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What Makes a Program "Alternative Certification?" An Operational Definition

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This essay presents the background for understanding why defining alternative certification has been made a difficult matter, and proposes an operational definition of the term.

Professionalists vs. Deregulators

Since 1823 when Rev. Samuel Hall opened the first teacher training institution in Concord, Vermont there has been a continuing push-pull between two groups. Each is heterogeneous and comprised of many constituencies. The first are the professionalists; the second the de-regulators. The professionalists believe that teacher education has a substantial knowledge base comprised of sound theory and substantial research. They also believe that in addition to a knowledge of the subject matters they will teach, future teachers need to learn how children and adolescents develop, how they learn, and best practice regarding the nature of teaching, the management of classrooms, and the utilization of learning materials and technology.

To accomplish these goals the professionalists have developed a national system of education schools and departments which offer from 30 to 60 credits in education coursework as part of bachelors degrees leading to teacher certification. In a few states these studies occur at the master's level. Future elementary and special education teachers typically devote two years or one half of their baccalaureate programs to professional courses. Future secondary teachers devote one year to professional studies. In addition to coursework these programs also provide future teachers with field based experiences and student teaching. Over this period of 175 years the professionalists have built a strong political structure. Every state has a department of teacher licensing as part of their state departments of education. These state departments' control who can be licensed to teach by accrediting the colleges and universities in their respective states to offer teacher education programs. Until the advent of alternative certification programs only graduates of accredited college and university programs of teacher education could be licensed to teach.

The professionalists are supported by many subgroups; these include faculty and administrators in education departments and colleges, the administrators and staffs of the 50 state education departments, the NEA and the AFT, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and until the year 2000, the United States Department of Education. The professionalists are also supported by a system of federal grants which distributes billions of dollars annually and which, until recently,

would only award grants designed to improve teacher quality to departments and schools of education. In addition to this complex and well-financed structure the various constituents comprising the professionalist group include literally hundreds of professional organizations and lobbying groups. It must also be noted that substantial numbers of legislators and the public are committed to this structure. Professionalists firmly believe that colleges and universities are capable of preparing teachers and indeed are the only organizations capable of doing so. Essentially, the professionalist position is based on the existence of their knowledge base, which they equate with the knowledge bases used to prepare other professionals, e.g. physicians, nurses, lawyers, engineers and others. The stated goal of the professionalists is to limit the power to certify teachers to schools and departments of education in colleges and universities. They are dedicated to the proposition that no one should enter a classroom as a licensed teacher who has not completed a state approved program of professional studies offered by an accredited school of education.

The constituencies comprising the deregulators group hold a range of opposing views. They dispute the claim that there is a professional knowledge base held by teachers which is equivalent to the knowledge bases in the health professions, law and other professions. They believe that what teachers know is not a "professional knowledge base" known only to teachers but common sense known to anyone who is a college graduate, a parent, or anyone in the general public who is willing to think about their own school experiences. The deregulators believe that in place of education courses people learn to teach by actually teaching. They view education courses as comprised of piffle which is actually a hindrance to future teachers since it prevents them from taking more college courses in the subject matters they will be teaching. They do not accept the contention that education faculty are similar to faculty preparing other professionals and point out that those who train doctors can actually treat patients and those who train lawyers can represent clients, while professors of education would not last a week in a substantial number of America's classrooms. The essence of the deregulators' argument is that what is wrong with schooling in America is that the teachers don't know enough of the subjects they teach, and that the whole structure of licensing teachers is a protectionist plot to keep people who possess the requisite knowledge in the cognate fields from teaching children. The specializations most frequently cited by the deregulators are math and science where there is the greatest need for teachers and where the largest number of children and youth are taught by teachers who lack knowledge of these subjects but are highly schooled in education courses. Some of the constituencies comprising the deregulators group include those who support private, parochial, charter, voucher and home schools; the United States Department of Education since 2000; several prominent foundations; many academics in the liberal arts and in fields outside of education; large numbers of the general public and many elected officials. The stated goal of the deregulators is to do away with current state systems of teacher licensing and allow schools to hire knowledgeable teachers in a free market system.

It is often noted that teachers need to establish rapport with children and youth before either their professional or their subject matter knowledge will be accepted and learned by their students. The notion that teachers need to be selected who can relate to students before they are required to take either education or academic courses is

essentially rejected by both groups. Professionalists believe their programs of teacher education are so powerful that they can change the attitudes of their students. The professional journals in teacher education have published literally hundreds of articles which claim to have changed the values of students in their teacher education programs. The deregulators sidestep the whole notion that teachers must first be selected who can relate to children and youth. They argue that the contention is backwards: it is the responsibility of the students to learn to learn to relate to their teachers. It is the teacher's job to impart important knowledge and that if the teachers are truly knowledgeable individuals they will get students' respect.

Muddying the Waters

The battle between the professionalists and the deregulators is not a new one. In the last decade the increased variety in programs of teacher education has muddied the distinction between alternative certification and the university programs to which they are supposed to be alternatives. When I began offering alternative programs forty six years ago the term was considered a pejorative one denoting something second class, outside of the mainstream, and a watered down way to prepare and certify teachers. The more desirable terms were regular, standard and university based teacher education. I can recall attending meetings with colleagues who would brainstorm to find other terms to replace alternative. Indeed, at the early meetings of what is now the National Association of Alternative Certification Programs, I can recall the pleas of members seeking a term other than alternative. They felt the term conjured up only negative connotations. Today, the situation is reversed. Colleges and universities scramble to claim they offer some form of alternative certification program. Indeed, education faculty and deans go further and deny their programs can be described as regular, traditional, or university based. The current politically correct term for university controlled teacher education is "field based" to connote that the candidates take much more than courses and are off campus learning in real world schools.

The reason for this shift is not difficult to understand. Alternative programs bring over 200,000 new teachers into teaching every year and the number is growing. These programs have opened teaching to more mature adults, to people with substantial knowledge in a variety of fields, to individuals with experiences in the world of work, to adults who have raised families, to more minorities, more males and most of all, more people who seek positions in the very schools to which graduates of traditional programs don't even apply. It is typical for an alternative teacher certification program to place one hundred percent of its graduates in positions in struggling schools serving diverse children in poverty, while graduates of traditional programs must be recruited, cajoled, and paid bonuses to take positions in such schools. And even then, more than half of the graduates of traditional programs who deign to work where they are most needed quit or fail in five years or less. To counter the criticism that they are irrelevant, universities and colleges are eager to show that they too can recruit candidate pools of mature adults and describe these individuals as "non-traditional students." In effect, the term alternative certification has been co-opted by colleges and universities to describe programs which retain most of the features of traditional

teacher education thus creating the confusion about just what constitutes an alternative certification program.

Defining Educational Terms

Defining terms in education is never easy. If a definition must be absolute with no exceptions and if there must be complete agreement among all who use the term then we must recognize that the most commonly used terms in education cannot be defined. There is no absolute agreement on the definition of terms such as teaching, learning, or school. Any attempt to define these terms will start a discussion and debate. For example, can behavioral acts be defined as "teaching" whether or not students are learning? Can students be "learning" if they do not demonstrate measurable changes in their behavior? Can a "school" be a library, a computer, a laboratory, a museum? Because our definitions cannot absolutely rule out alternative uses of the same term and because we cannot get everyone to agree on a single definition, we should do what the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary do. They catalogue common usage. They invoke the tests of original or first use of the term and the most common usage of the term. They eschew the notion that in order for a term to be defined there must be complete agreement among all who use the term-- without exception-- and that the way a term is defined must absolutely rule out every other possible use of the term. If absolutist definitions rather than common usage were the standard their dictionary would contain a very small percentage of the present 23 million entries.

The Elements of a "Pure" Alternative Certification Program

The elements which follow are referred to as "pure" alternative certification because they reflect the position of the deregulators who started the first alternative certification programs. These elements may be summarized in the following manner. The essential knowledge base for alternative certification programs is the competence of candidates in the cognate disciplines (#1). This base can be readily assessed by written tests of subject matter (#2). All professional studies are merely skills and information that can be readily learned on the job, through common sense, practice, having a colleague in the school (#4) and an occasional meeting (#5). The basic assumption is that candidate's learn to teach by teaching (#3) and can do so in the most difficult school situations (#6) if they know their subjects. Finally the determination of who should be licensed is based on performance, including student achievement (#7), and that those most capable of making these decisions are the candidates' employers (#9 and #10). Some of the most frequently raised questions are listed after each of the elements cited below. These italicized questions show how the expansion of those offering alternative programs inevitably leads to watering down the original intentions and elements.

1. The candidate is a college graduate with competence in a cognate field of academic study and without previous courses in education who is hired into a school district as a fully responsible, paid, teacher of record.

Questions:

a. *What if a candidate is only hired part time in order to attend courses at a local college? Might part time employment in a school still be an alternative program?*

b. *What if an individual was an undergraduate education major who never majored in a cognate field but was never certified? Would they be admissible?*

c. *Can competence be defined as an undergraduate major or must the candidate pass a test on the subject matter?*

d. *What if the field of study is not taught in the public schools? Many schools have dropped art and music. What about college majors that are not part of the K12 curriculum?*

2. The candidate passes all the state and local district criteria for employment, including written tests, interviews, health and criminal checks. Courses in Education are not included among the hiring criteria.

Questions:

a. *What if candidates pass the subject matter tests but not the professional knowledge tests?*

b. *What if there is a cooperative arrangement with a local university that requires one education course before hiring?*

c. *Can the requirement to pass the subject matter test be delayed until the candidate has taught for a while?*

3. The candidate is appointed to a school and assigned the full, regular load of a beginning classroom teacher in the district.

Questions:

a. *What if a candidate works part of the time under the direction of a licensed teacher and is not "fully" responsible?*

b. *What if the candidate has less than a full load in order take a class?*

4. The candidate is assigned a teacher in the same school who will serve as a mentor.

Questions:

a. *What if the candidate has a supervisor supplied by a local university who is not currently a teacher or is not an employee of the school district?*

b. *What if there is no officially assigned mentor?*

5. There are workshops or meetings scheduled to assist the candidates with the problems of beginning teachers such as classroom management, working with parents, completing paperwork and following the procedures of the district. These meetings are directly related to simplifying and facilitating the work of the teacher. They are not credit classes and not part of any degree program. Such meetings or workshops are limited to one per week, or less, since

candidate's time is focused on teaching and the numerous tasks related to the daily work of teaching.

<u>Questions:</u>

a. *What if a candidate is simultaneously registered in a local university as part of a cooperative agreement with the district and must take courses towards a master's degree in order to be part of the program?*
b. *What if the candidate is required to complete some course assignments which are not directly related to the daily work of a teacher?*
c. *What if the state requires a few education courses as part of the program?*
d. *What if there is an on-line education course required?*

6. Candidates are placed as beginning teachers in schools where there are vacancies. This means they are assigned to some of the most challenging placements and not to professional development centers".

<u>Questions:</u>

a. *What if candidates are required to spend part of their training in a professional development school prior to being assigned as a teacher in order to see best practice?*
b. *What if candidates are assigned only to schools with principals rated as satisfactory or higher?*

7. The evaluation of candidates is based on their actual teaching performance, including children's achievement and not on how well they do in courses or on assignments outside of the classroom.

<u>Questions:</u>

a. *What if it is a cooperative programs and part of the candidate's evaluation includes their completion of university requirements?*
b. *What if the candidate does not pass state mandated tests of professional knowledge?*

8. Candidates are not required to enter a university program unless and until they choose to do so.

<u>Questions:</u>

a. *What if there is a state law requiring the candidates to be in a program that is co-sponsored by a university?*
b. *What if there are grants that candidates can only receive if they are also in a school of education?*

9. Candidates are retained or dismissed using the district's criteria and procedures of assessment for any beginning teacher

<u>Questions:</u>

a. *What if the university must agree before a candidate can be dismissed?*
b. *What if the university can still recommend a candidate for certification after the district has dismissed them?*

c. *What if the university drops a candidate for non-payment of fees and s/he is an excellent teacher?*

10. The recommendations of candidates' to the state for teaching licenses come from the school district or a regional agency working with several school districts and not from a university.

    Questions:

    a. *What if recommendations for licensure are a joint decision of the university and the local school district?*
    b. *What if there is a state mandate or district agreement that the university make the recommendation?*
    c. *What if a school district does not wish to hire a candidate who has been licensed upon recommendation of the university?*

Alternative Certification in Common Usage

It is clear that there are few alternative programs that can still meet the ten elements used above to define "pure" programs. For example, the New York City schools hire as many as 12,000 alternative certification candidates in a year but they must all be registered in master's degree programs concurrent to their work as teachers and they must complete master's degrees to be recommended to the State of New York by their respective universities in order to become fully certified. Indeed, it is only in a minority of states that we find alternative programs that can be run independent of any college or university. In order to gain the recognition, the access to funding and most of all, to protect themselves against the charge that the teachers they turn out are not succeeding in the schools where they are needed most, the professionalists have started literally hundreds of programs now labeled alternative. Almost all of them contribute to the process of watering down the alternative programs originally proposed by the deregulators.

The Definition of an Alternative Certification Program

The most reasonable response to these issues is to accept the definitions of all those who, for whatever reasons, want to call themselves alternative certification with one caveat. For any program to be a legitimate alternative certification approach the first element must remain non-negotiable. Nine of the ten elements of "pure" ACP cited above may be watered down and altered to varying degrees…and programs will continue to be described as "alternative certification" in common usage. The first point however can never be conceded without giving up the last vestige of the reason alternative certification programs were originally developed. For the term alternative certification program to retain any degree of validity it must refer to a program in which it is possible for a college graduate with competence in a cognate field of academic study and without previous courses in education to be employed in a school district as a paid, fully responsible teacher of record.

