

PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVELY AND
TRADITIONALLY LICENSED TEACHERS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Kristi Lyn Kilby Goodwin. PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS OF
ALTERNATIVELY AND TRADITIONALLY LICENSED TEACHERS. (Under the
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This qualitative phenomenological study examined the perceptions of both traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers regarding the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program on creating effective classroom teachers. Sixteen teachers at three Northeast Georgia schools participated in a series of semi-structured interviews over a period of five months. The teachers described perceptions of their teacher preparation route and corresponding effectiveness in the classroom. In addition to the interviews the teachers were asked to complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale in order to establish a quantitative view of self-efficacy among study participants. The interviews revealed that the most important qualities possessed by effective teachers were rooted essentially in their love of students and of content regardless of teacher preparation route.

Key words: teacher licensure, alternatively licensed, self-efficacy, classroom effectiveness, Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale, teacher preparation, phenomenology

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my husband, Matthew, and to my children, Avarie and Beau. No matter where this life takes me you can rest assured that no title has ever meant more to me than the titles “wife” and “mommy.”

And to my parents, who always led me to believe that I could do anything I wanted to do. Message received.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh,
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

- Robert Frost, 1920

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Matthew, my husband, you are my soul mate and without you, there would have been too many days when I simply could not have put one foot in front of the other. Your selflessness is astounding and I owe you dearly for the many, many nights that you've spent not only as daddy, but also mommy, housekeeper, pet wrangler, chef and everything in between. I look forward to 60 more years of gardening and running and traveling with you and I love you so much.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS)

Georgia Department of Education (GADOE)

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE)

Georgia Standards for School Performance (GSSP)

English Language Learner (ELL)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Needs Improvement (NI)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

Students with Disability (SWD)

United States Department of Education (USDOE)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

One of the greatest equalizing factors in education is that all teachers in public classrooms are required to be classified as *highly qualified*. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 defines a highly qualified teacher as one who has met minimum state licensing criteria for the area in which he or she teaches, including completion of a baccalaureate program in the subject area, as well as passing standardized content-based and pedagogy tests (Au, 2004; United States Department of Education [USDOE], 2001). Thus, federal regulations require that all teachers complete a teacher preparation program in order to be qualified to teach under federal guidelines (Cohen-Vogel & Hunt, 2007; USDOE, 2001).

Despite the need for every teacher to become highly qualified, the method of preparation for the classroom differs for each teacher. The most common route to becoming a teacher is through the completion of a traditional teacher preparation program. Teachers classified in this way typically complete a four year degree in education, with a minor in the area that they would like to specifically teach. While the individual teacher preparation programs may have different approaches, there are some similarities. These similarities include a focus on teaching pre-service teachers the foundations and history of education, general pedagogy, and content-specific pedagogy, although the later is not required in all programs or at all levels. In addition, pre-service teachers often engage in some sort of classroom experience under the supervision of a

mentor teacher. The implementation of this practice varies according to each state's licensure rules and is currently only required in 38 states in order to gain licensure (Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, & Wycoff, 2007).

While most current classroom teachers became licensed through the traditional route described above, alternative means of securing licensure have become more common in recent years. Alternative routes to education first became an option in the early 1980s as a response to projected teacher shortages. An alternatively licensed teacher can range from a person with no pedagogical training who passed a series of licensure tests administered by the state to a person who has completed an advanced degree in education in addition to an undergraduate degree in a content area (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Over the past three decades, programs like Teach for America have become important and influential in providing new teachers through experience-based alternative teacher preparation. Proponents of alternative certification cite greater numbers of men, non-Whites, mature and educated individuals entering the teaching profession as a result of alternative licensure options (Feistritzer, 2005). However, critics are quick to point out that these inexperienced teachers are often placed in the highest needs classrooms and struggle to learn pedagogical techniques at the expense of student learning (Russell & Wineburg, 2007)

Whether teachers participated in traditional teacher preparation programs or in provisional, experienced based program, they can provide important feedback on how to improve those programs and make them more relevant (Bryan & Atwater, 2002; Koballa,

Glynn, Upson & Coleman, 2005). Despite the fact that this valuable feedback is available when administrators begin designing and reformatting teacher preparation programs, it is too often ignored (Crowe, 2010). While it is an important consideration that programs must meet state and national standards to create highly qualified educators, the primary concern when creating programs should be the need to emphasize those skills and experiences that are most applicable in the classroom (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009).

Data released in a 1998 study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) projected that between the years 1999 and 2010, the United States would suffer a shortage of 2.2 million teachers in classrooms across the nation. This shortage would be especially acute in the areas of math and science and in low socioeconomic schools, fueling a rise in alternative licensure programs (NCES, 2000). At the beginning of the 21st century, public schools indeed reported a great deal of hiring difficulties, particularly in the area of mathematics, proving the predictions regarding teacher shortages to be accurate (Ingersoll, 2003). Current projections indicate that the number of new public school teacher hires will increase by 26% (to about 357,000 new hires) by the year 2018 (NCES, 2009).

In addition to the hiring difficulties experienced in public schools, the teacher shortage issue is compounded by the alarmingly high rate of teacher attrition, especially among novice teachers, those in their first five years in the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Many teachers spend a great deal of time preparing to be educators, only to find themselves unhappy and inadequately prepared for the realities that they face every day

in the classroom once they begin teaching. Research shows that 25% of new teachers leave the field after their first year of teaching, and 50% leave after only five years in the classroom (Thornton, Peltier, & Hill, 2005). According to exit interviews conducted with these teachers, about 67% of those losses can be attributed to pursuit of a better job or job dissatisfaction. Since the data suggests that large numbers of teachers are leaving the field shortly after being hired, the teacher shortage will obviously not be solved simply by hiring new teachers. The problems with the teacher preparation process that are responsible for teachers being ill-prepared for the classroom must be addressed (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Consider the following case of Kristen. Kristen was a bright young teaching prospect, who despite great promise ended her teaching career after only two years in the profession. Kristen entered the teaching field with excellent recommendations after finishing at the top of her graduating class. She had a great experience student teaching, and the supervising teacher reported that Kristen's passion for teaching children was clearly evident. So how did this young highly qualified teacher end up leaving the profession after only two years?

Although Kristen's students and fellow teachers became enamored with her bright smile and obvious love for teaching science, she soon found herself staring at contradictory administrative reviews. In each of these reviews, instead of taking the opportunity to provide valuable and necessary feedback for Kristen regarding effective and ineffective teaching practices, administrators instead spent time focusing criticisms on menial management issues. The lack of meaningful and accessible support left her

searching for help from an assigned mentor that had no common planning time, experience, or subject expertise.

The combination of ineffective feedback and insufficient guidance soon dampened Kristen's love for teaching. Kristen reported feeling overwhelmed daily in her attempt to pair the lessons that she had learned throughout her program with the dynamic reality of the classroom. Kristen often noted that the student teaching experience, taking place in the already established classroom of an experienced teacher, left her confused and frustrated in her attempts to create the same kind of atmosphere in her own classroom. Kristen's desire to leave the field of education began around December of her second year, and by the spring she had secured a job outside the field of education. In follow-up interviews, Kristen expressed regret that the realities of her teaching experience did not reflect the teacher training process where her love of education was nurtured.

Surveys conducted by the NCES indicate dissatisfaction with the field of teaching as one of the three primary causes of teacher attrition among new teachers (United States Department of Education, 2009). Perhaps these new young teachers, much like Kristen, felt a calling to help students, but instead found themselves drowning in paperwork and overwhelmed with managing discipline problems. Education researchers and administrators must ask how many times similar conditions have robbed the classroom of bright, young, and enthusiastic teachers like Kristen.

Problem Statement

Darling-Hammond and Hasselkorn (2009) found that the field of education must begin considering how best to improve teacher practice in the classroom for the benefit of the students. Stipek (2007) echoed the cry of many in the field of educational research (Gersten & Brengelman, 1996; Gersten & Dimino, 2001; Greenwood & Abbott, 2001; Nougaret, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2005; Scheeler, 2008; Vaughn, Klinger, & Hughes, 2000) who indicated that there seems to be an extreme disconnect between best practices as determined by education research and the actual daily practice of education. Critics indicate that education research loses its effectiveness and subsequent link to student learning because there is no follow-through in the field of education (Gersten, 2001; Scheeler, 2008).

As the needs of students continue to change, the field of educational research must find the most applicable ways to use the research that has been compiled and tested in the classroom. As we strive to move forward in creating a more effective teaching experience, education researchers need to move away from the comparisons of alternative and traditional programs and focus instead on those components of each program that create effective classroom teaching practices (Wycoff, 2010).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine educators' perceptions of the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs. By comparing the perspectives of novice and experienced teachers, as well as traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers, I hoped to gain insight regarding the relative state of teacher

preparation programs in America and its subsequent application in the classroom. While the debate exists across the education field about the effectiveness of the different routes that are available to future teachers in each state, educational leaders must establish a research-based background about the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs if they are to produce teachers that love their jobs and want to continue to teach beyond the first five years.

Significance of the Study

The sole focus of this study is investigating the connection between teacher licensure and teacher effectiveness. Throughout the last thirty years, studies have proliferated in the area of teacher licensure and effectiveness (see Ballou & Podgursky, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2009; Gilstrap, 1994; Miller, McKenna, M., & McKenna, B., 1998; Popovics, 1989; Turley & Nakai, 2000; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). Review of these studies reveals a gap in the literature concerning bias-free research that investigates and compares classroom efficacy perspectives of alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers in relation to their preparation programs and subsequent effectiveness in the classroom.

Teacher preparation programs must find a balance between initially placing motivated individuals into classrooms and finding the right combination of training and support to keep them effective. By examining the licensure process through the lens of several highly qualified individuals who achieved this status through different means, educational researchers may gain access to real-world insights regarding how different

certification routes impact perceived classroom effectiveness. This information could be used to revise current teacher preparation programs and create new curriculums.

The core definition of effectiveness can be described as the fulfillment of the purpose of an activity the extent to which an activity fulfills its intended purpose or function (Harvey, 2009). In relation to teachers and the classroom, effectiveness indicates the ability of the teacher to create a link between teaching and learning that results in the mastery of the material by the students. Although education researchers agree that classroom and teacher effectiveness are essential components that must be fostered in teacher preparation programs, debate still exists in the methods of measurement of teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Ding & Sherman, 2006; Gibson & Deembo, 1984). Classroom effectiveness becomes an even more important consideration as teacher shortages and attrition rates across the country are fueling the rise in classroom teachers who arrive there due to alternative means. Alternatively licensed teachers are often those that are placed in the most at risk schools and classrooms, which indicates a need for empirical studies on the effectiveness of these means of alternative licensure (Tissington & Grow, 2007).

When comparing standardized achievement data between the students of teachers licensed through traditional teacher preparation programs and the students of teachers licensed through alternative licensure programs, the analysis of results are often ambiguous and related to the source of information (Humphrey, Weschsler, & Hough, 2008; Wright, 2008). While proponents of traditional programs cite the performance of traditionally trained teachers as higher performing on standardized testing (Darling-

Hammond, 2005; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002), published data from the Teach for America program contradicts these findings. Teach for America asserts that when considering standardized math achievement data, those students that are taught by alternatively licensed teachers score at the same levels or higher than those in the same testing conditions with traditionally trained teachers (Tissington & Grow, 2007). Given the ambiguities of the data collection and reports, education researchers must expand their search beyond quantitative standardized testing data in order to get a greater picture of those aspects of teacher preparation that fosters greater classroom effectiveness.

Efficacy studies look at the relationship between effectiveness and teacher preparation route through the lens of teacher perception. The mentoring portion of effective programs is referenced throughout a critical review of the literature as an important factor in teacher retention and classroom effectiveness (Brown, 2003; Kajs, 2002; Portner, 2005). Furthermore, Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) indicates that the self-efficacy component of teaching has a great deal to do with the ability of a teacher to remain in the field in spite of the difficulties that may be faced – especially within those difficult first five years of teaching. Teacher perceptions and qualitative feedback are an important factor when considering how teachers are hired and in the self-efficacy of alternatively licensed teachers. This study aspires to look at the perceptions of both novice and experienced traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers in order to discern those factors that improve classroom and program efficacy.

Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of both traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers regarding the effectiveness of their relative teacher preparation programs in creating effective classroom teachers and how does this relate to how they view classroom efficacy in themselves and others?
- 2) What are the self-efficacy views of novice and veteran alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers?

Research Plan

The study is a qualitative phenomenological study. The study participants completed both an information gathering survey as well as a series of interviews with the primary researcher. The educators were selected using the stratified purposeful sampling method (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). By using stratified purposeful sampling I was able to select a group of representatives across the spectrum of the study in order to gain more insight into a particular phenomenon (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Selected educators represent four groups: experienced traditionally licensed educators, novice traditionally licensed educators, experienced alternatively licensed educators, and novice alternatively licensed educators. A total of four participants in each category were selected for the study in order to increase the validity of the study through replication, providing a data pool of sixteen participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994). Sample replication allowed me to compare the efficacy responses of teachers with similar backgrounds and allow for saturation of the participant pool.

Each study participant was asked to complete a series of self-efficacy scales at the beginning of the study (Hoy, 2008). I used the responses to these self-efficacy scales to draw general conclusions about the efficacy views of each category of participant. These terms were used to direct initial coding procedures and throughout the follow up interview process. Additionally, the participants were engaged in a series of in-depth interviews in order to more fully develop conclusions regarding the relationships that exist between teacher preparation programs and classroom effectiveness.

The main data collection component consisted of a minimum of two in-depth interviews with each participant. Because of the emergent and flexible nature of qualitative studies, the interviews followed the open-ended, or conversational, format (Merriam, 1998). An interview guide was used by the researcher in order to provide a prompt for questioning and for continuity across the different categories of teachers. However, the heuristic nature of the phenomenological study, as described by Moustakas (1990), allowed for greater exploration of topics in conversation. All interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. I also kept detailed field notes and reflections during each interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed and coded to find themes related to classroom effectiveness and teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hoy, 2008).

Definitions

Accreditation program – a state, regional, national, or international program used to monitor the academic professionalism and rigor of teacher preparation programs.

Alternative teacher preparation program – a teacher licensure program for teachers who have already earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a non-education field, and now desire to become educators. It requires that future teachers take basic education methodology courses and earn licensure through experience and mentorship over time, usually while participating in a supervised internship.

Emergency licensure – licensure issued by states on a provisional basis to qualified candidates based on either test scores or the completion of a six to nine week teaching methods course. State agencies may or may not require continuing education courses to maintain emergency licensure. The length of time that an emergency license is valid depends on the guidelines of the state that administers the license, and can vary from one year to the length of the teaching career.

Effectiveness – the relationship between the stated goals and achievement of those goals. In relation to teachers and the classroom, effectiveness indicates the ability of the teacher to create a link between teaching and learning that results in student mastery of the material presented by the teacher.

Efficacy – the ability of a teacher to convey information or achieve desired results.

Experienced teacher – a licensed teacher who has been solely responsible for creating lesson plans and imparting knowledge for a time period greater than six years.

Highly qualified – a NCLB classification of core academic teachers who are required by federal legislation to have a bachelor's degree from a four year institution, demonstrate competence in the field in which they teach – generally through the

completion of a standardized subject-specific test, and be fully licensed by the state in which they teach.

Novice teacher – a licensed teacher who has been solely responsible for creating lesson plans and imparting knowledge for a time period of between one and five years.

Mentor teacher – an assigned experienced teacher within a particular professional learning community whose role is to provide sound advice in the areas of methods and classroom management.

Pre-service teachers – individuals currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program and who have not formally taught in a classroom.

Provisional experience based program – a licensure program that allows individuals with related bachelor's degrees from four-year institutions to become temporarily licensed after demonstrating competence on standardized subject-specific tests. Full certification may be established after completing core teacher education courses and participating in a minimum of a one-year internship within a qualified teacher licensure program.

Self-efficacy – a person's beliefs about his or her capabilities to affect particular outcomes. Self-efficacy beliefs may often influence a person's feelings about success prior to engaging in a difficult or arduous task.

Teacher effectiveness – a qualitative measure of the ability of a teacher to effectively communicate the subject in a way that allows students to retain and apply the learned information.

Teacher preparation programs – a series of higher education classes and experiences designed to create highly qualified and effective classroom teachers.

Title I school - a school that meets federal qualifications for extra funding due to the low socioeconomic status of the majority of the students.

Traditional teacher preparation program – a teacher licensure route that enables students to earn a bachelor's degree in education through basic methods, subject-specific classes, and supervised field experiences.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two of this study provides a review of the literature regarding the relationship between teacher education programs and the effectiveness of the classroom teacher in creating mastery learning opportunities for students. This chapter gives special importance to the relationship between alternative and traditional teacher licensure and classroom effectiveness. First is a discussion of the theoretical framework on which this particular study is based – Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), and the importance of self-efficacy in classroom teaching. Next, the history of teaching is presented with emphasis on the development of licensure practices and the rise of alternative licensure programs. Then, a specific discussion of traditional and alternative licensure is provided, with comparison and critiques of each. There is, in addition, a more complete discussion of the lack of consistency in the definition of alternative licensure and how this has affected the compilation of educational research in this area. Finally, the researcher discusses the relationship between effectiveness and licensure route. A brief examination of the measurement of teacher effectiveness in classroom practice and in educational research is provided, as well as a look at the characteristics of an effective teacher. The relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement is also discussed.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based upon Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), and especially the importance of self-efficacy to effective teaching. SCT, as postulated by Bandura, asserts that individuals are able to exert a measure of control over thoughts and feelings, and subsequently their actions. Bandura (1994) describes self-efficacy as the belief one has regarding the ability to influence events in their lives through positive or negative thinking. Individuals with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to take on challenging or difficult tasks, and any setbacks encountered are viewed as surmountable. Sources of self-efficacy include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and physiological states. Of these, mastery experiences, or experiences where the individual makes judgment about abilities after completing a challenging experience, have the greatest influence in creating self-efficacy (Pajares, 1997).

Classroom teachers are not only affected by self-efficacy in their own teaching, but are also transmitters of self-efficacy to their students through modeling and verbal encouragement. Historical studies relate teacher efficacy to the ability to create mastery learning activities, positive classroom environments, and confidence within students, as well as positive correlations between teacher predictions of student achievement and outcomes (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Chambers & Hardy, 2005; Cohn & Rossmiller, 1987; Gibson & Deembo, 1984; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990).

Because of the far-reaching consequences on self-efficacy concepts in teachers, the relationship between teacher efficacy and licensure becomes an important link to consider. The role that teacher efficacy plays in the retention of teachers may provide additional information regarding the links between licensure, efficiency, and teacher retention. A study of prospective social studies teachers indicated that at the end of the teacher preparation program, students felt that they had high self-efficacy regarding teaching methods and course and lesson design, but not regarding their particular subject matter (Yilmaz, 2009). In contrast, beginning teachers in New York City who entered the teaching profession through alternate licensure routes expressed a great deal of self doubt and felt less prepared to succeed in the classroom than beginning teachers who were graduates of more traditional programs.

Research reviewed by Humphrey et al. (2002) indicates that findings are mixed regarding efficacy and licensure. Half of the studies that were reviewed by Humphrey et al. found that alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers were reported to have similar levels of efficacy and confidence (Guyton, Fox, & Sisk, 1991; Miller, McKenna, M. & McKenna, B., 1998), and two others found that alternatively licensed teachers were less confident (Jelmberg, 1996; Lutz & Hutton, 1989). More recent studies indicate continued disagreement between education researchers on the relationship between efficacy and licensure route. These studies also consider such classroom variables as bilingualism, mentor teacher involvement, principal leadership style, and parental involvement. However, they fail to make a definitive judgment that links efficacy and

licensure (Chambers & Hardy, 2005; Hamman et al., 2006; Leonard & Oakley, 2006; Nir & Kranot, 2006; Sandoval-Lucero, 2006).

Review of the Literature

Historical Background. Historically, education and teacher preparation programs are able to trace their roots through private tutors in ancient civilizations to the creation of more formalized schools of pedagogy that related to religious training and were influenced by those philosophers that figure more prominently in today's educational foundations texts (Hailman, 1873). Teacher preparation programs traditionally focused on preparing teachers through a mixture of pedagogy, theory, and practicum experiences (Ackerman, 2004). The development of these ideas for teacher education programs in America can be traced to the development of the normal schools of the early 1800s, and more specifically to the French École Normale Supérieure established in Paris in 1794 (Helton, 2008; Normal school, 2010). Normal schools were primarily responsible for the education and training of elementary school teachers and followed the teachings of Johann Pestalozzi – a student of Jean-Jacques Rousseau – who touted the idea that learning was a development of the child's own senses rather than the imposition of the teacher's knowledge (Coble, Edelfelt, & Kettlewell, 2004). As more and more students became educated, the need for higher education for teachers became necessary, and the normal school idea spread to universities. By 1873 the influence of education pioneers like John Dewey became more prevalent as normal schools began their transformation into teacher colleges (Helton, 2008).

Although many teachers in the early days of the American normal school were largely prominent men in the community (Helton, 2008), throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, normal schools provided a large portion of higher education opportunities

for women (Bohan & Null, 2007). As more communities began seeking education for their children, the expectations and requirements for those teachers also climbed. Precursors of today's licensure gates began to emerge. State-sponsored normal schools' licensure requirements were to be met primarily through the use of state-administered examinations. Potential teacher candidates were required to possess a great deal of in-depth knowledge about a variety of subjects. In order to hold the required certificate to teach, they had to pass a series of tests on classroom management, content-specific ideas, and ideas about educational philosophy (Bohan & Null, 2007; Pyle, 2009).

As history progressed many of the normal schools became incorporated into larger universities. For example, the Normal School of Los Angeles became what is now known as the University of California at Los Angeles [UCLA] (Bohan & Null, 2007). Practice schools that allowed for students to experiment with classroom management ideas and lesson plans were established and the debate between those who viewed teaching as an art and those that viewed it as a science began (Bohan & Null, 2007; Helton, 2008).

As education opportunities expanded, so did the need for standardization agencies to govern the field of education (Finn, 2009). The United States Office of Education was created by Congress in 1867 with the primary purpose of collecting and disseminating data regarding education to state and local education officials (Feistritzer & Haar, n.d.). As the 1800's drew to a close, practicing and pre-service teachers were asked to prove their understanding and knowledge of educational theory, pedagogy, and content knowledge through a series of examinations. These examinations allowed education

agencies to create greater standardization of the teacher preparation process. Even then, successful completion of the examinations proved to be a contentious and worrisome endeavor for future teachers. Teachers who were able to pass a rigorous series of exams would be allowed to gain a lifetime licensure from the state in which he or she chose to reside and teach, allowing the teacher to seek gainful and lasting employment in individual communities (Pyle, 2009).

As the 20th century progressed, instructional institutions also began to focus on standardization in the instruction of future educators. Instructional institutions sought to create regulated and common standards and experiences for all teachers. Many of the accreditation programs that presently regulate the broad field of education today, such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, were developed during the 1940s and 1950s (Finn, 2009). As the accreditation agencies strove to find more effective means of educating teachers, the notion of the importance of practical experience in the classroom continued to gain popularity, becoming a common practice in the 1970s (Finn, 2009).

In the second half of the 20th century, the United States government began to take a more vested interest in the regulation of schools and learning. In 1969, the U.S. Congress established the NCES in order to examine levels of academic achievement among students and to improve public education. In 1980, the government initiated the development of the Department of Education as a federal entity focusing on the development of education in the United States (Feistritzer & Haar, n.d.). The federal report, *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983 brought the public's attention to the lack of

quality schools throughout the nation. After the release of this report, teacher preparation programs across the country began to reflect the national interest in education reform (Finn, 2009) and alternative teacher preparation programs began to gain greater acceptance. This new alternative to the traditional teacher licensure route created a means for teachers to collect a salary while gaining greater experience and completing training in the skills deemed necessary for effective teaching while being guided by a mentor teacher. The requirements for entrance into the program were often greater than traditional teacher preparation programs, and interested individuals were able to skip what was viewed as a tedious process and learn the skills and knowledge that was directly linked and vital to classroom instruction (Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991).

One such alternative program that resulted from education reform was the New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program in 1985 (Feistritzer & Haar, n.d.). Although the New Jersey Provisional teacher program was not the first alternative or provisional program to be developed, but it was one of the most widely studied for educational research purposes (Feistritzer & Haar, n.d.). Although only eight states had alternative licensure routes available for teachers in 1983, by 2003 that number had increased to 46 and the District of Colombia (Birkeland & Peske, 2004). The number and types of alternative programs continued to grow throughout the 80s and 90s with an estimated 50,000 alternatively licensed teachers filling teaching positions by the year 1996 (Rhuland & Bremer, 2002).

Present Teacher Preparation Practices. The idea that it is the duty of public educators to further the social consciousness is as old as civilization. Records of the Roman historian Quintilian from 39 A.D. urged teachers to create engaging, differentiated, student-focused learning (Berliner, 2007). The enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 was a call to action for educators to begin looking at creating measurable quantitative mastery learning goals in order to create a more level playing field for all students. With the passing of NCLB, an important new education buzzword became the focus of teachers and teacher preparation programs across the country – highly qualified. A highly qualified teacher is defined as one who earned at least a bachelor's degree, demonstrated knowledge in a content field (usually through some sort of standardized test), and who has completed all the licensure requirements for the state in which s/he wishes to teach (United States Department of Education, 2005).

Traditional Teacher Preparation. The traditional teacher preparation route for an American undergraduate student begins with the student's enrollment in the teacher education program of study in a liberal arts college or university. Potential teacher candidates then choose the age range they would like to teach (elementary, middle, or secondary) and then complete a series of methodology, pedagogy, and content specific courses. Additionally the top three teacher-producing states - New York, California, and Texas - require a minimum period of supervised classroom teaching time for potential teacher candidates, although the time and supervisory levels are subject to the individual programs (United States Department of Education, 2006). An accreditation agency or organization often assures that the proscribed teacher education program has given proof

of the rigor and requirements that are deemed necessary to produce knowledgeable and skilled educators. These organizations may be state or nationally based and often conduct education research and provide standards and guides to which teacher preparation programs adhere (Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). Once all the requirements for the specific teacher education program have been satisfactorily met, the teacher education candidate may then apply to the state's licensure agency and become a fully licensed educator (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2010).

Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs. Although similarities could be drawn between most traditional teacher preparation programs throughout the United States, the faces of alternative licensure appear to be very different. The term *alternative licensure* generally refers to the process that provides licensure for public educators who do not currently hold an undergraduate degree in the field of education from an accredited teacher preparation program (Rhuland & Bremer, 2002). Demand for more classroom teachers – especially in the fields of mathematics and science – has employers looking for alternatives to the traditional teacher education route to fill the shortage of teaching positions (Ingersoll, 2003). While critics of traditional teacher preparation programs assert that alternative licensure programs have the potential to create not only highly qualified but *high quality* educators; researchers, educators, administrators and legislators all seem to be working with a different definition of alternative licensure (Boyd et al., 2007).

Any licensure route that does not follow the traditional path may be considered alternative; an ambiguous definition that allows for great variation among licensing

bodies across the nation. Alternative licensure can range from no classroom experience or coursework before beginning teaching (as is the case for those teachers that may receive emergency or provisional licensure) to a year-long internship with additional master's level content, pedagogy, and methodology coursework for those individuals possessing undergraduate degrees in the subject field in which they wish to teach (Birkeland & Peske, 2004; Ruhland & Bremer, 2002). Additionally, much like traditional teacher preparation programs, the requirements for alternative licensure vary greatly by state and licensure agencies (Finn, 2009).

The primary difference between traditional and alternative licensure lies in the placement and amount of time actually spent teaching in a classroom. In most cases alternative licensure instruction primarily involves fieldwork and actual teaching experience in the classroom through paid full time teaching positions (Birkeland & Peske, 2004). Alternatively licensed teachers first obtain teaching positions, and then build upon teaching experience with additional licensure coursework, rather than the reverse that is found in traditional teaching licensure programs (Finn, 2009).

Characteristics of Effective Teachers. While the NCLB legislation requires a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, education researchers continue their search to define the necessary qualities of an effective teacher. The classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for creating the educational experience that will transfer knowledge to a student in the most engaging form. What are the characteristics of teachers who are able to most effectively convey knowledge and are those characteristics

intrinsic traits, created didactically, products of classroom experience, or some combination of all of these? How are these characteristics measured and by whom?

Regardless of the route that a teacher takes to arrive at licensure, it is of paramount importance to the entire education community that a teacher cultivates his or her skills to make the classroom experience an individualized and optimum learning opportunity for each student (Darling-Hammond, 1999). A review of the studies of teacher effectiveness indicates that there are a few key areas in which effective teachers seem to be highly skilled. These areas include communication, classroom management, lesson plan development and implementation, and differentiating for student need (Brewer, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Humphrey, Weschsler, & Hough, 2008; Linek et al., 2009; Poftak, 2003; Wise, 2002). Specifically, skillful teachers can be described as those who are (a) able to transform education knowledge into education action, (b) able to access and use instructional resources to enhance classroom instruction in meaningful ways, (c) knowledgeable about learning styles and the methods and resources that best meet particular student needs, (d) able to clearly communicate developmentally appropriate education ideas, and (e) able to provide meaningful feedback to students that is designed to enhance the learning process for students (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Kline, 1999).

Effectiveness and Achievement. The NCLB legislation introduced new terminology, but also a new era of accountability in education. Those that view teaching as a science rather than an art form began looking for a more quantifiable means of measuring the overall effectiveness of teachers. This view led to the analysis of student

achievement as a measure of teacher effectiveness (Salinas & Kritsonis, 2006; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). The overall purpose behind NCLB was to create a way to address the need to marry effectiveness and achievement, especially amongst the schools and school districts serving those groups defined as at-risk. Effectiveness data compiled by education researchers indicates that effective teaching practices and consistent exposure to so called *good teaching* are linked to higher levels of student achievement on national standardized testing in low-income, high minority districts, just as they are in primarily middle class, predominately Caucasian school districts (Boyd et al., 2007; National Academy of Education, 2009).

There are many researchers, critics, and legislators who are quick to create links between student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; Felter, 1999; Goldhaber & Brewer, 1999). Value-added teacher effectiveness measures provide a statistical analysis to allow administrators to evaluate teachers; however, it is important to remember that student test scores are not always a measure of how well a classroom teacher taught during the year (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997; Boyd et al., 2009; Hanushek, 1986; Hanushek, 1997; Loeb & Page, 2000). At the same time, the current evaluation process may leave much to be desired in the areas of true assessment of teaching skills, effectiveness, and providing a means of feedback and growth for teachers (Excellence in Teaching, 2010).

Student Achievement and Licensure Route. While there is little debate about the need for effective teaching in the classroom and its subsequent effect on student achievement, there remains a great deal of dialogue regarding the role that the teacher

licensure route plays in the need for classroom accountability. Although all teachers are federally required to meet highly qualified status, each state sets its own determining criteria for licensure and passing test scores. As a result, different teacher preparation programs and professional licensure agencies nationwide have very different requirements, rigor, and standards to gain licensure (Baines, 2006; Peterson & Nadler, 2009). The reported discrepancies in licensure criteria have led to the current climate of criticism and the increasing rise in the amount of alternative licensure routes in the past decade. Critics assert a divide exists between the labels of highly qualified and *highly effective* (Scheeler, 2008).

