INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600



Downloaded from SHAREOK. Persistent Handle URL: https://hdl.handle.net/11244/323

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

VOICES OF ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS: FACTORS THAT ASSISTED IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENT OF LONGEVITY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Casey Graham Brown

Norman, Oklahoma

2001

UMI Number: 3009546



UMI Microform 3009546
Copyright 2001 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

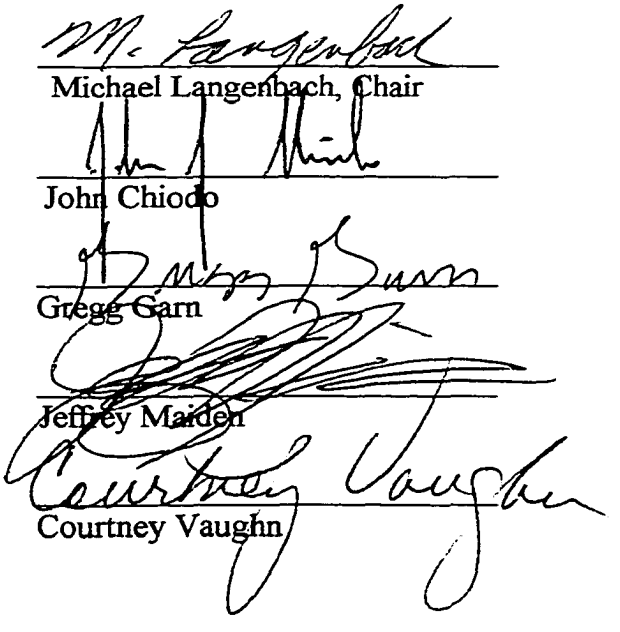
Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© Copyright by Casey Graham Brown 2001
All Rights Reserved

VOICES OF ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS:
FACTORS THAT ASSISTED IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENT OF LONGEVITY

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY



Michael Langenbach, Chair

John Chiodo

Gregg Garn

Jeffrey Maiden

Courtney Vaughn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincerest appreciation is expressed to Dr. Michael Langenbach, committee chairman, for his guidance and leadership. His editorial abilities are second to none. Thank you for influencing the lives of countless students. Thank you to my committee members, Dr. John Chiodo, Dr. Gregg Garn, Dr. Jeff Maiden and Dr. Courtney Vaughn for their help and encouragement. You have been a wonderful committee, full of helpful suggestions and support.

I appreciate the participants in this study for sharing their stories. Their successes are to be admired.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my father, Gary Graham. His love, support, encouragement and belief in me were heaven-sent.

To my husband, Brian Brown, for his love, patience and assistance. To my mother, Sherry Graham, for her love, words of encouragement and refusal to let me give up.

To my in-laws, my second parents, David and Linda Elam. You have accepted me as your daughter. To my grandfather, David Quarles, and the memory of my grandmother, Marie Quarles. Thank you for teaching your children the importance of education. In memory of my grandparents, Bill and Lois Graham, for their love. To my aunt, Linda Quarles, for her spirit of giving. My family is a great source of support. Thank you all for your help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background of the Problem	3
	Research Questions	6
	Significance	7
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE	9
	Review of Selected Literature	10
	A. Certification Types	10
	B. Advantages and Disadvantages	11
	C. State Alternative Certification Programs	18
III.	DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	26
	Research Questions	26
	Sample	27
	Procedures	27
	Assumptions	29
	Definitions	29
	Methodology	30

Rationale.....32

Methodological Limitations.....33

IV. Backgrounds of Participants.....35

Personal Experiences.....35

A. Jack's Experiences.....35

B. Susan's Experiences.....39

C. Kathryn's Experiences.....43

D. Tim's Experiences.....48

E. Irene's Experiences.....52

F. Frank's Experiences.....58

G. Kent's Experiences.....62

H. Daniel's Experiences.....65

I. Glen's Experiences.....69

J. Patrick's Experiences.....74

V. Longevity Factors.....77

Introduction.....77

Work Experiences.....78

A. Relationships with Others.....79

B. Problem Solving.....79

C. Sharing Experiences.....80

D. Communication and Instructional Skills.....81

E. Other Assistance.....84

Mentors.....85

A. Family Members and Friends.....87

B. Formal and Informal Colleague Mentors.....88

C. College Professors.....92

D. Past Teachers.....93

Conclusion.....95

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....97

REFERENCES.....104

APPENDICES.....110

ABSTRACT

VOICES OF ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS: FACTORS THAT ASSISTED IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENT OF LONGEVITY

BY: CASEY GRAHAM BROWN

MAJOR PROFESSOR: MICHAEL LANGENBACH

A person with no pedagogical training, curricular knowledge nor classroom observation experiences may show up the first day of school and call himself or herself your child's teacher. As teacher attrition occurs and the need for teachers increases, alternatively certified teachers are entering the teaching profession at a rapid rate, thus affecting school climate and student learning. Research was needed to add to the knowledge base of alternative teacher certification. Data was collected to discover factors that assisted a group of tenured, alternatively certified teachers achieve longevity in the classroom.

Research results of studies that examine alternatively certified teachers are inconsistent. Some describe the tremendous accomplishments of alternatively certified teachers. Others allude to their high attrition rates and failures (Miller, McKenna & McKenna, 1998). Research was lacking that qualitatively examined the factors that assisted the professional survival of alternatively certified teachers in one southwestern state.

Participants included 10 alternatively certified science teachers, each of whom

was currently employed by a school district in a southwestern state for at least three years. The methodological approach employed was educational biography, during which the participants relayed brief general life histories, focusing upon their educational lives, and described their professional experiences.

