ABSTRACT

The Impact of First Year Mentoring Experiences on the
Attrition Rates of Alternatively Certified Teachers

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School administrators across the State of Texas struggle each year to fill

classroom vacancies prior to the arrival of students. These administrators often find

themselves repeatedly filling the same vacancies that they filled the previous year.

Teachers cite many reasons for leaving their schools; two of the most common reasons

are lack of support and job dissatisfaction.

Largely as a result of teacher shortages, alternative certification programs have

become major producers of teachers in Texas. Individuals desiring to be teachers receive

a short orientation period, often during the summer, and are then certified to teach for the

coming school year. The teachers are required to periodically attend classes through their

certification program during the school year. Upon completion of the alternative

program requirements, the teacher is recommended for full certification as a teacher in

Texas.

This study evaluated the impact of mentoring on the attrition rates of alternatively

certified teachers. Two hundred twenty-five first year alternatively certified teachers who

were part of the Education Career Alternatives Program (ECAP) were given the survey.

Ninety-nine surveys were returned, of which 34 were not usable since these teachers were not being assigned a mentor teacher. Of the remaining 65 surveys, 54 were complete and usable surveys.

The alternatively certified teachers identified their mentoring programs as being high quality, with some differences based on teaching levels. The teachers also identified all 26 mentoring experiences as important, even though these same activities did not occur in all of the programs. This study found that nearly 72% of the variance in success could be attributed to the perceived quality of mentoring.

Teachers who stated that mentoring would play a role in their decision to return to their school for a second year rated their overall mentoring experiences higher than those teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision. This study suggests that quality mentoring, with the mentor identified as a key ingredient in the success of the program, can help to reduce the attrition rates that cripple schools each year.
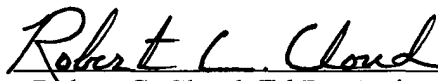
The Impact of First Year Mentoring Experiences on the
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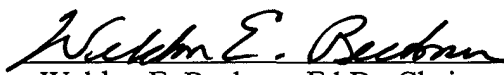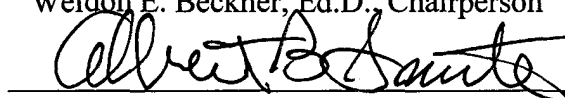Paul Laurier Uttley, B.S., M.Ed.

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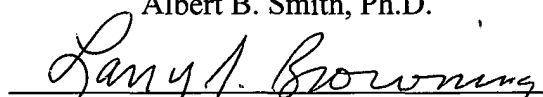
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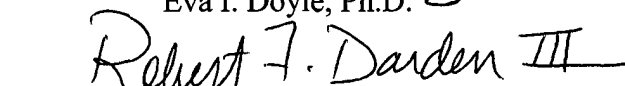
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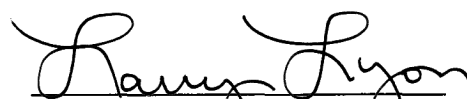
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DEDICATION

To my children

Logan, Libbie, and Lane

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

"Regardless of the research basis, it is clear that effective teachers have a profound influence on student achievement and ineffective teachers do not" (Marzano, 2003, p. 75). With the need for highly qualified teachers to serve an increasing student population, it is necessary to evaluate the practices that allow some teachers to stay in the classroom for a full career as opposed to those teachers that leave the profession in a relatively short time period (Halford, 1999).

Conceptual Framework

Teacher Attrition

School administrators across the nation often scramble to fill the same teacher vacancies year after year. The issue is that teachers often leave the profession after one year. The reasons for this exodus from the profession are numerous, although inadequate pay, overbearing workload, lack of support, and classroom management often cited as the main reasons. Many well intentioned individuals become disenfranchised when they make the conversion from being a student of education to being the instructor. This new world of teaching is filled with surprises with which these individuals are not prepared to deal. These surprises sometimes result in a level of frustration that manifests itself in these new teachers making a decision to leave the profession, resulting in the cycle starting over again.

Alternative Certification Programs

Alternative certification has grown out of a nationwide teacher shortage (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This certification route is viewed as a way to fast track individuals that already hold a degree into the teaching profession (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). In addition, a desire to have students receive instruction from non-certified individuals who hold a degree and have a strong content knowledge based on previous work experience has been a driving force in the development of alternative certification. It is widely held that these types of individuals do not have enough time or financial ability to go through a traditional preparation method. An equal contributing factor is a belief that time spent in methodology classes by traditionally trained teachers does not add to overall effectiveness of instruction in the classroom.

There is a concern that many of the teachers who enter teaching through alternative methods leave the profession at a higher rate than those who are traditionally trained (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Critics of alternative certification often claim that this proposed *solution* to the problem of teacher attrition rates actually produces the opposite result. Instead, alternatively certified teachers often receive little exposure to the classroom prior to being hired, sometimes resulting in these teachers being overwhelmed in a relatively short time.

Mentoring Programs

Many factors are considered when determining teacher effectiveness, such as (a) student performance on state assessments, (b) classroom management, (c) procedural routines, (d) an environment based on caring, and (e) sound pedagogical methods (Marzano, 2003). These factors take time to cultivate, and they are often achieved

through the ability to interact with other, more experienced teachers. Mentoring is a tool

used to provide a safety net to new teachers by experienced teachers. "The role of the

mentor is highly significant and requires specialized preparation for the mentor and

significant ongoing personal and time commitments on the part of the mentor" (Odell &

Huling, 1998, p. 70). Experienced teachers provide modeling, advice, and support to new

teachers as they travel through their first year. The goal of mentoring is often aimed at

offsetting the feeling of isolation that many new teachers inevitably experience in their

new profession (Monsour, 2000). The most productive forms of mentoring are programs

in which mentors stay abreast of the issues that the new teachers are facing, as opposed to

waiting on the new teachers to acknowledge that they are in need of assistance (Wong,

2004).

Statement of the Purpose

Alternative certification methods used to achieve a teaching certificate will

continue to be an option. In 1999, the state of Texas certified 17% of teachers through

alternative certification methods. By the year 2003, this number increased to 34%

(Herbert, 2004). Each spring school administrators face filling teacher vacancies; often

the same positions that were filled prior to the last academic year. School administrators

are on the front line of teacher attrition and must be cognizant of reasons related to this

issue. Therefore, it is imperative for building-level administrators, as well as district

administrators, to gain a deeper understanding of reasons for this apparently constant

turnover of teachers who were initially eager to enter the profession. Consequently, the

purpose of this study was to assess the different mentoring needs and experiences of first

year alternatively certified teachers and to determine if there are correlations with their decision to stay in the profession.

Statement of the Objectives

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following objectives guided the research.

1. To assess the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers as to how the mentoring activity plays a role in their success.

2. To assess first year alternatively certified teachers relative to personal perceptions of their needs.

3. To determine the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers relative to the importance of mentoring activities.

4. To compare responses of first year alternatively certified teachers, by teaching level, relative to how well their needs were met through their mentoring experience.

5. To compare the responses of teachers relative to the impact of mentoring on their decision to return to their original assignment for a second year.

The original research project was to include questions that compared the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers and their mentors. The original survey was sent to 259 teachers who had completed their first year of teaching. A total of 37 teachers responded to the survey after two mailings. Of the 37 respondents, a total of 10 responded that they were not provided a mentor and therefore did not qualify for the study.

The second group of teachers surveyed did not provide adequate information to allow surveys to be sent to their mentor teachers. Due to the inability to survey mentor teachers, changes were made to objectives one and two.

Significance of the Study

States are facing budget shortfalls that have a direct impact on education. Districts, administrators, and teachers have to make hard decisions about how to educate more students with less money. School administrators must find ways to improve student performance as they work in an educational landscape of national and state accountability, and this must start with recruiting and retaining highly dedicated and skilled teachers in all classrooms. Teacher effectiveness typically improves with experience. Since teacher attrition is costly and hinders overall school performance, there is a need to evaluate methods that will assist administrators in formulating effective strategies to retain a larger percentage of teachers.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study only included teachers from the Education Career Alternatives Program (ECAP) in Texas who were hired within the region and who were newly certified through the alternative certification program. The attrition rate was defined as teachers who did not return to their original school. Typically, attrition rates are calculated by identifying teachers who leave the profession, not just the school or district.

This study surveyed teachers who were in their last two months of their first year of teaching. The teachers were identified through ECAP and were made available at an evening meeting required as part of their certification program.

This study was completed in the Fort Worth area of Texas, including suburbs. The researcher realizes that variables other than mentoring contribute to the attrition rates of teachers, but this study did not attempt to consider those variables. Additionally, this study did not attempt to establish a cause and effect relationship between mentoring

practices and attrition rates. Instead, it only attempted to show a relationship in which one might infer cause and effect. Because this study looked at only one of many alternative certification programs across the state, it must be understood that the results may not be generalizable beyond the specific parameters of the study.

Definitions

1. *Alternative Certification* − Teacher training offered by education service centers, school districts and other entities, as well as colleges and universities, for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree (SBEC website, 2006).

2. *Attrition Rates* − For this study, percentages of teachers who leave their school after the initial year of placement. This may include teachers that leave the profession or possibly leave their current assignment and are employed in a neighboring school or school district.

3. *Education Career Alternatives Program (ECAP)* − A private alternative certification program approved by the State Board for Certification in Texas. This program is located in Fort Worth, Texas (ECAP website, 2006).

4. *Mentoring Programs* − Programs designed to assist new teachers to the profession. These programs vary in design with mentors often being teachers on the same campus as the teachers they serve, but districts frequently employ mentors who serve more than one campus.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Teacher Attrition

The need for certified teachers is front-page news across the United States. "Few educational problems have received more attention in recent times than the failure to ensure that elementary and secondary classrooms are all staffed with qualified teachers" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 4). The education community has been in turmoil over the crisis surrounding teacher attrition. "At an alarming rate that continues to surpass itself year after year, we see the urgent need for qualified teachers overtaking the number of available teachers" (Whiting & Klotz, 1999, p. 3). The Texas Center for Educational Research has shown that this is a critical factor in the shortage of teachers in Texas.

> Texas is facing a serious teacher shortage because of increasing student enrollment coupled with decreasing rates of teacher retention. In the 1998-99 school year, Texas school districts had to fill over 63,000 teaching positions. While approximately 5,700 positions were created to accommodate increasing student enrollment, most vacant positions resulted from existing teachers retiring (11,000) or leaving the profession (46,600). (Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000, p. 1)

There is a belief among many policy makers that if the educational community can produce more teachers, the attrition problem would cease to be an issue. "The dominant policy response to school staffing problems has been to attempt to augment the quantity of teacher supply" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 4). This issue has resulted in a national trend to provide better incentives and training to the teaching population. "In the last few years, more than 25 states have enacted legislation to improve teacher recruitment, education, certification, or professional development" (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 5).

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The problem does not seem to be producing teachers, as much as it is convincing certified teachers to actually make a profession out of the degree they have received. A study in Texas showed just how large of a problem this is:

> While 6% of alternatively certified teachers did not teach, 10-11% of teachers from undergraduate programs and 14-15% of teachers from post-baccalaureate programs did not enter the classroom in the first few years after being certified. These proportions represent significant numbers of teachers, 4,249 of teachers initially certified between 1998 and 2000. (Herbert, 2004, p. 3)

This issue is not isolated to Texas. Teachers across the country are leaving the profession as quickly as they are entering. "Contrary to popular perceptions, the United States has many more prepared and certified teachers than it has jobs for teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 12). Teachers are simply leaving the profession at an alarming rate.

> . . . when the final bell rings this school year and students across the nation head out the door for summer vacation, too many of their teachers will also be leaving the classroom-permanently. About 207,000 teachers, nearly 6 percent of the teaching workforce will not return to teaching next fall. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 1)

There are a multitude of reasons that teachers leave the profession. Often times it can be due to starting a family, a spouse being transferred, or leaving for higher pay outside of education. These issues can easily be looked at as the reason for the teacher shortage. This type of view can lead to a misunderstanding of the enormity of the problem.

> Although some teachers leave teaching from burnout after years of teaching, a significant percentage of teachers leave the profession within the first three years of employment. For the beginning Texas teacher cohort in school years 1993-94, 1994-95, and 1995-96, between 13 and 19 percent of these beginning teachers left the profession after the first year. By the end of the third year, between 35 and 43 percent had left. (Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000, p. 1)

Huling, Resta, and Rainwater (2001) explain that the teacher shortage is due to

multiple reasons. "The teacher shortage is being created by a 'triple whammy' of

increasing student enrollments, an aging teacher force transitioning from the classroom

into retirement, and a high teacher attrition rate, especially among novice teachers"

(p. 326-327). The first two contributing factors are not difficult to understand. The

attrition rate of novice teachers has been studied by researchers and educational leaders.

