

ABSTRACT

A Multiple Case Study Exploring the Relationship between Teachers' Alternative Certification Experience and Their Self-Efficacy in Their First Year of Teaching

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Teacher preparation is at the forefront of educational policy. All over the country, teachers continue to protest because of the feeling of being overworked and underpaid (Ravitch, 2020). The country's lowest-performing schools tend to gain the most underprepared and alternatively certified teachers (Hussar et al., 2020). Teachers often experience a low sense of self-efficacy, and attrition rates continue to rise in the profession. Preparing teachers to teach in low-income urban environments through alternative certification warrants more extensive study. Overall, this study explored critical components of teacher preparation programs in an effort to understand how these components impact preservice teachers' self-efficacy and their success during their first year of teaching.

The following study describes the feelings and perceptions of four first-year teachers in a city in Texas who were certified through an approved alternative certification program. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand the feelings and perceptions of first-year teachers and to explore the impact of

their alternative certification experience on their self-efficacy. Through an *a priori* theoretical framework, this study utilized Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy to describe the stories of four first-year teachers. This study created a link between components of alternative certification programs to the perceived effectiveness of first-year teachers. Observations, open-ended sentence stems, and interviews enabled me to collect data from four first-year teachers.

This Problem of Practice found that teachers who experienced clinical internship during their alternative certification teaching program relied heavily on their mastery experiences within their first year of teaching regarding their self-efficacy. This Problem of Practice also found that teachers emotional and psychological traits played a strong role in a teachers perceived self-efficacy when clinical internship was absent from the alternative certification experience. Overall, this study examined the components of different alternative certification programs in regards to first-year teachers self-efficacy. Programs that included prolonged, structured clinical internships paired with culturally relevant pedagogy more positively impacted the teacher's self-efficacy than those that did not include this component.

A Multiple Case Study Exploring the Relationship between Teachers'
Alternative Certification Experience and Their Self-Efficacy in Their First Year of Teaching

by

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DEDICATION

To my family

Mom, Dad, Brock, Bryce, Kim and Kristine

Thank you for always loving and supporting me through every adventure. Your love, support and guidance has given me strength to pursue my dreams.

To Carey

Thank you for never letting me give up on myself or my dreams. I love you.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Problem of Practice

Introduction

Increasing student achievement in all schools has been an essential aspect of public education policy in the United States over the past few decades (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2016; No Child Left Behind, 2001). Due to the rising achievement gap, public education policymakers have implemented multiple strategies to ensure teachers are prepared to work and stay in urban schools across America. The National Center for Education Statistics (Kena et al., 2016) conducted a study to determine the number of the nation's teachers who were alternatively certified and where these teachers were teaching. In 2015–16, 18% of teachers across the country were alternatively certified. More than half of these alternatively certified teachers entered classrooms to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects (Kena et al., 2016). Recent data indicate that 46% of alternatively certified teachers teach in elementary classrooms and 50% of alternatively certified teachers teach in schools with high amounts of racial and ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged students (“Characteristics of public-school teachers,” 2017). These data highlight that alternatively certified teachers are common in high-needs schools, as well as high-need subjects. For years, researchers have posited there is a problem with preservice teacher training in society's current alternative certification programs (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016). In a national debate on teacher education, Sutcher et al. (2016) argued that many alternative certified teachers are not prepared to face the myriad of challenges that exist in today's

diverse classrooms. Despite the actions of No Child Left Behind (2001) to create high-quality teachers in a short period of time, many alternative certification programs create teachers who are ill-equipped to handle the issues often found in high-risk schools (Sutcher et al., 2016). Unfortunately, this problem negatively impacts students in these classrooms. One potential cause of ill-equipped teachers is the need to certify teachers quickly due to the rising shortages and attrition rates in public education. Many alternative certification programs leave out critical components of teacher preparation, including; clinical internship and mentorship that are often deeply embedded into traditional teacher preparation programs. Kee (2012) found that teachers who were alternatively certified felt less successful, especially when their programs left out differing types of educational coursework and shortened, or even left out, the required clinical experiences. Hence, there is a need to explore the impacts of alternative certification programs and their links to first year teachers' self-efficacy.

Teachers' lack of self-efficacy is a common reason many of them feel ill-prepared to teach in diverse classrooms (Siwatu et al., 2016). Teachers' self-efficacy in low-income, urban areas differs in the sense that culturally responsive teaching is the primary contributor to the teacher's success (Siwatu & Starker, 2010). Siwatu (2011) posited that teachers in low-income schools have a higher sense of self-efficacy in developing personal relationships with students; however, they have a low sense of self-efficacy when interweaving students' personal lives into the curriculum and communicating with English language learners and their families.

Alternative certification programs that include clinical internships have been implemented in many programs to alleviate the ongoing issue of culturally relevant

pedagogy (CRP) missing from new teachers' skill sets (Guha et al., 2017). Clinical internships, paired with coursework, help connect theory to practice. Beck (2020) called this the third space preparation. In her study, she referred to first space preparation as having little theory and research, and second space preparation as loosely connecting theory to practice. However, third space allowed for a balance between theory and practice; therefore, alternative certifications that include practice and theory position teacher candidates for a more successful experience of preparation. As alternative certification programs grow in popularity, first-year teachers' self-efficacy warrants further study. A gap exists in the first-year teachers' self-efficacy due to their teacher preparation program and its' role in teachers' success.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous studies indicate teachers' perceptions of their teaching abilities in regards to their self-efficacy (Feistritzer, 2005; Herman et al., 2017; Rochkind et al., 2008; Shernoff et al., 2011). However, few specifically addressed their perceptions during their first year of teaching after completing an alternative certification program. Few studies also addressed the perceptions of teachers who become certified through alternative certification programs in regards to the impact these programs had on their self-efficacy. There is a gap in the literature of qualitative-based studies that analyze first-year teachers' self-efficacy as it relates to various components and factors of their preservice teaching preparation.

Many studies have focused on the importance of traditionally certified teachers or alternatively certified teachers; however, few studies have concentrated on these programs' components that impact preservice teachers' self-efficacy (Feistritzer, 2005;

Herman et al., 2017; Rochkind et al., 2008; Shernoff et al., 2011).. For example, Feistritzer (2005) surveyed both experienced and beginning alternative certification teachers and compared them to traditionally certified teachers regarding their perceptions of their teaching ability in the classroom. The study failed to identify which specific components affected their teaching ability in the sense of perceived self-efficacy. Instead, the study included wholistic views of different programs such as the New Teacher Project, Teach for America, and online alternative certification programs. Herein lies the gap this study intended to fill; the research pertaining to alternative certification program components is not robust, specifically pertaining to the impact these preparation programs have on first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy to teach during their first year.

Studies relating to specific components of alternative certification programs are lacking. Conversely, this study also posited the importance of teacher self-perception and confidence in the workplace. Rochkind et al. (2008) shed light on new teacher perceptions regarding their feelings of preparedness to teach after their teacher preparation programs. This study examined surveys of three specific beginning teaching programs: Teach for America, Teaching Fellows, and Troops for Teachers. Only 50% of alternative certification teachers felt prepared for their first year of teaching. In comparison, 80% of traditionally certified teachers felt prepared to teach. Within the same study, 74% of alternative certification teachers believed their students were making academic gains compared to 94% of traditionally certified teachers. The perceptions of traditionally certified teachers far outshine the perceptions of alternative certification

teachers in terms of being prepared to teach and making academic gains with their students (Rockhind et al., 2008).

Perceptions affect teachers' confidence to teach and their willingness to stay in this professional field. First-year teachers' perceptions tend to differ from those of veteran teachers. First-year teachers' frustrations typically stem from the stress and burnout that occur when teachers are in classrooms with little preparation (Shernoff et al., 2011). Linda Darling-Hammond (2016) offered that teacher preparation is linked to the academic achievement of students. Shernoff et al. (2011) also suggested that stress and burnout negatively affect teachers' ability to effectively enter the classroom and be successful. Another study posited that teachers who feel more stress have less impact on student learning (Herman et al., 2017). Nearly 25% of teachers in inner-city schools left the profession after their third year of teaching. Herein lies a need to examine the factors that initiated this exodus to decrease such a staggering statistic (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Teachers leaving at such high rates also creates a financial crisis for our nation's schools. In a 2012 study, Synar and Maiden explored the financial effects of a southern urban school district regarding teacher turnover. Through their analysis, they found that total turnover costs consist of training costs, performance productivity costs, as well as advertising cost. These are in addition to the cost to hire a new teacher. They also found that these costs can vary by district but impact low-income districts the most. With high teacher attrition rates in low-income schools, it is especially vital to explore reasons behind why teachers are leaving.

The ability to train teachers so that stress and burnout do not negatively impact their early teaching careers is vital to public education. One factor that may impact

teacher departure in low-income school districts is that many teachers are not prepared to deal with the myriad of issues they face with diverse student populations (Sutcher et al., 2016). As alternative certification programs (ACP) become more popular, especially for inner-city schools, many studies aim to investigate the differences in students' academic outcomes from alternatively certified teachers when compared to traditionally certified teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Freytag, 2003; Whitford et al., 2018). The U.S. Department of Education found that alternative certification programs do, indeed, increase the number of certified teachers (Whitford et al., 2018). However, many studies claim that alternatively certified teachers, in their first five years, struggle much more with classroom management, pedagogy, and day-to-day interactions with students than traditionally certified teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Freytag, 2003). One dilemma to consider is that most alternatively certified teachers serve in low-income areas with a multitude of different cultures and challenges not present in more affluent areas (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). These teachers are often underprepared to deal with these complex issues, specifically related to culturally relevant pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 2016). These findings shed light on the need to explore beginning teachers' self-efficacy in their first year of teaching in diverse classrooms after they have completed an alternative certification program.

As noted earlier, many teachers who work in low-income, inner-city schools face low teacher retention due to a consistent feeling of stress, specifically in their first five years of teaching (Fuller & Alexander, 2003; Herman et al., 2017). Fuller and Alexander (2003) concluded that underprepared teachers who earned certification through ACP teach in districts with a higher percentage of minority and low-income students.

Additional research conducted by Herman et al. (2017) examined teachers' stress when teaching in low-income schools. This research concluded that teachers' stress levels directly related to student outcomes. According to Herman et al. (2017), "Students whose teachers were high-stress, low coping, and high burnout had the poorest outcomes" (p. 90). Comparatively, Herman et al. (2017) found that disruptive behaviors were more common in highly stressed teachers' classrooms. Self-efficacy, stress, burnout, and overall pedagogical knowledge are all factors that affect how teachers feel and directly impact how successful a teacher feels in the classroom (Herman et al., 2017). In summary, self-efficacy affects teachers' ability to feel successful during their first year of teaching raises the dilemma concerning how the seemingly popular ACPs prepare teachers to teach in diverse settings and impact their self-efficacy to teach.

ACPs fill the need for training teachers quickly and effectively. Through multiple critical factors of teacher attrition, ACPs seem to be at the heart of teacher preparedness, especially as they relate to teacher attrition in low-income schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In March of 2017, former President Donald Trump overturned a policy to ensure teacher preparation programs are held accountable for the quality of their candidates' preparedness. In light of this policy, Vagi et al. (2019) implemented a study that examined the relationship and importance of high-quality teacher preparation programs and teacher attrition rates. Vagi et al. (2019) suggested it costs each district between 4,000 dollars to 18,000 dollars to replace teachers who leave the profession. These dollar amounts are staggering, but for low-income districts, this price tag is even greater. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) analyzed the most recent attrition rates

and their effect on students and schools. Sixty-seven percent of attrition is linked to voluntary and preretirement turnover.

Another critical point to teacher attrition is public schools in inner-city areas that serve higher percentages of students in poverty tend to have higher attrition rates than their counterparts (Vagi et al., 2019). Herman et al. (2017) conducted a study that examined one specific alternative certification program and addressed the literature gap on teachers' perceived effectiveness within their first year of teaching. Researchers discovered that teacher positive sense of self-efficacy did help improve the statistics of teacher attrition. To add to this body of research, the current study sought to understand teachers' perceptions in their first year of teaching, specifically examining the relationship between their alternative certification experience regarding program components and self-efficacy in teaching.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative multiple case study explored the perceptions and feelings of four first-year teachers' experiences and their self-efficacy during their first year of teaching in an urban elementary school. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems during the first semester of their teaching experience. This qualitative multiple case study sheds light on the importance of critical aspects of ACPs, specifically mentoring, clinical field experience, and CRP, as they affect the teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

An abundant amount of literature examines the effectiveness of ACPs (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Vagi et al., 2019; Whitford et al., 2018); however, there is a gap in the literature on how specific components within the programs impact teachers' perceived

effectiveness in the classroom in regards to their self-efficacy. This study investigated the challenges and perceptions of elementary teachers in a city in Texas, all who completed an alternative certification program. This study attempted to add to the literature by examining these first-year teachers' feelings and perceptions of preparedness, as well as their self-efficacy, and how these relate to their alternative certification experience. It individually examined the importance of clinical practice, CRP, and mentoring during preservice training. Although ACPs help expedite the certification process for teaching professionals, many programs offer the bare minimum for certification and do not include extensive clinical experience, CRP, and mentorship in preparation programs (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2011).

The primary research question that guided this study was: In what ways do components of teacher ACP impact the self-efficacy of first-year teachers in low-income urban schools? The study examined the following sub questions: What aspects of ACP help to increase teacher's self-efficacy? In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success? How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the teacher's alternative certification program?

This study calls for more research on the broad array of ACPs, specifically on the varying components of ACPs and their impact on teacher self-efficacy. This research is essential for federal and state agencies to improve teacher certification in alternative settings to prepare teachers to teach in diverse settings. Teachers must be highly effective in their profession and be adequately trained to teach in diverse school settings in order to contribute to the success of 21st-century students (Darling-Hammond, 2010). This study

provides critical feedback on how different alternative certification programs prepare preservice teachers by assessing different aspects of the programs to ultimately discover what components of such programs impact their self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

This study was framed through the lens of Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, which describes the confidence a person possesses when faced with challenges. Further, Bandura stated that efficacy is found to predict perseverance through obstacles, put forth in effort in completing tasks, and motivate a person to achieve results. Efficacy also relates to the choices people make in their lives and how they effectively monitor these choices (Bandura, 1997). In the realm of teaching, self-efficacy is described as the "extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (Berman et al., 1997, p. 137). The framework helps explore the critical attributes of ACP in relation to teachers' feelings and perceptions, specifically regarding their success in a classroom.

In this study, an *a priori* theoretical framework recognizes the connection between the alternative certification experience and the self-efficacy a first-year teacher develops when teaching students. Therefore, data collected were analyzed from the theoretical framework's perspective of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy.

Feelings and perceptions of success in the educational system are aspects of *self-efficacy*, a term that can simply be defined as confidence (Herman et al., 2017). Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1997) indicates that self-efficacy incorporates four key components: mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional

and psychological states. The four sources work together to impact a person's sense of self-efficacy.

The most impactful source of efficacy, according to many researchers, is mastery experience (Bandura, 1997; Cansiz & Cansiz, 2019; Jamil et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Morris et al., 2016). Looking through the lens of Bandura's (1997) mastery experience, teachers gain self-efficacy through mastering a task or controlling an environment. Strong efficacy beliefs are developed through personal mastery. In Collie et al.'s (2012) study, "teaching efficacy is defined as the judgment of capabilities to bring desired outcomes of engagement and learning" (p. 1190). Teachers' perceptions and the contexts in which they work impact their daily lives. Data from 17 school districts support this claim. Teachers' perceptions impacted their well-being and motivation. The same study found that teachers who experienced stress did not "perceive themselves as successfully managing behavior, engaging students, or using effective teaching strategies" (Collie et al., 2012, p. 1199). Their mastery experience was low, which caused their teacher self-efficacy to also be low.

Vicarious experience is another source of efficacy that Bandura described that impacts individuals. Vicarious experiences happen when individuals observe others completing difficult tasks (Bandura, 1997). Cansiz and Cansiz (2019) offered the example of preservice teachers observing other teachers. Through this observation, preservice teachers are able to see models of effective teaching. Ideally, good models would increase their self-efficacy to teach. Bandura (1997) further described this source as "the attainments of others who are similar to oneself are judged to be diagnostic of one's own capabilities" (p. 87). Observing others be successful in similar acts impacts

self-efficacy. Conversely, observing others struggle in similar acts can have reciprocal effects on an individual's self-efficacy.

The third source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Bandura described verbal persuasion as the encouragement and discouragement from others when given a task. He stated, "people who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it" (p. 101). Verbal persuasion in teaching is presented through feedback during observations or feedback from a credible teaching source (Morris et al., 2016). Discouragement can greatly hinder a person's self-efficacy. In fact, Bandura posited that discouraging messages are more likely to affect a person's self-efficacy than encouraging messages (1997). Therefore, feedback and social messages are vital to the feeling of success or contributing to failure.

Another critical component of Bandura's theory of self-efficacy pertains to emotional and physiological states. Bandura (1997) described that positive emotions can boost confidence, while stress and tension are often signs of vulnerability. Jamil et al. (2012) found that emotional and physiological states impact a teacher sense of self-efficacy more if there is a lack in mastery experiences. In a study of 509 preservice teachers, researchers found personality traits and emotional states were more likely to link to self-efficacy than mastery experiences. Fear and anxiety can greatly impact a teacher's feeling of success. Incorporating stimulus to reduce fear and anxiety in teachers likely increases their psychological state and, in turn, increases self-efficacy. Figure 1.1 explains the four sources of efficacy based on Bandura's model.

Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy frames this study through the four sources of efficacy. First-year teachers' confidence in their teaching ability significantly

affects their implementation of the skills they learned in their teaching program. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy portray less effective teaching practices. Framing the study through Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy allows me to collect rich data and analyze ACP's critical components related to first-year teachers' confidence.

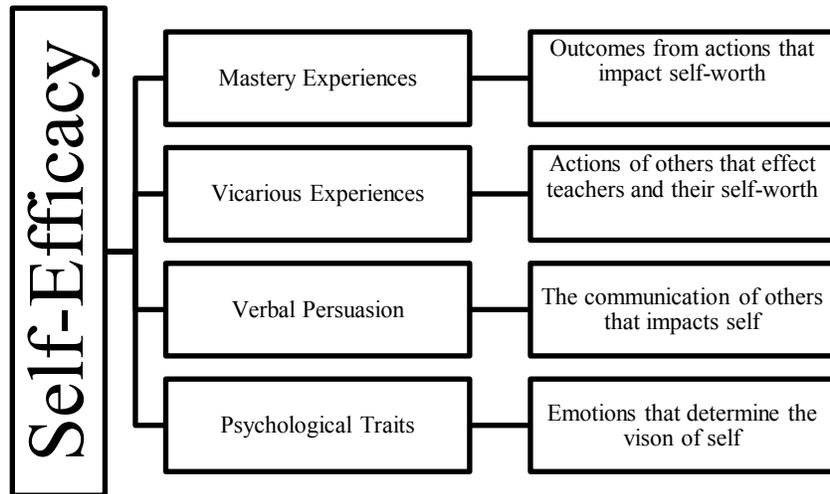


Figure 1.1. Sources of efficacy that effect teachers.

Each of the four sources; mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological traits; work together to increase or decrease a teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Mastery experiences and psychological traits are most common in effecting self-efficacy; however, verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences also are likely to effect teachers' sense of confidence (Bandura, 1997). This study intended to utilize Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, specifically the four sources of efficacy, to draw a connection between alternative certification components and first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy.

Research Design and Methods

This research used a qualitative multiple case study design to help explore teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom after their professional training in an alternative certification program. Both Creswell (2013) and Yin (2014) offer definitions of case studies. Creswell summarizes that a case study is a real-life phenomenon that is explored. Case studies involve collecting multiple sources of data and reporting the findings through themes and descriptions. Yin (2014) agrees with this definition and adds that a case study is bound by some context and relies on a theoretical construct. This Problem of Practice coincided with the definitions brought forth by Yin and Creswell. The purpose of this study was to explore a phenomenon, in this case, alternative certification program components, as they impacted participants in the real-world. This particular case was bound by both setting and time. All participants were in their first year of teaching and completed an alternative certification route to teaching. This study provided an in-depth look at how alternative certification program components impact teachers' self-efficacy throughout the first year of teaching in the classroom.

I purposefully selected participants in this study using maximum variation to portray the differentiation of program participants. I also collected data using semi-structured interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems. All data collected were analyzed through the theoretical framework and coded for themes based on Bandura's four sources of efficacy. I further used pattern matching to code the data and divide them into categories and then themes. Finally, I conducted a cross-case analysis to code the data across all four cases to identify patterns and themes that emerged from multiple cases.

Definition of Key Terms

The following are terms used in this dissertation and their definitions:

ACP: are programs that certify teachers through a system of standards set up by the council for accreditation of educator preparation. Participants do not need a bachelor's degree in education but must have a bachelor's degree to participate in the programs (Milner, 2011).

Burnout: defined as a by-product of stress where individuals experience exhaustion in all forms (e.g., physical, emotional, attitudinal) (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998).

Clinical experience: fieldwork in a classroom within the context of teacher perpetration programs.

Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP): a teaching framework that allows the teacher to teach to social justice and address the extreme gaps in educational experiences for students, especially those of minority populations (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Educator preparation programs: Certify teachers to be teachers of records in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Self-efficacy: a term that means confidence (Bandura, 1997).

Stress: defined as emotional unpleasantness that can lead to feelings of anger, anxiety, and frustration (Bandura, 1997).

Teacher attrition: the rate at which teachers are leaving or moving from schools before retirement (Herman et al., 2017).

Teacher self-efficacy: a term based on Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, meaning confidence and perceptions of mastery in the classroom.

Teacher shortage: an epidemic in the United States, where schools are unable to gain new teachers due to a lack of teachers being trained (Learning Policy Institute, 2016).

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP): the current organization that measures the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and decides if new educator preparation programs are allowed to certify teachers (CAEP, 2019).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE): the organization that reviewed educator preparation programs before the year of 2015 (NCATE, 2007).

Traditional teacher preparation programs: undergraduate or graduate degree programs that certify teachers through a four or five year certification process.

Conclusion

Teachers' self-efficacy can greatly impact their willingness to stay in the profession. ACPs aid in adding more teachers to the profession; however, these programs often fast track the certification route. While adding teachers into the field is a positive occurrence, the effects of being underprepared with low self-efficacy does little to impact attrition rates and position students to achieve academic success.

This study sought to fill the gap in the literature on alternative certification components and their impact on first-year teachers' self-efficacy. This study sheds light on components within such programs that impact beginning teachers' confidence in the classroom. Bandura's four sources of efficacy delineate what components are most impactful on teacher's self-efficacy. Each source affects first-year teachers in different ways. Mastery experiences are thought to be the most important factor. Through successfully completing tasks, individuals gain efficacy. Verbal persuasion and vicarious experience can also help in the increase of efficacy through positive feedback and

opportunities to observe others be successful. Finally, the measures to cope with psychological traits, anxiety and stress for example, impact individuals' confidence in their actions. This chapter displayed the problem statement, and described the theoretical framework in which the entire study is framed. The next chapter presents literature that examines the importance and history of ACPs, self-efficacy in teaching, clinical internship, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Student achievement seems to be at the forefront of school conversations (Sutcher et al., 2016). Researchers consistently search for new ways to increase achievement for all students across the country and close the achievement gap that exists between low-income schools and middle-class schools across the nation. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future portrayed a solution to these dilemmas that does not solely focus on student achievement, but also on teacher preparation. They wrote:

What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what teachers can accomplish. New Courses, tests, curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them productively. Policies can improve schools only if people in them are armed with the knowledge, skills, and supports they need. (1996, p. 5)

In other words, teachers are an essential component of public education. Teachers must be highly trained and qualified in order to impact reform in the spaces of public education. They must believe they matter and possess the self-efficacy to be difference makers in the classrooms where they teach.

Another critical component to consider when thinking about highly trained educators in school systems pertains to the myriad of skills teachers need to effectively teach diverse learners. Urban educators need the confidence to lead and teach and have cultural competencies to understand, reflect, and think critically about their practice. Cultural competencies in education ensure social justice and educational equity for all students in teachers' classrooms (Sutcher et al., 2016). Highly trained teachers and

cultural competencies are not the only factors that influence teachers' effectiveness in urban environments. Teacher training is vital to teachers' success in the classroom, especially during their first few years of teaching.

It is essential that teachers receive training on cultural competencies and pedagogy before entering the classroom during their first year of teaching. Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) argued for the importance of teacher training on these cultural competencies and pedagogy, offering:

certainly among the most demanding kinds of professional preparation: teacher educators must constantly model practices; construct powerful learning experiences; thoughtfully support progress, understanding, and practice; carefully assess students' progress and understandings and help link the theory and practice. (p. 441)

With connections to Darling-Hammond and Bransford's (2005) research, this study examined the impact of alternative certification preparation programs for teachers, specifically examining the importance of clinical practice, culturally relevant pedagogical skills and mentorship practices before entering the classroom, and how these components shape teachers' self-efficacy to teach.

This chapter examines relevant literature and explores factors leading to successful teacher preparation. Clinical practice, paired with healthy mentoring practices and CRP, are essential components necessary for all teachers, even those who are trained through ACPs (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). This Problem of Practice attempts to shed light on these issues. First, this chapter presents the importance of quality teacher preparation, followed by the history and importance of clinical practice in teacher preparation, especially for teacher preparation in low-income districts. I then argue for the importance of CRP within the spaces where teachers learn to be certified. Next, I give background information on ACPs, specifically these programs' history and

purpose. To connect ACP and self-efficacy, workplace self-efficacy' and its' impact on teachers is introduced.

Importance of Teacher Preparation

Examining the history of education and analyzing the critical aspects that make up current education preparation programs is essential to embracing the many facets of teachers' success and longevity in the classroom. Education has a multifaceted history that has shaped the way educational policy is currently portrayed. Education encountered its' first considerable alteration in 1983; as a result, *A Nation at Risk: An Imperative for Educational Reform* was published (Wise & Leibbrand, 2000). This work changed the landscape of education and initiated the standards movement currently being witnessed in education. Before the 1980s, teaching was a profession known for merely teaching students fundamental skills (Wise & Leibbrand, 2000). In 1987, however, the NCATE redesigned its' framework. It required university education departments to develop a norm in which all certification programs followed the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). During this time, there was also a movement to examine clinical practice and its impact on classroom preparation. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards sought to require teachers to meet specific standards of practice by developing performance assessments related to the skill of teaching. Through this induction of policy and teacher quality improvement, policymakers noticed students were still struggling academically and scoring poorly on standardized assessments (Wise & Leibbrand, 2000). Teacher preparation became a topic of interest again in the early 21st century. The focus of student achievement shifted from only focusing on standards to focusing on both standards and teacher preparation.

In the early 21st century, though, President George Bush conceived a new movement, No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002). In NCLB, the reform ideas centered around testing, accountability, and choice. Standardized testing became a national movement. Schools and teachers were judged for their test scores, and schools were successes or failures based on a standardized test (Ravitch, 2016). Shortly after NCLB, Race to the Top (2009) was deemed the new education reformation during the Obama administration. This movement tried to incentivize teachers based on merit pay and gave states cash to adopt charter schools. During this time, many teachers lost their jobs, and schools closed due to a myriad of factors. Many public schools turned into charter schools, and the state took over management for many low-performing districts (Ravitch, 2016). NCLB (2002) and Race to the Top (2009) created educational policies that seemed, by many, to be more damaging than helpful to the overall public education realm.

Currently, according to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), teachers' knowledge and ability to teach significantly impact students' ability to learn. Teacher preparation may well be the main proponent of a student's ability to grow and learn academically (Boyd et al., 2007; Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). Without adequately trained teachers, students may never reach their full academic potential. Boyd et al. (2007) found that teacher preparation may positively affect student achievement; therefore, to improve student achievement, teacher preparation programs must be improved by providing achievement-based data about teachers and equipping them to understand and model best practices. The preliminary conclusions on educational policy history help shape the current study's

need for a more in-depth look at teacher preparation, especially alternative certification programs.

Research on teacher preparation programs was vital to heart of this study. Darling-Hammond (2010) offered that teacher training is not only one of the most demanding professional trainings, but that teachers need to be models of exemplary practice, connect theory to learning, and must be able to understand the socioemotional learning of children. Additionally, teachers must be able to support, understand, and progress to create compelling learning experiences for all children. Darling-Hammond posited that more knowledge of teacher preparation is needed in today's policies to fully grasp the importance of how teacher training impacts students' academic performance. She also analyzed many presidential addresses and posited that research and policy must be put into practice. Her analysis of policy led to the importance of examining current standards in place for teacher preparation programs.

Today, the CAEP has five standards to measure teacher preparation programs' effectiveness. These standards exist so that all teachers receive the proper training before their first year of teaching. The first standard refers to content and pedagogical knowledge. This standard refers to the teaching candidate's ability to advance students' learning standards to be successful for college and career readiness. The following standard is clinical partnerships and practice, which measures the preparation programs' ability to implement high-quality clinical practice to ensure the development of knowledge, skills, and professionals to impact students positively. The third standard is candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity. This standard measure teacher candidates' effectiveness and the program's ability to recruit new, effective teachers. The fourth

standard is the program's impact, which refers to teacher candidates' satisfaction and effectiveness. Finally, the fifth standard is the providers' quality assurance and continuous improvement, ensuring all program must keep data and continually use the data from participants to improve their practices (CAEP, 2019). This study is connected to the importance of standard two, clinical partnerships and practice, and related to diversity training for teachers in low-income school districts. The next section describes the importance of one of the critical aspects of clinical partnerships in practice. Specifically, it encompasses a history of clinical practice research and the effects on teacher preparation.

History of Clinical Practice Research in Teacher Preparation

Clinical practice is defined and measured throughout the national standards for teaching preparation. To understand the history of clinical practice, it is essential to examine the current standard that encompasses clinical practice. Standard two of the CAEP offers that clinical partnerships and practices are evaluated every year. This evaluation determines if the teacher preparation program adheres to the condition of offering high-quality clinical practices while also ensuring the development of knowledge, skills, and professionalism of candidates through their clinical practices (CAEP, 2019). Teacher preparation programs must include clinical practices, but these standards fail to identify how long the clinical practices must span. With the recent modeling of connecting the profession of teaching to professions in the medical field, clinical practice has become more critical for teacher preparation programs. The profession of teaching continues to make its' mark as a combined discipline of both theory and practice, rather than just a compartmentalized notion of the two (American

Association of Colleges of Teacher Education [AACTE], 2010). As such, the CAEP is making the change to connecting theory and practice by changing its' standard to include clinical internship. Herein lies the need to examine the history of research studies conducted on clinical practice and the field of education.

Over the past 25 years, research on clinical practice as a component of teacher preparation has been abundant (Aiken & Day, 1999; Flores, 2015; Metcalf et al., 1996; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014; Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017; Wilson, 1996). Many researchers seek explanations about what the most critical aspects of teacher preparation programs are, as well as how such components are linked to student achievement. Metcalf et al. (1996) sampled data from 16 teacher candidates during their student teaching experience and 21 different teacher candidates who were assigned a simulated role-play in a college university lab. This study found no significant effect between the two groups of teacher candidates. In fact, the teaching candidates who had a simulated lab showed more effectiveness in the classroom than those placed in a clinical or student teaching field experience. In another study, 26 teacher candidates were placed into 3 different schools for their clinical experiences (Wilson, 1996). This study focused on the aspects of useful clinical experience and discovered programs that included clearly defined roles with logical sequences and implementation of practice before a teacher's first year of teaching created a greater sense of self-efficacy in these newly trained teachers (Wilson, 1996). In 1999, Aiken and Day conducted to collect data about their teaching programs and their clinical fieldwork experience. This study revealed that teachers perceived clinical experience to be a necessary component of teacher preparation because it allowed them to build relationships with students, gain a commitment to

teaching, and motivate them. A non-significant number of teachers expressed their clinical experience was unhelpful and misleading, which led researchers to conclude that clinical experiences were still inconsistent across teacher preparation programs.

Important work by Burant (1999) concluded that more research was needed on clinical experience within teacher education programs. This study offered data to highlight the importance of having methodologies and foundational classes, paired with clinical experience in the classroom, as critical components of teacher training programs. The 1990s allowed researchers to notice the importance of clinical internship but did not make a compelling case for the necessity of clinical experience in all forms of teacher preparation.

Following the research of the 1990s on clinical practice and teacher preparation programs, Darling-Hammond conducted numerous studies on the importance of clinical practice within teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010, 2016; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2000, 2005). She concluded that five key components make up the framework of good preservice teaching. These include “a clear, shared vision of what good teaching looks like across all aspects of the program, clear standards, a curriculum centered on child development, learning theories, pedagogy content knowledge, and then, applied practice” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005, p. 40). Bowman and McCormick (2002) offered a study about the importance of peer coaching within clinical settings. It appears to be essential to have peer teachers observe preservice teachers to give valuable feedback and gain more knowledge so that they can utilize this new knowledge in their classrooms. Other studies posited that clinical experience is most effective when the university faculty members and cooperating school teachers help

supervise teaching candidates to give the teaching candidate adequate feedback (Grisham et al., 2000). Many researchers in the early 2000s concluded that field experience and clinical work, combined with pedagogical courses, help boost teachers' self-efficacy, or confidence, in the classroom (Bullough et al., 2002; Reynolds et al., 2002; Rock & Levin, 2002). The early 2000s added to the literature on the necessity and benefits of adding clinical practice to already existing components of coursework. The last 10 years have been monumental in discovering such findings about the impact of including clinical experience to preservice teacher training.

More recently, in the past 10 years, research on clinical practice in teaching has aligned to findings similar to the early 2000s. Researchers concluded that clinical experience could help improve teacher's self-efficacy (Flores, 2015; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014). Peeble and Mendaglio (2014) conducted a study on preservice teachers to determine if the clinical practice positively affected their self-efficacy, and many participants related positive experiences to preservice clinical practice. Further, the researchers found that preservice teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom increased. To help bolster this finding, Flores (2015) conducted a study in which he examined the occurrence of the clinical experience within teacher training. He concluded that teachers who experience clinical work early on in their program have a more significant boost in self-efficacy and are more likely to have higher levels of confidence throughout the program. Self-efficacy, then, appears to be an essential factor when examining clinical experiences and teacher preparation.

Some of the most fundamental skills that preservice teachers need, other than having a high sense of self-efficacy, are how to manage classroom behavior and develop

adequate instructional strategies to reach diverse learners. Welsh and Schaffer (2017) explained the importance of fieldwork based on these factors. Teachers who completed a clinical experience during their teacher preparation program are more successfully able to create environments in which they are confident in implementing instructional strategies and behavior management systems. They are able to foster a better environment for students to achieve high levels of academic success. Finally, one of the most recent and vital studies for this research about the clinical practice was completed by Singh in 2017. Singh (2017) surveyed 28 undergraduate teacher candidates. This research concluded that clinical experience allowed preservice teachers to apply their coursework to practice, reduce anxiety, add confidence in teaching, and boost the teacher candidate's overall self-efficacy. In sum, connecting field experience to practice is vital to the self-efficacy of new teachers and their ability to implement instructional strategies that are beneficial to the students they teach.

Research spanning across decades highlights the importance of clinical experience as a vital component of all teacher preparation programs (Flores, 2015; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014; Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). Clinical experiences help improve preservice teachers' overall self-efficacy and boost their confidence, allowing them to feel a sense of pride and readiness when walking into their first classroom (Flores, 2015; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014; Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). Clinical experiences also give teachers a more simulated classroom management experience, while implementing instructional strategies and reflective practices, all at the same time (Malone et al., 2002). In sum, clinical experience is vital for new teacher preparation programs (Flores, 2015; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014; Singh, 2017; Welsh &

Schaffer, 2017). Including a clinical experience component is not sufficient; the inclusion must be intentional in practice for educator preparation programs to be successful.

The intentionality, as well as longevity, of clinical practice increase the success of many teacher preparation programs. One-way programs can be intentional is through the addition of yearlong mentoring opportunities tied to the clinical internship process.

Mentoring consists of three components: relationship, process, and context (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010). Through evaluating many mentoring programs and defining what mentoring entails, Ambrosetti and Dekker concluded that mentoring is a relationship that evolves through the mentor and mentee. It is non-hierarchical, and the collaboration works toward a shared professional outcome. Roles are defined, and the relationship is generally developed on a timeline. The mentoring relationship develops with a clear purpose in mind. Garza and Harter (2016) added to this definition in their findings, stating that the mentor relationship develops over more extended periods, suggesting longer clinical practice in the classroom to engage in higher quality mentoring experiences. In a study conducted by Callahan (2016), new teachers who had a strong relationship with their mentors were more likely to overcome hardships in the classroom during their first year of teaching. Garza and Harter (2016) discovered that with a supportive mentor, preservice teachers could transition from student to teacher more fluidly, increasing their pedagogical knowledge. Studies have linked mentoring as an essential ingredient to teaching success.

Clinical training is key to increasing the capacity of teachers (DeMonte, 2016). Through longer periods in clinical experience, DeMonte (2016) found that new teachers' effectiveness increased during their first year of teaching. Ronfeldt et al. (2014) also

conducted a study and found that more long-term clinical practice created better-prepared teachers, who were inclined to stay in education for more extended periods of time. The length of the clinical internship matters when examining teacher preparation. This section notes the importance of clinical experience in educator preparation programs and concludes by noting the importance of mentors and clinical practice longevity. The next section describes the importance of teacher preparation in low-income districts and introduces CRP into the discussion.

Teacher Preparation in Low-income Districts

Teachers who teach in low-income schools need a plethora of professional skills. This section introduces some of the challenges to teaching in low-income schools and relates the importance of clinical fieldwork, self-efficacy, and teacher preparation to teacher effectiveness. Downey and Cobbs (2007) analyzed the impact of clinical fieldwork on teachers' cultural competence, especially in low-income school districts. They discovered that clinical work allowed teachers to gain more insight into cultural competencies, specifically how these competencies related to effective teaching and learning. They also concluded that, through clinical experience, teachers' insights into instruction and how to meet diverse students' needs also increased. This section continues to highlight this research and connects teacher preparation in a low-income district with cultural competencies and clinical experiences.

Teaching in low-income districts is different from teaching in other, more affluent areas (Milner, 2011). Low-income areas have a diverse student population with different socioemotional and learning needs. Low-income districts often deal with higher rates of teacher attrition and teacher shortages in many subjects, including math, science,

technology, and special education (Learning Policy Institute, 2016). Movement between schools is often higher for students in many low-income areas; it is often more difficult to staff schools with high-quality teachers (Milner, 2011). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2009) offered, "some studies have found that teacher attrition seems related to the demographic characteristics of schools' student populations. . . [or] due to the difficulties posed by the kinds of working conditions that often pertain to high-minority, low-income schools" (p. 11). Along the same lines, Gay (2010) argued that teaching must incorporate CRP and defined this as:

using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and useful for them. It teaches to and through the strengths of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming. (p. 31)

Teachers must be prepared to teach in high-needs schools and be willing to teach content areas that are of the highest need. New teachers must have the ability to challenge the status quo by teaching CRP, and the profession needs to gain and retain high-quality teachers (Learning Policy Institute, 2016). Teaching in low-income areas has specific needs that are important for preservice teachers to understand before their first year of teaching. This study argued that teachers who teach in low-income areas must possess a vast knowledge of pedagogy and diverse clinical experience to be successful educators. The next section posits the importance of CRP in teacher preparation programs.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Clinical experience is necessary for educators to be successful in their first year of teaching (Singh, 2017); however, another vital component of any educator preparation program is CRP (Ladson-Billings, 2011). While all teachers must have knowledge and skills of CRP, teachers in low-income areas must have this skill set to be successful with

all students in diverse classrooms, even from the first day of the school year. This section describes the importance of CRP and its' link to clinical experience in teacher preparation programs.

Teachers in low-income, urban school settings need knowledge that far surpasses just that of pedagogical content. They must incorporate diverse languages, cultures, and communities into their differing learning contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) conceptualized the theory of CRP to produce this type of advanced teaching. CRP is a teaching framework that allows teachers to teach social justice and address the extreme gaps in educational experiences for students, predominantly minority populations. There are three primary components of this framework. First, it posits that teachers who are well versed and use CRP in the classroom maintain high academic achievement levels because the students choose to achieve success in the classroom. Gay (2010) identified this component in her research by arguing that CRP liberates individuals psychologically and intellectually. She also posited that students choose to achieve success through the legitimacy of their cultural heritages in class and their attitudes toward learning.

The second component of CRP is maintaining an ethos of cultural competence within the classroom. Students must sustain cultural integrity, and teachers assist in this endeavor by continually allowing students to talk about culture and bring culture into the classroom. Gay (2010) elaborated on bringing culture into the classroom by mirroring the concept of building bridges. Gay (2010) posited that CRP helps build the bridge between home and school and brings students' lived realities to the educational experience.

The third component of CRP is that students are critically conscious and understand and are able to critique their country's current social order. This type of pedagogy allows students to incorporate multicultural information and materials into every subject. It teaches students to look beyond their classroom culture and use their competencies to question the world (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In terms of teaching, Ladson-Billings (2011) argued that when teaching CRP, teachers must have the mindset of cultural competence and be willing to stretch and grow their cultural awareness in the classroom.

CRP is not a list of steps but, instead, a continuum of transformation for teachers to ensure all students have equitable opportunities for academic success. Many teachers who use CRP believe it works because they are able to build relationships with the students they are teaching, and they are aware of their different backgrounds and cultures. Teachers who practice CRP fully understand the importance of accepting, fostering, supporting, creating, and enabling student learning opportunities in all facets (Milner, 2011). Milner (2011) further noted that CRP is like a democratic government; people are not explicitly told how to participate in democracy because the principals of democracy intertwine throughout U.S. society. Paolo Freire (1998) discussed this concept in detail and its' impact on teachers and students. Teachers use CRP to create environments in classrooms where students have a presence and a voice. Students work with teachers to consume the information taught and help construct and reconstruct the knowledge (Freire, 1998). Milner (2011) found that educators who create culturally responsive classrooms and allow for culturally relevant learning environments seek to understand students as an asset rather than a detriment to their success. CRP is an essential aspect for

educators to master, especially those who teach in low-income areas. Educators must be prepared and understand the concept to achieve the highest level of student success in their diverse classrooms. As Ladson-Billings (1994) explained, culturally relevant teaching is a “pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (pp. 17–18). CRP directly affects how educators teach and manage their classrooms. It affects teachers’ ability to create relationships with students and construct and deconstruct learning standards within their classrooms (Freire, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994). In terms of this study, it is essential to examine how CRP is incorporated into teacher preparation programs for alternatively certified first-year teachers. Prior studies point to the inclusion of CRP as a vital component of teacher preparation for those who teach in low-income schools, and, as such, it may be linked to their self-efficacy during their first year of teaching.

CRP is not explicitly stated in the standards for educator preparation programs. However, educator preparation program standards have evolved over the last 10 years in terms of inclusion of diversity. In 2013, the NCATE held educator preparation programs accountable for training high-quality teaching candidates. In their standards for the education preparation programs, it is not explicitly stated that programs must include diversity training or CRP. However, in the earlier version of standard two: Clinical Partnerships and Practice, the NCATE (2007) described:

Extensive and substantive field experiences and clinical practices for both conventional and distance learning programs are designed to encourage candidates to interact with exceptional students and students from a broad range of diverse groups. The experiences help candidates confront diversity issues that affect teaching and student learning and develop strategies for improving student learning and candidates’ effectiveness as teachers. (p. 36)

This earlier version of teacher preparation program standards explicitly confronts diversity as part of the standard for clinical partnerships and practice. Although vague, Allen et al. (2017) supported this as a step in the right direction—a directive that must be included in the standard to teach the multitude of diverse students who are in the public educational system. However, in 2015, the standards changed, and the organization that evaluates teacher preparation programs also changed. The CAEP became accountable for holding educator preparation programs to high standards to ensure high-quality educators are in classrooms. In changing councils, the verbiage for the standards also changed.

Standard two: Clinical partnerships and practice is reworded to state:

The provider works with partners to design clinical experiences of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on all students' learning and development. Clinical experiences, including technology-enhanced learning opportunities, are structured to have multiple performances-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate candidates' development of the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions, as delineated in standard one, that are associated with a positive impact on the learning and development of all P-12 students. (p. 1)

Allen et al. (2017) concluded that this standard does not mandate that clinical experience has to mirror the same demographic of the district where teaching candidates teach. It also does not mention that teaching candidates must have diversity training or that CRP is part of the teaching program. While the old standards seem to be more versed in diversity, the new standards are now in place. Many researchers believe that CRP is an essential component that should be included in teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Milner, 2011). The standards offer a glance at what educator preparation programs should incorporate into their curriculum to prepare teachers to teach in diverse school settings. Unfortunately, teacher preparation programs are not required to include diversity training.

Every child deserves a quality teacher. Serving in diverse classrooms in low-income areas is a passion for many teachers (Weilbacher, 2012). With a change in standards, many educator preparation programs seek ways to support the diversity element of teaching with the vague language of standard two of the CAEP (2019). Hollins (2011) offered that CRP is a commitment that all educator preparation programs should uphold. It is challenging to hold educator preparation programs accountable because of the language stated in the standards. This language makes it difficult for teacher preparation programs to hold candidates accountable for learning the tenets of CRP. Without holding the preparation programs accountable, Hollins (2011) sheds doubt on the ability of many teachers to effectively teach the diverse student populations found in many of the nations' schools. Education preparation programs must be held accountable for diversity inclusion, especially those that prepare teachers to teach in low-income areas.

This study discovered the perceptions and feelings of teachers certified through ACP that may or may not explicitly include clinical experiences that encompass CRP. This section sought to describe the importance of clinical experience during teacher preparation and link this with CRP to show the critical need for ACPs to incorporate both elements. This study investigated in depth the stories of teachers who teach in low-income schools and were certified through an alternative certification program. The next section describes the importance and history of ACPs.

Alternative Certification Programs

Quality teacher preparation increases teachers' ability to be successful in their first years of teaching. It prepares them with skill sets needed to help every student

experience academic success. Not only does preparation impact teachers' ability to teach, it also impacts teachers' ability to feel confident in their practice and become leaders in their field (Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). An essential component that contributes to teacher preparation programs' effectiveness, especially in low-income urban areas, is clinical experiences and the inclusion of CRP as a tenet within their preparation experience (Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). In 1999, Lewis et al. offered:

To fully answer the question of whether educators are adequately prepared to teach our children requires extensive, in-depth studies of teachers, [and] one approach to addressing these concerns is to examine the extent to which teachers themselves feel prepared to meet these demands. (1999, p. 47)

The current study sought to examine teachers' self-efficacy and their preparedness to teach in a low-income urban district after being professionally trained to teach in alternative teacher preparation programs. This section of the literature review briefly describes the history of ACPs and explains why they are essential for 21st-century teachers. An overview of alternatively certified teachers' current statistics and an in-depth analysis of current ACPs in the state of Texas follows.

History and Purpose of Alternative Certification Programs

ACPs first began between 1983 and 1985 when the state of New Jersey created The Provisional Teacher Program (Feistritzer, 2005; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). The Provisional Teacher Program was a unique program that allowed for individuals with a bachelor's degree, strong grade point averages, and passing scores on their content examination to be eligible for teacher positions within a school district (Feistritzer, 2005; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). The National Center of Education Information (2007) noted that the first alternatively certified teachers were teacher interns (Feistritzer, 2005). Since the year 1985, ACPs have offered a widespread career change and entry into teaching for

individuals who did not initially graduate with a teaching degree. In the 2018–2019 school year, more than 32% of first-year elementary school teachers in Texas were alternatively certified (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

ACP first began to alleviate issues of teacher shortage and teacher attrition within public schools. A large number of teacher retirees resulted in teacher shortages and high turnover rates (Ludlow, 2013; U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2004; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Due to the expansion of many varied professional opportunities, especially for women and minorities, many chose careers other than teaching (Ludlow, 2013; USDE, 2004; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Alliance for Excellent Education (2014) found that nearly half a million teachers (13%) change schools or leave the profession altogether every year. In years with high turnover rates, students tend to perform lower on standardized tests in critical subjects such as mathematics and reading. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2014) also concluded that beginning teachers tend to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching at astounding rates between 40% to 50%. These rates can be predetermined and can often be estimated through the satisfaction of preservice training teachers received. DeAngelis et al. (2013) found that teacher attrition is analyzed through the perception of their satisfaction. This study found that preservice teacher satisfaction correlates to early teacher attrition. To deal with the financial burden that teacher shortages caused to the education system, the United States created ACPs to quickly train teachers and pay them as interns in school systems (USDE, 2004). This study sought to gain more understanding of the importance of ACPs and what components they include or do not include that impact first year teachers' self-efficacy.

With the popularity of ACPs growing, it is essential to shed light on how such ACPs impact candidates' ability to feel successful during their first year of teaching.

While ACPs are growing in popularity, there are still critics who believe that overall student achievement is higher in classrooms of traditionally trained teachers. Sutcher et al. (2016) posited that teachers in current ACP are underprepared to teach in public education classrooms. Researchers have concluded that to ease fears over the teacher shortage issue, the education system has made teaching available to a broader audience and, in the process, has lowered its' standards. According to Sutcher et al. (2016), "If teachers are hired without having been fully prepared, the much higher turnover rates that result are costly in terms of both dollars spent on the replacement process and decreases in student achievement in high-turnover schools" (p. 6). Critics of ACPs have agreed that such programs are costly to public education in both financial means and students' achievement.

In the last 20 years, many studies have concluded that students' outcomes of traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers are not significantly different. Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) examined student outcomes of teachers who were traditionally certified with those who were alternatively certified. One study revealed that traditionally certified teachers were more effective with affluent middle-class students. However, alternatively certified teachers were more effective with English language learners and their students experienced more academic growth throughout the year. In another study, completed by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019), it was determined that 71% of alternatively certified teachers teach in low-income urban schools and in critical areas that enroll a large number of high-poverty students. Alternatively

certified teachers help fill the need of teachers in many low-income areas (Whitford et al., 2018). ACPs have become a response to the teacher shortage to place more teachers in classrooms at higher rates. Urban schools with high-minority populations encounter teacher shortages in content areas such as special education, mathematics, and science, where most struggle to acquire and keep high-quality teachers. Research supports that ACPs help remedy this issue (Blazer, 2012; Boyd et al., 2007; USDE, 2004; Whitford et al., 2018).

ACPs are not only helpful for keeping teachers in classrooms but may also be linked to reducing teacher attrition (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Whitford et al., 2018). Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, (2005) offered that teachers who are alternatively certified are “more willing than traditionally certified teachers to teach in low-SES urban schools, but these data may reflect more where teachers can get jobs than actual teacher preferences” (p. 663). While it may be true that teachers of ACPs are more likely to be placed in low-income schools, Alger and Norman-Gloria (2009) found that these teachers are more motivated and willing to teach in urban settings. This section highlights the importance of ACP and their need in public education. This study explicitly examined first-year teachers who completed different ACPs and related components of these alternative certification to the perceived self-efficacy of teachers. The following section describes the importance of self-efficacy in teaching and how it pertains to teacher preparation.

Workplace Self-Efficacy and Teacher Impact

Self-efficacy is a critical component to teacher preparation that leads researchers to analyze the effects training programs have on new teachers, specifically those that

parallel Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1997). Teachers who combine field experiences with pedagogical coursework for a more extended period tend to have a higher level of satisfaction with their jobs (Jorissen, 2002). Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy indicates the importance of mastery experience, as teachers who feel effective tend to stay within the profession for a more extended period. Jorissen (2002) also noted that teachers who are more satisfied with their teacher preparation tend to stay in the profession for more extended periods. George et al. (2018) continued this research with a longitudinal study of 74 early career teachers. The researchers hypothesized that over a five-year time period, teachers' self-efficacy increased. Through a mixed-methods design, the researchers found that teachers' self-efficacy in classroom management, instructional strategies and student engagement increased due to experience. The teachers' mastery experiences increased in the classroom, which had a reciprocal effect on their self-efficacy. In turn, self-efficacy is vital to teachers' success, and to further improve a teacher's self-efficacy, it is necessary to improve their clinical experience before entering the classroom.

Many studies also demonstrated the impact that teachers' stress has on students' outcomes (Herman et al., 2017; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Herman et al. (2017) posited that high teacher stress is related to poor student outcomes. Herman et al. (2017) studied 121 teachers and 1817 students in kindergarten through fourth grade. The researchers examined how coping, burn out, and stress impact students' success in the classroom. Results indicated that teachers in high-stress, high-burn-out, and low-coping environments had higher numbers of unsatisfactory student outcomes relating to academic success. In an earlier study, Maslach and Jackson (1981) found that

teachers who experience high emotional exhaustion levels demonstrate lower-quality teaching and impaired relationships with students. Finally, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) found that teachers with low self-efficacy or negative feelings regarding their teaching ability tend to have less effective teaching practices, which, in turn, leads to lower student achievement. Consequently, it seems essential to understand how teacher stress and preparedness are associated with diverse students' outcomes (Herman et al., 2017; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

Improving self-efficacy in teachers through clinical internship and relating self-efficacy in teachers to student achievement demonstrates the importance of the theory of self-efficacy and the teaching profession. One study in particular helps to further show the importance of self-efficacy through comparing traditional certification programs and ACP's ability to effect music teachers' self-efficacy. West and Frey-Clark (2019) found that teachers who are alternatively certified suffer from a lack of self-efficacy in the first 10 years of teaching. Therefore, they discussed the importance of cultivating self-efficacy within preservice teachers. Self-efficacy in teachers' attributes to student achievement.

Another earlier study explored the differences in teachers who stay in the profession and teachers who choose to leave. This study specifically examined teachers with less than five years of experience. Hong (2012) found that both teachers who stayed (stayers) and who left (leavers) had intrinsic motivations for teaching. Both groups also identified challenges within the first five-years. Self-efficacy was the main difference in the groups. Leavers portrayed weaker efficacy and had beliefs about themselves that caused emotional burnout. Cultivating self-efficacy early in the professions helps increase student achievement and impact attrition in the profession.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the relevant literature and explored the components of successful teacher education programs to create culturally competent and high-quality teachers in urban education settings. Beginning with an overview of teacher preparation and the importance of clinical practice, this chapter painted a picture of the landscape of educator preparation today. This chapter also examined the importance of CRPs related to the standard of educator preparation programs and highlighted how teachers can use CRP in the classroom to achieve high rates of academic success for their students. Next, this chapter described the importance of ACPs for teachers in urban communities, economic issues, and student outcomes. Although some faults were recognized regarding various ACPs, many of the statistics positively shed light on their influence in the field of education. This chapter ended with an in-depth overview of self-efficacy in teaching.

This study sought to understand how the critical attributes of ACPs impact teachers' sense of self-efficacy within the first year of teaching. While there is much research on ACPs, research of specific program components impacting self-efficacy is lacking. This study explored first-year teachers' experiences to measure the impact of components within ACPs and their influence on teachers' self-efficacy to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. The next chapter examines the methodologies, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction: Research Questions

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore the relationship between alternative certification program components and first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy within the first year of their teaching career. Four, first-year teachers who completed their alternative certification program participated in this study at one elementary school campus in a city in Texas. This study examined the teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) through a multiple case study analysis. Previous studies have shown the importance of clinical internship on preservice educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010), the need for ACP to overcome the demand for high-quality teachers (Whitford et al., 2018) in the United States, and the growing popularity of clinical experience in teacher preparation programs because of its influence and preparation in developing effective teachers (Guha et al., 2017). This study explored the relationship between components of ACP and their effect on first-year teachers' self-efficacy. The study answered the following primary research question: In what ways do components of alternative teacher preparation programs impact the candidate's self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools? This study also answered the following secondary research questions:

1. What aspects of alternative certification program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?
2. In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success?

3. How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers' alternative certification experience?

This chapter reports all components of the research methodology. In the next sections, I describe the study design, participants and setting, data collection, data analysis protocol, ethical considerations, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Researcher Perspective and Positionality

Positionality and perspective help aid in the research process, as the researcher has background experiences that affect the overall study. Researchers believe it is necessary to portray their worldviews and position themselves in writing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher of this study, I have extensive experience in the field of education. I currently work at an urban school district as an assistant principal. I began my teaching career in an alternative certification program, the New Teacher Project. After only six short weeks of teaching summer school, I was able to teach in a classroom while I earned my teaching certificate. During my first year of teaching, I saw how vital clinical experience and CRP were in my classroom self-efficacy. In my first year of teaching, a dedicated mentor worked with me; however, she could not attend my classes due to her schedule and commitments. I was fortunate to have a mentor during this time; however, the mentoring program did not help my confidence when I entered the classroom. As I reflect on my preservice training, I am certain having a longer clinical experience and an influential mentor teacher could have helped shape my self-efficacy as a first-year teacher. I believe that my students struggled, and I was able to see directly the detriments that teachers who are alternatively certified can have on students, especially in low-income areas.

I have now worked in education for six years and served as a leader for four of those years. I have seen the importance of CRP and the inequities that low-income students face daily. The work I do every day helps me realize the potential for change in the public education system. I advocate for change daily regarding my students' success and have a passion for advancing educators' instructional practices. In the summer of 2019, I was allowed to work for Teach for America, to train incoming teachers throughout the summer and prepare them to teach in low-income urban schools. I not only trained them through observations and professional development opportunities but sat with them in Critical Race Theory conversations, as well as professional development opportunities on CRP. I found my passion for educating teachers. Leading my school has allowed me to become a master teacher, as well. During this time, I have been able to train teachers in their classrooms and ascertain the instructional best practices needed to create instructional leaders.

I have consistently witnessed the effects of ACPs and teachers' self-efficacy throughout their careers. I hope the findings of this study will help impact the preparation of teachers, specifically those who teach in low-income districts. I must admit that I have biases toward the program being studied, as I directly connect with ACPs. I am optimistic that the data will show an increase in self-efficacy and acknowledge my biases toward alternative certification and their ability to train influential teachers due to prior experiences. I believe in the power of ACPs and understand the importance of mentorship, clinical internship, and CRP as they relate to teachers' self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

Program components in preservice teacher programs can significantly impact a teacher's self-efficacy in the classroom. This study utilized Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy to measure the impact program components have on first-year teachers' self-efficacy in a low-income urban school. Through an *a priori* theoretical framework, I examined this study through Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy. This study demonstrated the importance of clinical internship, CRP, and teacher preparation program components that affect first-year teachers' self-efficacy in a culturally diverse high-needs school.

Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy incorporates mastery experience, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological states to provide a lens to examine this qualitative study. Patterson and Famer (2018) found that effective teacher preparation programs increase teachers' self-efficacy by developing and training them in the initial preparation phase. Bandura explained that self-efficacy is a person's confidence in their abilities (1997). Through analysis of first-year teachers in the classroom, self-efficacy affected preservice teachers' ability to teach children from diverse backgrounds. This study linked the connection of program components in preservice teaching and the self-efficacy of four first-year teachers. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy helps provide a framework to explore the relationship between first-year teachers' self-efficacy and their components embedded into their teacher preparation program.

The framework informed the research questions by examining program components and their relationship to a first-year teacher's self-efficacy. Therefore, Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory created an opportunity to closely examine the

relationship that first-year teachers' program components and self-efficacy have on each other. The primary research questions specifically concentrated on the program components that impact first-year teachers' self-efficacy. The relationships, or lack of relationships, between a mentor teacher and the first-year teacher during preservice training is portrayed through the sub questions. Bandura's (1997) four components of self-efficacy were used to create the primary research question. Mastery experience, vicarious experience, emotional and psychological states, and verbal persuasion provided the language through which the questions were investigated. In a qualitative case study, the use of research questions that focus on the study's essential framework is necessary (Marriam, 1998). As the researcher of this problem of practice I created the primary and secondary questions with self-efficacy theory in mind. The theoretical framework was the focus of the study and informed all aspects of the research questions.

Through Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, data collection explicitly showed the connection between a first-year teacher's self-efficacy and the alternative certification program components (1997). In this study, data were collected through a series of interviews, classroom observations, and open-ended sentence stems. The theoretical framework helped to inform the interview questions, sentence stems, and classroom observation lens, as I created interview questions through the use of Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy. I also used the four self-efficacy sources to create open-ended sentence stems that allowed for descriptive data about the relationship between the alternative certification program components and first-year teacher. Finally, I made observations through the lens that utilized the definition of self-efficacy. I analyzed

observations through these four self-efficacy sources, and used the interviews and open-ended sentence stems to gauge first-year teachers' self-efficacy.

This study was analyzed through Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. Yin (2014) suggested using a theoretical proposition to analyze the data in a case study. This study used the *a priori* framework to analyze the components of ACPs and first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy within the first of teaching. The framework portrayed the importance of self-efficacy in first-year teachers, precisely due to program components, such as their clinical practice experience and their perceptions of CRP in the classroom.

Research Design and Rationale

The connection between alternative certification program factors and self-efficacy illustrated the importance of analyzing the impacts these factors have on first-year teachers' self-efficacy and led to the research design through collecting first-year teachers' stories. These stories depicted the relationship between specific alternative certification components and self-efficacy. Therefore, a multiple case study was preferred, as this strategy allowed for rich descriptive details about the factors in differing ACPs and how these factors influenced their self-efficacy. This design was a strength, as it recognized the need for a description of each case and helped to link program components to self-efficacy in the classroom during the first year of teaching. Yin (1994) stated that case studies are used for the why and how questions and when the researcher has little control over the events happening in the study. The primary and secondary research questions described the why and how of the present study. I also had little control over the first-year teachers' experience as it related to their teacher preparation programs. I also chose a multiple case study, as it helped to gain a deep understanding of

the participants' stories. Becker (1968) offered that a case study is twofold "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study and to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure" (p. 33). This study investigated the relationship between preservice training and first-year teachers' self-efficacy. Qualitative research was used to discuss the importance of this social and human problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This design directly affected humans and their perceived self-efficacy when entering low-income schools.

A multiple case study was the ideal design for this research because many data sources sought to make meaning of the relationship between ACPs and first-year teachers perceived self-efficacy. This study also provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, which depicted real-life situations (Yin, 2014). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems. Semi-structured interviews with the first-year teachers occurred at the end of the first semester. Observations of teachers occurred during school hours and took place to observe the teaching experience on the teachers' self-efficacy. This study followed an *a priori* framework for the collection and coding of the data. There were first open codes associated with self-efficacy. After the initial coding was complete, themes were then identified and analyzed.

This Problem of Practice investigated teachers' self-efficacy related to their experiences in alternative certification teaching programs. This phenomenon is in a real-world setting, and both the setting and the time bound this study. All participants were part of an alternative certification program; however, not all participants completed the same alternative certification program. Finally, this was an in-depth multiple case study

because there was little to no control over the decisions made by the first-year teachers. A multiple case study was appropriate for this type of research, as it explained the “how” of alternative certification program components and its relationship regarding self-efficacy (Yin, 2014).

Site Selection and Participant Sampling

This study focused on one urban elementary school for purposes of collecting data. This site was chosen, as it is a low-income school in Texas and needs greater teacher retention. Specifically, this study focused on four, first-year teachers in a city in Texas, who completed an alternative certification program before or during their first teaching year. The urban school district earned a “C” rating in the 2018–2019 school year. As a district, XYZ seeks to implement strong tier-one instruction by hiring ready and willing teachers to learn and grow. All employees of the district must be certified or be in the process of certification. At the time of this research, the district served 85% of economically disadvantaged students, and 65% were considered at risk. The district had a 16% turnover rate for teachers, and about 40% of teachers in the district had zero to five years of experience (Texas academic performance report 2019-2020, 2020).

XYZ school district employs many first-year teachers. However, one specific site was utilized for this study. ABC Elementary School (ABC pseudonym). ABC is a turnaround campus rated by Texas with a letter grade F. This means that the school is at risk for being taken over by the state and improvement is required. Schools that are rated F must complete and successfully implement a targeted improvement plan to increase student achievement, student growth, and subpopulation scores. Due to the pandemic, ABC has been unsuccessful in earning a higher letter grade and has been rated F for both

the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years. In the 2019–2020 school year, ABC had a 50% turnover rate for teachers due to the stress of targeted improvement plans and campus improvement plans. ABC was also 93% economically disadvantaged, and 77% of students were at risk of not graduating. Due to the location, over 60% of students were considered English language learners as well. This study took place at ABC with four brand new teachers. Each teacher went through an alternate route to teaching and completed their certification during the first year of teaching.

All of the participants in the study were new teachers. Two were completely certified and two were still in the process of getting certification. Purposeful sampling took place to understand the story behind each participant fully. Merriam (1998) stated, “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight” (p. 61). In this problem of practice, the purpose was to gain insight into the relationship between alternate routes to teaching and the first-year teaching as it affects teacher self-efficacy. The study utilized maximum variation to “represent diverse cases and fully describe multiple perspectives about the case” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158). There were four participants in this study. The teachers participated in an alternate route to certification in teaching. Two completed a fast-track program through Texas A&M, and two were completing an online certification program. All participants came from varied backgrounds and had a bachelor’s degree before entering the alternative certification program.

Each participant came with a vast amount of knowledge from previous experiences due to previous involvement in academics. All participants needed a bachelor’s degree or higher to be considered for the certification program. A multiple

case study design was chosen to portray each participant’s unique experiences and help alternative certification program staff understand the certain influences factors such as clinical internship and CRP have on the participants’ self-efficacy (Yin, 2014). Table 3.1 describes the study participants, their background before beginning to teach, and their grade level placement during the study.

Table 3.1

Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Professional years of experience	Previous career	Grade Level Placement
Gabby	1	Substitute teacher	Bilingual fifth grade
Tory	0	College student	Bilingual kindergarten
Mary	10	Pharmacist	Second grade
Sage	9	Daycare, halfway houses, paraprofessional	Kindergarten

The participants and the setting in which this study took place enhanced the study’s validity through long-term observations and member checks. Purposeful sampling through the site helped to answer the research questions. The maximum variation allowed for the differentiation of participants. It helped to show an in-depth picture of the program components and documented their influence on teachers’ self-efficacy in the first year of teaching. This section described the site and the participants in the study. The next section outlines the data collection procedures used in the study

Data Collection Procedures

Data in this Problem of Practice were triangulated to aid in the validity of the study. All types of qualitative data can be:

grouped into four basic types of information: observations (ranging from nonparticipant to participant), interview (ranging from closed-ended to open-ended), documents (ranging from private to public), and audiovisual materials (including materials such as photographs, compact discs, and videotapes). (Creswell, 2013, p. 159)

To gain an in-depth understanding of the multiple case study presented, I utilized multiple forms of information. Creswell (2013) stated, “when qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data, they are triangulating information and providing validity to their finding” (p. 251). The three forms of data; observations, open-ended sentence stems, and interviews; were used to triangulate the study and provide pattern-matching evidence.

Data were first collected through an interview process. These were one-hour interviews that followed a semi-structured approach. Questions were open-ended and allowed for a conversation to flow between the interviewer and interviewee during the interview. Yin (2014) described this process as a “shorter case study interview.” The interview questions sought to answer the central questions of the study. Interviews were conducted at the end of the first semester of the school year, and data were collected through written records, voice recorded, and typed on a computer to be stored. Data from the interviews included the first-year teachers’ perspectives as they pertained to their self-efficacy and components of their alternate route to teaching. Table 3.2 describes the questions that were asked to the teachers in the interview and how they relate to the research sub questions. All questions that were asked were related to the central question

of the study: In what ways do components of teacher preparation programs impact the candidates' self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools?

Open-ended sentence stems were also used to collect data. The sentence stems were collected via email and were specific, so that I could get a clear picture of the four self-efficacy sources that Bandura emphasized in the self-efficacy theory. The open-ended sentence stems included different avenues for the first-year teachers to express their teaching confidence based on efficacy sources (see appendix D). All open-ended sentence stems were collected through a Google form and stored on my computer to analyze. Sentence stems were also printed and kept in files to be analyzed by hand and member checked.

Teacher observations were the third type of data collected. I was an observer as a participant in all cases and recorded information as it occurred. While I was in the classroom observing, I occasionally interacted with the teacher or students in the classroom. Two observations for each participant were set up during the first semester of the first-year teaching—one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end of the semester. Eight observations were completed. Fieldnotes of each observation were taken to record teacher actions, the influence of CRP, overall classroom environment, and the teachers' confidence in the lesson.

Following each classroom observation, I informally rated the teacher based on the appraisal rubric used for Texas Teacher Observations. Observation actions were placed into categories of self-efficacy sources. I also observed the teachers' sense of self-efficacy when teaching using Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy.

Table 3.2

Alignment of the Teacher Interview Questions and Research Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	"How confident are you in your teaching ability?"
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	"When have you felt successful in your teaching this year?"
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	"What factors played a role in your feelings of success or failure?"
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	"How did your teaching program affect your confidence in teaching?"
RQ3 How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the resident's mentorship experience?	"How have you improved in CRP throughout the semester?"
RQ2 In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success?	What relationship did you have with a mentor teacher?
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	On a scale of one to five, how would you rate your confidence in teaching and why?
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	What is the most memorable course/ experience from your teaching program?
RQ3 How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers' certification experience?	How do you think your teaching program prepared you to teach in low-income schools?
RQ3 How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers' certification experience?	What is your definition of CRP? Were you taught about CRP in your teaching program?
RQ1 What aspects of the teacher preparation program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?	What aspect of your teaching do you believe was the strongest when you began teaching? What is your strongest trait now?
RQ2 In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success?	If you had a mentor teacher, how do you think that person helped your confidence in teaching? If you did not, do you believe this could have been helpful?

This section discussed the data collection procedures in detail. These procedures included interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems from all participants. Through multiple observations, interviews, and open-ended sentence stems, I gained critical data on the importance of alternative certification components and their impact on first-year teachers' self-efficacy. The next section describes the data analysis procedures of the study; specifically, the procedures and analysis that occurred to collect data.

Data Analysis Procedures

Interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems gave me an in-depth examination of the first-year teachers' lives. Collecting information about self-efficacy through interviews, observations, and sentence stems helped to add to the literature on alternative certification program components and their ability to increase self-efficacy in teachers. Throughout the data collection process, I used interviews and observations to analyze what was occurring (see Figure 3.1). I video-recorded and saved all interviews, as well as hand-written descriptions of the interview. I used a form to record each observation that was time-stamped. Open-ended sentence stems were kept in a file on my computer and locked using a passcode. They were also stored under pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and maintain the participants' trustworthiness with me. For easier access to coding I typed all interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems kept them on my computer. Lichtman (2012) stated that transcribing interviews and observations and putting them in separate files on the computer helps organize the analyzed data. The study followed an *a priori* design, and the self-efficacy framework aided in analyzing the data for components that impacted the teachers' confidence during the first year of teaching.

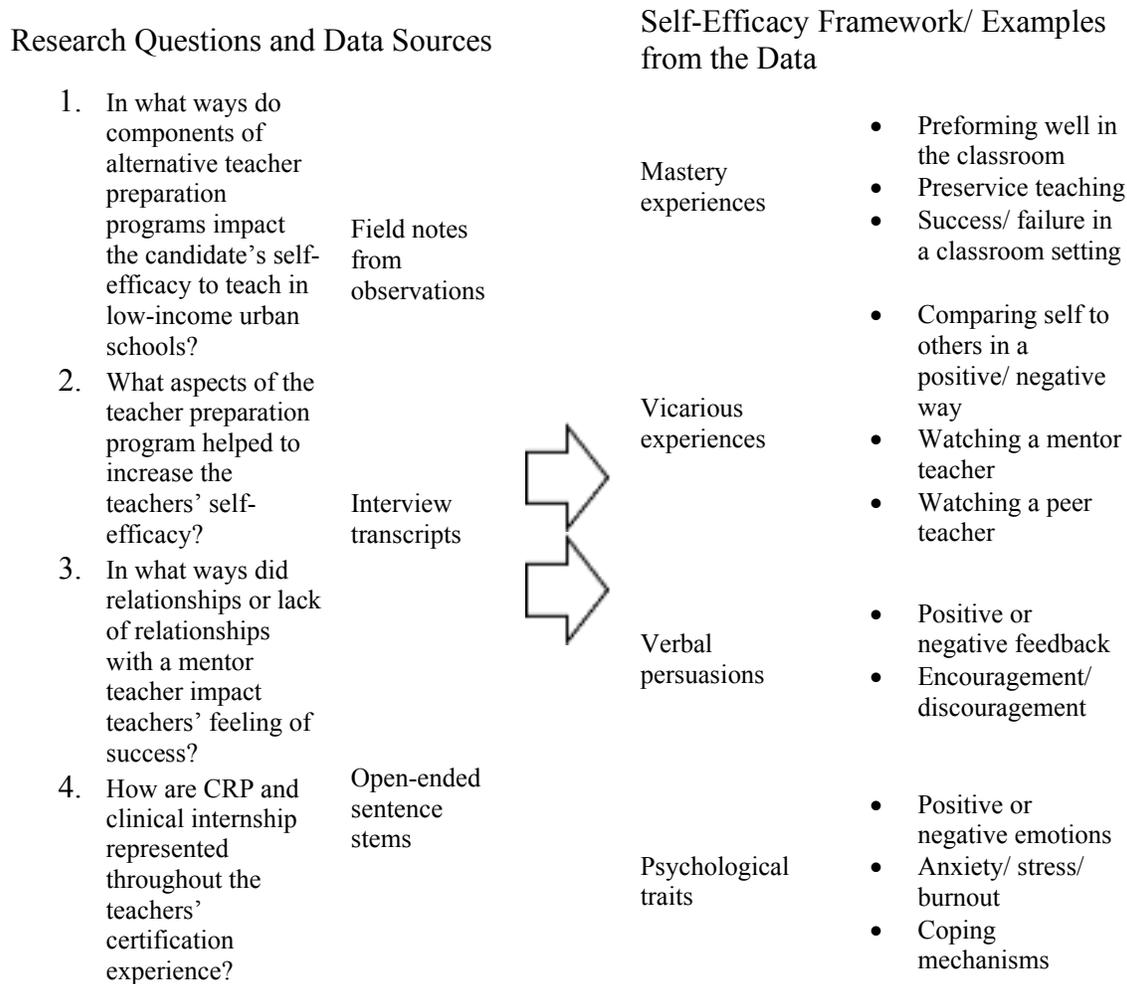


Figure 3.1. Research questions and connection to self-efficacy framework.

Analysis

Data collected were analyzed through the perspective of the theoretical framework used in the study, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). All of the data collected went through a six-step coding process. Lichtman (2012) described this as the three Cs of analysis: coding, categorizing, and concepts. Each interview, observation, and open-ended sentence stem went through the following six steps outlined by Lichtman (2012, p. 252).

1. Initial coding, Going from responses to summary ideas of the responses
2. Revisiting initial coding

3. Developing an initial list of categories
4. Modifying the initial list based on addition rereading
5. Revisiting categories and subcategories
6. Moving from categories to concepts

The six steps helped to code the data into categories initially and then concepts. The concepts were kept to a small number, as this allowed for an in-depth, rich analysis. Once all concepts were created, the data went through both the pattern matching process and cross-case analysis.

Pattern matching was used in this study to compare the data that were collected to the existing theories. Yin (2014) stated that pattern matching compares the data collected in the study to predictions made before the study based on existing theory. If the data are similar, the results can improve the case study. The data in the current study were compared to Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy

A cross-case analysis was also used to code the data across all four cases to identify multiple case patterns and themes. Creswell and Poth (2018) revealed that after the data are collected and each case has detailed descriptions from multiple sources, a cross-case analysis can follow. The cases were compared after the initial coding process, and information from initial concepts was used to compare all four cases.

Data Validation Strategies

The validity and reliability of the research were of the utmost concern. The use of pattern matching in the study helped to ensure internal validity, which Yin (2014) described as seeking to determine a causal relationship. The cross-case analysis was also used to help ensure the internal validity of the research.

Yin (2014) further described that construct validity is the ability to “identify correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (p. 42). This research ensured construct reliability through the use of multiple forms of data, including interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems. Another validation strategy is reliability. Reliability is described as the data collection procedures and their ability to be repeated to get the same results. This study ensured reliability through the case-study protocol and creating of a case-study database. All evidence was kept in the same files and analyzed throughout the entire study.

This section discussed the data analysis procedures that took place after completing interviews, observations, and open-ended sentence stems. All data were collected and transcribed into files on a computer before undergoing the six-step coding process. The data were then analyzed further using pattern matching and cross-case analysis to see major themes across all four cases. The validity and reliability of the study were explained. The next section discusses the ethical considerations for the study.

Ethical Considerations

The closeness to the site and knowledge of teacher preparation programs can threaten validity and credibility. Triangulation of the multiple sources helped to aid in the validity and reliability of this multiple case study. Creswell and Poth (2018) found that a peer review could help maintain the study’s reliability. Peer review is done through an intercoder agreement. A peer review of the data was conducted to show the reliability of the study. I also submitted a proposal to Baylor’s Institutional Review Board and was exempt from human subject’s research due to the program’s size and the non-generalizability of the research. I took great care in ensuring anonymity for all

participants by using pseudonyms. I am the only person who knows the pseudonym of the participants. To continue the anonymity, the participants alternative certification programs were not named, nor was their school or school district. All participants were given an initial consent form describing the study and their participation. The participants' trustworthiness was ensured by storing the data on a computer that was only used by me. Data were also coded through a number system so that participants remained anonymous in all documentation.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were several limitations and delimitations to this study. This study only included four first-year teachers. Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative studies, it was difficult to sample a large number of participants. More than four first-year teachers were on the campus; however, only four were chosen to participate in the study. Second, the study's timing took place after school had been shut down for many months due to COVID-19. Many of the classrooms looked different than before, and all the teachers were trying to understand the new way of teaching, especially during virtual learning and hybrid learning. Third, the study was completed in a school district, and some participants may have withheld information due to the politics of being a first-year teacher and XYZ district. To help this, I created pseudonyms and built a trusting relationship with each participant.

There were also several delimitations that I created to help narrow the focus. All teachers were on the same campus, and each teacher had to teach both virtually and in-person for the same amount of time. All participants were part of the turnaround campus

for the first time, which resulted in higher workloads (e.g., longer hours, more professional development, more tutoring) than most teachers in XYZ district.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the sampling procedures, data collection, and data analysis were reviewed. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy framed all components of the study. The primary and secondary research questions focused on the relationship between the alternative certification program components and their impact on the first-year teachers' self-efficacy. This multiple case study followed data collection and data analysis procedures that complement qualitative research. The participants at ABC Elementary school were given interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations. The data were collected through transcriptions and stored on a computer in one file. The data were also coded in six steps, triangulated, pattern matching, and cross-analyzed to make conclusions about the data. The methods section also discussed the limitations, delimitations, and ethical considerations of the study, focusing on participants' reliability, validity, and trustworthiness. The next chapter discusses the results and implications of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Implications

Introduction

A multiple case study design was used to examine the impact alternative certification program components have on first-year teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom. Data from interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations helped to analyze the stories of four participants who completed alternative certification teaching programs and were in their first year of teaching. These data allowed for analysis of the central research question: In what ways do components of alternative teacher preparation programs impact the candidate's self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools? The study results also answered the following sub questions:

1. What aspects of alternative certification program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy?
2. In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success?
3. How are CRP and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers' alternative certification experience?

The theoretical framework used in the study, which was portrayed in previous chapters, framed this study's data analysis. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy notions that people's cognitive development and functioning are affected through their self-efficacy. Bandura (1993) described that self-efficacy "exerts itself through cognitive, motivational, affective and selecting processes" (p. 117). Bandura defined this notion of self-efficacy as how people motivate themselves, feel, think, and behave through many different

processes. This study specifically utilized his framework to analyze the effects of self-efficacy in teaching based on the four sources of efficacy: mastery experience, verbal persuasions, vicarious experiences, and psychological traits. This chapter reveals three primary findings. First was that lack of mastery experiences in ACP lead participants to depend on psychological traits for self-efficacy in the first year of teaching. The second finding was that structured clinical internship that included mentoring increased self-efficacy. The third finding concluded CRP helped to increase self-efficacy within the first-year of teaching at a low-income urban school.

The presentation of these findings unfolds in three stages. Following a multiple case study design, I begin with a brief overview of the participants. Each participant is then detailed as one separate case. The cases begin with an overview of the individual's journey into education and experience in an alternative certification program. Following the description, each case is divided into the four sources of efficacy. The first source of efficacy was mastery experiences, any hands-on experience the teacher had with teaching. Examples of this source include a clinical internship, substitute teaching or being in a classroom with a small group. Next is vicarious experiences, or watching others complete a similar task. For this study, these experiences included watching mentor teachers, watching peers teach, or watching videos of teachers. The third source of efficacy presented was verbal persuasion. This source relied on feedback in the classroom, in observations, or coursework. Finally, each participant's story was analyzed through psychological traits. These traits were the overall emotional state of the participant pertaining to teaching. Psychological traits can be both positive or negative and change throughout time. After analyzing each participant through the sources, I then

completed a cross-case analysis and answered the research questions for the participants to pinpoint emerging themes within the cases. After each case was presented and discussed, the cross-case analysis was compared to literature in the discussion. Finally, this chapter ends after a description of the implications.

Participants

A comprehensive description of the participant sampling methods utilized and the participants who were selected are detailed in Chapter Three. This multiple case study focused on first-year teachers who completed or were part of an alternative certification teaching program in Texas. I identified four first-year teachers at the same elementary school in an urban low-income school to bind this study. Table 3.1, presented in Chapter Three, provides an overview of the participants.

Individual Case Descriptions

This section develops the mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and psychological traits pertaining to the teaching experiences of Gabby, Tory, Mary and Sage. Through observations, open-ended sentence stems, and semi-structured interviews, each participant's story was told. Each case begins with a robust introduction of the participant, followed by a framework analysis and ends with a summary of each case.

Gabby

Gabby's story into teaching was a personal journey through which she was able to conquer many heartaches and come out on top. Gabby decided to become a teacher after having her son prematurely at 24 weeks when she was 18 years old. She described how

her “son was disabled and needed every therapy imaginable after he was born.” She was determined to get him on track and not have him labeled as a special needs child or be behind from the start of his life. Through researching and times of trial and error, she believed she was doing everything possible to keep her son on track. Anytime her son would learn something new, she explained that it “sparked a joy in heart” knowing that she was able to help him through. This story of perseverance for her own child allowed her to realize her dream of helping others learn.

When Gabby’s son went off to school, she decided to do the same. She enrolled in her local community college and began taking her basic courses to earn her associate degree. She was the first person in her family to go to college, all while trying to raise her son throughout the process. While attending one of her classes, the professor spoke to her about an alternative certification program that allowed her to earn her bachelor’s degree and teaching certificate in one year instead of two. Gabby explained, “I knew that this program is what I needed as I was a single parent and wanted to get working as soon as possible.” She also knew that earning a bachelor’s degree from Texas Tech would make her parents and son very proud, as no one in her family had ever attended a university before. After earning her associate degree, she joined the fast-track program for both licensure and her bachelors. Gabby’s background played a role in her experience as a first-year teacher during which she was a fifth-grade dual-language teacher for English language arts and science. Her sources of efficacy during this year were explored through this section and knowing her story helped me to understand the influences self-efficacy had on her experience. This section developed Gabby’s story through first delving into her alternative certification program components, then her mastery experiences, vicarious

experiences, verbal persuasions, and psychological traits pertaining to her teaching experience are explored. To conclude this case, I analyzed the impact of the sources on Gabby's overall self-efficacy and notated the sources that impacted Gabby the most.

Gabby's program components. ACPs can vary based on the program that the participant chooses to enroll in. Gabby decided to complete a fast-track program into licensure that allowed her to earn her certification in one year. She described in her open-ended sentence stems that the program had different components, from mentoring to CRP, as well as multiple intensive classes and observations. She stated:

The main components of my teacher preparation program that helped me feel prepared to teach this year were the formal observations and performance assessments we had. Also, the meetings with our site coordinator before and after our observations that helped shape our lessons. Our site coordinators were so hard on us and prepared us for the real world of teaching they never sugarcoated anything.

Gabby's experience in the classroom before her first year of teaching helped her to understand the student relationships needed to be successful as well as the workload that teachers undertake during the school year. She also mentioned that during her program she would meet with other members of the program in "cluster." This was a time where she would be able to bounce ideas off of other preservice teachers. Specifically, she explained that cluster allowed her to see how different teachers were implementing class work in the field. Gabby said in her interview, "Different angles, different opinions or ways to do the same thing was really helpful." Having the support of fellow preservice teachers, as well as mentor teachers and site coordinators, helped Gabby to gain confidence in the classroom.

Mentoring was a large part of the program for Gabby. She believed she had a great relationship with her mentor teachers and was able to connect with them throughout

the year. She stated, “I had a great relationship. I still talk to them to this day. I reach out for advice and go to them for help.” The mentorship aspect of her program benefited her both in and outside of the program. Gabby recognized this important aspect of her program. When asked how she would have felt if she did have a mentor coming into this school year she noted, “if I did not have a mentor I would have freaked out at observations and overall, I wouldn’t know what to expect or what I was doing.” Her confidence in the classroom stemmed from this mentorship. She also understood that her preservice experience helped to prepare her for the different cultures she might encounter in her future teaching career.

When asked about CRP, Gabby was aware of the term. However, she was unable to describe her definition. She told me that she took multiple classes on diversity, and that her program was intentional about the books they would read to study different cultures and how to teach others who are different from oneself. She mentioned in her interview that her placement school matched the school where she was currently teaching. It was a low-income Title I school in a similar district which made this year seem easier at first. She did mention that the culture of her preservice school was highly Hispanic. She stated, “When I was a student teaching, I only had Hispanic students. This year, I have improved a lot because I had to. I feel that I have to include everyone’s beliefs, the way I word things, even holidays, foods, and family structure.” Gabby did not realize that ABC Elementary would be so diverse in cultures. She was a bilingual teacher but also had one regular program class. In this class, Gabby noted that she had students from all over the world, including refugee students. She believed her teaching program helped her navigate these cultural differences.

Gabby's program included mentor teaching, CRP, fieldwork, and a cohort structure. She believed all aspects of her program instilled confidence in her to teach and cope with the stresses of first-year teaching. This section outlined the program components through Gabby's perspective. In the next section, Gabby's sources of efficacy, based on her program and the components mentioned above, are explored.

Mastery experiences. Having the ability to perform well and succeed is a strong source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Gabby's teaching program ensured that this was possible. She was able to be a "resident" in a classroom for an entire year in which she also completed coursework. She was able to continually put into practice what she was learning, and this showed in her first year of teaching. Gabby further reiterated that she was able to learn from her mistakes during her residency year. She felt this experience helped shape her into the confident teacher she is today.

Gabby's alternative certification program allowed her to be in a classroom full time for the entire year of the program. She was given multiple opportunities to put into practice her knowledge from classwork. She stated, "My first semester of the program I was able to add in my learning, from my classes, every day practices were developed." Having the ability to mix fieldwork and coursework helped Gabby feel more successful in the classroom. This was evident through observations I completed. In the field notes, it is stated that Gabby handled misbehaviors with ease. She was confident in her practices and had management systems that she explained she had used in her preservice teaching. Gabby's confidence not only existed in the classroom procedures but her relationships with students as well. She described that in her preservice year she had relationships with students and directly stated, "I was able to build a bond with the kids. They knew me."

Her ability to build relationships with students helped her to understand the students more. She was able to build lessons that were unique to her students. She further noted that being in a classroom prepared her more for this school year because she understood the needs of the community and the students she was serving. She mentioned, “I had my field experience in a low-income school I was able to get to know the neighborhood and the area. I knew what to expect for my first year of teaching.” Gabby’s practice in the field and mastery experiences within the classroom increased her self-efficacy in the classroom specifically pertaining to student relationships and management practices.

Gabby also mentioned how her residency year helped her to learn from her mistakes. She reflected back on her residency experience and believed that without this she would not be the teacher she is today. She expounded more on this by saying:

I have seen some new teachers jump into their first year of teaching without having actually been in a classroom and I am just shocked because I think back to my first evaluations and how horrible they were because I was not adequately prepared to teach yet. I feel that the actual experience is what makes your confident., you can read all the education books and take all the classes, but you need to live through the rough patches of the experience to be confident in what you are doing.

Her ability to understand the need for mastery experience to help her to succeed was imperative to her story. Gabby knew that her teaching residency helped her exponentially in the classroom. She explained that consistently learning from her mistakes and receiving on the spot coaching helped to shape her into the first-year teacher she is today. Gabby had a high frequency of mastery experiences that she explained in her interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and were shown through actions in observations. Her mastery experiences were of high value to her self-efficacy. The following section outlines the importance of vicarious experiences to her self-efficacy, specifically, the impact of her mentor teacher.

Vicarious experiences. Gabby shared several different instances of vicarious experiences throughout her interviews and open-ended sentence stems. According to Gabby, her mentor teachers, as well as other preservice teachers in her program were extremely helpful in her preservice teaching experience. Watching these teachers succeed in their lesson planning, management techniques, and relationship building helped Gabby to understand better how she would succeed in the future. Gabby initiated this thought through stating, “watching my mentors’ teacher was a big part of my feeling of success. They were great teachers, and they were teaching me everything I felt I needed to know.” Gabby’s experience in a classroom and watching her mentors teach was not the only factor to her feelings of success for this source. Gabby also found that looking at other lesson plans and observing colleagues teach helped her to gain a better understanding of the field. She explained, “I like looking at other lesson plans because it lets me see a different perspective.” She was able to analyze others’ work and find what was going to make her feel successful in her classroom and lesson plans. Gabby reiterated that learning from a mentor was not only helpful but played into her success in the current year. Her mentor gave her confidence because she saw someone succeeding at their craft. Gabby’s vicarious experiences were very much paired with verbal persuasions. She talked about them hand in hand. She mentioned that watching her mentor teacher was helpful. However, receiving on the spot coaching and feedback of her own teaching also greatly impacted her feeling of success in the first year of teaching.

Verbal persuasions. Through her alternative certification program, Gabby received multiple observations and on the spot coaching. She was able to learn from her mistakes in planning, teaching and relationship building with students in the moment. She

believed that this aspect of her program was powerful in that it allowed her to change her ways and not build bad habits. Gabby described:

The primary components of my teacher preparation program that helped me feel prepared to teach this year were the formal observations and performance assessments. Meeting with our site coordinators before and after our observations helped to shape our lessons. Our site coordinators were so hard on us and prepared us for the real world of teaching. They never sugar coated anything.

Gabby's experience with feedback helped her in the classroom in the first year. She was used to getting difficult feedback. She was used to the process and learned from all of the feedback. In speaking with Gabby more about the feedback she was given and the verbal persuasions that she believed impacted her self-efficacy, she explained that having her observers and site coordinators give feedback on lessons helped her to feel successful. She knew that this year would be difficult but also believed she was prepared based on the words of wisdom she had been given throughout her program. Gabby later described the verbal persuasions she has received since being on campus. As a first-year teacher, she felt she would be successful and receive criticism well. However, in her interview, Gabby delved into the harsh reality of being a teacher and how her confidence in teaching took a turn based on verbal persuasions. She noted:

when administrators tear apart your lessons and basically tell you that everything you are doing is wrong it is a bit hard. Just because there are so many things that happen behind the lessons that administrators are usually not aware of, and having them tear it apart is a bit hurtful

Her experience with verbal persuasions in the alternative certification program played into an increased feeling of self-efficacy. However, Gabby's emotions toward feedback during her first year of teaching seemed to hinder her overall feeling of self-efficacy. The last source of efficacy then, Psychological Traits, was portrayed throughout both the first-

year teaching and preservice teaching. Gabby's background and story into teaching helped to further explain her psychological traits and impact her overall efficacy.

Psychological traits. Gabby was very straightforward with what she believed increased or self-efficacy. She noted that her confidence level was at a three or four on a scale of one to five. When speaking with Gabby and interacting with her during observations, she was continually emoting positively. Rarely did Gabby rely on emotions to impact her efficacy in the classroom when discussing "normal" teaching. Gabby felt it was important to discuss the emotions that she felt in terms of teaching hybrid. Her teaching program did not teach her how to do this. In fact, she stated that hybrid teaching was the main time when she felt unsuccessful in teaching. She dived deeper into this feeling by stating:

I have a hard time making sure my virtual students keep their cameras on and therefore I am not even sure they are working. . . . I feel I have been struggling with this all year. . . . I honestly feel this is what has affected my teaching the most this year

Gabby knew that her main struggles and emotions behind the struggles were due to virtual learning. When talking about in-person learning and her teaching program, she only portrays positive characteristics. She described her experience as, "extremely helpful," and she felt "prepared in every way." In observing Gabby in the classroom, she was positive with her students. She did not feel anxious and had coping skills that helped her when she did. Gabby enjoyed teaching and had fun in the classroom. Her attitude was apparent in the way she motivated students and herself.

Gabby's self-efficacy summary. Gabby's overall self-efficacy, based on her description throughout the interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observation, was

high. Gabby felt efficacious, especially because of the preparation that her teaching program gave her. She described multiple times the importance of her mastery experiences. When analyzing the data, I noticed that mastery experiences were mentioned more than the other sources. Gabby utilized the mastery experience that she gained through her teaching program to help her understand the teaching world. She also had a high frequency of vicarious experience and verbal persuasion throughout her interviews. Gabby noted that these sources of efficacy played a role in her confidence and were still affecting her confidence during the first year of teaching. The source that was mentioned the least was psychological traits. Due to the nature of the Gabby's program, she drew a great deal of her self-efficacy from the other three sources. Gabby continually mentioned the important role her program played in the development of her self-efficacy. She described the importance of a mentor teacher, the ability to teach real students, and the value that feedback added to her overall confidence in the classroom. Her psychological traits were overall positive, and she drew on all of the sources in a different way to impact her self-efficacy during her first year of teaching.

Sage

Sage began her journey into education when she first attended McMurry University. She had dreams and aspirations to become a therapist to children who had been sexually assaulted. She earned a degree in sociology with a minor in criminology and had a heavy focus on trauma in children. This was not without challenges though. As a junior in college, Sage gave birth to her son and was confronted with finishing college while raising a newborn. She felt lucky to have invested professors who gave her the opportunity to complete independent studies. During her senior year of college, Sage

completed a paid internship with Harmony Family Service and was in charge of creating the activity schedule and the summer program curriculum. She found her passion for working with students and creating lessons during this time.

After graduation, she and her son moved to Abilene and Sage worked at a drop-in daycare while interviewing for positions at Child Protective Services. Through trials and tribulations of interviewing, Sage decided to go back to school and get her graduate degree in teaching to become a sociology teacher. Working full time, raising her son, and completing classwork became too much and she ended up dropping out of graduate school and taking a desk job with New Horizons, which works with families in foster care. Sage missed directly working with children and did not enjoy working behind a desk. She decided to change career paths again and work as a paraprofessional in a special education classroom. It was during this time that Sage pursued an alternative certification program for teaching. She took advantage of the time off due to COVID-19 and completed her online coursework before being offered a position as a kindergarten teacher in a city in Texas. Sage's background experience paired with her experience in her alternative certification are described in the following paragraphs. Her story of her first-year teaching experience is told through examining each of the sources of efficacy, then to conclude this case, I detail the efficacy sources through major themes that were evident in her interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations.

Sage's program components. Sage completed an alternative certification in Texas that was completely online. Due to the 2020 pandemic, the program was structured differently than it had been in the past. She completed modules online with reflections of reading and assignments. She was also pushed to reach out to teachers she may know to

network. Her observation hours were completed through watching videos of classrooms and giving both oral and written responses. Sage described not having any experience with in-class teaching other than her previous profession. Her program did not offer in-class observations or mentoring. Sage also described her encounter with CRP. She stated that she did not know what that term meant. She specifically stated, “I do not know what CRP is, however I had trainings on different family structures and some diversity training.” Sage examined her previous experiences and modules with nuclear families and different cultures. She loved this aspect of her program but wished she had more training in this area. She related that her school was very diverse, and she was not prepared to teach students who did not speak English or even Spanish. Sage concluded that the components in her program were modules, reflections, and observations of videos. She did not believe her program was extremely rigorous and mentioned wishing she had clinical experience before entering the classroom.

Mastery experiences. Sage’s alternative certification program did not give her opportunity to engage in mastery experience. She described her program as being mostly online courses that encouraged her to complete observation hours if she could. Sage found this difficult though, as the pandemic raced through the country. Not only was she unemployed due to the pandemic, but she was also trying to take care of her son and finish her coursework so she could be eligible for hire in the fall of 2020. Through analysis of the data, a few major themes shaped Sage’s story in terms of mastery experiences. Sage was not given many opportunities to engage in teaching through her program. She had to seek out her own clinical experience, and she was a paraprofessional, which helped her through this first year.

Throughout her alternative certification program, Sage completed modules online to gain her probationary certificate in teaching. These online courses consisted of discussion posts and responses, quizzes, and assignments. Her observation hours were completed through watching videos and Sage described this experience as “perfect classrooms where all your kids follow directions and not realistic at all.” Sage did not get an opportunity to be in a classroom through her program. She was able to see classrooms but not have that mastery experience of feeling success or failure when teaching. The only opportunity she felt she had was when she was a paraprofessional.

During her time in a classroom helping out special education students, Sage watched the classroom teacher. She was able to work individually with students and learn techniques that helped her to intervene with students. She explained:

I had a lot of hands-on experience working with students in many ways. From working in a daycare for years, working in an emergency shelter, working in an adoption agency being trained in TBRI, to being a paraprofessional and got to work with some of the most amazing teachers who took time to show me what they were doing and why it worked. My actual program did little to set me up for success it was all of my past work experience that helped me be where I am today.

Through classroom observations, Sage was comfortable intervening with special-needs students and dealing with very low-level students. Her ability to fully plan a lesson and implement the lesson cycle though is where she saw a disconnect. She specifically stated, “I wish my program would have touched more on what *has* to be taught and how to implement it into daily lessons.” She further mentioned how she was not given the opportunity to learn from failures or successes and had to engage in that process with her first-year students

Sage’s lack of mastery experiences has decreased her confidence in the classroom, although she sought out different opportunities through past careers to

increase this source of efficacy. Her alternative certification program did not play a significant role for this source.

Vicarious experiences. Watching others teach and master their craft was part of Sage's experience during her alternative certification program, but also something she believed would have made her more confident in the classroom if it was incorporated more throughout the program. Experiences such as video observations and encouragement to reach out to teachers she may know were all the program offered. Through her own personal experience, she was given the opportunity to watch teachers and during her first year of teaching she was given the opportunity to observe and work with peer teachers.

Sage was first given the opportunity to watch others through a series of videos. Sage described these videos as "perfect classrooms" and the "golden experience." She mentioned that while these were helpful in that time, they are not helpful now. She believed the program did not show her what a real classroom was like. She also mentioned the impact of watching her supporting teachers during her time as a paraprofessional. She described this experience as helpful, as she was able to receive information, but she also was working with a small group and was not able to immerse herself fully in an observation. Sage's frequency with vicarious experiences was low through her alternative certification. This source of efficacy played little into fostering her efficacy.

Verbal persuasions. Feedback was another source of efficacy that was not frequented often and did not factor into Sage's overall sense of efficacy. During

interviews, Sage described her program-specific components and explained that she only received feedback on her assignments of discussion posts. During observations, Sage would get frustrated or stressed whenever she was given feedback. Her program did not set her up for the role feedback would play in her profession. She specifically stated in an open-ended sentence stem:

I want to use our book but get told by peers I am doing it wrong if I teach that way, or it's because your new, one day you too will be able to teach without using the book.

Sage struggled with receiving feedback from peers on lesson planning. She let her emotions take over and constantly felt attacked by other teachers and administrators during her first year of teaching.

Psychological traits. The most powerful source of efficacy for Sage was psychological traits. Sage's emotional traits were portrayed through the open-ended sentence stems, interviews, and observations. Feelings such as stress and anxiety, not being good enough, not being able to cope with stress, and difficulty communicating with peers and administration made this source extremely powerful and most affected Sage's efficacy to teach in the classroom.

An overall theme for Sage was being overwhelmed with the workload and having anxiety when it came to teaching. Sage alluded to this when she stated, "I love teaching, it fills me with joy, when I am not stressed over trying to get through a lesson while also managing behavior." She felt that she was constantly managing behavior in her classroom and was not able to teach a full lesson due to the routines and procedures not being set. Sage also mentioned, "I feel like I only have good groundwork. I have a solid foundation of knowing what I am supposed to do. I feel like I still need to work on

implementing this in my classroom and my flow.” She understood what she needed to do to be successful in the classroom but did not feel she was able to implement it. Sage’s feelings showed in the classroom as well. She was very anxious and stressed and would look at me during the observations to apologize for what was happening. She wanted to do really well but her ability to cope with the stresses of teaching was low.

Sage believed that her alternative certification program did not prepare her with coping strategies to use throughout her first-year teaching. In interviews, anytime we were discussing teaching, she would state words and phrases such as “overwhelming,” “not good enough,” and “cried knowing my students are learning.” She did not know how to overcome these emotions in the classroom and truly believed her alternative certification program did not prepare her. She stated, “I honestly do not think I was prepared, I set up management systems that weren’t manageable, everything just didn’t work.” Instead of coping with this stress and anxiety, Sage lashed out at peers and anyone who would try to give her feedback. Her emotions overtook her efficacy in the classroom.

Sage’s relationships with peer teachers lacked during her first year of teaching. Her alternative certification program did not give her the opportunity to work with other teachers, and she thought she was not as good as the other teachers on her campus. When asked how she felt about receiving feedback in the classroom or working with peers to improve her teaching, Sage stated:

Overwhelmed, we didn’t get our coaches until mid-semester and I feel as if they are trying to jump the broom. I get asked “What can I do to help you?” and I honestly do not know how to respond. What I need isn’t them doing things for me but more physical classroom time alone.

She wanted to receive help from others but did not know how to communicate that. She believed everyone was against her and not trying to help her. She also mentioned feeling

“isolated” from other teachers and would get frustrated when people would tell her anything to help her improve. She recognized these emotions but did not know how to deal with them.

Sage’s psychological traits played a large role in her efficacy in the first year of teaching. She was eager at first to teach but after beginning her first-year positions, she felt negative emotions toward the profession. She allowed these emotions to lower her confidence in teacher and hinder her self-efficacy throughout the year.

Sage’s self-efficacy summary. When rating her self-efficacy, Sage believed she was a three on a scale from one to five. Her description of why read:

I know that I am a good teacher when I have everything I need. I believe that with the right training, I can grow and become stronger. I just wasn’t prepared for this year and all that this year brought. I honestly thought it would be easier.

Sage was able to read and portray her emotions in a sensible manner. She knew what she needed to work on and where her strengths were. The four sources of efficacy were not all powerful for her. She had a lack of mastery experiences, which in turn, affected her psychological traits. She observed teachers and mentors and received feedback but not frequently enough to foster a positive sense of efficacy. Her doubts, stress, and anxiety took over for much of her first year of teaching, which led to a low sense of efficacy overall.

Mary

Mary grew up in poverty and described her home life as very poor. From a young age, she was aware that the only way out was to go to college. Her teachers played a significant role in her decision to go to college and made an impact on her life. This is why she chose to give back in the way that she did and the reason she wanted to become

a teacher. She explained that her teachers saw her abilities to be something and encouraged her and helped her all through high school and to go to college. She was the first person to ever go to college, let alone, graduate with a bachelor's degree in her family. Her parents did not graduate high school and her grandparents did not go to school past sixth grade. So, to break this mold for her family was a huge accomplishment for Mary.

Mary was an athletic trainer in high school and earned a full ride to college as an athletic trainer. She knew that if she was going to get out of poverty this was her chance. Mary described that she also ran cross country in high school and her coach was always supportive of her. Her coach saw her abilities and her living situation and helped her to overcome her battles. Mary stated,

she (my coach) picked me up from my house every day and took me to school (we had practice before school every day and I had no way to get there). She saw my situation and helped me. She didn't have to do this but chose to

This act of kindness instilled a will in Mary to keep pushing and to always give back.

In Mary's last semester of college, she got a job at a pharmacy and fell into pharmacy for 12 years. She completed her bachelor's degree but stayed at the pharmacy. There were times she wanted to go back to teaching but she enjoyed working in the pharmacy lab, so she stayed. This job was not fulfilling her in the way she hoped, and she began to research ways to become a certified teacher. She found her alternative certification program through a friend. Her friend knew Mary always wanted to be a teacher and she encouraged Mary to complete the program and become what she had set out to be. She joined the program in 2013. Mary completed all of her modules and requirements for the program. She just had to pass her core content test. Her boss at the

pharmacy found out she was pursuing teaching and encouraged her to stay in pharmacy with a pay raise because she was so good in the lab. So, she made the decision to stay and stayed there another five years until she heard about the quick hire governor Abbott was passing due to a teacher shortage. She fit the criteria of only needing her core content test to get her certificate. She did just that and started applying for teaching jobs. She was finally following my dreams to be a teacher.

Mary's program components. Mary's experience in a teaching program is different from the rest of the participants. Mary first started her journey into teaching seven years ago. She began an online alternative certification program in 2013, and in 2021, she was on the road to complete the program. Mary explained:

I did my alternative certification 7 year ago, I did it when the program was laid out differently. We focused more on TEKS instead of actually teaching. Making sure everything was connected to the TEKS. Now it is more focused on content. They prepared me in a way for the TEKS but not the content.

When asking Mary about the specific components of her program, she mainly discussed the modules. She noted that her program was very focused on the TEKS, which is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Every teacher must teach these and they are the building blocks of Texas education. As Mary mentioned, she learned how to break down the TEKS and make connections but did not focus on content.

The module portion of Mary's certification was all online. She had discussion boards, readings, quizzes, and assignments that she had to complete each week. She found that the module portion was not very helpful. In her interview, Mary told me that she "one-hundred percent learned more in the first year just being in a classroom than in any of the coursework from my program." She alluded to the absence of a mentor experience and maintained that the coursework was very dry.

Mentoring was not a component of the alternative certification program that Mary completed. She told me that the program encouraged her to reach out to teachers who she may know to get observation hours, but they did not set up a specific observation process. Luckily, Mary knew someone who had recently completed the same alternative certification program. This person allowed Mary into her classroom for observation hours. Mar explained that this was strictly observation. She was not allowed to teach or be part of the class at all. When asked about this experience and how she felt a mentor would have helped, Mary stated that mentoring “would have helped all around, knowing the ins-and-outs of what we have to do on a daily basis. What we have to be prepared for every day.” She described that she was only able to see snippets of classrooms before her first year of teaching. She believed her program failed her in not offering an opportunity for hands-on learning in a classroom, specifically, one that matched her current teaching placement.

Mary discussed with me during the interview and in the open-ended sentence stems that she had never heard of CRP. Her alternative certification program did not explore the concept of CRP, and when asked to expand on her program’s coursework on diversity in general. Mary concluded that this was not part of her coursework. She furthered that her program “did not teacher me to teach in low-income schools or teach students with different perspectives.” Mary believed that she learned more on the job teaching about diversity than she ever did in her program. Her perspective switched after the first couple of weeks full time teaching. She stated:

the population at my school is different than I have ever experienced. I have multiple students who do not celebrate the same holidays I celebrate. You have to change the way you phrase things, word things and teach about so that you are inclusive to all.

Mary's inclusive diversity teaching was increasing but she continued to notate that this was not due to the teaching program and was due to her experience in the classroom.

Mary's teaching components included mainly coursework that was completed online and 30 hours of mandatory observation. Due to the nature of her program, she was still currently completing the program and must pass all assessments before she was given final licensure. Her alternative certification did not include CRP or a mentorship. This was completed on her own through a friend she previously knew. This section detailed Mary's alternative certification components. To answer the central research questions, the following sections describe her self-efficacy through the four sources of efficacy and conclude with Mary's perception of her self-efficacy during her first-year teaching.

Mastery experiences. Learning by doing, being successful at an experience, and learning from mistakes are all examples of mastery experiences. Mary expressed that in her alternative certification program she was not given these experiences. In fact, the only time she truly felt this measure of efficacy was during the first year of teaching. She worked in a second-grade classroom and had felt failure and success, but as she phrased "at the expense of my students." Due to the notion that her alternative certification program did not give her the opportunity to practice teaching before entering the field. This source of efficacy was low for Mary. She had few instances of this source during both the interviews and the open-ended sentence stems. In her response to when she had felt success, Mary stated:

I felt successful in teaching when a student grew two levels in reading, I am going to cry, I felt super successful and saw success in this moment. . . I know it wasn't all me, but I at least played a part.

This feeling of success was followed by feelings of self-doubt. Mary consistently discussed the emotions she felt when feeling successful or mastering, as well as failing at a task. She was unable to fully tell me a time when she truly felt she was learning by doing before teaching.

By observing Mary, I was able to see her success as well as emotions due to these successes. Through a series of observations, Mary was showing growth in her confidence and her teaching techniques. She was gaining more expertise, and the students were seeming to be engaged. However, Mary still believed she was not doing enough or being enough for her students. She would wear her frustrations on her face, and after each observation, would apologize for any mistake she made. Her lack of mastery experience in her preservice resulted in her coping ability when processes did not go quite right in her class. She portrayed a low sense of self-efficacy due to the absence of this source. The next source, vicarious experience, was more frequented in her alternative certification program. The following section explores the impact this source had on Mary's self-efficacy.

Vicarious experiences. Watching others succeed or fail at a task similar to one's own task defines the next section of Mary's journey. During Mary's alternative certification program, she completed 30 hours of observation. She was specifically watching different teachers and documenting what she saw. She observed teachers be successful in the classroom and teachers make mistakes. She believed that her biggest take away from this experience was learning about content and watching the routines of teaching. Mary stated in an interview that she "learned more of the content from watching other teachers teach." She engaged in thoughtful reflection throughout the

observation process, and believed she had a good understanding of how to implement content-driven lessons.

Vicarious experiences are also driven by watching peers teach. This part of the source was not specifically shown in the preservice work of her alternative certification program, but Mary expressed the impact that watching others teach during her first-year teaching. She detailed, “I know other (new teachers) going through a program more recently has helped them more, especially when I watch them teach.” Mary compared herself to the other new teachers on the campus in multiple occasions. She believed that she had a disadvantage due to the fact that her program took place over seven years ago. This feeling was noted in her observations as well. When observing Mary in the classroom she would compare herself to her partner teacher. She expressed to the students that the other second-grade teacher taught math a certain way and that is why she was teaching it this way. Mary’s efficacy due to watching her neighbor teacher was low. She perceived that she was not as strong as the veteran teacher.

Mary’s vicarious experiences were more frequent in her interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations than were master experiences. This source of efficacy was in high frequency throughout, however, for the most part, resulted in a lower sense of perceived efficacy. The next source of efficacy, verbal persuasions, played a positive role in Mary’s efficacy and affected her overall perception of her abilities.

Verbal persuasions. Feedback, whether verbal or written, defined this source of efficacy. Mary was given feedback on her submissions through course modules as well as feedback during the first year of teaching. Her program allowed her to teach on a probationary certificate for the first year and she, therefore, received observations from

her site coordinator. Mary believed that her site coordinator really helped her confidence and always gave positive, helpful feedback. Mary said, “My observation person is amazing, very positive and always gives me positive feedback.” This allowed Mary to want to keep teaching and get better. She enjoyed the feedback and had a drive to consistently better herself. She even stated that the feedback she received throughout the year impacted her self-efficacy a lot. She mentioned “she plays a big role in why I would rate myself as a four in confidence on a scale of one to five.” Mary’s ability to receive feedback, and the program’s feedback overall helped increase Mary’s self-efficacy.

Mary’s drive in the classroom is seen through this source. She thrived in the classroom when given feedback by her principal. I was able to observe a classroom session when the principal was in class. The principal stopped Mary mid-lesson and explained a possible misconception that Mary might be teaching the students pertaining to the language she was using during a math lesson. Mary immediately apologized to the principal and the class and clarified her lesson. She took the feedback with ease and adjusted her lesson. She did not allow this instance to discourage her.

Last, Mary described her feelings toward feedback and verbal persuasions during the open-ended sentence stems. She responded, “when given feedback from administrators or a coach I feel relieved, but I know I can still do better. I still feel like I can prepare more for a lesson or try to make it more engaging for the students.” Mary brought out her emotions in almost all answers around feedback. She enjoyed the feedback but also felt the relief of receiving constructive and positive feedback. Her emotional connection to feedback impacted her efficacy due to this source. Verbal

persuasions seemed to have a positive impact on Mary's overall perceived efficacy. In the next section, I discuss the impact of psychological traits on Mary's perceived efficacy.

Psychological traits. The other three sources of efficacy all impacted Mary's overall perception of self-efficacy in teaching. Psychological traits, however, was the most frequented source of efficacy. This source pertained to the participants' feelings and emotions toward teaching. It specifically looked at the participants' coping skills, overall feelings, and attitudes toward their task. Mary discussed many emotions and portrayed these emotions in interviews, sentence stems, and observations.

Mary displayed psychological traits frequently during her first year of teaching. She first discussed her emotions with me during our interview. She stated, "I feel like I am a huge failure for my online students, I can't keep them entertained or answer questions." Virtual teaching was very challenging for Mary at first. Although she thought she improved, she still felt like a failure. She also alluded to failure many times throughout the interview. She stated that her biggest impact on her efficacy was "failures, I am unequipped, I don't feel prepared." She felt her preparation program did not prepare her for this school year. She even discussed how she felt like she was "lower than all the other new teachers on campus." Her attitude toward her ability hindered her self-efficacy in this source.

Mary also portrayed these same feelings of failure in the open-ended sentence stems. She initiated this feeling by answering:

During my teacher preparation program, I felt I would be successful at teaching because I thought I was being taught to handle the classroom and the material and how to set up lessons. But now that I am teaching, I feel overwhelmed.

Mary took a sentence stem that was meant for her to be positive and look at success and turned it into a negative and felt overwhelmed. Her psychological traits were a strong factor in her overall self-efficacy. She portrayed this feeling of being overwhelmed once again when she stated, “The emotions I feel when teaching or preparing to teach are overwhelming.” Mary began her journey into teaching enthusiastically. She mentioned that she was living out her dream to be a teacher and pass on knowledge to her students. She started this journey to make a difference in young lives. Her psychological traits due to her preservice experience and feelings of un-preparedness lowered her self-efficacy.

This source of efficacy was very strong and connected to the other four. Mary’s perceptions and feelings were seen throughout the other three sources of efficacy. Her overall perception of her self-efficacy based on the sources and alternative certification components follows to help conclude this case and the story of Mary in her first-year teaching.

Mary’s self-efficacy summary. The components of Mary’s alternative certification program, along with the exploration of the sources of efficacy based on Mary’s experiences in teaching during her first year helped paint a picture of Mary’s overall perceived self-efficacy. Mary’s case portrayed that not all sources were frequented an equal amount. Mary had a low frequency of mastery experiences during her alternative certification program, the absence of this source factored into a lower sense of efficacy. The higher frequency of psychological traits also factored into a low sense of self-efficacy. Both vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion had an equal frequency and impact on the self-efficacy of Mary. Vicarious experiences seemed to have

a negative impact on her self-efficacy, and verbal persuasions positively impacted her overall efficacy.

As Mary explained the absence of both CRP and clinical experience in her alternative certification program, she mentioned the impact this had on her efficacy throughout her first year. She described the knowledge she could have had if she had a mentor. She analyzed the importance of CRP and discussed the importance of knowing how to handle teaching different cultures. In the interview process, Mary and I discussed her self-efficacy due to her program. To express her feelings toward her efficacy as it pertains to teaching, Mary described that she was “confident but still needs growth” and that she was “confident in the fact that I can teach, just being able to put all my resources together and go in and teach every day.” After hearing this, I pushed further and asked her how she felt about teaching and impacting student achievement. She responded, “I need growth—growth as in what all I need to be teaching in order to follow the schools outline, the rigor of the lesson.” Mary described that she was still loving living out her dream. While she maintained a positive demeanor, her psychological traits were a very strong source and were evident in the concluding sections of our interview, as well as observations.

Torey

As a college student, Torey was not fully decided on the degree she wanted to complete. She earned an associate degree in teaching from Tarrant County College and decided to join Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society of Education. She spent 34 hours observing elementary classrooms and 6 hours observing in the district in which she

first began teaching. After all the observation hours, she fell in love with the profession and knew she wanted to earn her certification to teach.

Torey's journey began when she realized she wanted to teach because she wanted to be part of the learning journey of others. She liked working with young children and had a passion for learning, as well as sharing her knowledge. She wanted to take part in shaping the next generation, to inspire their potential. Her goal was to give back to her community and instill a love for learning in all students.

Torey chose an accelerated teaching program, which would grant her certification in one year. In this program, she had to complete coursework and fieldwork at the same time. She taught kindergarten in her first field placement and third-grade English language arts in her second semester placement. She was granted opportunity to work with special education students, students with English as a second language, bilingual students, and gifted and talented students. She fully believed this program helped her become a highly effective and qualified teacher.

Torey's program components. Torey's alternative certification program consisted of many different parts. She described the program as in a positive light and enjoyed each part of the program. When I asked about how her program increased her confidence, Torey stated, "My teacher preparation program made me feel confident to teach by providing many opportunities for me to learn the best practices and strategies. I got to observe, practice, and collaborate with people in the field." Not only did Torey complete coursework to gain certification, she was also in the field for an entire school year. During this year she was mentored, participated in professional development, and learned about different components of CRP. She believed her program was most effective in

helping her build family and student relationships due to the hands-on experience she received.

Torey's clinical experience played a large role in what she believed to be the success of her program. Throughout the yearlong experience, Torey was paired up with two different mentor teachers. One was a kindergarten teacher, and the next semester, Torey was with a third-grade bilingual teacher. She described her experience with the mentors as collaborative. She stated in an interview, "I would not be successful without my mentor. She had 20 years of experience in kindergarten. I was able to co-teach with her. I would watch her teach and model after what she did." Torey found this mentorship to be irreplaceable. She insisted that her mentors pushed her and were constructive. She even stated that she "wouldn't be able to collaborate with other teachers if it wasn't for her mentor." This mentorship pushed Torey outside of her comfort zone and forced her to collaborate with colleagues. Throughout her preservice teaching, Torey also participated in three hours of professional development every Friday. Her program based the professional development on her specific learning needs. The program individualized training to meet the needs of each preservice teacher. She also noted that her mentors allowed her freedom to create both family and community nights in the classroom. They gave her the opportunity to create relationships with students and families, which helped her to invest herself in the community. Torey described, "I was able to create a family meeting night. I was able to take charge and represent more of my student placement. I was also working with others and learning about where others can grow." She noted in her open-ended sentence stems that this experience was the most valuable part of her

preservice teaching. She loved being able to integrate herself into the lives of her students.

To fully understand the lives of her students, Torey and I discussed her program's intentionality in including CRP. She described that her program courses were based in diversity training. She stated:

I think we took a lot of special education courses, read a lot about diversity, even racial injustices, we read case studies and real-life encounters of racial issues. We saw how we as teachers should approach diversity in the classroom. How we are going to be in the field.

Her program was intentional in its coursework and Torey felt more at ease when she first began teaching because of the CRP component. She specifically stated in the interview that her program "expanded my ability to work with different cultures." The coursework developed Torey's sense of diversity and she believed this aspect of the program ensured her success during her first year of teaching.

The program components were essential to understand Torey's experience in her alternative certification. Through mentoring, CRP, intensive coursework, and individualized professional development, Torey's program tried to create teachers who were ready to work in the classroom year one. This section described each of these components and the importance they had for Torey's development. The next sections entail each source of efficacy and the effect each had on Torey's perception of her self-efficacy in teaching.

Mastery experiences. The experiences that Torey had in her alternative certification program were very hands-on. Torey participated in a real classroom and had the opportunity to teach in that classroom. She was an integral part of the school and completed a yearlong internship under two mentor teachers. Torey stated, "I got to

practice a lot and my mentor was very you do it yourself, trial and error type.” She learned from her mistakes and had a year of practice before coming into her first year of teaching. Torey discussed in her open-ended sentence stems why she felt successful coming into her first-year teaching. She mentioned that her mentoring experience helped her to understand the needs of the class. She specifically stated, “I felt I would be successful due to having a year of practice and receiving feedback to improve my teaching.” Torey’s mastery experiences were very frequent in both the interviews and open-sentence stems. She was intentional in telling me that the experience she had in the classroom was extremely valuable to her current teaching placement. She felt she was successful in her preservice teaching and this feeling has followed her during her first-year teaching.

During observations of her classroom, this feeling of success and high self-efficacy was noticeable. Torey managed her classroom and implemented routines with her students without stress or fear. She told me during the observation that the routines and procedures she implemented in her classroom were the same routines and procedures that her mentor teacher created. She allowed me to watch these procedures throughout the lesson as well as watch her instruction. Torey was confident in all of her teaching. She continued to use positive phrases, had a smile on her face, and did not seem stressed throughout the lesson.

The mastery experiences that made up Torey’s’ teaching program impacted her ability to feel confident in the classroom. She portrayed this through her interview, sentence stems, and her observation. This source of efficacy portrayed the importance of

clinical internship for Torey. In the next section, Torey described the importance of vicarious experiences on her self-efficacy in the classroom.

Vicarious experiences. Torey experienced many instances of watching others achieve success. In her alternative certification program, she watched her mentor teacher teach and create relationships with students. Torey mentioned feelings of excitement when she was watching her first lessons. She stated, “When I first watched a lesson, I was excited to see myself implement that in a classroom.” Torey used this feeling of success to increase her self-efficacy. She also noted that she watched other teachers teach to help herself in her classroom during her preservice teaching and during her first-year teaching. Seeing others be successful in a task only encouraged Torey to be the best teacher she could be. She emphasized this point by saying “Watching other people teach helps you learn what you want to do in your classroom.” She took the time to understand how to implement each aspect of other classrooms and make them her own. Torey used this source of efficacy to increase her teaching capacity.

Torey was also influenced by this source when she looked at others lesson plans as well as watched others teach through learning walks. I noticed through an observation that Torey added in components of a lesson plan of a peer. She collaborated with the other teacher. However, she also made sure to utilize her colleagues’ expertise and learn from them. She alluded to this more in a sentence stem when she discussed:

Looking at other lesson plans and teaching makes me reflect on my own plans and strategies. I feel like there is always room for improvement. Getting to view plans or observe others teaching helps me identify areas in which I can grow or adjust my plans.

She intentionally watched and read peers work to grow herself. This source of efficacy is one that has greatly affected Torey’s perception of her self-efficacy. She portrayed a

feeling of positivity and success throughout all forms of data collection. Her program set her up for success through the clinical experience and mentorship in which she took part. The next source of efficacy, verbal persuasions, also demonstrated her program's ability to increase efficacy through constant feedback and mentorship.

Verbal persuasions. Mentorship and feedback pushed Torey to feel confident in her first-year teaching. Torey's alternative certification program intentionally incorporated feedback from multiple sources. She received feedback from her mentor teacher, her site coordinator, and peer teachers. Torey's attitude toward the feedback helped her to be able to understand and grow from it. When discussing her experience with feedback in an interview, Torey answered, "I had to take feedback that was nice and constructive. How are you going to push low students? How are you going to do hands-on learning?" She was constantly being questioned and pushed outside of her comfort zone. She stated in her sentence stems, "I would receive weekly feedback from my program site coordinator during walkthroughs in my preservice classroom." As a preservice teacher, she was accustomed to feedback, which she believed only helped her when she became a first-year teacher. She worked at a school that completed multiple walkthroughs and administrators gave feedback weekly. This experience she knew could be tough on a first-year teacher, but Torey was ready due to her program's intentionality in constant feedback during preservice. Torey analyzed this experience in a sentence stem. She replied,

When given feedback from administration or a coach I feel delighted. I welcome any feedback provided by anyone. Everyone's experiences and background knowledge can contribute additional information or strategies that I may need to improve my teaching

Her ability to take feedback and learn from it also grew her confidence in teaching. She applied and implemented the feedback into class as well.

During a classroom observation, Torey would point out where she had received feedback in the past and how she changed her routine or lesson. She was impacted by the feedback her administrators gave her and used it to change instruction. Torey's attitude once again was positive toward this source of efficacy. In every source, Torey seemed to be positive and confident. The next and final source, psychological traits, discusses more her attitudes toward teaching and the effect this had on her self-efficacy in the first year of teaching.

Psychological traits. Throughout the three other sources of efficacy, Torey displayed positive thoughts and emotions toward teaching and her teaching program. Her attitude toward the profession was pleasant overall and she was excited to be a teacher. Throughout the past year, Torey had taught with a smile on her face and brought about positive feelings when participating in interviews, finishing sentence stems, or teaching her class. She noted in one sentence stem, "the emotions I feel when teaching and preparing to teach is enthusiasm. I like to visualize my plan and look forward to how a lesson will unfold in the classroom." She consistently portrayed this feeling of enthusiasm in all discussions. Psychological traits did not come up much in our discussion other than her body language and overall feelings toward her program and excitement. Torey ensured me that she loved her program. Whether discussing the coursework, clinical experience, feedback, or CRP, Torey always insisted that she grew from each experience. This source was integrated into the other three sources for Torey.

She did not give any negative responses, and in observations, she taught with ease and relaxation.

This section described Torey's sources of efficacy. Throughout the section, it was notable that Torey had a positive experience with her teaching program and seemed to have high efficacy for all four sources. The next section develops Torey's personal sense of efficacy and relates the four sources to her perceived self-efficacy in her first year of teaching.

Torey's self-efficacy summary. Torey participated in an alternative certification program that included components such as clinical internship for a year, CRP, consistent feedback, mentoring, and ongoing professional development. Her thoughts toward her program were overall positive and her self-efficacy in relation to the four sources of efficacy was also high. Torey and I discussed her perceived sense of efficacy as it pertained to teaching as well as the factors that made her feel this way. This section describes the impact the four sources had on Torey's self-efficacy and her own thoughts on her efficacy when it came to teaching.

The four sources displayed multiple types of information for Torey. Torey displayed a high sense of self-efficacy in all four of the sources. Psychological traits were the source relied on the least throughout the interview, sentence stems, and observations. Torey consistently referred back to her mastery experiences and verbal persuasions when discussing her efficacy. These two sources of efficacy were frequented the most and resulted in a high sense of efficacy. Torey also discussed vicarious experiences frequently. However, she discussed this in relation to her mastery experiences. According

to the data collected on the four sources, Torey's perceived sense of efficacy was high and she was confident in the classroom.

To conclude Torey's interview, I asked Torey how confident she was in her teaching ability based on a scale of 1 to 5. Torey thought about this question and laughed because she stated she did not want to come off arrogant. She replied:

I am a four on a confidence scale. I have room to grow. With my knowledge and what I know. I know how to teach but don't want to sound too confident, but my knowledge of teaching puts me at a four.

Torey had a high sense of self-efficacy when it came to teaching. She was a first-year teacher and understood that she needed to grow but also believed in herself and her teaching program. She expounded on why she was confident and the factors that made her confident through saying:

Confident in my teaching ability. I got to practice a lot and my mentor was very you do it yourself, trial and error type. I would consistently get feedback on my instruction. I just developed confidence. If you were to tell me to start teaching at any moment I would because of the experience with my mentor.

She believed that her program set her up for success in the classroom and in her first-year teaching. Mentoring, time to practice teaching, feedback, and support helped Torey to have a high sense of self-efficacy in her first-year teaching.

Cross-Case Analysis

A cross-case analysis of all four participants' data analysis occurred after all data were collected. I utilized constant comparative analysis to compare each case for emergent themes. The results of the cross-case analysis, as seen in table 4.1, are divided by Bandura's (1997) four sources of efficacy. Each of the following sections identifies the summary of the four participants' answers broken down by each source of efficacy, and a summary of all emergent themes concludes this section.

Table 4.1

Sources of Efficacy and Emergent Themes

Efficacy Source	Emergent Themes
Mastery Experiences	Mentoring during clinical internship is critical Clinical experience must be structured
Vicarious Experiences	Observations of veteran teachers is helpful
Verbal Persuasions	Constructive feedback is dependent on psychological traits Constructive, positive feedback is most helpful
Psychological Traits	Lack of mastery experiences leads to negative emotions Traits are intertwined with other sources

Mastery Experiences Themes

Mastery experiences were not present in each of the participants cases. Mary and Sage completed alternative certification programs that did not include a clinical internship. Torey and Gabby however had an extensive yearlong internship. This section describes the themes related to mastery experiences for all four participants.

Mentorships are critical. The four participants differed in their mastery experiences. The two participants who had a structured clinical experience during their alternative certification program portrayed a higher sense of self-efficacy within the first year than the two participants that did not receive mentorship. Gabby and Torey continued to reiterate the impact their mentors had on their success in the classroom.

Both participants felt mentorship was invaluable and relied heavily on this experience during their first year of teaching.

Clinical experiences must be structured. For mentoring and clinical experience to be effective, all four participants showed that they must be structured. Sage and Mary were both told to complete their observations as well as well as clinical experience free of the program. They found this to be unhelpful and were not able to relate the information from their course work. Gabby and Torey explained a different process. Their clinical experience was structured and connected theory to practice. They mentioned the importance of the structure and found it helpful in their first-year teaching.

Vicarious Experiences Themes

Due to the nature of certification requirements in Texas, each participant had vicarious experiences in their alternative certification program. This section outlined the major theme that emerged from the cross-case analysis regarding the participants vicarious experiences.

Each of the participants had to complete observation hours in their alternative certification program. The participants explained that the observations were helpful in gaining knowledge of what a classroom would look like in the future. Gabby, Torey and Mary observed teachers in an actual classroom, while Sage watched videos to satisfy her observation requirements. Sage demonstrated that the videos showed a perfect environment, but she still found them helpful to watch for teaching ideas. Mary watched a friend teach in her classroom and was able to see routines and procedures in real time. Torey and Gabby observed their respective mentor teachers and gained insight on daily

routines from start to finish. While this was not the most powerful source, each participant described the helpfulness of observations.

Verbal Persuasions Themes

Critical feedback is crucial to development of self-efficacy. Bandura noticed that verbal persuasions can hinder or foster self-efficacy. In this study, each participant portrayed varying ways in which verbal persuasions affected them. Two major themes emerged from analyzing this data. First is that constructive, positive feedback fostered the teachers' self-efficacy, and second is that teachers with negative psychological traits turned constructive feedback into negative feedback which hindered self-efficacy. Each of these themes is discussed in the following sections. constructive feedback was dependent of the teachers.

Constructive and positive feedback fosters self-efficacy. Each of the participants described moments of feedback that most affected their efficacy to teach. Administrative, and coaching feedback helped the participants to grow if it was framed in a positive manner. Torey and Gabby described that they were used to receiving feedback in their program, however, positive feedback helped them grow but constructive feedback was what they were accustomed too. Mary and Sage received feedback from their school administrators first. They noticed that feedback that was positive and constructive most helped them to grow and made them feel better about their teaching. Each participant found that constructive criticism is necessary, if it is framed in a positive manner.

Constructive feedback is dependent on psychological traits. All participants paired their verbal persuasions with themes of psychological traits. Torey specifically

mentioned that she loved receiving feedback, she was happy to learn more about how she could grow. Gabby had similar feelings, however she felt that sometimes feedback tore her down. Sage and Mary enjoyed the feedback at times but felt overwhelmed with comments and constant suggestions. This feeling was consistent with the negative emotions they portrayed throughout their psychological traits.

Psychological Traits Themes

The emotions and psychological states that a teacher feels is analyzed through the psychological traits in Banduras (1997) four sources of efficacy. This source was not as evident as the verbal persuasions or mastery experiences. Instead, it was interwoven throughout the other sources and portrayed the participants emotions towards their career. There were two themes that emerged from the cross-case analysis; the interwoven nature of this source of efficacy with the other sources, and lack of mastery experiences lead to negative emotions.

Lack of mastery experience leads to negative emotions. Through constant comparative analysis I was able to notice an emerging theme related to psychological traits. The participants that did not have many mastery experiences before teaching tended to have lower psychological traits. They portrayed negative emotions, using phrases such as “being overwhelmed,” burn-out,” “stressed,” and “not know how to handle everything.” Mary and Sage both did not have a clinical experience and these phrases were constant throughout their interviews, open-ended sentence stems and were observed in classroom observations. Torey and Gabby on the other hand portrayed more

positive psychological traits and they both encountered mastery experiences during their ACP.

Psychological traits are intertwined with other sources. There was not one specific instance where I would look for psychological traits. Throughout the interviews, open-ended sentence stems and classroom observations each participant portrayed different emotions and emotional states. When discussing experiences throughout their ACP's the participants had positive emotions or negative emotions. This led me to believe that each of the other three sources had psychological traits embedded. The psychological traits of a participant were intertwined within the other sources.

Conclusion

The cross-case analysis resulted in emerging themes from analysis of all four participants. Through analysis of their mastery experiences, verbal persuasions, vicarious experiences and psychological traits, I was able to determine the importance of clinical internship, feedback, observations and emotional states of the four participants. This section developed the emerging themes based off the theoretical framework. Bandura (1997) offered that mastery experiences was the most powerful source of efficacy. This Problem of Practice mirrored this finding; however, the participants also portrayed the powerful nature of psychological traits. The next section explored the analysis of the participant data in terms of the research questions, beginning with an interpretation of data, each research question is answered and then followed by a section that outlines the significant findings of the study.

Discussion

Alternative certification programs opened the door for many professionals to become certified teachers. Their development also combated challenges of high teacher attrition rates and the dilemma of having too few teachers to teach in high needs areas. The remnants of No Child Left Behind, and Every Student Succeeds Act added hundreds of teachers to the profession through the growing popularity of alternative certification. The national achievement gap continues to be a spotlighted issue and many officials believe that through the process of training more teachers these dilemmas will be solved (Darling-Hammond, 2016; Hussar et al., 2020; Ravitch, 2020). Due to their growing enrollments, this study explored the impact alternative certification programs have on first-year teachers' self-efficacy. Through interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and classroom observations, I analyzed the teachers perceived self-efficacy as they journeyed through their first year of teaching. Robert Banduras' (1997) theory of self-efficacy framed this study, and I analyzed each of the participants data through the four sources of efficacy. This section describes the interpretation and key findings of the analyzed data. First, this section describes the interpretation of all of the data collected through an analysis of each research question. Then, I introduce the significant findings as they relate to the emergent themes. This section concludes and leads into the implications of this study's findings.

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of alternative certification program components on first-year teachers perceived self-efficacy. The research questions were designed to gather information on the specific components of each participants' alternative certification program and relate them to the participants' sense of self-efficacy. The central research question was: In what ways do components of

alternative teacher preparation programs impact the candidate's self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools? The sub questions added more detail to this central research question: What aspects of alternative certification program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy? In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success? How is culturally relevant pedagogy, and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers' alternative certification experience?

Central Research Question: In What Ways Do Components of Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs Impact the Candidate's Self-Efficacy to Teach in Low-Income Urban Schools?

Participants in this Problem of Practice helped to answer the central research question through interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations. Each participant's case investigated the components of their alternative certification program and the impact that program had on the participant's self-efficacy within the first year of teaching. Through constant comparative analysis, I was able to congregate all of the data into three major themes to answer this research question. I discovered that mentoring opportunities, culturally relevant experiences, and the observations of successful teachers most impacted the first-year teachers' self-efficacy.

Mentoring opportunities. Two participants in this study had opportunities to practice teach and be mentored through their alternative certification program. Both Torey and Gabby received on the spot mentoring and feedback. The programs they were apart of allowed them to teach in a mentor's classrooms for an entire year. They were able to see the "daily routines" as Gabby stated, and "had hands-on experience" as Torey

mentioned. Mentoring helped both of these teachers to feel confident in their first-year teaching. Their perceived efficacy was higher than the other two participants who did not have this experience. Both Gabby and Torey pointed out that they learned from their mistakes and that through mentoring they were able to understand how to run a classroom before they had their own students. Alternatively, Mary and Sage mentioned a lack of this experience. They felt more anxiety and had a difficult time coping with the first year of teaching. Sage even mentioned that she felt less prepared than other teachers because she did not have this experience. Mentoring was a large factor in the perceived efficacy of the participants of this study.

Culturally relevant experiences. Participants engaged in multiple different opportunities throughout their program that increased their knowledge of CRP. Both Gabby and Torey described courses that pertained to CRP and discussed the importance this had on teaching during their first year. Both participants also analyzed the impact that CRP had on their student teaching experience. Torey enjoyed reading books about CRP and found ways to incorporate this coursework in class. Torey stated in an interview, “we saw how we as teachers should approach diversity in the classroom.” She invested her new skills into her teaching and this she believed helped her high sense of self-efficacy in the classroom during the first year of teaching. Gabby noted similar feelings and stated that she went through many diversity classes and felt she was placed at a school with similar diversity during her student teaching. She also discussed how the course helped her in the first year as she had background knowledge on how to teach different cultures. Mary did not know what CRP was and mentioned that she did not remember taking any courses related to diversity. She explored the impact of this lack of

knowledge pertaining to her self-efficacy. Not having diversity classes made her first year of teaching more of a learning curve when it came to teaching students of multiple different cultures. Alternatively, Sage only noted that she partook in many courses dealing with English as second language students, family structures, and diversity. She argued that these courses were discussion boards and not interactive, so it was not extremely helpful. The participants who received coursework on CRP and implemented this coursework into lessons before their first year of teaching demonstrated a higher sense of self-efficacy due to this experience. The participants without the coursework believed they were learning on the job and even felt overwhelmed due to a high amount of diversity at their school.

Observations of veteran teachers. Each participant experienced observing other teachers in the classroom before their first year of teaching. Two participants, Mary and Sage, sought out observations themselves, as their program did not offer this in-person to them. Mary described this experience as helpful but “only for routines and procedures.” She was able to strictly observe a friend who was teaching and earn her observation hours for her program. Sage sought out observation hours through her previous profession as a paraprofessional. She watched and notated the classroom teachers’ routines, procedures, and management for “snippets of time.” Both Mary and Sage enjoyed watching teachers but wished they had more time for observations and described the impact that seeing a full day of teaching would have had. For this, observing other teachers increased their efficacy but not significantly, as they believed they did not gain much from this experience. Gabby and Torey thought otherwise. Both participants were part of a classroom for an entire year. They observed a mentor teacher from the beginning of the

day to the end of the day and interacted with the teacher on a daily basis. Their experience allowed their self-efficacy in teaching to increase, and their overall confidence in the classroom portrayed this notion. Torey explained the importance of this component. She stated, “I would not be the same without my mentor. I watched her and modeled everything I did after her.” Gabby described the same feelings, stating “watching my mentors teach helped to teach me everything I knew.” Both Gabby and Torey described this experience as being irreplaceable and their high self-efficacy was attributed in part to the intentionality of this component. This was different from the participants who had to seek out this experience on their own. Mary and Sage showed little increase in efficacy due to the observation factor.

Summary. Alternative certification components played a large role in the impact of participants’ self-efficacy. Each participant described observing other teachers, mentorship, or lack thereof, and culturally relevant experience as components of their ACP. These components affected each participant differently. However, there were similarities between Mary and Sage as well as Torey and Gabby. The components, when implemented with fidelity, portrayed an increase in self-efficacy for Gabby and Torey and did not have a large effect on Sage and Mary.

Sub question One: What Aspects of Alternative Certification Program Helped to Increase the Teachers’ Self-Efficacy?

Throughout the participants’ stories, each described their experience in the mentoring program. Each participant allowed me to obtain a full description of the components that helped them the most when entering their first year of teaching, as well as gave me in-depth looks into their self-efficacy. After a thorough analysis of all four

participants, the factors that helped to increase teachers' self-efficacy the most were twofold. Torey and Mary shared a component of clinical internship, while Sage and Mary attributed their high efficacy to feedback and observations during their respective ACP.

Torey and Gabby described the importance of clinical internship. In their interviews, sentence stems, and observations, both participants consistently referenced this component of their teaching program. They believed the experience allowed them to see how the classroom would really be, and they insinuated that without this they would not be the teachers they are today. Both participants displayed confidence in their routines and procedures during observations, and during interviews discussed the importance of their mentorship during their alternative certification.

Mary and Sage described a different component that increased their self-efficacy. They mentioned the component of feedback as a helpful component. Each participant had a different experience with feedback. The site coordinator for Mary's program observed her multiple times and gave positive and constructive feedback. Mary stated that this feedback "was extremely helpful" and continued that the feedback helped her grow throughout her first year of teaching. Sage described the feedback to modules and observations of her teaching. She also thought feedback was constructive from her program, which attributed to her a higher sense of self-efficacy due to this component.

Each participant had components of their program that increased their self-efficacy. Programs that included a clinical internship impacted the participants' self-efficacy in a positive way. These participants consistently mentioned the importance of this experience. Participants without this experience emoted the need for a mentoring experience during their alternative certification program. The two participants who

lacked clinical internships portrayed their increase through feedback and observations. They grew from the constructive feedback during their first year of teaching.

Subquestion Two: In What Ways Did Relationships or Lack of Relationships with a Mentor Teacher Impact Teachers' Feeling of Success?

Mentorship answered the central research question and sub question one as a major component that helped increase participants' efficacy. The two participants who encountered a mentor during their program felt more equipped to teach during their first year of teaching. Gabby stated in open-ended sentence stems "my teacher preparation program made me feel confident to teach by giving me the ability to be in a classroom with a mentor." She attributed her success to the mentorship she received during preservice. To compare, Torey also explained, "I would not be successful without my mentor." Each of these participants analyzed this success due to the mentorship they received. In contrast, the participants who did not receive mentorship attributed their feelings of being overwhelmed and stress to the lack of mentorship. When we discussed the lack of mentorship, Mary explained, "I feel like I am a failure, I feel less prepared than the other teachers." Mary's lack on clinical internship affected her overall self-efficacy in terms of teaching. Both Mary and Sage described more negative feelings toward their performance than Torey and Gabby. Mentorship during preservice preparation helped teachers to feel prepared and ready during their first year of teaching.

Sub question Three: How is Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Clinical Internship Represented throughout the Teachers' Alternative Certification Experience?

The answer to this research question has been alluded to in the previous findings of different questions. Clinical internships and CRP were two emergent themes

throughout each of the research questions. Each participant either discussed these components and their increase in self-efficacy due to these components or they discussed the lack of these components and the effect on their self-efficacy. Torey and Gabby were taught about CRP in their program through coursework, and through implementation in the field. Torey stated in an interview, “I was able to become part of the community in my field placement. I could work with families and put my coursework in diversity into action.” Gabby explained similar feelings stating, “the coursework on diversity helped me understand my students more and be intentional with my planning for my students.” Each of the former participant’s programs portrayed fieldwork and coursework to best implement CRP. Mary and Sage both described a lack of CRP in their training programs. Sage received instruction in some courses, but she believed it was not engaging. She stated, “my coursework was through modules that did not help me to engage in the material.” Mary described that she did not even remember taking coursework that dealt with diversity at all. Her statement detailed, “my program didn’t have anything that I remember on diversity, it was all TEKS based.” Sage and Mary’s programs’ intentionality with CRP in both fieldwork and coursework was not connected. Each of them discussed this throughout their interviews.

Clinical internship is also a major theme that has been portrayed throughout the analysis of the research questions and case descriptions. Torey and Gabby described this important aspect. Both went through an entire year under multiple mentors and clinical internship was very present in their programs. In Sage’s and Mary’s programs, clinical internship was not present at all. Gabby’s statement on clinical internship summed up the importance of this component for her. She stated:

I feel that the actual experience is what makes you confident, you can read all the education books and take all the classes but you need to live through the rough patches of the experience to be confident in what you do.

Clinical internship helped both Gabby and Torey to perceive their self-efficacy as high, whereas the lack of internship was felt as a hindrance for Mary and Sage. Mary stated in contrast to Gabby that clinical internship “Would have helped all around but knowing the ins-and-outs of what we have to do on a daily basis. What we have to be prepared for every day.” Programs that intentionally implemented clinical internship for a year showed higher perceived efficacy in the classroom.

Summary of emergent themes. The cross-case analysis of the data using pattern matching revealed the emergent themes of the study. Table 4.2 represents these themes based on the research questions that were analyzed above.

Through responses to open-ended sentence stems, observations, and interviews, the participants portrayed these emergent themes. Each of the participants completed a different alternative certification program. After thorough analysis of the research questions, major themes structured around CRP and clinical internship emerged. Participants who participated in a clinical internship and had diversity training through both fieldwork and coursework perceived their self-efficacy higher in the first year of teaching. Programs that did not include clinical internship also did not include CRP and participants’ overall self-efficacy was low. Each of the participants observed other teachers teach during their alternative certification program. Programs with structured time for observations tended to equip participants with a higher sense of self-efficacy than those programs that did not structure this experience for preservice teachers.

Table 4.2

Research Questions and Emergent Themes

Research Questions	Emergent Themes from the Research Questions
Central research question-components of alternative certification that impact self-efficacy	Mentoring during clinical internship Culturally relevant experiences Observations of veteran teachers
Subquestion one-components that increased efficacy	Clinical internship CRP
Subquestion two-relationships with a mentor	Structured mentoring by the program
Subquestion three-CRP and clinical internship	Increased efficacy when apparent in program

This section analyzed each of the research questions through a cross-case analysis. I used pattern matching to describe the similarities and differences in the cases and pull out emergent themes from the data. The central and sub questions for this study were analyzed across all cases and the data revealed themes relating to clinical internship, CRP, and the structure of ACP to intentionally increase first-year teachers’ self-efficacy. I present the key findings of the study and relate these findings to literature in the next section of this problem of practice.

Summary of Significant Findings

The purpose of this multiple case study was to understand participants’ descriptions of their self-efficacy to teach as a result of their enrollment in ACPs. The research questions in this study were designed to explore the specific components of ACPs and the effects these components had on first-year teachers’ perceived efficacy.

The results of this problem of practice led to several findings about self-efficacy in first-year teachers and the impact alternative certification components have:

- Finding One—lack of mastery experiences in ACP lead participants to depend on psychological traits for self-efficacy in the first year of teaching
- Finding Two—structured clinical internship that included mentoring increased self-efficacy
- Finding Three—CRP helped to increase self-efficacy within the first-year of teaching at a low-income urban school

Each of the participant stories were told through the perspective of the theoretical framework in the case descriptions. Table 4.3 illustrates how the findings of this Problem of Practice align with themes from the literature review.

Table 4.3

Findings Aligned with Literature Review

Findings	Literature Perspective
One—lack of mastery experiences	Mastery experience are the strongest source of efficacy, combining both fieldwork with coursework results in higher satisfaction (Bandura, 1997; Jorissen, 2002)
Two—structured clinical internship	Longer and structured clinical internship leads to less anxiety, improved self-efficacy, and ability to cope with stress (Callahan, 2016; Flores, 2015; Garza & Harter, 2016; Singh, 2017)
Three—CRP helped to increase self-efficacy	CRP as a tenet for teacher preparation program success (Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017)

In the next section, I present a discussion of each finding and its' relation to the literature. I then detail the implications of this Problem of practice.

Finding One

The first finding identifies the lack of mastery experiences in alternative certification programs leads participants to depend on psychological traits for self-efficacy in the first year of teaching. Participants in this study explained different avenues that helped them have a high sense of self-efficacy or a low sense of self-efficacy during their first year of teaching. The sources of efficacy represented these avenues and in multiple participants, certain sources were stronger than others. For both Gabby and Torey, mastery experiences formed their strongest source of efficacy and affected their first year the most. Each of the participants in this source described mentoring, practicing, learning from mistakes, and the valuableness of seeing a classroom from start to finish. They used phrases to entail this experience such as “I wouldn’t be the same teacher without my clinical internship” and “I wouldn’t know what to do during an observation, I learned from my mistakes.” This source of efficacy allowed these teachers to have a positive affect when it came to teaching in the first year. The mastery experiences allowed their psychological traits to be mainly positive and gave the teachers opportunities to relieve their anxiety before the first year of teaching.

Sage and Mary had a different experience. Participants did not have a mastery experience that was set up by their teaching program. Mary did not have a mastery experience at all, stating “I strictly watched my friend teach for 30 hours, I wasn’t allowed to help or practice.” Mary further felt the hindrance this had on her first-year teaching. She showed emotions of not feeling ready. She was “overwhelmed,” and anxious. Sage had similar feelings except she was able to practice with her previous profession. Sage leaned on teaching experience she gained while she was a

paraprofessional. However, as Sage described, “being a paraprofessional did not prepare me. I was in the class for a little and then working with small groups.” She further described never seeing the class from start to finish and never fully teaching a lesson. Sage also learned a lot into her negative emotions. During her interview, she consistently stated how she was tired, anxious, overwhelmed, and overall burned out. Her lack of a structured mastery experience pushed her to use another source of efficacy, psychological traits.

The participants’ experiences were expressed in the research regarding the powerfulness of mastery experiences and the negative effects emotional and psychological traits have on teachers (Arslan, 2019; Bandura, 1997; Jorissen, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Mastery experiences is found to be the most powerful of the sources for teaching efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Arslan (2019) argued this point through stating that psychological traits were also one of the most powerful sources. This was demonstrated in this study. Participants either relied on their emotional states or their mastery experience to most powerfully effect their self-efficacy. Just as the research shows, feelings of anxiety and high levels of stress decayed teaching self-efficacy, while joy and pleasure fostered a high sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). This Problem of Practice further found that mastery experiences helped to increase the efficacy of two participants whose programs were intentional in this structured internship.

Finding Two

The second finding of this Problem of Practice reads structured clinical internship that included mentoring increased self-efficacy. Gabby and Torey received preservice teacher training through coursework and a structured mentoring program. Their clinical

internship was with teachers who were trained and worked with their alternative certification program. Participants described their mentor teachers as strong teachers who “created relationships with students” and “allowed me to teach and learn from mistakes.” This structured clinical internship successfully fostered the efficacy of both Gabby and Torey. Clinical experiences are known to help improve teachers’ self-efficacy through applying their coursework and reducing anxiety when first entering their classroom (Flores, 2015; Peeble & Mendaglio, 2014; Singh, 2017). Torey and Gabby portrayed reduced anxiety when entering the classroom compared to the other two participants. Both Mary and Sage did not have a structured clinical internship or, for that matter, any at all. They underwent a program in which they were told to seek out observation hours and if they could find a mentor, that would be helpful. They showed the signs of anxiety and stress within the first year of teaching. Their lack of having a relationship with a mentor hindered their self-efficacy. Research has agreed with this idea of lack of mentorship hindering teachers’ efficacy. Garza and Harter (2016) suggested that teacher programs should have mentoring experiences that span longer periods. This would help to develop the mentoring relationship. Teachers who had the mentoring experience within their preservice teacher were more likely to overcome hardships and stress during the first years of teaching. This was true of the participants in this Problem of Practice. Torey and Gabby showed positive emotions toward teaching throughout the interviews, observations, and sentence stems. Mary and Sage showed signs of anxiety, stress, and consistently mentioned being overwhelmed. The structure of clinical internships helped to combat these feelings for Torey and Gabby.

Finding Three

Finding three of this Problem of Practice details culturally relevant pedagogy helped to increase self-efficacy within the first year of teaching at a low-income urban school. Three of the four participants mentioned receiving diversity training. Gabby and Torey described taking classes that were geared toward teaching diverse groups of students and being able to implement this coursework into actual lessons. Mary analyzed taking courses that centered around different family structures and modules pertaining to diversity in the classroom. Mary was the only participant who notated not receiving any training in diversity. CRP was explicitly taught to two of the four participants. Torey and Gabby both described the term CRP to me and detailed how they used CRP in their first year of teaching. They also portrayed how this fed into their high sense of efficacy. Research has demonstrated that pairing CRP with clinical internship contributes to teacher preparation program effectiveness. This is especially true within low-income urban environments (Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). Torey and Gabby's programs purposefully integrated CRP and clinical internship to ensure the success of their preservice teachers. This factor helped to foster their self-efficacy in teaching. Teachers' classroom experience is also dependent on their ability to teach cultural competencies in terms of social justice and educational equities through the classroom experience (Sutcher et al., 2016). Two of the programs successful allowed for this to happen during preservice, further enhancing the teacher's self-efficacy in the classroom.

Summary of the findings. This section discussed the findings of this Problem of practice, particularly as they pertain to the literature. Each finding was compared to the literature that has been illuminated and compared to the current study. This study's

findings aligned with the literature in that clinical practice and CRP are imperative components of ACPs. These components ensure growth in self-efficacy and help teachers to maintain a high sense of self-efficacy within their first year of teaching. This Problem of practice also found that mastery experiences is a powerful source of efficacy. However, the lack of mastery experiences allowed participants to foster psychological traits as the strongest efficacy source. A lack of mastery experience led to negative psychological traits and an overall low sense of self-efficacy. The next section discusses the implications this study has on professional programs and practices.

Implications

The findings of this Problem of Practice provided several implications for school leaders, and alternative certification program leaders. Following a discussion of each of the implications, I provide recommendations for school leadership and ACPs.

The following are implications from this research:

- For school leaders
 - School leaders need to be aware of the programs from which brand-new teachers are coming. They need to understand the background and the needs of teachers upon hiring them.
 - School leaders need to create atmospheres and cultures in which all teachers can thrive through professional development, trainings, and overall culture.
 - New teachers begin with a multitude of knowledge and backgrounds, understanding their training can help the leaders to foster or build efficacy.
 - All new teachers should be paired with a mentor on their campus so that they can feel supported and have someone to model ideas and teaching around.
 - Observations to provide friendly feedback is imperative.

- For ACPs
 - CRP is imperative for all teachers to understand and know how to implement.

Clinical internship results in power training for teachers. Building in structured opportunities for clinical experience should be a goal of each program.

 - Blended programs that allow teachers to connect theory to practice in their training is important.
- First Year Teachers
 - Seek out district training that your alternative program lacked
 - Find mentors on campus who you feel can support your growth

School leaders. School leaders are the first people to hire and train a brand-new teacher. The culture of the school, the trainings, and professional developments is based upon who school leadership hires and the culture they portray from the first day of school. School leadership then must understand the importance of training and hiring teachers. With ACPs growing in number, school leadership must ensure they understand the teachers who are hiring (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Each alternative certification program is different, and some teachers are entering the profession with little to no experience in a classroom. Teachers are relying on their psychological traits when there is a lack of mastery experience. School leadership must foster the self-efficacy and help train teachers into confident classroom educators. One way to do this is through building professional development experiences that are differentiated for teachers. Professional development that meets the needs of every teacher on campus allows for each teacher to foster an individual sense of efficacy and develop adequate skills to teach students in diverse classrooms.

Creating differentiated opportunities for professional development is only possible if the school leader creates a culture of community and belonging. School culture can greatly impact an educator's willingness to stay in the first five years. It is the school leaders' job to ensure that safety, trust, and growth are tenets of their campus. Each educator presents with different training, and school leaders should know those trainings to foster growth in areas of weaknesses in order to best create a community culture on campus.

Alternative certification programs. As the number of ACPs grow, teachers continue to enter the profession with varying levels of preparedness. Teacher preparation programs must follow the CAEP guidelines; however, they also must ensure that new teachers are prepared to teach in any school they enter. CRP and clinical internship are two components that have proven capabilities to create teachers who feel more confident and prepared. Multiple studies have supported that essential components that contribute to the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in low-income communities are clinical experiences and CRP (Singh, 2017; Welsh & Schaffer, 2017). This study further noted that with the analysis and comparison of the four participants. Darling-Hammond seems to agree with this by offering that training for teachers should connect theory to practice, and teachers must be able to understand the needs of their students. ACPs have the ability to train teachers quickly, but that should not mean they are lessening the rigor of the program. Through the inclusion of clinical internship and CRP, ACPs foster teacher preparation spaces to ensure teachers are prepared to teach diverse groups of students in the first year of teaching.

First year teachers. This study found that first year teachers are impacted by the components of their alternative certification program. In order for teachers to be successful in their first years of teaching, it is beneficial for the teacher to seek out mentoring opportunities. Teachers should seek out mentors within the same subject and grade level, if possible, and observe them teach on multiple occasions. They should also look for professional development opportunities within their district to help them fill the gaps missing in their certification training programs. First year teachers must be aware of their alternative certification program training and advocate for themselves in order to be the best teachers possible.

Summary and Conclusion

Teacher training is not only one of the most demanding trainings but the main proponent of students' growth and ability to achieve and learn in school (Boyd et al., 2007; Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). This Problem of Practice investigated specific alternative certification programs and the components within each program. Specifically, this study examined the effect ACPs had on first-year teachers' sense of self-efficacy. This chapter analyzed all of the data from each participant in multiple ways. Using Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, each participant's story was told, and emergent themes based on the research questions emerged. The cross-case analysis and emergent themes led to the findings, which noted that a lack of mastery experiences in ACPs leads participants to depend on psychological traits for self-efficacy in the first year of teaching, structured clinical internship that included mentoring increased self-efficacy, and CRP helped to increase self-efficacy within the first year of teaching at a low-income urban school. These findings helped to formulate implications for stakeholders, such as

school leaders, ACPs, and first-year educators. The final chapter of this Problem of Practice demonstrates how I plan to distribute the findings and provide an executive summary.

CHAPTER FIVE

Distribution of Findings

Executive Summary

Burn-out and stress affect teachers all over the nation. With recent changes to the public education system and the growing attrition rates of teachers, alternative certification programs have become a popular avenue to place more certified teachers in the nation's schools. Public school teachers are overworked, underpaid, and underprepared to teach in the nation's lowest income schools. Stress, anxiety, and the feeling of being overwhelmed remain constant feelings among many public educators. Thus, many teachers choose to leave the profession due to their inability to cope with these emotions (Ravitch, 2020). These feelings of self-deprivation and low sense of self-efficacy relate to the recent attrition rates in the nation's public schools. Nearly 25% of teachers in inner-city schools leave the teaching profession after their third year (Sutcher et al., 2016). One factor that leads to teacher attrition is a low self-efficacy in teaching. Herman et al. (2017) shed light on the impact of student achievement when teachers have such low self-efficacy. Teachers' self-efficacy is one cause of their encountered stress. Teacher preparation programs help to either foster or hinder the self-efficacy of teachers (Arslan, 2019). Due to the shortage and the mobility rate of teachers, alternative certification programs have experienced a rise in enrollment. Unfortunately, the self-efficacy of alternatively certified teachers is often less than desirable. There are studies that explore and compare the effects of preparation on stress and burn out, as well as studies that explore the effects of the financial burden teacher turnover creates for

districts. However, there is a gap in the literature of the specific components that impact teachers' self-efficacy within their first year of teaching after completing an alternative certification program. This Problem of Practice investigates the alternative certification program components that most impact a teacher's self-efficacy within the first year of teaching. Utilizing Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy as the theoretical framework, this Problem of Practice explores four alternative programs' components and their effects of first-year teachers' self-efficacy to teach during their first year of teaching.

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data collection and analysis procedures for this Problem of Practice employed a qualitative multiple case study design. It was important to hear the participants' stories through their own words and shed light on how they perceive their self-efficacy in the classroom during their first year of teaching. The participants for this study were four first-year teachers who completed, or were enrolled, in an alternative certification program. None of the participants were certified through a traditional college preparation program. Two of the participants were enrolled in their alternative program and on a probationary certificate to teach. The other two participants completed their entire alternative certification program before the first year of teaching and were actually in their first official year as certified teachers. Each participant participated in an interview, completed written open-ended sentence stems, and I observed each of them three times in the classroom while they taught. The interviews took place at the end of the first semester of the 2020–2021 school year and I conducted each of the interviews through a recorded Zoom platform. The open-ended sentence stems helped to inform the interview questions, which I collected at the end of the study.

Data collection and data analysis took place concurrently. As the data were being collected, I coded each of the items according to the theoretical framework, which included mastery experiences, verbal persuasions, vicarious experiences, and psychological traits. Bandura's (1997) sources of efficacy helped to guide the analysis procedures. Each participant's data were first coded through the four sources of mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and psychological traits, which are all listed as major tenets in Bandura's framework. Through Bandura's four sources of efficacy, the major components of their alternative certification program were identified. Next, each participant's overall sense of efficacy was coded, and themes were compared across cases. All of the data from each participant's sources of efficacy, components of their programs, and overall sense of efficacy were compared and summarized to answer the central research questions and sub questions at the heart of this study. Emerging themes compared to the literature were then discussed and major findings emerged.

Summary of Key Findings

Data from this qualitative study were collected to answer the central research question and three sub questions. The central research question includes; In what ways do components of alternative teacher preparation programs impact the candidate's self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools? This central research question was followed by three sub questions: What aspects of alternative certification program helped to increase the teachers' self-efficacy, In what ways did relationships or lack of relationships with a mentor teacher impact teachers' feeling of success, How is culturally relevant pedagogy, and clinical internship represented throughout the teachers'

alternative certification experience? The collection of data through open ended sentence stems, interview and observations yielded the following findings.

Finding one—lack of mastery experiences in ACP lead participants to depend on psychological traits for self-efficacy in the first year of teaching. The first finding sheds light on the lack of mastery experience in alternative certification programs. This absence led participants to rely heavily on their psychological traits as their primary source of efficacy. Mastery experiences were described as the participants' successful completion of a task, similar to teaching. In many of the participants' stories, this related to their clinical experience, or student teaching component, of their alternative certification program. The two participants who did not have this component relied on their emotional traits to guide their efficacy within the first year. For these two participants, their emotions were more negative in nature, and they often brought up feelings of overwhelming stress and anxiety. Their emotions were more negative, in general, when compared to the two participants who had a clinical internship. The two participants who did have mastery experiences built into their program through clinical experiences relay more positive feelings in this element of self-efficacy. Their reliance on this mastery experience created positive emotions and this helped to increase their self-efficacy in the classroom.

Finding two—structured clinical internship that included mentoring increased self-efficacy. The second major finding was the impact on mentoring. Findings indicate that structured clinical internships that included mentoring increased the self-efficacy of first year teachers. Only two of the participants reported having a student teaching, or

clinical, experience that was structured within their certification program. They were placed in a school with a mentor teacher and had multiple meetings on a regular basis with their mentors. This mentor experience was structured throughout the entire year. The other two participants did not have a formal, structured clinical internship within their alternative certification programs. Instead, securing these through resources of their own was the only option provided. The lack of mentorships negatively impacted their self-efficacy, as they did not receive the nurturing and coaching feedback that mentors within the other two participants' programs provided.

Finding three—CRP helped to increase self-efficacy within the first year of teaching at a low-income urban school. The third finding related to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). Again, two of the participants received intentional coursework that specifically contained guidelines and content on the inclusion of CRP in their alternative certification programs. This aspect helped the participants to understand the needs of their diverse student populations and feel confident in meeting the needs of such diverse classrooms during their first year of teaching. They described that the diversity training, paired with clinical internship, helped them put theory to practice and improved their self-efficacy in teaching, especially in regard to meeting the needs of diverse learners. The two participants who did not have this component reported learning more “on the job” and did not feel they were adequately meeting the needs of their diverse learners.

This section explored the key findings based on the data analysis. The next section provides informed recommendations based on the key findings. These recommendations include key stakeholders such as district leaders, campus administration, and alternative certification program leaders.

Informed Recommendations

All three of the key findings offer hope for leaders of districts and campuses, as well as alternative certification programs. These findings offer considerations on how to improve the self-efficacy of first-year teachers and decrease teacher attrition rates in the United States' public-school system. Through these recommendations, leaders can help first-year teachers feel prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds. These recommendations also offer hope to increase the self-efficacy of first-year teachers, which in turn, may have huge impacts on their academic success of the students they teach.

Recommendations for school districts and school administrators. Knowing the background of a teacher's preparation program should inform school leaders and district professionals on the needs of the teacher before beginning the school year. Many teachers are certified through ACPs that do not require clinical internships. Through the findings of this study, teacher's emotional states will be a strong source of efficacy, for teachers who did not complete a clinical internship during their ACP. Through social emotional training, and constant support, school leaders can help new teachers feel prepared. School leaders must also be intentional with the professional development they give new teachers. Knowing the background of the teachers can help school leaders and district leaders to differentiate professional development based on the inclusion of CRP, clinical internship, and the structure of the new teachers' alternative certification program

Recommendations for alternative certification programs. This Problem of Practice also provides recommendations to the alternative certification program leaders.

This study portrayed the importance of CRP and clinical internship in a structured environment. First-year teacher who encountered these key aspects felt more prepared to teach than those who did not have these components included in their programs. It is recommended that ACPs require teachers to complete a clinical internship that is structured so they feel more prepared to teach in their first year. The findings also help to recommend that ACPs include coursework on CRP. This coursework helps all participants and allows them to better understand the needs of their diverse student populations.

Findings Distribution Proposal

This section describes the findings and distribution proposal that I plan to use to disseminate the findings. First, this section describes the target audiences, then this section leads to the actual distribution plan. Each of the target audiences will follow a similar distribution plan.

Target Audience that Includes Proposed Distribution Methods and Materials

There are several groups of targeted audience that can benefit from the findings of this study. Each audience is identified below, and the proposed distribution methods are outlined. A brief description of distribution methods is also offered.

School district administrators and school leaders. One of the targeted audiences of the Problem of Practice is school and district leadership. The current district where I work is a low-income urban school district that serves over 80,000 students. With this number, the number of teachers who are alternatively certified is growing, and many teachers leave within the first three years. There are numerous alternative certification

programs in Texas, and teachers are completing these programs quicker than ever before, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. Distributing my findings to school and district leadership can help principals, executive directors, and assistant superintendents make informed decisions on the professional development needs of new teachers.

Alternative certification programs. Another key stakeholder is alternative certification programs in Texas. These programs are offered both in-person and virtually. Many programs currently partner with XYZ Independent School District and continually train teachers year after year. Distributing my findings to the alternative certification programs can help program leaders to add theory to practice and understand the self-efficacy needs of first year teachers.

Professional conference attendees. The last key stakeholder is professional conference attendees. Many school administrators, district administrators, first-year teachers and education professionals attend conferences for professional development needs. Distributing my findings at conferences will reach multiple professionals and address the need for more research on self-efficacy in teaching. Adequately trained, first-year teachers are imperative to the success of students, and through presenting these findings at a conference, I will be able to impact more teachers and administrations throughout Texas by drawing attention to the findings of this study.

Proposed distribution methods. I will present these findings at a professional presentation for the key stakeholders; district administration, school leaders, alternative certification program leaders, and professional conference attendees. At the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, I plan to present to my current school principal, the executive

director of my pyramid, as well as the chief of academic officer for XYZ ISD. I will present to this committee because it is my hope they will be able to improve professional development and understand their first-year teachers' needs. As a district that is changing neighborhood boundaries, there will be a great deal of movement between campuses and many new teachers will be entering into the district. My findings could be instrumental in helping the district ensure every student has a qualified teacher who has a high sense of self- efficacy.

In this presentation, I will define my research, findings, and recommendations for the school leaders. This presentation will be followed by a thirty-minute question and answer session. This presentation will also be able to be adapted to alternative certification program leaders, as well as conference attendees, depending on the audience.

The findings will be distributed through both the executive summary and a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint presentation will include each of the sections of this Problem of Practice. There is an introduction to the problem, a brief overview of the literature, the data collection, and analysis, as well as methodology of the study, key findings, emergent themes, and recommendations for the intended audience; school and district leadership, alternative certification programs, or conference attendees. This section described the proposed distribution plan and key stakeholders. Next, this chapter will conclude with a summary of the Problem of Practice.

Conclusion

Alternative certification programs continue to train teachers and place them in the many urban schools. The teaching profession continues to grow more complex as student populations become more diverse. Findings from this study indicate that alternative

certification programs that include clinical internship and courses related to culturally relevant pedagogy enhance teachers' self-efficacy throughout their first years of teaching. Teachers' emotional and psychological states are dependent on their mastery experiences before entering the classroom. This study adds to the wealth of literature on the importance and intentionality of alternative preparation programs that certify many of the nation's teachers. After all, every student in every classroom deserves a first-year teacher who has a high self-efficacy to teach.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent form

Baylor University
Ed.D Learning and Organizational Change

Consent Form for Research

PROTOCOL TITLE: A Qualitative Case Study Exploring the Relationship between Teachers' Pre-Service Alternative Certification Experience and Their Self-Efficacy in their First Year of Teaching

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Haley Jones

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to be part of a research study. This consent form will help you choose whether or not to participate in the study. Feel free to ask if anything is not clear in this consent form.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to understand the perception of first year teachers self-efficacy, specifically looking at the relationship between their alternative certification experience and self-efficacy in teaching.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in 1 interview, respond to a google form with sentence stems, and give permission to use teaching recordings for observations.

- 1 time in December: The participant will complete an interview, 1 hour
- 1 time in December 2020: The participant will respond to sentence stems, 30 minutes
- 1 time: The participant will give permission to use recording of teaching, 30 minutes

I would like to make a video recording of you during this study. Video recording is optional for this study. If you do not want to be recorded, you can still be in the study. You will indicate your decision at the end of this form

How long will I be in this study and how many people will be in the study?

Participation in this study will last from October 2020 to December 2020. About 4 participants, or will take part in this research study.

What are the risks of taking part in this research study?

We don't believe there are any risks from participating in this research.

Are there any benefits from being in this research study?

Although you will not directly benefit from being in this study, others might benefit because this study will help to further understand the relationship of mentors and resident teachers. Other cohorts might benefit from the research on the importance of the relationships and in turn helping their experience in the residency program.

How Will You Protect my Information?

A risk of taking part in this study is the possibility of a loss of confidentiality. Loss of confidentiality includes having your personal information shared with someone who is not on the study team and was not supposed to see or know about your information. The researcher plans to protect your confidentiality.

We will keep the records of this study confidential by keeping participants anonymity throughout the study. All original information regarding sentence stems, interviews and observations will be seen only by the researcher and stored in the researcher's computer. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your records.

The following people or groups may review your study records for purposes such as quality control or safety:

- Representatives of Baylor University and the BU Institutional Review Board

The results of this study may also be used for teaching, publications, or presentations at professional meetings. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by using a code number or pseudonym rather than your name or other identifying information.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or to withdraw at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you decide to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. You cannot withdraw information collected prior to your withdrawal.

If you are a Baylor student or faculty/staff member, you may choose not to be in the study or to stop being in the study before it is over at any time. This will not affect your grades or job status at Baylor University. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you take part in this research study.

Contact Information for the Study Team and Questions about the Research

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact:

Haley Jones
Phone: 317-374-8616
Email: haley_jones6@baylor.edu

Or

Leanne Howell
Email: Leanne_howell@baylor.edu

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the following:

Baylor University Institutional Review Board
Office of the Vice Provost for Research
Phone: 254-710-3708
Email: irb@baylor.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. We will give you a copy of this document for your records. We will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

Signature of Subject

Date

Optional Research

Consent to be Audio/video Recorded

I agree to be audio/video recorded.

YES _____ NO _____ Initials _____

Consent to Use Data for Future Research

I agree that my information may be shared with other researchers for future research studies that may be similar to this study or may be completely different. The information shared with other researchers will not include any information that can directly identify me. Researchers will not contact me for additional permission to use this information. *(Note: This separate consent is not necessary if you will only store and share deidentified data.)*

YES _____ NO _____ Initials _____

Consent to be Contacted for Participation in Future Research

I give the researchers permission to keep my contact information and to contact me for future research projects.

YES _____ NO _____ Initials _____

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

The following research questions were asked in a semi-structured interview. The following central question framed this body of research:

In what ways do components of teacher preparation programs impact the candidate's self-efficacy to teach in low-income urban schools?

The researcher also aimed to answer the following sub-questions to help deepen the understanding of program components and self-efficacy in teaching.

What aspects of the teacher preparation helped to increase the self-efficacy?
In what ways did relationships with
How is culturally relevant pedagogy, and clinical internship represented throughout the experience?

Interview Questions:

How confident are you in your teaching ability?
When have you felt successful in your teaching this year?
What factors played a role in your feelings of success or failure?
How did your teaching program affect your confidence in teaching?
How have you improved in culturally relevant pedagogy throughout the semester?
What relationship did you have with a mentor teacher?
On a scale of one to five how would you rate your confidence in teaching and why?
What is the most memorable course/ experience from your teaching program?
How do you think your teaching program prepared you to teach in low-income schools?
What is your definition of culturally relevant pedagogy? Were you taught about CRP in your teaching program?
What aspect of your teaching do you believe was the strongest when you began teaching? What is your strongest trait now?
If you had a mentor teacher, how do you think that person helped your confidence in teaching? If you did not, do you believe this could have been helpful?

APPENDIX C

IRB Email



Swindell, April

To: Jones, Haley; Cc: Howell, Leanne

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 2:57 PM

Hi Haley,

We would still classify this as a Non HSR determination due to the fact that the participant count is too small to generate generalizable findings. Please contact me if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

April

From: Jones, Haley <Haley_Jones6@baylor.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 2:35 PM
To: Swindell, April <April_Swindell@baylor.edu>
Cc: Howell, Leanne <Leanne_Howell@baylor.edu>
Subject: IRB change of study

Hi, April-

I am one of Dr. Howell's online EdD students. She asked that I reach out to you to send you a summary paragraph of how my dissertation study has changed due to Covid. The changes are very minor and still involve 4 participants in a qualitative study. Here is a summary of the changes: Due to the recent pandemic I have had to change my Problem of Practice research a little bit. My study will be exploring the impact that alternative certification programs have on first-year teachers self-efficacy. I will be conducting interviews, open-ended sentence stems, and observations of four first-year teachers at an elementary school in Fort Worth ISD. I will specifically be looking at what components most impact the teachers sense of self-efficacy during the first year. All of my participants completed an alternative certification teaching program in Texas.

Please let me know if you need any further information or have questions.

Sincerely,
Haley Jones

APPENDIX D

Open-Ended Sentence Stems

4/4/2021

Dissertation Research

Dissertation Research

1. First and Last Name

2. Name of teaching Program

3. Amount of time spent in a classroom through your teaching program.

Mark only one oval.

My teaching program didn't have a clinical internship or student teaching experience

1 semester

1 year

Other: _____

4. If other please explain

Open-ended sentence stems

Please answer as fully and honestly as possible.

5. I have felt successful in my class this year when...

6. I have felt un-successful in my class when...

- 7. During my teacher preparation program I felt I would be successful at teaching because...

- 8. An experience that has most effected my teaching this year is..

- 9. Looking at other lesson plans and teaching makes me feel...

10. When given feedback from administration or a coach I feel...

11. The emotions I feel when teaching and preparing to teach are...

12. My teacher preparation program made me feel confident to teach by...

- 13. The main components of my teacher preparation program that helped me feel prepared to teach this year were...

- 14. The most difficult part of being a first year teacher is..

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