Patterns were discovered that indicated that each of the teachers interviewed achieved longevity through the assistance of mentors and previous work-related experiences. Mentors included family members, colleagues and administrators who provided encouragement, advice and direct instruction. The participants' prior work experiences provided them with knowledge and skills they were able to draw from to survive in the classroom. The patterns that emerged helped to provide information about what assists alternatively certified teachers achieve longevity in the classroom. As the alternative teacher certification trend continues, knowledge about what helps teachers survive and even flourish in classrooms may influence student knowledge achievement and school environments.

VOICES OF ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS: FACTORS THAT ASSISTED IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENT OF LONGEVITY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A sizable number of teachers are entering the classroom with little training. When they face students on the first day of class, many teachers have never had a single formal class in pedagogy. The teacher has submitted a resume and 10-minute teaching video, interviewed with a committee and paid a fee. He or she may have never participated in long-term instructional planning, taught a single class before a group of students nor heard a word about teaching special needs children. Even without many of the aforementioned opportunities, many people are bestowed with the title of teacher and allowed to enter classrooms (Schaefer, 1999).

This group of teachers falls under the category of alternative certification. According to the United States Department of Education (USDE), alternative certification describes "programs or procedures that facilitate the entry of college graduates with appropriate subject-matter expertise into teaching or educational administration....to reduce the time and expense required by state education agency certification requirements" (USDE, 1991, p. 2). Alternative certification programs have been created to "attract qualified professionals to the teaching profession" (USDE, 1991, p. 1). Alternatively certified teachers are entering the education

profession with few if any educational classes. Typically, little to no coursework has been completed in methods, instructional techniques nor classroom management (McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991).

Alternative certification routes "provide opportunities for people from various educational backgrounds and walks of life to become teachers" (Feistritzer & Chester, 2000, www.ncei.com). Such programs have allowed into the teaching profession those people who are "from other careers, from the military, from liberal arts colleges, former teachers who want to upgrade their credentials and get back into teaching and...people who trained to teach years ago but never did" (Feistritzer & Chester, 2000, www.ncei.com). Alternatively certified teachers have degrees in fields other than education and are more likely to be men and members of minority groups than traditionally certified teachers. Darling-Hammond, Hudson and Kirby (1989) stated

> What sets nontraditional teacher preparation programs apart from other attempts to resolve teacher shortages is that they seek to find a compromise between competing demands for quality and quantity. That is, they attempt to find, recruit, and prepare for teaching careers individuals who were not attracted to traditional undergraduate preparation programs, while maintaining the requirement that these recruits be certified to teach their subjects. (p. 301)

Many studies have examined the differences between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers, but their findings have been contradictory and inconclusive. In some instances, it appears that alternatively certified teachers are retaining jobs, receiving evaluations indicating their competence and teaching students who perform as well as the students of traditionally certified teachers

(Goebel, Ronacher & Sanchez, 1989; Lutz & Hutton, 1989). In other instances, alternatively certified teachers had higher attrition rates, more difficulties with content knowledge and classroom management and students who achieved less than the students of traditionally certified teachers (Banks & Necco, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990; Mitchell, 1987; Smith 1994). Some people "question the quality of teaching performance that can be expected of candidates who have not completed a teacher preparation program nor had an opportunity to develop the pedagogy which lies at the heart of traditional teacher education" (Bradshaw, 1998, p. 2).

Problems in study design and differing definitions of alternative and traditional certification may explain research inconsistencies. Measurement problems also complicate matters (Miller, McKenna & McKenna, 1998). There is a need for a qualitative examination of the hardships and successes of alternatively certified teachers to discover specific survival mechanisms that, in addition to improving the understanding of alternative certification. may provide administrators and policy makers with information regarding how to better assist these teachers.

Background of the Problem

Each year since 1983, the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) has polled individual state departments of education on the topics of teacher education and certification. By 1997, 41 states and the District of Columbia reported that they had some sort of alternative certification program for people with a

bachelor's degree who wanted to become licensed to teach. More than 75,000 people have been licensed to teach through the programs (Feistritzer, 1998). NCEI's 1997 survey found that in the last five years 25 states reported an increase in the number of people who were becoming alternatively licensed to teach. According to Bradshaw (1998), "As interest and participation in alternative certification programs continue to grow, state education agencies and teacher education institutions must respond to the alternative routes to teaching which are established by policy makers" (p. 2).

Instruction is only one of the many responsibilities of teachers. They must modify their teaching for special needs students, discipline students, work with parents and other stakeholders, design curriculum and counsel students (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Teachers are asked to perform all of the aforementioned tasks while being paid salaries that are far behind those earned in other professions. A teacher shortage in areas such as math and science has ensued, producing a shortage of qualified teachers and forcing school districts to hire teachers who are unprepared for their jobs (Darling-Hammond, 1996).

Other research indicates that certification type and teachers' experiences make no difference. Miller, McKenna and McKenna (1998) conducted three studies that compared alternatively certified teachers to traditionally certified teachers. The three studies showed no major differences between the two types of certification. The studies examined teacher behaviors, student test scores, and teachers' perceptions of their abilities. Hawk and Schmidt (1989) found no difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers when the two groups were compared by utilizing

teaching observations and National Teacher Examination test scores. Other researchers (Barnes, Salmon, & Wale, 1989; Etheridge, Butler, Etheridge, & James, 1988; Soares, 1989, 1990) reported similar findings. Barnes, Salmon and Wales (1989) and Gomez and Grobe (1990) found that alternatively certified teachers did not necessarily have students who scored lower on tests than the students of traditionally certified teachers (Barnes, Salmon, & Wales, 1989; Gomez & Grobe, 1990).