Lessons Learned from Graduates of an Alternative Certification Program: The Case of the Stanley British Primary School

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The purpose of this article is to review the essential features of the Stanley British Primary School (SBPS) and its Alternative Teacher Certification Program (ATCP). Attention is given to the surveyed reactions of the first wave of graduates from the program, particularly those completing the licensure program between 1994 and 2000. Many areas were examined during the survey—including the demographics of the sample; the nature of effective recruitment strategies and reasons given for selecting the ATCP; graduates' evaluations of the SBPS ATCP components; and teacher retention. At the article's conclusion, major findings are discussed in the form of lessons learned.

Alternative teacher certification programs and their effects continue to be controversial (e.g., see Alternative choices, 2005; Brewer, 2003; Descamps & Klingstedt, 2001; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2003; and Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). A great source of data bearing on these issues, are graduates of alternative teacher preparation programs, as they are in an excellent position to evaluate both their preparation experiences and their resultant life as a teacher. Here we describe the Stanley British Primary School (SBPS) and its Alternative Teacher Certification Program (ATCP), as well as a survey of its graduates. Results from the survey, as well as lessons learned, are described in detail below.

Stanley British Primary School

The Stanley British Primary School began as a community preschool in 1971 in a church basement in Denver. Enthusiasm for this constructivist preschool grew, and in 1984, parents and other supporters purchased Stanley Elementary School, and remodeled it to house the Stanley British Primary School (so named as it had adopted features of the English Infant, or Primary, School in vogue in Great Britain during the 1960s and 1970s). The building purchased had been part of the Denver Public Schools and was named for Stanley, the famed explorer (i.e., Dr. Livingston, I presume) who traveled through Denver as the school was being built early in the 1890s. SBPS has since moved its main campus to what had been Lowry Air Force Base in central Denver. Now a K-8 school, SBPS has an affiliation with a like-minded preschool, Paddington Station, at its former site; the former building also houses the offices and main classroom for the alternative teacher preparation program itself.

The philosophical base for the constructivist orientation at SBPS comes from

Plato, Rousseau, Froebel, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky. Stanley is committed to developmentally appropriate and highly participatory student learning, student and parent empowerment, diversity, and public outreach. Children are active originators of many of their educational activities, and choices for children are common. Play, particularly for younger children, is viewed as an essential way for them to make sense of their world. The well-equipped classrooms are laboratories of learning where children can initiate and discover. Student projects integrate learning across different subject areas and foster cooperation. Family or vertical grouping is used, whereby children remain with the same teacher for three years in a multi-age classroom (e.g., K-2, 3-5, 6-8); this grouping pattern reduces same-age comparisons that hinder slower-to-develop children, and increases the opportunities available to higher-achieving children. Other distinctive concepts of the SBPS approach include: respect for the child; child autonomy; learning communities; socialization emphasis; integrated day; academic standards that subtly influence the curriculum; a focus on students' learning; and limited formal assessment.

The majority of the families and children served by the school are White (74%) and represent all socioeconomic levels. Children of color make up the balance of the students (24%), with Black/African American children comprising the largest single group. While a private school, SBPS's tuition falls well below the average costs of other private schools in Denver. SBPS maintains a strong commitment to diversity, perhaps most evident in its tuition scholarships used to increase enrollment of children from lower socioeconomic homes; over 30% of Stanley's families receive financial aid. The SBPS commitment to public outreach also is illustrated by its partnership with local public schools and its teacher preparation program. Active parental participation is another hallmark of the SBPS approach. Parents assist in the classrooms and in the office, raise funds, serve on the school's committees and board of trustees, and provide their special abilities in service to the school.

In summary, the program brings an innovative and productive approach to teaching into the schools. Through a challenging, experiential program, Stanley students develop basic skills as well as the higher order abilities of creativity, problem-solving, and cooperative teamwork. The approach results in a lively, exciting school with enthusiastic and joyful students and teachers. The learning environment and a tradition of active parental involvement create a dynamic and inclusive learning community. Life in such a school appears to create in students a love of learning now and for the future.

Stanley's Alternative Teacher Certification Program

In 1991, the SBPS teacher preparation model was approved by the State of Colorado as an Alternative Teaching Certification Program (ATCP), resulting in an early education or an elementary school license (most interns have selected the latter). The following year, SBPS contracted with the Denver Public Schools to initiate British Primary classrooms in two public elementary schools. The School of Education (SOE) of the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD) became the third player in this unique private-public partnership in 1994 after being selected as Stanley's higher education partner. The SOE has contributed to the SBPS teacher preparation program in two

main ways. First, the Division of Educational Psychology at UCD assists with the teacher-training curriculum. Second, along with receiving their teacher certification, interns can transcribe courses through UCD and complete additional course work in order to receive a Master's degree in Educational Psychology or Early Childhood Education (and originally also with a Curriculum and Instruction option). About 60 to 70% of the interns have sought the Master's degree option, with the percentage increasing of late.

This innovative teacher preparation program has attracted high-achieving students nationwide (as well as a few international interns), immersed these students in a developmentally-appropriate approach to teaching, and placed many of its graduates in local public schools, thereby helping to address the shortage of qualified public school teachers. The SBPS preparation program has received a large number of applicants from top-tier schools nationwide (e.g., Bowdoin, Brown, Colorado College, Harvard, Michigan State, Princeton, and Stanford). Those emerging from the rigorous application/interview process demonstrated academic strength, rapport with children (prospective interns "try-out" by presenting an activity to children during their interview), and commitment to education. Cohorts have varied in size from about 18 to 30, with an average size of about 25 interns annually.

The SBPS program features a field-based apprenticeship model. Interns spend four days each week for the entire school year in the classroom with experienced mentor-teachers and on the fifth day complete the 225 hours of instruction required for a state license recommendation. Faculty from the School of Education (SOE) at the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD) and other instructors, often skilled practitioners, provide sessions for the Stanley interns. A majority of the interns spend one semester at SBPS, and one at a public elementary school, thus gaining both private and public school experience. Interns were given ever-increasing responsibilities in the classroom.

Interns receive a salary that pays for the ATCP and also leaves them with a modest take-home amount each month; the cost of the articulated Masters degree is separate, but reasonable relative to other graduate programs. Many of the student interns, upon completion of the certification program, are hired as teachers in the schools where they were prepared. Thus, the partner schools often have first choice in hiring the highly qualified students recruited by and prepared in the SBPS program. In 1996, the Educational Psychology Division of the UCD SOE received a five-year Colorado Commission on Higher Education Program of Excellence grant in part to enhance this unique private-public partnership for teacher preparation.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Design

An initial survey was drafted based on existing instruments that had been used with some interns in earlier years. Four central sections were included: demographic information (e.g., age, teaching experience); recruitment for, and selection of, the program; evaluation of program components (e.g., placements, mentoring, the 225 hours of instruction, and overall evaluation of the BPS program); and respondents'

retention in teaching and future plans. To increase the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire, the initial draft was reviewed by the SBPS Head, the Director and also the Coordinator of the SBPS ATCP, current mentors and interns, and the faculty liaison to the program from UCD. Input received resulted in refinements of existing questions plus the addition of questions related to intern recruitment and teacher retention/attrition. The final questionnaire contained 103 questions, 23 of which were open-ended questions eliciting comments.

Sample

All interns who had completed the SBPS ATCP from 1994 to 2000 were identified as the potential sample. Of the 180 interns who had completed the program, 18 subsequently were excluded: 9 could not be located; 3 sets of parents at permanent addresses reported that their children had not been in the program; 3 graduates indicated that the program they attended did not match the survey; and 3 were out-of-country and not reachable. These deletions left a possible sample of 162 interns.

Implementation

The survey was mailed to the 162 program gradates identified. Each survey packet also included a cover letter with a personal salutation in blue ink, a stamped and addressed return envelope, and a detachable half-sheet of paper on which respondents were asked to print their names. These half-sheets permitted the targeting of follow-up mailings while maintaining respondent anonymity. Of the 162 graduates, 74 (45.7%) responded to the first mailing in December 2000; 48 (29.6%) replied to the second mailing in January 2001 (now with a short handwritten plea in red ink); and 16 (9.8%) responded to the final mailing in March 2001 (now with a longer plea penned in red ink). Overall, 138 of the 162 former interns returned the survey for a response rate of 85%.

RESULTS

Demographics of the Sample

All respondents had completed the SBPS ATCP between 1994 and 2000 and most had received a Colorado provisional elementary school license (a few opted for the early childhood provisional license). The respondents were divided fairly evenly across the seven years, that is, about 20 per year. About three-quarters of the interns were Colorado residents as they entered the program. Just over half of the sample reported having had some teaching experience prior to entering the SBPS program; oftentimes, such experience was less formal in that it occurred in summer camps, church settings, preschools, Head Start, the Peace Corps, and the like. While the average age of the interns when entering was just over 27 years, the range was 21 to 50 and the majority of the interns were between 22 and 25 years old.

Interns were placed in 12 different schools. A majority of interns completed at least one of their semesters at Stanley. Those few interns who did not have a semester at Stanley often stayed on at an affiliated site for the entire year to provide continuity

for the children when the mentor teacher had to leave due to pregnancy or due to relocation out of Denver. About 25% of the interns had at least one semester in one of two Denver public elementary schools. Other placements were spread among a charter school and seven affiliated private schools.

Of these 138 respondents, 87 (63%) had pursued the Masters' degree option at UCD. Just over half (51%) had selected the Educational Psychology MA, 36% opted for Curriculum and Instruction, and the remainder picked the Early Childhood MA. At the time of the survey, 62 of the 87 (71%) had completed the Masters degree, 13 (15%) were in process, and 12 (14%) had either left the Masters program or were "resting."

Recruitment Channels and Attendance Decisions

Respondents were asked how they heard about the SBPS ATCP. Channels that led to their recruitment appear in Table 1. As can be noted, over half of the graduates learned about the program from a friend who had been an intern.

Table 1
Percent of Interns Learning of SBPS Program via Different Recruitment Channels

Recruitment Channel	Percent of Interns
Friend/Former Intern	54
Personal Link with an Affiliated School	22
College Career Placement office	18
Family Member	6

Just over a fifth of them found out about the ATCP via their participation with 1 of the 11 schools affiliated with Stanley. College/university placement offices served as the recruitment avenue for just under a fifth of the respondents, while the remainder of the graduates learned of Stanley's program through family members.

Of course, an important question remaining was why the graduates decided to attend the SBPS program. While multiple factors likely came into play for each individual intern, graduates were asked to identify the single most important reason for deciding to attend the Stanley program (from a list of 10 possible reasons). The two elements selected most often were the program's emphasis on actual classroom/field experience (34% of the graduates) and its distinct philosophy (27%). Smaller numbers of graduates picked as most important the opportunity to get a Masters degree (10%), the accelerated pace of the program (9%), encouragement from a friend (7%), its cost relative to other programs (5%), and its location in Denver (4%). Also chosen were the opportunity for both public and private school experiences, and the encouragement

from a college advisor (each noted by 2% of the graduates). Less than 1% selected the program's emphasis on mentoring as the most important reason. In addition, 37 interns wrote in "other important reasons." Two such responses, each made by three former interns, were the program's reputation and the impressive interview/selection process.

While most interns did not view the relative cost of the SBPS program as the primary reason for deciding to attend, cost still affected their decisions. Indeed, 64% of those responding indicated that they probably would not have entered the program if there had been no stipend. The stipend may well have helped the interns stay out of debt—66% had no debt as they finished the program, 18% were in debt for less than $5,000, and 16% graduated with a debt of more than $5,000. Note. too, that in a separate question, nearly two-thirds of the graduates (63%) said that when they entered the program, they were very interested in obtaining a teaching license in order to teach in the public schools; another 28% were somewhat interested.

Evaluation of SBPS Program Components

In all, five components of the SBPS program were evaluated by the graduates—the program philosophy, the time split of 80% in the field and 20% for in-class instruction, the 225 hours of instruction, the mentoring, and the program overall. In terms of the program philosophy, nearly all (96%) of the graduates reported that their grounding in the BPS philosophy had been helpful. At the same time, responses to open-ended questions made it clear that a number of respondents had experienced challenges related to the philosophy. In general, if the graduate ended up in a school like SBPS, transfer and implementation of the BPS model was viewed as easy, while challenges were numerous if the graduate had landed in a school championing direct instruction with little student choice. Most respondents reported a mix of successes and challenges in enacting the BPS philosophy. Challenges included: more formal school structures and environments; higher student-teacher ratios; school emphasis on testing and grading; little appreciation of the BPS philosophy among teaching colleagues and administrators; and the different learning needs of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Successes derived from the BPS approach involved: fostering creativity; using hands-on activities; listening closely to children; and drawing from a variety of teaching strategies. Closely related to the successes were responses to the question about those aspects of the BPS philosophy that graduates took with them and applied, such as choice time, emphasis on building learning communities, child-centered classrooms, and an appreciation of the individual child and unique learning styles. One graduate in a non-BPS-like school wrote: "It is difficult to be so out of synch with the rest of the world, but positive too as so much of the BPS philosophy is great for kids."

The time split of 80/20 between being in classrooms with children (that is, in the field) and receiving instruction themselves one day each week typically was seen as appropriate. Most respondents (88%) were positive, and most of these were extremely positive, about the 80/20 split.
Comments on the split were only 8% negative and 2% mixed; the remaining comments were positive.

Evaluations of the 225 hours of instruction received were also quite positive. In terms of satisfaction, 25% were very satisfied, 49% were satisfied, and 25% were

somewhat satisfied. Just one graduate was not at all satisfied. In terms of content of the instruction, no topic area was perceived as receiving too much emphasis. Enough coverage in the once-a-week sessions was reported for: child growth and development; science; curriculum units and sharing ideas; BPS philosophy, philosophy, and history of education; and planning age-appropriate activities. Several other topics approached having enough emphasis in the graduates' view, such as: theories of/approaches to learning; diversity; working with parents in the classroom; school law; job hunting; school administration; math; art; classroom management; educational standards; literacy; and public school expectations. Finally, those topics selected as receiving too little emphasis included: motivating unmotivated students; special education; student assessment; technology/computers; and social studies. In a separate query, those topics considered most useful when teaching included: classroom management; literacy; planning age-appropriate activities; child growth and development; program philosophy; and theories of/approaches to learning.