As a result of this discrepancy, alternative programs in 2010 range from a six-week crash course in classroom management to a two year guided internship with additional courses (Quigney, 2010; Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Critics and traditionalists cite concern that the students that are often served by the least traditionally trained teachers – low income, minority, urban students – are the students that have the greatest need for a highly effective teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Walsh, 2010). As the debate around alternative licensure continues, the future of education reform seems poised to move in one of two directions: education lawmakers will rely on the traditional model, which provides greater regulations and rigor, higher recruitment, and more field-based learning, or they will continue to allow alternative paths to teacher licensure, fueled by teacher shortages and so called career changers who seek to circumvent the more tedious portions of the teacher education program for greater education opportunities (Humphrey et al., 2002).

One of the primary criticisms of traditional teacher preparation programs is that they tend to have an open policy on applicants with very little criteria regarding program acceptance. A report by the American Federation of Teachers (2000) outlines the requirements of many teacher preparation programs. These requirements include a lack of specialized content courses, basic literacy requirements and a minimum entry GPA of 2.5. Thornhill, Peltier, and Hill (2005) suggest that some of the alarming attrition trends experienced by those who hire new teachers are that they are not suited to the field, and this could be avoided with more stringent acceptance requirements. Personality scales and student interest matching allows for students to not only determine whether or not education is a fit, but also what particular area and level is the best fit. The authors caution against the use of this as a profiling tool, or to exclude students from programs in which they have great interest.

In contrast, consider the much more competitive and stringent requirements for entry in to programs in other industrialized nations with whom American students are routinely compared (Darling-Hammond, 2005a). Teacher preparation programs in peer nations are noted to “routinely prepare teachers more extensively, pay them more in relation to competing occupations, and provide them with more time for joint planning and professional development” (Darling-Hammond, 2005a, p. 238). For example, teachers in Finland and Sweden receive at least two years of additional graduate level training by the government as well as a stipend during this training period (Darling-Hammond, 2008). Not only does this provide highly skilled individuals with the incentive to enter the field of education, it also encourages them by providing for their

financial needs as well. German teachers must obtain two degrees and then complete a two year pedagogy training and internship before they are even considered candidates for education (Waldrop, 1991). French teachers complete a highly competitive two year internship, complete with a one-year government subsidized residency similar to that completed by students training to be medical doctors (Holyoake, 1993). Government officials in Japan and Taiwan offer similar graduate level internships, and in comparison to the United States teacher shortages and attrition rates are rarely a problem because of the competitive pay scales and heavy investment of the government in the training of the highest caliber teachers for their public schools (Darling-Hammond, 2005a; Shimahara & Sakai, 1995).

Despite the in-service training that is received, many pre-service teachers in the United States may also enter the classroom with unrealistic expectations about their teaching duties and lesson planning. This can often quickly lead to disappointment and disenchantment with the field (Duck, 2007; Quigney, 2010). Teachers who enjoyed a particular classroom experience, or felt a certain connection with a coach or teacher in the past may carry preconceived and inaccurate perceptions of the field of teaching into the classroom. Researchers suggest that those pre-service teachers who are most interested due to prior experiences should be careful to make multiple observations and interviews to get more realistic expectations of teacher roles before choosing it as a final career (Mitchell, Doolittle, & Schwager, 2005).

Additionally, Scheeler (2008) found that only 30% of what was taught in teacher preparation programs is actually implemented in the classroom. Many practices are

abandoned as early as four days after the initial program implementation, despite the best efforts of many teachers. Similarly Scott and Baker (2003) report that many traditional programs are unable or unwilling to teach pre-service teachers how to make the adaptations necessary between a simulated and real world classroom situation. Exacerbating the problem, many education professors often teach the methods that are thought to be most effective for learners in the classroom, but rarely utilize those methods in their own classroom (Tobias, 1997).

These observations indicate that the improvement of student achievement and the improvement of experiences for new teachers lie in the revision of the teacher preparation program. Almost every critic of the traditional teacher preparation program, including teachers who are actively serving in classrooms, is that more experiential education is needed (Worthy, 2005). Some studies have shown that greater experience in the form of year-long internships have led to greater understanding of the teaching process, a greater toolbox of information, greater basic skills, and greater continued enthusiasm for the field (Spooner, Flowers, Lambert, & Algozzine, 2008). A similar study conducted by Williams and Alawiye (2001) found that the year-long internship also had a benefit in that it allowed a greater connection between public school and college preparation programs. Greater connectedness between what the public school needs and what teacher preparation programs offer is linked to greater achievement in the classroom for students, which is most often measured by student achievement on standardized testing (Ding & Sherman, 2006; Evans, Stewart, Mangin, & Bagley, 2001). The year-long programs are

more similar to the standards and implementation of international teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2005a).

As state standards are changed and maintained some teacher preparation and accreditation programs are already taking steps to revamp the process. One university in the Southeastern United States conducted a research study modeling increased field experience. The candidates spent a greater amount of time in the classroom, followed by teaching methods classes daily. The teachers were also connected to a strong mentor teacher who helped serve as a liaison between the school and the University. The results were greater understanding of the integration of theory and practice and needed placement in Title I schools. An expansion of the program placed even more teachers in the classroom and generated an even greater amount of information. After experiencing both teaching successes and complications, the school also decided to revamp the teacher preparation program to make acceptance criteria more stringent (Kent, 2005).

These findings are similar to the suggestions made by Hopkins (2008) in response to the Teach for America program, as well as other similar alternative preparation programs. These reforms are echoed in the international reforms as well. Louden and Rohl (2006) indicate that the current focus of teacher preparation programs in Australian universities is to spend more time on educational theory and not on actual classroom teaching skills. Discussions and surveys of these Australian teachers within their first three years of service found that although they were prepared for some parts of the field, they were lacking in the most basic skills that came from the actual experience of being in the classroom.

While some types of alternative preparation may be accepted, the public's perceptions have led to apprehensions about the validity of some of the training. Huss (2007) looked particularly at the perceptions that secondary school principals had of teachers who obtained teaching degrees via online programs. Despite the vast number of schools that now offer online courses and degree programs and the numbers of students enrolled in those programs, the principals still expressed hesitation when considering graduates from these non-traditional programs. Principals cite concerns about the ethics of the programs and how the teacher ensures that the students completed the work as well as concerns about why the students chose to engage in such a non-traditional coursework (Finn, 2009).

Critics of alternative licensure programs are quick to note that those students who are defined as most at risk - poor, minority, and low-performing students - are also those most likely to be served by alternatively licensed teachers (Boyd et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Viadero, 2002). However, studies indicate that many of these teachers and programs are highly effective in classrooms of typically low-performing students. Programs like Teach for America and the New York Fellows program have been successful in recruiting teachers with significantly higher background qualifications, including graduate level in-field degrees and work experience, and those teachers have experienced success in the classroom and testing arena as well (Boyd et al., 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Research conducted by Gimbert, Bol, and Wallace (2007) found that when looking at data collected on achievement tests in mathematics,

that students being taught by teachers who engaged in alternative preparation programs scored better on second quarter tests, as well as the overall final unit exams.

In addition to showing similar or significant gains in at risk classrooms on standardized testing data, alternative teacher preparation programs may also serve as a model source of greater classroom diversity. A 1993 survey conducted in the Houston Independent School District found that alternatively licensed teachers were most likely to be African American males between the ages of 30 and 40 (Rhuland & Bremer, 2002). This is an important consideration because same ethnicity and same sex role models can be tied to greater achievement and improved future work ethic among low income, African-American students (Reglin, 1995).

Summary of Research

Educational reformer Horace Mann purportedly noted “education... is the great equalizer” (Cremin, 1957, p.65). Mann’s sentiments that education would create a world where all students would have equal opportunities for success continues to be the impetus for education reform in schools today. Throughout the long history of teaching there have been emerging common themes – qualification, meeting work force needs, licensure, assessment, and education reform. In an effort to continue to reshape the education process, teachers, administrators, and education researchers must continually adapt the field of education to meet the needs of the public and its students. The social reformists of the early 1900s realized that the education system as it was currently configured would not be able to continue to meet the needs of students in the age of the

Industrial Revolution (Murphy, 2005). Today, education faces the necessity for reforms again as technology continues to evolve at exponential rates.

Education reform advocates must once again consider the role of education in preparing students for a changing society. Teachers are coming to education from outside fields at an increasing rate, and growing student class sizes are driving an expedited licensure process filled with on-the-job teacher training. However, education researchers must ask themselves if this process is a relevant and effective path. Since the rise of the alternative licensure process (especially through the late 20th and early 21st century), more and more researchers are looking at alternative licensure and seeking to identify the appeal to this path for teacher candidates, as well as its relevance to the field of teacher education (Anderson, 2002; Brewer, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Humphrey, Weschsler, & Hough, 2008; Mallard, 2005; Scheeler, 2008; Villa, 2006; Wise, 2002; Worthy, 2005).

This study will attempt to add to the field of education research, and specifically teacher licensure practices, by looking at and directly comparing the perspectives of both novice and experienced teachers who have completed traditional teacher preparation programs and alternative licensure programs. This study differs from others in its focus on the common themes between each classification of teacher rather than only alternatively licensed teachers (Mallard, 2005; Villa, 2006) or teachers from a particular field. By examining the perspectives of teachers about those skills that help them cultivate effective classroom practices, the researcher intends to add to the body of work that seeks to reform and create teacher preparation curriculum. This research will also

provide information to teachers and administrators who may be considering this alternative licensure as a viable option for teacher preparation and hiring practices.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This is a qualitative phenomenological study examining the relationship between teacher preparation programs and effective classroom practices via the perspective of both novice and veteran alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers. This chapter presents an overview of the research design and methods that will be used to further explore this topic. The information presented here is reflective of the nature of qualitative research in that it is often flexible and emergent (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1999; Moustakas, 1990). However, the study attempts to provide a basis for the beginning of the research, with allowances for alteration as needed in order to fully examine the phenomena at hand (Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, 2003; Hatch, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Merriam, 1998; Sherman & Webb, 1998)

In this chapter, the research questions are followed by a thorough discussion of the philosophical and theoretical tenets inherent in a qualitative phenomenological study, as presented first by Edmund Husserl (1927) and revised by Clark Moustakas (1990). The rest of the chapter is devoted to a more in-depth discussion of the details of the study. I have provided the reader with a descriptive outline of the procedures and instruments that were used in the study as well as a discussion of the specific measures taken to increase the validity and credibility of the study.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of both traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers regarding the effectiveness of their relative preparation programs on creating effective classroom teachers and how does this relate to how they view classroom efficacy in themselves and others?
- 2) What are the self-efficacy views of novice and veteran alternatively and traditionally licensed teacher?

Design

The nature of a qualitative research study spends time focusing on the understanding of the problem. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorenson (2006) defined the qualitative researcher as one who seeks “to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables” (p. 31). Merriam (1998) noted that those involved in qualitative research are those who are primarily interested in understanding the world from the perspective of those living in it. John Dewey (1931) said about qualitative research, “The world in which we immediately live, that in which we strive, succeed, and are defeated is preeminently a qualitative world. What we act for, suffer, and enjoy are things in their qualitative determinations” (p. 96). While a quantitative researcher may seek understanding from a group of statistical data, a qualitative researcher instead turns to interview and observation in order to more fully understand a phenomenon through the perspective of those who experienced it.

The inquisitive nature of the qualitative research study lends itself to the development of refinements of the study as it takes place (Hatch, 2002; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Merriam, 1998). The researcher begins to peel back the layers of the subject, seeking patterns and themes in the information presented by the subjects themselves. Hatch (2002) noted that when conducting a qualitative research study the goal is to create an in-depth look at social phenomena in its setting. This can often create a dilemma among researchers. The obstacle of trying to define a setting while simultaneously studying the setting without preconceptions can be a fine line for a researcher and must be carefully considered when determining the theoretical and practical applications of the research proposal.

Specifically, a phenomenological study invites the researcher to take an in-depth look at a particular sample in order to more closely examine the common experience of the subjects (Dukes, 1984). This particular form of research, based upon the philosophical tenets introduced by Edmund Husserl (1927), often focuses on a small sample in an effort to create larger insights into the motivations and actions of the subjects in relation to the proposed research questions (Lester, 1999). Creswell (1998) emphasizes that within the bounds of a phenomenological study “researchers search for the essence or the central underlying meaning of the experience” (p. 52). This search leads one to examine experiences and seek interpretations of the subjective meanings outside of presuppositions (Pring, 2002).

The roots of phenomenological study lie in the school of qualitative thought that focuses on the emphasis of experience and its subsequent interpretation (Merriam, 1998).

The founder of the phenomenological movement, Edmund Husserl, stressed that in order to fully study one's experiences the researcher must begin by putting aside, or *bracketing*, all preconceived notions and suppositions regarding the experience being considered (Hatch, 2002). Only after these beliefs about the phenomena have been bracketed can the researcher begin to interpret the phenomena (Lancy, 1993). The notion of bracketing was expanded by Moustakas (1994), who placed the importance of the practice in the context of a need to hear the voice of the subjects rather than the internal voice of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). Moustakas provides an excellent synopsis of bracketing saying:

The challenge facing the human science researcher is to describe things in themselves, to permit what is before one to enter consciousness and be understood with its meanings and essences in the light of intuition and self-reflection. The process involves a blending of what is really present with what is imagined as present from the vantage point of possible meanings; thus a unity of the real and the ideal. (p. 27)

Husserl (1927) considered the practice of bracketing one of vital importance as the researcher seeks to interpret events in light of the subjective meanings created by those who experience the events. The phenomenological researcher must discard all assumptions as he or she attempts to understand the common experiences of the subjects, rather than his or her personal views of the subjects' experiences (Lancy, 1993). Husserl felt that bracketing allowed the researcher to set aside the inherent bias that one might feel and focus solely on the voice and interpretation of subject rather than the researcher. The ontological focus on multiple realities and the epistemological concept of knowledge

as a human construct are key tenets of the constructivist research paradigm common in phenomenological studies. As constructivists, phenomenological researchers use personal interviews to help build an understanding of the contextual setting of their subjects. Creswell (2007) reminds the researcher to “rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (p. 439) and suggests the use of open-ended questions as the primary form of gathering data for a phenomenological study.

In this study I sought to examine the common phenomenon of the need of all teachers to create effective classrooms. This study examines the relationship that teachers have to their own training and what they recognize as effective teaching. In essence, this study asks all teachers (a) what makes a teacher effective and (b) how did they become that way?

Setting

All participants in the study were selected from adjacent medium-sized county school districts in northeast Georgia. In order to assure that the sample represented the majority of teachers, the two schools selected varied in size and racial composition, while keeping the grade range of participants’ students the same. Similar standardized test scores were also reported for both schools. For the purposes of this research study, the schools will be named School A, B, and C. Overall student demographics and subgroup demographics for the participating schools are given in Table 1, Figure 1, and Figure 2.

Table 1.

Student Demographics and Subgroup Populations

	Student number	Percentage
<i>School A</i>		
<i>Total Population</i>	697	
Caucasian	622	89%
Hispanic	47	7%
Other (Black, Multiracial, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan)	14	4%
ELL	0	0%
SWD	109	15%
Economically Disadvantaged	243	35%
<i>School B</i>		
<i>Total Population</i>	992	
Caucasian	437	44%
Hispanic	425	43%
Other (Black, Multiracial, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan)	93	13%
ELL	161	14%
SWD	141	16%
Economically Disadvantaged	743	74%
<i>School C</i>		
<i>Total Population</i>	1309	
Caucasian	955	73%
Hispanic	223	17%
Other (Black, Multiracial, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan)	128	10%
ELL	34	3%
SWD	174	13%
Economically Disadvantaged	478	37%

Note: Adapted from “AYP Overview Report,” Georgia Department of Education (2009).

Figure 1. Student Population Demographics

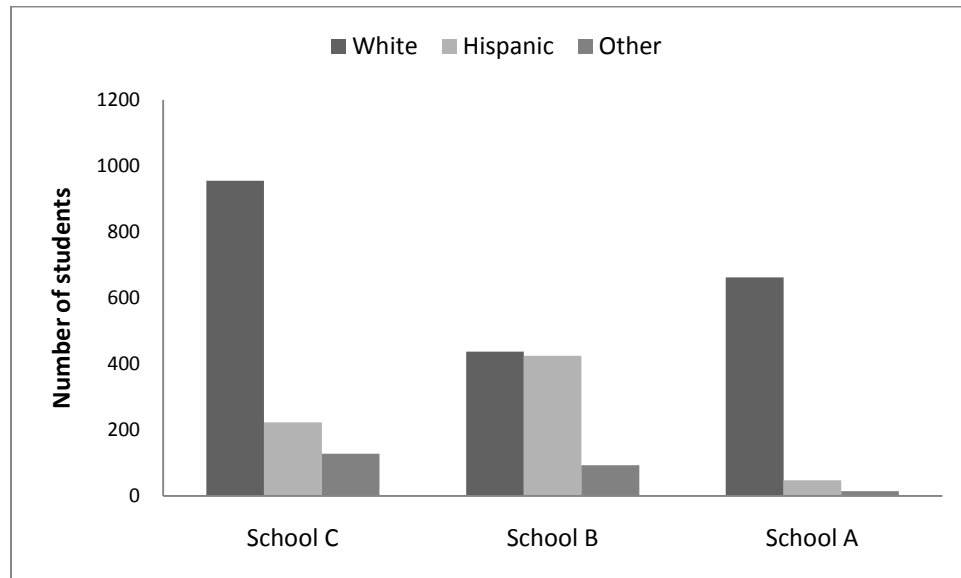
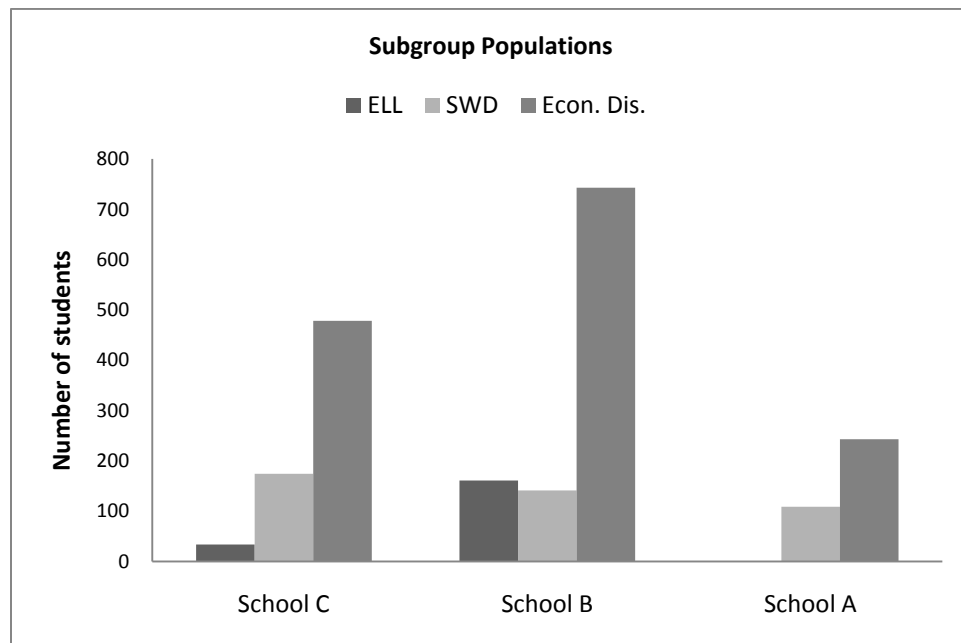


Figure 2. Subgroup Populations.



The first school system is responsible for educating a rural population of 3,000 students, 697 of which attend the middle school (School A). The population of the school is approximately 89% Caucasian. The largest minority is Hispanic students,

representing approximately 7% of the total school population. School A is a Title I school with a large number of students, approximately 35%, who qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Fifteen percent of the total school population holds the federal classification of Students with Disabilities (SWD), and no students are classified as English Language Learners (ELL) or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) for the purposes of standardized testing. The total district revenue is approximately 28 million dollars, the majority coming from state and local revenues. Approximately 65% of district expenditures are classified as instructional expenditures (GADOE, 2009a; NCES, 2010).

Despite the majority low socio-economic and rural status of the population, the school consistently performs well on standardized tests. School A has received accolades from the State of Georgia for their academic performance, including being named as a Title I Distinguished school for multiple years in a row. It was also the 2010 State Distinguished Breakthrough Schools Award Winner (GADOE, 2009a). The atmosphere of the school is described as generally positive and welcoming by all and the faculty, and students follow the lead of administration in referring to the school as “The Greatest Middle School in the Land.”

The second system in the study is a large suburban school district serving a population of about 26,000 students. Individuals chosen to participate in this study were selected from two of the six middle schools from this district (Schools B and C). Enrollment at the two middle schools is 992 and 1309 students, respectively. The total reported district expenditures are approximately \$279 million dollars, with a reported 65% of expenditures allocated to instruction (NCES, 2010).

School B has a population of approximately 992 students. White students represent 44% of the total population; Hispanic students represent 43% of the total population. The school is classified as a Title I school, with approximately 74% of students classified as poverty or low socio-economic status. Fourteen percent of the school population receives special education services, and 16% are served as ELL students. Despite struggles earlier in the decade, both staff and students have worked to improve standardized test scores, resulting in the school coming off the Needs Improvement list and maintaining positive AYP as national requirements have risen (GADOE, 2009b).

School C is the largest middle school in the district, with a total enrollment of 1,309 students. Similar to the rural school in the study, this school has a majority Caucasian population with 73% of the student body carrying this classification. The next highest demographic subgroup is the Hispanic population at 17%. Although recent economic hardships in the area have resulted in greater numbers of students qualifying for free and reduced lunches, the overall percentage of students receiving benefits is significantly smaller than either School A or School B at approximately 37%. Additionally, 13% of the student population is classified as SWD and only 3% are served as ELL. School C has met national standardized testing requirements every year that they have been in place and frequently leads the county in student scores on the optional Carnegie Unit Courses (GADOE, 2009c).

Participants

Participants for the study were chosen using a stratified purposeful sampling technique. I chose to use this technique in order to achieve a representative sample of the entire teaching population. In this case the stratified purposive sampling (Ary et al., 2006) included a total of sixteen participants. In this study, eight teachers were representative of a traditional preparation route and eight teachers were representative of alternative licensure, as defined by an individual having an undergraduate degree in a field outside education. Additionally, each group was further stratified by number of years of experience in order to ensure a saturation of the participant field. Because classroom experience is an important consideration in the effectiveness of classroom teachers, I felt that it was important to bracket for this variable by including perceptions of both novice and veteran teachers in both categories. For the purposes of this study, a novice teacher will be classified as a teacher who has taught in a classroom for less than six years, and a veteran teacher is one who has worked in education for between seven and thirty years. Additionally, the teachers were categorized as either traditionally licensed, indicated by attainment of an undergraduate degree in education, or alternatively licensed, indicated by attainment of an undergraduate degree in a field other than education.

Stratified purposeful sampling aims to create insightful characterizations of each variation through a specific and small sample size in order to create a more in-depth view of the phenomenon from each perspective (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Although the sample size is small, it is indicative of the in-depth and highly focused nature of a

qualitative study. Gall et al. (2003) indicated that the purpose of sample selection in a qualitative study is to choose participants that create a deep understanding of the phenomena. Thus the focus should not be on the size of the population, but instead on locating the sample that best presents an accurately defined population.

The participant pool for this study represented a wide range of years of teaching and subject areas representative of the teaching pool that is found in this area and in the teaching arena in general. All of the participant teachers in this instance were Caucasian, and the majority of participants were women. Participants ranged in age from mid-20s to 55 years of age, and represented a total middle school teaching experience range of 2-28 years.

Participants were selected from each of the primary content areas that are found in middle schools, including two language arts teachers, four science teachers, two social studies teachers, and two math teachers. In addition, four participants are classified as special education teachers and serve as co-teachers in content area classrooms. One participant serves as a special education, self-contained classroom teacher for moderately and severely disabled students and one serves as an ESL teacher for students who are classified as ELL or LEP. A breakdown of participants is provided in Table 2.

Table 2.

Participant Information

Name*	Years of Experience	Teaching Area	School
<i>Novice Alternatively Licensed</i>			
Anna	3	Language Arts/ Special Education (8)	A
Elizabeth	4	Science (6)	C
Betty	5	Language Arts (8)	B
Vivian	5	Science (8)	A
<i>Experienced Alternatively Licensed</i>			
Sofia	7	Language Arts/ Special Education (8)	C
Rory	9	Self-contained severely impaired	A
Hollie	9	Language Arts/ Special Education (7)	C
Patsy	10	Mathematics (6)	A
<i>Novice Traditionally Licensed</i>			
Scott	4	Language Arts (8)	A
Jessica	4	Science (7)	A
James	5	Social Studies (8)	C
Shayna	5	Mathematics (7)	C
<i>Experienced Traditionally Licensed</i>			
Ella	7	Science/ Special Education (7)	C
Kathleen	11	English as a Second Language	C
Deborah	17	Science (8)	A
David	28	Social Studies (8)	A

Note: All names used in this study represent pseudonyms.

Procedures

Data were collected over a period of five months during the spring semester of the 2010 – 2011 school year. Prior to data collection, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as from district officials, to conduct research within the school systems (see Appendix A). In this study, data collection primarily consisted of a series of qualitative interviews that were digitally recorded and later transcribed for analysis. In addition, general self-efficacy views from each category of teacher were collected using the long survey form of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Anita Hoy (2008). Finally, I analyzed a series of 20 minute video submissions from each category of participants to look for particular traits of classroom efficacy as defined by the Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards tool. A total of eight videos were collected, with two representatives from each category.

Approval process. Prior to the beginning of the study, I submitted all important paperwork to committee members, committee chairs, and the Liberty IRB. Letters were obtained from each of the participating school districts allowing me to collect information from participants. For Schools B and C, the district provided additional directives outside of the IRB guidelines, including protecting the confidentiality of the participants through the use of pseudonyms and conducting all interviews of participants outside of school hours. Once IRB consent was gained, I created an online informed consent (see Appendix B) using a popular web-based survey site, Survey Monkey, and emailed the survey link to each participant. Use of the online informed consent greatly reduced

paperwork turnaround time, and provided an easily accessible and confidential format for the participants to provide consent.

The Researcher's Role. It is important to note that as the primary researcher in this instance, I am also a non-traditional, or alternatively licensed, teacher. The impetus behind the research focus lies in the fact that the attrition rate amongst traditionally licensed teachers is very high in the first five years in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Vanderslice, 2010). Some estimates say that as many as 50% of teachers leave the field of education after only five years in the profession. In addition, the money spent for recruitment, hiring, and training of replacement teachers is estimated to be as high as \$7 billion a year in the United States (Vanderslice, 2010).

New teachers have anecdotally expressed concern that they did not feel adequately prepared by their teacher preparation program for the realities of the classroom and that their field experience or student teaching presented an inaccurate view of a working classroom. Exit and follow up interviews with teachers who have left the field confirm these findings (Kent, Feldman, & Hayes, 2009). Teachers who left the teaching profession cited poor working conditions, high-stake testing pressures, and lack of preparation as the three primary reasons for leaving the field (Heider & Jalongo, 2006). A value-added study conducted by Ingle (2009) found evidence that the more courses that were taken by the teacher in preparation for the classroom, the greater the likelihood of not only remaining in the field of education, but also providing a more quality education to their students.

Research Intent. As a beginning teacher with alternative licensure, I fortunately had multiple opportunities to be observed and to receive feedback regarding effective practices. I was then able to immediately apply the constructive criticism that was received as I was cultivating my own first year classroom. Although a teacher may be observed during the traditional teacher preparation program, those observations are not always an accurate representation of the classroom that a first year teacher faces. The classroom environment in which a student teacher is observed is often a classroom already managed and maintained by a master teacher. The rules and norms established throughout the year by the primary instructor do not allow pre-service teachers to experience the same classroom management issues that a typical novice teacher will experience.

The research study presented focused on the differences in perspective between novice alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers in the first five years of teaching in order to gain insight into the feelings they may have regarding how to set up an effective classroom, and the techniques that they rely upon to do so. Additionally, it is the intent of the study to provide a comparison between the two categories of teachers after the initial five years of teaching to see if there is a difference in opinion regarding effectiveness and strategy once the same amount of classroom experience is able to be applied.

Data collection.

Initial survey. After consent forms were obtained, each participant was emailed a link to an online version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (see Appendix C)

developed at Ohio State by Dr. Anita Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran of the College of William and Mary (2001), and were used with permission in this study. Primarily used as a quantitative measure of self-efficacy, in this instance I decided to use the survey to get a general understanding of the relationship between the different categories of teachers and their perceived self-efficacy in the areas of engagement, management, and instruction, as measured by the test. The quantitative data that was collected in the initial stages of the study was used for comparison with the beliefs that were expressed by the participants later during the interviews.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2001) set out to create a tool that better measured perceived self-efficacy in pre-service teachers based on Albert Bandura's SCT (1979). Construct validity and reliability were established through a series of comparison testing with existing, but to their opinion incomplete, efficacy measures. The conclusion of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (2001) study found validity correlations in the areas of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement of 0.84, 0.79, and 0.85 respectively. The reliability of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale is measured at 0.94. (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Information was compiled by the researcher at the completion of Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's study using the factor analysis and scoring instructions provided by Hoy to make generalizations regarding the relative efficacy views of traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers in the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement.

Furthermore, I used the raw form of the long form survey to begin to develop questions to use as an interview guide (see Appendix D). I rearranged the questions to fall

into the major categories of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Then I compiled any questions that were similar in nature. Next I reformatted the questions in such a way to encourage discussion and conversation of effectiveness and self-efficacy in the context of licensure and teacher preparation. Piloted versions of these questions would eventually become the basis for the interviews that were conducted with each of the participants.

Demographic information. During the course of the interview process, demographic information was gathered for each of the participants. This information was recorded to note similar characteristics between those candidates who chose traditional versus alternative licensure routes. Although gender did not play a role in the final determination of candidates, it is an important consideration given the differences in the teaching styles and student responses to male and female teachers. These factors could provide an important consideration for further study. Additionally I also polled the participants on their highest level of education.

Interview. The primary means of information collection were a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with each candidate. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note that the in-depth unstructured interview is the most commonly used tool among researchers conducting phenomenological studies. Seidman (2005) notes that when using open-ended questioning techniques, the primary task of the researcher is to “build upon and explore their participants’ responses to those questions” (p.15) and thereby construct meaning for their topic through those responses.

As listed earlier, an interview guide (see Appendix D) was created, based in part on the TSES (2001), as well as the research questions of the study. The interview guide served as an initial conversation prompt and for continuity between interviews, but participants were not provided with the questions beforehand so that I could make important notes about the participants' reactions as they considered the information that was presented. Although the guide was developed and piloted to establish face value validity and decrease bias, the intention of the questioning of the participants was to attempt to establish the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants who experienced it (Moustakas, 1990; Seidman, 2005). During the course of participant interviews, I used a general base of questions to spark conversation, however, I followed the silences, laughter, and verbal and non-verbal prompts of the participants to further explore those ideas related to effectiveness and teaching preparation practices (Seidman, 2005).

Maxwell (2005) emphasized that pilot studies allow the researcher to make a precise examination of the ideas, methods, and implications of the study. The interview guide questions and format were piloted using two of my colleagues who agreed to read the questions and provide feedback regarding any inherent bias. The first reviewer was a novice alternatively licensed teachers with five years of experience as a special education middle school teacher, and the second reviewer was an experienced traditionally licensed teacher with 27 years of experience as a general education math and science teacher.