The vast subject knowledge that is often identified as a strength of alternatively certified teachers has been questioned by some researchers. McDiarmid and Wilson (1991) compared the knowledge of alternatively certified mathematics teachers to the subject knowledge of traditionally certified mathematics teachers. They found that many teachers with alternative certificates "lack fundamental knowledge of mathematics" (p. 94). The study found that some alternatively certified teachers, "may learn more about the subject from teaching it, yet those data also suggest that although such teachers may learn about some concepts from their own practice, other ideas may be less easily understood from practice" (p. 102). Several studies supported the equivalence and occasional advantages of alternative certification programs when compared with traditional certification programs. Adelman (1986) surprisingly found that alternative certification programs attracted people with superior classroom effectiveness than that of traditionally certified teachers.

One of the reasons for the inconsistencies between studies may be attributable to the many different types of alternative certification programs. A program may be labeled as alternative if it is significantly different from traditional programs (Smith, Nystrand, Ruch, Gideonse, & Carlson, 1985). According to Miller, McKenna and McKenna (1998), "one problem with investigations and even discussion of AC and traditional certification (TC) is the variety of the former" (p. 165). Cornett (1990) wrote that some alternative certification programs "simply give teachers without the proper credentials (requirements such as education hours completed) an interim status and allow them to be employed while they work to earn the college credits that are equivalent to standard requirements for teacher education programs" (as cited in Miller, Miller & McKenna, 1998, p. 165). To avoid the inconsistencies between alternative certification programs, only the alternative certification program of one southwestern state will be focused upon in this study.

Research Questions

Despite the odds, some alternatively certified teachers are bridging the gap between their lack of formal educational training and their longevity in the classroom. These teachers have often received little to no pedagogical training, but are enduring and have received tenure. In the southwestern state focused upon, over half of the school districts have at least one teacher who has been through the alternative certification program. In the state studied approximately one-third of the alternatively certified teachers have been employed for over three years. Approximately three-

fourths of that state's alternatively certified teachers who hold a certificate are presently teaching in the state. Less that five of the state's alternative certification program applicants have not received a recommendation for certification (State Department of Education (SDE), 2001). Because the alternatively certified teachers interviewed retained their teaching positions, data was collected and analyzed in an effort to discover what contributed to the teachers' longevity and made-up for their lack of formal training.

Significance

Administrators and other school personnel need reliable information in order to plan how to assist alternatively certified teachers. If administrators are aware of how to best assist alternatively certified teachers, they can help to meet their needs in an effort to ensure adequate instruction is provided to students. If the problems alternatively certified teachers face are addressed, the talent of the teachers can be harnessed and their knowledge and life experiences can be shared with students.

Summary

Alternative certification programs have been in place as long as there have been certification programs of any kind. All states issue probationary certificates in areas that lack enough traditionally certified teachers. Somehow, at least a few of the alternatively certified teachers are compensating for their lack of formal educational training, as compared with traditionally certified teachers (Goebel, Ronacher & Sanchez, 1989; Lutz & Hutton, 1989).

Chapter two of this study examines the literature of alternative certification. Chapter three describes the design. Chapter four provides background information on the 10 teachers interviewed. Chapter five analyzes the study findings. Chapter six includes discussion, conclusions and recommendations for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) defines alternative teacher certification as "any significant departure from the traditional undergraduate route through teacher education programs in colleges and universities" (Smith et al., 1985, p. 24). The words "alternative teacher certification" have been used to describe "every avenue to becoming licensed to teach from emergency certification to very sophisticated and well-designed programs that address the professional preparation needs of the growing population of already degreed adults with considerable life experience who want to become teachers" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 1). Zumwalt (1991) described alternative certification as a relatively inexpensive way to train people to teach who did not participate in a traditional teacher education program.

Quality alternative certification programs are "market-driven." The programs have been created to help fulfill the needs of specific geographic and subjects areas that lack an adequate supply of teachers. Alternative certification programs are designed to assist people who have a bachelor's degree, and usually work experience in the area they wish to teach. Most of the alternative certification programs are joint efforts. State education departments work with colleges, universities and individual school districts (Feistritzer & Chester, 2000).

Review of Selected Literature

Certification Types

The topic of alternative teacher certification may be misconstrued due to its many different types. Eight types of alternative certification were recognized by the National Center for Education. Class A certification programs are specifically for people with at least a bachelor's degree in a non-education field. Class A is "not restricted to shortages, secondary grade levels or subject areas" but entails "teaching with a trained mentor, and formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year--and sometimes in the summer before and/or after" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25).

Teachers certified through Class B routes have at least a bachelor's degree. The teachers are provided with mentors and instruction. Class B programs are only for areas with "shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25). The Class C programs "entail review of academic and professional background, transcript analysis" and "involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. *The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design*" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25, emphasis in original). The alternative certification program of the state studied is a variation of classes A and C.

Prospective teachers completing Class D programs have their transcripts and past school and work experiences examined. Participants take courses required for

certification. Colleges or universities take on most of the responsibility for designing the program. Class E programs are post-baccalaureate and are "based at an institution of higher education" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25). Class F programs are ways to emergency certification. The teacher is able to teach while he or she completes the courses required for certification. Class G programs are for participants who have "very few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditionally approved college teacher education program route, e.g., persons certified in one state moving to another; persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25). Class H alternative certificates allow people with an exemplary attainment to teach a certain subject(s). A label of Class I indicated that in 1995 the particular state was not "implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 25).

Advantages and Disadvantages

Alternative teacher certification came into existence to help meet a projected teacher shortage. After the National Center for Education Statistics declared that by 1992 the need for teachers would be filled only two-thirds by new teacher education graduates, several states started "looking for alternative routes to license people to teach, thus warding off the projected teacher shortage" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 2).