Graduates' views of the mentoring they received as interns generally were quite positive. Almost half of the respondents (47%) indicated that they were very satisfied with the mentoring, over an additional quarter (28%) were satisfied, a fifth (19%) were somewhat satisfied, while the remainder (6%) were not satisfied at all. Survey respondents also were asked to indicate the extent to which their mentors fulfilled four different roles: professional (e.g., informing and working with the intern on district policies, procedures, and structures); personal (e.g., providing moral support and friendship); instructional (e.g., demonstrating lesson planning and discussing classroom management strategies); and coaching (e.g., observing in the classroom, conferencing, providing feedback). The former interns used a four-point scale, where 1 = not at all to 4 = a lot, and provided two ratings for each role for the two mentors that most of them experienced (that is, different mentors in the fall and in the spring). Their average estimates of how well their mentors performed the four roles across the two terms are presented in Table 2. Note that mentors most often fulfilled the personal and instructional roles, with the coaching and professional roles receiving somewhat less attention (in the interns' perceptions).

Table 2
Interns' Average Rating of Mentors' Role Fulfillment by Semester

Mentoring Role	Mean Fall Rating	Mean Spring Rating
Professional	2.77	2.88
Personal	3.36	3.26
Instructional	3.17	3.15
Coaching	2.99	2.98

Note: Scale used by respondents: 1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = somewhat; 4 = a lot.

Interestingly, when satisfaction with mentoring was correlated with the perceived fulfillment of these roles, all of the correlations were positive and statistically significant. Thus, the more the interns saw their mentors as fulfilling these roles, especially the instructional role in the fall, the more satisfied they were with their mentoring. An open-ended question asked respondents how their mentoring experience might have been improved. The most common recommendation was to provide more time for observation, discussion, and feedback. A small number of graduates were fairly critical, suggesting that mentors have more teaching experience and mentor training, that more stringent criteria be used when selecting mentors and that better matching of mentor and intern was needed. Some interns believed that they would have benefited from having more responsibility in the classroom.

When considering the overall program evaluation, satisfaction with the program was very high. Over half of the graduates (55%) reported being very satisfied, while an additional third (34%) reported being satisfied. The remaining graduates (11%) were somewhat satisfied, and no graduate said they were not at all satisfied. Virtually all of the former interns (99%) said that they would recommend the SBPS program to prospective interns, and most (87%) indicated that they already had. Evaluating their preparation for teaching, a third (32%) reported being very well prepared, and almost another half (45%) said they were well prepared. Another 22% considered themselves fairly well prepared, while 2% reported being not prepared at all.

Retention in the Field of Teaching and Future Plans

Teacher retention was assessed through several questions. Graduates who received certification through the SBPS program had taught from zero to seven years. On average, graduates had taught just over three years at the time the survey was completed, and almost half of this teaching was in public schools. Over three-quarters (78%) of the respondents were teaching in Colorado. Of the 138 respondents, 95 (or 69%) reported that they were currently teaching.

Only 43 graduates reported that they were not currently teaching. Among these 43, the most common activity was raising children (35%); in addition, many who were not teaching were still working in the field of education (30%). Smaller numbers of respondents had entered other helping professions (14%), business fields (12%), or were pursuing higher education (9%). When asked about the possibility of returning to teaching, 40 of the 43 replied. Almost a third of them (30%) indicated they planned to return, while another 22 (55%) said they might return. Only six former interns (15%) did not plan to return to teaching. In terms of reasons given for leaving the profession, two moved into new careers (child therapist and beauty salon operator), two left to raise children, one left because of low pay and burnout, and one reported that s/he "grew up." Finally, graduates were asked what career they expected to have in five years. More than half (54%) expected to remain in teaching, while another sizeable group (23%) expected to be in education, but not teaching. Smaller numbers expected to be raising children (15%), in other helping professions (6%), or in higher education pursuits (3%).

DISCUSSION OF LESSONS LEARNED

The survey of the graduates of the SBPS ATCP included those who had completed the program across seven years. We were quite surprised by the rich data that resulted—data especially valuable in multiple ways. We discuss results in terms of the lessons that were learned. While we note great diversity in alternative teacher certification programs (e.g., see Dill, 1996; Dill & Stafford, 1996), and also controversy about their merit (see the examples at the start of this article), we are hopeful that these lessons can apply to a number of other ATCPs. We also believe that these survey results helped identify much about the SBPS ATCP that was meritorious.

Lesson 1: Graduates of an alternative certification program are a veritable gold mine of key evaluative data for program improvement. In this case, the cohesion of the SBPS ATCP, with its apprenticeship format, gave former interns a common known quantity to evaluate. For example, the graduates' beliefs with regard to topic areas where they were better or less well prepared constituted crucial input in evaluating the 225 hours of instruction they received, as well as other ATCP elements. Follow-up surveys of graduates, while time consuming and costly, pay immediate dividends.

Lesson 2: Using a survey methodology that increases response rates in turn increases your confidence in the accuracy of the data generated. This survey used three spaced mailings, with personal handwritten appeals to professionalism, that resulted in an 85% response rate. Many other varied strategies might have been used—the key point is that a large response lends stability and credibility to the aggregated data.

Lesson 3: Encouraging former graduates and affiliated schools to be personal ambassadors likely is an effective strategy for program recruiting. Of course, this strategy works better if the former novices and the partner schools truly believe that they have experienced a high quality alternative certification program. In the case of the SBPS ATCP graduates, over three-quarters had learned of the program through a friend/former intern or via a partner school. Then, after completing the ATCP, virtually all of the graduates said they would recommend the program to others (and 87% noted that they already had). Thus, sending current program materials to former graduates to enhance their role as recruiting ambassadors has merit, and they might in turn approach promising candidates or their former colleges' career placement offices. Programs clearly benefit from having an abundance of applicants when forming ATCP cohorts.

Lesson 4: When recruiting, emphasize those program elements that past novices found compelling as they made their decisions to become involved. In Stanley's case, the emphasis on field experiences (four days each week in the classroom) and on a distinct philosophy were important elements leading many prospective interns to apply. While not noted as the primary reason for selecting the SBPS ATCP, the availability of some monetary support was also important. With other programs, different elements might be identified by graduates as salient reasons for attending.

Lesson 5: Using a thorough selection process will enhance the quality of the intern cohort selected. As noted, Stanley used a try-out procedure whereby prospective interns conducted an activity with children in a Stanley classroom. This was observed by teachers who would mentor interns the following year; these likely mentors also were on teams that interviewed the candidates. One way to ATCP improvement is to start with a strong intern cohort—good interns make (and at times insist on) better programs.

Lesson 6: Having a positive working relationship with a higher education partner provides important options attractive to many interns. Such options might include advanced graduate degrees, memorable instructional experiences, and the like.

Lesson 7: Graduates who are teaching are in an excellent position to evaluate the adequacy of the topics addressed in their ATCP (in Colorado, this pertains to the 225 hours of required instruction). The corollary to this lesson is that ATCPs must be willing to examine the many topics offered and make changes when necessary.

Lesson 8: All four roles identified for mentors—professional, personal, instructional, and coaching—are important. Those teachers selected to mentor should in turn be supported and given the resources and ideas necessary to perform all four roles well. The importance of high quality mentors, and the many differences in what constitutes mentoring, were been well explicated (e.g., Dill, 1996; Ganser, 1995).

Lesson 9: An important barometer of an ATCP's value is the percent of graduates who continue teaching. Follow-up data on this issue are important as they speak to both the quality of the novices selected for the program and the quality of the program itself. In the case of SBPS, the teacher retention data revealed many more graduates continuing to teach rather than leaving the profession and thus were particularly encouraging. The alternative teacher certification program retention studies summarized by Zeichner and Schulte (2001) revealed a pattern of good retention rates for program graduates.

Lesson 10: Program elements that lead to program satisfaction may not be the program elements that attract interns initially. A good case in point here was the lowly status of "emphasis on mentoring" as a primary reason for selecting and attending the SBPS ATCP; less than 1% of entering interns saw mentoring as primary. Still, overall program satisfaction closely correlated with overall satisfaction with mentors.

While we could continue to list lessons learned from this graduate follow-up, we are not certain how well the lessons would generalize to other alternative programs. Indeed, many of the 10 lessons identified above might generalize to some alternative programs and not to others. Still, the process of following-up with graduates and listening closely to their messages will generalize to all alternative certification programs. Further, the information obtained can be instrumental in fueling program improvement.

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A Critical Reflection of the CSU Fullerton Alternative Certification Program

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In the past decade the demand for highly qualified and especially trained teachers of students with special needs has exceeded the supply. To meet this deficit, alternative programs have sprouted up across the country. One such program, at CSU Fullerton, is successfully trying to fill that gap. Some 280 students have completed the requirements of a specially designed Intern program of coursework, practicum, advanced seminars, research and directed student teaching and are working in the communities of four, Southern California's local counties. The following article explains and describes the process, procedures, methods and results of these efforts. A highlight of this program is action research; the gathering of data, using scientifically-based interventions and analyzing the outcomes that produce change or progress.

Alternative certification programs have been documented in forty-six states and the District of Columbia (Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). Over 250 universities around the country provide some type of alternative teacher preparation program (Basinger, 2000). Alternative routes exist for a variety of reasons (see Feistritzer & Chester); most of the programs began as a quest to support a severe and increasing shortage of qualified personnel (Dill, 1994; Rosenberg & Rock, 1994; Smith-Davis & Billingsley, 1993). Shepherd & Brown (2003) discuss what the literature says about teacher shortages and concludes that alternative certification programs are extremely necessary. Haberman (1999) highlights the need for alternative routes in urban areas of the country.

A variety of special education intern program options are available in California. As Turley and Nakai (2000) note, in California alternative certification programs have emerged in special education to lessen the historical shortage (see Gunderson & Karge, 1992; McKibben & Schrup, 1995). Karge et. al. (2004) summarized over twenty programs in a Special Education Intern Monograph.

Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act was passed in 1975, with requirements by the Federal Government for full implementation in 1978.

This implementation brought a need for teachers to work with students with special needs. In California, there was a shortage of fully credentialed special education teachers and legislation was introduced to authorize the "Intern Program", California's version of Alternative Certification. In 1983, legislation was passed to allow school districts or a consortium of districts to develop Intern programs for teacher preparation (McKibbin, 2002). The California Special Education Intern program was for teachers with general education credentials who were interested in working with students with special needs. The two year program provided on-the-job training and support and quickly became an acceptable option for teacher preparation.

In 1997, the California credential structure for obtaining certification for special education was redesigned by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). CCTC is the governing body responsible for teacher certification in the state. University programs across the state were required to write new program documents. California State University Fullerton (CSU Fullerton) Department of Special Education faculty met with district and community focus groups including the advice of the certified district bargaining representatives during the 1997-98 school year to write a new program document to include an alternative certification method of obtaining a credential.

How flexible can a certification program be and still equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively address the specialized needs of children with disabilities from diverse cultural and language backgrounds? Research has indicated that traditionally certified teachers are better qualified than nontraditionally certified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). Though teachers from nontraditional programs may have mastered basic skills in content areas, they were unable to explain fundamental concepts to students due to lack of training in pedagogy (Rubino et al 1994; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Clearly, alternative certification programs must incorporate research that has been shown to be effective in improving outcomes for children with disabilities in training opportunities and reflected in required coursework. Moreover, the course of study leading to certification must be of sufficient quantity, quality, intensity and duration to lead to improvements in teaching practice.

Aware of the controversy regarding Alternative Certification Darling-Hammond (1998) and others in the field suggest alternative certification programs bring under-qualified teachers into the classroom. Our design team set the goal of writing a first class program for teachers-in-training that aligned with the research recommendations for alternative certification and the guidelines established by the CCTC.

Program Description

CSU Fullerton's Special Education program has become a leader in alternative certification in Southern California. In a collaborative program with four County Offices of Education (Orange County, Los Angeles County, San Bernardino County and Riverside County) the Intern program provides candidates the opportunity to attain a Education Specialist credential while working as a special education teacher in one of 48 collaborating districts. The candidates in the program have the opportunity to attain

a Clear Education Specialist Credential in the areas of Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities and Early Childhood Special Education. The faculty provide a high quality instructional program, as evidenced by post-evaluations and comments made by Principals who hire the Interns (Karge & Glaeser, 2004). All of the Interns work in special education settings or public agencies (such Early Intervention Center or County Offices of Education) as inclusion itinerants, special day class teachers, resource specialist program teachers. The Interns teach in a variety of infant/toddler preschool or K-12 teaching settings.

During the two-year program, the Interns receive systematic support, guidance, and feedback from both the participating school districts, from cohort peers, and from university faculty and staff. Special program features include an emphasis on effective teaching strategies in reading, mathematics and content areas, as well as specialized training in collaboration skills for general education/special education teaming, positive behavior supports, diversity awareness, and curriculum modifications and adaptations for the inclusive classroom.

California Interns must meet prerequisite teacher preparation requirements. The California requirements include passing the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST), verification of the United States constitution requirement, subject matter competency (usually passing the California Subject Examinations for Teachers [CSET]), a bachelor's degree and a program interview. In addition to traditional prerequisite requirements, Interns must meet a pre-service requirement. Before receiving the Intern credential, the Intern participates in a 60-hour practicum with typical children in general education settings and practices teaching procedures in the day-to-day classroom setting. The Intern completes coursework in classroom management, lesson planning and scope-and-sequence of instruction. The Intern creates a draft educational philosophy statement and explores the dynamics of disabilities relating to families and parents. Additionally, Interns must complete university and Intern program entrance prerequisites and experiences including activities designed to create an awareness of diversity and disability and participate in 30 hours of practicum working with children with disabilities. These requirements allow the Interns to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) highly qualified definition. "No Child Let Behind requires teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree, be licensed by the state and demonstrate competency in each of the academic areas they teach, whether by passing a rigorous state test or by completing an academic major or its equivalent" (Special Education Report, 2004, p. 2).