Any identified biases in the questions were revised to ensure that there were no leading questions (Seidman, 2005). For example, I was encouraged to reword questions

that may have revealed to the participant that I was an alternatively licensed teacher myself. Also, during the pilot interview, I asked one experienced traditionally licensed teacher if she felt that traditionally licensed teachers were perceived as superior in classroom management skills or in lesson planning. She encouraged me to rewrite the question and omit any reference to specific details of strengths and weaknesses and instead ask more general questions about perceptions of traditionally licensed or alternatively licensed teachers. The reworded question asked the teachers what they felt were their particular strengths or weaknesses as a result of their licensure route, and gave me a more well-rounded view of the participants' perceptions.

An additional colleague, an alternatively licensed educator with 10 years of teaching experience as a middle school math teacher, agreed to participate in a mock interview in order to help test the recording equipment and to ensure content validity of the questions. At the conclusion of the pilot interview, the colleague offered suggestions regarding question wording and interview techniques. She encouraged me to remember to give the participants sufficient time to process their thoughts and use their own vocabulary. She suggested allowing more time between questions instead of interrupting with prompts because the silence between questions could lead to more thoughtful and informative answers. She also encouraged me to watch for clues that the participant felt uncomfortable with the question or with the recording device. Content validity was checked again at the conclusion of the research period by conferencing with the recording transcriptionists. The transcriptionists were asked to note any instances of leading

questions or bias in the research questions as well as to reflect on the nature of the interviews in relation to the purpose of the study.

Each teacher participated in two primary interviews over the five month research period, each lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. Some participants chose to break the second set of questions into a third follow up interview lasting approximately the same length. I used an online booking website (<http://kristigoodwin.youcanbook.me>) to allow participants to schedule interviews at their convenience. By allowing the participants to view a list of available interview times, they were able to choose the times that fit their own schedules. In addition, this approach allowed the participants to indicate which format they wanted to utilize and where they wanted the interviews to take place, and sent automatic reminders to both the participants and myself at 48, 24, and 12 hours prior to the scheduled interview. The scheduler also provided an easy way for participants to reschedule in the event of an unexpected conflict.

Most of the interviews were conducted either by phone or at School C since that is the school where I currently teach, although two participants chose to complete their interviews using the online video conferencing software Skype. All participants were given the option for the primary researcher to visit their school for the interviews; however, due to differing school schedules, participants at Schools A and B chose to complete their interviews over the phone. Although ideally I would have preferred to conduct all interviews in person, allowing participants to be interviewed via phone allowed greater convenience for the participants who lived a great distance away and had family obligations.

Interview questions attempted to reveal the feelings that the teacher had regarding their own perceived classroom effectiveness and their teacher preparation route.

Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and uploaded to my computer for transcription. These interviews were made available to the participants through the use of a password protected online file sharing program (<http://Dropbox.com>). The digital interview files were organized by participant number and then interview number and placed in separate files. I used these files to sort and share the information later with a hired transcriptionist.

Observation. Participant data were also gathered using a series of digitally recorded video classroom observations. Selected participants from each category were asked to submit a brief twenty minute video showing what they would deem to be an exemplar of their own effective teaching. I used the Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) analysis classroom observation tool (GADOE, 2006) to analyze the video submission for examples of effective teaching in each category.

The GAPSS tool (see Appendix F) was developed by the GADOE to serve as an analysis tool to drive school improvement issues across the state of Georgia, in conjunction with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The tool was externally reviewed and validated by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE), described as a “non- partisan, nonprofit, statewide entity in Georgia whose Board of Directors is comprised of business, governmental, and educational leaders whose sole focus is to improve academic achievement of Georgia’s students” (GADOE, 2010). The analysis tool was found to be a valid assessment of schools and of

effective teaching, and became a tool used by schools for SACS accreditation visits. The GAPSS Analysis tool has an accompanying 165 page handbook that provides detailed information regarding the measurement indices for schools and teachers in eight critical areas: curriculum, instruction, assessment, planning and organization, student, family, and community support, professional learning, leadership, and school climate (GADOE, 2006; GADOE, 2010).

Content validity of the state school improvement standards, which provided the basis for the GAPSS tool, called the Georgia Standards for School Performance (GSSP), was conducted in a national independent study directed by officials at both the University of Georgia and Georgia State University during the development of the standards in the 2004-2005 school years. At this time, the standards and measurement tool was field tested in 13 Georgia schools labeled as Needs Improvement (NI) as measured by national AYP scores on Academic Progress. Positive correlations between the field tests and established validity and reliability led to further testing of the GAPSS tool as a pilot program.

The program was piloted by the GPEE during the 2005-2006 school year in 40 schools across Georgia. A summer committee of the GADOE school improvement staff revised the analysis tool and evaluation process over the summer, and the new tool guidelines and evaluation procedures were quickly disseminated to all schools in Georgia. While the primary purpose of the GAPSS analysis tool is to guide improvement measures in schools classified as NI, any school or school district may request GAPSS visits for the purposes of school improvement (GADOE, 2010).

A typical GAPSS school visit consists of a two-day school observation by a trained outside committee of teachers, counselors, and school administrators. The first day of visits consists of parent, student, faculty, and administration interviews of randomly selected individuals. Committee members then spend the remainder of the day visiting classrooms for 20 minutes each. Observers use the GAPSS Classroom Observation Instrument (see Appendix F) to record the number of instances observed of particular classroom traits as outlined in the GSSP. Classroom observations are conducted anonymously with observers noting only the grade level and subject areas, and improvement data is reported as a reflection of the entire school (GADOE, 2006).

In keeping with the intentions of the GAPSS analysis tool, I attempted to use the classroom observation tool to gain a general overview of the efficacy of a particular category of participants. I used these observations and notes to gain a greater picture of each of the teachers in order to make generalizations about the effectiveness of traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers.

Qualitative documentation. Seidman (2005) notes that one of the most useful skills of the successful interviewer lies in cultivating the ability to actively listen to the participant. In order to do this effectively, it is suggested that researchers spend time before, during, and after each participant interview reflecting on the underlying themes and ideas that are generated. Creswell (2005) suggested the use of field journals to record important thoughts and impressions that the researcher may have during interviews and to record, or memo, internal dialogue, reflections, and biases. Throughout the study, I kept detailed notes in a field journal. The journal contained my thoughts,

further questions, and specific reflections on the participants' responses to questions (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1990; Seidman, 2005). It also became a sounding board for emergent themes throughout the interview period. Later these notes became one of the first sources I consulted for analysis of those themes and ideas that the teachers felt were important.

Data Analysis

Common descriptive words related to qualitative research include reflective, emergent, naturalistic, evolutionary, and holistic (Creswell, 1998; Hatch, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Seidman (2005) compared the basis of qualitative data to Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy. As physics struggles to define and predict the precise locations and movements of subatomic particles, so the qualitative researcher seeks understanding of the nature and understanding of human relationships and experiences. Despite the emergent nature of qualitative data, the qualitative researcher bears a responsibility to provide a clear and direct accounting of analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Unfortunately, the number of data analysis methods is as varied as the researchers performing the analysis (Merriam, 2009). When it comes to analyzing qualitative data, the decision for appropriate methods and measurement styles is often left to the discretion of the researcher, as text and information books provide only a general guideline for qualitative data analysis (Litchman, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1999). Even the definition of the phenomenological study can vary depending on the personal interpretation of the researcher (Patton, 2002).

Although qualitative analysis seems to be poorly defined, the qualitative researcher may choose from a variety of accepted general viewpoints, theories, and coding and categorization methods to increase trustworthiness, also known as credibility or reliability in quantitative studies, as well as begin to manage the enormous quantities of generated qualitative data (Litchman, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1999; Saldaña, 2009; Seidman, 2005). Typically data analysis in a phenomenological study takes a narrative approach in an attempt to tell the story of the respondents who experienced the particular studied phenomenon (Bernard & Ryan, 2009; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1999; Seidman, 2005). Narrative data focuses on both the stories that are told and *the way* that the stories are told (Merriam, 1998).

Although narrative stories are common in phenomenological research, they are not the only choice for telling the story and highlighting the phenomenon experienced. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the basic guidelines for interpreting and coding material in qualitative research (Bernard & Ryan, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1999; Seidman, 2005). First, each of the transcriptions was carefully read and the information was used to create a profile of each participant. Because it was important to reflect the stories of the participants in their own words, I decided to use in vivo as well as attribute coding (Saldaña, 2009) to build the profiles. Attribute coding refers to the compilation of demographic and biographical information through the interview process, rather than a secondary demographic survey. In vivo coding uses the words and direct quotes from the participants to develop important codes. For example, throughout this research study I noted that each

participant used the word *passion*. This became a significant in vivo code within the study. Important findings and themes regarding the perceptions of effective teachers were determined at this point (see Appendix H). Throughout the study, recurrent themes were explored and analyzed further through descriptive coding (see Appendix I).

Next I chose to look through the transcriptions with a focus on descriptive terms that related to the research questions (See Appendix H). Because of the nature of the research questions, it was deemed important to use evaluative coding for this section of the data. Evaluative coding uses the data that is provided by the participants to make a judgment regarding the worth of the data (Saldaña, 2009). In this case, I wished to determine the effectiveness of programs. I compiled the information into a table listing positive and negative evaluative statements and recommendations made by each of the participants regarding teacher training as well as teacher effectiveness.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness as the act of the inquirer or researcher persuading the reader that the inquiries and subsequent findings are worth noting. They note that a researcher must consider four important ideas in the establishment of trustworthiness of a study: neutrality, consistency, applicability, and truth value. Readers of a study often look to the validity and reliability measures that are established in a study. Because the nature of the qualitative research study is emergent (Merriam, 1998), the idea of establishing validity and reliability are not defined in the same terms that they would be in a quantitative study. The issue of reliability is concerned with the establishment of a dependable and consistent study (Lincoln & Guba,

1985), while validity discusses the bigger import and truthfulness of the data (Miles & Huberman, 2009). In the context of a qualitative study, the notions of reliability and validity are often referred to using the terms credibility and dependability.

Credibility. Credibility in a qualitative study is akin to the concept of validity in a quantitative research study. In essence the impetus is on the researcher to provide a measure of the “truthfulness of the data” and “confidence in the findings based on the research design, participants, and context” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 504). In this study, credibility will be established using transcription of the interviews, member checks, field notes and memoing, peer review and triangulation of data.(Creswell, 2007; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Transcription. The first step in data analysis consisted of a transcription of the data. The interviews were transcribed by a hired transcriptionist. Before beginning the transcription I determined that each interview should be transcribed *as is*, with all comments, spacers, and time fillers included in order to capture the full intent of the participant when reviewing the passage. Seidman (2005) recommended the use of in-depth interviewing as the pauses, laughter, and space fillers may indicate important reflections or word choices by the participant.

After each of the transcriptions were finished, I peer-conferenced with the transcriptionist, a member of an education faculty, regarding the validity of the questions, potential bias in the questions, and her perception of the validity of the interviews. Any bias that she detected was noted as a result of this peer-conference. I then organized each

of the transcribed interviews according to participant and printed out each participant's data for analysis and coding.

Initially, I randomly chose the complete transcript of one participant and began reading the data. Descriptive notes and reflective memos about the initial interview were noted in the margins of the paper. The descriptive codes were numbered and logged online to be shared with the research committee. After feedback and discussion, the most relevant means of coding were determined and analysis began.

Member Checking. Once each of the transcriptions was finished, they were placed in individual files in an online file sharing program (<http://www.Dropbox.com>). Individual folders were shared with the relevant participant for review. Participants were encouraged to leave feedback by means of comments inserted into the document. In some instances, it was determined that more follow-up was needed or desired on a particular term or phrase that was used by the participant. When this occurred, the relevant text was highlighted within the transcribed document and the specific question to the participant was addressed in the comment section. In some instances, the participants asked that the space fillers be removed from the final product in order for greater readability of the text. In order to meet these participant requests, the text in their file was formatted in this way.

Initial participant profiles were also added to the shared document folders for review by each of the participants. I wanted to ensure that the portrayal of each of the participants was accurate; therefore they were encouraged to add editing notes to the initial profiles if desired. Because pseudonyms have been used in the study to maintain

the confidentiality of the participants, each participant was asked if they desired a particular pseudonym at that time. At the end of this process, all participants agreed that the participant profiles were representative of the data that they had provided over the course of the survey and that they were good faith representations.

Memoing. Both Edmund Husserl (1927) and Clark Moustakas (1994) reflected on the importance of noting the voice of the researcher in the development of phenomenological research. While Husserl indicated that personal reflections should be noted in a manner he called bracketing in order to focus solely on the voice of the participant, Moustakas' heuristic approach posited that a researcher who is present and invested in a study cannot avoid learning and growing as a consequence of the study. Moustakas felt that these personal reflections were an important finding of the study and should be noted throughout. Regardless of whether the researcher decides to bracket emotions, as suggested by Husserl, or include personal growth reflections, as encouraged by Moustakas, it is clear that the act of noting reflections in the form of memoing is vital to the process of completing a phenomenological study.

For this study I chose to note personal reflections through memoing in two categories: personal reflections and reflections on findings. During the initial reading, I chose to make notes throughout the margins of the original transcripts. At the conclusion of the initial read-through of the transcripts, the memoed notes were organized and inserted into the documents. They were further delineated in an online code book for later analysis.

As a supplement to the memoing within the transcribed data, I also created a field notebook prior to the beginning of the research collection period. Throughout each of the interviews I took notes in the field journal regarding personal reflections on posture, attitude, and significant quotes by the participants. These were supplemented by my own memos regarding personal reflections or associations with the data that were given. I made sure to note particular instances that were intriguing, sparked further questions, were counter to my own feelings, or where I may have felt inherent bias in the question or answer. The field notes were studied at the conclusion of each of the interviews and important information was logged in a reflective journal format.

Peer Review. During the research process, I continually engaged in peer review with members of my dissertation committee, as well as other members of the education field. Review feedback was facilitated in the areas of transcription analysis, coding methods, and analysis methods. Information that was gathered during the peer review was incorporated into the data analysis chapter.

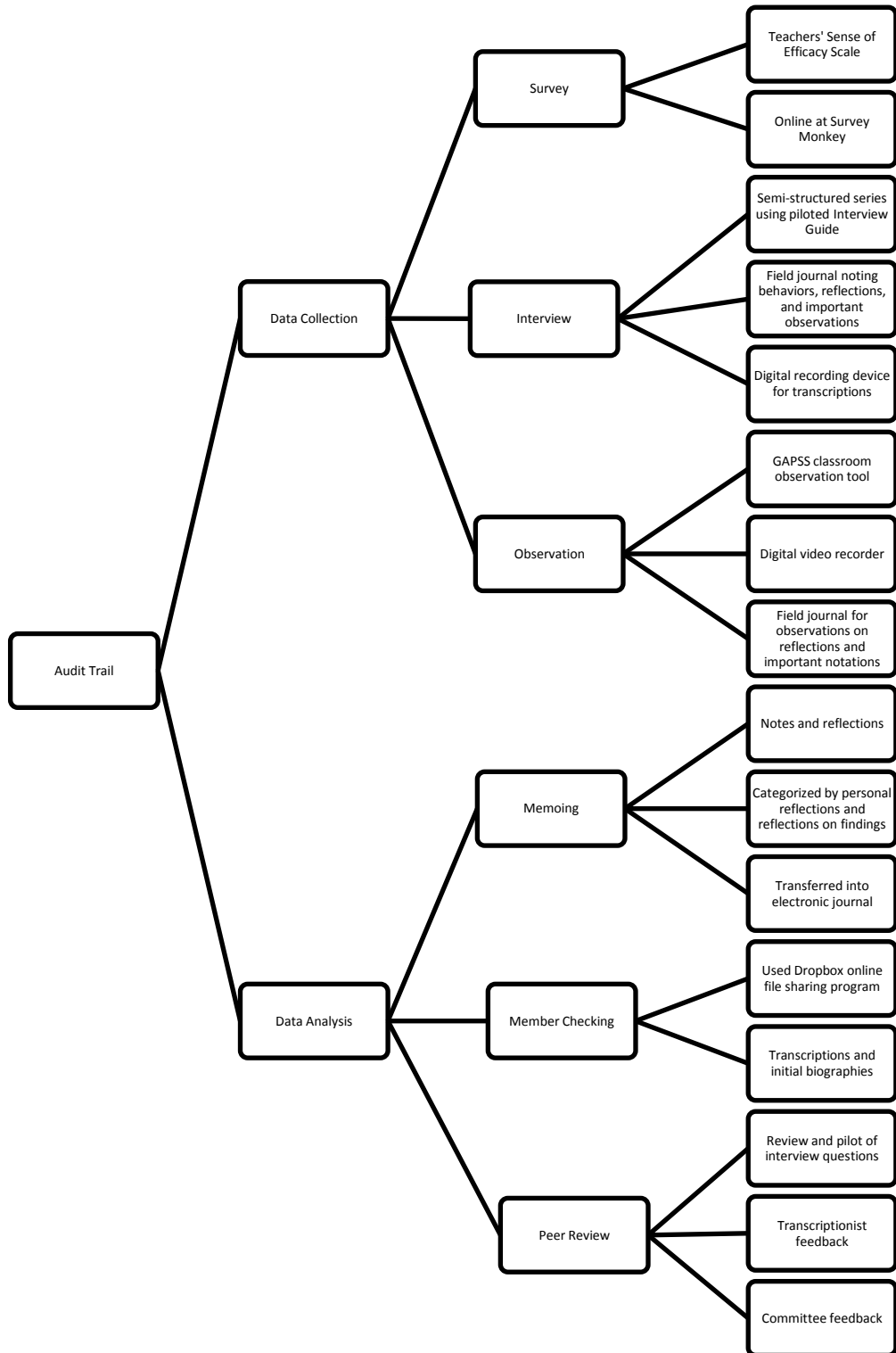
Data Triangulation. In order to increase the credibility of the study, both the collection and analysis of data were triangulated. During data collection I relied on multiple forms of input including field journals, interviews, an initial survey, and observations. Data analysis also relied on multiple viewpoints in order to create greater credibility. In this case, the data were subjected to peer review, member checking, and memoing in an effort to make sure that the information that was presented as a result of this study was an accurate representation of the information that was collected from each of the participants. Additionally, I compared information that was presented by the

participants during the interviews regarding their own views of self-efficacy and effectiveness in the classroom to the results of the initial survey and video observations. I was especially interested in looking at the relationship between the participants' perceptions of their own weaknesses and strengths in the classroom and the overall perceptions of alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers, as mentioned in the survey. This was viewed as especially important due to the nature of the phenomenological study in presenting the perspectives of the participants in relation to the studied phenomenon.

Dependability. Qualitative researchers must also consider the dependability of their study when conducting research. Qualitative dependability correlates to the reliability measures that are determined in quantitative studies and addresses the consistency of the study. Ary et al. (2006) indicated that researchers may enhance reliability by demonstrating that the methods used are “reproducible and consistent, that the approach and procedures used were appropriate for the context and can be documented, and that external evidence can be used to test conclusion” (p. 509).

For the documentation of this study, a clear audit trail is provided. This flowchart (see Figure 3) of activity outlines each of the steps taken by the researcher to gather and accurately record the data used in the study. In an effort to maintain the dependability of the study, a thorough explanation of the coding practices that were used in the study is provided. The research perspective, as well as the existence of rich narrative data and descriptions which are characteristic of a qualitative study, provide a final measure of dependability for the study.

Figure 3. Audit trail.



Audit Trail. The idea of an audit trail in qualitative research is to provide an accounting for the decisions made by the researcher. In this study, I attempted to increase the trustworthiness of the study by presenting an audit of the events, influences, and actions of the researcher in the development of the study (Carcary, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated six areas in which a qualitative researcher can provide greater detail in the development of the audit trail: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information.

Because of the phenomenological nature of this qualitative research study, my primary focus was to allow the voice of the participants to be the driving force in the analysis of the data (see Figure 3). Raw data were organized according to participant and analyzed with the objective of keeping to the original words and intent of the speaker. As it was reduced, the data were continually checked for the maintenance of the participant experience of the phenomena. The transcriptions and subsequent profiles were examined for emergent themes and new findings regarding the proposed research questions. Finally, I used the information that was collected to process important findings and conclusions regarding the perceptions of the interactions existent between licensure routes and effective teaching.

Coding. Seidman (2005) defined coding as “the process of noting what is interesting, labeling it, and putting into appropriate files” (p.125). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) expanded on this idea by encouraging the researcher to view the process of coding akin to climbing a staircase of data. While coding data for this study, I

indicated movement from a lower level of understanding in the raw text to the highest level of research concerns. For the purposes of this study, I decided to use descriptive and in vivo coding in order to build profiles of the participants, examine emergent themes, and evaluative coding in relation to the proposed research questions. A breakdown and organization of the descriptive codes is presented in Appendix H.

Transferability. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) point out that while generalizability is primarily a statistical concept not suited to the nature of qualitative research, a similar idea to transferability, called *relatability*, is an expected outcome of well-designed qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In terms of transferability, one may expect the theoretical findings of a qualitative study to be relatable to other subgroups and cultures (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). To the contrary, Miles & Huberman (1994) highlight the importance of allowing the reader and participants to make connections outside of the limits of the study.

The context of the study is the relationship between teacher preparation programs and effective teaching. However, the findings of the study have transferability because the basic tenets of effective teaching and preparation are important considerations for any member of the education field. Furthermore, the design study allows for further opportunities for phenomenological study in fields outside of education that involve a relationship between preparation and effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

Merriam (2009) pointed out that in addition to establishing reliability and validity in a study, a researcher must also establish the ethical correctness of the study as well.

In-depth interviewing allowed me to look inside, so to speak, and explore the personal relationships that had been built by the participant with the phenomena in question. My ultimate goal was not to serve as a judge of the persons or interactions that occurred, but simply to respond to the findings (Silverman, 2010). Even so, it is important to remember that the subjects were not inanimate objects, and had to be treated with care at all times (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Stake (2005) noted, “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (p.459). Marshall & Rossman (2010) encouraged the design of a research study that is grounded in a “respect for persons, beneficence, and justice” (p.47).

After primary identification of the research subjects, participants of this study were only known by their assigned pseudonym on all identifying materials. Initial identifying demographic information was stored in a password protected electronic file for the duration of the research period. At the conclusion of the study, the information was printed and a hard copy was stored in a locked, fireproof box located in my home. Information for each subject was collected and then color coded and stored in separate password protected electronic files. Only the researcher and participant had access to those electronic files for the duration of the study. At the conclusion of the research study, the files were downloaded and saved to an external hard drive which will be stored for three years in a locked, fireproof box in my home. All hard copies of the data and notes that were collected are stored in separate labeled notebooks in a locked file cabinet at my place of employment for the duration of the study, and then for the subsequent three years.

During the research period I kept all electronic documents such as email communications, survey results, interview transcriptions and notes, and journal responses in individual, password protected electronic files uploaded into the researcher's encrypted and password protected Dropbox account (<http://www.dropbox.com>). The files were accessible only to me and the participant to whom the information pertained (at the participant's request. After the allotted retainment period the data file will be deleted and the hard drive will be reformatted to ensure the data is destroyed. Any hard copies of data, such as interview notes will be recorded and bound in separate color coded notebooks labeled with each participant's number or pseudonym only. All hard copies will be stored in a locked file cabinet drawer at my work until the conclusion of the three year period.

The field of teacher preparation must find a balance between getting motivated individuals into classrooms and finding the right combination of training and support to keep them effective. By looking at the licensure process through the lens of several highly qualified individuals who achieved this status through different means, educational researchers may gain access to real-world insights regarding the different licensure routes and how they relate to actual classroom effectiveness. Professionally this information could be used to revise current teacher preparation programs and create new curriculums.

While the risks of the research study described in this form is minimal, the benefits to the field of education are great. The risk to research subjects during this study is no greater than they would experience while undertaking their normal work activities.

Both the interviews and observations were conducted at the convenience of the participant. One possible benefit to the subject is a greater ability and increased opportunity for reflection on his or her teaching practice. Current studies in the fields of teacher efficacy, especially in terms of teacher preparation route, are often conflicting and biased. Little or no research exists relating the effective characteristics of teachers to the self-efficacy of the teacher. By looking through the lens of those who are in the classroom to find common themes, education researchers can sort through conflicting information as they seek to improve the practice of educators and the process of creating educators.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine and explore the phenomenon and relationship between teacher preparation programs and licensure route and classroom effectiveness. The goal of a phenomenological study is to highlight the voice of the participants, and so this chapter looks extensively at the proposed research questions by using the words of the participants themselves. Teachers were asked to reflect on what influenced their decisions to become teachers, and in the case of veteran teachers, remain in the teaching profession. They were also asked to reflect on their own teacher preparation programs as well as their perceptions of alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers. Additionally, because of the current perceived relationship between teacher effectiveness and the measurement of student achievement, the teachers were asked to reflect upon the NCLB legislation.

Analysis of the interviews in relationship to the research questions revealed important information regarding the perceived effectiveness of classroom teachers in relationship to their particular licensure route. Evaluative coding procedures were used to determine and delineate particular pros and cons of each licensure route. Specific suggestions for improvements and descriptive coding lead to a series of emergent themes regarding the perceptions that were inherent. The primary emergent themes included the traits of effective teachers, perceptions of effectiveness in alternatively licensed and traditionally licensed teachers, and fostering effective teaching in pre-service teachers.

Meet the Participants

A phenomenological study focuses on presenting the voice of the participants to the reader. To study a phenomenon is not enough. The researcher must dig deeper and try to portray the experience of the phenomenon through the words of the participant. Only by understanding the experience of teaching through the participants can the researcher grow, learn, and begin to understand the phenomenon itself. Through the interviews that were conducted, I began to gain a clearer picture of the way that teachers who are working in the classroom define effective teaching. The participants were eager to share those perspectives and provide examples both from their own experiences in the classroom as well as observations of other teachers.

The participants in this study were extremely varied. When the initial research project began, I hoped to survey secondary teachers in general, and solicited responses from grades six through twelve. Being a middle school teacher myself, the greatest connections seem to have been made within the area middle schools, thus the entire participant pool was composed of middle school teachers. Although this initially seemed like a small difference, it eventually made an enormous impact on the nature of the study. Despite having taught in middle school for the last six years, I truly did not understand the significant difference of pedagogical and content training inherent in teachers who were prepared traditionally for middle school education rather than secondary education. Similarly, the complex biological changes experienced by middle school students lend itself to peculiar teacher needs. Despite the vast differences in age, gender, background, and preparation, all the teachers in this research study had a very clear picture of what

made a *good* middle school teacher. As we talked, three ideas kept coming to the surface: love for students, love for content, and a desire and ability to share it.

Throughout the interviews the key word that continually emerged was *passion*. Each teacher in some way referenced the passion that they felt for students as well as for teaching in general, and their content area specifically. Each cited this passion as a vital - and equally immeasurable component - of effective teaching.

Novice Alternatively Licensed. Four novice alternatively licensed teachers were interviewed for this research study: Betty, a middle aged career switcher; Elizabeth, a young enthusiastic science teacher who quickly realized that she wanted to use her biology degree to teach; Vivian, a former athletic trainer who took her knowledge of the human body into the science classroom; and Anna, a mother of four whose compassion and love for children led her to the special education classroom.

Betty. Betty was the first participant to volunteer for the study, and her enthusiasm for it never waned through the months. She was always willing to step in and serve as my guinea pig and repeatedly emphasized how excited she was to be participating in a study that could add to the field of education. Her attitude and voice is bubbly, and despite never having had contact with her before, her warm and friendly personality soon made me feel like I had known her forever and we were simply old friends having a discussion about her teaching over coffee. Her experiences in education over the past few years have been extremely varied, but it hasn't seemed to dampen her enthusiasm for the students, or their enthusiasm for her.

Betty did not take the average route to education. Although she felt the pull of education in her college career, she decided to stick with public relations and enjoyed a career working with the Special Olympics education department. Still, there seemed to be more missing. She described how a visit to family in Florida ended in a drastic career change:

I went in and in 15 minutes I had a job. I had a week to come home, pack my stuff, get my son enrolled in a school somewhere, and find a place to live... It was kind of a crazy thing, but I had always in the back of my mind that I wanted to be a teacher.

Not only did Betty find herself in a new career, she also found herself in the unenviable position of teaching in a high stress teaching situation. Although the situation was new and different, Betty wasn't walking into the classroom with her eyes closed. She knew that she was going to be faced with a difficult situation, and the alternative methods that she developed in this classroom continued to serve her work in low SES classrooms over the last three years:

It turned out that the school I ended up in was Title I and probably one of the toughest schools in South Florida. They literally dropped me into a classroom with nothing. And it was almost a sink or swim type thing. I had a couple of books, and I had a coach. I wouldn't even say that I had a mentor. And all I knew was that I had some of the biggest gang bangers in South Florida, and I had to teach them how to read. They trained me for maybe two hours on *Read 180*, and that was it. I had kids who came to school – and this is where my passion lies

in teaching kids from very impoverished neighborhoods. You know, I had kids come in with tens of thousands of dollars in their pockets because they'd been on the street the night before selling drugs and they knew that school was the safest place to be with that kind of money. So they came to school not necessarily to learn, but because they knew they would be safe there. So I had to make my time with them as entertaining as possible to try and teach them something when I knew that they could walk out and buy themselves a new Porsche that afternoon, and they had more money in their pocket than I would ever make.

Although Betty's route to education makes her a nontraditional teacher, the desired outcome of her teaching is the same as traditional teachers: achievement and a sense of accomplishment for her students. Although this is the first time that the term passion emerges, it is certainly not the last. Betty seems to be one of those teachers who have inherently picked up on the specific needs of impoverished students. Betty expresses great concern and compassion for her students, and admits that this drives her daily eighty mile commute to school. Her passion is reflected in her views on effectiveness and the importance she places on building relationships with students.

To me, teacher effectiveness is – I think – turning the light bulb on. I think if you can look into a kid's eyes and see that they're getting it. Then you're being effective. You really can see the kids get excited when they get it, and I think that's how I would measure my effectiveness is looking around the room and seeing how many eyes are on me or on where they should be, and you can tell whether or not they're engaged and learning just by the looks on their faces.

Betty further emphasized that an effective teacher cares about their students – including being able to build a relationship with those students:

I think you have to be a relationship builder. If you go into a classroom and you don't care about the kids, you're not going to be effective. And I think that those who take the time to get to know their kids [pause], you have to know what's going on at home. ... To me, that's part of the job.

Although Betty didn't take the traditional path to teaching, she does feel like it is a calling. And success stories follow her each year. The successes are not just test scores, although they play an important role, but it is the effect that she seems to have on her students, including a former student who moved to a different state with her in an effort to continue to forge a better life for herself. Additionally, Betty has continued to build on her initial education. Although she holds a Bachelors of Arts in Public Relations, she has added both a masters and specialist degree in education, and is currently thinking about pursuing a doctorate in the field as well.

Elizabeth. Spend five minutes with Elizabeth and her internal joy becomes contagious. After ten minutes I felt like I was sitting with an old friend. One of the field notes that appeared in reference to Elizabeth repeatedly was “glass half full.” Her optimistic personality allowed her to constantly see the best in every situation. Elizabeth's youth and vivacious personality quickly pulled me in and made me understand why her students often seemed so eager to please. Rarely have I ever meet anyone in the education world that loves the rock cycle quite like Elizabeth, and though she did not originally choose education as her career path, her dedication to the work and

to the students became evident as I interviewed her and watched her interact with her students.

Elizabeth's love of the sciences originally led her to pursue a bachelor's degree in biology – a choice that she felt provided her with a unique advantage in the classroom, and a great deal of confidence in her own understanding of science concepts:

I'm very glad I got a straight bio degree because I really like science and it gave me a lot more science classes. It really opened me up for really getting the concept. ... That made me happy. Because I love science.