According to Kwiatkowski, in his writing for the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, what is promoting the alternative certification trend is a "quest to enhance education through at least four important goals" (www.edexcellence.net). Alternative certification is utilized to "increase the teaching pool of those competent in high-demand educational specialties" and "increase the participation of under-represented teachers" (www.edexcellence.net). The alternative certification programs help "increase staffing levels of urban schools or 'difficult settings,'" and "decrease the need for emergency credentialling to meet teacher shortages, although emergency certification is also a form of AC" (www.edexcellence.net). The site www.edexcellence.net is sponsored by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and affiliated with the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

Each year since 1983, the NCEI has surveyed the individual state departments of education on the topics of teacher education and certification. According to NCEI, in 1997, 41 states and the District of Columbia, reported "having some type of alternative teacher certification program for persons who already have a bachelor's degree and want to become licensed to teach" (Feistritzer, 1998, www.ncei.com). NCEI's 1997 survey found that in the last five years 25 states reported an increase in the number of people who are becoming alternatively licensed to teach (Feistritzer, 1998).

School districts "increasingly turn to alternative certification to widen the pool of teaching candidates with backgrounds in high-demand specialties, candidates from under-represented groups, or those prepared to teach in challenging settings"

(www.edexcellence.net). Alternative certification increases the number of such teachers (www.edexcellence.net). Hawley (1990) found that "AC programs, in comparison to TC programs, have attracted proportionately more males, persons over 25, minorities, and persons who have majored in college math, science, and foreign languages" (p. 11).

In a 1988 study of the Los Angeles Unified School District, McKibbin found the "annual drop-out rate from teaching for AC teacher interns was 20 percent compared to 40 percent for TC first-year teachers during the same period" (as cited in www.edexcellence.net). In a Dallas, Texas, study, however, "only 40% of the AC interns said they planned to stay in teaching, as compared to 72% of traditionally trained recruits" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 143). These figures indicate a discrepancy due to state requirements, induction programs and support of alternatively certified teachers.

The USDE (1991) described advantages of alternatively certified teachers. The teachers provide school districts with ways to address the need for math, science and special education teachers. Alternative certification helps make up for "the poor academic backgrounds of many prospective teachers" (p. 4). The USDE (1991) asserted that alternative certification also helps make up for "the poor quality of many teacher training programs; and the need to increase the number of minority teachers" (p. 4). Few studies were cited in the USDE's information and no research was cited that described the basis upon which teacher training programs have earned the label of "poor."

Ashton's (1996) study found that the students of traditionally certified teachers scored higher than those of alternatively certified teachers. The traditionally certified teachers also received higher scores from their supervisors (Ashton, 1996; Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1996). Darling-Hammond and Cobb (1996) wrote that traditionally educated teachers have better discipline, are more aware of teaching strategies and evaluate students better than alternatively certified teachers do. A 1988 study conducted by the NCEI found that alternative certification is supported by 82 percent of superintendents, 77 percent of public school principals and 82 percent of private school principals (USDE, 1991).

Cornett (1990) stated that some alternative certification programs "give teachers without the proper credentials (requirements such as education hours completed) an interim status and allow then to be employed while they work to earn the college credits that are equivalent to standard requirements for teacher education programs" (p. 57). Several other states have developed alternative certification programs that allow "arts and sciences graduates to go through intensified but shorter programs (not requiring the typical accumulation of education hours), or meet requirements by demonstrating competencies, or by gaining the necessary expertise through field-based experiences while holding a teaching position" (Cornett, 1990, p. 57).

Teachers admitted through alternate routes often have problems with knowledge of their subject areas, curricular planning and working with students (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990; Grossman, 1989; Mitchell, 1987). Alternatively

certified teachers lack the training that could prepare them for the duties and responsibilities of teaching.

Shulman (1989) assigned alternatively certified teachers to write about their own experiences. The teachers wrote about students' reactions to their lessons and activities. She found that the teachers "knew enough content, but they did not have the pedagogical content knowledge for transforming what they knew into suitable instruction for their students" (p. 5). Also found was the "teachers' limitations of not knowing the research base for the general pedagogical knowledge of teaching and organizing instruction" (p. 5). The study also suggested that mentors are necessary for all teachers, especially alternatively certified ones.

According to Feistritzer and Chester (1995), the reason alternative teacher certification continues to exist as a certification type is because many adults with bachelor's degrees in non-education fields decide to enter the teaching profession. Military downsizing has also added to this pool of people wishing to become educators. Alternative teacher certification continues to be prevalent because "state departments of education and colleges of education are faced with the realities of politicians' and policymakers' interest in mandating alternative routes for licensing teachers" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 1). Policymakers in more than 40 states have already mandated such alternative certification routes. When President George Bush was elected in 1988, the endorsement of alternative certification was his only

education proposal. In 1995, Newt Gingrich chose the elimination of teacher certification rules as his main educational policy ambition (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

States saw alternative certification as a way to quickly certify additional teachers. Alternative teacher certification helped eliminate teacher shortages by "providing short-cut routes to certification" though it "drew heavy criticism from the education establishment, and threatened to give alternative teacher certification a bad name" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 8). Feistritzer and Chester (1995), asserted that states were attempting to "find better routes for preparing and licensing teachers than the traditional college approved program routes designed primarily for persons pursuing an undergraduate degree" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 8).

In 1984, New Jersey became the first state to institute legislation for alternative teacher certification. In 1985, Texas created an alternative teacher certification program for the Houston Independent School District. Texas cited upcoming teacher shortages as the reason for implementation. In 1989, the Texas legislature removed the requirement that alternative certification may be used only for teacher shortages. The Texas alternative certification program produces approximately one-fifth of all newly-hired Texas teachers (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995).

In Texas and New Jersey, "most alternatively certified teachers are trained and teach in urban areas" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 9). The NCEI found that by 1995, "the number of states reporting they were implementing an alternative

certification program for teachers had risen to 40, plus the District of Columbia" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 9).

In 1983, states often "seemed to interpret 'alternatives' as relatively new programs they had introduced to allow non-traditional teacher candidates to become licensed to teach -- at least, temporarily" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 9). Recently, states have only used the term "alternative certification" for "new programs designed specifically to bring quality adults who already have at least a bachelor's degree -- and many of whom have considerable life experience -- into the teaching profession" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 9).

Now, states that "just a couple of years ago called all of the programs they had leading to full certification 'alternatives'", label alternative certification paths as those programs that meet "specific guidelines for entry and for completion of an alternative route" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 9). The goal of alternative certification is to bring those people with degrees in fields other than education into the teaching profession (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995).

Since the inception of alternative certification programs, approximately 125,000 teachers have been granted alternative certification (Feistritzer & Chester, 2000). Those people who show the most interest in alternative teacher certification programs include "military personnel facing retirement or being relieved of their duties...former teachers trying to get back into teaching" and "people who trained to teach some years ago but never taught" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 10).

State Alternative Certification Programs

According to Feistritzer and Chester (2000), in the last two years 14 states have passed or at least talked about creating new mandates for establishing alternative programs. Forty states presently have alternative certification programs through which more than 125,000 people have earned alternative certification (www.ncei.com). NCEI has identified states with alternative certification routes it calls "exemplary." Exemplary alternative certification programs are field-based and created to recruit and assist people who have a baccalaureate degree and are deemed talented (Feistritzer, 2000). Alternative certification candidates must "pass a rigorous screening process, such as passing tests, interviews" and "demonstrated mastery of content," work with mentors, and complete specified professional education "coursework or equivalent experiences...before and while teaching" (Feistritzer & Chester, 2000, www.ncei.com).

New Jersey, California and Texas "stand out as having exemplary alternative teacher certification program routes that are widely used in their states and have a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals for teaching" (Feistritzer, 1999, www.ncei.com). According to Feistritzer (1999), these three states "report that teachers certified through their alternative routes perform as well, and, in some cases, better, on certification examinations as their counterparts who completed traditional teacher education programs" (www.ncei.com).

New Jersey's alternative certification program "produces 20-25 percent of all the new teachers hired. The program provides training for teachers while they are

employed full-time. Mentor teachers are provided for each alternatively certified teacher (Feistritzer, 1999). New Jersey requires alternatively certified teachers to hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. Secondary candidates must have majored in the subject area they plan to teach. Elementary candidates must have a degree in the sciences or liberal arts. The candidates are required to pass several tests. When all of these requirements are completed, the candidates are awarded a certificate of eligibility and are allowed to seek employment as a teacher. New Jersey provides support for teachers after their employment. Each applies for a provisional certificate and must complete 200 hours of instruction. If the new teacher meets the guidelines and receives satisfactory evaluations, he or she may be awarded a standard certificate (Tryneski, 1998).

Texas's alternative certification program participants attend weekend and evening classes that provide instruction and training. During the classes candidates often participate in question and answer sessions as they relate their experiences (Schaefer, 1999). Each candidate must have earned a baccalaureate degree with a 2.5 or higher grade point average in the subject he or she wishes to teach. The candidate must pass required tests and meet credit hour requirements. The committee, comprised of representatives of the school district, college, and education service center, guides each participant. The partnership decides the competencies the candidate must meet. Each candidate participates in a one-year internship, with guidance provided by a mentor teacher, and must complete state-required training (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995).

West Virginia requires alternatively certification program candidates to be United States citizens and at least 18 years of age. Each candidate must have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution in an area the public schools teach and the state board approves. Each candidate's grade point average must be 2.5 or higher and each must either pass required tests or have three years of successful teaching experience in the area he or she wishes to teach within the last seven years. Each candidate is required to participate in "200 hours of formal instruction including a full-time seminar practicum of twenty to thirty days duration and continuing on-the-job supervision and evaluation (Tryneski, 1998, p. 225). Each candidate must also pass an exam to determine whether he or she will be recommended for certification, "re-entry to an alternative program" or "disapproval of further participation in the alternative program" (Tryneski, 1998, p. 225).

In Mississippi alternative certification candidates must have a baccalaureate degree and pass two required tests. The candidate has three years to complete nine credit hours of specified course work (Tryneski, 1998). In Virginia candidates must have earned a baccalaureate degree in the arts and sciences, completed course work in general studies and meet endorsement requirements. Each candidate must successfully complete an assessment. After the provisional license is granted, each candidate must complete 15 credit hours of specified professional course work and one satisfactory year of teaching with a mentor (Tryneski, 1998). Applicants for California's alternative certification program must attend workshops in basic teaching skills. The candidates participate in a paid internship, participate in course work and

receive guidance from a mentor. The candidates' principals provide evaluations (Marchant, 2000).

Colorado alternative certification applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and pass a required examination. Each must meet the subject matter requirements necessary for teaching in the particular area. The candidates must also agree to participate in a one-year alternative teacher program to be completed while teaching. The participants must have received a contract for a full-year teaching position (Tryneski, 1998).

Troops to Teachers offices "help military veterans navigate the complexities of becoming licensed to teach and finding jobs where they want to live" (Bradley, 1998, www.ncei.com). One-half of the Texas Troops to Teachers participants have entered teaching through alternative certification programs (Bradley, 1998). Before alternative certification became prevalent, "people who wanted to transfer into teaching had to go to college to get the courses prescribed for education majors" (Bradley, 1998, www.ncei.com). The requirements "usually didn't make sense for a career-change to give up a salary, go to college more or less full time and then come out with no guarantee of a job at the end" (Bradley, 1998, www.ncei.com).

Emily Feistritzer, president of NCEI, said Troops to Teachers "is almost the perfect recruitment device for hard-to-staff schools" because the program introduces additional males and minority member into classrooms (Raspberry, 1998, www.ncei.com). The Troops to Teachers participants tend to be more willing to teach in rural or city areas and to teach in the fields of math and science. The

veterans may maintain good student discipline "both because they are largely male and because they are military" (Raspberry, 1998, www.ncei.com).

The motivation of the program of the state studied was to "meet real and predicted teacher shortages and expand the areas in which degreed, but non-certified, individuals possessing exceptional expertise can become certified" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 274). The present state alternative placement program allows applicants with baccalaureate or higher degrees from accredited institutions to "pursue teacher certification if the baccalaureate degree field matches a field of certification" (S. Jacobson, personal communication, January 24, 2001). An alternative certification applicant must "pursue initial certification in the field in which that applicant's degree is posted" (S. Jacobson, personal communication, January 24, 2001).

The Alternative Placement Program (APP) is comprised of three phases. Applicants must first be admitted to the APP. Those applying must send an application, application fee, official transcripts, teaching video and lesson plans and a resume to the SDE. The SDE informs the applicants of the "certificate fields they are eligible to pursue" (S. Jacobson, personal communication, January 24, 2001).

In the second step of the process, the applicant must pass the required certification assessments. The "new competency-based teacher preparation process involves multiple tests which must be passed whether a person is seeking certification through traditional or alternative routes" (S. Jacobson, personal communication,

January 24, 2001). All applicants must submit to and pass a background check performed by the State Bureau of Investigation (SDE, 2001).

After the applicant passes the assessments, a Teacher Competency Review Panel (TCRP) must examine him or her. The TCRP is a team of seven professionals who assess the applicant's abilities. The alternative certification applicants who do not receive a recommendation for certification may not teach unless they "pursue a traditional teacher education program (S. Jacobson, personal communication, January 24, 2001). Those applicants who receive recommendations from the panel are awarded teaching licenses. The interview and tests are relied upon to determine whether or not the candidate will be a competent teacher.

The Teacher Competency Review Panel advises teacher candidates to understand there is "no statutory means for appeal of a decision rendered by the TCRP. If an applicant fails to receive a recommendation for certification from the panel, the Alternative Placement Program ceases to be a possible route to certification for that applicant" (SDE, 2001). From July to February, 2000-2001, the TCRP reviewed just over 200 teacher candidates. Of those, 168 candidates had been recommended to teach (SDE, 2001).

The original alternative certification program directed those people interested in alternative certification to document "at least two years of work experience which is related to the subject area of specialization if the person has only a baccalaureate degree with no postbaccalaureate work in a related area" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 274). There was no minimum GPA requirement. The state board of education

could grant exceptions for those people who could "demonstrate specific competency in a subject area of specialization" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 274).

Those applying for the original alternative certification program had to "present a document from an accredited public school district in the state offering employment...or declare the intention to seek employment as a teacher at an accredited public school district in the state" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 275). Those accepted into the alternative teacher program were required to complete 18 hours of professional education courses within three years. The number of hours required could have been "reduced proportionately by either advanced degrees, work experiences, or a combination of both" (Feistritzer & Chester, 1995, p. 275). There were never less than six credit hours required, however. The alternative teacher certification participants were not required to student teach, satisfy the foreign language requirement nor participate in other pre-teaching field experiences.

Most professions add responsibilities to new employees as their knowledge and skills increase. Teaching is an anomaly. New teachers often begin employment with as many responsibilities as experienced teachers have (Camp & Heath-Camp, 1991). A new teacher who has participated in traditional formal learning and professional development activities may have an arduous time fulfilling the responsibilities. Indubitably, alternatively certified teachers do too. However, some alternatively certified teachers are somehow compensating for their lack of education preparatory classes to fulfill their duties. Because alternative certification programs exist and alternatively certified teachers are being hired to teach, educators and policy

makers need to know more about the factors that influence alternatively certified teachers who manage to remain employed in the same district more than three years.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

There are many studies that examine the differences between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. For example, Darling Hammond (1992) researched whether mentoring and supervision helped alternatively certified teachers compensate for less traditional training. Fuller (1999) studied differences in test scores of students taught by traditionally certified versus alternatively certified teachers. A number of alternatively certified teachers have retained their jobs, received evaluations indicating at least a minimal competence, and taught students who performed as well as the students of traditionally certified teachers (Lutz & Hutton, 1989). Alternatively certified teachers are entering the teaching profession at a rapid rate, but not all of them thrive (Gomez & Grobe, 1990; McDiarmid & Wilson, 1991).

Research Questions

Alternative certification research results are discrepant due to "methodological differences across studies, lack of accepted dependent variables, problems with operationally defining the term alternative certification, and other measurement problems" (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998, p. 166). Educators need to continue to examine alternative teacher certification to discover specific survival mechanisms to add to the body of knowledge regarding alternative certification.

Additionally, administrators and policy makers need reliable information in order to assist alternatively certified teachers.

This study sought to discover what helped those alternatively certified teachers survive in the classroom. Typically, these teachers received little or no pedagogical training. Thus, what specifically contributed to their longevity and made up for their lack of formal training?

Sample

Ten alternatively certified secondary math, science and social studies teachers were chosen for the study. Each participant had a previous career in a non-educator profession. All participants were employed by school districts in the southwestern United States. Only alternatively certified teachers who had been rehired for at least three years were selected for the study. Each teacher received certification through the state alternative certification process. Participants were identified through lists of names provided by school districts, the SDE, universities and other alternatively certified teachers.

Procedures

I qualitatively examined the hardships and successes of 10 alternatively certified teachers who had persevered to earn tenure in an effort to discover additional information about alternative certification as it is seen by people who possess such

certification. Alternative teacher certification was also examined to discover specific survival mechanisms.

The participants were contacted and asked to participate. Each subjects was interviewed for approximately one and a half hour at a neutral place. The teachers interviewed earned six to 18 hours in education course work. Following completion of an entry year program and assigned coursework, the teachers earned teaching certificates. The alternative teachers had three years to complete the process.

Participant interviews were tape-recorded. The educational biography approach, incorporating elements of narrative and life history methodologies, were used to solicit information. Questions were asked to shed light on factors that helped them attain longevity. After transcribing the interviews, I analyzed the results to discover success and failure patterns in the educational lives of the participants. Each subject's responses were printed and cut apart. The responses were combined into the categories.

I examined the responses for differences and similarities among the experiences of the alternatively certified teachers in an effort to determine patterns. Information was gathered to provide background information for each subject. The life history biographies were conducted in an attempt to "find out how something happened in the life of a person, or group" (Denzin, 1989, p. 185) while focusing on experiences.

Assumptions

Results of the study depended upon the veracity of responses. I assumed the respondents were telling the truth, not just what I wanted to hear as "the answers to the researchers' questions will be different according to the image the participant projects onto the researcher, given the researcher's profession" (Dominice, 2000, p. 63).

I carefully analyzed the qualitative data collected. When implementing the methodology of educational biography, "the biographical narrative belongs to the world of meaning and reflection. It does not have the accuracy of a fact or figure" (Dominice, 2000, p. 30). A life history "opens the door to imaginative interpretation of life events" (Dominice, 2000, p. 31).

I had to assume that the teachers were capable of performing their jobs, as indicated by being rehired to teach each year for at least three years. The teachers were assumed to be telling the truth as they answered interview questions. It was assumed that alternatively certified teachers could be capable and even excellent teachers. I also assumed that the teachers' supervisors conducted adequate evaluations that led to the teachers' reemployment over at least a three-year period.

Definitions

Alternative certification (AC)- certification granted to persons who complete a degree, at least two years of work, and pass three tests, one of which is in the area for which they request certification (SDE, 2000).

Career teacher- "a teacher who has completed three (3) or more consecutive complete school years in such capacity in one school district under a written teaching contract" (SDE, 2000, p. 89).

Longevity- teaching for at least three years in a particular district.

Probationary teacher- "a teacher who has completed fewer than three (3) or more consecutive complete school years in such capacity in one school district under a written teaching contract" (SDE, 2000, p. 89).

Residency- the first year of teaching (SDE, 2000).

Resident committee- the group of people supporting the development of the new teacher, including an administrative supervisor, mentor teacher, and college or university representative who assist and supervise the first year teacher and vote on whether he or she will receive a certificate (SDE, 2000).

Traditional certification (TC)- the method of certification reached by those who successfully complete a teacher education program, pass three certification tests, and complete other licensing requirements, for example, satisfy the foreign language requirement (SDE, 2000).

Methodology

Educational biography was utilized to examine the educational lives of the alternatively certified teachers. The definition of biography is "the search for a life's truth through the determination of fact" (Kridel, 1998 p. 178-179). Biography means, literally, "description of a life" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 71). Biographies provide specific details about people's lives and may disclose interesting patterns (Van Manen, 1990). Good biographies "deal with the ways people faced living—tell how they met problems, how they coped with big and little crises, how they loved, competed, did the things we all do daily" (Kridel, 1998, p. 3).

Biographies are about "passion and commitment, prescription and choice,

freedom and responsibility, the individual and the crowd, now and then, life and death" (Kridel, 1998, p. 237). Educational biography describes "biographical research that examines the lives of those individuals who worked or work in the field of education" (Kridel, 1998, p. 8). As research is conducted in the field of education, "biographical work clearly has much to offer as researchers feel their way along and seek to shed light on this complex phenomenon we call education" (Kridel, 1998, p. 11).

Educational biography is often used to study adult learning. The methodology assists adult learners as they "prepare and share life histories that become vehicles through which these learners can reflect on their educational experiences" (Dominice, 2000, p. xv). Educational biography "offers the values of reminiscence and the interpretation of experience and influences upon that experience" and serves as a "distinctive approach to teaching and learning because its main purpose is to help adults deepen their understanding of their own ways of learning and of their existing knowledge" (Dominice, 2000, p. xv).

The process of educational biography "can reveal such formal learning experiences in all their complexity, illuminating influences, learning styles, benefits, and dissatisfactions" (Dominice, 2000, p. xv). Educational biography can help adults "appreciate the pervasiveness of their total learning, reflect on and interpret their experiences, and gain insight into their singular learning processes" (Dominice, 2000, p. xv). Preparing a life history "can also clarify the interdependence of biographical

themes, major life transitions, and educational activities, calling learners' attention to both processes and outcomes in their lives and learning" (Dominice, 2000, p. 6).

Rationale

The biographical method provides an opportunity for a researcher to be a detective and incorporate the artistry of teaching, rather than a recitation of facts. Teachers are provided with a forum to share their first hand experiences of what has worked for them. As teaching is an art, a creative research method should be implemented to gather and analyze information.

From individuals' descriptions of their lives, researchers can learn about the "nature of educational experiences and individual developments" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 72). Good biographies "provide a reader with an abiding sense of the miracle human beings accomplish as they struggle to make and find meaning in their lives" (Kridel, 1998, p. 270). Biographies of teachers "show us moments of transcendence, of greatness, lived in the every day of classroom life. At their best, teacher biographies resist the smooth and the cliched in favor of the rough-edged reality we actually face" (Kridel, 1998, p. 238). A biography "enlivens cold facts" (Kridel, 1998, p. 226) and allows one to share in the "recreation of another's life story, something one cannot accomplish by quantitative data analysis or statistical inference" (Kridel, 1998, p. 200).

This study revealed patterns of success and failure in the instructional lives of alternatively certified teachers. Life as a "march of days, months, and years readily

defeats artistry. Life as patterns and meanings inspires the artistry of design and metaphor" (Kridel, 1998, p. 184). A limited life history, as described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), was focused upon, mainly utilizing "data on a particular period in the person's life" (p. 57). The study followed Louise DeSalvo's advice to biographers, to "focus on the story" one wishes to tell (Kridel, 1998, p. 270). Life histories "often try to construct subjects' careers by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping objects' evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 57). Life history biographies will be conducted in an attempt to "find out how something happened in the life of a person, or group" (Denzin, 1989, p. 185) while focusing on experiences.

Methodological Limitations

Biographies are very time-consuming for both researchers and research subjects (Symon & Cassell, 1998). Subjects may not relate the entire truth nor want to displease the researcher. In turn, researchers may not want to displease their living subjects (Kridel, 1998, p. 199). Temptation to "write what the researcher knows her subject would like to read can be irresistible" (Kridel, 1998, p. 199). This is harmful if it leads to "embellishment, overstatement or omission" (Kridel, 1998, p. 199).

The method allows the author to become involved as it does not "presume that the researcher is some impartial, value-free entity, who unproblematically engages in the research process to produce objective accounts of the reified truth" (Symon & Cassell, 1998, p. 12). As the researcher brings into the study his or her views and

feelings, overidentification may become a problem. The researcher may lose himself or herself in the subject (Kridel, 1998). A researcher should realize "the norms, values, and basic assumptions which make up his or her own network of typifications and constructions" (Symon & Cassell, 1998, p. 25).

CHAPTER IV

BACKGROUNDS OF PARTICIPANTS

Personal Experiences

Each of the alternatively certified teachers had a unique story to tell. The participants came from assorted professions, family lives and degree fields. All ended up in the same profession with a wide assortment of past experiences. All seemed to enjoy their choices of profession and stated that they became teachers to help children. Their narratives follow.

Jack's Experiences

"I always knew I was going to go into education, so everything I did, substituting or whatever, all led up to education," said Jack. Jack earned a bachelor's degree in a medical-related field, a master's degree in educational administration and is presently pursuing a doctoral degree in education. He is certified to teach physical education and mathematics. Jack taught math to students in grades seven through twelve and coached basketball, softball and tennis. Jack was not the only teacher in his family. His father taught for ten years and his mother taught for almost 30 years. Jack applied for and received alternative certification, though his work in fields other than education was limited. Before teaching, Jack worked during the summers in fields such as banking and sports training. The positions were temporary, however. Teaching was his first real career.

Jack has had many positive classroom experiences. One of his students became a National Merit Scholar and countless others earned scholarships and attended college. His students continue to contact and visit him. The former students "remember specifics about my class and they thank me for what I made them do," said Jack. Jack said his positive classroom experiences were assisted by his good relationships with people and his ability to speak to others. "To speak and communicate with people...get a point across and try to do it in a positive way...I think that all comes from my past...the things I've done...the things I've been involved with...it's just a culmination of everything," said Jack.

Often Jack's struggles were with low-level students who lacked knowledge or the ability to learn the way he taught. He said he often had to change the way he taught to meet students' needs. Other struggles included working with students who lacked guidance and assistance at home, versus students "who [were] sponges and [could] learn on their own." Jack spent much time getting his advanced students involved to help other class members. He also listed difficulties with organizational skills. "Times got tough organizationally when you're coaching and teaching a full day. It was rough at times, especially during the play-offs. You're gone a lot and you try to make it where your kids don't suffer academically while you're gone," he said.

Many people observed Jack's class throughout the years. "People always came in and sat in my classes because they liked some of the things I was doing. They'd always send people to my class if they'd have somebody who was having a problem in classroom management or what have you," said Jack. "I guess they felt I

worked well with problem kids. I taught a math seminar...they always asked if they could put other people in there because so much good talk was going on about that class." he said. "I had one class with 40 kids in it. They moved me to a huge room. Every different level of kid was in there." When asked what led him into teaching, Jack laughingly noted that it wasn't the money. "It's just one of those underlying things you just know," he said. "I've always wanted to teach or coach or be in the field one way or the other." Jack said he would stay in education until he retires. "I love it and can't see myself not doing it," he said. When it is time to retire, however, Jack said he would do so.

Jack said he saw some differences between his teaching and the teaching of traditionally certified teachers. "I feel I was better at many things because of being around education my whole life," he said. "It was one of those things that was built into me." He has had struggles "knowing the specific dates when things were going to be done...some of the lingo that teachers use on different things...progress reports...how exactly they need to be filled out." Jack said, "on some of those things I feel like I was behind, but it wasn't something that I couldn't do, because that's all stuff you have to learn." He added, "As for the actual presenting and teaching...I think I did a better job than a lot of them...a lot of them were doing it, I felt, because it was an easy degree to get in college." Jack said he was comfortable with his subject matter. "In math I think you have to be...in every subject you have to be...you never know what a student's going to ask you," he said. Jack stated that teaching is like "doing a presentation every hour, on the hour, and you never know

what [students] are going to ask, so you have to be prepared." Jack said that when it came to creating written lesson plans, he was a little behind. "I knew I had to do it, so I asked a couple of teachers to see their lesson plan books from the year before," he said. Jack examined their activities and objectives and during his first quarter of teaching used the other teachers' formats. "From that point forward, as things went along, I kind of adapted my own style," he said.

The alternative certification program devised for Jack consisted of 12 hours. He was told to complete the 12 hours during his first three years of teaching, but he completed the courses in only two years. He also began working on his master's degree during this time. Jack was assigned two professors from a college. One professor assisted him with student teaching experiences while he taught his first semester. The other professor advised and observed him during his first year of teaching. Though the first semester was labeled student teaching, Jack did not have a cooperating teacher. He was solely responsible for his class and was paid as a "regular" teacher. During college, