. Teachers are more likely to quit when their salary is low and working conditions are unfavorable. Those in demanding fields of math and science generally can obtain a more lucrative salary outside education (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Unfortunately, salaries are rarely under administrative control.

Working conditions, according to Darling-Hammond (2003), include resources for teaching, teacher input in decisions, and administrative support. More advantaged schools have easier working conditions. Teachers in these schools generally have smaller class sizes and are included in decision making. Lower income schools usually have poorer facilities, fewer textbooks and supplies, less administrative supports, and larger class sizes, which in turn foster higher teacher attrition rates. Jorissen (2003) found that teachers left schools to find order and predictability. The teachers found that school-wide norms could tear apart or build on their efforts. Additionally, teachers were looking for a fair workload.

Preparing teachers is another aspect that cannot be overlooked. Teachers who lack initial preparation are more likely to leave within five years. In California, 40 percent of

emergency-permit teachers left the profession within a year. In Massachusetts, nearly one-half of the new teachers left within two years, and in Houston the rate of departure was almost 80 percent after two years for Teach for America recruits. There is evidence that those who graduated from five-year programs are more likely to enter and remain in the profession. A longitudinal study compared graduates of five-year teacher preparation programs to graduates completing four-year teacher education programs from the same institution. The findings showed those from the five-year programs entered and stayed in teaching at much higher rates than four-year graduates. Both four and five-year graduates stayed longer than teachers of alternative programs with only a few weeks of training (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The more preparation teachers receive, the more likely they will enter the profession and plan to stay.

A final area, just as important, discussed by Darling-Hammond (2003) is mentoring support. If schools want to improve teachers' attitudes, instructional skills, and effectiveness, they must have a strong mentoring/induction program. Well designed and supported programs will include providing release time for the coaching teacher to mentor the first year teacher. Mentoring/induction programs allow for new teachers to become more assured than those teachers who must learn by trial and error. Mentoring programs tied to high-quality preparation

produce beginning teachers who feel connected to the system. In addition, veteran teachers are more stimulated when mentoring and coaching other teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Jorissen, 2003).

Opportunities to learn and grow professionally were a factor in why teachers chose schools in a study by Moore-Johnson and Birkeland (2003). In their study of "voluntary movers," they found teachers also wanted to have time to interact with other professionals and fine-tune their skills. Voluntary movers were defined in this study as teachers leaving from their original schools to go to other public schools by choice. When leaving one school, teachers searched for another, but with a culture that could sustain them professionally. The voluntary movers also looked for schools where principals interacted with them, expressed confidence in them, included them on some decisions, and were accessible. This study concluded that school leaders can provide the supports that teachers need, and teachers will stay where they are supported.

Another study by Yoon and Gilchrist (2003), *Elementary teachers' perceptions of administrative support in working with disruptive and aggressive students,* revealed four areas of administrative support needed by teachers: Emotional support, Teamwork, Behavioral solutions, and Parental involvement. In terms of emotional support, the administrator should be

supportive of decisions, available when teachers need them, and support teachers when dealing with complex parental issues. Teamwork was defined as working with all faculty in coming up with strategies to handle difficult students or students with problems. The team included psychologists, social workers, counselors, and ESL teachers. Regular meetings should be held as necessary. Behavioral solutions entailed having direct principal involvement in communicating with and disciplining students. Finally, administrators needed to assist with parental involvement by contacting parents in regard to students' behavior and conducting meetings with the parent, teacher, and students to create possible solutions. Administrative/principal support was found to be critical in dealing with disruptive students and parental conflicts (Yoon & Gilchrist, 2003). Many other studies confirmed that administrative/principal support is a key factor affecting the attrition of new teachers (e.g., Littrell & Billingsley, 1994; Spinella, 2003).

The first years of teaching are challenging in themselves, but new teachers still seem to get the classrooms and/or courses that no one else will take. First-year teachers also tend to get the most challenging groups to educate (Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Alternatively certified teachers usually are placed in classrooms with those same characteristics (Jorissen, 2003; Sayler, 2003)

Alternatively certified teachers who enter the teaching work force are generally older, have majored in subjects other than education, are more likely to be males and persons of color, have other work experiences, and are generally placed in the neediest schools. Given that alternatively certified teachers generally enter the profession of teaching after pursuing other life experiences, they may need support factors that differ from traditionally certified teachers, yet very few studies could be found on the support alternatively certified teachers felt was needed in the first year of teaching.

Sayler (2003) conducted a descriptive study on a group of university students enrolled in an alternative certification program. Out of 38 student participants, 32 were employed as full time teachers. Sayler found that 32 participants in her study had no orientation or special training, and 22 participants had no assigned mentor in their first years of teaching.

Another study conducted by Jorissen (2003) found that mentor support for alternatively certified teachers can foster professional growth. In this qualitative study, Jorissen used participants in their sixth year of teaching elementary school, and who had completed the same alternate route program at the same time. Twelve teachers were contacted and six responded (four Black women and two Black men). The participants revealed

that mentors provided support in curriculum planning, improvement of teaching methods, and socialization to the school culture. Jorissen concluded that retention of teachers is affected by a strong mentoring relationship.

Most of the studies reviewed indicated the importance of principal support or mentor support to new teacher retention. For the most part, these studies involved traditionally certified teachers.

My study sought to determine all the support that alternatively certified teachers perceive that they receive from their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers, and what factors of that support they feel are most important to their success and retention. Addressing the importance of relationships (principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers) that provide psychological and instructional support to alternatively certified teachers is important to their career development, quality, and retention (Jorissen, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the support needed for the success of alternatively certified teachers in their beginning years of teaching. The literature is limited with regard to teachers with alternative certification and the supports needed to be successful in the teaching profession. This chapter contains the methodology used for the study. Included are the purpose of the study, the setting in which the study was conducted, the description of participants, the research design, the method of data collection, and the data analysis process.

Purpose of the Study

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 created a need for quality teachers to be hired and retained by the year 2006. The certified teacher shortage created a need for alternative certification programs to provide individuals for the teacher work force. Whether the programs truly produce "highly qualified" teachers is a debate that is continuing. However, once hired, many alternatively certified teachers leave the teaching profession, at the same or higher rates than traditionally-certified new teachers.

Although there is research about the retention of traditionally-certified teachers, studies are limited concerning

31

supports needed for alternatively certified teachers to be successful in the first years of teaching. This study investigated the kinds of support alternatively certified teachers say they most need and the kinds of support they believe that they actually receive from their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers. The findings of this study can provide valuable information to alternative certification programs, teacher induction programs, and administrators.

Setting

The setting of the study was a large urban school system with 77 elementary schools, 23 middle/junior high schools, and 30 senior high schools that employ many alternatively certified teachers. Per an administrator in the Human Resources Department, the district has approximately 395 alternatively certified teachers, but the figures on how many of those teachers were in middle school were not available (personal phone conversation December 14, 2004). According to Teach for America (2004), 160 of their alternatively certified teachers were employed in the district in 2004.

The Louisiana Department of Education, in spring 1999, adopted an accountability plan for the state's public school districts. To determine academic growth in the individual districts, a criterion-referenced test called LEAP (Louisiana Educational Assessment Program) is given to students annually. The results, coupled with other school data (student demographics, absenteeism rate, dropout rate), determine the schools' and district's ratings. Schools and districts are then

placed in School Improvement Levels ranging from 1 through 5. The targeted district's low academic scores, according to the Louisiana Department of Education (2004), place 75 elementary/middle schools, 1 combination school, and 14 high schools in School Improvement Levels 1 through 5. Schools in Levels 3 through 5 obtain assistance to improve academics by incorporating positions of District Assistance Team Leader, Distinguished Educator, Literacy and Numeracy Coaches, and receive additional funds. However, the district must restructure schools in Level 5 and employ certified teachers. Schools are at risk of state takeover if they do not show improvement. There are more professional development mandates, assessments, and programs aligned with the goal of school improvement for schools in corrective action. Middle schools comprise the largest number of such schools.

Participants

The participants of the study were alternatively certified teachers in middle schools where teaching vacancies were the highest and the proportion of alternatively certified teachers were the greatest in the 2003-2004 school year. The entire population of all principals from the district's middle schools was asked to supply the researcher the number of alternatively certified teachers in their schools and to distribute the survey instruments to them. The included teachers had to be in their first or second year of teaching.

Research Design

Survey research design was used to collect data to describe the attitudes, behaviors, opinions, and characteristics of a population. This design uses questionnaires or interviews to collect and analyze quantitative, numeric data (Creswell, 2002). Data are descriptive in nature. Some inferential analyses will address the effects of perceived support on teacher satisfaction and likelihood of remaining in teaching, but these are not the primary questions of the descriptive study.

Because the purpose of this study is to find the opinions of alternatively certified teachers about the support they need to be successful in the first years of teaching and the possible impact of that support on whether they remain in the teaching profession, survey research design was the appropriate quantitative method to employ.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

1) Do first and second year alternatively certified teachers perceive that they are supported by their principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers?

2) What are the factors of that support they deem most important?

Ancillary Questions

3) Is teacher perception of support related to satisfaction with teaching?

4) Is teacher perception of support related to teacher-reported intent to remain at the current school and in the profession?

Procedure

Upon approval from the dissertation committee, a letter was submitted to the University of New Orleans (UNO) Human Subjects Review Committee requesting permission to conduct proposed research. Following research approval (see Appendix A), the district superintendent was contacted to secure cooperation for the study.

Surveys were delivered to school site principals for distribution to participants. In order for participants to remain anonymous to the researcher, surveys did not have the names of participants on them. Surveys were issued a school number only. Completed surveys were returned by participants in a self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by the researcher. Participants were delivered a letter two weeks after delivery of the instrument to thank those who had completed the survey, and remind those who had not completed the survey to do so. After another two weeks passed, an e-mail was sent stating that principals responding with the number of alternatively certified teachers in their school would be entered into a drawing for $50.00. In the same e-mail, principals also were asked to advise teachers that if they returned surveys by the end of February, they also would be entered into a drawing for $50.00.

Data Collection

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was based on a study by Spinella (2003) to ascertain teachers' perceptions of factors that impact their decision to remain in the teaching profession. The items used a six-point Likert-scale response. Teachers chose a number from 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree to indicate their level of agreement with each type of support displayed by the principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers.

The section of the Spinella (2003) instrument that was used contains items pertaining to perceived quality of the first employment experience. Characteristics of open and effective principals (Blase & Kirby, 2000) guided the development of items for the predictor variable of principal support. This study expanded those predictor variables to include other sources of support-- assigned mentor and other teachers-- to determine perceived satisfaction (and ultimately retention).

The instrument used (see Appendix B) contains 20 items, and allowed the participants independent evaluation of perceived support from the principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers using a Likert response scale. Four additional items assessed whether the respondent was satisfied with career choice and the current school, and whether the respondent was likely to remain in teaching and in the current school.

Validity and Reliability

In Spinella's (2003) study, the internal consistency coefficient of .95 indicated high intercorrelations for the

items of principal support. A principal components factor
analysis with extraction restricted to eigenvalues of .75 or
above and a varimax rotation was computed. Six factors (respect,
involvement, autonomy, backing up, concern, and minimizing
bureaucracy) emerged corresponding to support behaviors reported
by Blase and Kirby (1992, 2000). Spinella (2003) concluded,
based on this evidence, that the scale was a valid and reliable
measure of administrator support. For the present study,
Spinella's questions were expanded to apply to three support
systems (the principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers).

Due to adjustments in the questions, a pilot study was
conducted to test construct validity and reliability of the
questions. Ten teachers at my school were randomly selected to
complete the survey. Conducting a pilot test with eight
traditionally certified teachers and two alternatively certified
teachers provided information on the ease of taking the survey
and time required to complete it. The pilot test also provided
feedback on whether changes or additions needed to be made to
the instrument. According to the responses on the pilot test,
the instrument was very easy to understand, took approximately
ten to fifteen minutes to complete, and no changes or additions
were suggested.

Data Analysis

The primary research questions were answered with
descriptive statistics on all sources of support-- principal,
assigned mentor, and other teachers. The instrument was scored

37

to give a Support sub-score for each possible source of support. The sum of all support item scores was used rather than the mean because the number of support behaviors is important. Means would not take into account those items marked "Not applicable" even though the source could have demonstrated support in that area. There were three support scores: Principal support, Assigned Mentor Support, and Other Teacher Support. Also, the Spinella (2003) support factors -- respect, involvement, autonomy, backing up, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy -- are reported. Items within each factor were summed to achieve a factor score. Means, ranges, and standard deviations are reported for each source of support by factor score.

The importance that teachers ascribe to each support factor (response column 1 of the instrument) were correlated with the actual support received on that factor to determine whether teachers are getting what they feel they most need in their early careers.

Ancillary questions were addressed through linear regression. Linear regression was used to explain the effects of the predictor variables (kinds of support) on the criterion variables (teacher perceptions of satisfaction and likelihood of remaining in the profession). R^2 was reported to show the proportion of variability explained in the dependent variable by the predictor variables (Creswell, 2002). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 12.0) was used to analyze data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize participants' gender, age, ethnicity, grade currently teaching, years of teaching, and type of alternative program. The research questions are answered using descriptive statistics and linear regression. Comparisons of Spinella's (2003) results and this study's results on the significance of the factors of respect, involvement, autonomy, backup, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy follow the descriptive data.

Participant Response Rate

In this study, the entire population of all first or second year alternatively certified teachers from New Orleans public middle schools were asked to complete the survey instrument, a modified version of the teacher support factors instrument developed by Spinella (2003). Participant eligibility was determined by the principal of the employing school. In 2003–2004, middle schools in the Orleans Parish School System employed the largest number of alternatively certified teachers.

In 2004-2005, Orleans Parish schools underwent reconfigurations, with some schools becoming K-8 and phasing out middle schools. In addition, middle schools in corrective action were to hire only certified, highly qualified teachers in order to raise students' state assessment scores. This left a lower number of alternatively certified teachers in the 2004-2005 school session than in previous years.

In order to make certain the questionnaire was clear to respondents, ten teachers were randomly selected at one school to participate in a pilot study of the instrument. The teachers were asked to respond to the difficulty, time needed to complete, and clarity of the instrument, and if changes or additions were needed to the survey. No one had difficulty or suggested any changes or additions. According to the participants, the time needed to take the survey was 10-15 minutes.

After receiving permission from the superintendent to conduct the study, the 23 middle school principals were contacted to determine how many alternatively certified teachers were employed in their buildings. After very little response from principals on the number of surveys needed at each school, an e-mail was sent stating that principals responding with the number of alternatively certified teachers would be entered into a drawing for $50.00. In the same e-mail, principals also were

asked to advise teachers that if they returned surveys by the end of February, they also would be entered into a drawing for $50.00. Responses were still slow and incomplete. Another letter was sent, with follow-up done by e-mail and phone calls, that rendered a response from 17 of the principals. These 17 principals reported having 58 eligible alternatively certified teachers. Table 1 represents the response rate of 47/58 or 81% of surveys completed and returned.

Table 1
School/ Frequency of Respondent Rate

School Number	Surveys Sent	Surveys Returned	Response Rate (%)
1	3	2	66.7
2	3	0	0.0
3	1	0	0.0
4	3	2	66.7
5	10	10	100.0
6	5	4	80.0
7	0	0	0.0
8	2	2	100.0
9	3	2	66.7
12	15	15	100.0
13	0	0	0.0
14	1	1	100.0
15	3	0	0.0
17	1	1	100.0
18	1	1	100.0
19	2	2	100.0
21	5	5	100.0
Total	58	47	81.0

The original packets sent to schools contained a letter to the principals explaining the distribution of the teacher

letters and survey instruments, a request for participation, the surveys, and stamped, self-addressed envelopes for surveys to be returned by the teachers directly to the researcher. Two weeks after the surveys were sent to principals, only 10 were returned. E-mails were sent and phone calls were made to principals to thank those who had returned surveys and remind those who had not to please do so. This action produced an additional 13 surveys. Because responses were anonymous, the researcher had to rely on the principals of the schools to distribute/re-distribute surveys and relay reminders and letters/e-mails of appreciation for completion.

Of the surveys completed and returned, all were usable. Of teachers given surveys, some non-respondent teachers may have exceeded the teaching experience limitation of one or two years. For principals who did not respond, some may not have had teachers who fit the study definition of new alternatively certified teacher (program and/or time teaching). Six principals who did not reply as to the number of alternatively certified teachers they employed, after phone call messages were not returned, were sent packets with five surveys. Because there were no responses from these principals or any teachers from their schools, these numbers were not considered in the distribution count or the response rate.

Demographics of Teacher Respondents

  In this study, participants were asked to respond to their personal characteristics of gender, age, ethnicity, grade(s) currently teaching, time in teaching, highest degree earned, and program of study. Tables 2 and 3 present the means of gender and age of the respondents. About two thirds of respondents were female, with almost half at the age of 25-30 and one-fourth at the age level of 41+.

Table 2
Gender of Alternatively Certified Teachers

Gender	f	%
Female	34	72.3
Male	13	27.7
Total	47	100.0

Table 3
Age of Alternatively Certified Teachers

Age	f	%
25-30	23	48.9
31-35	7	14.9
36-40	5	10.6
41+	2	25.5
Total	7	100.0

Ethnicity of the respondents are represented in Table 4. The alternatively certified teachers surveyed showed approximately two-thirds were African American, with the other third almost equally distributed between Caucasian and Other ethnicity. Less than one-tenth of these teachers were of Hispanic origin. Table 5 and Table 6 present the frequencies for grades currently teaching and years of teaching experience. Grades these teachers were teaching at the time of the study showed a distribution relatively even among seventh, eighth, and combination classes, with nearly one-half teaching for the second year in the same school. The distribution of first year and second year/different school alternatively certified teachers were approximately one-fourth each.

Table 4
Ethnicity of Alternatively Certified Teachers

Ethnicity	f	%
Caucasian	6	12.8
African American	34	72.3
Hispanic	1	2.1
Other	6	12.8
Total	47	100.0

Table 5
Grades Currently Being Taught by Alternatively Certified Teachers

Grades	*f*	%
Sixth	4	8.5
Seventh	13	27.7
Eighth	14	29.8
Combination of Grades	16	34.0
Total	47	100.0

Table 6
Alternatively Certified Teachers' Years of Experience

Year of Teaching	*f*	%
First year	11	23.4
Second year/same school	23	48.9
Second year/ different school	13	27.7
Total	47	100.0

The educational backgrounds of the alternatively certified teachers were mostly comprised of earning bachelor degrees (approximately three-fifths). Approximately one fourth of the

participants obtained a master's degree. Less than one tenth of the respondents did not answer this item (See Table 7).

Table 7
Highest Degree Earned by Alternatively Certified Teachers

Degree	f*	%
Bachelors	30	65.2
Masters	12	26.1
Masters plus 30	3	6.5
Specialist	1	2.2
Total	46	100.0

*one teacher did not respond to this item

The frequencies for the respondents' program of study are represented in Table 8. Approximately two fifths of the teachers indicated participating in a masters alternate certification program, while three tenths indicated participating in a practitioner teacher alternate certification program. Approximately one fifth of the teachers participated in a certification-only program. Less than one tenth of the respondents did not answer the survey item of program of study.

Table 8
Alternatively Certified Teachers Programs of Study

Program	f*	%
Non-Masters/ Certification Only	9	20.9
Masters Alternate Certification	19	44.2
Practitioner Teacher Alternate Certification	15	34.9
Total	43	100.0

*four teachers did not respond to this item

Descriptive Statistics for Support Variables

The survey instrument contained twenty items to assess the sources of support for the factors of respect, involvement, autonomy, backup, concern, and minimizing of bureaucracy. Each teacher assessed their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers on all 20 items. The instrument used the remaining four items from the Spinella (2003) instrument to determine level of satisfaction of alternatively certified teachers with 1) the choice of becoming a teacher and 2) teaching at current school, and likelihood of 1) returning to same school the following year if allowed, and 2) making teaching their permanent career. Each respondent was asked to indicate the level of agreement to the

items by using a Likert scale of 1-6 (1= strongly disagree, 2=moderately disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, and 6=strongly agree).

The variables of Principal Support, Assigned Mentor Support, and Other Teacher Support were created by computing the sum of indicated levels of agreement about behaviors demonstrated in items 1-20 by each possible source of support (principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers). The variable of Importance was also created by computing the sum of the scores for how important teachers felt each support behavior was to them in their beginning years of teaching. The possible score for each support and for importance is 20-120. The means and standard deviations for each support are presented in Table 9 and show that the teachers felt fairly well supported from all sources and found support in all areas to be important.

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics for Alternatively Certified Teacher Support Survey

Support Source	n	M	SD
Principal	45	101.20	22.52
Mentor	42	96.62	23.84
Other Teachers	45	93.58	20.96
Importance	45	108.64	15.67

The survey instrument contained four items for participants to indicate the level of agreement of satisfaction with their choice to become a teacher and teaching at their current school, as well as how likely they would return to the same school (if given the opportunity), and make teaching their permanent career. Out of 47 completed surveys, 42 participants responded to items 21 – 24. The mean and standard deviation for the satisfaction/future choice items are reported in Table 10. It shows that the majority of participants are satisfied and likely to continue teaching, preferable at the same school.

Table 10
Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Satisfaction

Outcome Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Satisfied with choice	42	5.62	.76
Satisfied teaching at current school	42	5.38	1.19
Likely to return to same school next year	42	5.21	1.46
Likely to make teaching permanent career	42	5.02	1.33

Range of scores is 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree

The support variables of respect, involvement, autonomy, backup, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy were created by using a mean of the items of the survey that Spinella (2003) identified as related to each sub-scale. The sub-scale means and standard deviations were determined (see Table 11).

Table 11
Descriptive Statistics for Factors of Support

Support Type	n	M	SD
Respect	45	5.26	1.03
Involvement	45	5.16	1.06
Autonomy	45	5.19	.98
Backup	42	5.29	1.15
Concern	42	5.45	.96
Minimizing Bureaucracy	45	5.26	.90

Research Questions

The first research question, Do first and second year alternatively certified teachers perceive that they are supported by their principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers? was presented in Tables 9 and 11. Alternatively certified teachers reported receiving support of all types from all three sources—principals, mentors, and peers.

To answer the second research question, "What are the factors of that support they deem most important," A correlation was calculated between the importance of the support and the sources of the support. In Table 12, the sources of support were significantly ($p<.01$) related to the importance of the support perceived by alternatively certified teachers, with principal support showing the highest correlation.

Table 12
Correlations of Importance and Sources of Support

Source of Support	Importance	Principal	Mentor
Principal	.677		
Mentor	.566	.632	
Other teachers	.414	.497	.814

Note: n=45; All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The ancillary questions, "Is teacher perception of support related to satisfaction with teaching?" and "Is teacher perception of support related to teacher-reported intent to remain at the current school and in the profession?" were analyzed by linear regression on each of the four satisfaction items and the sources of support (principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers) as predictor variables. No source of support predicted teachers' satisfaction with their career choice (see Table 13).

Table 13
Regression Summary Table for Effects of Support Sources on Teacher Satisfaction of Choice to Become a Teacher

Source of Support	B	Beta	t	p
Principal	.004	.136	.786	.437
Assigned Mentor	.011	.409	1.605	.118
Other Teachers	−.005	−.170	−.708	.484

R^2=.14, Adjusted R^2=.07

Only the principal as a source of support was significant in predicting teacher satisfaction with the current teaching assignment as represented in Table 14. Only 15% of the variance in satisfaction was explained by the sources of support.

Table 14
Regression Summary Table for Effects of Support Sources on Teacher Satisfaction with Teaching at Current School

Source of Support	*B*	*Beta*	*t*	*p*
Principal	.025	.424	2.463	.019
Assigned Mentor	−.008	−.137	−.541	.592
Other Teachers	.002	.040	.169	.867

R^2=.15, Adjusted R^2=.08

To determine which of the factors in Spinella's (2003) research were most important in terms of predicting teacher satisfaction with teaching at their current school, another linear regression was computed, again using satisfaction at the current school as the dependent variable but the predictor variables of respect, autonomy, involvement, backup, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy. (See Appendix C for items that relate to each factor.) Table 15 presents the regression for effects of principal support on teacher satisfaction at the current school. Involvement, autonomy, and concern were

significant predictors. The model explained 68% of the

variability in teachers' reported satisfaction at their school.

Table 15
Regression for Effects of Spinella's Factors of Principal
Support on Alternatively Certified Teacher Satisfaction with
Teaching at Current School

Factors of Support	B	Beta	t	p
Respect	−.623	−.550	−1.679	.102
Involvement	−1.531	−1.374	−3.358	.002
Autonomy	1.540	1.240	4.027	.000
Backup	.519	.502	1.742	.090
Concern	.957	.769	3.488	.001
Minimizing Bureaucracy	−.011	−.008	−.029	.977

$R^2=.68$, Adjusted $R^2=.62$

Linear regression was used to determine the significant

predictors of the likelihood of teacher returning to the same

school the next year. Table 16 presents results which show that

only the principal support was a significant predictor of

likelihood of remaining in the present school if given the

chance. The model explained only 17% of the variance in

teachers' likelihood of returning to the same school.

Table 16
Regression Summary Table for Effects of Support Sources on Teacher Likelihood of Returning to Same School Next Year

Source of Support	B	Beta	t	p
Principal	.035	.455	2.678	.011
Assigned Mentor	−.012	−.165	−.661	.513
Other Teachers	.005	.065	.275	.785

R^2=.17, Adjusted R^2=.10

Two sources of support were deemed important to teachers' likelihood of remaining in the teaching profession—the principal and other teachers. Together, the support received from these two sources explained over 50% of the variance in likelihood of remaining (see Table 17).

Table 17
Regression Summary Table for Effects of Support Sources on Teacher Satisfaction of Teaching Becoming Permanent Career

Source of Support	B	Beta	t	p
Principal	.032	.471	3.700	.001
Assigned Mentor	.003	.038	.202	.841
Other Teachers	.028	.409	2.315	.027

R^2=.53, Adjusted R^2=.49

Summary

Findings from the study suggest that support received in the first years of teaching, especially from the principal, is important to alternatively certified teachers. Their satisfaction with their teaching assignment and likelihood of remaining at the school and in the profession are related to the level of support received from their principal. Further, peers play a significant role in alternatively certified teachers' choice of remaining in the teaching profession. These findings and their implications for practice and research are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Chapter Five provides interpretation, discussion, and implications of this study of alternatively certified teachers and principal, mentor, and peer support. The chapter includes an overview and a discussion of findings from Spinella's (2003) earlier work as compared to the present findings. The chapter also presents implications of the study for policy and practice, teacher preparation and retention, and future research. Limitations of the research are noted.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of alternatively certified teachers about the support received from principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers, the impact of that support on their success in the first years of teaching, and ultimately, their satisfaction and likelihood of remaining in teaching. The entire population of all first and second year alternatively certified teachers from New Orleans public middle schools were asked to complete the survey instrument.

57

The instrument used to measure teacher support was an adaptation of the Spinella (2003) instrument containing items that measured five kinds of support. These variables were developed from characteristics of open and effective principals identified by Blase and Kirby (2000). The instrument expanded the sources of support to include not only principal support, but also assigned mentor support, and other teacher support. Also assessed was the importance of these supports in predicting teacher satisfaction.

The instrument was used with first and second year alternatively certified teachers in middle schools. The majority of the participants in this study were females, between the ages of 25 and 30, African American, and teaching mostly in the seventh, eighth, or a combination of grades. Most were second year teachers at the same school, with bachelor degrees. Some respondents had completed or were currently participating in a master's alternate certification program. Only a few had gone beyond a masters degree.

Participants were asked to indicate a level of agreement on support behaviors as demonstrated by the principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers, and also indicate the level of importance support behaviors have on early teaching development using a Likert-scale rating of 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree. The possible sum of the behaviors for each source was 20

to 120. Teachers rated the support received from the principal and the importance of that support very high, with sums of 108.6 and 101.2, respectively. The support from assigned mentors (96.6) and other teachers (93.5) were not as strong as from the principal, but did have an impact on early teaching development. This shows that the teachers felt support sources in all areas were important and they were well supported by the sources of support – principal, assigned mentor, and other teachers. It is important to note that teachers felt the support of principal and assigned mentor were the most important in their development.

Alternatively certified teachers also indicated the level of satisfaction they had in their choice to become a teacher and teaching at the current school, as well as likelihood of returning to the same school the next year and having teaching become their permanent career. With the highest possible mean score of 6, the means (5.61, 5.38, 5.21, and 5.02, respectively) indicated that teachers surveyed were satisfied with their placements and likely to remain in teaching, preferably at the same school.

Correlations between the sources of support and importance of the support as perceived by alternatively certified teachers revealed that teachers received the kinds of support they deemed

important. However, principal support was the most important source of support for these teachers.

A linear regression was calculated on each of the four items of satisfaction (choice to become a teacher, teaching at current school, returning to same school next year, and remaining in the teaching profession) and the sources of support. No source of support could predict the choice to become a teacher. This means the teacher could have been influenced by others, self-motivated, or selected the career due to personal circumstances. Any number of reasons could have influenced the choice to enter the field of education. However, the principal was the only significant predictor of the satisfaction of teaching at the current school. To determine which factors of principal support (respect, involvement, autonomy, backup, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy) were important in predicting satisfaction of teaching at the current school, another linear regression was performed. The results revealed that factors of involvement, autonomy, and concern were significant predictors. For teachers to return to the same school the following year, principal support was the only significant predictor. The two significant predictors for remaining in the profession of teaching permanently were principals and other teachers. Overall, this study showed that alternatively certified teachers feel the support of principals

is important for their development in their first years as teachers and in their satisfaction with teaching now and in the future.

Teachers in this study indicated they felt satisfied in their teaching career and were getting the needed support from principals, assigned mentors, and other teachers. Though the other supports are necessary to teacher development, principal support was deemed the most important by teachers in their development and satisfaction with the teaching profession. Principals determine what kinds of support, how much support, and when support can be given to teachers.

Comparison to Prior Research

Spinella's research (2003) which created the model for the present study focused on new teacher retention and the principal's role in that retention. As with this study, the majority of the teachers participating in her study were new teachers in their second year of teaching at the same school and were mostly female. Unlike this study, her teachers were mostly Caucasian, and slightly younger, between the ages of 22 to 26. About two-thirds of her teachers taught in elementary schools whereas teachers in this study were more likely to teach in middle schools. In both studies, teachers indicated that they taught in schools in which they would like to continue their

careers. The main difference between the two studies is that Spinella included mostly traditionally certified teachers and this study included only alternatively certified teachers.

Spinella's (2003) study of the principal's role in relation to the new teacher revealed six areas which were important to new teachers: respect, involvement, autonomy, backup, concern, and minimizing of bureaucracy. According to her study, there were four characteristics that appeared to be the best predictors of retention of new teachers: teacher support, respect, concern, and protection from bureaucracy. Blase and Kirby (1992) discussed those characteristics as ones which principals should use when working with faculty.

Spinella (2003) found other teacher support to be a significant predictor of teacher retention. New teachers revealed they needed to know what to teach and how to teach it and got such help from their peers. As in Spinella's (2003) study, the support variables important to new teachers—of respect, autonomy, involvement, backup, concern, and minimizing bureaucracy—were all important to the alternatively certified teachers in this study as reflected by the high means for each factor which ranged from 5.16 to 5.45.

Similar to Spinella's (2003) study, alternatively certified teachers in this study found principal concern to be important. They needed to know that principals cared for students enough to

let them know when teacher actions were not in the best interest of students. Teachers felt more apt to remain in teaching when their principal showed concern and optimism for the quality of education in the school.

Spinella (2003) found respect, concern, and protection from bureaucracy to be most important to the probability of teacher retention. In my study, there were three characteristics of principal support that were significant predictors of retention: involvement, autonomy, and concern. Only concern was also significant in Spinella's (2003) work.

Alternatively certified teachers viewed principal support important in the area of involvement. The actions of involvement in decisions, supporting professional development, getting opinions, and knowing how to give advice were very important to alternatively certified teachers. Teachers were more likely to be satisfied in the current school where principals made them feel like an integral part of the school community.

The next characteristic teachers felt was important for principals to display was autonomy. Teachers indicated a need to have some freedom in making curriculum decisions in the classroom. They also expected principals to provide them with necessary materials and resources in order to do the job. Additionally, the principal was to keep teachers informed of changes in education. Implications are that teachers want

principals to create an atmosphere of professionalism, which
allows for professional development.

Discussion

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has created a need for
quality teachers to be hired and retained by the year 2006.
Alternatively certified teachers are quickly becoming a large
part of the workforce for urban schools. Understanding what
factors and sources of support impact the retention of
alternatively certified teachers is essential if a remedy to the
growing teacher shortage is to be found.

The quality of the classroom and student learning is
controlled by the teacher (regardless of the certification
program). Even with that common sense knowledge, almost half of
all teachers are quitting within five years, with critical
shortages in the content areas for middle and high schools.
According to Gerstner Jr. (2005), the baby boom generation is
creating the need for two million teachers over the next decade.
Amongst the reasons listed are inadequate on-the-job mentoring,
support, and no control by principals on which teachers remain
or leave the school site.

In order for schools to meet the "highly qualified" teacher
goal set by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, new teachers
(alternatively or traditionally certified) must remain in the
profession. Darling-Hammond (2003) stated how important support

is to the retention of teachers, which this study supports. Other authors (e.g., Blase & Kirby, 1992, 2000; Jorissen, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Moore-Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) have written on the supports teachers identify as important to them remaining in the profession, and all of them clearly indicate the importance of principal support and other teacher support, which this study and Spinella's (2003) study confirm.

If we are to develop and retain teachers, whether alternatively certified or traditionally certified, principals must first realize the impact their actions have on the satisfaction of teachers. If teachers are not satisfied in the current school, more than likely they will not return to that school the following year or remain in the teaching profession as a career.

In order for principals to increase the perception of support given to teachers, they must develop the characteristics identified by Blase and Kirby (2000) that were supported by both Spinella (2003) and Sorapuru (2005). Though involvement, autonomy, and concern were identified in this research study as the most needed characteristics of principal support by alternatively certified teachers, Spinella's study also indicated concern with the additional characteristics of teacher support, respect, and protection from bureaucracy. Principals

65

should receive professional development designed to increase the capacity of school leadership (which goes beyond school management).

Federal and state policies should allow funding for additional teacher development, which would include mentorship programs. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires teachers to obtain a certain number of professional development hours to remain highly qualified. However, funding for those hours is minor. Most states are creating or have created licensing and training programs to recruit professionals who want to enter the teaching field (Feistritzer, 2002).

Approximately 25,000 teachers have been trained and certified through an alternatively certified program and hired each year. Since 1990, teachers have been leaving at the same rate or better than those entering the profession. Teachers leaving the profession early, before they are fully trained, have placed an impact on schools' finances, investment of time, relationships, and professional growth. Furthermore, teachers do not become effective until after the first few years of teaching are completed (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). Creating more policies on recruiting teachers and not having programs in place to retain them is a waste of money.

As for district policies, far too many new teachers are placed in schools where there are few veteran teachers or

principals to give proper support. New teachers (alternatively certified or traditionally certified) are generally assigned to classes that no one else will take. Alternatively certified teachers usually are employed at schools in poor neighborhoods, given minimal supplies and resources, and educating students at risk. Teachers entering the profession for the first time are not prepared to survive in these circumstances. Districts should have a plan for teachers to have mentorship from three to five years, place them in schools where they are with the best teachers and administrators, and give the principals and teachers the materials and resources needed for teacher development.

This is confirmed by a recent study completed by the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, which concluded that districts were hiring new teachers at the last minute and not giving them the support needed to properly manage their new responsibilities. The report indicated that among the reasons for new teachers having high attrition rates was the practice that places them in less desirable positions, delays in state budgets that slow the process of schools knowing how many positions they will have available, and very little support. The impact of these conditions of hiring and support causes new teachers to look for other positions or careers (Helgeson, 2005).

Once a new teacher is assigned to a school, it would be beneficial if the principal conduct/implement an orientation program. Having a teacher understand the basic operations, knowing something about the persons they are expected to work with, and knowing the expectations of the principal will produce a sense of caring for the new teacher. The principal could give additional assistance by assigning a mentor immediately, giving time for teachers to meet regularly, keeping the teachers updated on changes and assist when necessary on those changes, constantly getting and giving feedback, supporting professional development, and modeling the importance of high expectations for student development. Securing materials, supplies, and resources necessary for teachers to be successful is not only going to impact teachers' perception of support, but will increase student achievement. As indicated in this study, teachers supported in these ways will more than likely remain at the current school, if given the opportunity, and remain in the teaching profession.

Teachers should offer support to new teachers in curriculum development, classroom management, and orientation of the school. Veteran teachers are an important source in teachers becoming a part of the school's community. They impart the school's mission, belief, and goals by the daily routines and environmental artifacts. Though the impact of other teacher

support is not as strong as principal support, not having that support can cause teachers to leave the school or the profession. Therefore, veteran teachers should not wait to be assigned by their principal to assist new teachers, instead, assisting a new teacher (whether they have an assigned mentor or not) should be an automatic reflex. Further, such assistance should be recognized and rewarded. When assistance is given to new teachers, it only increases the quality of education in the school.

Programs that prepare alternatively certified teachers should also be aware of the challenges these teachers face when entering the profession. Mentoring and supporting teachers should not end once hired. Supports are needed for survival, along with and in spite of principal or other teachers' support being present. Under-preparation in delivery of instruction, lack of classroom management skills, and minimal knowledge of content, along with other challenges, need to be addressed during and after the training program. These multiple programs and institutions should be a source of support for newly hired alternatively certified teachers.

Implications for Research

Further research on the characteristics of principal support of teachers with more than two years of experience is needed. If principals can improve the quality of current

teachers, attraction and retention of new teachers (alternatively certified or traditionally certified) may increase.

This study could be replicated to examine a different geographical area, teachers of different grade level groups (elementary or high school), and with different biographical characteristics (age, gender, educational background, and highest degree earned). This information could provide more insight as to the importance of the roles of principal and other teachers for support of traditional or alternatively certified teachers.

The research can be extended to examine the programs the alternative teachers completed or are still completing. The factors of support could be related to the role of the programs or the professors. Comparisons of alternative certification programs (entrant qualifications, length of program, type of training/curriculum, and support during and after the program) may reveal the same or different factors of support. This may give a more complete picture of changes needed to programs for better preparation and retention of alternatively certified teachers.

In addition, a qualitative study may allow for other influences of teacher retention to arise. Like the study conducted by Blase and Kirby (2000), teachers' experience would

give meaning and enlightenment to the support factors displayed by the sources of support. Such a study could substantiate and enrich the knowledge base on alternatively certified teachers.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of this study are mainly related to the population and setting. The sample was alternatively certified teachers in the New Orleans Public Schools. Teachers of alternative certification in New Orleans Public Schools may or may not face the same challenges as other large urban school districts.

This study was delimited to first or second year middle school teachers with alternative certification. The study did not include non-certified teachers, teachers at other grade levels, or those who left after the first or second year of teaching.

The results may not be generalized to other districts or school systems. This study relied on participants returning surveys in a timely manner. There is not a guarantee that respondents have similar perceptions as non-respondents. Because the survey was anonymous in nature, a follow-up of non-respondents was limited. This choice was deemed necessary to increase the likelihood that participants would respond truthfully about their current employers.

The study used a survey instrument that was used previously in only one other study. The instrument was further modified for the present study. Issues of validity and reliability may have affected the results. Because the responses were overwhelmingly positive, additional instrument development may be warranted to further differentiate the levels of support actually received.

The response rate of 47 of 58 teachers was also a limitation of this study. During the period of study, the school district suffered from a flourish of media attention, all negative, public political battles between the state and the district as well as within the district, exposure of financial improprieties, and ever-declining test scores. Paranoia and apathy were pervasive. This unhealthy climate may have served to reduce the willingness of teachers to respond, especially new teachers who are most vulnerable. It also may have affected principals' willingness to cooperate.

Finally, the definition of alternative certification is a limitation of this and most studies of alternatively certified teachers. According to Feistritzer (2005, no page number) of the National Center for Education Information, "There is a paucity of research on alternative teacher certification routes –– and with good reason. The biggest reason is that there is no clear-cut definition of alternative teacher certification."

Conclusion

This study has attempted to identify the sources of support that impact alternatively certified teachers' satisfaction in the teaching profession. In addition to the sources of support, the study revealed three important characteristics of principal support that impact teacher retention in the current school and, ultimately, in the teaching profession—involving teachers in school-wide decisions, giving teachers some level of autonomy, and placing concern for the students above all else.

In this study, retention of alternatively certified teachers was significantly related to principal support. Knowing the characteristics of principal support can assist districts and principals in developing policies and programs that will help develop highly qualified teachers. Teachers with the supports needed will more than likely remain in the profession, slowing the mass exodus of trained teachers. More importantly, keeping good teachers will preserve the continuity of care our students so desperately need.

REFERENCES

Berry, B. (2001). No shortcuts to preparing good teachers. *Educational Leadership, 58*(8), 1-7. Retrieved September 15, 2003, from Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development Web Site: http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/0105/bery.html

Blase, J., & Kirby, P. C. (1992). *Bringing out the best in teachers: what effective principals do* (1st ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Blase, J., & Kirby, P. C. (2000). *Bringing out the best in teachers: what effective principals do* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Chapman, D. W. (1983). A model of the influences on teacher retention. Journal of Teacher Education, 34(5), 43-49.

Chapman, D. W. (1984). Teacher retention: The test of a model. American Educational Research Journal, 21, 645-658.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 6-13.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A national
     teachers supply policy for education: the right way to meet
     the "highly qualified teacher" challenge. *Education Policy
     Analysis Archives, 11*(33), 1-57.

Emerick, S., Hirsch, E., & Berry, B. (2004). Does highly
     qualified mean high quality. *Infobrief,* (39), 1-9.
     Retrieved December 13, 2004, from Association of
     Supervision and Curriculum Development Web Site:
     http://www.ascd.org/publications/infobrief

Feistritzer, C. E. (1999, May 13). *Teacher quality and
     alternative certification programs*. Retrieved September 15,
     2003, from National Center for Edcuation Information Web
     Site: http://www.ncei.com/Testimony051399.html

Feistritzer, C. E. (2002, June 18). *Alternative teacher
     certification: new support and new urgency*. Retrieved
     September 15, 2003, from National Council on Teacher
     Quality Web Site:
     http://www.nctq.org/press/2002_consumers_guide/feistritzer.
     html

Feistritzer, C. E. (2005, February). *Alternative teacher
     certification: an overview*. Retrieved April 5, 2005 from
     National Center for Education Information Web Site:
     http://www.ncei.com/Alt-Teacher-Cert.htm#Research

Fox, J. E., & Certo, J. (1999, December). *Recruiting and
     retaining teachers: areview of the literature*
     (ED446076). Virginia: ERIC.

Gerstner Jr., L. V. (2005, January). An education reform agenda
        for the next four years – and beyond. Retrieved April 13,
        2005 from Education Week Web Site:
        http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2005/01/05/16gerstner.h24
        .html?querystring=teacher retention

Harris, S. A., Camp, W. E., & Adkison, J. (). *New structures and
        approaches for teacher preparation: do they make a
        difference in teacher retention?* (ED472813). Dallas, TX:
        ERIC.

Haycock, K. (1998). Good teaching matters... a lot. *Thinking K-
        16, 3*(2), 3-14.

Hegelson, L. (2003, October). *New teachers: last to be hired,
        first to burn out.* Retrieved April 13, 2005 from AARP Web
        Site: http://www.aarp.org/nrta-watch/Articles/a2003-10-09-
        burnout.html

Humphrey, D. C., Wechsler, M., Bosetti, K., Wayne, A., &
        Adelman, N. (2002). *Alternative certification: design for a
        national study*. Retrieved April 2, 2005 from SRI
        International Web Site:
        http://www.sri.com/policy/cep/teachers/natstudy.pdf

Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003). The wrong solution to
        the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 30-33.

Jorissen, K. T. (2003). Successful career transitions: lessons
        from urban alternate route teachers. *High School Journal*,
        86(3), 41-51.

Krumboltz, J. (1979). A social learning theory of career
decision making. In A. M. Mitchell, G. B. Jones, & J. D.
Krumboltz (Eds.), *Social Learning and Career Decision
Making* (pp.19-49). Cranston, RI: Carroll Press.

Kwiatkowski, M. K. (1998). Debating alternative teacher
certification: a trial by achievement. *Thomas B. Fordham
Foundation*, 1-33. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing
Office.

Laczko-Kerr, I., & Berliner, D. C. (2002). The effectiveness of
"teach for America" and other under-certified teachers on
student academic achievement. *Education Policy Analysis
Archives, 10*(37), 1-56.

Legler, R. (n.d.). *Alternative certification: a review of
theory and research*. Retrieved September 15, 2003, from
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory Web Site:
http://www.ncrel.org/policy/pubs/html/altcert/intro.html

Littrell, P. C., & Billingsley, B. S. (1994). The effects of
principal support on special and general educators' stress,
job satisfaction, school commitment, health, and intent to
stay in teaching. *Remedial & Special Education, 15*(5), 297-
310. Retrieved October 31, 2004, from EBSCOhost Web Site:
http://web5.epnet.com.ezproxy.uno.edu/

Louisiana Department of Education. (1998). Standards for School
Principals in Louisiana. In *Professional Development
Educational Leadership Standards* (). Retrieved October 16,
2004, from Louisiana Department of Education Web Site:
http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/pd/848.html

Louisiana Department of Education. (2003). *District Composite Reports*. Retrieved December 5, 2004, from Louisiana Department of Education Web Site: http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/pair/1613.html

Louisiana Department of Education. (2003, October 1). *Summary of Reported Personnel and District Salaries*. Retrieved December 5, 2004, from Louisiana Department of Education Web Site: http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/pair/1089.html

McCabe, M. (2003, August 18). Alternative routes. *Education Week,* pp. 1-5.

Moore-Johnson, S. & Birkeland, S. E. (2003). The schools that teachers choose. *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 20-24.

Otuya, E. (1992). Alternative teacher certification--an update. *ERIC Digests, ,* 1-5. Retrieved September 15, 2003, from ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education Washington DC Web Site: http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed351312.html

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (1999, July 27). *New strategies to curb teacher flight from the classroom gaining momentum nationwide*. Retrieved December 13, 2004, from http://recruiting teachers.org/channels/clearinghouse/audience/media/1g16_media_p

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (n.d.). *The urban teacher challenge: teacher demand and supply in the great city schools*. Retrieved December 13, 2004, from http://recruitingteachers.org/channels/clearinghouse/aboutr nt/151_rntbackground.htm

Renard, L. (2003). Setting new teachers up for failure...or
    success. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 62-64.

Sayler, B. A. (2003). Alternatively and traditionally certified
    teachers: the same but different. *NASSP Bulletin, 87*(636),
    16-27. Retrieved October 13, 2003, from
    http://www.nassp.org/publications/bulletin/bltn_0903_same_b
    ut_different.cfm

Spinella, F. A. (2003). The principal's role in new teacher
    retention. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of
    New Orleans.

Teach for America. (2004). *Teach for America*. Retrieved December
    14, 2004, from http://www.teachforamerica.org/about.html

Teach Louisiana. (n.d.). *Alternate Teacher Preparation*.
    Retrieved December 5, 2004, from Louisiana Department of
    Education Web Site: http://teachlouisiana.net/pages.asp?

U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *No Child Left Behind Act
    of 2001*. Retrieved September 21, 2004, from U.S. Department
    of Education Web Site:
    http://www.ed.gov/policy/landing.jhtm

Voke, H. (2002). Attracting and retaining quality teachers:
    understanding and responding to the teacher shortage.
    Infobrief, (29), 1-14. Retrieved December 13, 2004, from
    Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Web
    Site:
    http://www.ascd.org/publications/infobrief/issue29.html

Yoon, J. S., & Gilchrist, J. (2003). Elementary teachers'

    perceptions of 'administrative support' in working with

    disruptive and aggressive students. *Education, 123*(3), 564–

    569. Retrieved October 16, 2003, from EBSCOhost Web Site:

    http://seg802.ocs.lsu.edu:2163

Appendix A

Introductory Letters

January, 2004

(Principal's Name)

(Name of Middle School)

(Street. Address)

New Orleans, LA (Zip Code)

Dear (Principal's Name),

My name is Reina Sorapuru, and I am currently in my third year of doctoral studies at the University of New Orleans in Educational Administration and Leadership. I would appreciate if you will allow me to conduct a study of the "Alternatively Certified Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support."

As a current principal at Andrew H. Wilson Elementary School, I am aware of the problems we face in the education of students. One of those problems is not having enough certified teachers. Therefore, a current trend is to hire teachers currently certified or seeking certification through other avenues, such as, *Teach for America*, *Teach for Greater New Orleans*, and *Fellows* Programs. It is not enough for school systems to hire teachers, but the systems must find ways to retain them.

I am asking for your assistance in distributing the enclosed survey along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and consent form to individual teachers that fit in the category of alternative certification. Please do not include any identifying information on the instrument. Names of participants are not necessary and surveys should be returned anonymously. The teachers' participation is voluntary. The survey consists of 24 questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Data collected is for the purpose of examining the perceptions of "alternatively certified" teachers about the support given by principals, mentors, other teachers, districts, and teacher education programs or professors in addressing the challenges of teaching in the first years. No individual data will be reported.

If you should have any questions, please contact me or my advisor at the Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70148 (504)280-6661 or email rsorapur@uno.edu.

Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely,

Reina Sorapuru
Doctoral Student

University of New Orleans

Educational Administration and Leadership

Encl: Survey Cover Letters

        Surveys

        Self-addressed, stamped envelopes

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of New Orleans and am conducting my dissertation research regarding "Alternatively Certified Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support." As a first or second year teacher with alternative certification, your input may lead to insights and recommendations to improve educational practice.

The survey is designed to provide biographical information of alternative certification teachers and data related to characteristics of our Louisiana schools. You will be asked questions related to support received from your principal, assigned mentors, other teachers, district, and teacher education program or professor, and the importance of these supports in your beginning years of teaching.

As an educator myself, I understand that your time is extremely valuable. Therefore, I have constructed a questionnaire which can be easily answered in 15 minutes. There are no correct or incorrect answers. I am only interested in your opinions and experiences. There is no coding used to identify your survey. No individual data will be reported. Please use the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope to return your questionnaire by January 18, 2005.

If you should have any questions, please contact me or my advisor at the Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70148 (504)280-6661 or email rsorapur@uno.edu. If you would like a summary of the results please notify me by email at rsorapur@uno.edu.

Thank you in advance for participating in this research study by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Reina Bianca Heron Sorapuru

Doctoral Candidate

University of New Orleans

Educational Administration and Leadership

Appendix B

Sorapuru Survey Instrument

Alternatively Certified Teacher Survey

Instructions: Please indicate your answers to the following items by checking the appropriate box.

Biographical Information, Personal Characteristics, and School Characteristics

1. Gender: Female   Male

2. Age: 25 – 30   31 – 35   36 – 40
  41+

3. Ethnic Background:

   Caucasian   African American   Hispanic
   Asian American
   Native American   Other

4. Grade currently teaching:
   6th 7th 8th

5. Time in teaching:
   First year   Second year in same school   Second year in different school

6. Highest degree earned:

Bachelors   Masters   Master's plus 30

Specialist   Doctorate

7. My program of study:

Non-Master's/Certification Only Program

Master's Degree Alternate

Certification Program   Practitioner

Teacher Alternate Certification Program

Response scale: **1**=Strongly Disagree (SD) **2**=Moderately Disagree (D) **3**=Slightly Disagree (sD) **4**=Slightly Agree (sA) **5**=Moderately Agree (MA) **6**= Strongly Agree (SA)	**Please indicate (circle) your extent of agreement that the behaviors in items 1- 20 were demonstrated by each possible source of support (your principal, assigned mentor, other teachers, district, teacher education program or professor) using a scale where** **1 = Strongly Disagree, 2= Moderately Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4=Slightly Agree, 5= Moderately Agree, and 6=Strongly Agree. Using the same scale, indicate your extent of agreement with items 21 – 24.**			
	This source of support is important to me in my early teaching years	**Principal**	**Assigned Mentor**	**Other Teachers**
Example: Taught me how to prepare for the first day of school	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
1. Sincere praise when I demonstrate effective teaching	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Non-verbal expressions of appreciation for the job I do	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Clear expectations for my performance	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Models effective professional behavior	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Involves me in important decisions	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Uses formal and informal structures for gathering teacher opinions	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding curriculum in my classroom	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding instruction in my classroom	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Gives teachers autonomy but intervenes when necessary	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Orients new teachers to school and district resources	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Provides the materials and resources I need to do my job	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

Response scale:
1=Strongly Disagree (SD)
2=Moderately Disagree (D)
3=Slightly Disagree (sD)
4=Slightly Agree (sA)
5=Moderately Agree (MA)
6= Strongly Agree (SA)

	This source of support is important to me in my early teaching years	Principal	Assigned Mentor	Other Teachers
12. Supports my participation in professional development activities	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Backs me up when appropriate action is taken on discipline issues	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Protects instructional time from disruptions	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Knows how to give advice without being pushy or demanding	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Keeps me informed of new developments in education	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Minimizes bureaucratic rules and procedures	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
18. More concerned with doing the right thing	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
19. Would let me know if I did something that was not in the best interest of the student	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Optimistic about the quality of education in our schools	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
	Level of agreement			
21. I am satisfied with my choice to become a teacher	1 2 3 4 5 6			
22. I am happy teaching at my current school	1 2 3 4 5 6			
23. If given the opportunity I will return to this school next year	1 2 3 4 5 6			
24. Teaching will be my permanent career.	1 2 3 4 5 6			

Appendix C

Survey Items Related to Spinella's Factors

Survey Items Related to Spinella's Factors

Item	Related Factors
1. Sincere praise when I demonstrate effective teaching	Respect
2. Non-verbal expressions of appreciation for the job I do	Respect
3. Clear expectations for my performance	Respect
4. Models effective professional behavior	Respect
5. Involves me in important decisions	Involvement
6. Uses formal and informal structures for gathering teacher opinions	Involvement
7. Gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding curriculum in my classroom	Autonomy
8. Gives me the freedom to make decisions regarding instruction in my classroom	Minimizing Bureaucracy
9. Gives teachers autonomy but intervenes when necessary	Minimizing Bureaucracy
10. Orients new teachers to school and district resources	Involvement
11. Provides the materials and resources I need to do my job	Autonomy
12. Supports my participation in professional development activities	Involvement
13. Backs me up when appropriate action is taken on discipline issues	Backup
14. Protects instructional time from disruptions	Backup
15. Knows how to give advice without being pushy or demanding	Involvement
16. Keeps me informed of new developments in education	Autonomy
17. Minimizes bureaucratic rules and procedures	Minimizing Bureaucracy
18. More concerned with doing the right thing	Minimizing Bureaucracy
19. Would let me know if I did something that was not in the best interest of the student	Concern
20. Optimistic about the quality of education in our schools	Concern

Appendix D

Human Subjects Approval

University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans

Form Number: 04JAN05

(please refer to this number in all future correspondence concerning this protocol)

Principal Investigator Reina Sorapuru   **Title:** Doctoral Student

Faculty Supervisor: Peggy Kirby   *(if PI is a student)*

Department: ELCF   **College:** Education

Project Title: Alternatively Certified Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support

Date Reviewed:

Dates of Proposed Project Period   From 01/01/05   to 05/01/05

*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.

          Approval Status   **Date**

☐ **Full Committee Approval**

☒ **Expedited Approval**   12-14-04

☐ **Continuation**

☐ **Rejected**

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

Committee Signatures:

_____   Laura Scaramella, Ph.D. (Chair)

_____   Pamela Jenkins, Ph.D.

_____   Anthony Kontos, Ph.D.

_____   Richard B. Speaker, Ph.D.

_____   Gary Talarchek, Ph.D.

_____   Kari Walsh

_____   L. Allen Witt, Ph.D.

VITA

Reina Bianca Heron Sorapuru was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. There she attended elementary school at McDonogh #6 from Kindergarten to fourth grade, completed elementary grades at Mary Dora Coghill. She then attended junior high school for the seventh and eighth grades at Rivers Fredericks School, ninth grade at Gregory Junior High, and completed tenth through twelfth grades, and graduated in 1971, from John F. Kennedy Senior High School. All of these schools were public schools. She went on to higher education at Dillard University as a vocal music major in 1971. In Jaunary, 1973, she resigned from Dillard University. Reina Sorapuru returned to her studies as an Education Major at Xavier University in Louisiana and graduated with honors, December, 1995. During that time, she participated in a program sponsored by the Southern Education Foundation titled Teachers as Leaders. This program supported her development in teaching through visits to higher educational sites – Teachers College at Columbia University, Harvard University, and Vanderbilt University. It was these programs that kept her inspired to pursue her Master of Education Degree, which she received from the University of New Orleans in 2001.

Dr. Sorapuru is currently the Principal of Andrew H. Wilson Elementary School in the Orleans Parish School System. Prior to beginning the doctoral program, she reared five daughters and inspired four of them to enter the teaching profession, taught in Osborne Elementary School, and was an Assistant Principal of Hoffman Elementary.

96