The CSU Fullerton Special Education Intern Program consists of three phases. The first phase, pre-service, introduces the Intern to the basic characteristics of typical child development and learning theory. All candidates in the Intern program must complete the pre-service phase and agree to attend three pre-service courses. The pre-service courses include an intensive survival training course, a families' course and a foundations course. The second phase, core-components, allows the Intern to acquire knowledge of the issues and concerns related to the statistical assessment and identification of exceptional individuals. The second phase also includes courses in the legal mandates and regulations of special education law. The third phase, advanced specialization, addresses the specific issues related to the Intern's specialty area (Mild/Moderate/Severe Disabilities or Early Childhood Special Education).

During the core-components phase, the Intern learns about the variety of effective teaching models for math/reading and other core curriculum areas and is exposed to ideas for implementation of a collaborative program. The Intern gains knowledge of the techniques and strategies for working with ethnically and culturally diverse students and is exposed to the techniques for positive behavior support. Finally, the Intern has a practicum in both general and special education.

In advanced specialization the Intern establishes specific expertise by completing characteristics and teaching methods courses relating to the specific disability area. During phase three, exploration of research and data-based instruction is expanded and advanced collaboration skills are taught. In the final semester of the program, Interns explore leadership skills and transitional, career, vocational and community aspects of special education. The Interns participate in advanced staff development, use positive behavior supports and design and implement a formal induction plan.

While in the program, Interns are allowed to take several substitute days, funded through the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Grants to Support Intern Programs to visit a Professional Development School and learn a specific strategy or assessment technique. The Professional Development School sites are award-winning schools using research based effective teaching practices to implement their programs. The chance to observe experts in action is a valuable learning opportunity, especially for persons who do not work with traditional master teachers.

Ensuring Successful Outcomes

Retention. Since 2001, CSU Fullerton has educated, placed and supported 280 Interns in Special Education teaching positions at collaborating school districts, with 276 still teaching in special education in the district of original placement. During the program, Interns are contracted with local school districts to teach Special Education while they simultaneously receive systematic support, guidance and feedback from the participating school districts, from cohort peers and from university faculty and staff.

Support. During the two-year program, the Interns receive systematic support, guidance and feedback from the participating school districts, cohort peers and university faculty and staff. The program is known for using innovative methods of providing assistance and guidance to Interns. The Interns maintain support logs and create portfolios to document progress as a teacher. The program has a fulltime telephone hotline staffed by a past Intern. Interns' messages are answered within 24 hours. Support seminars and classroom supervision and coaching are provided to all special education Interns throughout each of the four semesters of the program.

Evaluation. An important evaluation feature is the use of classroom data to measure growth of students with disabilities. During coursework, each Intern learns how to design and conduct curriculum-based assessment and behavioral assessments. Both assessments are measured at three points during the Intern's first and second years. The goal is for each child with Mild/Moderate disabilities in the Intern's class/program to show at least one years growth academically. For children with

Moderate/Severe disabilities the focus varies widely depending on their Individualized Education Programs; most emphasize behavior and social skills over academics. The level of student improvement should strongly correlate with the quality of instruction provided by the Intern, a feature in line with the Coordinated Compliance Review (CCR) regulations to assess student achievement.

The Importance of Monitoring Student Outcomes

One of the most important aspects of teacher training is to promote skills and behaviors that will enable teachers to be effective at collecting and analyzing student data in order to improve their instruction. This is no less true for teachers in special education, who must continually keep data to show that their students have progressed toward their IEP objectives. In his comments at the Swearing-In for the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, January 15, 2002, former U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige reiterated that two major goals of No Child Left Behind are (a) accountability for results and (b) instruction based on scientific research. Even though teachers in the program are provided research-based tools in every course of the program, Interns must also learn to implement these instructional tools with fidelity, and to monitor their effectiveness based on student outcomes. This means that teachers must know how to choose pertinent student outcomes, select assessment devices or routines, collect data in an organized manner, analyze the results for each child in their classroom, change their practice accordingly, and to continually repeat this process. These activities are all a part of the *action research* model of inquiry which results in the training of teachers to become reflective practitioners with active control over student outcomes (Johnson, 2005).

Action research differs from traditional scientific research in that the researcher, in this case a teacher, is directly involved in the process of research and the outcomes of this research benefit the participants, both teachers and students, directly and immediately (Calhoun, 1993; Stringer, 1996). Training teachers to conduct action research should include an understanding of what Borgia and Schuler (1996) refer to as the "five C's" of action research: *commitment* to the time needed to focus on a problem, *collaboration* with peers and faculty and *concern* for their opinions and efforts, *consideration* and critical reflection of one's own practices, and acceptance of *change* as part of the practice of growing as a teacher. Thus, the intern faculty decided to train our teachers to conduct action research, and as a result, became involved in our own action research project.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

One hundred thirty eight Interns from CSU Fullerton Special Education Intern program participated in the study. The participants ranged in age from 24 to 55 with the majority of the participants (41%) between age 26 and 35. Twenty-four percent of the participants were male and 76 % were female. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (68%) with 19% Latino, 9% African-American and 3% Asian/Pacific

Islander. One percent declined to state their background. Sixty-one percent of the participants work in California Designated Hard-to-Staff schools.

Instruments

The participant's responses were analyzed in several ways. California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, College of Education conducted a statewide survey called the California Teacher Internship Survey. The questions related to why Interns chose their Intern programs for school years starting 2001 to 2005. The survey responses were analyzed with a factor analysis. This data was provided to CSU Fullerton Intern faculty. New surveys specific for CSUF were developed and administered by the CSU Fullerton Intern faculty targeting the same groups of students over the same period of time.

Procedures

Data form the California Teacher Internship Study. Dr. Elaine Chin, Professor of Education and Project Director for the California Teacher Internship Study (a Federal project) electronically distributed the California Polytechnic State University Intern survey to every Intern in the state. Her project staff conducted a factor analysis of the 8,881 participants then provided the CSU Fullerton team with an analysis of the data for statewide and a breakdown of the CSU Fullerton Intern responses in comparison to other interns in the state.

CSU Fullerton Intern Surveys. The surveys developed by the Intern faculty were distributed by mail to all of the Interns participating in the program for the previous year. They were to write in their responses to both Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. The Interns were given a self-addressed and stamped envelope in which to return their responses. The only exception to this procedure was in the 2004-2005 year where the surveys were distributed to the Interns at the final meeting of the year. The students completed the surveys and returned them to the Intern faculty before leaving the meeting. For more details on the intern survey see Karge & Glaeser, 2004.

Intern Action Research Projects. Intern action research projects were collected and evaluated over the period of time from 2001 to 2005. At the first back-to-school meeting of the 2001-2002 school year, Interns were presented with the option of participate in the action research project. Many Interns were just beginning their first teaching position, so they were told that the project would not require a lot of extra work, because they must collect data on behavior and academic progress as part of their daily teaching. To earn the stipend, they had to first choose an academic or behavioral goal they needed to focus on to improve student achievement. They had to provide an assessment of current achievement or behavior, plan an intervention, collect scores over time, and do a final analysis of the results. A short and simple overview of action research was provided, followed by a question and answer session. Before the last meeting of the school year, Interns were reminded to bring their projects to the next meeting.

For the 2002-2003 school year, a new tool was available for Interns to guide them through the action research process. This website is available through the University of Kansas (http://actionresearch.altec.org). The website provides tools for students to write their research proposals, track their progress, and receive feedback from faculty. Each project is given a number, and faculty can access the projects individually to read and provide guidance on what needs to be done to improve the project.

For the 2003-2004 school year, interns received seminars on Action Research at three meetings throughout the year. The Intern faculty emphasized that Action Research should not be a burden, and instead, should help them solve problems in their classrooms. In addition, Interns were reminded that No Child Left Behind requires that all teachers use scientifically-based interventions, so Interns should be collecting data on the effectiveness of their interventions as a natural part of the teaching process. At the first session, a model project was presented by an Intern who had completed an exceptional project the previous school year. This project was chosen because the student was able to successfully avoid litigation by using her data as evidence that students were learning in her classroom. In fact, as she stated to the group, "At the end of the meeting, the lawyer for the parents said because my data was so detailed, there was nothing he could argue against!" This Intern collected data throughout the school day on all of her students with autism and transferred the data into graphs that were easy to read and easy for parents and administrators to visualize student successes.

Another attempt to increase Intern responses to the project requirement was the addition of another website from the University of Kansas created to teach systematic data collection. CSU Fullerton was chosen as a validation site, however, constraints of the study required that only students enrolled in a collaboration class participated in the study and received the training.

In the 2004-2005 year, Interns were given the same beginning-of-the- year presentation as the previous year, but in addition, they were provided specific training in Action Research step-by-step. They were given guide sheets that were to be filled out and turned in each month for analysis and feedback from the Intern faculty. These consisted of specific steps for collecting baseline data, for analyzing the data, and for reflecting on the data to inform their teaching. At every monthly meeting, the projects were collected and feedback provided.

RESULTS

California Teacher Internship Study

To develop a clear picture of why people choose to participate in Intern programs, the California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo team did a factor analysis of the survey questions completed by CSU Fullerton Interns and compared this analysis to other Interns statewide (see Chin, 2005). Six factors emerged, however, only one factor showed a significant difference between CSU Fullerton Interns and Interns across the state. The six factors were, (1) Confidence in their ability to do the work of teaching; (2) Belief in learning by doing, (3) The desire to begin teaching immediately, often motivated by the need to earn a living; (4)

Influence from marketing or recruitment efforts (5) Internship experience may help those less sure about teaching to choose it as a career; (6) Efficiency in work towards a credential and convenience of programs. There was a significant difference (p=.05) in how CSU Fullerton Interns rated Factor One as compared to other Interns in the state. Interns participating in the program at CSU Fullerton rated Factor One, Importance of confidence in their ability to do the work of teaching as a reason for choosing to earn a credential through an Internship program, as a five "Very Important" which is the highest rating on this 5-point Likert scale. Other Interns in the study rated this item as a four or below. All other responses were consistent with other Interns in the state and did not produce significantly different results.

Additionally, the California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo team did an factor analysis of the survey questions completed by CSU Fullerton Interns and compared this analysis to other Interns statewide to assess the aspect of choosing teaching as a career (see Chin, 2005). The only significant difference (p=.05) reported in which the CSU Fullerton Interns scored higher than the statewide sample was on Factor Five, Teaching gives teachers an opportunity to improve the schools in their communities or to reform education.

CSU Fullerton Intern Surveys

CSU Fullerton graduates and employers praise the program for the demonstrated blending of theory and practice. Past Interns applaud the immediate availability of classroom supports from the university both in technique and faculty time and expertise. They share that they feel fortunate to train in an environment with a high level of technology. Additionally, Interns share that being a member of a cohort provided continuous support and opportunities to participate in collegial discussions that improved their teaching. In small, job-alike groups, led by faculty in their discipline, Interns appreciate the opportunity to learn what other Interns are doing in the variety of classrooms, schools, and districts represented in the program.

CSU Fullerton Action Research Projects

First year: 2001-2002. When the projects were analyzed, only 20 of the 138 Interns completed projects. Of these, only a handful met the requirements for good action research. The Interns who met this requirement had chosen an area that needed improvement, systematically collected data and provided a good problem statement, reflection, analysis, and final reflection on the project. Others, however, did not show that they understood how to target an area, collect relevant data, and use it to change their practice. One merely turned in his end-of-the-year grade sheets. When asked why they did not participate despite the offer of a stipend, Interns reported that they were 'too busy' with school and work to spend time on a project. This was a disappointing answer, considering that we had emphasized that it was something that should be an integral part of good teaching. Possible contributors to these results may include the fact that some Interns were in their first year of studies, and until they had a formal research course, they could not apply the brief once-a-month instruction at the seminars

without more opportunity to practice. The Interns also had not been provided with feedback on their projects as they worked on them.

Second year: 2002-2003. During this year, we utilized an Action Research Website available at www.actionresearch.altec.org. At this site, students are provided with a template for completing an Action Research Project. It includes titles of each section of a project, and provides boxes in which students can fill-in their specific project. For example, the section for the beginning of the project is entitled *Define Research Problem and Context*. Under this heading is a box for students to define their problem and the context/setting they work in. After they fill in this section, they can submit it to the Intern advisors for editing and approval.

The website was successful in many ways. It allowed students a specific guide for their research, and a template for them to use to collect and review their data. Efforts to produce good research projects improved, but the website proved to be more restrictive than helpful for many. The template is set, and thus an Intern could not individualize a project to fit his or her needs. In addition, it was very difficult for faculty to provide feedback. Projects could not be edited, but space was provided to write comments. These were difficult for the Intern to access, and because we could not edit on the original document, many times Interns could not discern what we were referring to in our comments. Thus, the website was not used for the next school year.

Third Year: 2003-2004. A few of the students who completed the validation study and training did seem to understand how to collect and present data, and overall, the number of project submissions was better this year, but still only about a third of the Interns participated. When asked why they chose not to participate, invariably the answer was "I didn't have time." This was very frustrating to the Intern staff, as they had tried hard to emphasize that data collection should be a daily part of their teaching. The faculty discussed this over the Summer of 2004, and strategized for the Fall. One suggestion was that the word "research" may be intimidating to new Interns because they had not yet had a research class, and perhaps we should use a different term. We decided instead to keep the term Action Research, but to be very specific in what the term meant, and how each Intern was to complete his or her project.