Despite the fact that Elizabeth chose to pursue a career in the sciences originally, she soon felt the allure of teaching and the happiness it gave her. When asked why she wanted to become a teacher she responded:

Well, I really, *really*, liked science, so I knew I had to do a science career and I really enjoy working with children and those two seemed to go together very well. I originally thought I might be a physical therapist, but then I just so much love explaining concepts to kids that I thought, "okay, you know what, let's just do this." And plus, in college, I was just so into rock cycles, if you can't tell. All the kids in the class would come to the library and I would lead them in little mini lessons to help them study for the tests and I really liked that a lot. Of course I figured that out after I graduated, but then I realized I want to teach because I enjoy relaying information.

Elizabeth's passion lies in spending time with the students, and she echoed the common refrain heard from all the respondents of a necessity for the teacher to have a passion for the content and for the student:

Teaching earth science – to finally be teaching the content that I really, really, really loved - was very shaping because I got so excited about it that I would research and do all sorts of things to come up with a really cool way of explaining to the kids . . . But when I got what I really liked to teach, then I started going crazy and coming up with new ideas and being really creative with them and I really get excited. And they can tell I love my content.

Elizabeth offered a stark reminder to teachers about what happens in the classroom when teachers lose the love that they have for students, and the profound impact that may have on their immediate learning, and lifelong understanding of a subject.

You just really gotta like what you are doing because if you hate your job then your kids are going to be able to tell and they are not going to learn. Because I've had professors that clearly didn't want to be there, and I didn't want to be there either. Then I had the ones that were really psyched to be there, and they could really explain it to me and I loved going to their class and I learned a lot from them. So you should apply that to the children. Because you are asking them to sit down... not sit down... be in your room for a long time and they are very bouncy. So if you can't bring it to their level and make it something they actually want to understand, then it's not going to work.

To paint a picture of a visit to Elizabeth's class, imagine a warm smile, a big wave, a cluster of excited and eager sixth grade learners in a (noisy/busy/active-choose one), but orderly classroom, and a sharp but laughing admonition from her colleagues to 'Please! Don't get her started on the rock cycle! Her classroom is filled with opportunities for students to explore and learn more about earth science. The classroom is rarely the staid, quiet place that we imagine as we think back to our own educational experiences, but instead filled with students moving around purposefully, feeling and sensing the topics for themselves, rather than simply serving as sideline spectators.

Vivian. Vivian always enjoyed athletics, and upon entering college found herself drawn to coaching and athletic training. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training and Health Sciences and serving as an athletic trainer for her college teams for two years, Vivian realized that the aspect that she enjoyed the most was being able to educate students about healthy living and exercise. She quickly made the decision to go back to pursue teaching and coaching at the middle school level and never turned back. When she reflected on this transition time, she talked about how important it was to her to know where she was going with her life, and that teaching was the best decision for her. Although she did not take the average route to the science classroom where she now teaches, Vivian offered a great perspective on knowing that the education field is exactly where she wants to spend the rest of her career:

No. I wouldn't change anything because I know this is where I want to be. I tried other things. I've had more experience, so it's kind of like an advantage for me. I

know I don't want to be anywhere else. I've already been somewhere else, and this is what I love doing.

Not only did Vivian feel confident in her decision to become a middle school science teacher, her commitment and seriousness about ensuring that her students receive the best education possible was evident in her discussions about effective teaching examples. In response to the question regarding the difficulty of teaching, Vivian noted that it was really a function of the expectations one creates in the classroom:

Well, I think it depends on what your expectations are. I stress a little bit about, "Do I have a good lesson today? Am I going to keep the kids engaged," you know? But if you didn't really care how they performed or if they learned anything, it probably would be a pretty easy job... And anything – if you want to be the best at it, it's definitely going to make it harder – anything that you want to do; well, you'll try harder.

Not a serious person by nature, Vivian's quiet but calm demeanor shined through in every conversation. Although she seemed hesitant when I first started to interview her due to her desire to avoid making mistakes, once she began to talk about education and her students, she seemed to be less reluctant to share her thoughts and feelings. Her own experiences in the classroom as a high school student seem to have really stuck with her and continue to influence the kind of hands-on, exciting education that she wants her own students to experience. Knowing that many of her favorite memories from school were participation in out-of-the-box activities, she continued to attend conferences – including the most recent National Science Teachers' Association conference – to build on

opportunities to provide differentiated and exciting learning to her own students. Presenting students with interesting and challenging learning opportunities is a pedagogical skill that she indicated she is still struggling with, but looks forward to mastering as she continues to grow in her profession.

Anna. After only a short conversation with Anna, I soon understood that her center lies with her family, which is something that has carried over into her classroom. In fact, much of what drove Anna into considering a career in teaching was the ability to be available to guide her own children, nieces, and nephews through the process of schooling. This propensity to be a mentor carried over to all of her students soon after entering the classroom three years ago, although it was far from her first teaching experience. An initial degree in Christian ministry education led to a career working with preschoolers, but she still found herself craving more. She reflects:

I guess not that that job is not important . . . but I just wanted something . . . I wanted to have something that I knew my life wouldn't - I don't want to say lived in vain because I have my own two kids too - but I wanted to do something where I knew I was making a difference, to be honest . . . I know that probably sounds corny, but it's true!

And even though she made the transition into teaching older students, the 2009 – 2010 school year was her first opportunity to teach at the middle school level. It is a job that she found to have its own challenges and rewards. Her compassion and her love for the students repeatedly shined through as she expressed her feelings about understanding the emotional toll that teaching can take on one as a teacher:

Because I think you can sit in class all day and not really learn how it's going to affect you emotionally and then to leave, maybe with kids that are struggling and kids that have bad home lives and you find out things about things going on at home . . . I think that some of that [effective teaching] comes from getting to know the kids very well. And that can be, that can be very difficult when you have 125 of them versus 30 in middle school. But the one thing I've learned this year is [to] remember that they are . . . they're not little adults. They are kids. And they have drama at home and drama with their friends and they do not leave it out of the classroom. You kind of have to learn to adapt for that...

Not only did Anna reflect on the importance of remembering that students are people too, she also reflected on the often dire consequences to the classroom environment when teachers forget this fact.

Being comfortable – I think sometimes we kind of forget. I'll be honest with you; sitting at lunch tables with teachers – especially when I was doing observations in different schools – teachers forget to look at students as people because they get so frustrated. I remember sitting at a lunch table . . . and I thought, Lord have mercy! Why are these teachers even teachers? They act like they hate the students. When you become ineffective, it's almost like you lose your passion a little bit; you get caught up in testing and scores and your school work, and you know, I feel that pressure [B]ut I think sometimes you just have to realize that it's not always about scores . . . the teacher that forgets students have

feelings because I think once you lose them, if you forget they're people, then they don't care what you have to say. Sometimes we forget to be nice.

Anna really summed up the importance of remembering that students are people too with a controversial statement encouraging teachers to be nice, a suggestion that is often considered to lead to poor classroom management. Despite the negative connotation of being nice to the students, Anna's observation brought home the importance of relationship building between teachers and students.

Experienced Alternately Licensed. The experienced alternatively licensed teachers in this group were all women who had between seven and ten years of experience in the classroom. While each of them had a decade or less in the classroom, all represented career switchers who followed their calling and found joy in bringing education to middle school students. While the stories of how Hollie, Rory, Patsy, and Sofia came to the classroom may be different, their combined experiences in the classroom have strengthened my understanding of how to create meaningful education opportunities for students.

Sofia. A conversation with Sofia indicated that during her seven year teaching career, she has accumulated all of the wisdom that her name implies. Sophia was a middle-aged finance worker before taking a job as a school bookkeeper. However, time spent with adolescents in her church youth program and in her own home brought her to acknowledge and pursue her calling in life. Sofia turned away from the corporate world where her bachelor's degree in finance had been useful in helping her climb the corporate ladder, but ultimately failed to fulfill what she describes as her spiritual need to help

students find their way in life. While Sofia was working as a bookkeeper for the school, a position came open for a special education language arts position and she quickly stepped up to the challenge. Although she admittedly knew nothing about the special education population, she felt she could use her heart for these students and love of writing to make an impact in the classroom. She credited one of her own post-baccalaureate assignments – a student interview – as a defining moment in her own career:

Well, one experience would be when I had to interview a student with special needs [it] started the whole process. After that interview with that student and realizing that he had potential, he had the motivation to do it, he had a disability that he was having to overcome. Seeing that made me realize that there is a need for what we are doing. And that these students do count and they have their place in the classroom. Whether it be in a total inclusion classroom or a resource class is a whole ‘nother conversation, but these students do count. And that was what really motivated me and made me realize that I had made the right decision.

One of the aspects that Sofia had attempted to bring into her classroom was her own love of writing, something that she considered herself passionate about. The idea of being passionate in the classroom was one that Sofia considered a particularly important trait in an effective teacher. When asked to define this trait Sofia offered the following explanation:

I care about them – as a whole person – not just the academic side, but as a whole person. I’m talking to them; I care what’s going on with them – what friends you’re hanging around – what they’re doing. Why do you hate school? Tell me why. What can we do to change that? Or maybe we can’t. I’m just passionate about them – and some of it may be from personal experience. I want the student know that I’m glad you’re here. I’m glad you showed up today. And if that’s all that made a difference, then it’s worth it.

Although Sofia acknowledged that experience cultivates effective teaching, she adamantly maintained that passion for students and for the content must be inherent in order for effective instruction to occur in the classroom. As she reflected on what makes an effective teacher, she fondly remembered one of her former teachers and how it influenced her own life as a student.

. . . my science teacher in high school. I just remember he liked kids. He liked being there. He liked us being there. He explained things in a way that we could relate to. He put it on our level. He asked for our input. It was a collaborative class even back then. We just didn’t sit there and write down notes all the time because I would leave one class where I’d written down vocabulary words on a sheet of paper, then go to his class and there was activity and creativity and he respected us. He didn’t just come in and tell us what to do and how to do it. He let us share in that. In what would be the best way. And we knew something about him. He shared some of himself with us – what he enjoyed doing, what he was passionate about, what he cared about outside of school and outside of

academics, so that I walked away with caring about other people, not just about myself.

Observations of Sofia with her students in the hallway and in the classroom show that she continues to honor these lessons in effective teaching. Students seem comfortable, safe, and ready to learn when she enters the room.

Hollie. Comfortable shoes may not be the first thing that you notice about Hollie, but spending time observing her leaves no question as to why she needs them or how she can seem to be in so many places all at once. Her demeanor while interviewing has much the same fervor. Although some teachers may initially be hesitant to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of teaching, Hollie felt that it would be an injustice if she chose not to portray teaching accurately. Hollie began her career in the mental health field and then in social work, but desired a more personal relationship with students. She went back to school to become a school counselor, but soon found herself pursuing a career in teaching special education:

I weighed out the options and decided that teaching would be a much better fit for me, and it would give me an opportunity to make a really positive impact on people. In the mental health field I had seen so many people that seemed to continually get stuck in a cycle of sickness and I wanted a chance to make a positive impact and help students see their true potential.

Hollie found that working with students with disabilities had its own set of highlights and disappointments, but felt that she had something important to offer the students as a language arts teacher. Reflecting upon what she felt were her particular

strengths in the classroom Hollie said, “I am very able to let the small things go, so that I can get to the larger picture” This ability to look at the larger picture pushes her to expect only the best from her students. She believes in creating high expectations for students, especially for students with disabilities whom she feels particularly motivated to help. When speaking about creating effective classrooms for students she noted, “I push my students very hard despite their disabilities because I feel that a lot of times they are given the easy route, which had led them to not put forth 100% effort.” The high expectations seem to carry over to the classroom. Video observations showed Hollie engaging in many different forms of effective instruction, including an excellent example of team teaching with her fellow language arts co-teacher. While the classroom may be anything but quiet, the noise seems to be learning noise. During one observation, the students were engaged in a discussion of the novel they are reading and its relationship to their everyday life.

Patsy. Patsy began teaching after her career in information technology was cut due to company downsizing. Although she did not originally plan to teach, her love of the mathematics content provided a great background for a new career. She credited her love of mathematics for leading her to teaching, and has served as a middle school mathematics teacher for the last ten years. She talked about the importance of this love of content in maintaining effectiveness as a teacher:

. . . [y]ou need to have a passion for the subject; you’re not highly qualified just because you’re teaching math or a higher science ‘cause that’s where the jobs are. I believe that to truly be highly qualified you have to have a passion for the

content that you're teaching. And you might have a passion for life science and you hate earth science; you might be qualified to teach it, but you won't put your best into it because it's not where your heart is, and I think that to be really highly qualified you've got to be teaching something you're really passionate about – something that you would care to learn more about and come up with more ways to learn it, and you want to make sure they learn it because you see the value in it, not just because you're just teaching it because it's on the list of standards that. "Okay, it says I've got to cover all this, so I better go over it," then you sit them down with a book and paper...

The love for content that Patsy showed carries over into her sixth grade mathematics classroom, where she routinely works at different methods of engagement and assessment. It is a process that she considers a vital part of growing in the classroom, and a by-product of her ten years of classroom experience. She maintained that part of the growth of a teacher is in recognizing that each teacher is responsible for learning to respond to the specific situations and needs of their students. She talked about how when teaching becomes a part of you, it is hard not to carry it with you always:

Then we also know teachers who . . . that teaching is their life. Constantly. Even when they are not at work they are constantly thinking what can I do to improve this lesson or you go out jogging and something hits you - you see something that makes you think of something that you can do in your lesson. I think it's those teachers, and the ones that are learning from their kids . . . I mean . . . I know that my kids will probably struggle with a lesson I'm going to

do, or I know that my kids are going to get stuck in it, or want to understand why I'm going to make them show their work when they solve equations, so maybe I need to preview where we are going with it so they won't fight me so much on it. And you know, it's those experiences where you start to anticipate things that the kids might have trouble with or the things the kids are going to fight me on because they don't really see the purpose in it. That's going to help you improve your teaching so that you can improve your learning, which is really what your job is – to help them learn; not for you just to stand up there and teach, but for them to learn. I think effectiveness is your willingness to use that experience to grow yourself as a teacher.

Her connection to the students and commitment to providing the best learning opportunities for her students often drove her to step out of her comfort zone. She talked about how she dealt with the challenges of balancing her preconceived notions of a well-managed classroom and providing learning opportunities for students, a common management conundrum faced by novice and experienced teachers alike:

I had to get away from thinking, "Okay, we've got to get a ton of work done during this hour." I used to think they need to get 15-20 problems done, and some of them might be finding the volume of a cylinder and the volume of a prism, and some other little problems here and there, but I've come to the realization that it doesn't matter if they're doing five problems if they're getting them right. If they're only doing 5-8 problems in our classroom – and they're complex problems – and I'm making sure that the kids are getting it, then that's going to be

a whole lot more productive than doing 15-20 and half of the kids missing them all. That was something that I had to break myself of, and I still struggle with it. But they know I'm going to call them out if they do it incorrectly, and they better be prepared to answer. I just have to get used to the idea that they don't have to be quiet and working non-stop all the time because it's more productive and they're getting it.

This experience in the classroom lends itself to creating a great atmosphere for learning for both the students and the teacher. Patsy hopes to continue to use her previous real-world life experiences to create meaningful opportunities for the students and to answer the persistent questions concerning the value of learning a particular concept.

Rory. Rory is an unusual teacher in an unusual classroom who took an unexpected route to get there. Rory went to college admittedly without direction, and outside of family expectations. After completing a finance degree, Rory felt that she had little direction and found herself waitressing and trying to find a focus. Her need for meaningful purpose in her work became blazingly clear to her after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Reflecting on this time she says:

And I got it and I guess I was about 22 or 23 years old, and for the next 6 years I waited tables because the thought of having an office job just absolutely terrified me and I hated everything about it. But I had to get a college degree. That was just something I had to do. And then September 11th happened and when 9/11

happened, I was 31 and it scared me to death and I think I grew up on 9/11/01 and I was so scared. I was like, I have to do something with my life.

This need to pursue a meaningful career led Rory to consider the field of teaching. It was a career she was familiar with because her mother was a teacher, and she quickly gained the certification necessary and found herself in a classroom for moderately and severely handicapped students. It was a career that fulfilled her need for a meaningful life experience. Her passion for these students continues to drive her work today.

Because she does not teach in a mainstream classroom, Rory maintains the view that her love for her students is vitally important to their later success in life. The stressful nature and responsibilities of this classroom requires a unique view of the job, and Rory credits much of this classroom perspective to her beloved assistant, Ms. Edith. Ms. Edith had spent 17 years as a parapro in the mentally handicapped classroom when Rory began teaching, and she depended on her knowledge and experience to guide her in the best way to reach her special needs students. Rory credits Ms. Edith with her ability to manage the classroom in a way that shows love to the students by helping them to become independent. Rory worries that too much babying at the middle school level could be detrimental to the students in the long run, and speaks of Ms. Edith's admonishments to remember her humor in the classroom at all times and do her best to create a situation that would create successes for the students independently. Reflecting on the importance of mentors in the classroom, Rory's respect for Ms. Edith shined through in her descriptions of her and how she helped shape her into the teacher she is today:

Like I said at the beginning of this, my assistant that had been in that classroom for 17 years. And she, to this day, my classroom is run from things that she taught me and there is so many things that I do all day long that are a direct result of her. She really taught me how to teach students with significant disabilities. If it hadn't been for Ms. Edith, I would not be in education. She's 50 - well I guess by now, she's probably in her early 50s - that's all she's done. We had a blast. We had so much fun. She and I clicked. We both have a very irreverent sense of humor and in special ed., working with students with significant disabilities, it seems like you have people who are very super nurturing and baby the kids and wait on them hand and foot, or you have the people - I'm more towards the end of the spectrum that's like, "let's get with the real world and you need to be as independent as you possibly can." And you have to have fun because a lot of these kids are in a stressful situation. I have a student in a wheelchair with very severe cerebral palsy. I have a student with severe autism. I had a 14 year old this year that was not potty trained and couldn't talk, so it's a very stressful job. And she and I, her sense of humor, her laugh was so wonderful. Me and the kids would just come up with ways to make her laugh, and things to do. And she would do the same thing. She would think of ways to make me laugh, and we'd cut up and we'd just have so much fun.

The frank discussion of the stresses that the job entails highlighted the importance that Rory seemed to place on the importance of understanding the particular needs of her students. Her discussions of the special needs classrooms and her students portrays a

respect for the situation that they are in and the importance of meeting their specific needs. Regardless, the joy that she feels for her job was evident when she stated, “most of the time I can’t believe that I get paid to do what I do. I have the most fun job in the world!”

Novice Traditionally Licensed. The novice traditional teachers in this study represented teachers that were at the beginning of their education careers. Each of these teachers had completed the traditional teacher preparation route and each held an undergraduate degree in education. This group contains representatives from each of the areas of middle grades general education. These recent additions to the education field offered a fresh outlook on the school process and the importance of relationship building and content knowledge in the classroom.

Shayna. When Shayna entered her undergraduate program, she primarily felt the pull of science, but soon her love of peer tutoring and past experiences with kids led her to pursue a career in mathematics education, something that she has now been doing for the last five years. Shayna echoed the statement heard from many teachers that consider teaching to be a calling. She responded to the critics of teaching saying:

It just takes a special person to do a special job and everybody has their own calling. Some people are called to teach . . . Yeah [I was called to teach].

‘Cause I tried different. I had different mentalities on the way that my life was going to go and it all kept coming back to I needed to teach. I tried not to.

Now as a classroom teacher, Shayna has very definite ideas about what she thinks that an effective classroom should look like. When she pictured the perfect classroom,

she imagined students working together cooperatively, and most importantly, engaged in instruction. When she reflected on her own personal measurements of effectiveness, she did not rely on test scores alone, but instead chose to look at the whole series of assessments. Additionally, she seemed to have not only a great grasp of assessing students, but on their motivations and psyches as well:

You can just look at the kids. I mean you can see it. You can see it in their eyes. You can tell, oh I didn't do it today. But then you can look at the other days and say, "oh, they got this." You can look at the projects that they turned in. I don't like tests. I don't think because of a test I'm an effective teacher, because kids don't . . . they don't study. They don't put in the time. They don't practice. So that doesn't make me an effective teacher because they don't go home and spend extra time with my content. But if they can sit down on a project and explain every bit of what we've been doing, then I know they know it. Whether they can apply it . . . you know, they're just not to that age when they want to. There's nothing hanging over their heads saying you have to.

Despite all that Shayna has learned over the last few years, she acknowledged that effective teaching is a learning process. She had a clear picture of the type of teacher and classroom that she was looking for, and cited mentorship and experience as two of the aspects of the school culture that she hopes to utilize to cultivate herself into that type of teacher and to develop that type of classroom over the next few years.

Scott. Scott has admittedly always been a fan of school, so the transition into the teaching career seemed an easy choice for him. In fact, he stated that he always knew he

wanted to be a teacher and mentor for students, so the teacher preparation program at the University of Georgia felt like the perfect fit for him. One of the skills that he learned there and brought to his own classroom was the importance of building relationships with the students. He credited relationship building as an important quality of effective teaching:

To be an effective teacher, a person must build relationships with the students. The effective teacher provides a place of safety for the students. Both physical and emotional safety is important.

Just like many of the other teachers, Scott felt that teaching was more than a job – it was his calling in life. This point came up when he was asked to reflect on the oft-quoted data regarding teacher attrition rates within the first five years of teaching:

Yeah. You know, I'm interested to see as I approached my third and even my fourth years, teacher burnout used to be high and you'd see teachers come and go and a lot of turnovers. Fortunately for me I knew that this was the calling that I was supposed to fill and even in my fifth year I feel confident and more comfortable now than I did, you know, of course my first, second, third, and fourth year. I have a better understanding for the content and you know, it's just [pause] I guess I feel more and more inspired and challenged to improve upon the year before. The motivational aspect of it – especially for me – because I'm a very competitive person. I'm constantly trying and striving to outdo the previous years, I guess you would say.

Scott recognized that the teaching profession may not be the ideal job for everyone, and admitted that it can definitely have its challenges, especially in the area of knowing the content, and being able to convey it to the students. He emphasized this as an important skill that experience helps teachers master. He felt that it simply is not enough to know something, but that one has to be able to provide students with that knowledge as well. He definitely seemed to feel that the positives far outweighed the negatives of the classroom, and felt a great responsibility for the significance of education outside of only content transfer:

Teaching is challenging. The standards change, the tests change, and the students change. Expectations and goals change. Teaching is a constantly shifting profession. On the other hand, it is very rewarding. I enjoy the relationships with the students. Personally for me [pause] I mean of course there are a number of professions that are out there that are wonderful that provide – I guess – an incentive as far as monetary value. There are few that offer the opportunity to impact the building of future generations the way that teaching does. You know, every day is different. That's the one thing I love about it. No matter how bad a day goes in the classroom or something just isn't clicking, there's always that option to start fresh the next day. There's just so much value that you get out of it that goes beyond just academics, and that's just one of the things that I love about the teaching profession itself.

Jessica. Picture a young, bubbly teacher with a 100-watt smile on her face and you have an accurate picture of Jessica. Not only does Jessica spend time helping

students learn more about life science every day, she also helps out with several extracurricular activities at the school as well. Like many of the teachers in this study, Jessica's route to teaching did not follow the straightest path, but she found herself as a teacher and loves the experience. Reflecting on her decision to enter the education field she stated:

I'm giving you the honest answer to this one. I really didn't think I ever would be a teacher. My mom taught high school math for 32 years, and it was the one thing I swore I would never do. I was a pre-pharmacy major and had decided that I would be a pharmacist. However, one morning I literally woke up and decided that wasn't what I wanted to do. At that point I had three years of math and science courses under my belt, and I was ready to graduate. I got to looking at different majors, and decided teaching was a good fit. I knew I wanted to do something with math and science because they had always been my strengths, but I also really enjoyed working with people. I enrolled for the intro to ed class and got in touch with all the teachers I could think of that would let me come and visit their classroom to make sure this was something I could do and enjoy. I sat in on an 8th grade math class, and I knew instantly that I would enjoy teaching.

Once Jessica entered the teaching profession, she felt that her love of her content made her student's experience a more positive one. She lists this knowledge as well as a personality that she feels is suited to the middle school classroom as personal strengths:

I think content knowledge is one of my biggest strengths. I'm definitely a science nerd, so I like to stay up on all the new things that are happening. Being

completely fascinated by the things that I teach helps me to be enthusiastic too. Also, my personality works very well with middle school kids. I tend to be a bit sarcastic, but I'm also very nurturing, so it's a good balance. I enjoy what I teach, and I enjoy the age group I teach, so my job is a lot of fun for me!

Although Jessica considers her content knowledge one of her strengths in the classroom, the idea that personal relationships are a vital part of an effective classroom was never far from her mind. It was evident in witnessing her interactions with the students that they enjoyed being around her and felt comfortable in her classroom. She talked about the importance of relationships and a mutual respect in the classroom as some of the key characteristics of effective classroom teaching:

An effective teacher has the love and respect of their students and can get them to put forth their best effort. I think teaching is about more than just test scores. I think an effective teacher cares about their kids first and the performance of the kids second. Of course we want all of our kids to learn and to know everything we teach them, but we also want them to feel loved and safe. An effective teacher thinks of new and fun ways to present the material instead of the same old thing and can make it relevant to students.

Jessica's effervescent personality seemed to draw in all of those around her – both teachers and students. Her fun-loving and adventurous spirit allowed the students to explore her classroom and her subject while engaging in learning.

James. Walk by James' class at any time of the day and you may see students working together at computers on a group test, creating their own rap videos to the

preamble of the United States Constitution, establishing their own colonies and rebelling against tyrannical control, or hearing a history story interspersed with the important pop culture references of the relevant time period. What you will not see is the typical boring social studies class, something that James strives to leave behind.

Walking by the classroom James may not appear to be the typical novice teacher to the casual onlooker. Succumbing to parental pressure, James failed to follow his original dream and ended up working in the retail sector for several years before deciding in his mid-30s to follow his heart. He reflected on this decision and how it has ultimately affected his classroom:

I had wanted to become a teacher when I was in high school in the eighties, but I had very working class parents who thought that was a ridiculous waste of college tuition to go and make no money being a teacher. Talked me out of it, so I went to college as a business major and never finished, not in the traditional amount of time at any rate. I had originally wanted to be a music teacher when I was in high school. I did not want to go through that process when I had decided at 38 that I needed to decide – well 35 – what I wanted to be when I grew up. So I went back to school. I loved history. I loved social studies. I knew that was what I wanted to teach. I think I realized that one of the reasons that I wanted to become a teacher was that I wanted to be myself. I had been in the corporate world for 20 years and you're always having to wear a hat that's not necessarily you. You've got to put off a persona. You've gotta fit this company profile. You've got to fit this . . . and when it comes to things like that I'm sometimes a sort of a square

peg trying to get hammered into a round hole. And I realized that I didn't want to spend the next 25 years of my life feeling like I'm getting the snot beat out of me with a hammer trying to pound me somewhere where I didn't fit. What I realized in education was that I was so much into that trying to be what I thought the corporate persona should be, my first year teaching especially, I think I was trying to fit into that. And I think that it kind of had me very bewildered and confused. When I realized what I needed to be in the classroom was myself. If you're not yourself in the classroom, we may as well throw up the video monitors and teach everyone via teleconferencing because it can be a very sterile type of thing. The one thing about having a teacher in the classroom is that you bring your experiences, you bring your personality, you bring yourself to the classroom. If you're not bringing that, then you're not going to enjoy what you're doing and the kids are not going to react as well.

Although James is still a novice teacher, he has very clearly-formed opinions on what he feels are the most essential traits of effective teachers. He echoed the sentiments of others in feeling that the necessities include passion for content and for students. In speaking about this passion in the classroom he stated:

I think all effective teachers are very passionate about what they do. If I was teaching math it would not be an effective classroom because it's not a passion of mine. It's something that I know is necessary and methodical, and it's not something that is in my wheelhouse. I think you've got to have a love of what you do. I think you've got to have a love for kids, and I think if you don't have

patience and you don't really love being around children, then you're not going to be an effective teacher. I think it's just you want to be there. If you're engaged the kids will be engaged.

He went on to discuss the difficulties that are sometimes inherent in making the students the center of the classroom. Because of his understanding of the business world, he could provide a particular perspective in respecting the individuality that each student has to offer in the classroom:

Love the kids – every one of them! The one that challenges you in class, the one that screams at you, the one that tells you that your daughter said on Facebook that she wanted to get with him in the middle of class (yes, that happened to me a few weeks ago). To control yourself and still love that one the next day was very difficult! You've got a lot of kids. Bottom line is that you can't make excuses for them, but if you have difficulties you've got to take the time to understand what's going on with them at home, and you've got to try to be more than a teacher. There may be one day you can make an impression on them. Eight out of 10 times you're not, but I still think that a couple of those eight out of 10s it's going to catch up with them later on and they're going to remember what you said even though they're not going to admit it to your face that year for all the tea in China. You've got to be willing to be a little bit more 'cause otherwise you just deal in a business. I go back to the old business in college for a while, otherwise you just go back to the widgets. You're just dealing with 30 widgets in your classroom and they don't mean anything to you and you deliver the content that's going to

deliver the widget out of your classroom, and you go on and you don't think a thing about it, and there are plenty of people that do that, but I think the best teachers – bar none – are the ones that care about what's happening to those kids. That doesn't mean they do the perfect thing in class every day, but they're always trying, always working. To me it's cool to see a frustrated teacher because a frustrated teacher cares about what's going on and they're wanting to make it better. They're not just blaming the kids that it's all their fault or their parents. They take some ownership. Yeah, everybody takes a little bit of ownership. Sometimes the parents have some fault, sometimes the kids have some fault, and sometimes the teacher does, too.

Experienced Traditionally Licensed

The experienced traditionally licensed teachers in this study represent those who have been around education for many years and have experienced most of what the world of education has to offer. They are the mentors, and the veterans. Between the four of them, they offer more than 60 years of combined teaching experience. Individual teaching experience ranges from 7 to 28 years, and is representative of the entire spectrum of experienced teaching. In addition to the classroom experience that these teachers offered, they were able to offer the long view of effective teaching and how their definitions of effective teaching and the appearance of their classrooms have changed over the years.

Elle. Elle is the youngest of the experienced traditional teachers and has gained that experience as a co-teacher in middle school science classrooms. Although she is certified in all content areas in special education, she chose to get further certification in general middle education sciences because her heart truly lies in the sciences. Elle found a heart for special needs students while still in high school, and quickly decided that she wanted to spend the rest of her life helping students learn information in unique ways:

When I was in high school, I was a teacher's aide in the severely handicapped classroom and I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed just getting to work with them and I wanted to be a teacher for that because I really enjoyed working with the kids. I thought it was fun. And then in college I had the opportunity to travel abroad and teach a science class and it was just being able to see the light bulbs come on and realize how much fun you can do . . . school is not always - and it wasn't for me growing up - school's not always book, test, book, test, book, test . . . and being able to do things and create activities for these kids that were fun and that they got involved in and learned something too made me realize that I didn't necessarily want to be in a classroom with students that had severe disabilities, but that I maybe wanted to work with students that had learning disabilities or needed an alternative way to learn the material.

Elle talked about how differentiated classrooms are an especially important consideration as the teacher takes an accounting of the specific needs of students. Elle recommended the idea that teachers reach out to their surroundings and to the interests of the students in order to grab the attention of the students and help them retain the

information. When asked what would be important in her own curriculum design for pre-service teachers she noted:

[T]eachers would be required to come up with activities or - not that you couldn't use paper - but really find ways to present material in alternative forms. Not necessarily with technology, but whether it's movement or song, or something out in nature, or random items of junk from around the house. You know, new ways to present materials.