"Research indicates that many teachers leave the profession due to a lack of support and

mentoring, including teachers with 3-5 years teaching experience" (Chappelle &

Eubanks, 2001, p. 314). This constant exiting of teachers from the profession often times

leaves school administrators with a feeling of being on a sinking ship.

> Schools do not generally lack newly credentialed candidates to choose from;
> instead, they are rapidly losing the newly hired teachers they already have. In
> other words, schools are leaky buckets losing existing teachers faster than they
> can take in new ones. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 7)

The shortage of teachers has caused concern, at least on one front, due to the

accountability movement across the country. There are costs that are associated with

teacher attrition rates. "Teacher attrition disrupts program continuity and planning,

hinders student learning, and increases school districts' expenditures on recruiting and

hiring" (Shen & Palmer, 2005, p. 155). Academic performance of individual districts,

schools, and even classrooms is being scrutinized like no other time in history. Academic

performance, it is argued, can be tied directly back to the competence of the professional

in charge of the classroom. "Despite conventional wisdom that school inputs make little

difference in student learning, a growing body of research suggests that schools can make

a difference, and a substantial portion of that difference is attributable to teachers"

(Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 5). The idea that the teacher in the classroom makes a

difference in the academic performance of students is gaining support in the research.

"We finally recognize that the teacher is the single most important school-based

determinant of student learning" (Wise, 2001, p. 18). With overall test scores, along with

student subpopulations being considered the determining factor in student success,

schools must look at every possible avenue when considering how to meet the needs of

all learners. There are indications that the success of all students, even the at-risk

population, can be better served by qualified teachers. "Even low performing students

facing barriers to learning can achieve high standards if they are taught by highly

qualified professional teachers" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 6).

Alternative Certification

"School-age population increase, retirement, and attrition will continue to exert

pressures on districts to seek new teachers" (Turley & Nakai, 2000, p. 132). This need

has been the catalyst for non-traditional routes to certification as well as the reason the

certification options have continued to grow (Feistritzer, 1994; Huling, Resta, &

Rainwater, 2001; Ruckel, 2000). "Alternative education represents the changing face of

public education" (Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001, p. 314). Alternative certification is

rapidly becoming a major factor in the preparation of teachers. "This route appears to be

on track to become the primary source of new teachers in Texas within the next ten

years" (Herbert, 2004, p. 3). These programs vary in nature and definition, which causes

difficulty in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of alternative certification programs

(Holmes, 2001; Newman & Thomas, 1999). Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow

(2002) state,

> These programs vary from short summer programs that place candidates in
> teaching assignments with full responsibility for students after a few weeks of

training to those that offer 1- or 2-year post baccalaureate programs with ongoing support, integrated coursework, close mentoring, and supervision. (p. 287)

Chappelle and Eubanks (2001) define alternative certification as, ". . . a state-approved program that waives coursework in pedagogy. Teacher candidates generally hold non-education degree(s) in a specified area and desire to become a classroom teacher" (p. 312). The proponents of alternative certification are quick to point to the fact that not all traditional preparation methods are effective. "There are many models for ATC, and just as some university teacher education programs are better than others, the same may be said of routes to alternative certification" (Holmes, 2001, p. 328). Unlike other movements in education, this particular movement seems to have gained momentum.

Recurring interest in alternative certification programs seems to be rooted in three major issues: a need to address declining numbers of available teachers; a concern with the quality of individuals who do choose teaching as a career; and a desire on the part of the general public to allow entry into teaching by individuals perceived to have skills needed by the schools. (Bradshaw, 1998, p. 5)

Educators and researchers alike, regardless of their beliefs towards alternative certification, typically agree that it is not a movement that will disappear anytime soon. "Reforms in education seem to come and go at a rather rapid rate. One that appears not only to have 'staying power' but to be having a long-term effect is alternative teacher certification" (Feistritzer, 1994, p. 132). Universities are well aware of this trend, and some are participating in the alternative certification process, but this is not without controversy. "Alternative routes may be linked to the university, but they typically seek to fast-track or circumvent traditional university-based teacher education" (Turley & Nakai, 2000, p. 122).

There are, of course, some detractors to the alternative certification movement. "Rather than focus on getting and keeping well-prepared teachers, some states and

districts recruit untrained teachers or create short-term training programs that provide only a few weeks of preparation before candidates enter the classroom" (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 14). Martin and Shoho (2000) add to the argument for traditional training by stating, ". . . research suggests that the pedagogical knowledge is a necessary component for quality instruction" (p. 4).

The placing of teachers in classrooms after a short indoctrination period, often without any meaningful time in the classroom, is the direct opposite of another trend in education. Developments of professional development schools have started to make a presence in the teacher education community.

> Like the teaching hospital in the field of medicine, the PDS is designed to more fully integrate academic and clinical preparation for beginning teachers. Policymakers and educators recognize that beginning teachers and teacher candidates require more support than the truncated clinical experience of a four-year undergraduate program affords. (Wise, 2001, p. 19)

Another common complaint is that traditional teacher candidates are able to circumvent the typical route to certification and bypass the culminating student teaching experience. "AC offers different approaches to expand the pool of qualified teachers to include persons who might not otherwise be able to become teachers. AC should not be a shortcut, nor should it rely on inferior kinds of preparation" (McKibbin & Ray, 1994, p. 202).

Growth of Alternative Certification

Alternative certification has spread across the country. "It is estimated that more than 125,000 persons have been licensed through some form of alternative route to certification" (Holmes, 2001, p. 324). One major factor is the need for teachers in urban areas, areas that have, in the past, struggled to attract teachers. In traditional university-

based teacher education, a diverse teaching field is hard to come by, and alternative

certification serves to compensate for this. "AC populations are demonstrably more

diverse than TC populations" (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998, p. 166). "In Texas

and New Jersey, most alternatively certified teachers are both trained, and actually teach,

in urban areas. The greatest demand for new teachers across the nation is in large urban

areas" (Feistritzer, 1994, p. 135). Ruckel (2000) further emphasizes this trend.

> Human resource managers know the extra burden of training a teacher on the job
> and generally prefer hiring fully licensed teachers. The alternative candidates
> they seek, therefore, are those willing and able to take on difficult assignments or
> to teach in shortage content areas such as math, science, special education, and
> programs for English language learners. (p. 3)

The proponents of alternative certification often cite the advantage of second career

individuals bringing a sense of maturity to the profession (Martin & Shoho, 1999). "AC

programs help place in our nations' classrooms those prospective teachers who want to

put their energies directly into a job and learn by doing" (McKibbin & Ray, 1994,

p. 208). However, some educators believe that the problem with attracting second career

individuals is that there has not been an option available to them, in the past, which

would allow a simplified entrance into the teaching profession. "Traditional programs

delivered by SCDEs have worked relatively well for the populations for whom they were

originally designed, undergraduates and 5th-year teacher candidates, but have not been

particularly successful in meeting the needs of midcareer adults" (Huling, Resta, &

Rainwater, 2001, p. 328).

There is also a sense of competition for candidates. College and university

schools of education now have to compete for candidates that used to have no other

choices available to them. "Alternative certification programs understandably make

schools of education nervous. They crack the cartel and create competition for the

monopoly" (Finn & Madigan, 2001, p. 31).

     Another choice that potential teachers must face is the multitude of other options

available to them, most which typically pay more. Alternative certification proponents

argue that if routes to certification have too many hurdles involved candidates will simply

ignore teaching as a viable choice. "Today's college graduates have many career options

and opportunities. If the path into teaching is too burdensome or costly, they won't take

it" (Finn & Madigan, 2001, p. 30). Skipping the traditional student teaching experience

and going directly into the classroom has become an attractive option because the

teachers are the actual teacher of record and are paid as such (Turley & Nakai, 2000).

"While teacher education did not seem to be a viable course of study for many college

graduates during their undergraduate years, teaching has become a viable occupational

choice through alternative certification programs" (Bradshaw, 1998, p. 15).

     Another argument for alternative certification is that this avenue allows the best

individuals to be in the classroom. There is a belief that many qualified individuals are

kept out of the classroom simply because they do not have the paperwork that "qualifies"

them to teach. "If instead of erecting more barriers, we were to eliminate the hoops and

hurdles that discourage good candidates from entering the classroom, we would find

effective teachers in many places" (Finn & Madigan, 2001, p. 30). Proponents of

alternative certification view this certification not only as a route to gain entrance into the

profession, but also as a way to solve the teacher shortage crisis. "Routes to certification

that specifically attract non-traditional teacher candidates have the potential to curb the

crisis while bringing highly competent teachers into the classroom" (Bergeron, Larson,

Prest, Dumas-Hopper, & Wenhart, 2005, p. 61). Eliminating certification requirements will allow school principals the flexibility they need to improve instruction in the classroom, thus improving student performance in this day of accountability (Finn & Madigan, 2001). Shen (1997) in his research found that more alternatively trained teachers teaching math and science had their degrees in the same corresponding field when compared with the degrees of traditionally trained teachers.

"Investigation of the multiple pathways to teacher licensure is critical at this time when employment in teaching is so open" (Turley & Nakai, 2000, p. 124). Traditional certification proponents argue that this is exactly what is wrong with the certification process in this country. "If alternative certification is to be accepted as a legitimate method for increasing the pool of quality teachers, then the preparedness and performance of non-traditionally trained teachers should be comparable to traditionally trained student teachers" (Grable & Ogden, 1994, p. 471).

The belief among critics of alternative certification is that this "solution" to teacher shortages is actually worsening the situation. "States and districts that want a stable, competent teaching force need to figure out how to invest their training resources in more cost-effective preparation programs" (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 15). Many traditional teaching instruction supporters simply believe that potential teachers need to be exposed to the situations they will experience prior to entering the classroom. In short, ". . . measures to improve teacher education programs will do little to improve teacher quality if states allow schools to hire teachers without preparation, as more than 30 currently do"(Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002, p. 296). Traditional preparation allows potential teachers to understand the full complexities of the job. "In

addition to developing the curriculum, the teacher's role involves a myriad of tasks including, but not limited to, efficient management of the classroom as a whole" (Martin & Shoho, 2000, p. 3).

Support for Traditional Certification

Supporters of traditional certification suggest that alternative certification exasperates the actual problem it set out to solve; teacher shortages. In fact, ". . . various authors suggest contrary views on AC teacher retention, an important concern since many of these programs were created to address teacher shortages" (Sokal, Smith, & Mowat, 2002, p. 6). Shen (1997) found that fewer alternatively certified teachers planned on staying in the profession when compared to traditionally trained teachers. At least 15% of New York's alternatively certified teachers quit within the first two months of starting (Berry, 2001). Darling-Hammond (2001) concurs with this argument: "Among new teachers, those who enter with little teacher education and those who receive little mentoring leave most quickly, overwhelmed by complexities that they are poorly armed to meet" (p. 12). The statistics for TFA, a highly touted alternative certification program, suggest that attrition rates are a problem (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Of the TFA recruits that started teaching in 1990, 58% had quit prior to the third year of teaching. This is an attrition rate that is three times the national average for new teachers. Shen and Palmer (2005) argue that alternative certification predisposes individuals to leave the profession earlier than their traditional counterparts. "Generally speaking, those who enter teaching via emergency certificates or those with less stringent kinds of alternative certification, do not continue to teach as long as those who enter teaching via the traditional route of teacher education" (p. 155).

According to some observers, support seems to be the key, and some detractors of alternative certification argue that there is not a support system built into alternative certification programs.

> Teachers prepared in a single formal program of preparation feel better prepared than those who take a series of courses from different institutions, who in turn feel better prepared than those who enter through alternative programs that minimize preservice training and those who enter without prior experience or training. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002, p. 294-295)

An additional argument against alternative certification is related to the notion that anyone can teach a subject that is familiar to him or her.

> One of the great flaws of the "bright person myth" of teaching is that it presumes that anyone can teach what he or she knows to anyone else. However, people who have never studied teaching or learning often have a very difficult time understanding how to convey material that they themselves learned effortlessly and almost subconsciously. (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 171)

Another widely held opinion is the assumption that traditionally trained teachers are only teaching because they could not succeed in other occupations. Shen (1997) found that alternatively certified teachers actually had less academic success than their traditionally trained counterparts. Teachers must have more than content knowledge; they must be able to deliver the material in a meaningful manner in which students will engage the learning process (McKibbin & Ray, 1994).

> . . . studies of teachers admitted with less than full preparation find that recruits tend to be less satisfied with their training and have greater difficulties planning curriculum, teaching, managing the classroom, and diagnosing students' learning needs. They are less able to adapt their instruction to promote student learning and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming the students if their teaching is not effective. (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 167)

"What began as a temporary means to address teacher shortages in a variety of areas has become a viable—and for many a preferable—option to traditional teacher preparation programs" (Martin & Shoho, 1999, p. 8). This is to suggest that Turley and Nakai (2000)

are correct when they state that, "Alternative routes to teaching promises to be a future of the national teacher preparation landscape for the foreseeable future" (p. 132). How much of a role these programs will play in the certification of teachers is unclear.