Fourth year: 2004-2005 This step-by-step method proved to be the most successful at encouraging excellent Action Research projects. Despite the offer of a stipend, many Interns still chose not to participate. However, the quality of the projects that were submitted were significantly better. Many projects by teachers of students with moderate-severe disabilities focused on changing student behaviors, such as using the toilet, reducing tantrums, and sitting in their seats for the duration of a lesson. For teachers of students with mild-moderate disabilities, many teachers chose to focus on their standard reading or math program, and to collect data on its effectiveness. As we had emphasized this in our training, it was nice to see that teachers chose to do this topic.

One outstanding project was done by a high-school teacher in a school with very challenging students. His school is situated in the Watts area of Los Angeles, and many students had experienced life-long poverty and lack of social supports at home.

This Intern chose to teach his students to raise their hands instead of shouting out an answer. During the baseline phase, he noted that one student in particular was the 'ring-leader' of the class, so he focused his attention on this student. After weeks of instruction, this teacher successfully co-opted his class leader into the program, and as a result, the other students followed. He wrote in his final paper, "While conversing with some of my colleagues with whom I share some students, they reported a significant change in their classroom behavior. They were raising their hands outside of my class in other teacher's classes. This made me feel proud and reinforced my goal of modifying their classroom behavior." We have received permission to use this project as a model for future classes, and are considering presenting it at a state conference next year.

DISCUSSION

Two of the factors considered important in an Intern preparation program by all Interns in the State of California were significantly more important to students in the CSU Fullerton Intern program. The first factor is the importance of confidence and the ability to do the work of teaching and the second is that effective teachers are change agents, improving the schools in their community and reforming education. The CSU Fullerton Interns rate these areas as more important than Interns statewide perhaps due to the quality of their Intern program. The Intern faculty at CSU Fullerton teach and support these elements through continuing evaluation and modification of the program itself. Two major factors in our program support these findings. The first is the Action Research project that is integrated in to the Intern program and the second is the CSU Fullerton courses on collaboration and school change.

Confidence in the Work of Teaching

Results from the statewide study documented CSU Fullerton Interns have confidence in their ability to do the work of teaching. This confidence is built on the knowledge the Interns have acquired from the Intern program resulting in the ability to collect, analyze and evaluate student outcomes via the Action Research. The Action Research products and quality has improved over the years. Interns are taking the task of data collection more seriously and are reporting a higher level of confidence in knowledge of what to do with the data in order to affect change in their classrooms. The faculty have increased their focus on the projects and spent numerous hours providing step-by-step guidance through the phases of Action Research.

Teachers as Change Agents

A series of two courses cap our program, both dealing with training teachers to collaborate with faculty and families at their school sites. The first course, Collaboration and Consultation, includes training on Fullan's (1990) model of school change, on self-analysis and personality styles and how to work with others of differing styles, team problem-solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Two main projects required in this course are to co-teach with another teacher, preferably in general

education, and to provide staff development to the entire school faculty. To accomplish the staff development project, the special educator in training must meet with the principal and get on the agenda for a staff meeting or other time he or she prefers, to conduct a needs analysis of the staff in regards to special education, and to provide training on the topic chosen by the staff. Through this process, our teachers-in-training are told that they are change agents in their schools, and the reflections of the in-services provided by students in their final products over the years have supported this premise. The second course taken is Advanced Collaboration. This is the capstone course and students are required to turn a completed portfolio that includes strategies for advocacy, program marketing, systems change, research to support a staff development emphasis that the student has carried out for their time in the program, and student outcome data. They must include a reflection of their own effectiveness as teachers that resulted in the data (both positive and negative). Over the years, Intern students seem to have much more detailed and insightful reflections and more organized data, and in most cases, report better student growth overall.

Implications for Future Research

Interns are fortunate. They have the opportunity to teach as they learn about their profession. This gives institutions of higher education the opportunity to give assignments that require teachers to practice their methodology and to reflect on the results of their efforts, with guidance from faculty. This article covered the efforts of one Alternative Teacher Education program to evaluate it's effectiveness in preparing teachers. These results indicate that the program has been effective in promoting confidence in the work of teaching and preparing agents of change in the education community. Future research efforts will focus on Intern outcomes once they complete the program and have been teaching in the field for a number of years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Karge has worked with Interns for the past 15 years at three different universities and has authored numerous articles on alternative certification. She and the four co-authors currently comprise the Intern faculty at CSU Fullerton.

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Mentorship Defined by Alternative Teacher Certification Candidates: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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National teacher shortages have driven the market for alternative means of teacher certification. This study sought to understand what mentorship means to 27 beginning teachers in a university-district partnership Alternative Certification Program (ACP) in an effort to understand the participants' perceptions. The process included administering and coding self report questionnaires, random selection and focus group interviews, data triangulation, and intense interaction over a 10 month period. Principles of phenomenology guided researchers to realize four interrelated essential core themes exploring the meaning of mentorship (a) school politics, (b) proximity (c) relationship, and (d) classroom management.

Florida is expected to need 30,000 new teachers in the fall of 2006, and an estimated 20,000 each year for the following ten years (Matus, 2005). By 2006, the federal No Child Left Behind Act mandates that every classroom must be led by a highly qualified teacher who is certified in his/her field or subject area. National teacher shortages have driven the market for alternative means of teacher certification to produce quality teachers and ultimately improve student learning outcomes. School districts and state and local governments are meeting the demands through alternative teacher certification programs (Feistritzer, 1998; Henke & Zahn, 2003; Legler, 2003). Programs vary from emergency certification to very sophisticated and well designed programs (NCEI, 2002). Many of these alternative teacher certification programs are aligned to universities which provide ACP teachers an opportunity to complete a master's degree. One such ACP program is described in this study.

A northwest Florida university partnered with three local school districts to provide an Alternative Certification Program (ACP). The program developer and instructor was a veteran teacher with 18 years classroom teaching experience and 5 years teaching experience at the university level that included courses at the graduate level. Cohort groups, on-the-job classroom assignments, alternative scheduling of coursework, the use of in-school and peer mentors, and school district induction activities were ACP characteristics. At least a bachelor's degree and employment with any of the participating school districts were prerequisites for program participants. Many ACP candidates also had life experiences that enhanced classroom teaching.

Ultimately, ACP candidates were assessed by state, university and district guidelines. Each candidate submitted a portfolio of authentic classroom tasks, including documentation of student learning outcomes that reflected Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP). Skills such as lesson planning, assessment, and

classroom management were also included. The university instructor provided the final evaluation of the coursework while school site administrators provided the final evaluation of the infield performance of each ACP candidate. District certification specialists determined which ACP candidates successfully completed district teacher certification requirements before forwarding a report to the state Department of Education. Mentorship as another important ACP component was the focus of this research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While mentorship models have existed for decades, typically these models regarded business or youth programs. Mentoring was not as common in the educational setting until recent years (Davis, 2001). Mentorship can be thought of as a way to retain and support beginning teachers with professional growth. Using national data, Ingersoll & Smith (2004) found that beginning teachers who were provided mentors for the same subject field and who participated in collective induction activities, such as planning and collaboration with other teachers, were less likely to leave the teaching profession.

Mentoring in induction programs can be effective to help ameliorate isolation and lack of support (Andrews & Quinn, 2005). Teaching reflects vulnerability for both teacher and mentor. "Beginning teachers must be helped to understand and to face their weaknesses even when they do not wish to and even when mentors, who badly want to be supportive and not directive, would rather disengage, as so many do, to avoid conflict." (Bullough, 2005, p. 10).

Characteristics common for mentors of beginning teachers were described in the literature. Simmons (1998) describes necessary characteristics as professional role models, voluntary servants, good communicators, astute diplomats, and self reliant mentors. Kelley (2004) proposes that mentors should be chosen for their teaching excellence, disposition toward collaboration, commitment to growth and change, and expertise in priority areas such as classroom management or content areas. Mentorship was defined by the ACP candidates in this study.

The researcher, developer and instructor for the program, was intimately involved with the ACP beginning teachers for the first year of teaching experience. While the literature indicated that mentors are important and the participating school districts mandated that ACP candidates have mentors, a common meaning of mentorship was unknown. Consequently, schools within districts and schools across districts approached the phenomenon of mentorship differently. The overarching question became, "What is mentorship?"

METHODOLOGY

Phenomenological research can be a springboard to quantitative research. Qualitative research, to understand the human experience and construct meaning from it, sets the stage for quantitative research to generate and test hypothetical generalizations (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). Phenomenological inquiry as a type of qualitative research was considered as the theoretical framework for this study. By definition, the purpose of phenomenology was to emphasize "a descriptive recording of

immediate subjective experience as reported" by the 27 ACP candidates in this research study (Sonnemann, 1954, p. 344). Phenomenological reflection is retrospective. Van Manen (1990) describes phenomenology as "reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through"
(p. 9-10). Therefore, the researcher sought to understand how ACP candidates perceive, make sense of, and describe mentorship to others through their individual and collective lived experiences through phenomenological research methodology.

Phenomenological research focuses on "what an experience means for persons who have had the experience" and how they can articulate the experience (Schram, 2003, p. 71). We can only know the appearance of what mentorship meant but ultimately reality depends upon the participants' perspectives. The only way to really know what mentorship meant for ACP candidates was to experience it as directly as possible. The researcher as the program developer and instructor shared an intense relationship with the ACP candidates over a 10 month period. Phenomenology research indicates that the researcher have an insider's perspective. As an ACP advocate, the researcher was well aware of the human cost of living through the first year of teaching for nontraditionally trained teachers and the need ACP candidates appear to have for mentorship.

Researcher bias was addressed by analyzing the data through the cyclical nature of qualitative research methodology. For another form of bias checking, researcher triangulation was employed by the primary investigator and two graduate students. One graduate student had completed the ACP and accompanying master's degree. The other graduate student was a doctoral candidate seeking a degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Both graduate students were working in university sponsored assistantships regarding the ACP.

Heuristically, the process of the internal search to discover the meaning of the experiences led the researcher to develop methods and procedures for investigation (Patton, 2002). Participation in the ACP, for both the researcher and the ACP participants was an intense human experience. Other artifacts evaluated in the collection of data were email correspondence, journaling, telephone conversations, office appointments, class discussions, and individual portfolio submissions. Data were collected throughout the first year of teaching for the ACP beginning teachers as participants in this research.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 27 ACP candidates voluntarily participated in this research project. All of the participants had completed ACP coursework and were taking summer master's degree classes as a cohort group at the participating university. Timing was crucial as the investigation required retrospection of mentorship throughout their first year of teaching while they sought teacher certification. Criteria for the participants included: (a) working for one of the 3 participating school districts, (b) completion of one school year as an ACP candidate, (c) taking at least one graduate level summer course at the university.

The participants ranged in age from early twenties to late thirties. Twenty-two participants were female and 5 participants were male. Nineteen participants were

Caucasian, 7 participants were African American, and one participant was Hispanic. Representation of socio-economic level varied with upper-middle class, rural, and inner-city school sites. Ten participants were secondary education teachers, 10 were middle level education teachers and 7 were elementary or preschool teachers. Teaching assignments varied from Spanish, special education, business education, computer technology, dance, reading, and drama as well as the traditional content areas of English, math, science, and social studies. Phenomenology was the methodology used to collect and analyze the data for this research.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The starting point for knowledge of the mentorship experience came from in-depth data collection from the researcher's insider perspective. Data collection from the researcher's own experience included email correspondence, journaling, telephone conversations, office appointments, class discussions, and individual portfolio submissions as well as the experiences of the research participants. Researchers were required to complete the university's Internal Review Board approval and signed consent was obtained from ACP candidates.

Phenomenological analysis was conducted in five steps (see Figure 1 for model). First, 27 participants completed a general questionnaire. Second, 13 participants were interviewed. Third, 3 participants were asked to check the responses of the interviewed ACP candidates. Fourth, the researchers interpreted data that had been analyzed through the cyclical process. The last step was to define mentorship through the eyes of the ACP teacher candidates. Following, the five research steps are described in more detail.

Initially the researcher sought to ask the basic question, "What is a mentor?" Self report questionnaires were distributed in graduate level summer courses at the participating university to the ACP cohort group of teachers and collected by a graduate assistant (see Appendix for questions). Neutrality about the content of the interviews was achieved by the researcher and two graduate assistants independently coding the questionnaires. All three searched for essential core themes by locating key phrases or statements within the personal experiences of the ACP participants. Although not identical the lists of each researcher were similar and only those core themes that emerged from all three lists were included. Mutual agreement was obtained regarding the following four essential core themes: (a) mentor guidance, (b) mentor experience, (c) relationship with mentors, and (d) the ability to ask questions of mentors. Therefore, essential core themes were defined as true experiences without prejudgment or imposed meanings. Further investigation using interviews was needed to clarify across the collective group of ACP candidates what appeared to be real. The second step in the research process was to interview ACP candidates.

Secondly, all study participants were invited to a "last day of classes" outdoor celebration and told that interviews would be conducted for those who could attend. Interview prompts were a reflection of the previously mentioned core themes. Thirteen of the 27 original participants provided 30 to 40 minute, audio taped interviews. Audio tapes were transcribed by a graduate assistant. Typed transcripts were then coded and compared. Another dimension of a phenomenological approach was the assumption

that there were *essences* of the core meanings of the shared experience (Van Manen, 1990). Patton (2002) suggested "the experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon" (p.106). As informed readers, the researchers interpreted the essences of meaning to be (a) school politics, (b) close proximity, (c) relationship, and (d) classroom management (see Table 1 for identified core themes). The third step of the research process was conducting a focus group to member check.

Third, all of the remaining ACP candidates were invited to participate in a focus group interview. Six teachers participated and responded to the same interview questions. The focus group interview was audio taped, transcribed, and coded to obtain commonality of the subjects' interpretations. As a form of member checking, essential core themes and essences of meaning that previously emerged were presented to a final group of 3 not previously interviewed study participants to assess if the researcher's findings were viewed as accurate. The fourth research step required interpretation.

School Politics

Fourth, researcher interpretation "seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience" of the phenomenon of mentorship for ACP candidates (Patton, 2002, p. 482). This called for serious inspection of what the meanings revealed about the essential, recurring features of mentorship for ACP candidates. Noted was *school politics*. One teacher talked about her mentor warning her to "pre-watch videos" before showing them to students and to "stay away from topics" that would be too controversial. Another ACP candidate mentioned that her mentor told her to "keep [a copy of] all of her tests." One talked about how colleagues can "play games." Nine respondents actually said they were mentored to know which people they "can and can't" consult. One participant remarked that her mentor was "tight with administration" which made the beginning teacher mistrustful. The words "school politics" were used repeatedly by research participants when describing the mentorship experience.

Typically, ACP candidates are unfamiliar with school culture unless they have experienced a previous career such as substitute teaching or have actively volunteered in school settings. Mentoring for an ACP candidate means so much more than just the details of the school site policies and procedures. School policies and procedures can be learned from school handbooks or manuals but the hidden curriculum of teaching can best be taught through nurturing mentorship. To facilitate the indoctrination of school culture with ACP candidates, mentors need to be in close proximity.

Close Proximity

Another dominant commonality from the data was *close proximity*. ACP candidates talked about mentor teachers being "right next door" or "across the hall." Research participants often referred to having lunch with their mentors. Several affectionately referred to their mentors as "lunch buddies." Sharing a common planning period also emerged as a popular occurrence. Teachers talked about seeing their mentors "on the way in [to school]" or their mentors checking on them "daily." One

ACP candidate described it this way, “She would spend her whole planning period with me when I was stressed out.” “She would ask me to tell her about my problem and stay with me her whole [planning] period.” Another respondent reported, “My mentor was right across the hall.” “She was there all the time, any time, and was that was the best reassurance.” “She kept me safe.”

A preschool teacher noted that she had “lots and lots and lots” of questions to ask her mentor. She felt fortunate because her mentor was also the guidance counselor for her school. This meant her mentor not only had the expertise of guidance counseling but also had more opportunity for immediate availability to the ACP candidate. Close proximity meant help in classroom management for this particular preschool ACP teacher. Sometimes the participants’ responses regarding close proximity and classroom management became intertwined.

Seniority is a concept of school culture that veteran teachers understand. Due to seniority, sometimes ACP candidates are the teachers who are not assigned a specific classroom but instead are referred to as “floating” teachers. Floating teachers use the classrooms of teachers who have a scheduled break or planning period during that specific period of time. Being a floating teacher may present several problems for ACP teachers. In addition to not having the safety and security of their own classrooms or close proximity to mentors’ classrooms, ACP candidates may be further away in proximity from other resources. These resources may include the front office, other resource officers, or guidance departments. ACP candidates felt that is was important to have close proximity to a mentor with whom they shared a relationship.

Relationship

Relationship with mentors was thematic in the lived experiences of the ACP candidates. Two respondents used the words “mother-daughter” to describe the relationship while other respondents used the word “friend.” An ACP candidate remarked that her mentor was a friend in “spite of the age difference.” Another ACP candidate remarked that her mentor was “awesome” and that she even had her “[phone] number in her cell phone.” She continued to say that they had become “best buddies” and would even “hang out” outside of school. She explained how she could tell her things in “confidence and trust her to go no further.” Yet another replied that her mentor “taught” her “the stumbling blocks” so she didn’t have to “mess up.”

Many times the phenomenon of school politics and relationship became intertwined in the interviews. One teacher reported that she felt like she could “confide without jeopardy” in her mentor, especially if she had a “problem with another co-worker.” Several times ACP candidates mentioned “safety” when describing the mentor relationship and the school politics. Mentors need to develop relationships that are supportive in nature rather than instructive in nature.

Classroom Management

Classroom management, was another commonality. One candidate remarked that her mentor’s advice was “more beneficial” than the school district pre-service workshop. Another remarked that her mentor taught her “little things like field trips”

and “how to get a bus.” One ACP candidate said that she “didn’t even know what a cum [cumulative record] folder was” until her mentor informed her. Frequently mentioned were words to describe the essence of classroom management like “strategies,” “ideas,” “modeling,” “tips,” “suggestions,” “pointers,” “techniques,” “materials,” “practical applications,” “planning,” “tests,” and “projects.” One respondent summarized it by saying that her mentor “helped tremendously by just giving me her Julius Caesar stuff.” Another exclaimed that she didn’t know she “couldn’t send five kids to the bathroom” at once.

Classroom management includes management of materials, the classroom atmosphere, and behavior management techniques. All of these concepts work together for a positive teaching and learning environment. Many of these management skills come from experience. Initially, ACP candidates lack the direct experience necessary and these skills must develop over time. Mentors familiar with the school culture, in close proximity, and who have developed good working relationships with new ACP teachers can offer much needed support. A definition of mentorship through the experiences of beginning ACP teacher candidates may be helpful to provide such support.

Mentorship

The fifth step in the phenomenological analysis was an attempt to offer a tentative definition from organized immersion in the data, meaningful clusters, and a synthesis of meanings as the experience unfolded. Initially the researcher sought to ask the basic question, “What is a mentor?” One ACP candidate was very factual when he reported that a mentor was, “Someone to take initiative to ask and keep tabs on a new person.” When asked if he would take initiative to be a mentor for new teachers, he readily nodded his head in agreement. Later in the interview he described the excitement of teaching a special program at a different school site for the coming school year. When asked if he would be mentor for beginning teachers at his new school, his expression was perceived to immediately change from an expression of contentment to be a second year teacher to an expression of confusion to be a beginning teacher again at a new school. Thus, the concept of mentor can mean many different things to many different stakeholders and the paradigm changes with the situation.

Negatives reported by ACP candidates include mentors who “want you to do things their way,” mentors who are “tight with administration,” and mentors who express that the beginning teacher is a “burden.” Additionally, one participant reported that her mentor was generally disliked and the candidate feared that dislike could be transferred to her. Several ACP candidates reported that they didn’t want to “feel judged or evaluated.”

Overall, ACP candidates who participated in this research study were very pleased with the mentor experience and could articulate what that meant to them. ACP candidates felt more secure in teaching when mentors with whom they had established trusting relationships were close by for guidance with school culture related issues and as a resource with the management skills necessary for teaching. One ACP candidate described her teaching situation by saying she was a “first year teacher, in a portable

[building], with no intercom, and teaching a split 4-5 grade ESE [Exceptional Student Education] class. She acknowledged the need for and reliance upon a mentor. Another remarked that she was "very appreciative of the ACP and my relationship with my peers but you need someone at school!"

Table 1
Mentorship Defined by Alternative Certification Candidates: *Essences of Meaning*

Four Emerging Themes: School Politics, Close Proximity, Relationship, Classroom Management and the characteristics as described by ACP candidates for each theme.

School Politics	Close Proximity	Relationship	Classroom Management
Suggestions	Share tests	Friend	Detention
Pointers	Share lesson plans	Mother/Daughter	Strategies
Observation	Tips	Balancing	Modeling
	Ideas		Materials

PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

School politics, proximity, relationship, and classroom management categories aim to make sense of the complex reality of school culture. The reflections by the participants throughout their first years of teaching and the additional interviews make it clear that the majority of the ACP candidates feel they have been positively affected by a mentor. The reader of this research should come away with a better understanding of what it feels like to experience mentorship in the ACP (Schram, 2003). Phenomenology is methodology used in this research which allowed for insights that would not have been possible with more traditional qualitative research. A need for additional research calls for manuscripts that address other forms of alternative certification programs and comparisons between novice teachers and ACP candidates regarding mentorship.

School culture is a new paradigm for most of the ACP second career professionals. Doerger (2003) purposes that mentors need to have the personal disposition and understanding that they are responsible for cultural transmission because beginning teachers are learning the culture of their own schools as well as the culture of the education profession. In describing adaptation to school climate, one ACP candidate responded "nothing really prepared me and I made it my goal just to make it until Christmas." Another described it by saying her mentor "opened my eyes." After establishing a relationship with her mentor one beginning teacher said she felt more prepared as "just the second semester was so different." Grossman & Thompson

(2004) suggested that the goal was not to change beginning teachers as they begin to construct their practices but rather how to provide the needed supports.

The ACP was many things to the candidates but most of all, the program was the relationship with the people who helped them learn the school culture. In response after response, participants talked about the importance of the people who helped and supported them. Other mentor relationships mentioned by research participants were family members who were also teachers, ACP peer members, the program instructor, the school secretary, and data clerks because they "know student issues."

These new teachers crave close proximity and relationship with mentor teachers to learn the school culture and to acquire strategies, such as classroom management, necessary for teaching. These results are supported by the literature which suggested that the strongest factors for teacher retention include a same field mentor, common planning periods, and regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

The experiences and influences of mentors have implications for ACP candidates because they reveal the school culture for beginning teachers. This research illustrates the importance for mentors to understand the needs of teachers who are not traditionally trained and feel vulnerable. Mentors will increasingly come into contact with teachers who are becoming teacher certified in alternate ways. Therefore, it is important for mentors to not only be knowledgeable about the procedures, school climate, pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom management strategies, but also to understand the needs such as classroom management skills and feelings such as safety and security of teachers completing the program. Alternative teacher training programs are providing an opportunity for additional people to join the teaching profession. Teachers who are provided with positive mentors and receive nurturance and support may promote a sense of well-being and self-confidence. With the overwhelming shortage of teachers needed in Florida as well as across the nation, stakeholders should be aware that mentorship for ACP beginning teachers remains an important phenomenon.

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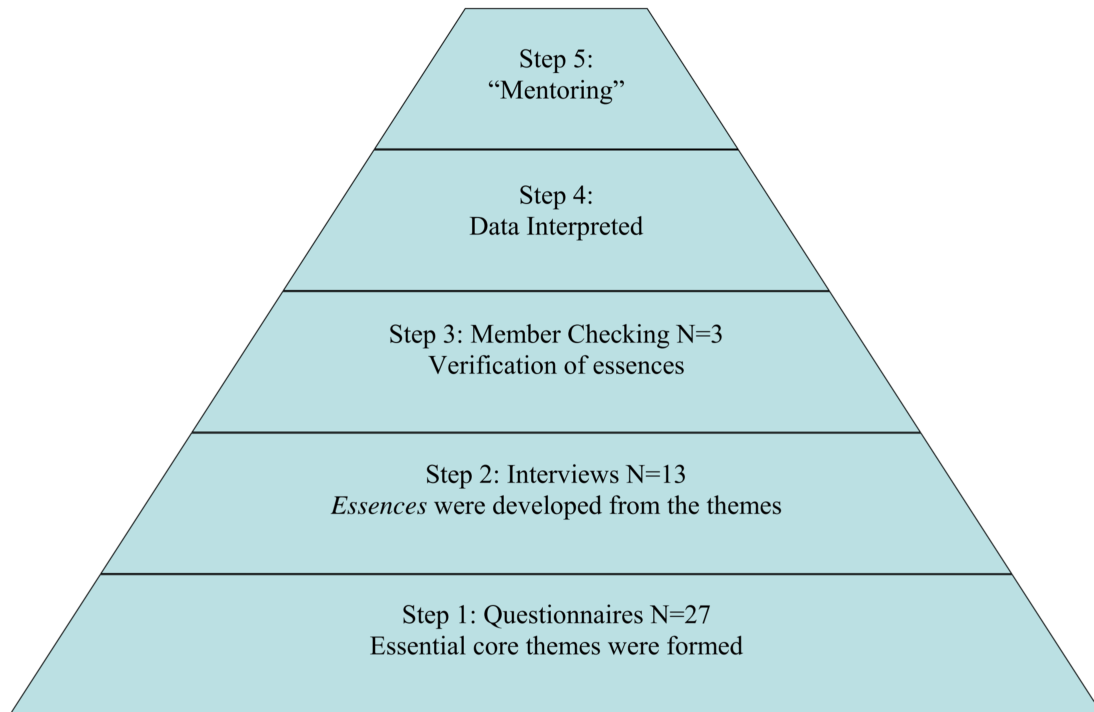
Figure 1. Phenomenological Analysis



Appendix A. Questionnaire and Interview Questions

Self Report Questionnaire Questions

1. What does mentorship mean?
2. Tell me about your “mentor.”
3. Tell me about meeting with your “mentor.”
4. Estimate how many contact hours you spent per week with your mentor.
5. Define mentorship
6. Describe mentor feedback
7. Tell me what you mentor did for you.
8. What else do you want to tell me about your mentor?

Random Selection Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your mentor.
2. Tell me about “guidance” regarding your mentor.
3. Tell me about “relationship” regarding your mentor.
4. Tell me about “asking questions” of your mentor.
5. What else do you want to tell me

Mentoring Alternative Certification Teachers: Perceptions from the Field

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In this paper we present two studies that examine mentoring supports for alternative certification teachers from three perspectives: pre-interns, mentor teachers, and site administrators. The diverse sample population allowed us to study the role of race, gender, age, and prior careers in six domains of teacher learning and in their beliefs about students. The results showed differing perceptions of support and the critical need for mentoring across all domains of teaching, regardless of teacher characteristics. The findings suggest several needs: clear mentoring goals, better communication, effective mentor training, and a stronger instructional focus.

Mentoring offers great relief to beginning teachers as they struggle through that first critical year of teaching. Across the nation, 22 out of 32 state-authorized induction programs include mentoring support to fully- and alternatively-certified teachers (AFT, 2001). This support is especially important to alternative teachers because they begin teaching without teacher preparation and are learning to teach while on the job. While the benefits of mentoring include teacher retention and job satisfaction, many questions remain unanswered about the specific aspects of programs and the mentoring process that produce these results (Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004).

Alternative certification (AC) pathways have opened the doors to teacher candidates who are older, more racially and ethnically diverse, include a higher number of males, and who have had other careers (Shen, 1988, NCEI, 2005). These teachers are hired primarily in urban and rural school districts in the shortage areas of mathematics, sciences, and special education. Their AC profile contrasts sharply with the profile of traditionally certified new teachers who are 85 percent white, 82 percent female, and younger than 30 years (Feistritzer, 2005). A second contrast exists between the profile of traditionally certified teachers and the 42 percent minority students enrolled in the public schools in 2003 (NCES, 2005).

The literature on the needs of beginning teachers reveals several perspectives. The first focuses on the concerns and realities of the lives of new teachers. The second focuses on the acquisition of teaching skills.

The first year of teaching is such an overwhelming experience that even teacher preparation cannot adequately prepare beginning teachers prior to their first teaching assignment (Glover and Mutchler, 1999). Because teaching is a highly personal and

emotional activity, feelings of self-esteem are closely linked with the ability to do one's job skillfully. Teachers hold "unrealistic expectations" about themselves when they assess their own limits to influence student outcomes (Kelchtermanns, 1996). Moreover, the transition from student to teacher is a drastic one—one in which beginning teacher optimism soon turns into *reality shock* (Veeneman, 1984). This shock may be what prevents teachers from understanding that not all classroom problems have solutions and that even their mentors may not have answers to all situations; willingness to learn is a critical ingredient of the mentoring relationship (Schmidt, 1999).

Beginning teachers also bring with them a complex and personal belief system that influences their teaching behaviors. Their cultural background, life and work experiences, and personal schooling experiences shape their core beliefs. Tenacious and resistant to change, core beliefs strongly affect the learning to teach process by acting as filters to adapt teaching strategies to fit into their belief systems (Ball and McDiarmid, 1988; Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986; NCRTE, 1990; Richardson, 1996; Stoddart, 1993). When prospective teachers discussed how to implement equity in a diverse classroom, they identified family background, student motivation, and differences in aptitude and ability as "problems" to consider. These "problems" were factors beyond a teacher's control and were closely connected to race and socio-economic status (Paine, 1990).

Other studies show that role models, cultural identity, high expectations, language support, and cultural awareness positively influence all students' learning (Banks, 2000. Darling -0Hammond, 1997; Dilworth, 1990; Feman-Nemser and Floden, 1986; Haberman, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Ogbu, 1992)

A growing body of evidence suggests that minority teachers who share the same ethnicity as their students are more successful in improving achievement levels, have fewer students assigned to remedial programs, and identify more students as gifted (Darling-Hammond, L., Dilworth, M. E., and Bullmaster, M., 1996; Fenwick, 2001; Stevens, 1994). While this evidence is promising, further studies about the effect of minority teachers on minority student achievement are needed (Torres, J., Santos, J., Peck, N. L., and Cortes, L., 2004).

In the learning to teach literature spanning two decades, the demands of classroom management and student motivation rank highest among new teacher concerns (Gratch, 1998, NCES, 1997; Odell, 1989; Veenman, 1984). Darling-Hammond (1999) argues that teachers who lack full certification feel less prepared and have greater difficulty planning curriculum, managing the classroom, and assessing students' learning needs. Because alternatively certified teachers have gaps in their knowledge and skills and learn how to teach by trial and error, they may teach themselves to cope in ways "counterproductive to student learning."

Yet, a survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (1997) yields somewhat different findings. First-year new teachers were asked about their preparedness to handle a variety of classroom activities that included lesson planning, discipline, and instruction. Forty-four percent of the AC teachers and 62 percent of the traditionally certified teachers reported they had received mentoring support through induction programs. The results showed no dramatic differences in feelings of

preparedness between alternatively certified teachers and those who had completed traditional teacher preparation programs (Feistritzer and Chester, 2000).

In this paper we seek to expand the current discussion of mentoring support for alternative certification teachers by reporting the results of two studies conducted within one large-scale research project of AC teachers (Kizu, 2002; Utsumi, 2002). One study focused on what AC teachers perceive they need and the assistance they receive from their mentor teachers (Utsumi, 2002). The second study examined whether the non-traditional AC teachers need differentiated support strategies related to their characteristics of race/ethnicity, gender, prior experiences, and age and their beliefs systems as influences on their teaching (Kizu, 2002).

Both studies were conducted in a large, urban school district and included alternative certification pre-interns, mentor teachers, and school administrators.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The two studies shared the same sample population of 687 individuals within three separate target groups—517 pre-interns, 118 mentor teachers, and 52 site administrators. Pre-interns, the primary focus of the studies, were first-year teachers in general and special education. They were hired without full certification and assigned to teach multiple subjects.

The pre-intern profile showed 59 percent as non-white, compared to 15 percent of non-white teachers, nationally. Thirty-two percent in our sample were male compared to 18 percent, nationally (NCEI, 2005). Approximately 70 percent of the sample entered teaching with prior career experiences, compared to 50 percent of AC teachers, nationally (Shen, 1998). Forty-three percent of the sample was over 30 years old. The ethnic breakdown revealed 29 percent White, 31 percent Hispanic, 16 percent Black, 8 percent Asian, 3 percent Filipino, 1 percent Native American, and 7 percent Other. Five percent of the 517 pre-interns did not respond.
The 118 mentor teachers in the sample supported pre-interns across the large district. Of the 52 site administrators, 35 were assistant principals and 17 were principals.

Survey Instruments

For the two studies, we developed and shared three questionnaires—one for pre-interns, another for mentors, and the third for administrators. Parallel questions about support were posed to all three groups. The Appendix shows the questionnaire for pre-interns and is the only questionnaire that requested demographic information.

Questions and statements were organized into larger groups: (a) mentoring support, (b) administrative support, (c) beliefs about teaching and learning, (d) demographic information, and (e) pre-intern assets.

Twenty-four questions focused on specific mentoring activities and were grouped together into six domains of support: *Emotional Support, Planning and Implementing Lessons, Content Knowledge, Classroom Management & Discipline, Analyzing Teaching & Learning,* and *Non-Teaching Duties.* Each domain consisted of three to five questions that probed a variety of strategies that mentors could

conceivably use, such as demonstrations, modeling, discussion, and observations. The questions required pre-interns to indicate the frequency of support they received, with possible responses of *Never*, *Once*, *Twice*, and *Ongoing*.

Five questions were Likert (1932) scale ratings that asked about pre-interns' beliefs on factors of student academic success, including socio-economic background, mastery of basic skills, motivation, and family support. Respondents reported their degree of agreement for each statement.

One question was open-ended, allowing participants to provide additional explanations and give personal opinions related to support.

Data Collection and Analysis

The pre-intern survey was conducted at six regional sites where pre-interns were attending new teacher courses. Mentor surveys were administered at mentor regional meetings. The administrator survey was administered at a voluntary professional development meeting.

We collected 687 surveys and compiled the responses on a database. The number of responses for each support domain varied, as some respondents elected not to answer all questions. Only those mentoring domains that had complete responses to all sub-questions were counted.

Data analysis consisted of producing quantitative descriptions about the support pre-interns receive and the support mentors and administrators. In order to analyze the role of race/ethnicity, gender, age, and prior career experiences as factors of pre-interns support and learning to teach, pre-interns were grouped into subgroup pairs. The subgroups were based upon single variables and were listed as: *Non-white* and *White, Male* and *Female, >30 years* and *< 30 years,* and *Prior Career* and *College.* For example, the responses for a pre-intern who was Hispanic, male, and over thirty years old were placed into three different subgroups.

We computed frequencies and percentages for each of the questions related to mentoring support. For statements with Likert scale responses, we computed mean values and subjected them to *t*-tests to determine if any significant differences existed between subgroups. We examined the reliability of the 24 questions as multiple-item indicators for each support domain. All domains for pre-interns showed high reliability (alpha ≥ 0.76) based on Cronbach's (1951) index of internal consistency. The mentor subscale coefficient also showed high reliability (alpha ≥ 0.70), except in the area of non-teaching duties, which was slightly lower (alpha=.65). On the administrative questionnaire, responses to the sub-questions in two domains did not meet the acceptable alpha coefficients (alpha =0.70) for internal reliability and were eliminated from the comparison between pre-interns, mentors, and administrators.

FINDINGS

The two quantitative studies explored the perceptions of support by pre-interns, mentor teachers, and administrators. The findings presented here are organized by the research questions:

- What specific mentoring do pre-interns, mentors, and administrators report they receive or provide?
- What do traditional (white, female, younger than 30 years of age, and/or recent college graduate) and non-traditional (non-white, male, older than 30 years of age, and/or with prior careers) pre-interns report as local supports to develop their classroom effectiveness?
- What beliefs, knowledge, and experiences do traditional and non-traditional pre-interns report as influences on their teaching?
- What support domains do pre-interns, mentors, and administrators report as needed for classroom effectiveness?

Results of the Teacher Support Domains

Tables 1 – 3 display the results of the responses by pre-interns, mentors, and administrators in each of the support domains. When comparing the results across the six domains, all groups agreed that emotional or psychological support was received or provided. Differences in the degree of support received were varied. Ninety-five percent of the mentors reported they provided ongoing emotional support, compared to 63 percent of the pre-interns who reported receiving ongoing support. Eighty-three percent of the administrators reported that pre-interns received emotional support from mentors or other support staff, including math and literacy coaches. Administrators also reported high percentages of ongoing support for pre-interns in *Teaching Strategies, Analyzing Teaching & Learning,* and *Non-Teaching Duties.*

When mentors were asked what they considered most important in a mentoring relationship, they wrote the word *trust* in 46 percent of their comments. Their comments revealed empathy for their pre-interns. One mentor wrote, “Mentees must feel you are there to help them and not to criticize or run to the principal to tell [*sic*] problems.”

Mentors agreed with pre-interns that they provided the least amount of support in planning and implementing lessons, but the relative agreement showed a difference of 17 percentage points. However, wide disagreements between mentors and pre-interns appeared in all the other support domains: *Content Knowledge, Classroom Management, Analyzing Teaching & Learning,* and *Non-Teaching Duties.* Based on anecdotal information gathered from new teachers and mentor teachers, we anticipated some discrepancies, but not to the extent we found.

Role of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Age, and Prior Experiences

The results of the subgroup pairs show that race/ethnicity, gender, age, and prior experiences were not significant factors for receiving support. Table 4 displays the results in the *Emotional Support* domain for each of the subgroups, compared to the responses by mentors and administrators. The responses of each of the paired subgroups showed differences that ranged between zero and six percentage points. T-tests showed that these differences were not significant.

Pre-intern subgroup pairs reported *Emotional Support* as the highest frequency of ongoing support from mentors. The 61 to 65 percent range of responses

from the subgroup pairs (Table 4) was similar to the 63 percent reported by the entire pre-intern sample for the same domain (Table 1). Each of the five other domains, *Planning & Implementing Lessons, Content Knowledge, Analyzing Teaching & Learning, Classroom Management & Student Discipline,* and *Non-teaching Duties* yielded a similar pattern of results.

Teachers' Beliefs and Influences

Table 5 displays the responses of pre-interns on their beliefs about students. Subgroup responses tended toward strong agreement that students' basic skills, motivation and family support are factors contributing to their academic success. In contrast, the subgroups tended to disagree slightly that a student's socioeconomic background is an important factor. The responses within each subgroup pairs varied minimally. Although mean responses showed slight differences, mentors agreed with pre-interns on socio-economic background, basic skills, and family support.

Needs for Additional Mentor Support

When we analyzed the data on what pre-interns, mentors, and administrators reported as areas for additional support, we were surprised that no single support domain emerged as a priority need. Contrary to much of the research on new teachers and the popular belief that new teachers need the most help in classroom management, our results showed that mentoring was needed across all domains, with slight skewing toward the instructional areas of *Analyzing Teaching & Learning* and *Planning & Implementing Lessons.* Likewise, mentors and administrators agreed that new teachers need support across all the domains.

In summary, the results of pre-intern perceptions of mentoring support revealed wide mismatches in perceptions between pre-interns and mentors in the specific teacher learning domains. Teacher characteristics of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and prior career experience showed no significant differences in the mentoring support they wanted and received. Sample teachers agreed that basic skills, student motivation, and family support were important factors to students' academic success.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Our two studies looked at AC pre-interns, mentors, and administrators and their perceptions about teacher support at the local school site. The diversity of our pre-intern sample provided us an opportunity to deepen our study and examine whether race/ethnicity, gender, age and/or having had prior careers were factors requiring differentiated support. Our findings provided us with new insights into AC teacher needs and the mentoring process.

Differing Perceptions of Support

To account for the mismatch in perceptions between pre-interns and mentor teachers, we offer several explanations. While there may be cases where assigned

mentors do very little to support their teachers, we think that the major perception of non-support has to do with the feeling of being left to "sink or swim." New teachers enter a world filled with students and peers, but then find themselves isolated from adult collaboration and interaction in their classrooms. Hargreaves (1995) contends that the underpinnings of teacher isolation are embedded in the "egg crate" organization of schools. He asserts that school cultures are reinforced by a national culture of individualism and provide few opportunities for joint planning, sharing resources, or visiting one another's classrooms. One of the purposes of mentoring is to encourage peer-to-peer interactions to reduce isolation, improve practice, and create collaborative relationships (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000).

Another possible explanation is that pre-interns, interns, and fully-certified new teachers cling to unrealistic expectations of what mentoring promises and what institutional support they think they will receive. They believe that someone or some system should be there to support them; the help should be instantaneous, direct, and magically successful. New teachers, interns, and pre-interns often look for simple solutions, not realizing that teaching is a highly complex activity that may take years to do well. One pre-intern wrote, "Give new teachers an actual lesson plan book from an experienced teacher," possibly thinking that what to teach translates into how to teach and can be penned into the two-inch blocks of a lesson plan book.

A third explanation in the mismatch between what pre-interns perceive as the support they receive and the support mentors report they give is miscommunication and lack of mutual understanding. The survey process provided us with insights into teachers' and mentors' understanding of what is missing in mentor/novice relationships. After completing the questionnaire, a pre- intern asked, "Is this what my mentor is supposed to be doing?" Another commented, "I didn't know I was supposed to learn all this." After mentors completed their questionnaires, one remarked, "I kept one of your surveys so now I know what to do." To add further confusion, many schools have mentors, literacy coaches, math coaches, coordinators, and district personnel who offer some form of support to new teachers. They may give mixed messages, advocate conflicting classroom strategies (i.e., constructivist vs. behaviorist), and focus on implementing programs instead of focusing on student learning. The misunderstandings reflect a lack of clear articulation of program goals and expectations, resulting in superficial interactions between mentors and the teachers they support.

Traditional v. Non-Traditional Characteristics of Pre-Intern

We were also surprised by the general similarity of responses between each of the subgroup pairs. This was due in part to the ample literature that suggests there are differences in teacher expectations based upon race/ethnicity and social class (Delpit, 1995, Ferguson, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995). One explanation for the findings may be attributed to the overwhelming nature of the first year of classroom teaching. This first-year experience and the support teachers need in all areas, overshadow personal characteristics and differences related to these characteristics. What is important is the fact that mentors should be aware of and sensitive to the cultural, career, and life experiences that the teachers they support bring to teaching.

Teacher Beliefs

Pre-Intern responses were consistent with Paine's (1990) study that identified student motivation, family support, and basic knowledge and skills as important factors for success. Since these factors are beyond teachers' immediate control, the results suggest that students, not teachers, are responsible for their own success or failure. This is consistent with Sugrue's (1996) argument that teachers often have a deficit view of students and do not acknowledge what learners bring to the learning situation, thereby shifting the responsibility for student learning out of the teacher's realm. Mentors can help new teachers acknowledge their students' backgrounds and experiences as assets they can build upon and teach to high expectations.

Balance Between Instructional and Non-Instructional Support

The two studies found several areas that validated existing research, expanded our understanding of the complex "gestalt" of teaching, and posed questions for further study. Without diminishing the importance of the affect, mentoring, as shown by the literature and our studies, has focused too narrowly on emotional support.

The higher level of agreement that support was received and given in *Emotional Support* and *Non-Teaching Duties* may be translated as comfort zones for both new teachers and mentors. Mentors nurture new teachers to help them survive the rigors of the classroom (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992). Their nurturing consists of praise, reassurances, encouragement, and positive feedback (Wildman et al., 1992). Moving beyond the affective domain, the challenge of mentoring is to provoke professional growth and to help others teach effectively, particularly to high poverty, minority students in urban schools.

Implications for Districts and Alternative Certification Programs

District mentoring programs should clearly identify the goals, roles, responsibilities, and strategies for effective mentoring. Within a framework of a common understanding, professional development for mentors should address new teacher needs, teacher belief systems, teacher expectations, diversity training, and a stronger focus on instructional practices.

At the local school level, the various support staff members need to include their mentors when discussing strategies for improving the instructional program. In many situations, mentors are full-time classroom teachers while support staff members are out-of-classroom teachers or administrators. Part-time mentors are often excluded from the instructional leadership that focuses on the current instructional needs of students. This exclusionary practice, however unintended, tends to create barriers that prevent schools from fully utilizing the resources available to them. By contrast, a school-wide collaborative leadership culture has the potential to encourage smaller mentoring teams that provide a structured, collegial environment for new teachers to learn how to deliver a rigorous, standards-based curriculum.

The findings from the two studies also have implications for alternative certification preparation programs. One implication is that AC programs should recognize that mentors need to upgrade their knowledge about current theories and practices taught in teacher preparation. Recognizing that mentor teachers are not teacher educators (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992), AC programs can forge stronger partnerships with mentors to collaboratively support the learning-to-teach process. While this may sound difficult, mentors may actually welcome recognition of their importance to teacher development. Program activities, such as special lectures on coaching or guest speakers, can bring together AC teachers and their mentors to learn together. The time spent at these events would count as mentoring time for their mentor logs.

Additionally, with the growing population of minority students and the decreasing numbers of minority teachers, nationally, AC programs need to embed examination of teacher beliefs and student expectations into their coursework so that teachers understand how their beliefs and cultural experiences impact their teaching and student learning.

In summary, our studies brought to the surface major discrepancies in perceptions between mentors and the teachers they support. These differing perceptions reduce the effectiveness of mentors, which ultimately impacts student achievement. The degree of truth in the differing perceptions is not the issue; the fact that differences do exist begs for improvement. Solutions do not have to be complex, but they do require concerted effort between all involved parties—mentors, new teachers, districts, and alternative certification preparation programs. Together, collaborative teams of mentors and new teachers, in partnership with the local school, district, and AC programs, can tackle the often mixed-messages and demands exerted onto their classrooms. By working together, the mentoring process can produce tangible evidence of new teacher progress and satisfaction in organizing and managing classrooms, planning and implementing lessons, engaging students, and valuing all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, language, and socio-economic status.

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TABLES

Table 1
Responses by Pre-Interns

Support Domains	No. of Cases	Never	Once	Twice	Ongoing
Emotional Support	402	14%	11%	12%	63%
Planning & Implementing Lessons	406	66%	11%	8%	14%
Content Knowledge	406	53%	13%	9%	19%
Classroom Management & Discipline	407	44%	17%	11%	28%
Analyzing Teaching & Learning	403	58%	12%	9%	21%
Non-Teaching Duties	404	32%	14%	12%	42%

Table 2
Responses by Mentor Teachers

Support Domain	# Cases	Never	Once	Twice	Ongoing
Emotional Support	111	0%	0%	5%	95%
Planning & Implementing Lessons	114	35%	17%	17%	31%
Content Knowledge	110	13%	14%	15%	58%
Classroom Management/Discipline	111	7%	11%	16%	66%
Analyzing Teaching & Learning	111	20%	11%	17%	52%
Non-Teaching Duties	110	0%	3%	8%	89%

Table 3
Administrator Responses

Support Domain	# Cases	Never	Once	Twice	Ongoing
Emotional Support	50	5%	6%	6%	83%
Teaching Strategies	25	11%	6%	15%	68%
Analyzing Teaching & Learning	35	6%	4%	8%	82%
Non-Teaching Duties	42	0%	5%	9%	86%

Table 4
Pre-Intern Subgroup Responses to Emotional Support

Groups	Never %	Once %	Twice %	Ongoing %
Pre-intern Subgroups				
Non-white	13	11	13	63
White	17	10	10	61
Males	16	10	12	62
Females	13	12	12	63
> 30 Years	15	11	10	64
< 30 Years	9	11	15	65
Prior Career	14	11	13	62
College	13	9	14	64
Mentors	1	1	3	95
Administrators	5	6	6	83

Table 5
Mean Values on Factors that Affect Students' Academic Success

Groups	SES	Basic Skills	Motivation	Family Support
Pre-intern Subgroups				
Non-white	2.56	3.32	3.45	3.44
White	2.45	3.39	3.56	3.47
Males	2.68	3.39	3.50	3.53
Females	2.47	3.36	3.46	3.45
> 30 Years	2.48	3.36	3.51	3.42
< 30 Years	2.55	3.36	3.43	3.47
Prior Career	2.60	3.37	3.48	3.44
College	2.58	3.36	3.50	3.52
Mentor	2.38	2.77	3.63	3.29

Mean values based on
1 - *Strongly disagree* 2 – *Disagree* 3 – *Agree* 4 - *Strongly agree*

PRE-INTERN SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to gather data about pre-interns and their school support systems for a research study. All information will be kept confidential.

Using a No. 2 pencil or pen with black or blue ink, please respond each question circling the appropriate letter.

1. Do you have a mentor, coach, or other support provider currently assigned to work regularly with you?

   (1) YES (2) NO (if NO, proceed to question 28)

2. How much time does your mentor, coach, or support provider spend with you each week? Include phone calls and e-mail, if applicable.

   (1) 0 hr. (3) ¾ - 1 ½ hours
   (2) ½ hr (4) 1 ½ - 2 or more hours

3. Would you like more time? Circle one. YES NO

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS RELATE ONLY TO SUPPORT PROVIDED BY YOUR CURRENTLY ASSIGNED MENTOR OR COACH. CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMERAL.

YOUR MENTOR OR COACH:	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	ON-GOING
4. Has addressed your specific concerns as a beginning teacher.	0	1	2	3
5. Facilitated your collaboration with colleagues.	0	1	2	3
6. Has communicated with you regularly by phone, e-mail, and/or face-to face.	0	1	2	3
7. Has earned your trust and maintains confidentiality about your teaching.	0	1	2	3
8. Helped you plan a lesson from beginning to end.	0	1	2	3
9. Co-taught a lesson that you had jointly planned.	0	1	2	3
10. Modeled techniques for teaching language development to English Language Learners.	0	1	2	3
11. Showed you how to break down a lesson into meaningful chunks (scaffolding).	0	1	2	3
12. Demonstrated how to incorporate culturally diverse materials into your daily curriculum.	0	1	2	3
13. Helped you move students from basic skills to higher levels of thinking.	0	1	2	3
14. Demonstrated content-appropriate strategies for building students' knowledge base.	0	1	2	3
15. Demonstrated ways to improve student motivation.	0	1	2	3
16. Demonstrated how to manage students in active learning experiences.	0	1	2	3

YOUR MENTOR OR COACH:	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE	ON-GOING
17. Modeled and coached effective discipline techniques.	0	1	2	3
18. Modeled how to implement a variety of classroom routines, including transition from one activity to another.	0	1	2	3

19. Helped you develop a discipline policy that aligns with your own tolerance levels.	0	1	2	3
20. Guided you to analyze a lesson you had jointly observed.	0	1	2	3
21. Coached you to observe and analyze student work and performance to assess learning.	0	1	2	3
22. Coached you to continually reflect on the effects of your teaching on students.	0	1	2	3
23. Engaged you in discussions about theories of teaching and learning.	0	1	2	3
24. Described and demonstrated the underlying theories of teaching and learning.	0	1	2	3
25. Helped you navigate school policies and procedures.	0	1	2	3
26. Helped you obtain resources/materials for your classroom.	0	1	2	3
27. Coached you to communicate with parents regarding their child's progress.	0	1	2	3

FOR THE NEXT QUESTIONS, CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT INDICATES THE DEGREE YOU AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT.	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
28. Students' academic success is largely determined by their socio-economic background.	1	2	3	4
29. Students' academic success is largely determined by their mastery of basic skills.	1	2	3	4
30. Students' academic success is largely determined by their motivation to learn.	1	2	3	4
31. Students' academic success is largely determined by the support they receive from their families.	1	2	3	4
32. I tend to teach the way I was taught in school.	1	2	3	4
33. Gender is an important identity factor in teaching students.	1	2	3	4
34. Similar cultural backgrounds help a teacher connect more effectively with students.	1	2	3	4
35. Prior career experiences provide teachers with added resources that enrich the curriculum.	1	2	3	4
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE

36. A teacher's maturity and life experiences enable him/her to deal with a variety of classroom situations.	1	2	3	4

FOR THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS, PLEASE CIRCLE THE BEST RESPONSE.

37. What percent of your students do you predict will graduate high school?	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
38. What percent of your students do you predict will attend college?	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%

QUESTIONS 39 THROUGH 42 RELATE ONLY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT YOU RECEIVE AT YOUR SCHOOL:

YOUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS:	NEVER	ONCE	SOME SUPPORT	GOOD SUPPORT	WOULD YOU LIKE MORE HELP?
39. Have counseled you in your growth and certification as a teacher.	0	1	2	3	Yes No
40. Support a strong instructional program within the school.	0	1	2	3	Yes No
41. Have ensured that classroom disruptions are minimized.	0	1	2	3	Yes No
42. Enforced your implementation of the discipline policy when students are sent to the office.	0	1	2	3	Yes No

43. Do you receive regular support from one or more peers at your school site? YES NO (Circle)

If YES, indicate how much time per week you receive support: ______________ minutes per/week

PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT YOURSELF

44. What do you teach?

(1) General Education (2) Special Education

45. What level do you teach?

(1) Elementary (2) Middle School

46. What is your gender?

(1) Female (2) Male

47. How would you describe your ethnicity? (Mark only one)

(1) American Indian/Alaska Native
(2) Asian
(3) Black, Not Hispanic
(4) Filipino
(5) Hispanic
(6) Pacific Islander
(7) White, Not Hispanic
(8) Other (specify)______________________

48. What is your age? ______________

49. What type of school did you attend?

(1) Public
(2) Private, other

50. What was your occupation prior to this teaching assignment?

(1) College student
(2) In an education-related field
(3) Employed full-time (specify)_______________
(4) Other (specify) ___________________________

51. Where did you receive most of your elementary school education? Please specify city, state, country.

____

52. Where did you receive most of your high school education? Please specify city, state, country.__________
____

53. How would you classify your own schooling experience?

(1) Urban (Population 500,000 +)
(2) Rural (Population 10,000)
(3) Suburban (Urban adjacent)

54. How would you classify the socioeconomic level of the high school you attended?

(1) Wealthy community
(2) Middle class community
(3) Low income community

55. In addition to English, are you fluent in any of the languages that any of your students speak? (Circle)

YES NO If YES, specify language_____________________

56. What percent of your students share your ethnicity? _________%

57. Which statement best reflects how you rate your growth as a new teacher?

(1) I am about the same as when I started.
(2) I have both good days and bad days.
(3) I am making steady progress.
(4) I am making excellent progress
(5) Other (specify)____

58. Please prioritize 1 (least) to 6 or 7 (most) the areas that you would like help from your mentor or coach.

________ Emotional support

________ Planning and implementing lessons

________ Content knowledge

________ Classroom management/Student discipline

________ Analyzing teaching and learning

________ Non-teaching duties (school procedures/policies)

________ Other (specify)____________________________

59. What other comments do you have about support for new teachers?

____

____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.