Elle's enthusiasm for presenting the material at hand in alternative ways seemed to be an off-shoot of her love of the subject, which is a critical component to effective teaching in her eyes. Although she completed and passed each of the content area tests required to remain a highly qualified special education teacher, the allure of teaching life science has been a constant in her teaching career. Serving as both a co-teacher and resource teacher in this area has given her time to observe many different teachers and teaching styles. It has helped her develop a well-defined sense of the importance of a love of the content one is teaching to student understanding and to classroom engagement:

[Y]ou have to have the hidden passion for the subject, and you have to be excited about it and want to get those kids [excited] about it also . . . You can't - I mean with middle schoolers - you're going to bore them to death in five seconds, especially if you don't care what you're teaching. You have to get excited about it and if you look a little stupid, who cares? As long as they get into it and they're excited and they want to come to your class and when they're not there or you're

not there, they say, “oh we missed you so much, what, you know, what are we going to do today?” When they want to come to your class because they’re gonna learn something and they’re gonna have fun.

It is this idea that students can learn and have fun at the same time that makes Elle’s classroom a unique place to visit and a highly engaged classroom to observe. Elle brings the subject to life for the students, and shows a real enthusiasm for the subjects that she is teaching. Overall, she shows a genuine desire to see her students learn.

Kathleen. Meeting Kathleen in the hallway is guaranteed to get you a friendly smile and an honest inquiry after your own health and well-being. A visit to her classroom will provide you a clear picture of expert differentiation in a middle school classroom. Kathleen started her education career as a middle school language arts teacher, but after being offered the opportunity to expand her certification areas and learn more about teaching ELLs, she found her education home. It is a job and a responsibility that she takes seriously, often referring to her protectiveness of *her kids*. She emphasized the necessity of thinking about the particular needs of her students when she described her idea of the perfect classroom by saying. “It would not be high stress. The kids would feel like it’s a safe environment where they can say and ask what they need to ask.”

In particular, she talked about the importance of building relationships with her students throughout the year. Because of the individualistic nature of the class for each of her students, Kathleen had a very unique view of the importance and integration of content for her ELLs. She cited the necessity of the students understanding the content that she is teaching, but also her ability to personalize that content for students who may

be at a very basic level of understanding. She credited her ability to differentiate successfully with her understanding of the students themselves. She emphasized the importance of relationship building as a vital part of creating a safe learning environment:

From an ESOL point of view, you have to know your students. I never really knew my students the two years that I taught regular ed the way that I know them now. You have to get to know them. I mean, you're never going to get through to communicate to them in any way, shape, or form unless you get to know your kids. You just can't do that in a bigger classroom. If you have - what I'm saying is - if you have an ESOL student in your class, you.

Deborah. Deborah's motto is "smile and hold it!" It is an idea that she has cultivated over the last 17 years she has spent as a middle school science teacher, and something that she puts into practice in her own classroom. Her positivity seems to radiate outward as she walks down the hallway, and her fun personality is always a welcome addition to any classroom or extracurricular activity. She takes her jubilation and experience into the science classroom and combines them with her love of content to create engaging and fun hands-on activities for the students. She felt very strongly about the importance of hands-on and relevant learning opportunities in order to create lasting impressions with the students. When reflecting on her classroom environment she stated:

I do believe with all my heart that my students understand and retain information better if they can do science, if they can maybe, I can include where they're investigating first and then learning facts and terms from that later. Or if they get

background knowledge first and then do a hands-on to feel what they have learned about.

The idea that students need to be able to interact with the content is something that she felt was an important concept to pass on to other teachers, and her capacity as one of the most experienced teachers in her school allowed her to do this through the school's mentoring program. When reflecting on the components that she felt are the most vital in creating effective teachers in the future, she discussed the need for young teachers to embrace the entire scientific process.

It is something that she recently had the opportunity to experience herself through her master's program, and an idea that she has adopted completely. After spending time completing scientific research with a group of marine scientists, she felt that she understood the ideas inherent in scientific research on a much more personal level, and has altered her activities to bring more of this experience to her own students. She talked about the importance of activity as she dreamed of the curriculum that she would design for the preparation of pre-service science teachers:

My program is going to - well, like I said a few minutes ago - they will definitely have to spend some time doing real science. They don't have to go away, but they will work either hand and hand with somebody in the science community or they'll spend a certain amount of time, maybe not doing typical homework, but doing a science experiment and the research that goes along with it. In my school for science teachers, they definitely will do research in a way that will be beneficial to them so that they'll want to continue as they go through the years to

always be learning new things and staying abreast of things that are going on in the science world, and how that applies to the student as learner. . They will do all they can to have their students enthusiastic about science. If they don't love science (because I do realize that everybody doesn't love science), but they will at least have learned and it will have been a pleasant experience for them. And science teachers will just be strong and confident in helping learn about careers in science. But they will also be knowledgeable about participating in professional organizations that also will help them stay up-to-date with trends, new ideas, and methods of teaching science.

Deborah's knowledge of science and the research methods has done much to improve her own understanding as well as the understanding of her students. She reported that she felt a new vigor for the classroom as well as a desire to reach out from the classroom into the higher education and policy fields of education.

David. David is an experienced traditional teacher who did not take the traditional route to teaching, but in the last twenty-eight years of education has made a continual impact on the school culture and community. David faced the same dilemma that many pre-service teachers face when the realities of student teaching, like the prospect of working for six months in a school with no pay, present themselves and left his pursuit of a teaching degree to follow other pursuits. He still felt that education was his calling, and that eventually led him to finish his coursework and enter the teaching field at 30 years of age. David said about the transition:

I wanted to make money, so I got out and made a little. But I've been more content doing [teaching] than other things. I always wanted to get back into it, but I did not want to give up a job and go student teach and give up the income, so I was real stubborn. But I always thought in the back of my mind that I wanted that, so when the opportunity presented itself . . . I did my student teaching and took a job unloading trucks at night and went from there.

Not only has David become a regular fixture in his school district, but also in his community. David summed up his experiences in the community and his love of teaching by saying:

I like the pace of education. I like the way you get to start over fresh every year. I've been [here] for so long now I wouldn't teach anywhere else. I'm teaching kids and I taught their parents. It's that kind of thing; you get comfortable in a community. There's nothing else - I've been a teacher and a coach for a long time too - there's nothing like that kind of connection you get in a community. I still remember all my teachers. I forget the names of business associates when I was in business, but I can tell you the names of everyone of my teachers. I think that it's important. I do.

His love for teaching, and more importantly for making a lasting impact on students, came through in the rich descriptions that he provided of interacting with his community. You can hear the pride and deep love he exudes for teaching in describing that night that most experienced teachers have come to view as a nuisance or a waste of time – open house. Instead David's continual passion for teaching, students, and his

community came shining through, leading the researcher to reflect that she hopes that she continues to feel the same passion for teaching after so many years in the teaching field:

Every year we have an open house and I look forward to that so much because every year I have these people who come walking up with their kid and the parents ask if I remember them and that kind of thing. I always look forward to that. And a lot of times I don't even realize that they are still living in the community and that they are still around here until they have a kid in 8th grade. They come walking up to me and they start telling stories about when they were in school and I taught them. I always look forward to that.

As happens so often in the real life of truly great teachers, love of students and community often trumps personal gain. David concluded saying:

There's been two or three times that I've thought about moving on. I've had some opportunities to move on where coaching wise I could have progressed, but I don't know . . . I just couldn't give it up. Being somebody in the community, instead of somebody who's just passing through for three or four years and then on to another place. For the coaching end of it, if you are going to be in it at all, that's what you've got to do. But I decided that wasn't what I wanted to do. I decided to make coaching a small part of what I do and stay and teach in the same community all these years, and I don't regret it a bit.

Not only did David feel that an inherent love for the school and for the students is vital, but he emphasized the importance of true content understanding. He connected content knowledge with an ability to do what he defined as the *true job* of the classroom

instructor – transferring the information to the students. In discussing the importance of content he stated:

There are a lot of people in education that don't think [content knowledge] is important because what the kids are required to know is so far below what [a college graduate] has to know, but to me, if you know it in a complex way you can explain it better than if you know it in a simple way because you see connections between things that another teacher might not see.

Summary of Participants. Regardless of the years of experience or certification route, teachers definitely recognize effective educators and effective instruction. The overwhelming consensus amongst those teachers was that while certification route, content knowledge, and years of experience are all important considerations in teaching effectively, they were not the most important factors. Instead, each teacher in this study felt that their ability to relate to students and a love and deep understanding of their content area were the most important factors.

Research Question 1: Perceptions of Effectiveness

Throughout the study, the participants were asked to offer their perspectives on their fellow teachers and teaching experience. For my first research question, I wanted to examine the relationship between a teacher's preparation path and the views that they held of preparation programs, other teachers, and ultimately the effect of different preparation routes on classroom effectiveness. The first interview specifically asked participants to offer their perspectives of alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers, and follow - up questions were offered in second and third interviews. Although most

teachers had very definite opinions regarding effectiveness in the classroom, few seemed to think of it in light of teacher preparation programs and licensure. Once I asked questions regarding the connection, the participants of the study were able to offer valuable insights on both the positives and negatives of each route. This data analysis also looked at some of those suggestions that were offered by the participants in their own words.

Traditionally Licensed Perceptions.

One of the commonalities of the traditionally licensed population was that each of them, regardless of the amount of time teaching, holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education. Although this may not seem like much, it ensures that each of the participants all had a set of common experiences including the same series of licensure exams and a guided student teaching experience. Because of this commonality, traditionally licensed teachers were able to offer similar perspectives of the teacher preparation process and the factors that influence this process.

Traditionally licensed teachers view of alternatively licensed teachers. Most traditionally licensed teachers had positive perceptions of alternatively licensed teachers as a whole, although some tended to express reservations about general classroom management traits. Experienced teacher Deborah reflected:

It probably would be my nature if I had a provisional teacher either in my science department or even another subject that I was close by – I probably would try to . . . be more helpful. From viewing . . . the different point of view or viewing

differently... ummmm... I probably would be a little concerned and try to be a little more helpful and help them learn the ropes a little bit more so.

Concerns regarding the classroom management skills of alternatively licensed teachers are common among experienced traditionally licensed teachers. Many expressed concern that as an administrator or fellow teacher, they felt uncomfortable with the idea that a particular type of alternatively licensed teacher -provisional teachers - was in the classroom without having had any supervision. In fact, experienced teacher Kathleen seemed to have serious concerns that teachers of this sort would be trusted with students at all by any administration, or even have the ability to secure or retain a job in a quality school system. David, who had more time in the classroom than any of the other traditionally licensed teachers, had this to say about the matter:

I did see a difference in their [alternatively certified teachers] classroom management. And it got to be – it was a problem for them. I don't think the kids necessarily ran all over them, but they didn't know when to be harsh and when to, kind of, overlook things. They didn't know how to roll with the flow. Nothing prepared them for kids that don't have that strong parent presence and haven't been taught the basics – manners and so forth – that they think kids [should] have. It does seem like somebody who is traditionally prepared, they at least got to do some observations and they've been exposed a little bit more. But everybody's different, and a lot of it has to do with whether the personality is suited to be a teacher to start with, or what reason they went into teaching and whether they had any kind of experience before teaching. People who've done things – there's

really no way to measure that. People who've spent time with kids in their churches and rec. departments and all sorts of other things like that, they're going to take to it much quicker than somebody who has basically been living in an adult world and hasn't been around many children. Maybe [they] didn't have any children of their own and all of the sudden after a 20 year military career they decide to become a teacher. I think that people like that struggle.

Although many of the traditionally licensed teachers expressed hesitation about alternatively licensed teachers, they were also quick to concede that the maturity of second career switchers and expertise from working in the field serve as an enormous advantage in the classroom. Experienced traditional teacher Deborah commented on the benefits of outside experience in the science classroom:

With my area being science I would have to say that I think there is a huge benefit to people teaching science that their field was a science - like say if they had a degree in biology or chemistry and then went back to get certified. Or went through the Teach Back program or whatever all else is going on. I don't think it's a bad thing for them to be educated in the field first, but I don't think it's easy to go directly to the classroom.

Novice traditional teacher James expounded upon this idea in regards to specific colleagues, and although he serves in the social sciences field, it was interesting that he primarily considered the inherent applicability to the fields of math and science.

I think that the traditional certification is going to be better for some individuals:

. . . but I don't think that it's going to be perfect for everybody. If you've got somebody that's been out in the field working with physics as a practical application, I think that's very powerful to bring in the classroom. I was never a mathematics student when I was in high school and in college and I struggle with it today, but if I could have had somebody come in there and say this is how I used algebra and trigonometry in my job every day before I came to teach you guys how to do this... that's an incredibly powerful tool to have in the classroom. I think if you've got somebody who was using science and technology in their job every day and decided they wanted to bring that experience to students, I think that's an incredibly powerful thing to be able to bring in.

When asked if there exists a divide between traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers in schools, the majority of traditionally certified teachers did not feel that there was a particular persona or stigma associated with either category of teachers in the school culture as a whole, although most of the traditionally licensed teachers did comment that they thought that alternatively licensed teachers may think a certain way about traditionally licensed teachers. Some traditionally licensed teachers commented about the idea that alternatively licensed teacher may feel that they were "stuck in the past" or "unwilling to learn new concepts or ways of doing things." Others felt that alternative teachers may tend to have more respect for traditionally licensed teachers because they would be viewed more as experts in the field of education, especially with the added benefit of experience. Shayna commented:

I think alternatively respect teachers more because they have that background. The ones that I've met and that I've worked with . . . well . . . some of the [alternatively licensed teachers] that I've met and worked with have been real receptive of "well how do you do this?" or . . . some think they know it all... and that's the way they go.

She went on to comment about the negative reaction that traditionally licensed teachers may have when receiving tips or suggestions from alternatively licensed teachers:

Just know-it-all kind of mentality. I've already done this for so long. I've gotten this kind of certification, and you're just running in here real quick in your couple of classes and thinking you know more than me. I don't think it goes over very well.

Despite the strong opinions that the participants seemed to have regarding the classroom management skills of alternatively certified teachers, none of the traditionally licensed teachers could identify any alternatively licensed teachers within their own schools that lacked those skills. Tellingly, some of the guesses that were made regarding who is an alternatively licensed teacher within their schools were actually incorrect, in some cases identifying other traditionally licensed teachers, although this information was not disclosed to the participants at the time.

Traditionally licensed teachers' perceptions of teacher preparation program and relationship to the classroom. Although traditional licensure programs lack conformity across the United States, the programs that were completed by the

participants in this study were similarly designed. Each of the participants, in order to be considered highly qualified, was asked to complete a series of pedagogy and methodology classes, observe classes in the age range of certification, complete a semester of student teaching under the instruction of a regular classroom teacher and a representative from their college's Department of Education, and pass a series of standardized tests mandated by the state of Georgia and the federal government. These similarities allowed for an equal comparison of the experiences of the traditionally licensed teachers in this study, who all felt that improvements should be made to the process.

The first and most often discussed topic in relation to the preparation of traditional teachers was the student teaching experience. The experiences of the teachers provided a strong response amongst the participants, especially the novice participants, and provided relevant contrasting information about the necessity of choosing good mentor teachers and the consequences of poor mentor selection. All but one of the novice traditionally certified teachers felt that the student teaching experience was handled poorly by the mentor teacher that was in charge of supervising their placement and that teaching them the essential skills that were foundational to building a great experience for the future. Most of the concerns voiced by the participants addressed the idea that the mentor teacher was unable to let go of control of the classroom and create a collaborative experience with the teacher. Many of the participants provided examples of how what they learned from their student teaching experience was what *not* to do in their own classrooms. Each of the participants summarized their own experience:

Shayna. [My mentor teacher] wasn't much that liked group work or interactive lessons, so I had to do it mostly her way, and then when it came to that one part where the person would come in and evaluate or that one where I was in charge of the whole day I got to do what I wanted to do... but I didn't get to do much of that.

Kathleen. And maybe that's part of why I would never want to co-teach now. I would never want to sit in anybody else's class and have to hear anybody else ever teach again. I mean, I don't mind coming in and doing a little evaluation like they might start making us do. You know, I'll do that for somebody for 30 minutes and get a real good idea and fill something out. But as far as just sitting and listening to someone else teach I cannot think of anything worse for me. I'm over it. That thousand hours . . . or fifteen hundred hours however many hours we had. I'm done. I'm done!

Scott. My first days as teacher and you know even my first year, all of those things that I learned – though some of them I can use – a lot of it was just kind of learning on the fly and teaching myself the concepts and the standards and the objectives that was listed in the GPS standards for the state of Georgia. So I would say just [pause] I guess [pause] the lack of [pause] I guess [pause] experiences on the individual level. Because as you do your student teaching you know, you have someone in the classroom with you . . . and it's kind of split up where you do a week here and you might have a week off here. I just didn't feel

like the content was explicitly . . . should have been preparing me for what lie ahead of me as far as content and instruction and standards go.

James. I was blessed and cursed by having a mentor teacher who was voted the STAR teacher that year at his school and who was a very gifted teacher and very good with his students and not necessarily the best mentor teacher. Because he did not, in his heart, want to give up control of his classroom. He was kind of coerced and elbowed, for lack of a better term, into it by his administration. And it really - he loved to teach. To some teachers that's a welcome break to have a student teacher that they can have in there and mentor and do something kind of different. It wasn't a role that he particularly wanted to be into. So it threw me a little bit of an extra curve. So it was something that I had to - I really had to step up my game. In retrospect, it was really a good trial by fire for me. But it was not an easy situation to kind of be into.

David. When [the school of education representatives] comes to observe [the pre-service teachers], they expect to see too much dog and pony show. They want them to teach things in such a way that if you really taught every subject the way they expect it to be when they come in it would take 40 years to get through the content that we are expected to cover. They expect you do to all these activities on one little thing. And I know that they are just trying to see that you can do them. And you would use all of them at some point during the year, but you really couldn't do all those different things on one unit if you expect to get finished – ever.

Jessica. This experience was very overwhelming for me. It was what I would call a sink or swim kind of experience. The thing that I remember the most was that on my third day in the classroom, when I should have still been learning names and becoming acclimated to the setting, the principal pulled my supervising teacher out and I ended up teaching a math lesson! Clearly, I was a bit terrified, but I definitely learned how to wing it that day! One thing that I didn't care for about the whole experience was the way the teacher prepared her lessons. It didn't seem that she gave them much thought. The norm was for her to come in and decide that morning what she was going to do and then to scramble around trying to get her ducks in a row. That was not a very good example to set for a new teacher. Of course sometimes things happen and you have to wing it, but I prefer to put thought into what and how I'm teaching and be prepared. I also remember that this particular teacher didn't seem to have much interest in dealing with the SPED kids. She was content to let the co-teacher (who was a first year teacher that had just taken the GACE, and used to be an insurance agent) handle them. That clearly wasn't very effective. I guess this wasn't a very positive experience for me.

Perhaps the most telling data were that out of the entire population of traditionally licensed teachers that were interviewed in this study and who had completed the student teaching process, none of them would have categorized this as an entirely positive experience as a student. While each maintained that there were important lessons learned, and that the time with the students and in the school culture may have given

them a slight edge over those that had no experience in school whatsoever prior to becoming an educator, hearing over and over again about the negatives of the student teaching experience was very disheartening as a researcher. Field notes from one of the interviews include this memo to the side: “Again? Another traditional teacher with a poor student teaching experience. Did any of the mentor teachers do a good job? Is this why new teachers leave the profession?”

Not only did the traditionally licensed teachers offer feedback on their past student teaching experiences, but they also offered suggestions for creating a better process for future teachers. The top two suggestions that were made were a) greater selectivity in the selection of class placement and b) a longer time in the classroom that allowed for more actual teaching experience. Shayna offered some advice on this topic:

Maybe do the first half of the year do the first half of the day or something like that and the second half of the year do the second half of the day but they actually are at . . . through the whole process of a year so that they’re not just learning how to teach and that’s it. Because there is so much more to what we do. There’s so much more paperwork and documentation and stuff like that that you don’t see when you are a student teacher. And then when you’re thrown in it your first year you have to create plus manage, plus this, plus that. I think it’s overwhelming. And it takes so long to get good at learning how to do all that. So maybe three semesters of student teaching instead of just two.

The other area where traditionally licensed teacher felt weakest was in the area of content training. Because this study primarily focused on middle school teachers, the

training of middle school teachers became a prominent issue that was addressed. Many of the traditional teachers felt that the preparation for this age level was focused too heavily on pedagogy and did not provide pre-service teachers with enough content-focused information. The participants referred to the classes as a waste of time, and bemoaned the lack of specialization for teachers that are attempting to prepare students for the higher level content classes. Shayna commented:

I would take out some of the B.S. classes - the ones like - for a middle school degree you learn how to teach elementary school, and I had to learn how to teach elementary reading. That didn't help me become a better middle school teacher. I'm sorry - that just was - I mean - I had to read 50 books and write 50 book reports. That didn't make me a better teacher, you know? Just, some of the classes that were a waste of my time because they were - it was one big curriculum that was for elementary and middle school and just more hands-on time. I think that the more that a person's learning what they're doing - for real - seeing more master teachers teach . . . 'cause if I could see four different math teachers teach, four different ways, I can sculpt what I think is best - better. Instead of walk into a classroom - this is the way it is - this is what you need to do . . .

David offered a similar perspective on the need for content knowledge in the teacher preparation classroom, and highlighted the importance that it plays in being able to transfer the information to the students. His analysis highlighted his own suggestions for how to improve the training of pre-service teachers:

Well as far as the college of education, what I always saw as the problem is that they took all the paths and they put so much coursework into the actual education classes and a lot of it was very theoretical – and I’m not saying that doesn’t help – but it doesn’t have the direct impact as if . . . [In reference to the researcher’s education background] I would say that you would probably be the best of both worlds because your training was more extensive than the average teacher who just started out for a science education degree. You would not have gotten the in-depth science training that you got, but then you ended up getting the education end of it too. If I can draw up a profile for how to get the best teachers I think that would absolutely be it. Because I do think that a lot of times they do certify people to teach subjects that are – and it’s not [the teacher’s] fault that they didn’t have more training in their subject – but the college required so much more education than they did content. I think somebody that is really knowledgeable in science – you can teach so much more to the kids than [those who] just have had the bare minimum. And I think that rings true of history and every other field. I think [the colleges of education] ought to fix it where people will be scientists and historians with teaching degrees, rather than teachers with a little bit of science or history.”

Deborah, another experienced traditionally licensed teacher, reflected also on the importance of having content classes to understanding the information in a way that makes it easier to relate to the students and also to the ability to reinvigorate passion about the content. In our interview she talked excitedly about an opportunity that she had

as a result of her current master's program to participate in a *real* science study. One of the most significant statements that she made was how affected she was by the experience of completing a science study. She noted that it was the first time in seventeen years of teaching science that she had participated in a real study, and had so much more of a grasp of the concepts that she had been teaching to students for years. Her completion of a real-life science study, gave her examples to use in the classroom. The concept of acquiring content knowledge in order to better understand the students is an across the board concern for all traditionally licensed teachers.

Alternatively Licensed Perceptions. One of the realities that immediately came to my attention after undertaking this study was that the definition of alternatively licensed teachers has not been clearly defined in either education research or in the daily education vernacular. The background, experiences, undergraduate degrees, and training of alternatively licensed teachers in this study are extremely varied. Although the background of each of the teachers is different, there were many similar ideas that were represented regarding their perceptions of traditionally licensed teachers as well as specific suggestions on mentoring within the school systems.

Alternatively licensed teachers perceptions of traditionally licensed teachers.

Alternatively licensed teachers were interviewed regarding their perceptions of traditionally licensed teachers. Participants were asked to reflect on both their own perceptions of traditionally licensed teachers as well as what they felt to be the perceptions of traditionally licensed teachers about them. The majority of the alternatively licensed teachers that were interviewed felt that there was no significant

difference between alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers in the classroom or in the school culture in regards to classroom management, and overall had a very positive view of themselves as teachers.

When asked to reflect on their own efficacy in the classroom in relationship to their training, many of the alternatively licensed teachers felt confident in bringing both work experience and greater content knowledge to the classroom. Additionally, most felt confident that traditionally licensed teachers thought that the additional coursework and experience created a positive experience for students in the classroom. Novice alternatively licensed teacher Elizabeth talked repeatedly about, and referenced several times, her pride in completing her very difficult biology degree prior to obtaining her post-baccalaureate certification for teaching:

I would certainly not change getting my straight biology degree. Not that you aren't strong anyway in the content, but that really gave me some experiences that I would not have gotten if I hadn't taken those classes. I wouldn't have taken Geology; I wouldn't have taken Genetics . . . I mean those were great classes. I would not have taken them if I would not have had to do them. But I'm glad I did. It really made me more aware ... I personally am very – not to be snotty – but I am very proud of the fact that I was able to get that biology degree. That was really hard. That degree was very difficult, and I was able to get that degree. So I feel like I've had maybe more opportunity to learn. I've more education. I'm not trying to sound - you know what I mean - I have had more learning experience, I think, because I was in school longer.

When experienced alternatively licensed teacher Sofia was asked to reflect on whether there seemed to be a difference between traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers, she pointed out that it was less about the credentials that a teacher brings with them and more about the reasons and passion that they bring to the classroom. Her response:

A lot of components come into that. How long somebody's been teaching . . . because some people could experience burn-out when they went the traditional way and they've been teaching for 20 years and . . . then you get somebody new coming in and that's done the alternative way and they're passionate and they've brought other experiences that they bring to the classroom from the business world from . . . you know. . . volunteering at the school. They bring in the other elements that teachers who've been in teaching all their life don't have from corporate America for how things are handled in corporate America. So . . . I think they bring different things to the table. Do I think it's better one way or the other? No. I can't say that it would be better one way or the other. They both bring different things to the table.

This diplomatic view of teachers seemed to be a common theme among all the participants in the study; however, Betty described a somewhat more contentious relationship with her colleagues after they discovered that she did not fit into the *normal* traditional licensure category. She felt that several of the other teachers felt much less receptive of her teaching philosophy and teaching style, which was not as cohesive as some of the other teachers in the building, lending to the air of ill-will. She also reported

a respect for her principal. However, she referenced a litany of examples of the principal's somewhat contentious management style. When asked about her own personal definition of alternatively licensed teachers, she addressed what she felt was one of the issues that alternatively licensed teachers deal with in the school climate on a daily basis:

Alternative teachers came from a different background, whether it be journalism, biology, and then were given some kind of training in classroom management basics and put into a classroom. The crime that I see is people who have 15 years of background in public relations as I did, who then step into a classroom are not only paid as if they are 22 and right out of college, but they are treated that way too. And granted, there is a huge difference between real world and classroom, but I think one of the biggest reasons nontraditional certification people, alternative certification people, end up leaving is because of the way that they are treated. I don't think that it has anything to do with ability or being able to teach. I think it has everything to do with being treated like you don't know anything.

Rory expressed an even more contentious attitude about traditionally licensed teachers because of the way that she felt about the unspoken – and sometimes expressed – criticism of alternatively certified teachers from traditionally certified teachers:

A lot of teachers that are traditionally certified have a bad view of alternatively certified. [Traditionally licensed teachers think] Well anybody can get a degree. Anybody can get a job teaching. And I don't blame them for holding those views. I mean, you want to think your education degree is valuable, but there's not a

whole lot you can do with an education degree but teach, but if you have a degree in biology you can teach, or there are a whole lot of things that you can do. Or if you have a degree in business management, there are other things that you can do. I don't blame traditional teachers for having that view, but I don't agree with it. I mean I hold no value to a four year education degree at all. I was like, don't tell me that teachers are the best and the brightest. I've worked with teachers who can't get hired at the Waffle House.

Much like traditionally licensed teachers, alternatively licensed teachers were not able to correctly identify particular teachers in their own school based on licensure route.

Perceptions of teacher preparation and relationship to classroom efficacy.

For the purposes of this study, all participants who were categorized as alternatively licensed had completed a minimum of a post-baccalaureate program through an accredited higher education institution. Because of the additional schooling experience, the alternatively licensed teachers were asked to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the preparation program. Many of the comments were similar to the ideas that were presented by the traditionally licensed teachers regarding certification classes. Teachers felt that the process could be improved by providing greater relevance to the classroom and focusing on practical rather than theoretical skills in the classroom. In addition, monitoring, observations and availability of student teaching experiences were inconsistent for alternatively licensed students.

The teachers who were interviewed expressed negative views of many of the classes that were presented as a part of the licensure route because of the lack of relativity

to the actual classroom. Many teachers felt that the information would have been much better suited if it was more practical or specialized information rather than simply generic theory and strategies. Patsy reflected on how she felt that it was counter-productive to spend time discussing and creating activities and lessons that she was not able to implement in her own classroom, especially at the beginning of her certification process and concurrent time in the classroom:

[T]he post-bac program the way I saw it... you were just going and taking the required education courses and then doing your student teaching. It was just kind of jumping through some hoops to get your certification. Because the way I did it, I was already teaching. And I was - more or less - I mean, this is going to sound kind of ugly - I was more or less just paying North Georgia College to give me the degree to allow me to keep doing it. I already had the job and I had a teacher come maybe three times to the school and that was the extent of it. I just saw the whole process and post-bac program... just kind of jumping through the hoops where I could get the paper you needed to keep your job. It did seem like... you were just killing time. You were sitting in class and most of what they were going over was in theory. It didn't really - it was not stuff I could actually - I felt like I could actually just take it from what I saw in class and heard or read about or took a test on . . . I kind of had a negative attitude towards it because I felt like it was a big waste of my time.

Although teachers expressed some frustration with the lack of relevance of the classes, others talked about the positive aspects of being able to receive feedback from

peers as well as from professors and fellow teachers. Elizabeth had a particularly positive experience with her program, and especially her student teaching experience, a rarity amongst the alternatively licensed teachers:

All I can say is that I'm really glad that my first teaching experience was with a really good teacher in a room with me. Because she gave me that kind of feedback - I don't think - I think if I jumped into it without any background at all - ahh - that would have been bad because I really didn't know what I was doing. And that's why you get certified. So she went and she was a very good, very strong teacher. Excellent teacher. She had excellent classroom management and she knew her content like *that*. And so she was able to [help me] just being able to observe her in action. 'Cause once you are in your classroom, you don't really get to see anyone else teaching, and I think if I hadn't had someone there guiding me the whole time - I mean, that would have been really difficult for me. Some people probably could have done it, but I don't think that I could have. Not well. And with her there she could give me tips. "Okay, when I saw you today, you did a really good job, but you weren't really keeping an eye on the back of the room and they were passing notes the whole time and you didn't really see that." And that taught me to be more aware. Or "you need to circulate more, you aren't moving around enough." She gave me really good feedback, so I'm really glad that I got the traditional student teaching route. Really glad!

Although Elizabeth was one of the only alternatively licensed teachers who had a more traditional student teaching experience, many of the other teachers did reference the

importance of having helpful mentors in the classrooms. Both Elizabeth and Rory referenced extremely helpful informal mentorship programs that were established and that helped reinforce the ideas that they were learning and working on in the classroom. Mentors for both Elizabeth and Rory made time to be available, and were working in the same content area during the mentorship period. This was an important factor in whether or not the teachers felt that the mentorship was beneficial to their learning, and whether or not they were eventually able to implement the mentor's lessons in their own classrooms.

Research Question 2: Perceptions of Self-efficacy

For my second research question I decided to take a closer look at the idea of self-efficacy and its importance in the classroom. Bandura's (1977) research on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) indicated that teachers who felt that they would be successful and had a positive view of themselves as teachers would have a greater impact in the classroom and be able to persevere through difficulties. In the late 1990s he drafted a self-efficacy tool that would be used as a guide for later surveys, including the one used in this study, the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Hoy, 2008). The questions on the survey sought to gather data on the amount of influence that teachers felt that they had on issues that were important to the climate and culture of American schools including how well they were able to communicate with administrators, their ability to affect the school culture through partnerships with outside community members, and their ability to not only plan and carry out engaging lessons, but also to motivate students in the classroom to learn.

Survey results. Prior to the interviews each participant was asked to complete an online survey based on the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (Hoy, 2008). This initial survey was generalized and the only identifying information that was gathered served to separate participant information into either alternatively licensed or traditionally licensed categories. The survey asked the participants to respond to a series of 24 questions gauging their self-efficacy in different scenarios with Likert-scaled responses ranging from 1 to 9. A response of one meant *nothing*, a response of three meant *very little*, a response of five meant *some influence*, a response of seven meant *quite a bit*, and a response of nine meant *a great deal*.

Scoring instructions provided by survey developers, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2008), divided the questions into three different categories related to the self-efficacy of classroom teachers: self-efficacy in student engagement, self-efficacy in instructional strategies, and self-efficacy in classroom management. Student engagement questions focused on the ability of the teacher to redirect distractions in the classroom as well as keep the students on task. Instructional strategies asked questions about establishing creativity and expression in classroom activities. Classroom management questions focused on the ability of the teacher to redirect misbehavior in the classroom as well as manage the class in such a way as to minimize disruptions and misbehavior. All questions were stated in such a way that higher scores indicated greater self-efficacy among the teachers.

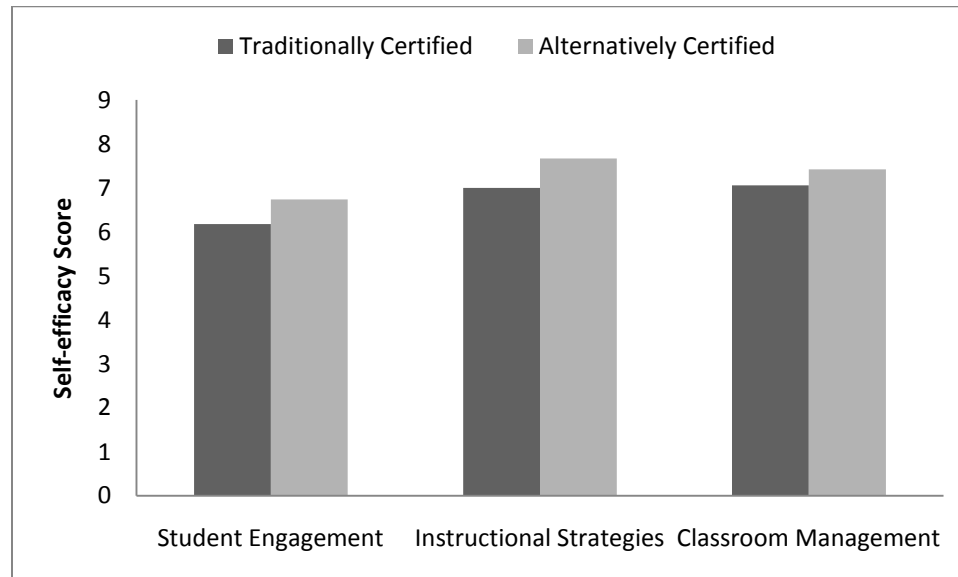
Self-efficacy beliefs among teachers were tied to achievement among students, as well as the teacher's ability to persevere amid difficult teaching conditions (Bandura,

1994). As the teachers finished the survey, the results were compiled and organized by licensure status. Mean results were gathered for each answer and organized. Score results are related to the amount of expressed self-efficacy by each teacher or group of teachers. As the mean score rises, so does the correlation of positive self-efficacy. Results greater than a value of 7 indicate a high amount of self-efficacy amongst teachers, and a general feeling that the teacher can contribute to the situation positively. This information was used to gain a generalized focus on teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and to allow me to seek further explanation from the participants during the interviews. Although each category of teacher displayed positive self-efficacy in all categories, overall alternatively licensed teachers displayed greater self-efficacy in all categories in the survey results. A breakdown of mean scores for each category and question is provided in Appendix J.

Table 3
Survey Results

	Traditionally Licensed	Alternatively Licensed
Student Engagement	6.17875	6.73625
Instructional Strategies	7	7.667143
Classroom Management	7.06	7.421429

Figure 4. Survey results.



All teachers felt that student engagement was their weakest area of self-efficacy with averages of 6.18 and 6.74 respectively. Traditionally licensed teachers scored themselves lowest on questions numbers 4 and 9 on the long form survey, indicating that they only felt that they had some influence in motivating students with low interest in school work and helping students to value school work. Alternately licensed teachers also indicated that they felt that they only had some influence in the areas of motivating students with low interest in school work, but felt that they could do more to help students value education, but had less influence with difficult students. Both categories of teachers felt that they had quite a bit of influence in fostering student creativity in the classroom.

Alternately licensed teachers felt that they had the strongest self-efficacy and the greatest influence in instructional strategies. The mean score for self-efficacy in

instructional strategies for alternatively licensed teachers was 7.67, indicating that this group of teachers felt that they had a great deal of influence in instructional strategies, compared to traditionally licensed teachers who scored themselves at a mean of 7.

Alternatively licensed teachers scored themselves highest in self-efficacy in response to being able to provide alternative explanations to student questions as well as being able to answer difficult questions that may be posed by students. Traditionally licensed teachers felt that they were strong in these areas as well, although self-efficacy measurements were significantly lower than for alternatively licensed teachers. Both categories of teachers indicated weaknesses in differentiation abilities, although alternatively licensed teachers again had greater self-efficacy in this area.

Finally, the teachers reflected on their own self-efficacy in the area of classroom management. The results collected were much closer between alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers than the first two self-efficacy reflections. The mean scores were 7.42 and 7.06 respectively. In looking at the specific data, both groups of teachers felt that they had a great deal of influence in creating classrooms where clear expectations were established, but traditionally licensed teachers felt more capable and responsible in managing groups within the classroom. Interestingly, alternatively licensed teachers had a higher sense of self-efficacy in dealing with students who were deemed defiant.

Perceptions of self-efficacy. The results of the survey were used to guide the interview process and I specifically wanted to look more closely at the teachers own perceptions of the idea self-efficacy in context of classroom management skills, student

engagement and instructional strategies. The last interview questions focused on the idea of self-efficacy and in particular how the participants viewed their own classrooms and teaching abilities in light of student performance in class and on standardized testing measures like those required by the NCLB legislation.

Student engagement. The survey results showed that in general traditionally certified teachers felt that their weakest area was self-efficacy in student engagement. In particular the teachers felt that they had only *some influence* when it came to motivating students who did not have a particular interest in school work. Kathleen referenced this idea when she reflected on how the students' engagement particularly seems to drop at the end of the school year and her own views as her students started taking the year end standardized tests:

[Effectiveness] is a teacher that [pause] gives their kids everything that they need to learn. But again, I'm feeling like, you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. So your job is to provide every single thing that you can do, every single thing you can, and then your conscious is clear.

James discussed this idea that teachers may not have a great deal of control over the way that students arrive in the classroom and must simply meet their needs where they are:

What you've got to remember is that we don't get to sit down at the beginning of the year and draw lots for who we're going to teach. When you're a teaching you've got to find the ways to most effectively teach the students you're given. The ones that break my heart are the ones that just don't want to be here, don't

want to make the effort, and there's always a family issue behind that so you understand where they're coming from, but you just want to try to get through to them and say, "We know your parents are terrible, but this is your opportunity. This is your opportunity to break out of that mold." I don't have the perfect class; they are what they are, and that's my job as a teacher to conform to them more than they do to me.

Scott also felt that the motivational aspect of teaching was an important consideration about why novice teachers may decide to leave the teaching profession. He talked about how he viewed the motivation of students as a personal challenge, but how he understood the way it could eventually act on those who decided to leave the field of education while still in the novice stages:

The motivational aspect of it – especially for me – because I'm a very competitive person. I'm constantly trying and striving to outdo the previous years I guess you would say. Because every year is different, and I know that every group of kids is different. I don't know if [novice teachers decide to leave because] just [pause] you might end up with a group that is a little more difficult and a little more challenging than the one before.

Alternatively certified teachers also felt that student engagement was one of their weakest areas, however, scored themselves higher than traditionally licensed teachers. Alternatively certified teachers seemed to feel that they had more influence on motivating students than traditionally licensed teachers, but still acknowledge difficulties in meeting the needs of students who do not seem interested in school in general. Shayna, a novice

alternatively licensed teacher, talked about her battles to help students in the classroom. Interestingly she used almost the same language as veteran traditionally licensed teacher Kathleen:

And it comes down to . . . the kids are not doing their part. They're not giving 100% effort and you can't judge yourself on what you did, because they didn't – they're not giving [their all] . . . you can take the horse to the water, but you can't make them drink. You can throw it in 75 different ways. You can love them and nurture them right up to the water, but how can you make them know it?

Experienced alternatively licensed teacher perhaps summed up best the thought that although a teacher may want to reach every student, the power that the student may have .

There are going to be those that you can reach that may be borderline, that maybe you can draw in to something, but there are going to be some that no matter what you do . . . you can be an effective teacher – the most effective teacher there is – but if you have the most unmotivated student there is, it doesn't matter how effective you are, so at some point the student plays a role in all of this. We can be led to believe, though, that effectiveness will motivate. Well, I think that's what we tend to focus on, and that's what we don't need to focus on. You've got 95% of the class that are willing to participate and we focus on that 1% sitting over there in the corner creating complete havoc, and that's who we talk about at lunch and at the end of the day, and at home, and after we quit talking about them and focus on the ones that are prepared and want to learn maybe then that will

motivate that one. I'd love to think that we could motivate somebody, but we can't. As teachers we spend too much time focusing on the ones that are not – in comparison to the ones that are. It's not that I want to hang them out to dry, but I can't move the class forward if I'm stuck on this one.

Classroom management. The second area of self-efficacy that was addressed in this study was classroom management. Traditionally licensed teachers expressed throughout the interview that while they felt that they have some influence in the areas of classroom management in general, however, when they had to deal one on one with students, especially those students who proved to be difficult or defiant, they felt that they had much less influence or self-efficacy. In consideration, further aggregating the data by experience level shows that novice teachers were those who were less likely to show confidence in their classroom management styles. Deborah reflects on the lessons that she has learned in dealing with students and managing her hands-on classroom through the last seventeen years:

I would say that my first year was probably not so much. My certification was middle grades. At that time it was just a general 4 – 8 certification and I taught 7th grade science and math and I was quite unprepared and surprised at all the discipline that I had to deal with. One thing that over the years, and I tell this to new teachers if they're observing or I have a parapro now who is certified but she finished in December so she's looking for a job, especially in science if somebody would have told this to me day one it would have helped. But you know... we are doing this lab and this activity and these are the rules and can either follow them

or you can stand on the wall and takes notes and you don't participate in the lab. Because as soon as I started doing that I could wait two or three minutes and then go back to the student and say okay are you ready to try again and then they get right back in and they're going and it just is a quick easy way to deal with anybody who was out of line. And I needed that 100 years ago.

Many of the veteran traditionally licensed teachers echoed Deborah's sentiments about the relationship between experience and the development of classroom management skills. Novice traditionally certified teacher Anna talked about her own struggles with classroom management as she experienced her first year at the middle school level:

[I]t's very easy to create lesson plans and classroom management plans. It's a much different thing to put them in the classroom and see how they work. I mean they talked a lot about that, but I think it would be more - not just planning what you would do, but actually, maybe school things - whether it be through video or stuff like that. But classroom management is something that I have trouble with because I'm just laid back and I have four boys that are 6, 5, 2, and 1 and there are things that go on that I'm just oblivious to because I'm used to just being oblivious to them. I think that it's great to make plans - like behavior plans, and discipline plans, and classroom management plans - but it's another thing to be able to see them being used and see how they are being used.

Alternatively licensed teachers scored themselves somewhat higher on the self-efficacy scales, but still disclosed struggles with learning to establish a classroom.

Alternatively licensed veteran teacher Sofia offers advice about establishing classroom management:

How do you teach classroom management? I'm rambling right now because I'm not sure how you teach it. I've looked at different models. The key is learning what your rules are, and you can't ever waiver from them. You have to be consistent. And you're not really their friend; you are their teacher. I like to get along and have fun and be silly, but when I say, "Let's get to work," we've got to get to work. And you have to respect me, and I have to respect them.

Veteran teacher Patsy agreed with the sentiment that classroom management is an evolutionary process, and reflected on her own changes in her classroom management style:

[I]t took me a while to accept that it's okay for kids to talk in my class. Because I like it quiet. And it's like – it's okay for them to be discussing this. It's really going to help them. . . you [have to] get out of the mindset that it has to be like it was when I was in school. Because it doesn't. And it's okay for them to talk. It's okay for them to need to do something where they can get up out of their seats. . .

[I]t's okay to do something that's a little different than what other people do in the classroom. Everybody's not going to teach the same, just like every kid's not going to learn the same.

Instructional Strategies. The final category that was analyzed in light of the survey was instructional strategies. Both alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers felt that they personally had a great deal of influence in the area of instructional

strategies. The teachers who were interviewed felt that not only that teachers in general had a great deal of influence when it came to affecting a students' performance in the classroom, but they in particular felt that they had a great deal of influence in the area of instructional strategies.

Many of the teachers were happy to provide specific examples of how they felt that they were able to provide particular strengths in the classroom and in adapting instructional strategies that allowed students to learn in individual ways. Traditionally licensed teacher Elle pointed out that her background in special education with general education certification in science helped her to be able to not only recognized when a student needed differentiation, but also to be able to explain it to the students in a way that helped them to understand.

I mean, in a cotaught class you know you have your sped kids, but you also have your regular ed, kids who just aren't getting it. And having the background and having the desire to make things . . . to get kids to understand things in a non book and note way . . . I think it's an advantage because I do it. I try to do it just naturally and I don't really have to think about it. I just -it's just me. And part of it is probably my schooling. Having to do things differently. And so... I don't think in just book and notes.

Veteran alternatively certified teacher Patsy also talked about how embracing new technology transformed her idea of the way that a classroom should look and her students' experience and understanding of mathematics:

Our administration – and my collaborative partner really encouraged using the responders, and he said the whiteboard was really good too, but he prefers using responders. And I had to get away from thinking, “Okay, we’ve got to get a ton of work done during this hour.” I used to think they need to get 15-20 problems done, and some of them might be finding the volume of a cylinder and the volume of a prism, and some other little problems here and there, but I’ve come to the realization that it doesn’t matter if they’re doing five problems if they’re getting them right. If they’re only doing 5-8 problems in our classroom – and they’re complex problems – and I’m making sure that the kids are getting it, then that’s going to be a whole lot more productive than doing 15-20 and half of the kids missing them all. That was something that I had to break myself of – and I still struggle with it. But they know I’m going to call them out if they do it incorrectly, and they better be prepared to answer. I just have to get used to the idea that they don’t have to be quiet and working non-stop all the time because it’s more productive and they’re getting it.

Rory, another alternatively licensed veteran teacher, who works in a self-contained classroom for special needs students talked about acquiring the skill from her mentor Ms. Edith, and how she has learned the importance of individualization in the classroom to create a more well rounded learning experience:

But my point is that you have to make learning fun for these kids. There is no way that you can sit and lecture and it takes a lot of repetition, so Ms. Edith taught me that. And she taught me that you have to be flexible and that you can’t, somehow

you have to know when to take the lesson in a different direction because it is something that the kids say or something that they need. And she kind of taught me to recognize those needs in what they say.

Each of the teachers felt that being able to make the information relevant to the students was especially important to the retention of the information of the students. The idea that the students were subject to standardized testing never seemed far from their minds, however, it also did not solely drive instructional strategies. Most teachers in the study acknowledged that there were positive effects as a result of the standardized testing that was developed in response to NCLB, but offered a warning that it should not be the sole basis of instructional strategies or the sole measurement of effectiveness of either teacher or student.

Summary. I think that it is important to note that while this provides an accurate picture of the self-efficacy views of the participants of this study, transferability of this information may be in question. Teachers most likely to agree to participate in the study are those who already feel confident in their teaching abilities. It is important to note that this might not be an accurate representation of all teachers, however, I think that it is an accurate representation of the participants of this study and provides interesting insight into the differences between the way that traditional and alternative teachers think.

Summary of the Findings

In this study, I tried to use the voice of the participants to very purposefully examine connections between teacher effectiveness and teacher preparation route.

Through the interviews that were conducted, three main themes emerged regarding this relationship:

1. traits of effective teachers
2. perceptions of effectiveness
3. suggestions for fostering effective teaching.

Regardless of the type of teacher preparation route, all interviewed teachers seemed to have a clear and similar picture of the actions in which effective teachers engage. First and foremost, teachers must have a true love of the students. The study participants felt that teachers who were not able to view the student as an individual person seem less efficient in the classroom. In addition, effective teachers should have a passion for the content that they are teaching. Excitement about the content transfers to the student, and allows for greater engagement of the teacher and therefore greater engagement of the students. Finally, the teachers felt that it was important to have a strong foundation of content knowledge, but to also have the ability to convey that knowledge to the students in a manner that created meaningful learning opportunities.

Teachers also weighed in on their perceptions of other teachers and their effectiveness, based on licensure route. Both categories of teachers seemed to express a perception that others may have thought negatively about them. Traditionally licensed teachers said that many alternatively licensed teachers felt that they were staid traditionalists who were not open to change in the classroom. Alternatively licensed teachers expressed feelings that the traditionally licensed teachers viewed them as less capable in the classroom and unable to last long term in the field of education. Although

the findings reinforced the widely held preconceived notions that teachers have, in actuality, the teachers were unable to provide any specific examples or correctly identify teachers' licensure routes within their own schools.

Finally, both alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers felt that the current teaching preparation process could use reforms in order to better serve pre-service teachers and support current teachers. Specifically, more content knowledge training was deemed a necessary improvement for teachers who are seeking certification in middle grades education. Participants also felt that there should be greater care in the selection of mentor and lead teachers to guide student teaching opportunities. The participants felt that the willingness of the mentor teacher to provide a stable classroom, balanced with a chance for growth and explorations for the pre-service teacher, were the most valuable traits in the mentor selection process.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study provide a set of guidelines for the consideration of teacher preparation programs across the nation. The idea that effective teaching may be in some way tied to the preparation route began to be a part of the national discussion soon after the rise of the alternative teaching programs in New Jersey. The seminal work *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) served to bring the practices of the everyday classroom into the spotlight, and the idea of education reform rose to the forefront of the national conscience. Education reformers seemed to gravitate to the extremes regarding efficacy and licensure, and research and propaganda were proposed and published from both sides. This bickering and extremism produced very little in the way of useable information on how to bring effectiveness into the teacher preparation discussion and process.

However, in recent years the leading researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2009) have encouraged the conversation has shifted to include a more thorough discussion of not only effectiveness as a result of preparation route, but effectiveness on a personal level, and what creates those traits. Education researchers like Linda Darling-Hammond have begun to encourage fellow researchers to focus less on simply evaluating the type of program, but instead look carefully at the effectiveness of the teacher and attempt to cultivate those traits. The purpose of this research study was to examine and explore the phenomenon and relationship between teacher preparation programs and licensure route and classroom effectiveness. By focusing on the voice of the respondents, I was able to

discern three important concepts that all participants in the study felt were important. The first was that effective teachers have an inherent and visible love of both students and the content that they taught. Secondly, there exists a divide in schools between alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers based on their certification route. While education researchers paint a divisive picture of alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers, the reality are that both groups of teachers hold a clear view of effectiveness, regardless of licensure route. The third concept deemed important by the participants in the study was that the preparation of pre-service teachers should focus on accessible and relevant instruction through experience in the classroom rather than the theoretical study of education. Each teacher in the study offered advice about the most helpful ways to foster novice teachers through mentorship and selective student teaching assignments.

Traits of effective teachers. Most of the literature regarding the traits of effective teaching primarily focuses on quantifiable and measurable characteristics, such as those that can be determined by various standardized tests. Education researchers are quick to focus on skills such as communication, feedback to students, differentiation, and lesson planning when discussing effective teaching traits (Brewer, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2002; Humphrey et al., 2008; Linek et al., 2009; Poftak, 2003; Wise, 2002). In this study, the participants felt that the most important traits of effective teachers were the love of students and the love of the content. I found this a surprising development because although these ideas are common anecdotally. Although these are important considerations in the classroom, both groups of teachers felt that the inherent passion that one feels in sharing a love for content with students was far more important. Previously,

I had considered the idea that *liking kids* was simply a cliché, not relevant to the classroom. However, throughout all of the conversations with all four categories of participants, each teacher at some point referenced (and provided specific examples of) the importance of the teacher viewing the student as an individual with specific traits to contribute to the classroom. This relationship building with students proved to be one of the areas that the participants cited as a key component to becoming more effective in the classroom, yet was not previously discussed in the literature as a component of effectiveness.

When asked to reflect on what they thought made for ineffective teaching practices, almost all of the teachers referenced a lack of *passion* for students in the classroom. One of the participants put it very eloquently by saying that when we take the personal component out of the classroom, we become no better than a group of automated machines dispensing facts, and thus lose the ability to make a difference. This idea was repeated by several of the participants in one way or another throughout the interviews. Most of the teachers agreed that there was no definite age, preparation level, or years of experienced that defined or indicated ineffectiveness outside of that time when the teacher begins to view the work as just job, and not a meaningful.

Elle stated that those new and alternative teachers were ineffective not because of their methods of preparation, but because of their reasons for entering the teaching field. She expressed a great deal of concern for those who entered the field because of a pay raise, the need for a job, the time off, or the perceived ease of the job. The ease of the job is definitely not a reason that many of the teachers in this study would decide to stay in

the field, as many of them agree wholeheartedly that teaching is indeed a difficult career. Many of the teachers in the study laughed at my questions regarding the difficulty of teaching and that old adage, “those who can’t do, teach.” One of the participants said it best by responding “those who think that, have never taught!”

Each teacher seemed to understand and feel a sense of gravity and awe for the importance of their own work. It is a feeling with which I am familiar because I feel that same gravity each day as I step into the classroom. The idea that a student may be building a future based on the teacher’s words or based on their own experiences in the classroom is never far from these teachers minds. Each participant seems committed to making sure that their students feel safe and comfortable enough to explore while in their classrooms.

These participants talked of making sure that the student knows that ultimately the teacher cares about them because they set boundaries and hold them to them with a classroom management plan that thinks about student needs and that is age appropriate. The teachers referenced the importance of appealing to the human side of students by showing an interest in their interests and making an attempt to bring their own lives into the classroom as well. For example, Shayna’s students know she is an avid Georgia Bulldog fan, Sofia’s room is filled with pictures of her own children in various stages of their life, Betty loves Disney and all things Tinkerbell, while Elizabeth’s room features areas all over the classroom where her sixth graders can constantly touch science in the items that she has personally collected over the years.

The participants also spoke of the feelings of helplessness that overwhelm them when they stop to think of the many battles that students may be fighting emotionally in the classroom. The participants expressed frustration at the fact that it seemed like the general public did not understand the basic obstacles that teachers face in getting students to learn. One of the teachers stated, “Some days it is hard to think about all the odds that are stacked against a student actually learning: home life, poverty, stress from parents, even technology. How do I make a dent in learning when the only reason that those students came to school today was to eat or because their parents needed a free babysitter?”

Teachers talk of being called to fulfill roles outside of simply delivering content, and sometimes feel that they must also perform the roles of counselor, mentor, guide, and even parent to students. These are roles that many of them did not expect to have based on their own experiences in the classroom and their preparation. Anna talked about how hard and surprising the emotional aspects of teaching became for her after entering the classroom. Even after spending a quarter of a century in the classroom, Doug reports that this is still one of those areas that just doesn’t get easier. Many of the participants reported that dealing with parents and the more emotional aspects of the job is one of the areas in which they wish they were better prepared prior to coming into the classroom. Regardless of the obstacles, each of the participants shared the feeling that the students must be viewed as a whole and that effective teaching can reach around and beyond these barriers.

Additionally, the teachers in the study felt that a vital component of being effective in the classroom was the ability to teach in a content area of personal passion. Teachers do not always get to teach in the area that they desire. This was true for both alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers in this study. However, the participants noted that being able to teach in an area in which they felt a great deal of interest led to greater personal engagement with the material. Teachers noted that when they felt more engaged and enthusiastic about the material that was being discussed, the students also became more excited. Content interest also led to teachers believing they could be more creative in the classroom, explain the information better, and create a much more positive school climate.

Elizabeth reflected on this fact when she talked about moving jobs to find a specific content area. Although she was already employed by a school, and everyone was happy with her performance, she had not fully ignited her passion until she was able to obtain a position teaching sixth grade Earth science. An interesting aspect of our conversation was that she actually referred to the position as “beloved.” She and other participants talked about their inclination to learn more, to reach deeper, and to really engage the students in the content when they were discussing a subject that they truly loved. She talked about how the class dynamics changed for her when the kids were able to truly experience her own excitement while studying the information.

Perceptions of effective teaching. Discussions regarding teacher preparation programs and professional licensure alternately focus on a criticism of traditional preparation programs regarding a lack of rigor (Baines, 2006; Peterson & Nadler, 2009;

Thornhill et al., 2005) and the relative inexperience of alternatively licensed teachers in the most vulnerable of classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2005b; Huss, 2007; Viadero, 2002; Walsh, 2010). NCLB guidelines call for qualifications based on standardized tests, and focus on those qualifications absent of additional effectiveness measures (Scheeler, 2008). However, one participant in this study felt, as many others have echoed in previous studies, that “simply having the ability to pass a test does not necessarily equate to having the ability to reach a student.” Likewise, there seemed to be an agreement among all teachers that test results were irrelevant to any one particular licensure route. Instead, the participants in the study chose to focus on those skills that made the students want to learn the content and retain the information that was being conveyed.

Knowing and having passion for the content not only leads to enthusiasm by the students, but it also allows for the teachers to better convey the content information in a meaningful way. Several of the participants mentioned that it simply was not enough for the teachers to be intelligent or to know or love the content, but that they must also be able to pass this knowledge on to the students in the class. Shayna referenced one of the chemistry professors that she had early in her college career stating:

There was no question that he was brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. But I didn't understand anything that he was saying to me. We were speaking foreign languages to each other. He didn't understand how I didn't understand it, and I couldn't find a way to explain that I wasn't getting the most basic concepts. It was a doomed situation.

Elizabeth talked about the importance of teaching the content information in a format that would allow the students to construct meaning from it. She broke down the importance of the conveyance of meaning when she said, “What good is it to know everything about a topic if you can’t tell the kids about it in a way that they will understand it?” It is this factor that moves effective teaching out of the range of reciting from the textbook and into creating learning experiences for the students. Deborah felt that these kinds of hands-on experiences were vital to helping the students, and helping her as well. She felt this even more after spending time learning more about her own content through some hands-on research projects. It was an idea that she hoped to bring back to her own classroom.

Suggestions for fostering effective teaching. One of the most consistent points raised by participants was that their particular route to the classroom could use improvement – regardless of licensure type. It is common for teachers to remark on the need for change in regard to teacher preparation routes. This seems to be a common theme in the education literature (Anderson, 2002; Brewer, 2006; Hopkins, 2008; Humphrey et al., 2008; Kent, 2005; Villa, 2006; Wise, 2002; Worthy, 2005). Though they were not the first researchers to comment on the effectiveness of teacher preparation route, Australian researchers Loudon and Rohl (2006) found that teachers who had been in the classroom for three years did not feel as prepared to enter classrooms as they thought they should have been after completing a teacher preparation program. In this study, the teachers remarked that they felt the training was too focused on educational

theory and not enough attention was given to actual teaching skills – results remarkably similar to the findings of this study.

The teachers in this study felt that they could offer specific suggestions for improvements in teacher preparation programs. The most frequent suggestion was to improve the process for the placement of pre-service teachers in classrooms. Out of the 16 participants in this study, only one – an alternatively licensed teacher – talked about her student teaching experience in a positive light and counted it as a learning experience that positively influenced her effectiveness. The other 15 teachers discussed their student teaching or internship experiences as ranging from non-existent to positively nightmarish.

Teachers disclosed stories such as being ignored, being suddenly put on the spot, and even being confronted by the teacher in front of the class regarding stories that she had reported to her professor regarding her supervising teacher's inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Jessica recalls:

I had a semester of student teaching with a 6th grade math and science teacher.

This experience was very overwhelming for me. It was what I would call a “sink or swim” kind of experience. The thing that I remember the most was that on my 3rd day in the classroom, when I should have still been learning names and becoming acclimated to the setting, the principal pulled my supervising teacher out and I ended up teaching a math lesson! Clearly I was a bit terrified, but I definitely learned how to wing it that day!

Each participant that was interviewed felt the most defining experiences that occurred in his or her life were those that came from one-on-one interactions with

students in the classrooms. Not one participant could cite the specifications or selection methods for how teachers were chosen for student teaching opportunities. One of the teachers, in response to this question stated, “Ummm... I don’t know. Mainly I think it’s just whoever is available that fits that area. At least that’s the way that it goes in our school now.”

This obviously is an important component for consideration in teacher preparation programs. Pre-service teachers are shaped by the experiences and attitudes of the classrooms in which they train. Hostile classrooms or negative supervisory relationships can lead pre-service teachers to not only get the wrong ideas about teaching, but also about how to relate to the students. Negative attitudes and constant complaints about administration, education, or especially students left some of the traditionally licensed pre-service teachers feeling disillusioned about their chosen career path. They then had to enter their own classroom without a clear picture of an effective classroom or school culture.

Even if the supervising teacher maintains a well-organized classroom, there are many aspects of becoming a first year or novice teacher that aren’t covered in even the best student teaching experience. Rarely are pre-service teachers present for pre-planning, teacher workdays, or the post-planning time period, which are some of the most important times for setting up and breaking down the classroom. Additionally, the participants in the study expressed concern that the pre-service teachers were not able to see the establishment of the well-managed classroom from the start. Experienced teachers noted that rules and procedures were taught in preparation classes, but this

provided little to no help when trying to balance all the responsibilities of the classroom with the challenge of managing students without the supervising teacher or professor.

Shayna reflected on this overwhelming feeling saying:

I wish I would have known what I was getting into and had some better preparation. It sounds so easy in the classes about the rules and things, but then you get into a real classroom and suddenly you have to plan lessons and call parents and organize the classroom and teach the students the rules and procedures and do the paperwork that comes with it. You have to learn on the job, and unfortunately it just turns into a series of mistakes that you learn from. I keep wondering when I'm going to start recognizing it, but here it comes - *BAM!* Out of nowhere, and I'm left trying to figure out what happened so that I don't do it again.

For those experienced teachers who had served in the capacity of mentor teacher, each of them expressed a great deal of confusion regarding the expectations of the pre-service teacher and affiliated school of higher education. They stated that the expectations in terms of pre-service teacher needs, time frame, and interactions were often not made clear. Furthermore, student teaching placements often occur during the spring semester of a school year, placing a pre-service teacher in charge of the class just prior to the high stakes testing windows in many schools. The teachers reflected on the high stress and pressure that they felt on behalf of the students. Although each of them felt that scores alone on a standardized test was not a measure of their teaching effectiveness, they also realized that these scores are an important measure for school

districts. Such a high stress situation is not conducive to an experienced teacher allowing a teaching novice to plan lessons and have complete control of their classrooms.

Perceptions of self-efficacy. When a teacher is excited about a topic, the students will identify with and internalize that same sense of excitement and desire to learn. A teacher may allow the students to be able to express their own desire to learn new things and continually challenge themselves. Bandura's (1977) most basic tenets of self-efficacy were shaped around the idea that belief in the personal ability to persevere through hardships makes actual perseverance more likely. In addition, studies of self-efficacy in teachers found that teachers who had higher self-efficacy had students with higher self-efficacy as well. In essence, those teachers who portray positivity about the subject they are teaching, and believe that they will be able to influence the students to learn, are more likely to be effective.

Not only does self-efficacy seem to play a role in the creation of positive classroom environments and student achievement outcomes, it may also reveal a relationship between those who decide to remain in the education field and the high attrition rate in novice teachers (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Chambers & Hardy, 2005; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). This was an important consideration in the literature, and something that the teachers in this study discussed as well. When asked about attrition rates, the teachers in this study were quick to reference personal knowledge about teachers that had left the field of teaching. Both Scott and David were quick to think of past instances where teachers who they felt had potential had left after just a few years in the classroom. Scott referenced a traditionally prepared teacher who had two years of

experience in the classroom who left after having to teach a particularly difficult group of students. David spoke of those who had entered the education field after a long career in other fields, but without the passion for students or previous experience.

There was shown to be little correlation between self-efficacy and licensure in past studies (Chambers & Hardy, 2005; Hamman et al., 2006; Leonard & Oakley, 2006; Nir & Kranot, 2006; Sandoval-Lucero, 2006). The stories and reflections from the teachers in this study confirmed findings such as these from the literature. Although I was surprised that the alternatively licensed teachers indicated greater self-efficacy in all categories than the traditionally licensed teachers, the participants seemed to display similar beliefs regarding teacher licensure routes. In actuality, the study participants felt that the difference in self-efficacy primarily seemed to be experience level rather than licensure.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations.

This study was limited to the perceptions of the teachers who were interviewed. The conclusions that were reached were subject to, and resultant of, the interpretation of those opinions and experiences. For the purposes of this study, I did not consider those teachers who have been emergency or provisionally licensed and who have not undergone, or are currently undergoing, any type of full licensure program. Although no current consensus exists in the education field for the definition of alternate licensure, for the purposes of this study the terms non-traditional and alternatively licensed were used interchangeably. These two terms identified teachers who hold a bachelor's degree in the field in which they currently teach, and who either are currently undergoing, or have

undergone, an additional full licensure program from an accredited institute of higher learning.

The idea of alternative licensure and the definition of alternative licensure is a possible area for future research. Literature, statistics, and education research journals are rife with references about alternative licensure, but the lack of a common definition does not always allow the statistics and the true voice of those teachers to emerge. This study may look completely differently if conducted only with traditionally licensed teachers or if the comparison with alternatively licensed teachers was made across a broader spectrum. An area that may hold great interest for a future research is in the comparison and voice of teachers who hold the most controversial of alternative licensures – emergency licensure – with other categories.

In addition, the participant pool is representative of only middle grades teachers. Because of the nature of the responsibilities of middle school teachers and the unique manner of their preparation programs, some of the opinions that were expressed by the participants are specifically relevant to the educational needs of adolescent students. The foundation of the middle school movement began in the early 1960s and includes factors that are typically not typical in other grade level areas. These factors include specialized programming, interdisciplinary teams, specific grade configurations, and scheduling considerations (Thompson & Homestead, 2004). Because of the unique situation, middle school preparation programs must prepare teachers to focus on pedagogy and content in equal amounts, along with understanding the particular psychological and emotional

turbulence that comes with the inherent biological changes of young adolescents (Dickinson & Butler, 2001).

The results of the study may be entirely different or allow for a different voice to emerge if the participants represented a different range of grade levels. Secondary teacher preparation has a tendency to have a greater focus on content preparation, while pre-service elementary teachers spend a great deal of time discussing pedagogy and methodology and very little time in the specific content areas. However, all groups of traditionally licensed teachers have in common the necessity of completing some sort of training or mentorship program. Future researchers may wish to examine more closely each of these relationships and the varied perspectives that come along with the different classifications of licensure.

In addition, the literature reveals that self-efficacy studies fall short in measuring the relationship between experience and self-efficacy, and more importantly between self-efficacy and actual classroom effectiveness (Guyton et al., 1991; Miller et al., 1998). While Bandura's (1977) SCT postulates that positive self-efficacy creates positive classroom effectiveness, a lack of an adequate means to measure classroom effectiveness leaves a gaping hole in the understanding of self-efficacy and whether this should be something that is encouraged in teacher preparation programs, and particularly in selection of potential teacher candidates. Future studies are necessary in this area in order to more precisely measure the strength of the relationship between self-efficacy and classroom effectiveness.

Although this study attempted to look at the differences in self-efficacy and classroom effectiveness, it must be considered that the results of the study may be skewed by the nature of those participants who chose to participate in a study of this nature. Prior to agreeing to the study the participants were clear of the nature of the study and of the fact that I would spend a great deal of time exploring their perceived effectiveness in the classroom. Each of the sixteen participants in the study are acknowledged effective teachers within their own school systems. Because of this, the classroom observations and self-efficacy results confirmed this information, and the results and views of all teachers may not be completely represented by this study.

Additional actual efficacy data proved difficult to obtain during the research period. Only eight of the participants elected to participate in the video observations as required by the initial research proposal, so although generalized efficacy data was collected, specific and in-depth triangulation of the data through the use of efficacy observations was not available for analysis in this study. For future studies, more complete efficacy data compared with more varied participants is an important consideration to building greater knowledge of the relationship teacher perspectives and efficacy. Although all the of the participants initially agreed to participate in the observations, due to the time constraints of both myself and the participants imposed by state standardized tests and additional restrictions by some of the schools, many of the participants either did not feel comfortable with the observations, or simply did not have time to organize and complete the observations.

In addition, the teachers and students in this were representative of the those teachers in suburban and rural communities only. Although I gave consideration to including an urban school district in the study due primarily to the extent of alternative licensure literature that relates to urban districts, I felt that the variation of types of alternative licensure among urban school districts would not be feasible for this study. Future research studies in this area could give special consideration to the differences in perspectives between urban, suburban, and rural teachers on the importance of teacher preparation and the characteristics of effective teaching.

Finally, although demographic information was collected in this study, I did not differentiate between the teachers by age or gender – both important considerations in the classroom. Teachers in this study, especially co-teachers who have had the opportunity to observe multiple teaching situations, remarked on the differences in student engagement and classroom management between male and female teachers as well as younger and older teachers. Anecdotal evidence indicates that teachers who are younger are more prone to naturally incorporate technology into the classroom. In contrast, these same younger teachers are less likely to have had experience with setting boundaries with children and adolescents, and many times report their greatest struggle lies with basic classroom management. A more in-depth comparison of any of these two groups may give greater insight into the overall nature of the effective teacher.

Conclusion

What qualities make a teacher effective or ineffective? How will the education world move forward and attempt to define and measure the effectiveness of teachers?

Finally, what part will educators today play in education reform, specifically the reshaping of teacher preparation? These are all important questions that must be considered if the field of education wants to be publically perceived as equal with other esteemed professions. However, some of the most important voices in that conversation –classroom teachers – are too often ignored.

The idea of *passion* in the classroom became a very important consideration early in the dissertation process for me and I soon found myself adjusting to the unexpected lens of this term. After conducting the first few interviews it became a theme that I hadn't heard before, and quickly an idea that I felt merited greater exploration. Each of the participants referenced the idea that passion in the content and for students was ultimately at the core of effective teaching. As we moved forward, the common refrain led me to understand that this was the need for the qualitative study that I had conducted. Although my study is not the first to ever address the idea of efficacy in the classroom or characteristics of effectiveness, by giving a voice to the participants the inherent need for a pedagogy of passion became a credential in the eyes of current effective classroom teachers and an ideal that they felt needed to be fostered in pre-service classrooms and teacher preparation programs.

The teachers in this study were able to bring the familiar voices and conversation from the hallways and lunchrooms to the world of education research. Many times the discussions between teachers are focused on what television program was on last night, or complaints about a difficult class or political situation we may currently be facing. Perhaps educators need to spend more time discussing topics relevant to their

instructional goals. At the conclusion of the final interview, Deborah took the opportunity to thank me for the experience. She commented that she had appreciated the opportunity to talk about effectiveness with other teachers, as it was something that had re-energized her own feelings about teaching. She followed her up her words of gratitude with a final statement that “teachers simply don’t do this enough,” and I have to agree with that assessment. Each of the teachers was eager to answer the questions and enjoyed taking the time to make a careful consideration of some of the ideas that we had discussed.

The future of the profession depends upon this kind of opportunity to mesh the practical academic world with the work of education research. Those who wish to become leaders in the education reform movement should embrace the perspectives of those that are currently serving on the front lines – the classroom teachers. My hope is that studies such as this one will provide a starting point for potentially difficult conversations between educators and researchers.

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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL LETTER

IRB Approval 1045.020711: Teacher perceptions of self-efficacy as related to teacher preparation route in novice and experienced alternatively and traditionally licensed teachers.

Good Morning Kristi,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. Attached you'll find the forms for those cases.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

We will be glad to send you a written memo from the Liberty IRB, as needed, upon request.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.

IRB Chair
Associate Professor
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502
(434) 592-4054

APPENDIX B. INFORMED CONSENT

DISSERTATION RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

“Teacher Perceptions of Self-Efficacy as Related to Teacher Preparation Route in Novice and Experienced Alternatively and Traditionally Licensed Teachers”

Researcher: Kristi L. Kilby Goodwin, Ed. D. Candidate
Liberty University

Participant’s Consent Form

I am being asked to read the following material to ensure that I am informed of the nature of this research study and of how I will participate in it, if I consent to do so. Signing this form will indicate that I have been so informed and that I give my consent. Federal regulations require written informed consent prior to participation in this research study so that I can know the nature and risks of my involvement and can decide whether to participate or not to participate in a free and informed manner. The interviews will take between 45 – 90 minutes to complete. The written responses will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Risks

The risks of participating are minimal. Information gathered will be held confidential. The study will not benefit you directly, but will add to the body of knowledge regarding the teacher preparation process.

Purpose

I am being invited to voluntarily participate in the above-titled research project. The purpose of this study is to examine and explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of their teacher preparation program. This investigation will serve as the foundation for a dissertation. The data gathered will be used to refine and answer research questions posed in the research project.

Selection Criteria

I understand that I am invited to participate in this study because of my certification status and number of years of teaching experience.

Procedure

If I agree to participate, I will be asked to participate in up to three interviews, and possibly another follow up interview. I may also be asked to provide some written responses or journal entries. I will also be asked to submit a series of video recorded sessions as an example of my own classroom practices. My participation is strictly voluntary, and I may terminate the procedures at any time.

Confidentiality

All tapes, transcripts, responses, and notes will be kept strictly confidential. Excerpts from some of the transcripts will be used in the dissertation. They may also appear in research or practitioner publication journals. I understand that the researcher will substitute a pseudonym for my real name and teaching assignment location. The data collected will be stored indefinitely in a private area accessible only by the researcher.

I have read and understood the above information. You can find out more by calling Kristi K. Goodwin at 770.503.6514. The Liberty University Research Office can also provide general information about the rights of human subjects in research.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this research study.

Name of participant (please print)

Date

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Date

APPENDIX C. TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY SCALE

College of Education
Phone 614-292-3774
29 West Woodruff Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1177
www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy
FAX 614-292-7900
Hoy.17@osu.edu
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor
Psychological Studies in Education

Dear Mrs. Kilby-Goodwin,

You have my permission to use the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* in your research. A copy of both the long and short forms of the instrument as well as scoring instructions can be found at:

<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm>

Best wishes in your work,
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹ (long form)

Teacher Beliefs		How much can you do?								
Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.		Nothing	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1.	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to help your students think critically?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How much can you do to foster student creativity?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
13.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
14.	How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
15.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
16.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
17.	How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
18.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
19.	How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
20.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
21.	How well can you respond to defiant students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
22.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
23.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
24.	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

Directions for Scoring the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale¹

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary
Arleta Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Construct Validity

For information the construct validity of the Teachers' Sense of Teacher efficacy Scale, see:

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805.

Factor Analysis

It is important to conduct a factor analysis to determine how your participants respond to the questions. We have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management*, but at times the make up of the scales varies slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full 24-item scale (or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

Subscale Scores

To determine the *Efficacy in Student Engagement*, *Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management* subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally these groupings are:

Long Form

<i>Efficacy in Student Engagement:</i>	Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
<i>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:</i>	Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
<i>Efficacy in Classroom Management:</i>	Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

Short Form

<i>Efficacy in Student Engagement:</i>	Items 2, 3, 4, 11
<i>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:</i>	Items 5, 9, 10, 12
<i>Efficacy in Classroom Management:</i>	Items 1, 6, 7, 8

Reliabilities

In Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 783-805, the following were found:

	Long Form			Short Form		
	Mean	SD	alpha	Mean	SD	alpha
OSTES	7.1	.94	.94	7.1	.98	.90
Engagement	7.3	1.1	.87	7.2	1.2	.81
Instruction	7.3	1.1	.91	7.3	1.2	.86
Management	6.7	1.1	.90	6.7	1.2	.86

¹ Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale*. We prefer the name, *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale*.

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW GUIDE

First Interview

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What made you decide to become a teacher?
3. Describe your licensure process.
4. What is your definition of traditional and alternative licensure practices?
5. What do you feel were the greatest strengths of your particular licensure process?
6. What are some past experiences that you feel helped shape your current teaching practice?
7. If you could change anything about your path leading to where you are now as a teacher what would it be and why?
- For traditionally prepared teachers:
 - What is your perspective of teachers who complete alternative licensure programs?
 - How do you think that alternatively certified teachers view traditionally licensed teachers?
- For alternatively prepared teachers:
 - What is your perspective of teachers who complete traditional licensure practices?
 - How do you think that traditionally prepared teachers view alternatively licensed teachers?

Second Interview

1. What is your definition of effective teaching?
2. If you were to describe your picture of the perfect classroom, what would it look like?
3. Describe the practices of an effective teacher.

4. How do you think that effective teachers and classroom practices are created?
5. In your opinion, what is the single most important factor in creating an effective teacher?
6. What are some of the ineffective practices that you see in classrooms on regular basis?
7. What do you think is the greatest factor in creating ineffective teaching practices?

Third Interview

1. Describe your perspective of the No Child Left Behind Legislation.
2. What is your opinion of “highly qualified teacher” as defined by No Child Left Behind?
3. What do you think is the relationship between being a “highly qualified” and a “highly effective” teacher?
4. In your opinion, how has the teacher preparation process been affected by the No Child Left Behind legislation?

APPENDIX E. SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Deborah Raw Data.

Transcription of Interview 1

March 18, 2011

Participant 9 (P9): Experienced traditionally certified teacher

Primary Researcher: Kristi L. Kilby-Goodwin (R)

Length: 36:45.8

P9: This is my 17th year teaching and I teach 8th grade physical science.

R: So, how did you come to be a teacher?

P9: It was pretty much something that I'd always wanted to do. Just... I had a 5th grade teacher that was influential in my life and I just wanted to do the same thing that she did for me. Gladys Turner, 5th grade.

R: It's amazing how those memories stick with us, isn't it?

P9: Uh huh.

R: So how would you classify yourself like traditional versus alternative and how would you define those certification routes?

P9: I would probably say... and I'm even working on a paper now about this... I probably would say that I try to be a blend of both, but we use a lot of progressivism, and traditional teaching – especially teaching science – I do believe with all my heart that my students understand and retain information better if they can do science, if they can maybe, I can include where they're investigating first and then learning facts and terms from that later. Or if they get background knowledge first and then do a hands-on to feel

what they have learned about. But then I also know that a lot of my students need some practice, some repetition, some direct instruction – explaining things. I try to do both. A happy balance.

R: A happy balance. Yeah. That's a hard thing to achieve sometimes. That's the trick right?

P9: It is. It's a trick.

R: So when you... you mentioned your 5th grade teacher, when you got into teaching... when... when you were training to become a teacher, was it like the way you thought it would be?

P9: I would say that my first year was probably not so much. My certification was middle grades. At that time it was just a general 4 – 8 certification and I taught 7th grade science and math and I was quite unprepared and surprised at all the discipline that I had to deal with. After that first year, my second year I went to the 6th grade and it was everything that I thought it would be.

R: Yeah. Do you think that was a change in the students or a change in just knowing what to expect?

P9: A little of both. That first year, regardless of if you're in an ideal situation or not, it's a little overwhelming. Just getting used to all the paperwork, the routines, the extra duties, and all that. So I did have that under my belt, so that probably contributed to my second year being better. But I definitely do also think it was the developmental stage of the students too. They were much calmer, a little sweeter than my 7th graders had been.

R: When you think back to your certification and your preparation, what do you think was your greatest strength that you had from the program? Or was there a greatest strength from that program?

P9: My strength definitely was from my science classes. I went to Mercer University at night and had...

[phone lost connection at this point during the interview...]

R: You were telling me that you just were... you went to Mercer...

P9: I went to Mercer at night. My strength areas probably came because of my science teachers there and their encouragement to teach hands-on – we called it the hands-on at that time – but hands-on inquiry you know... learning by doing. And the methods that my teacher taught were the same way. We were at Mercer doing hands-on science activities and things, so that would probably be the strongest thing.

R: Did you have a... so the content classes were kind of a content and methodology together?

P9: Yes.

R: Did you... did you have like a student teaching experience?

P9: I did. I student taught in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade gifted science and it was the same thing. Just the students were very involved when I started my observations the teacher taught hands-on. Students were doing research and investigations so then I implemented that into my lesson planning and my student teaching and then just kind of kept it over the years.

R: So if there was anything you would have changed about your route... is there anything that you would have changed or that you felt wasn't as helpful to you once you actually got into the classroom? Or you would have like to have more of?

P9: I think... I think it would have helped. I don't know that I could have made the changes – it might have just been the way the program went or a lot of the college programs went – but definitely I think more realistic and more training on discipline issues in the classroom. Classroom management.

R: Right. That's a hard one to have to learn.

P9: It is. And I know a lot of it is that you just have to get in there and do it. But I had little to nothing in that area.

R: Yeah. And it's a hard one to walk into a classroom and I struggled with that my first year. I remember telling one of my friends, for me... where was the class called filling out paperwork? I would have liked that one.

P9: I agree! I agree! And I felt. One thing that over the years, and I tell this to new teachers if they're observing or I have a parapro now who is certified but she finished in December so she's looking for a job, especially in science if somebody would have told this to me day one it would have helped. But you know... we are doing this lab and this activity and these are the rules and can either follow them or you can stand on the wall and takes notes and you don't participate in the lab. Because as soon as I started doing that I could wait two or three minutes and then go back to the student and say okay are you ready to try again and then they get right back in and they're going and it just is a

quick easy way to deal with anybody who was out of line. And I needed that 100 years ago.

R: So you've been in the classroom... you said 17 years right?

P9: Yes.

R: What role do you think experience plays in that too? In shaping teachers in the classroom and effective teachers in the classroom?

P9: I think that's... that's kind of just inevitable. After a year of being in a classroom you learn from colleagues and from reading in books and from different things like that. I think that my experience is valuable in the classroom. I try to convince my university professors – don't we get extra points for that? I've started back on a higher degree, so I think that experience is very valuable.

R: So would you say that there is a difference... or how would you define teachers who may be certified through an alternative route rather than an undergraduate degree in education?

P9: Well. With my area being science I would have to say that I think there is a huge benefit to people teaching science that their field was a science - like say if they had a degree in biology or chemistry and then went back to get certified. Or went through the Teach Back program or whatever all else is going on. I don't think it's a bad thing for them to be educated in the field first, but I don't think it's easy to go directly to the classroom. I think they definitely should go through some kind of student teaching or training. And that might be part of it too. Or like, I know there are people in my masters program that are five year students. They did their first four years in a science field and

now they're getting a masters in science education and then going to the classroom. I probably was a bit more confident having that earlier years experience, so I had a stronger science background and was teaching science. I've had to really learn a lot on my own.

R: Yeah. And you mentioned that student teaching portion as being important. Why do you think that is so important?

P9: I think a lot of people probably don't really have a true understanding of what goes on in public schools – for any schools for that matter. I think they definitely need experiences to see the real world before they commit. Just because it is... it's... it's a busy day.

R: It is. And... what... if you were... what about teachers who may be... like a provisional program where they are taking their education classes, but they are also teaching full time in the classroom?

P9: [long pause]. That's probably... I'm just trying to think if I've worked with anybody that was a provisional teacher. That's kind of... I think that could go either way. Because... I think it would be... probably a person who was pretty determined and felt like they really wanted to teach that would go through a process like that. Or it could be, in years past we've had such shortages of teachers that, it would be a quick easy route for a school system to get a person in the classroom. Are you asking me do I think they are going to be as effective a teacher?

R: Yeah. Just kind of what is your perspective of their teaching abilities. Like if you were... of their effectiveness yeah.

P9: I probably am... undecided on that. [long pause] I probably would say that they would not be as effective. I'm not saying that they wouldn't be good or that they couldn't be over time. I just think it would probably take longer.

R: Right. Do you think that teachers who would go through that route would view traditional teachers in that way or that alternatively certified teachers in a particular way?

P9: [pause] If they were working in the room next door to me or something?

R: Right. Right.

P9: Would I view them differently?

R: Would you view them differently and do you think they would view you differently? Or how would you think that?

P9: Umm... maybe. I probably would just... it probably would be my nature if I had a provisional teacher either in my science department or even another subject that I was close by – I probably would try to... be more helpful. From viewing... the different point of view or viewing differently... ummmm... I probably would be a little concerned and try to be a little more helpful and help them learn the ropes a little bit more so. Am I answering your question?

R: Yeah. Yeah. Do you think there is... exists a divide in schools between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers? Do you think they tend to... I don't know... is there a segregation in schools?

P9: That I have not seen. I don't think so.

R: What about from the administrative end? Do you think there is a perceived difference there?

P9: Yes. I do.

R: What do you think?

P9: I think that...[pause] I think that administrators are probably a little more careful or a little more strict with their evaluations. It maybe that...[pause]... I say that, but first year teachers, first two or three year teachers – that may be true for them too regardless. I'm gonna say they probably are a little more...[pause] critical. Even if it is constructive criticism.

R: Right. And that was going to be my next question... you know, you've been in the classroom for a while so is there really a difference between first year alternatively certified teachers and first year traditionally certified teachers? Would you view a difference between... what difference would you view between those two?

P9: So you're saying all first year – alternative versus traditional? And alternative you are talking about the teachers who are going through either a provisional or Teach Back or Troops to Teachers or things like that?

R: Something like that. Or maybe even someone who is a 35 year old career changer... and they're like maybe they've gone through a masters and got a masters of science in ed, but this is their first year in a classroom?

P9: Okay. And then your question was what again? What do I think about them?

R: Yeah. How would you perceive them? What would you have any different perceptions between a first year traditional and an alternatively first year.

P9: Probably not. No. I probably would not.

R: Do you think there is... umm... a difference?

P9: Well... hold on. I say that, but when I think of... [long pause]. I don't know. I don't know. I think of someone who has been out doing other jobs and then they have come to the decision that they really want to make a difference and being an educator and help kids and help them learn and be successful. I think that's big. But also for the same, somebody's, even... not been out in the working world, but got a degree and then decided they really wanted to make a difference and teach. I don't think I would view them differently than someone who went to college traditionally to be a teacher because that was also their goal and dreams. I don't think I would view them differently.

R: For those career switchers, what do you think they add to field of education outside of...or maybe they don't... I don't know?

P9: I think they probably...[pause] I think they can be very helpful and they add some common sense. I think we get so locked into the world of education. I think they are able to bring some common sense, some direction of what our kids will be going into when they graduate from high school and going into the real world. I think they have a lot of offer in that area.

R: So if you... if you could change anything about your path being to today... being the teacher you are today... is there anything you would have changed?

P9: [Long Pause] Probably not so much. I may have gone back for higher education earlier for my own self. But as far as... what I've done so far and my training, not so much.

R: And how do you think the whole higher education plays into that? Do you think it's important?

P9: I do. I [pause] I was very active when I first started teaching... professional learning was really big and I was always encouraged to go to workshops and learning techniques and things to do in the classroom and staying abreast of things to do, but... I was never encouraged to do any kind of research about science education or about students and learners. It was always... workshops were always methods and here try this and do that, but it really wasn't supported with the research behind it. So I think definitely, it probably would have helped me to have done research a little bit earlier.

R: What level are you working on?

P9: I'm getting my masters.

R: And so do you feel like there are a lot of practical applications in your masters?

P9: Absolutely. It has been [pause] so helpful. Especially with being in science and I had the opportunity to do a... a real science class, we went to Skidaway Island. I was a scientist. I was a marine scientist. I had to come up with a research project, do the testing, write the paper, gather the data, keep the notebook, it was just... that was the first real science that I had practiced in all these years of teaching and that was summer before last so... I'm sorry... last summer. So that was a big... I think it would be helpful for all science teachers to have a real science experience like that.

R: Right.

P9: It has made a huge difference. My classes from educational foundations to ed psych and my gifted classes – that's been very helpful. I've always taught inclusion classes almost from day one and then I took a class that was Teaching Science to students with

special needs, which I've been doing forever, but that was awesome. I learned some things that I did not know. Oh yes. Getting my masters has been very helpful.

R: Do you think that it would have been as significant to you earlier in your career?

P9: Yes. Yes I do.

R: And this is the last question. Thank you so much for helping me out by the way.

P9: Oh. I'm happy to do it. I hope I'm helping and not changing my mind too much as I think.

R: No it's great. I love it. It's always good to get somebody else's perspective and I appreciate your thoughtfulness about things. So you're creating Donna Jo's school for teachers and you can create whatever program you want to create. You are going manufacture all the science teachers and they're going to be excellent. What is your program going to look like?

P9: My program is going to... well, like I said a few minutes ago, there will definitely have to spend some time doing real science. They don't have to go away, but they will work either hand and hand with somebody in the science community or they'll spend certain amount of time – maybe not doing typical homework, but doing a science experiment and the research that goes along with it. In my Donna Jo's school for science teachers they definitely will do research in a way that will be beneficial to them so that they'll want to continue as they go through the years to always be learning new things and staying abreast of things that are going on in the science world and how that applies to the student as learner. I would definitely leave knowing how to have a safe, well-disciplined science classroom so that students are not hurt, but they learn, but they

don't... misbehave or interrupt learning for anybody else. But they will do all they can to have their students enthusiastic about science. If they don't love science – because I do realize that everybody doesn't love science – but they will at least have learned and it will have been a pleasant experience for them. And science teachers will just be strong and confident in helping learn about careers in science. But they will also be knowledgeable about participating in professional organizations that also will help them stay up to date with trends/ new ideas/ methods of teaching science. They will be doing some field trips and things like that too.

R: I want to go to your school. Can I go there?

P9: You can. We do have the best middle school in the land. I don't know if you've heard that before.

R: I have. I think we have a mutual friend who calls it The Greatest Middle School in Land.

P9: Well... our principal... Mr. Cooper... have you met him?

R: I haven't. I'm of course familiar with Dr. Simpson.

P9: Yes. She's precious. But... and Mr. Cooper has been... this is my third year at that school. It's my fifth year in eighth grade physical science. He's a micro-manager, but he tries hard not to be too into everything. But he finishes the daily announcements with "and welcome to the best middle school in the land."

R: Well. That's good. Sometimes a positive attitude can go a long way.

P9: It does. It's huge.

R: That's pretty much all the questions that I have unless there is anything else you want to say about certification, certification process, or how teachers become certified or anything like that.

P9: Overall, it's been an overall okay experience for me. I think when Georgia went to teachers being highly qualified in their fields, the year or two that all that changes was going on it was kind of crazy. And there were people that had been teaching for several years that were, reh reh reh reh reh about stuff and grumpy and complaining, but I think it's been a good thing for Georgia. I think it's been a good thing to have teachers to be pretty strong – to be experts in their field. No. I don't have any complaints for Georgia for what I've been through. It's been good.

R: Yeah. Have you always taught in Georgia though? Did you teach in any other state?

P9: I've always taught and Georgia.

R: So what I'm going to do is take this interview and I'll take it home and I'm going to transcribe it.

P9: Bless you.

R: What is your definition of teacher effectiveness?

P9: My definition would be able to be realized by students enjoying science and they are able to perform testing to show that they know their stuff.

R: What do you think some of the practices are of an effective teacher?

P9: Like methods?

R: What are some things you would see an effective teacher doing?

P9: I think making sure that students know what they need to learn, and then presenting the information in a variety of methods – having the students have some discussion, maybe some movement around the room. Of course, in science, doing hands-on labs. And you can't do problem-based learning every day, but having them do some problem-based learning, and create it so you can kind of get them started and then have them asking questions. Having opportunities to write about what they learn. Draw. Incorporating all kinds of instructional methods, and then do some information assessments, some summarizing to check for understanding as you go. In our school – in general – we do summarizing as we go along where the students have to give it back to you.

R: That's one of the ones that I'm working on right now is remembering to summarize – to come back to it in the end.

P9: That's hard, with time management. A lot of times we get carried away or end up taking longer on a topic or something, but generally I do try to summarize daily.

R: So how do you think effective teachers are created?

P9: I think that because of what's going on in Georgia right now with high-stakes testing and you're busting it trying to get your standards taught, I think it is not always easy, but my goal is to take the standard that has to be taught and then try to find a creative way to present it. It's not always easy – just the sheer factor of trying to get all my standards in. Try to have a sense of humor to look at things in a fun way. Sometimes just to kind of go out on a limb and try doing something different instead of the same old way I've always done it. Sometimes that's a little bit trial and effort to try to find an effective way to get

the message across. Probably, too, just getting some of my students and some of their interests and lifestyles to try to tie it in to what they already know. Because of where I teach we have a lot of students who live in the country on farms. They have chores and things to do, so lots of times I can tie in physical science concepts with that. We have a lot of students who are interested in race cars and that kind of thing so that helps to know that to tie in things.

R: Yeah, that's handy. That relate ability is sometimes so important. How do we teach teachers how to do that? How did you learn how to do that?

P9: A lot of what I do I learned at the college level when I was taking science methods classes. I was blessed with some wonderful professors who really believed in hands-on...I did have to learn a little balance – and maybe it was a little too extreme with hands-on and don't bury the textbook, because my first couple of years it was very difficult because I couldn't dance on the tables every day. So probably college instruction in my science methods classes, and then trial and error, experience. If I were to teach science teachers I would probably model all kinds of methods to use – as well as classroom management skills.

R: What are some of the ineffective things that you think go on in public schools?

P9: A couple of things. Lack of teacher enthusiasm for their subject. I think some – I can't say older teachers because I'm a veteran. I've been teaching 17 years and I've worked with people who are more experienced and less experienced that are just boring and not excited about their content area. I think that's a big thing, and then I think it's ineffective if a teacher does not have good classroom management skills – if there's

chaos in the classroom or students going to sleep, that is very ineffective. So I definitely think good classroom management skills, and then the again using writing instructional methods non-stop; I mean, at the middle school level students need to be able to talk about the content, move around, and have some social activities blended into science. It takes a lot of time and energy on the teacher's part to check around the room and make sure the students are staying on topic as much as possible, a lot of redirection. Usually, if you're strong and firm in the beginning, they kind of get the routine down pat.

R: Where do you think that ineffectiveness comes from?

P9: I think it's a couple of things. I think it is maybe a kind of false sense of what goes on in the classroom for new teachers, and maybe even – not necessarily young, but I know for me, at the beginning, I started teaching when I was 30, so I felt like, "Oh, I'm going show up. I'm going to teach, and the students are all going to sit down and be still and be quiet, and it's all going to go well." I had a real false sense of what was going to be going on in the classroom, and I think that's part of it. And I think people get burned out because it does require so much energy, a lot of classroom management, and the discipline, I think, is hard for a lot of teachers. It burns them out so they're not as eager to put a lot into their instruction for their students.

R: Yeah, you kind of get bogged down in everything.

P9: Yeah, they're kind of negative about the whole situation, and some of that, I think, is directly related to administration. I've been in both situations where I've had a strong administration that makes it clear to the students and parents that we're going to learn here, you're going to behave, or you're going to be out of there. And then I've had an

administrator where the parent whines and cries and says, “Oh, shouldn’t make my child do this or that,” and the administrator bends to them, and the students know that they rule, and that’s very ineffective.

R: Yeah. I hear a lot of the rhetoric of good teachers versus bad teacher; you hear that a lot in the news lately. I just wonder, what is the definition of good and bad, and who is coming up with these definitions, and what is the perspective behind that?

P9: Right, because it’s very subjective.

R: Am I a bad teacher a bad because I got on to your kid because they were off task? Or am I a bad teacher because I didn’t get on to your kid because they were off task?

P9: Right. Sometimes it’s a no-win.

R: So, NCLB – what is your perspective on that?

P9: I may be a little different than a lot of people in education, but I believe a lot of good has come out of NCLB. I think it has forced indicators to look at what they do on a daily basis as far as getting it across to the students. I think that there are problem some extremes that have come along with it as far as the accountability being such a huge deal based on one test. I don’t know that it should be the end-all. I think we do have to test so that we can see if students are making progress. I think that I – personally – have been a better teacher because of NCLB. It’s helped me stay focused on what I do in the classroom and teaching to my standards. I think in Georgia – with our performance standards – and we’ve got things aligned so that students aren’t getting the same thing three years in a row because that’s what the teacher wants to do – because that used to be a problem, so I think that we’re doing better because of NCLB. And which, also I just

learned recently – is kind of just built on some school things that came out back in 1965 after 1964 was desegregation and civil rights and all that went on. Well, then in 1965 a lot of educational things came out - I think Lyndon Johnson was president at the time – that were along the lines of NCLB. NCLB is just a little firmer and more elaborate, so I think , so I think we've been trying for a long time to do some of the things we're doing now just because of it.

R: Yeah, and I think you've got the movement now towards the common core standards for language arts and math. I wonder when science is going to follow, because, you know, we've had the national standards for a long time, and that project – I don't know if you're familiar with Project 2061 and having all that there, but I wonder when science is going to follow that.

P9: The national research council just came out with new national science standards in 2010. I think they're pretty similar to what we had; I think they added in a lot more research actions for the students to do, and then in 2012 Georgia is one of the few – if not the only state – that has added science as part of our AYP in all the efforts for Race to the Top. Have you heard that?

R: Yeah. It's our secondary indicator this year at our school.

P9: What percentage did y'all go with?

R: I have no idea.

P9: Banks County put in for a waiver in 2012, then it will count for us in 2013.

R: Yeah, they told us for sure we're going online with it counting next year for AYP, so I guess we'll get more updates on that over the summer – a specific number, but I think

we're coming in at maybe 56 or 58% - something like that. The other part of the NCLB legislation – besides the standardized testing – was the mandate that every classroom have a highly qualified teacher in it, so what is your perspective of that term – highly qualified?

P9: I kind of have mixed feelings on that because – from my personal experience when I went through school – I went through middle grades education with a concentration in science. More of my classes were science, but I don't have a degree in science, and now science is a critical need field still, but everybody's pushing, "We've got to have a science majors, then get a masters to teach. We've got to have biology major teacher biology – physics major teach physics." And you know, I'm not so sure that that's necessarily true. I think a good teacher – if there's a need for them to teach a certain subject, they're going to learn it and do a good job teaching that, but on the other hand, I'd hate to have a bad teacher teaching something, so the highly qualified – I think, yes, it's good – but I don't think it's impossible for someone who has to learn a new subject to learn it and do it well. Does that make sense?

R: Yeah. The thing – for me – is, hearing the term, "highly qualified" versus the term, "highly effective," and I'm not sure that those two things always match up.

P9: Right. Very true. Yes. I guess that's what I was saying when I talked about teachers who maybe went into a subject that's maybe not their favorite or strong area. They can still be very effective teaching it. Yes, I agree. That's a hard one because I know – for me, myself – I even took the Broadfield science, 'cause at some point I thought I might need to get some high school experience under my belt 'cause I've done

elementary and middle school, but boy, I would really have to study to teach high school science. But I don't think that I COULDN'T do it. I think I could be effective.

R: And that's what I'm certified in; I'm Broadfield Science 6-12. It opens the doors, but then again, it opens the doors, if you know what I mean.

P9: Yeah. Like I could very happily teach environmental science, ecology – that kind of thing. I could teach high school physical science, but oh boy, if I had to teach biology or chemistry I would have to study. I would probably refuse to teach physics because I just don't have the math background for that.

R: But you know, if you were asked to teach it, it doesn't necessarily mean – just because you're not comfortable with the content right now – that doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to be ineffective.

P9: Right. I would pull through. I might be one day ahead, but I'd be one day ahead.

R: Yeah. Here's a question for you: Do you think you're an effective teacher?

P9: I do. Yes.

R: How do you know?

P9: For the most part – with physical science – especially physical science, I mean, I've taught younger grades and other areas – definitely, yes. A lot of it was – I think – enthusiasm and personal relationships with my students, knowing them, but with physical science being a difficult subject and having success – and most of the students understanding and enjoying it, even if they're not typically science people – I do OK. Especially – even with my...I've always taught inclusion, and my special needs students do OK. They may not make that 800, but they get pretty close.

R: Do you think you're more effective in some areas than others at being a teacher – because I think we all know that being a teacher doesn't involve just classroom; I wish it only dealt with being in the classroom – but there's dealing with administrators, dealing with parents... Do you feel like there are areas you're stronger in and areas you may have weaknesses in?

P9: I'm pretty strong on leadership and dealing with other teachers and administrators. I really can't think of much for parents – not that it's negative – it's just that where I am now there's not a lot of parent involvement. I do try every year at the beginning of the year to call every single parent of every single child that I teach. It ends up taking usually a couple of weeks to get it all covered, but this year – because of being in school – is the first year that I have not done that, and I really didn't notice a difference, to be honest. I hate paperwork. My worst area is probably staying on top of grading and writing stuff – feedback – to students – other than talking through it. Written stuff – I'm terrible about that. So probably leadership and working with teachers, and then in the past I've always done well with parents, but I just haven't had that opportunity at the 8th grade level where I am now.

R: Do you think those other things are a really integral part of being a teacher?

P9: It's necessary – yes; however, I will say this: My first several years of teaching I would get frustrated at what I felt their parents didn't do to get them ready for school, or have them practice being the student that they should be, but then I realized I have no control over what parents do. I have that child for x amount of time. It's up to me to do anything and everything I can to help them get it. Once I got in that frame of mind,

probably the parental part of it was not as important. Administration and working with the teachers is inevitable.

R: Yeah – and the massive amounts of paperwork.

P9: Yeah, I would start off strong – and I thought I might do better this year, but yeah – I think we can't avoid that, either.

R: The kids laugh at me. I actually teach in a lab room all the time because they're just short on space so I happened to get the lab as my classroom – which has its good points and it's bad points – and the front lab table is my desk, and they're like, "Mrs. Goodwin, we haven't seen your desk in about two weeks. We're not sure that you're still back there, and we're kind of afraid for you to sit at your desk because we might lose you."

P9: And by spring time you've got piles of stuff everywhere; I understand!

R: Exactly. So, is teaching hard?

P9: I don't know that I would say it's hard. Is it demanding and taxing? Yes. But is it still a pleasure? Yes. So, is that hard? Yeah – then I guess I would say, "yes."

R: You know the saying, "Those that can DO, and those that can't TEACH," – right?

P9: Yeah, I HATE that!

R: You know, because we just babysit for nine months, and we get off at 2:30 and get paid vacations in the summer, right?

P9: Yeah, and we don't work as hard as anybody else. That's terrible. Terrible.

R: Do you feel it's demanding, though?

P9: Yes – absolutely.

R: But you still want to stick with it, anyway.

P9: Yes. Well, I say yes – I love my job, but I’ve been teaching 17 years, I just got my masters, and I’m going to continue on in anticipation of getting out of the classroom and doing something a little different – either teaching pre-service teachers or maybe corporate level or at the national level in setting policy – but that’s because I’m just ready to go to the next level.

R: You just feel like you could serve better...

P9: Yeah, I could still contribute to education at a different level.

R: That’s really all I’ve got – unless you have anything else you want to say about teaching, teaching effectiveness, certification.

P9: Well, I think there’s always room for improvement. I have personal issues - like, when I was writing my paper I was comparing China science ed. to U.S. science ed. and a lot of it was looking at their culture. Any time I bring up that I’ve been to China or working on my China comparison everybody says, “Oh, they just blow us away on tests.” Well, there’s a whole lot more to the story. You know what I mean? We do have a lot of good things going on in education, and I think we don’t hear that enough.

R: Yeah, it’s kind of hard to feel like the whipping boy these days.

P9: Yeah, but there are a lot of good things going on in a lot of public schools in the United States today. A lot of good things going on in Georgia.

R: I said that was the last question, but I just want to ask...so, you want to move into a teacher preparation – teaching pre-service teachers, maybe?

P9: That was my original goal – to teach at the college level – especially elementary or middle school. Really, I’ve spent more years at the elementary level, but I’ve really

enjoyed middle school. I feel that elementary needs more science and they need teachers that are not afraid of it. It seems like when I've worked at the elementary level a lot of teachers were not strong science people and they were not comfortable teaching science, so to work with people to have stronger science at a younger level – that was my original goal. But since I've been in school and I've had the opportunity to go to China I'm almost thinking I might like to deal with policy things first, and then we'll go to the college area with both areas of knowledge.

R: So what would you like to be the ultimate result of your policy work or that kind of thing?

P9: To speak up and have more positive things being said and done about science education here, and definitely to push for students to have opportunities to actively participate in labs and in research and inquiring, and that leads to smaller class sizes, resources in the classroom – that kind of thing.

R: I just asked because that's part of what I'm looking for – getting teachers' perspectives as how – if – things need to change or not – and how they need to change.

P9: One class I had this past semester was actually a doctorate level class, but it was the only science ed. class that was available, and we looked at science ed. over time – you know, a historical study of it – and we've been being bashed for years! It's always something...how horrible it is...how we're behind other countries...and I think a lot of it has been due to politics; if they can bash it, OK, then, let's pour more money into it and we can get more dollars. But we've had a lot of good things going on, and we need to quit being hammered.

R: Yeah. The NAEP scores – we actually didn't do too bad on those.

P9: Yeah, and the big test that I looked at was the PISA which was given to 60 countries. That's the one that Shanghai came in number one in reading, math and science. The U.S. was like at 23 and 24, but Kristi, it's just different. And the other thing is, in Shanghai – that's where they have all their best and their brightest. It would be like testing 5,000 15-year-old gifted students across the state. That's one. The other thing is: Their country, their parents – everybody pushes education in China. Number three: They don't have special needs students in a regular ed. classroom. They don't even have special needs students in most of their schools. And then, they don't have students who don't speak Chinese in their classrooms, so this is a whole different ballgame because our PISA students that were tested were from about 160 different school systems and I think they were randomly picked, so...

R: Yeah, it's kind of like when you look at the national SAT scores and you see something like South Dakota had number two, but they had maybe only 30 kids in the whole state who took the test.

P9: Yeah! And in Georgia, EVERYBODY'S taking it. That's ignorant that the news is allowed to come out with stuff like that.

R: Yeah, you can make statistics say whatever you want them to say, though.

P9: Right.

R: I could probably generate a great report on how smoking is good for you based on statistics alone, but we all know – in common sense – that it's not.

P9: The PISA results were the 2009 test, and they came out in November 2010 and in December 2010 all the major newspapers and news stations come out with how horrible the United States is doing, and we're a compassionate country! I have students in my science classroom that will never be able to function on their own. Then I have some students in my science classroom who just work their fannies off just to get by because they have learning disabilities. And I have students in there who absolutely cannot behave because they have a behavior disorder, then I'll try and teach everybody else that's average to above average to comprehend things while dealing with all that! Yay! I'm happy to help! But don't expect the same results and compare it to 5,000 of the most gifted and talented students in the country; it's just stupid!

R: And the pressures there are so incredibly different. Even nationally if they DON'T get number one...

P9: They're reforming their education system because their suicide rate for middle school students is so high. Their students don't read for pleasure. They lack creativity. They don't have uniform or equality education across the country, and in the rural areas the students have nothing whereas in the major cities they have everything – the best resources, the best teachers. So they're trying to change all those things that are making their scores show up as number one. Go figure. That was my paper.

R: Sometimes you've just got to think of it as quantity versus quality – you know, and what's the definition of quality? You've got to put that quality of life piece in there, too.

P9: Absolutely. That's what I mean when I say we've got a lot of wonderful things going on for our students here.

R: Well, I'd vote for you because I feel that way, too.

P9: What is your ultimate goal with all of this? What are you going to do?

R: I'm going to teach in the classroom like I am right now. Well, I say that; I've only been in the classroom for eight years. I've barely taught in the classroom when I've not had something else going on between getting my masters and having my daughter and getting my specialist and being pregnant with my son and then finishing up my doctoral stuff, so I'm really looking forward to actually just being a teacher for a little bit.

P9: Well, have a great time!

R: I eventually would like to teach college. I would love to teach science teachers how to be science teachers, and I would love to teach science at the college level; I really do love the content very much.

P9: Very good.

R: We'll see.

P9: Good for you. I think you're smart to be willing to get more years under your belt because that will make you more credible at the college level.

R: Yeah, I'm just excited about being able to get back to teaching.

P9: You'll have fun. When you finish school and you teach you'll be able to go home and relax, and then you'll be looking for some things to do in the classroom and you'll be able to put a little more time and energy into your students...it'll be nice. You'll enjoy it.

R: Yeah, everybody keeps asking me what I'm going to do with all my free time.

P9: You'll have plenty.

R: So, I'm sure I'll come up with something to keep myself busy.

P9: You'll be fine.

R: Well, thank you very much for your time.

END TRANSCRIPTION

APPENDIX F: GAPSS CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION OBSERVATION FORM

School Name: _____

Grade: _____

Subject: _____

Date: _____

Time In: _____

Time Out: _____ Beginning Middle End

Instruction Strand		Examples	Observed
I 1.1	An organizing framework is utilized to guide instruction.	Units of study and/or lesson plans are available. Curriculum maps and/or pacing guides may be available. Plans for the instructional period may be posted.	
I 1.3	Learning goals are aligned to the GPS/QCC.	Units of study, lesson plans, and/or commentary are clearly aligned to GPS/QCC. Standards, essential questions, etc. are explicit and referenced often during instruction.	
	Students apply learning goals in performance tasks aligned to the standards.	Performance tasks, culminating performance tasks, student work, portfolios, rubrics, and/or graphic organizers, etc. are clearly aligned to the GPS/QCC.	
I 2.1	Sequencing of the instructional period is predictable and logical.	Instruction begins by activating prior knowledge, including experienced-based activities, followed by spiraling and scaffolded tasks that move students toward conceptual understanding and independent use of what they are learning, and ends by summarizing learning.	
	The lesson begins with a clearly defined opening to strengthen learning.	Instruction explicitly states learning goals and makes connections to prior knowledge, subject areas, and/or student experiences, incorporates modeling or demonstration, and/or assesses student understanding (such as questioning, informal written assessments, charting), etc.	

	Instruction has a defined work period.	The work period provides opportunities to practice, review, and apply new knowledge and receive feedback (for example: independent practice, guided practice, small group, conferencing, hands-on learning, problem solving, etc.).	
	Instruction ends with a summary activity that reinforces the learning.	The lesson closing summarizes the learning goal(s), clarifies concepts, and addresses misconceptions. Students may share their work that relates to the learning goal(s).	
	Content specific vocabulary is developed in context.	The instructor provides rich information about new vocabulary words and how the new words function. New vocabulary is presented and reinforced in the context of the standards being taught. Students are provided opportunities to use the new words in their writing, reading, and conversations.	
I 2.2	Higher order thinking skills and processes are utilized in instruction.	Instructor's questioning techniques require students to compare, classify, analyze different perspectives, induce, investigate, problem solve, inquire, research, make decisions, etc.	
	Higher order thinking skills and processes are evident in student work.	All students are engaged in tasks that require comparison, classification, analysis of perspectives, induction, investigation, problem solving, inquiry, research, decision making, etc.	
I 2.3	Instruction is differentiated to meet student readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests.	The standards are the expectation for learning for all students, but within a class period instruction is paced and presented differently with the use of varying materials, resources, and tasks. (Instruction may be differentiated through content, process, product, and/or learning environment.)	
I 2.4	Instruction and tasks reinforce students' understanding of the purpose for what they are learning and its connection to the world beyond the classroom.	Instruction is explicitly made relevant to students. For example, classroom instruction is differentiated to reflect student interests, leads to the creation of products that are useful in real-world problem solving, emphasizes inter-disciplinary connections, leads to authentic assessments, and/or further reveals real-world problems and their potential solutions.	

I 2.5	The classroom structure supports implementation of a variety of grouping strategies.	The classroom arrangement allows for whole group instruction, small group, and independent learning.	
I 2.7	The use of technology is integrated effectively into instruction.	Teacher effectively uses technology to provide real-world, relevant application, to enhance students' research skills and to differentiate instruction to maximize student learning. Technology is used to enhance student learning of the grade/content standards. (e.g. Interactive boards, computers, digital cameras, projection systems, calculators, probeware, software, interactive games, voting systems, Palm Pilots, Online Assessment, etc.)	
	Students effectively use technology during the class period.	Students use technology to research, create documents and/or projects, and to demonstrate a greater understanding of the learning goals. (e.g. PowerPoints, Web pages, etc.)	
I 3.1	Instructional goals, activities, interactions, and classroom environment convey high expectations for student achievement.	Students are engaged in rigorous work. Students interact with other students and teachers concerning their work and the standards. The standards are held as the expectation for all students and are evident in classroom practices.	
I 3.3	Students demonstrate personal efficacy and responsibility.	Students evaluate their own work aligned to the standards, elements, benchmark work, anchor papers or rubrics and are provided the opportunity to revise their work. Students are on task and may use resources available in the room (content maps, rubrics, computers, posted exemplary work, etc.)	
Assessment Strand		Examples	Observed

A 2.2	Formative assessments are utilized during instruction to provide immediate evidence of student learning and to provide specific feedback to students.	The teacher is monitoring for student understanding throughout the instructional period, conferencing with students, asking questions, and/or engaging students in KWLs, 3-2-1 activities, quick write, ticket out the door, etc. The formative assessments are used to provide students with frequent and specific feedback.	
	Written commentary is aligned to the GPS standard(s) and elements or QCC content standards.	Commentary uses the language of the standard providing specific feedback by describing the quality of the student work when compared to the desired learning goals. Commentary goes beyond “good job”, “great work”, etc.	
Planning and Organization Strand		Examples	Observed
PO 3.2	Materials and resources are effectively allocated.	Student support materials and resources are easily accessible to students (classroom library, technology, etc.). Materials and resources to support content area lessons are visible. Human resources (co-teachers, paraprofessionals, instructional coaches, etc.) are effectively utilized to maximize instruction for all learners.	
PO 4.1	Classroom management is conducive to student learning.	Expectations for behavior are evident (rules posted, behavior consistently monitored and addressed when necessary). Classroom practices and procedures are understood and followed.	
PO 4.3	Instruction is provided in a safe and orderly environment.	The classroom is clean and conducive to learning.	
PO 4.2	Instructional time is maximized.	Classroom instruction has no or minimal interruptions.	
	The teacher maximizes instructional time.	Instruction begins and ends on time. Student transitions during instruction are smooth with no loss of instructional time. The teacher is monitoring student learning and actively engaged with students.	

School Culture Strand		Examples	Observed
SC 1.1	The culture of the classroom reflects a risk-free learning environment.	Students feel comfortable sharing their work and receiving feedback from the teacher and other students regarding their work, students ask clarifying questions, etc.	

Student Question: If the students are available for questioning and this action will not interrupt instruction, then ask three students the following question. If the students are able to answer the question place a check in the box. If you are only able to speak with one student, then select NA for the remaining students.

If we expect all students to achieve at high levels, then we need to define explicitly what we expect students to learn. These expectations need to be clearly communicated to students. With learning goals/standards clearly defined, students can better understand the work they are completing and how to improve their work.					
I 1.3	Learning goals/standards are clearly communicated to students.	What standard(s) or element(s) are you working on today? What does your teacher want you to learn? What is your learning goal today?	<p>The student can explain the learning goals or standards/elements that he/she is working on.</p> <p>The student is able to explain the substance of what is being learned and show how the learning is embedded in their work.</p>	Student A	NA

APPENDIX G: SAMPLE INITIAL CODING AND MEMOING

First Cycle Initial Descriptive Codes

*To start the coding process I decided to randomly select an interview and begin some descriptive coding. These were some of the codes that emerged.

Interview 4 – 1 (Participant 4, Interview 1)

Numbered/Descriptive Code	Comments/ Quotes
1 SELF – EFFICACY	Theoretical framework Participant views self as “intermediate.” I thought that this was interesting that she is obviously confident, but recognizing that she has room to grow.
2 LOVE FOR STUDENTS	Throughout this interview there seems to be a possible underlying theme. There are many examples of this throughout the interview and seems to really be behind the impetus for teaching at all.
3 LOVE FOR CONTENT	“I love writing...”
4 UNDERSTANDING STUDENT NEEDS	Could this be the link back to student relationships? That was one of the ideas/findings/whatevers that consistently appeared in my field notes as important since almost all participants referenced it in some way... particularly in the later effectiveness interviews... ➔ Subgroup to LOVE OF STUDENTS???
5 KNOWLEDGE OF STRENGTHS	Self – efficacy? “I just loved that age group. I’m not really good with the young ones because I want to talk about what they want to

	do with their lives and I didn't want to do high school..."
6 RELATIONSHIP OF TRAINING TO CLASSROOM	<p>+ Relativity of prep to classroom</p> <p>REC: Experience lessons in the classroom</p> <p>Here the participant talks about the fact that because she was in an alternative program she was able to work on lessons that she was using right then in the classroom and then come back and talk with her professors after getting immediate student feedback. She found her courses to be useful because she could directly use them and apply them. I also can relate to this because I felt the same way going through my own alternative internship. The lessons that were most valuable were the ones that I was using the classroom and getting really quick feedback turnaround from the students. I KNEW if it was going to work or not... because I tried it. And my professors helped me to know what it was about the lesson that made it work or not... was it the delivery mode, was it the student engagement, was it the way I presented it... invaluable resource that I use today now reflectively with my students, but developed then with guidance. If the first year is so incredibly difficult, would it be as difficult with this in place? Someone to "bounce things off of" that really KNOWS what they were talking about. Throughout the interviews there was talk of mentors, and how a GOOD</p>

	<p>mentor made the difference... what about when we have BAD mentors/guides in place? Is that the difference?</p>
7 NEED FOR CONTENT	<p>-Content training in middle school preservice curriculum</p> <p>Rec: Middle school education courses need more content specific learning</p> <p>Almost EVERY single traditional teacher mentioned that they did not feel like there was enough focus on content for preservice middle school teachers. This is an important concern and consideration for teacher preparation programs. Teachers who are in the classroom are demanding that as the standards and rigor increase for students in classes teachers MUST have greater preparation in core content classes.</p>
8 WILLINGNESS TO TEACH SELF	<p>I think this is going to be filed under self-efficacy eventually...</p> <p>There is a passage later on in the section where the participant notes that there is an important difference between the ability to teach and the ability to teach content that goes back to the ideas of self-efficacy in content areas. This is something that many middle school teachers noted.</p>
9 RESPECT FOR THE STUDENT	<p>More to go under the LOVE FOR STUDENT category I think. I loved that she was talking about really knowing she was in the right place</p>

	<p>after talking with and interviewing the student. She was “and realizing that he had potential... he had the motivation to do it... he had a disability that he was having to overcome.”</p> <p>And seeing that made me realize that there is a need for what we are doing. And that these students do count.” I think that her discussion and care for the students really makes her an amazing advocate for students with disabilities in the classroom. Observations of her teaching really emphasizes and backs this up as well. She doesn’t coddle the students, but really advocates for them to do their best.</p>
10 POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH PROFESSORS	<p>+ Feedback: This participant reflected on the fact that she really felt that there was a lot of positive interaction and lessons that were learned because of the interactions that took place. Both with herself and the professors and through interviewing the students.</p> <p>REC: Interviews with students. I don’t know how common of a practice that this may be in programs, but it seems like this was a really powerful lesson for the teacher and really helped her nail down WHY she was getting into the teaching profession. I wonder to myself how many preservice teachers get into this profession without really having a great deal of interaction with students and teachers and REAL conversations to try to determine what it is that they want from this job.</p>

12 "PASSION"	<p>The participant introduced the word "passion" over and over again. I wonder if this also doesn't get filed as a bridge between loving the student and loving the content. Is "passion" the key piece? So many of the teachers referenced this in some way. This participant references those things that may cause a teacher to lose their passion... age, burnout, etc. I think that these are genuine emotions that we have to address as we grow as teachers and that the school systems address as a product of experience. How do we make sure that we don't lose our passion?</p>
13 OUTSIDE EXPERIENCES	<p>+ Outside experiences</p> <p>Rec: Outside experiences</p> <p>The participant notes that one of the positive aspects of having alternatively certified teachers in schools is that they may have had outside experience. Even participants that hadn't worked outside of education field, but had a major in a content field felt like they were better prepared for teaching the content in classes.</p>
14 COHESIVENESS OF STAFF (COLLABORATION?)	<p>I think that collaboration is going to be the better term here. When I think about the cohesiveness of staff I think about the ability for everyone to be able to work together well and that no one feels left out or singled out, which is what the participant indicated here.</p>
15 HIGHER EDUCATION	<p>I have no idea how to go about codifying this. I</p>

	<p>think that I will probably note instances where the participant references higher education and use it within the attribute coding at the beginning and in the profiles of the participants. In this instance it makes me think that it is important to consider whether or not the participant is willing to further their own education or not. Are we life-long learners ourselves and how does that affect “passion” in the classroom?</p>
16 HIGHLY QUALIFIED	<p>Buzz word. In this case referencing testing for qualifications to teach.</p> <p>-QUALIFICATION SOLELY BY TESTING</p> <p>Rec: A more comprehensive look at certification and evaluation processes.</p> <p>I thought that it was particularly interesting in this case than an alternatively certified teacher was commenting that she didn’t feel like highly qualified could be determined solely by passing a test. In this instance I think that she is relating the terms “qualified” and “effective” while some other teachers are more apt to separate these two. Even though they are... is there a distinct separation here? I really liked the narrative here since she was talking specific about being the only one in the room full of veteran teachers that she admired with the HQ classification.</p>
17 EXPERIENCE	<p>Experience is key to the classroom.</p>
18 “PASSION” VS EXPERIENCE	<p>I’m not sure that this is going to end up as a</p>

	separate classification really. It seems like it could be...
19 CERTIFICATION TESTING	I think this is going to be combined into a category with highly qualified. How are we defining highly qualified? What is the role of certification testing? How does it relate to effectiveness in the classroom?
20 DEFINITIONS	Throughout the interviews I kept asking the participants to provide their own definitions of certain terms that are used in education like alternatively licensed, traditionally licensed, highly qualified, effective. I don't know how I'm going to use this data, but I thought that it was important to see if all the participants were working with the same or similar definitions. I know anecdotally I have had conversations before with other teachers and there are these buzzwords that are out there, but everyone seems to have a different meaning or application. I think it's important to establish the language of the conversation, before you can have the conversation, and so I was interested to see how the participants would define these terms.
22 SUPPORT	Support within the school system, support within families, support from teacher preparation programs and mentor teaching.
23 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	One of the aspects that many teachers highlight when it comes to the idea of effectiveness. This is one of the skills that the

	<p>participants noted that seemed to be a make or break for teachers. If you have good classroom management, you are then able to be effective. I think it is interesting to me the relationship between effectiveness and management. Teachers note that management must come before effectiveness, but effective teachers are often in my experience the best managers. Kind of the like the chicken and the egg to me...</p>
24 COMMITTED	<p>Self – efficacy. Are you willing to stick it out when times get tough?</p>
25 FAMILY	<p>This is a factor that must be considered. One of the reasons that teachers get into teaching is because of family, so are school systems doing enough to support teachers with families?</p>
26 KNOWLEDGE VS SKILL	<p>This was already addressed earlier, but I loved the line again... “And just because you know how to do something, doesn’t mean you know how to teach it.”</p>

APPENDIX H. DESCRIPTIVE CODES

Descriptive Codes			
A - Attribute Codes		D – Definitions	
1 - SELF - EFFICACY CODES	2 - LOVE OF STUDENTS	3 - LOVE OF CONTENT	4 – EVALUATIVE
1a. Knowledge of strengths	2a. Understanding student needs	3a. "Passion" for content	4a. Relationship of training to classroom'
1b. Willingness to teach self	2b. Respect for student		4b. Greater need for content training
1c. Classroom management			4c. Positive interactions with professors
1d. Content knowledge			4d. Receiving feedback
1e. Outside experiences			4e. Good student teaching experience
			4f. Poor student teaching experience
			4g. Cohesiveness of staff
			4h. Higher education
			4i. Highly qualified
			4j. Teaching experience
			4k. Mentoring
			4l. Administrative support
			4m. Socioeconomic status

APPENDIX I. EMERGENT THEMES

Emergent Themes

I. Traits of Effective Teachers

A. Love of students

1. Know the "whole" student
2. Understand student needs in the classroom

B. Love of content

1. Interest in the field
2. Ability to relay the information to the students

II. Perceptions of effectiveness

A. Alternatively licensed

1. Positive perceptions
2. Negative perceptions

B. Traditionally licensed

1. Positive perceptions
2. Negative perceptions

III. Ways to foster effective teaching

A. Preparation

1. Greater content knowledge
2. Student teacher placement

B. Continuing in field

1. Quality mentorship programs
 2. Professional learning opportunities
-
-

APPENDIX J. SURVEY RESULTS

	Mean Self Efficacy Averages	
	Alternatively Certified teachers	Traditionally certified teachers
<i>Self-efficacy in Classroom Management</i>		
How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	7.11	7.71
To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	8.56	7.71
How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	7.5	7.71
How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	6.89	6.29
How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	7.11	7.43
How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	7.56	6.43
How well can you respond to defiant students?	7.22	6.14
<i>Self-efficacy in Instructional Strategies</i>		
How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	7.56	7.43
How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	7.56	7
To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	8	7.14
How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	6.89	6.14
How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	8	7
To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	8.22	7.43
How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	7.44	6.86
<i>Self-efficacy in Student Engagement</i>		
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	6.22	6.43
How much can you do to help your students think critically?	6.67	6.43
How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	5.78	5.29
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	7.44	6.71
How much can you do to help your students value learning?	6.33	5.57
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	7.56	6.86
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	7.22	6.14
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	6.67	6