> We are not against these courses, what we are against is the design and implementation of such programs that put novices into shark infested waters with the expectation that they will be able to navigate and survive without harming either the students or themselves. (Whiting & Klotz, 1999, p. 7)

What is clear is that both traditional and alternative certification avenues are reality in today's educational landscape.

> What is important is not necessarily to question whether alternative certification as a concept is good or bad but rather whether the alternative certification programs being implemented or proposed in your state or school district are insufficient in adequately preparing applicants to teach in today's classroom. (Chappelle & Eubanks, 2001, p. 315)

There appears to be a need to look at individual programs, whether alternative or traditional, to determine whether or not they are successful in preparing teachers (Newman & Thomas, 1999).

Mentoring

Regardless of the entry method into the teaching field, it is important to keep qualified teachers in the classroom once they have joined the teaching ranks. "If every child is to have equal access to teachers who are truly highly qualified, the odds must be dramatically improved so that that teachers will stay in the profession long enough to become fully competent professionals" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 2). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has exerted unprecedented pressure on the educational community. "In today's environment of the No Child Left Behind Act and its requirement of high-stakes testing, there is a renewed sense of urgency to bring teachers

up to speed as quickly as possible" (Resta, 2006, pp. 103-104). The bottom line, based

on NCLB, is that students must achieve academic success in the classrooms that they

attend. It appears the success of students can be linked back to the quality of teachers

that have taught them.

> There is growing consensus that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of the teacher. Therefore, if the national goal of providing an equitable education to children across this nation is to be met, it is critical that efforts be concentrated on developing and retaining high-quality teachers in every community and at every grade level. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 1)

> "Teacher turnover threatens school reform which requires years of sustained staff

effort. And even for teachers who remain in the classroom, difficulties in the formative

professional years can have a continuing negative effect" (Halford, 1999, p. 14). While

this effort is certainly not new, it does have a renewed sense of urgency due to the new

federal guidelines. "By the 2005-06 school year, all teachers must be highly qualified.

And no district that has managed to fill its classrooms with highly qualified teachers

wants to lose them and begin the process again" (Colgan, 2004, p. 23).

> Beginning-teacher induction has broad-based support. High attrition rates during the early years of teaching and serious teacher shortages make programs that improve teacher retention attractive. Stories about the trials and tribulations of new teachers lend weight to the idea of beginning-teacher support. The realization that new teachers, even those with good preservice preparation, are still learning to teach underscores the need for ongoing professional development. Finally, raised expectations for student achievement, combined with concerns about quality assurance, highlight the need to link beginning-teacher assistance with standards-based assessments. (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, & Yusko, 1999, p. 3)

> Keeping teachers, especially those new to the profession, has become increasingly

difficult. "Beginning teachers are particularly vulnerable, because they are more likely to

be assigned low-performing students than their more experienced colleagues" (Alliance

for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 1). Typically, new teachers arrive to their new

profession full of energy and excitement. This euphoria is often erased due to the work

environment in which they find themselves.

> We know, as rational human beings and former novices ourselves, that new
> teachers take more time to do what we may consider the routine activities of
> teaching. They spend more hours planning units and lessons, grading papers, and
> reflecting on their successes and failures in the classroom. It takes them longer to
> produce effective handouts and tests, longer to accumulate activities and
> resources for use in instruction, and longer to design and implement effective
> class records and management systems that experienced teachers whip out in no
> time. New teachers often find themselves overwhelmed with work, both at school
> and at home. Yet we continue to ask them to do all of the "extras" that veterans
> do. (Renard, 2003, p. 63)

The key component in achieving this goal appears to be support, especially in the

first year. "Support connotes a responsive stance toward beginning teachers whose

problems, needs, and concerns justify the existence of mentor teachers and other support

providers" (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999, p. 4). This support is essential to the success of

the first year teacher.

> Beginning teachers are routinely assigned the most difficult classrooms, full of
> low performing students at risk of falling behind or dropping out. Often they are
> given little if any professional support, feedback, or demonstration of what it
> takes to help their students achieve. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004,
> p. 8)

Need for First Year Mentoring

First year teachers often are not prepared for their first teaching assignment. "The

first solo year can leave a new teacher feeling isolated and unequipped to handle the

many unexpected issues that arise inside and outside the classroom" (Monsour, 2000, p.

62). This point is further emphasized by Ingersoll and Smith (2004). "Indeed, critics

have long assailed teaching as an occupation that 'cannibalize its young' and in which the

initiation of new teachers is akin to a sink or swim, trial by fire, or boot camp experience"

(p. 28). Renard (2003) further illustrates this point. "The seasoned veterans of the

classroom will tell you horror stories about how overwhelming and awful their first years

were. They will tell you about getting the worst teaching assignments, the worst

students, and the worst classrooms and supplies" (p. 63).

New teachers often arrive to the profession inadequately prepared for the varied

tasks that they will be asked to fulfill. Parent conferences, school policies and

procedures, classroom management, instructional techniques, district and campus

initiatives, and meeting the needs of special needs students are a sample of what new

teachers must master in a relatively quick manner. "Charged with the same

responsibilities as their more experienced colleagues, new teachers are expected to

perform and be effective. Yet most aspects of the situation are unfamiliar-the students,

the curriculum, the community, and the local policies and procedures" (Feiman-Nemser

et al., 1999, p. 4).

This situation seems to be magnified for alternatively certified teachers.

"Although many mid-career changers have extensive experience working in

bureaucracies, they have limited patience with bureaucratic procedures and paperwork

that they perceive as barriers to their work with students" (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater,

2001, p. 62). This philosophy, placing teachers in the same position relative to their

experienced counterparts, is a fatal flaw in the education field. Ignoring that the new

teacher has an intense learning curve in the first year, and specifically the first semester,

places the new hire between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The teacher is simply

put in a situation in which it will be hard to succeed. "Beginning teachers have two jobs

to do-they have to teach and they have to learn to teach. On their own, beginning teachers often develop 'safe' practices that enable them to survive" (Feiman-Nemser et al., pp. 6-7). These "safe" practices are often not the "best" practices that experienced teachers implement in their classrooms. Often the new teacher will revert back to the practices that he/she knows best; the practices that they witnessed their teachers utilize as they matriculated through the school system as students. They simply pull from their past experiences when they are put in a position where they have no other choices. A strong mentoring program can help the new teacher overcome these obstacles.

One issue is that while first year teachers need assistance, they rarely admit to this need in fear of appearing ill prepared. "First year teachers generally do not seek help from colleagues except indirectly through social conversations" (David, 2000, p. 134). Wong (2004) states that this is a systemic problem in education:

> For the most part, education has failed to recognize what other industries have known almost from the start: formalized sustained training matters. Without carefully thought out professional development programs, school districts will not have effective teachers who can produce student achievement results. (p. 47)

The type of training teachers receive prior to being in a classroom is often problematic. The training tends to be generic, while the real world of teaching is much more specific. "New teachers are somewhat prepared for every classroom-and that, regrettably, is not sufficient preparation for success in today's accountability climate" (Lasley, Bainbridge, & Berry, 2002, p. 18).

Mentoring programs have become a focus of school efforts in providing guidance to new teachers and many applicants, through the advice of their preparation programs, seek schools that provide mentoring programs. "During the past 20 years teacher

mentoring programs have become the dominant form of teacher induction; indeed, the

two terms are currently often used interchangeably" (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004, p. 29).

Mentoring programs have become a necessity. Based on the fact that new

teachers routinely receive some of the worst placements in schools and classrooms, the

demands of the job for a new teacher can be overwhelming. "Placing new teachers in the

most challenging classrooms without comprehensive induction-and expecting them to

perform like experienced teachers-is like putting newly licensed drivers in the top heat of

a NASCAR race" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 2). The driving force

behind the mentoring movement appears to be an effort to keep qualified teachers in the

schools.

> In recent years there has been a growth in support, guidance, and orientation
> programs-collectively known as induction-for beginning elementary and
> secondary teachers during the transition into their first teaching jobs. While
> particulars of such programs vary widely, they are generally intended to increase
> the confidence and effectiveness of new teachers, and thus to stem the high levels
> of attrition among beginning teachers, which estimates place as high as 40-50%
> within the first five years. (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004, p. 1)

Yet, a focus on this area has not necessarily led to the desired improvements.

Simply providing a new teacher with a mentor does not provide the magical solution to

teacher dissatisfaction. Wong (2004) concurs: "The problem with many school districts

is that their mentors are not part of a mentoring program, much less an induction

program. The mentor is simply a veteran teacher assigned by a principal" (p. 43).

The role of the mentor is an often overlooked critical factor in the war of attrition.

"Developing high quality mentors is imperative as high quality mentoring is a prime

factor in teacher retention" (Johnson & Reiman, 2006, p. 146). While new teachers are in

need of support, there is a larger need to know if they are being effective in the area of

classroom instruction. "Some mentors meet with new teachers regularly for encouragement but never observe or evaluate them in the classroom. Emotional support is important for growing professionals, but it is a pale substitute for rigorous guidance about how to teach" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 12).

"The roles and responsibilities undertaken by the mentor vary from program to program. In all cases, however, it is the mentors who can play an essential role in helping the beginning teacher make the transition to the profession" (Hughes, 2006, p. 260). The structure of a mentoring program is instrumental in the success of the mentoring program. A school may have a qualified mentor working with new teachers, but if the program is set up incorrectly, it can be as ineffective as not having a mentoring program at all. "Effective mentoring programs provide training to the mentor, share a common focus, and have an established structure and accountability" (Hayes, 2006, p. 216). Many variables, such as time, how many teachers a mentor serves, and who is required to have a mentor are issues that must be addressed in a mentoring program.

> The overall objective of teacher mentoring programs is to provide newcomers with a local guide, but the particulars in regard to character and content of these programs themselves vary. Duration and intensity are one set of variables; mentoring programs can vary from a single meeting between mentor and mentee at the beginning of a school year, to a highly structured program involving frequent meetings over a couple of years between mentors and mentees who are provided with release time from their normal teaching schedules. (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004, p. 3)

It appears that the principal is often the key in determining the effectiveness of a mentoring program. "From recruiting mentors and matching them to protégés to helping with schedules and providing release time, a principal's actions and attitudes can either hinder or enhance mentoring programs" (Monsour, 2000, p. 62). The decision to provide,

or not provide a system of support to new teachers has a direct impact on the students in the classroom.

> Once "effective" teachers are identified and hired, administrators must provide for monitoring, mentoring, and effective professional development. Such support places added demands on already overburdened administrators. If teachers are the most important assets a school possesses for fostering student achievement, then these changes are essential. (Lasley et al., 2002, p. 22)

Summary of Mentoring

"The first year of teaching is full of extraordinary challenges, and a Darwinist ideology only makes it more likely that novices will leave the field"(Millinger, 2004, p. 69). Mentoring, if done correctly can lead to new teachers feeling supported and less overwhelmed. The learning curve that a new teacher goes through between graduation in May and being hired in August is incredible. "Most researchers and education experts agree that, in general, new teachers need from three to seven years in the field to reach proficiency and maximize their students' performance" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 2). Mentoring can play an instrumental part in the success of new teachers, but only if it is an inclusive program. The key is that mentoring must be viewed as a multi-dimensional support program for new teachers.

> Mentors support and coach novice teachers in several ways. They spend time observing new teachers in the classroom, offering them feedback, demonstrating effective teaching methods, assisting with lesson plans, and helping teachers analyze student work and achievement data. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, p. 13)

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design

This study took place in the Fort Worth metropolitan area of Texas and included only alternatively certified teachers that participated in the ECAP program and were new to the teaching profession in the 2005-06 school year. Survey research was utilized to identify teacher needs and methods by which mentoring programs may contribute to lowering the attrition rates of first year alternatively certified teachers. The results were analyzed to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to assess the different mentoring needs and experiences of first year alternatively certified teachers and to determine if there are correlations with their decision to stay in the profession. Specific questions related to this are:

1. What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers as to how the mentoring activity plays a role in their success?

2. What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers relative to the mentoring experiences meeting their needs?

3. How important did first year alternatively certified teachers rate different components of common mentoring programs?

4. How did the responses differ among teaching levels in relation to how well the mentoring experiences met the needs of the first year alternatively certified teachers?

5. How did the responses of teachers who stated that mentoring impacted their decision to return for their second year differ from those who stated that mentoring did not impact their decision to return?

Instruments Used in Data Collection

This study utilized a survey that was developed by Dr. Rob Danin (1998) for his research entitled: *Teachers' Perceptions of Induction Programs Developed in Response to a State Mandate: A Study of Provisionally Licensed Colorado Teachers.* Dr. Danin was contacted to ask permission to use his survey. His permission along with his letter which included the survey can be found in Appendix A. The original author pulled ideas from previously studied surveys to construct the survey. After construction of the survey, experts from the field of education were asked to review whether or not the questions were valid. The experts consisted of certified teachers that had recently completed their mentor experience.

There is an assumption that because the above survey was previously validated the validity will remain even though there were modifications to the original survey instrument. The author of this study did not do any additional validation.

Sections A and B of the survey consists of two questions. The participants needed to have been first year alternatively certified teachers in the 2005-06 school year and have participated in a mentoring program.

Section C of the survey asked questions related to Research Question 1. The questions in this section addressed how well the mentoring program prepared the new

teachers to deal with a variety of common issues. A second part of this section asked the teachers to rate their current level of proficiency. Participants answered this section utilizing a Likert scale.

Section D of the survey addressed Research Question 3. Participants were asked to assign a degree of importance to a variety of teacher issues. Additionally, the participants were to indicate whether or not assistance in these areas was provided through their mentoring program. A Likert scale along with a nominal response was needed in this section.

Section E of the survey addressed Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. The survey questions addressed different components of the mentoring activity. The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not these issues were considered as being needed in a mentoring activity, as well as if they were instrumental in their success during the first year teaching experience. This section required the respondents to check a yes or no answer.

Section F of the survey consisted of three questions related to Research Questions 1 and 2. The first question asked the respondents to assess their overall satisfaction with their mentoring program experience through a Likert scale response. The second question asked an open-ended question relating to what they would have liked to have seen done differently related to their mentoring program. The third question asked if the mentoring program played a role in the participants' decision related to returning for a second year in their original assignment.

Section G consisted of demographic information of the participants to help answer Research Question 4. Additionally, information related to the size of the school

that the participants taught in during their first year was collected. The survey (Appendix

B) along with a matrix (Appendix C) have been placed are found in the appendices.

Data Analysis

The initial data collection was disaggregated by research question. Scores for

each question were tallied with the mean, median, and mode while the nominal responses

were tallied with a total number of responses. Results are shown in table format.

Summary

This chapter detailed the process of analyzing the relationship of mentoring to the

needs and attrition rates of alternatively certified teachers. The individual teachers were

employed as first year alternatively certified teachers during the 2005-06 school year in

the Fort Worth metropolitan area.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Findings

This chapter details the results of the data collected from the first year alternatively certified teachers that were new to the teaching profession during the 2005-06 school year. The results are reported by research question. A summary of the demographic information, along with the response rate of the survey, serves as the first part of the chapter, followed by the results section.

Two hundred twenty five first year alternatively certified teachers were given the survey. The teachers received the surveys as they entered a meeting that was a requirement of ECAP. Ninety-nine surveys were returned at the end of the meeting. Of the 99 surveys, 34 respondents stated they were not assigned a mentor. Of the remaining 65 surveys, 11 were missing partial information and were thrown out. This left 54 surveys that were used to compile the data and to answer the research questions.

The respondents ranged in age from 22 to 54 years of age with a mean age of 29.5 years old. Two respondents did not provide their age. Thirty-three respondents were female, while 21 respondents were male. The majority of respondents were White (N=31), followed by Mexican American (N=7) and African American (N=6). One respondent did not provide an ethnicity coding. The highest total number of teachers reported that they taught at an elementary school (N=21) followed by high school (N=17). Table 1 presents the demographic information of this study.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 investigated the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers as to how the mentoring activity played a role in their success. This section of the survey asked 16 questions that required a two-part response. The first part of the

Table 1

Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	52	22	53	29.54

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Gender				
Female	33	61.1	61.1	61.1
Male	21	38.9	38.9	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	
Ethnicity				
American Indian/Native American	1	1.9	1.9	1.9
Black/African American	6	11.1	11.3	13.2
White/Caucasian	31	57.4	58.5	71.7
Puerto Rican	3	5.6	5.7	77.4
Mexican American	7	13.0	13.2	90.6
Other Hispanic	5	9.3	9.4	100.0
Total	53	98.1	100.0	
Grade Level Taught				
Elementary	21	38.9	38.9	38.9
Middle School	8	14.8	14.8	53.7
Junior High	6	11.1	11.1	64.8
High School	17	31.5	31.5	96.3
Multiple Levels	2	3.7	3.7	100.0
Total	54	100.0	100.0	

question dealt with how well the teachers felt that the mentoring activities developed

different teaching skills. A Likert scale was utilized with a rating of one representing

poor and five representing excellent. The second part of this question asked the teachers

to rate their own current level of success with these teaching activities. A Likert scale

was also utilized with one representing *unsuccessful* and five representing *successful*.

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of each question on this section of the survey.

Table 2

Response Means and Standard Deviations

Question	Quality of Mentoring		Level of Success	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Planning instructional activities	3.85	1.035	4.11	.691
2. Keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks	3.83	.986	3.89	.691
3. Ending the lesson with a summary of review	3.57	1.109	3.61	1.089
4. Showing care for students	4.35	.872	4.63	.525
5. Avoiding use of punishment to motivate students	3.63	1.051	3.91	.830
6. Ability to manage discipline problems	3.89	1.022	4.00	.952
7. Ability to work with administrators	4.07	.988	4.43	.838
8. Degree of professional commitment	4.28	.878	4.54	.605
9. Effective interactions with parents	3.87	1.082	4.15	.998
10. Ability to effectively locate educational materials	4.02	.942	3.94	.856

(*table continues*)

Question	Quality of Mentoring		Level of Success	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. Ability to effectively manage educational materials	3.80	1.188	3.93	1.061
12. Degree of oral/written communication with staff	3.98	1.055	4.19	.892
13. Degree of oral/written communication with parents	3.87	1.100	4.04	1.027
14. Development of short-term goals	3.74	1.085	4.02	.835
15. Development of long-term goals	3.91	.937	3.94	.834
16. Developing effective methods for record keeping	3.65	1.152	3.78	.945

Additionally, a mean was developed to represent each teacher's feelings related to the perceived quality of mentoring and their perceived teaching success. The individual teachers' ratings for the two parts of this section of the survey were computed into means and then a Pearson correlation was tabulated to compare perceived quality of mentoring and perceived levels of success. The correlation (.705) showed a level of significance (p<.001). Due to this level of significance, bivariate linear regression was used to predict level of success based upon self-reported mentoring quality. The regression equation demonstrating this relationship is of the form: $\hat{Y} = BX + A$. Where :

$\hat{Y}$ = the predicted level of success (dependent)

X = quality of mentoring (independent/predictor variable)

B = regression coefficient for estimating $\hat{Y}$ from X

A = regression constant or Y intercept

A partitioning of the variance of Y(sd²y) into a portion associated with X yielded the

variance of the discrepancies between the actual and estimated $\hat{Y}$ scores. This is known

as r², or the proportion of the variance of Y that is linearly associated with X. Table 3

shows the r² for this instance to be .718, indicating that nearly 72% of the variance in

success can be attributed to the perceived quality of the mentoring.

Table 3

Regression Level of Success

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.848(a)	.718	.596	.49888

Research Question 2

The second research question investigated the perceptions of first year

alternatively certified teachers relative to the mentoring experiences meeting their needs.

This section of the survey required teachers to provide a nominal response to 17

questions broken into three different categories. The first category asked the teachers to

provide a yes or no response to whether or not they had the opportunity to participate in

17 common mentoring activities. The second category asked the teachers whether or not

they felt that these activities contributed to their success. The final category asked the

teachers whether or not they felt that these activities were necessary to include in a

mentoring program, regardless of whether the activities were included in their program.

Table 4 shows the frequency of the responses broken down by individual questions and
sections.

Table 4

Responses to Mentoring Activities that Met Needs of Teachers

Question	Occurred/ Did Not Occur		Contributed to Their Success		Necessary?	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Observation and Consultation						
No	13	24.1	12	22.2	9	16.7
Yes	41	75.9	42	77.8	45	83.3
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
2. Learn Instructional Practices						
No	8	14.8	6	11.1	1	1.9
Yes	46	85.2	48	88.9	53	98.1
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
3. Conduct Parent Conferences						
No	31	57.4	24	44.4	5	9.3
Yes	23	42.6	30	55.6	49	90.7
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
5. Coordinate with Other Staff						
No	11	20.4	10	18.5	3	5.6
Yes	43	79.6	44	81.5	51	94.4
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
6. Attended Workshops						
No	9	16.7	8	14.8	1	1.9
Yes	45	83.3	46	85.2	53	98.1
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0

(*table continues*)

Question	Occurred/ Did Not Occur		Contributed to Their Success		Necessary?	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
7. Interact with Other First Year Teachers						
No	11	20.4	14	25.9	8	14.8
Yes	43	79.6	40	74.1	46	85.2
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
8. Use of Variety of Instructional Activities						
No	12	22.2	9	16.7	4	7.4
Yes	42	77.8	45	83.3	50	92.6
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
9. Sequence Learning Activities						
No	13	24.1	12	22.2	4	7.4
Yes	41	75.9	42	77.8	50	92.6
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
10. Identify Differences in Students						
No	19	35.2	13	24.1	3	5.6
Yes	35	64.8	41	75.9	51	94.4
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
11. Pace Lessons						
No	23	42.6	21	38.9	4	7.4
Yes	31	57.4	33	61.1	50	92.6
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
12. Organize Workload						
No	19	35.2	17	31.5	2	3.7
Yes	35	64.8	37	68.5	52	96.3
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
13. Establish Rapport with Students						
No	8	14.8	8	14.8	1	1.9
Yes	46	85.2	46	85.2	53	98.1
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0

(*table continues*)

Question	Occurred/ Did Not Occur		Contributed to Their Success		Necessary?	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
14. Use of Management Skills						
No	12	22.2	10	18.5	1	1.9
Yes	42	77.8	44	81.5	53	98.1
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
15. Expectations for Students						
No	5	9.3	5	9.3	0	0
Yes	49	90.7	49	90.7	54	100.0
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
16. Building Procedures						
No	9	16.7	9	16.7	3	5.6
Yes	45	83.3	45	83.3	51	94.4
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0
17. Understanding of the Influence of Physical Environment						
No	5	9.3	5	9.3	0	0
Yes	49	90.7	49	90.7	54	100.0
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0	54	100.0

Note: F = Frequency

Table 4 shows that 16 of the 17 activities occurred more than 50% of the time. A mean of 78.5% of the teachers responded that all 17 activities contributed to their success. All of the activities were rated as being necessary by more than 80% of the teachers. Two of the activities, establishing expectations for students and gaining an understanding of the physical environment's effect on teaching, were rated by 100% of the teachers as necessary.

A mean was calculated for each category of this section of the survey and a Pearson Correlation was tabulated as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Occurrence of Mentoring Activities Related to Need and Effectiveness

Mean		Mean	
	Occurred	Necessary	Success
Occurred			
Pearson Correlation	1.000	.380(**)	.957(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000
N	54.000	54.000	54.000
Necessary			
Pearson Correlation	.380(**)	1.000	.370(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.006
N	54.000	54.000	54.000
Success			
Pearson Correlation	.957(**)	.370(**)	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006	.000
N	54.000	54.000	54.000

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows that there is a strong relationship between the mentoring activities that occurred and the perceived success related to the teachers experiencing these activities.

To determine if the overall occurrence of mentoring can predict the success of teachers related to individual teaching activities, a bivariate linear regression was calculated. The regression equation demonstrating this relationship is of the form: $\hat{Y} = BX + A$. Where:

$\hat{Y}$ = perceived success (dependent)

X = occurrence of mentoring activity (independent/predictor variable)

B= regression coefficient for estimating $\hat{Y}$ from X

A = regression constant or Y intercept

A partitioning of the variance of $Y(sd^2_Y)$ into a portion associated with X yielded the variance of the discrepancies between the actual and estimated $\hat{Y}$ scores. This is known

as r², or the proportion of the variance of Y that is linearly associated with X. Table 6 shows that r² for this instance to be .945, indicating that nearly 95% of the variance in success can be attributed to the occurrence of those commonly practiced mentoring activities that were listed in Table 4.

Table 6

Level of Success

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.972(a)	.945	.919	.06907

Research Question 3

The third research question investigated how first year alternatively certified teachers perceived the importance of different components of common mentoring programs. This section of the survey had 26 questions that asked the teachers to rate with a Likert scale response (1-5) related to the importance of the activity. Additionally, the teachers were asked to give a *yes* or *no* response indicating whether or not the activity was included in their mentoring program. Table 7 shows the mean responses, as well as standard deviation, for the Likert scale questions, while Table 8 shows the nominal responses to this section of the survey.

Table 7 shows that all experiences were perceived as important, with a mean score above 4.0 for all 26 experiences. A total of 16 experiences were rated 4.4 or higher, while 11 of the experiences received a rating of 4.5 or higher.

Table 7

Value of Mentoring Program Experiences

Mentoring Experiences	Value Mean	Value Std. Deviation
Planning lessons	4.57	.690
Motivating students	4.67	.644
Classroom organization	4.52	.771
Becoming familiar with subject matter	4.54	.794
Establishing realistic expectations of student behavior	4.54	.665
Evaluating student progress	4.43	.716
Developing time management techniques	4.54	.693
Understanding students' individual differences	4.41	.714
Administrative support	4.31	.865
Teacher support	4.44	.718
Mentor support	4.54	.719
Parent support	4.50	.771
Student support	4.56	.604
Emotional support	4.41	.836
Developing effective instructional strategies	4.67	.514
Avoiding burn-out	4.39	.998
Meeting building requirements	4.02	1.157
Meeting district requirements	4.30	.882

(*table continues*)

Mentoring Experiences	Value Mean	Value Std. Deviation
Techniques for working with parents	4.22	.883
Techniques for dealing with other professionals	4.20	.919
Gathering instructional resources	4.35	.828
Evaluating own teaching skills	4.39	.834
Establishing effective class routines	4.67	.549
Avoiding professional isolation	4.30	.924
Ongoing professional development	4.48	.637
Maintaining professional self-esteem	4.37	.938

Table 8

Mentoring Experiences Included in Mentoring Programs

Mentoring Experiences	Frequency	%
Planning lessons		
No	15	27.8
Yes	39	72.2
Total	54	100.0
Motivating students		
No	13	24.1
Yes	41	75.9
Total	54	100.0
Classroom organization		
	15	27.8
	39	72.2
	54	100.0

(*table continues*)

Mentoring Experiences	Frequency	%
Becoming familiar with subject matter		
No	20	37.0
Yes	34	63.0
Total	54	100.0
Establishing realistic expectations of student behavior		
No	11	20.4
Yes	43	79.6
Total	54	100.0
Evaluating student progress		
No	13	24.1
Yes	41	75.9
Total	54	100.0
Developing time management techniques		
No	14	25.9
Yes	40	74.1
Total	54	100.0
Understanding students' individual differences.		
No	12	22.2
Yes	42	77.8
Total	54	100.0
Administrative support		
No	13	24.1
Yes	41	75.9
Total	54	100.0
Teacher support		
No	16	29.6
Yes	38	70.4
Total	54	100.0
Mentor support		
No	6	11.1
Yes	48	88.9
Total	54	100.0

Mentoring Experiences	Frequency	%
Parent support		
No	19	35.2
Yes	35	64.8
Total	54	100.0
Student support		
No	19	35.2
Yes	35	64.8
Total	54	100.0
Emotional support		
No	17	31.5
Yes	37	68.5
Total	54	100.0
Developing effective instructional strategies		
No	9	16.7
Yes	45	83.3
Total	54	100.0
Avoiding burn-out		
No	19	35.2
Yes	35	64.8
Total	54	100.0
Meeting building requirements		
No	21	38.9
Yes	33	61.1
Total	54	100.0
Meeting district requirements		
No	15	27.8
Yes	39	72.2
Total	54	100.0
Techniques for working with parents		
No	22	40.7
Yes	32	59.3
Total	54	100.0

(*table continues*)

Mentoring Experiences	Frequency	%
Techniques for dealing with other professionals		
No	25	46.3
Yes	29	53.7
Total	54	100.0
Gathering instructional resources		
No	16	29.6
Yes	38	70.4
Total	54	100.0
Evaluating own teaching skills		
No	17	31.5
Yes	37	68.5
Total	54	100.0
Establishing effective class routines		
No	4	7.4
Yes	50	92.6
Total	54	100.0
Avoiding professional isolation		
No	25	46.3
Yes	29	53.7
Total	54	100.0
Ongoing professional development		
No	10	18.5
Yes	44	81.5
Total	54	100.0
Maintaining professional self-esteem		
No	15	27.8
Yes	39	72.2
Total	54	100.0

Table 8 shows that the 26 mentoring experiences were included in at least 50% of the mentoring programs. A total of 16 experiences were included in at least 70% of the mentoring programs. One experience, establishing effective class routines, was included in 92.6% of the classrooms. The two lowest scores 1) Techniques for dealing with other professionals and 2) Avoiding professional isolation were included in 29 of the 54 mentoring programs.

To determine if there was a relationship between the degree of importance and whether or not the activities were included in the mentoring program a Pearson Correlation was tabulated using mean responses. There was not a notable relationship between the degree of importance and whether or not the activities were included in the mentoring program (.260). The three experiences receiving the highest mean rating were 1) Motivating students, 2) Developing effective instructional strategies, and 3) Establishing effective class routines. These experiences occurred in 75.9%, 83.3%, and 92.6% of the mentoring programs respectively. The experiences that occurred in most of the mentoring programs (92.6%, 88.9%, and 83.3%) received mean scores of 4.67, 4.54, and 4.67 respectively.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question investigated the differences in responses among teaching levels in relation to how well the mentoring experiences met the needs of the first year alternatively certified teachers. Teaching levels were gathered through the demographic section of the survey. The questions that were used to determine how well the needs of the teachers were met through mentoring came from Section C of the survey. There were 16 questions that asked the teachers to rate both quality of mentoring and

level of success using a Likert scale rating of 1-5. The means of the different levels of

teaching as related to their rating of the quality of their mentoring program are reported in

Table 9.

Table 9

Relationship of Quality of Mentoring to Teaching Levels

Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
Elementary								
Mean	4.10	4.10	3.95	4.52	3.62	4.05	4.29	4.33
N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Std. Deviation	.995	.831	1.024	.750	1.024	.973	1.056	.913
Middle School								
Mean	3.75	3.88	3.50	4.50	3.63	3.88	4.00	4.00
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Std. Deviation	1.282	1.356	1.195	.756	1.302	1.246	1.069	1.309
Junior High								
Mean	3.33	3.17	3.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	4.17	4.00
N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Std. Deviation	.816	1.169	.816	1.095	1.211	1.211	.983	.894
High School								
Mean	3.71	3.59	3.12	4.12	3.59	3.76	3.71	4.35
N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Std. Deviation	1.047	.795	1.166	.993	1.004	.903	.849	.606
Multiple Level								
Mean	4.50	5.00	4.50	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
N	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.707	.000	.707	.000	1.414	.000	.000	.000

(*table continues*)

Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
Total								
Mean	3.85	3.83	3.57	4.35	3.63	3.89	4.07	4.28
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	1.035	.986	1.109	.872	1.051	1.022	.988	.878

Level	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16
Elementary								
Mean	4.10	4.10	3.76	4.14	4.14	3.71	4.10	3.67
N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Std. Deviation	1.044	.889	1.091	.793	.910	1.056	.768	1.065
Middle School								
Mean	4.00	4.13	4.38	4.25	4.25	3.88	3.75	3.75
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Std. Deviation	1.069	.991	1.408	1.389	1.035	.991	1.282	1.282
Junior High								
Mean	4.17	3.67	3.50	4.17	3.67	3.33	3.33	3.33
N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Std. Deviation	.983	1.033	1.517	1.329	1.211	.816	.816	1.633
High School								
Mean	3.35	3.88	3.59	3.59	3.29	3.71	3.82	3.65
N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Std. Deviation	1.115	.993	1.121	1.064	1.160	1.263	.951	1.115
Multiple Level								
Mean	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
N	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.707	.000	.707	1.414	.000	.000	.000	1.414
Total								
Mean	3.87	4.02	3.80	3.98	3.87	3.74	3.91	3.65
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	1.082	.942	1.188	1.055	1.100	1.085	.937	1.152

Table 9 indicates that all levels of teachers had a mean score on quality of mentoring questions above an average rating. This is under the premise that a rating of 2.5 on a 5 point scale would be considered average. Additionally the teachers that taught at multiple levels (N=2) rated their mentoring experience the highest on all but one activity - Question #12. Excluding the multiple level group, the elementary teachers had the highest mean rating on seven questions.

The second part of Section C of the survey asked the teachers to rate their perceived level of success with various teaching activities. The differences in responses in relation to teaching levels were tabulated by individual questions. The differences in responses among the teaching levels are reported in Table 10.

Table 10

Relationship of Level of Success to Teaching Levels

Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
Elementary								
Mean	4.33	3.90	3.86	4.62	3.81	4.24	4.67	4.52
N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Std. Deviation	.730	.700	1.062	.590	1.030	.768	.577	.680
Middle School								
Mean	3.75	3.88	3.75	4.75	4.00	4.38	4.38	4.63
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Std. Deviation	.707	.641	.886	.463	.535	.518	1.061	.518
Junior High								
Mean	4.00	4.33	3.50	4.67	4.33	3.83	4.83	4.83
N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Std. Deviation	.000	.516	.837	.516	.816	1.472	.408	.408

(*table continues*)

Level	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
High School								
Mean	4.00	3.65	3.18	4.53	3.82	3.47	3.94	4.35
N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Std. Deviation	.707	.702	1.237	.514	.728	.943	.966	.606
Multiple Level								
Mean	4.50	4.50	4.50	5.00	4.00	5. 00	8.00	5.00
N	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.707	.702	1.237	.514	.728	.943	.966	.606
Total								
Mean	4.11	3.89	3.61	4.63	3.91	4.00	4.43	4.54
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	.691	.691	1.089	.525	.830	.952	.838	.605

Level	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16
Elementary								
Mean	4.48	4.05	4.00	4.43	4.33	4.19	4.14	3.81
N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Std. Deviation	.873	.865	1.049	.598	.856	.680	.727	.981
Middle School								
Mean	4.13	4.13	4.38	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.25	3.75
N	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Std. Deviation	1.126	.641	.744	.756	.886	.535	.707	.707
Junior High								
Mean	4.17	4.00	4.00	4.67	4.00	3.83	3.83	3.83
N	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Std. Deviation	1.169	.632	1.549	.516	1.265	.983	.983	1.472

(*table continues*)

Level	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16
High School								
Mean	3.65	3.59	3.53	3.59	3.47	3.82	3.53	3.71
N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Std. Deviation	.931	.939	1.007	1.064	1.068	1.074	.874	.849
Multiple Level								
Mean	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	5.00	4.50	4.50	4.00
N	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.000	.000	.707	1.414	.000	.707	.707	1.414
Total								
Mean	4.15	3.94	3.93	4.19	4.04	4.02	3.94	3.78
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	.998	.856	1.061	.892	1.027	.835	.834	.945

Again, the teachers that taught multiple levels (N=2) rated their level of success consistently higher than the other groups of teachers. Excluding the multiple level group, the junior high group rated their level of success highest on six indicators while middle school and elementary groups both rated their success level highest on five indicators. Additionally, mean scores were tabulated between teaching levels on the first question of Section F that asked the teachers to rate their overall mentoring activities using a Likert scale of 1-5. Table 11 shows the mean scores among the levels of teachers for Research Question 4. This indicates that the teachers, regardless of teaching level, were satisfied with their overall mentoring activities.

Table 11

Mean Responses to Overall Satisfaction of Mentoring Activities

Level	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Elementary	4.00	21	1.000
Middle School	4.00	8	1.414
Junior High	3.67	6	1.506
High School	4.00	17	.791
Multiple Levels	5.00	2	.000
Total	4.00	54	1.046

Research Question 5

The fifth research question investigated how the quality of mentoring was perceived between those teachers who stated that mentoring did or did not play a role in their decision to return to their current assignment for a second year. To evaluate this research question, the mean responses to the quality of mentoring questions from Section C were compared between the teachers who stated that mentoring impacted their decision to return for a second year and those who stated that mentoring did not affect their decision to return. Table 12 shows the mean responses to these questions.

Table 12 indicates that there was a higher level of satisfaction on each of the 16 questions related to quality of mentoring by those teachers that stated that mentoring had an impact on their decision to return to their current assignment as compared to those that stated that mentoring did not impact their decision. To determine if there was a difference in the perceived level of success between those teachers that stated that mentoring impacted their decision to return and those that stated that mentoring did not

impact their decision, mean scores from the level of perceived success from Section C

were tabulated. The results are reported in Table 13.

Table 12

Quality of Mentoring and Impact of Mentoring

Impact on Plans to Return?	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
No								
Mean	3.26	3.53	3.16	3.95	3.11	3.53	3.63	4.00
N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Std. Deviation	1.046	.905	.898	1.026	.809	1.020	.895	.816
Yes								
Mean	4.17	4.00	3.80	4.57	3.91	4.09	4.31	4.43
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Std. Deviation	.891	1.000	1.158	.698	1.067	.981	.963	.884
Total								
Mean	3.85	3.83	3.57	4.35	3.63	3.89	4.07	4.28
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	1.035	.986	1.109	.872	1.051	1.022	.988	.878
	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16
No								
Mean	3.47	3.58	3.37	3.47	3.32	3.42	3.58	3.05
N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Std. Deviation	.841	.902	1.012	1.073	1.204	.961	1.071	1.224
Yes								
Mean	4.09	4.26	4.03	4.26	4.17	3.91	4.09	3.97
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Std. Deviation	1.147	.886	1.224	.950	.923	1.121	.818	.985
Total								
Mean	3.87	4.02	3.80	3.98	3.87	3.74	3.91	3.65
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	1.082	.942	1.188	1.055	1.100	1.085	.937	1.152

Table 13

Level of Success and Impact of Mentoring

Impact on Plans to Return?	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
No								
Mean	4.21	4.11	3.58	4.63	3.84	3.89	4.37	4.58
N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Std. Deviation	.713	.459	.769	.496	.765	1.197	.895	.507
Yes								
Mean	4.06	3.77	3.63	4.63	3.94	4.06	4.46	4.51
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Std. Deviation	.684	.770	1.239	.547	.873	.802	.817	.658
Total								
Mean	4.11	3.89	3.61	4.63	3.91	4.00	4.43	4.54
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	.691	.691	1.089	.525	.830	.952	.838	.605

	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16
No								
Mean	3.95	3.68	3.84	4.11	3.84	3.95	3.89	3.32
N	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	19
Std. Deviation	1.129	.749	1.068	1.049	1.259	.780	.809	.946
Yes								
Mean	4.26	4.09	3.97	4.23	4.14	4.06	3.97	4.03
N	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Std. Deviation	.919	.887	1.071	.808	.879	.873	.857	.857
Total								
Mean	4.15	3.94	3.93	4.19	4.04	4.02	3.94	3.78
N	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Std. Deviation	.998	.856	1.061	.892	1.027	.835	.834	.945

Table 13 indicates that the teachers whose decision was impacted by mentoring had mean scores higher than those teachers whose decision was not impacted by mentoring on 12 of the 16 questions. The teachers who were not impacted had mean

scores higher than those who were impacted on three of the 16 questions. Those questions were: 1) Planning instructional activities, 2) Keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks, and 3) Degree of professional commitment. One question, showing care for students, received the same mean score between the two different groups of teachers.

The mean scores for the two questions that asked about the overall success of the mentoring activities and whether or not mentoring impacted their decision to return to their current assignment were compared. Results of this comparison are listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Mentoring Impact on Decision to Return Compared to Quality of Mentoring Mean Responses

Impact on Decision?	Mean Quality of Mentoring	N	Std. Deviation
No	3.47	19	1.020
Yes	4.29	35	.957
Total	4.00	54	1.046

Table 14 indicates teachers whose decision was impacted by their mentoring experiences rated their mentoring experience higher (4.3) than those who were not impacted (3.5).

The final question of the survey asked the teachers to give a written response explaining their answer to the question asking whether or not mentoring played a role in their decision to return to their current assignment for the following year. The responses

that stated that mentoring did not play a role are summarized in Table 15 while those that

stated that mentoring did play a role in their decision are summarized in Table 16.

Table 15

Mentoring Did Not Play a Role in Decision to Return

Positive	Neutral	Negative
The program was successful in making my transition into teaching but did not play a role in my decision to return or not return to my current school.	I had already learned most of these skills.	My mentor did not really help with the teaching of my class.
Although my mentoring was excellent, I would not take just that into consideration. The campus as a whole is a wonderful place.	Mentoring will not determine if I return.	Position is handed over based on seniority and need.
	My year would have been the same without my mentor.	My mentor was quite busy this year and I am fiercely independent.
	I feel that I received adequate support elsewhere. I had tons of support from teachers around me.	
	I am returning to teaching no matter how my mentoring turned out for the year.	
	My department head helped me the most.	

Table 15 shows that of the 11 written comments to the question of whether or not

mentoring played a role in their decision to return the following year, two of the

responses were positive about their mentoring experience. Six of the responses were

neutral to the mentoring program, while three of the responses could be considered

negative towards the respondents' mentoring experiences.

Table 16

Mentoring Did Play a Role in Decision to Return

Positive	Negative
My mentor teacher has become a real best friend to me. They would have to fire me before I would look elsewhere.	Currently I am frustrated and do not want to teach. My self-confidence has dropped and burn out is entirely too close
I felt the district wanted me to succeed and return. They put a lot of time and effort into the program.	My mentor was not there for me.
It did and I love what I am doing.	I was totally unattended to or advised in an area I was new to.
I will be returning.	
I loved what I learned and did this year and feel much better about my success.	
My mentor showed me how to help our kids and how they need us, so I want to be there for them next year.	
It has allowed me to be successful and to bring success to my students.	
Because my mentor was helpful and I learned a lot.	
I had a great experience with my mentor and we have built a great relationship that will help with my decision to return.	
My mentor is also my team leader. I have a great team and excellent support.	

(*table continues*)

Positive	Negative

I see how it gets easier as the year progresses.

My mentor helps me with any problems I have.

I had a fantastic mentor. She has taught me so much.

I plan on returning.

I felt very supported and encouraged.

She approached me in a very nice way to correct my mistakes or to point out things that could help me progress in the classroom.

My mentor was wonderful and always there for me.

My mentoring activity was very helpful in assuring me that I am on tack and developing towards my goal as an educator.

I learned so much just from talking with and observing other teachers.

Good training helped to prepare me for next year.

I feel more confident.

She helped me when I was stressed and I learned a lot from her.

I liked the school and the staff.

I have had many instances where my mentor would meet with me and her ideas have helped me be a better teacher.

The best teacher in the district was my mentor.

Table 16 indicates that a majority of the responses to the question of whether or not mentoring would play a role in the decision to return to their current assignment for a second year were *yes*. Of the 28 explanations, three respondents had negative comments that would lead to the belief that their mentoring experience led them to not return to their first year assignment. The other responses mentioned the positive relationships between the first year teachers and their mentor teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to assess the different mentoring needs and experiences of first year alternatively certified teachers and to determine if there are correlations with their decision to stay in the profession. This chapter reports a summary of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations reached from conducting this study.

Summary

A written survey was given to first year alternatively certified teachers completing their final month of teaching in the Fort Worth metropolitan area. The teachers were surveyed at a meeting where their attendance was required as part of their certification program (ECAP). Education Career Alternatives Program is a private alternative certification program approved by the State Board for Certification in Texas located in Fort Worth, Texas. Teachers completed a survey that required approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey asked questions related to perceived quality of mentoring and perceived level of success (Section C), level of importance of mentoring activities and whether or not these activities occurred (Section D), the occurrence of mentoring activities, whether or not the activities were necessary, and whether or not these activities contributed to the success of the teachers (Section E). There were also questions that asked the teachers to rate their overall mentoring program and whether or not their mentoring program played a role in their decision to return to their first year assignment

for the 2006-07 school year (Section F). Demographic information was included in

Section G of the survey.

Conclusions

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers as to how the

mentoring activity plays a role in their success? Teachers were asked to complete a

Likert scale rating of 1-5 related to perceived quality of their mentoring program as well

as perceived success related to these specific skills. The first year teachers in this study

rated all 16 mentoring activities, as well as their success with these skills, were above

average in quality. The lowest mean score for quality of mentoring was the skill of

ending the lesson with a summary review, which received a mean rating of 3.57. The

teachers rated their mean success with this skill as 3.61. The highest rating related to

quality of mentoring was in the area of showing care for students, with a mean rating of

4.35. This same skill received a mean score of 4.63 in relation to the level of teacher

success. A total of 15 of the 16 skills that were rated in this section received higher

success scores than mentoring scores. The one skill that was rated higher in the quality

of mentoring was the ability to locate educational materials (4.02 quality vs. 3.94

success).

A closer examination of these skills reveals that the scores below 4 (3.57-3.98) in

the quality of mentoring category are those skills that can be expected to take a long time

to develop. Instructional skills (i.e., planning lessons, keeping students involved, and

dealing with discipline issues) tend to take longer to develop than the skills above 4.0

(showing care for students, locating materials, and working with supervisors). The lower scores in these areas may be attributed to this maturational period.

The fact that the overall success was consistently rated higher than the quality of mentoring could be attributed to a lack of recognition of the impact that mentoring had on the level of success, specifically in those areas that are isolated to teaching where there would be a lack of prior experience that would lead to success. An additional possibility was that the teachers over rated their perceived success level.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers relative to the mentoring experiences meeting their needs? This part of the survey asked the teachers to give a nominal response (yes/no) to whether the activity occurred, was necessary, and whether or not the activity contributed to their success. The teachers responded that 16 of the 17 activities occurred in a majority of the mentoring programs represented in this study. The lowest occurrence (42.6%) was in learning how to conduct parent conferences. The highest occurrence (90.7%) was in the areas of expectations for students and understanding the influence of the physical environment on teaching effectiveness. Three of the activities occurred in more than 80% of the mentoring programs (Learned instructional practices/85.2%, Attended workshops/83.3%, and Established rapport with students/85.2%).

While the number of programs that these mentoring activities occurred in was high, the teachers did not feel they occurred enough of the time. Time to observe and consult with other teachers was the lowest rated activity, with 83.3% of the teachers stating that this was a necessary activity. This same activity actually occurred, according

to the respondents, in 75.9% of the mentoring programs. Help in the area of conducting parent conferences was rated as being necessary by 90.7% of the teachers, while it was reported as occurring in only 42.6% of the programs. Equally troubling was that pacing lessons was identified by 92.6% of the teachers as being necessary, while it occurred in just over half of the programs (57.4%).

The evidence points to the need to include all of these activities for a mentoring program to be successful in meeting the needs of first year alternatively certified teachers. Only one activity had a success rate lower than an occurrence rate. A total of 74.1% of the teachers stated that the ability to interact with other first year teachers contributed to their success, but this activity occurred in 79.6% of the programs. Fifteen of the 17 mentoring experiences were rated as being necessary by 90% or more of the teachers, with two of the activities rated as necessary by 100% of the respondents (expectations for students and understanding the influence of the physical environment). This would indicate that the higher the rate of frequency of these activities, the higher the perceived success rate of the teachers.

Research Question 3

How important did first year alternatively certified teachers rate different components of common mentoring programs? This part of the survey asked the teachers to rate the importance of 26 mentoring experiences on a Likert scale of 1-5. An additional nominal response indicated whether or not the activity was included in their mentoring program.

The first year alternatively certified teachers rated all 26 mentoring experiences as being very important, with a mean score above 4.0 on a 1-5 scale. The lowest rated

experience was meeting building requirements, with a mean score of 4.02. Even with this rating, nearly half of the respondents (N=26) rated this experience as a 5.0 on a 1-5 scale. A total of 11 of the experiences received a mean rating of 4.5 or above. This indicated that first year alternatively certified teachers perceive these experiences as necessary to a quality mentoring program.

When the teachers were asked to answer *yes* or *no* to whether or not certain mentoring experiences occurred, a total of 46.3% of the respondents stated that techniques for avoiding professional isolation and for working with other professionals was included in their program. Both of these experiences received a mean rating of 4.30 and 4.20 respectively when the teachers were asked to rate their importance in being included in a mentoring program. Dealing with parents was a missing component in nearly 41% of the programs, yet received a mean importance rating of 4.22. Equally bothersome, when considering that these teachers were new to the profession and lacked significant pedagogical training, was the fact that the opportunity to become familiar with subject matter occurred in only 63% of the programs, yet it received a mean importance level of 4.54.

It was clear that there was consensus among the teachers surveyed that all the experiences included in this study were viewed as important to include in mentoring programs. Equally clear was that while these experiences were deemed as important, they were missing components of many of the different mentoring programs represented in this study.

Research Question 4

How did the responses differ among teaching levels in relation to how well the mentoring experiences met the needs of the first year alternatively certified teachers? Section C of the survey was utilized to compare the quality of mentoring and perceived success levels by teaching levels. The overall quality of mentoring was rated above average for each teaching level. The results of the teachers who taught multiple levels were not discussed in this section due to this population of teachers consisting of only two teachers. Elementary teachers rated their quality of mentoring highest on 7 of the 16 skills while middle school teachers rated their quality of mentoring highest on six of the skills. Table 17 shows the skills that were rated highest by teaching levels in relation to quality of mentoring.

Elementary teachers rated their quality of mentoring lower than the other teaching levels in the area of avoiding punishment to motivate students. There was a large discrepancy between elementary and junior high teachers in the quality of mentoring in relation to keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks (3.95/elementary vs. 3.17 junior high). Additionally, there was a large discrepancy between high school (3.29) and middle school teachers (4.25) in their responses to the quality of mentoring in relation to oral/written communication with parents.

Elementary, middle school, junior high, and high school teachers all rated the quality of mentoring in the 4.0 range in relation to showing care for students and degree of professional commitment. The four levels of teachers gave ratings of 3.59-3.67 when the question asked about avoiding punishment as a way to motivate students, while they

gave ratings of 3.33-3.75 for the role of mentoring to help establish effective methods for

record keeping.

Table 17

Quality of Mentoring by Teaching Levels

Elementary	Middle School	Junior High	High School
Planning instructional activities (4.10)	Ability to effectively locate educational materials (4.13)	Avoiding use as punishment as a way to motivate students (3.65)	Degree of professional commitment (4.35)
Keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks (4.10)	Ability to effectively manage educational materials (4.38)	Effective interactions with parents (4.17)	
Ending lesson with a summary review (3.95)	Degree of oral/written communication with staff (4.25)		
Showing care for students (4.52)	Degree of oral/written communication with parents (4.25)		
Ability to manage discipline problems (4.05)	Development of short-term goals (3.88)		
Ability to work with administrators (4.29)	Developing effective methods for record keeping (3.75)		
Development of long-term goals (4.10)			

Junior high teachers rated their level of success highest on 6 of the 16 teaching skills. Elementary and middle school teachers rated themselves highest on four of the skills, while high school did not have a high rating on any of the 16 skills. Table 18 shows the skills that were rated highest by teaching levels in relation to perceived level of teacher success.

Table 18

Level of Success by Teaching Level

Elementary	Middle School	Junior High
Planning instructional activities (4.33)	Showing care for students (4.75)	Keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks (4.33)
Ending the lesson with a summary review (3.86)	Ability to manage discipline problems (4.38)	Avoiding use of punishment to motivate students (4.33)
Effective interactions with parents (4.48)	Ability to effectively locate educational materials (4.13)	Ability to work with administrators(4.38)
Degree of oral/written communication with parents (4.33)	Ability to effectively manage educational materials (4.38)	Degree of professional commitment (4.83)
Development of short-term goals (4.19)	Development of long-term goals (4.25)	Degree of oral/written communication with staff (4.67)
		Developing effective methods for record keeping (3.83)

The overall mean scores for the quality of mentoring were the same among elementary, middle, and high school teachers, with a mean rating of 4.0. Junior high

teachers rated their overall mentoring with a mean rating of 3.67. This indicated that there was not a noticeable difference in the quality of mentoring among the different teaching levels.

Research Question 5

How did the responses of teachers who stated that mentoring impacted their decision to return for their second year differ from those who stated that mentoring did not impact their decision to return? A Likert scale, 1-5, was used to rate quality of mentoring in Section C of the survey. Those responses were compared using the question from Section F of the survey that asked if mentoring would play a role in the teacher's decision to return to their current assignment for a second year. A total of 35 of the 54 teachers stated that mentoring would play a role in their decision whether or not to return to their current assignment for a second year. On all 16 questions the teachers that said mentoring would play a role in their decision to return had higher mean ratings than those who stated that mentoring would not play a role in their decision to return. Twelve of the 16 questions received a mean rating of 4.0 or above by those who stated that their decision would be impacted by their mentoring, while only one question received a mean score of 4.0 by those that stated their decision would not be impacted by mentoring. The largest discrepancy was in the area of mentoring being helpful in developing effective methods for record keeping. Those teachers who stated their decision would be impacted by their mentoring experience rated this skill a 3.97 while those who said their decision would not be impacted rated this skill a 3.05 for a difference in mean scores of .92. There were a total of 13 skills in which the mean difference was greater than .50 between

those who said mentoring would impact their decision to return and those who said it would not affect their decision.

The perceived level of success questions from Section C were also compared between those teachers who said mentoring would or would not impact their decision to return for a second year. A total of 12 questions were rated higher for level of success by those who said mentoring would play a role in their decision whether or not to return. Those teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision rated their level of success higher in three areas, while the two groups rated one question the same. The largest difference in mean scores between the two groups perceived level of success was the skill of developing effective methods of record keeping which was .71. Those teachers who said their decision would not be impacted rated their level of success at 4.0 or higher on six of the skills, while those who stated they would be impacted rated their skill level at 4.0 or higher a total of 11 times.

When the two groups of teacher responses to the overall quality of mentoring were compared, there was a difference in mean scores of .82. The teachers who said their decision would be impacted by their mentoring experience rated their mentoring activities with a 4.29 and those who stated their decision would not be impacted rated their mentoring activities 3.47. A total of two teachers stated that their mentoring program would play a role in their decision whether or not to return and also gave a score of below three on their rating of their overall mentoring program.

The final question of the survey asked the teachers to explain why they answered *yes* or *no* to the question of whether or not mentoring would play a role in their decision to return for a second year. A total of 11 of the 19 respondents who answered that it

would not impact their decision gave a written explanation to this question. A total of three of the responses were negative towards their mentoring experiences. Two of the respondents stated that their mentoring was successful, but that mentoring alone was not the deciding factor in their decision to return, while two respondents stated that mentoring would not play a role but did not specify a positive or negative response towards mentoring.

A total of 28 of the 35 teachers who stated that mentoring would play a role in their decision to return also gave written explanations to their answer. A majority of these responses were positive about their mentoring experiences (N=25), while three responses were negative. Of the 25 positive responses, 12 of them made reference to the mentor being a positive influence in their experience, while two of the three negative responses indicated that their mentor did not meet their expectations.

Discussion and Implications

It is important that those educators responsible for teacher retention evaluate the findings of this study to determine the implications for mentoring in their districts. There was a total response rate of 28% for this study. Due to this response rate, generalization cannot be overstated. The following section discusses the recommendations by individual research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers as to how the mentoring activity plays a role in their success? The perceived success of the teachers in this study was relatively high, with the lowest mean score being 3.61. This indicated that

the group of participating teachers felt successful with the teaching skills that were surveyed as part of this study. The interesting point was that the level of success was consistently rated higher than the quality of mentoring. With this group of teachers being alternatively certified, meaning little to no prior training in these areas, the success must have certainly come from their exposure to these skills. A large portion of the exposure, if not all, certainly came from their mentoring experiences.

One key aspect of this study appears to be that specific skills did not stand out, positively or negatively, as perceived in quality of mentoring or level of success. There was a correlation coefficient of .70 between the mean perceived quality of mentoring and perceived levels of success. An r^2 of .71 indicated that nearly 72% of the variance in success could be attributed to the perceived quality of mentoring. A significant finding of this study suggests that quality mentoring leads to high levels of perceived success.

In this time of high stakes testing, under-funded budgets, and in many cases a lack of support for the classroom teacher, a teacher who feels high levels of success is a tremendous achievement. Success breeds success. If teachers feel good about the job they are doing, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy can often carry them through that extremely tough first year. Mentoring experiences are an opportunity to hear from a colleague that all is well, which often allows the new teacher the ability to understand that they are not over their heads, but rather in fact, they are doing well. Feeling accepted by colleagues, especially a mentor teacher, is much different than being isolated by fears of not being successful.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of first year alternatively certified teachers relative to the mentoring experiences meeting their needs? Sixteen of the experiences surveyed in this study were reported as occurring in over 50% of the programs. In all but one of the 17 experiences, the level of perceived success was equal to or higher than the level of mentoring occurrence. Some respondents indicated that mentoring activities contributed to their success, but did not occur in their mentoring program. The reason that the level of success was higher than the level of occurrence must be attributed to misinterpretation of the question.

A closer examination of this section revealed that while an activity might or might not have occurred in a certain mentoring program, it was always rated higher in the necessary column than it was in the occurred column. Six hundred ninety-three of a possible 918 responses were recorded as occurred, while 867 responses were recorded as necessary. This indicates a difference of 174 responses, or an average of 10.2 responses per question, between those experiences that occurred and those that the teachers thought were necessary.

Too often in education there is a feeling that new teachers are overwhelmed and that participation in required mentoring experiences would be the equivalent of the straw that broke the camel's back. This study points to the contrary. The teachers, all new and alternatively certified, which one could argue would make their first year even more frustrating, overwhelmingly suggested that we, as experienced educators, could do more to support them through additional mentoring activities. In fact, there was agreement by 100% of the alternatively certified teachers that every mentoring program should include

two of the 17 experiences. Yet, five respondents in both categories stated they did not receive an opportunity to participate in these activities. This means that nearly 10% of the teachers missed opportunities to participate in necessary training.

School administrators across the state should evaluate their mentoring programs to ensure that these 17 opportunities are included in their programs. This is not to suggest that this is a comprehensive list, but rather to serve as a minimal expectation of what quality mentoring programs should include. We must keep in mind that the number of times that these activities were offered positively correlated with the success of the teachers. This key information from these first year teachers cannot be ignored if we want to make a difference in the success of first year teachers.

Research Question 3

How important did first year alternatively certified teachers rate different components of common mentoring programs? The first year alternatively certified teachers who were surveyed in this study stated that all 26 mentoring components that were part of this survey were important. On a 1-5 rating, each mentoring component received a mean score of 4.0 or above, indicating a high level of importance. An interesting aspect of this study was the levels of importance that were assigned above and below the 4.5 level of importance.

The mentoring experiences rated above 4.5 may be thought of as those most directly linked to what occurs when the classroom door is closed. Given the choice, a new teacher will most likely choose to receive help in the area of planning lessons, motivating students, classroom organization, and establishing effective class routines. Other areas, such as meeting building/district requirements, evaluating own teaching

skills, and professional development probably require more experience to be seen as important.

The issue was not that the first year teachers do not see the importance of all these activities, but rather it was the equivalent of drinking water from a fire hose. The teachers must choose those activities that will yield the greatest returns. Surviving the first year becomes an issue of great concern to most first year teachers, and for this reason they will see those issues that are most directly linked to their day-to-day instructional lives as most important.

School administrators should evaluate their mentoring programs to ensure that all 26 experiences are included. A mentoring program that staggers these activities throughout the year is worth investigating. Too often mentoring programs are heaviest during the first semester and tend to become less intense during the second semester. A mentoring program that addresses three or four of these activities per session, from greatest importance to least importance, may yield the greatest gains in meeting the needs of first year teachers. As teachers mature in the profession throughout the year, they may be able to see the importance of many of these issues that were rated less than 4.5, and they will also receive a continuous level of support.

An important aspect of this study noted that of the 11 experiences that were rated at 4.5 or higher, six of the experiences were reported to occur in 75% or less of the programs, with percentages ranging from 63-74%. While many of the activities were deemed as necessary by the first year teachers, these same activities were missing in many of the programs evaluated. To be effective, mentoring programs need to include activities that teachers perceive as necessary.

The lesson derived from these numbers was that educators should evaluate their existing programs closely to see exactly what is included. It was clear from this study that the mentoring activities surveyed were considered important by first year alternatively certified teachers. If those teachers that we, as experienced educators, are trying to serve consider these activities necessary, it seems good policy would include these activities in our mentoring programs, as well.

Research Question 4

How did the responses differ among teaching levels in relation to how well the mentoring experiences met the needs of the first year alternatively certified teachers? While all levels of teachers believed that quality of mentoring, as well as their own perceived success, was high, there were differences that were noted. Elementary teachers rated their quality of mentoring highest on 7 of the 16 questions, but only reported their level of success as highest on 5 of the 16 questions. Only two of the questions were rated highest in quality and perceived level of success. Middle school teachers rated their quality of mentoring and level of success highest in 6 of the 16 questions, yet only two of the questions were the same between quality of mentoring and level of success. Fourteen of the questions were rated higher on level of success than on quality of mentoring. When teaching levels were compared against the overall quality of mentoring question, all levels reported an overall satisfaction with their mentoring experiences, with junior high school teachers reporting the lowest level of satisfaction with a mean score of 3.67.

Interestingly all teaching levels reported a high quality of mentoring, as well as high levels of success. High school teachers reported the lowest satisfaction with their mentoring by individual mean response, while junior high teachers reported the lowest

satisfaction with the overall rating of the mentoring programs. At the other end of the educational spectrum, elementary teachers reported the greatest satisfaction with their mentoring experiences. While the differences are not large, they are worth further investigation.

Successful mentoring programs are dependent on the relationships between the new teachers and their mentor teachers. Elementary schools, many times, are not restricted by the same scheduling conflicts as secondary schools. Secondary schools often find teachers who are isolated by not just their schedules, but also by content area. For the most part, elementary schools are organized by grade levels and are self-contained, which allows more mentor/mentee interaction without disruption to the schedule. Additionally, elementary schools are usually much smaller than secondary schools. There is a level of support built into small schools that allows easier identification of a struggling teacher than in large secondary schools.

Research Question 5

How did the responses of teachers who stated that mentoring impacted their decision to return for their second year differ from those who stated that mentoring did not impact their decision to return? This study asked teachers to state their intentions. While there were not follow-up to determine if teachers followed through with their intention, it is indicated that intention is typically consistent with action. Quality of mentoring was rated higher on all 16 questions by those teachers who said that mentoring would play a role in their decision when compared to those teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision to return. The average difference in mean responses between the two groups was .64. While levels of success for the teachers who

said mentoring would play a role in their decision were higher on 12 of the 16 questions than those teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision, the average difference in mean scores was .19. Additionally, the overall satisfaction for those teachers who said mentoring would play a role in their decision whether or not to return was 4.29, while those teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision was 3.47 for a difference in mean scores of .82.

An examination of the written comments that asked the teachers to explain their answers indicated that of the teachers who said mentoring would not play a role in their decision, there were 3 of 11 responses that were negative towards their mentoring experience. An examination of the responses that indicated that mentoring would play a role in their decision to return showed that 3 of 28 responses were negative towards their mentoring experiences.

The significant aspect of this finding was that mentoring did make a difference in the alternatively certified teacher's decision whether or not to return to their original assignment for a second year. Additionally, the written comments indicated that mentoring was a positive influence in the decision of whether or not to return to the original assignment for a second year.

A close examination of the written comments indicated that the relationship with the mentor teacher was a large influence in the overall success of the mentoring program. This should be clear evidence to school administrators responsible for mentoring programs that the assignment of mentor teachers is a vital component of any program. For relationships to be established, a willing mentor teacher is a key ingredient. A teacher who is simply assigned as the mentor, without the desire, is a recipe for trouble.

Mentoring is not easy and, in most cases, is not rewarded with a significant stipend. This underscores the importance of soliciting only those teachers who are inspired to play a role in the development of new teachers.

Simply having a mentor teacher with the desire to help new teachers still does not equate to a successful mentoring program. Support must also be provided to mentor teachers in order to keep them from losing their desire. Mentor teachers should not be responsible for developing the mentoring program; their responsibility should be implementation of the program. If mentor teachers must develop the program, the sad result may be the typical response of, "See me when you have a problem." If the new teacher does in fact go to the mentor in this case, it will likely be a case of too little too late.

School administrators responsible for establishing mentoring programs should consult this study in developing an effective mentoring program. This is not to suggest that the mentoring activities evaluated as part of this study are an all-inclusive list, but rather a good starting point. The new teachers, who participated in this study, identified those activities that contributed to their success, were deemed as necessary to include in a mentoring program, and important to different mentoring activities.

Additional Conclusions and Implications

The number of alternatively certified teachers increases each year, which underscores the need to find methods to allow these individuals to stay in their chosen profession. Mentoring appears to be a key ingredient in meeting this need. School administrators must face this issue if student performance is to stay on target with the ever growing state and federal accountability requirements.

Mentors can only be as effective as the overall mentoring program. They must have support from campus and district administrators. This support should include an established school/district program to ensure that all new teachers receive the same activities throughout the year. Having a proven program allows mentors to support each other as they have a network of fellow mentors as they progress through the year.

A problem at secondary schools is that the content is so specialized it is difficult to find mentors with content specific knowledge that have the same conference period as new teachers. A possible solution would be to assign new teachers two different mentors. One mentor would serve to provide general advice on routine tasks that are required, while the second mentor would serve to provide subject specific advice. This would help in delivering the needed level of support required for secondary teachers.

This support must also include release time for both the mentor and new teacher. This release time should be scheduled to include observation time for not only the mentor, but also the new teacher. It is imperative that the mentor teacher has the ability to observe the new teacher, but equally important is the ability for the new teacher to view experienced teachers. A component that cannot be ignored is scheduled time to allow follow-up conversations to these observations.

Another level of support that is missing in many of the current mentoring programs is a meaningful stipend for the mentor teacher. This activity is too important to our schools to allow this practice to continue. It really becomes an issue of when the school/district wants to pay the money. They can pay the money up front with a mentor or pay the money after the fact in hiring new teachers each year.

An additional resource that is often overlooked is the field supervisor program that is part of many alternative certification programs. These are typically individuals with past experience in educational administration. They make regular visits with the first year teacher and check in with the mentor or school administrator. It would be beneficial if the programs and the schools could arrange time for the new teacher, field supervisor, and the mentor teacher to have regular meetings to ensure that all areas are being addressed.

Further Research

It is important to remember that the original intent of this research study was to include a survey of mentor teachers to compare their answers related to success and needs of the new teachers. Enough information was not available to reach the mentor teachers. It is important to do this comparison to see if there is an equal perception of success and needs, or if there is a difference in the perceptions of the two groups. This type of research would allow for a further refinement of the mentoring practices that should occur.

An equally important research project might include those teachers who were not provided a mentor teacher. Thirty-four of the 99 teachers who returned this survey were not eligible for this study because they were not provided a mentor. It is necessary to evaluate this group in relation to their needs and perceived levels of success to further understand the overall impact of mentoring.

This study asked teachers whether or not mentoring would play a role in their decision to return to their teaching assignment the following year. A study that surveyed a cohort group of alternatively certified teachers after they completed their first year of

teaching would add to this study. The information gained from this type of study could then be compared to this study to compare results.

All alternative certification programs are not the same. For this reason additional studies and comparisons of different programs would be beneficial. The ability to compare teacher responses from these different programs will allow further insight into the needs of alternatively certified teachers.

The attrition rate problem is not isolated to alternatively certified teachers. A study that compares the impact of mentoring on first year traditionally trained teachers to those of alternatively certified teachers would benefit researchers as well as school administrators. This will allow for a clearer picture of what these two distinct groups need during their crucial first year in the profession.

School officials often state that proven mentoring programs are too expensive to implement. They do the best they can with creating their own school or district programs. A beneficial study would be to compare the cost of teacher attrition to the cost of implementing a proven mentoring program. The results would prove beneficial to the discussion of whether attrition rates or mentoring programs are more costly.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letters to and from Dr. Danin

October 29, 2005

Dr. Rob Danin
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
School of Education
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
P.O. Box 7150
Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7150

Dear Dr. Danin,

I am a graduate student at Baylor University working on my dissertation proposal. In my research I have come across an excerpt of the survey instrument that you developed for your study "Teacher's Perceptions of Induction Programs Developed in Response to a State Mandate: A Study of Provisionally Licensed Colorado Teachers." I am interested in gaining your approval in allowing me to utilize your survey for my research. Included with this letter is a release form to allow me use of your survey. Thank you for your consideration of this request.
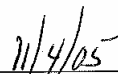
Sincerely,

Paul Uttley
Graduate Student
Baylor University
1240 Windy Meadows
Burleson, Texas 76028

I, Rob Danin, give Paul Uttley permission to use the survey from the study entitled: "Teacher's Perceptions of Induction Programs Developed in Response to a State Mandate: A Study of Provisionally Licensed Colorado Teachers" for the purpose of collecting data to complete his study on "The Relationship of First Year Mentoring Experiences on the Attrition Rates of Alternatively Certified Teachers." He may modify the survey instrument as needed. Dr. Rob Danin will also be specifically cited in any addition publications related to the research.

_____
Signature (indicates approval)

_____
Date

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

College of Education

Columbine Hall, COH 6
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
P.O. Box 7150
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80933-7150
719-262-4996 Fax 719-262-4110
Email: soe@uccs.edu

To: Paul Uttley
Re: Teacher Induction Survey
Date: November 4, 2005

Here is the copy you requested of the teacher induction survey of Provisionally Licensed teachers in the state of Colorado.

Please note this survey and corresponding study are copyrighted. I would appreciate being credited when this survey is used or referred to.

Best of luck with your work on teacher induction!

Sincerely,

Rob Danin, Ph.D.

APPENDIX B

Teacher Mentoring Survey

Section A and B

1. Were you employed as an Alternatively Certified Teacher in the State of Texas during the 2005-06 school year?

    Yes _____   **No** _____

    If you responded "Yes" to this question, please indicate the type of school you were employed in:

    _____ Public School

    _____ Charter School

2. Did you participate during the 2005-06 school year in a mentoring activity?

    Yes _____   **No** _____

    Name of your school district: _____
    (Results will be reported for the region without identifying individual teachers and school districts)

      If you responded "No" to either of the above questions, you do not need to fill out the remainder of this survey. Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your time.

      If you responded " Yes" to the above questions, please turn to the next page and complete this quick survey. Your feedback will help determine the effectiveness of different mentoring activities provided to alternatively certified teachers. All steps have been taken to guarantee complete confidentiality of your participation in this study. Thank you for taking the time to share your valued insights.

Teacher Mentoring Survey
Section C

Please rate the following items on (1) the quality of your teacher mentoring activity in helping you develop these skills, and (2) how you currently perceive your level of success.

Quality of Mentoring Activity						Level of Success				
Poor			Excellent			unsuccessful				successful
1	2	3	4	5	planning instructional activities	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	keeping students involved in assigned instructional tasks	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	ending the lesson with a summary or review	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	showing care for students	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	avoiding use of punishment to motivate students	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	ability to manage discipline problems	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	ability to work with administrators	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	degree of professional commitment	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	effective interactions with parents	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	ability to effectively locate educational materials	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	ability to effectively manage educational materials	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	degree of oral/written communication with staff	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	degree of oral/written communication with parents	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	development of short-term goals	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	development of long-term goals	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	developing effective methods for record keeping	1	2	3	4	5

Teacher Mentoring Survey
Section D

Please rate, on the basis of importance and actual experience, each of these factors in your teacher mentoring activity.

	Degree of Importance	Was this included in your mentoring activity?
	Not Important Very Important	
1. planning lessons	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
2. motivating students	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
3. classroom organization	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
4. becoming familiar with subject matter	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
5. establishing realistic expectations of student behavior	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
6. evaluating student progress	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
7. developing time management skills differences	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
8. administrative support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
9. teacher support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
10. mentor support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
11. parent support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
12. student support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
13. emotional support	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
14. developing effective instructional strategies	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
15. avoiding burn-out	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
16. meeting building requirements	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
17. meeting district requirements	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
18. techniques for working with parents	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
19. techniques for dealing with other professionals	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
20. gathering instructional resources	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
21. evaluating own teaching skills	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
22. establishing effective class routines	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
23. avoiding professional isolation	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
24. ongoing professional development	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____
25. maintaining professional self-esteem	1 2 3 4 5	Yes_____ No_____

Teacher Mentoring Survey
Section E

Please respond to the following statements regarding your mentoring activity by marking each corresponding column in the way that best reflects your own feelings and experiences.

As a direct result of my mentoring activity:	Occurred/Did not occur		Is this activity necessary?		Did this contribute to your success?	
My mentor teacher was able to schedule time for observation and consultation.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No
I had opportunities to learn new instructional practices.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I learned how to conduct parent conferences	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I learned how to assess student work	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I had the opportunity to coordinate my efforts with other staff members to maximize my teaching abilities.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I attended workshops/in-services that strengthened my teaching ability.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I had the opportunity to interact with other first-year teachers.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I practiced how to use a variety of instructional methods.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___
I practiced how to sequence learning activities.	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___ No	___ Yes	___

Please respond to the following statements regarding your mentoring activity by marking each corresponding column in the way that best reflects your own feelings and experiences.

As a direct result of my mentoring activity:	Occurred/Did not occur				Is this activity necessary?				Did this contribute to your success?			
I practiced how to identify individual differences in my students.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I practiced how to pace my lessons.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I practiced how to organize my workload.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I established good rapport with my students.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I used management skills which made good use of my time.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I established expectations for student behavior.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I gained in my general procedures used in the building(s) in which I taught.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No
I gained in my understanding of how physical environment of the classroom can influence my teaching effectiveness.	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No	___	Yes	___	No

Teacher Mentoring Survey
Section F

1. In general, how would you assess the overall success of your mentoring activities?

unsuccessful   somewhat successful   very successful

1   2   3   4   5

2. Please list any changes you would like to see made to the mentoring activity that you participated in.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

3. Will your experience with your mentoring activity play a role in your decision to return to your current school for the 2006-07 school year?

_____ Yes   _____ No

Please explain

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Mentoring Survey
Section G

General Information:

1. Gender: _____ Female _____ Male

2. Age during the start of the 2004-05 school year: _____

3. Ethnicity:

     a. American Indian/Native American   _____
     b. Asian/Pacific Island Native   _____
     c. Black/African American   _____
     d. White/Caucasian   _____
     e. Puerto Rican   _____
     f. Mexican American   _____
     g. Cuban American   _____
     h. Other Hispanic   _____

4. Teaching level during the 2004-05 school year:

     _____ Elementary
     _____ Middle School
     _____ Junior High
     _____ High School

5. What was the average daily enrollment of your school district during the 2004-05 school year?
     Student populations between:
     _____ 1-999
     _____ 1,000-4,999
     _____ 5,000-14,999
     _____ 15,000 and up

APPENDIX C

Matrix

Table B.1

Survey Questions Matched to Research Questions

Section	Questions	Corresponding Research Question
A and B	Questions to verify that the respondent was a first year teacher that participated in a mentoring program during the 2004-05 school year.	Does not match-up with a research question
C	16 questions	Research Question 1, 4, 5
D	26 questions	Research Question 3
E	17 questions	Research Question 1, 2
F	3 questions	Research Question 5
G	7 questions	Demographic Information and Research Question 4

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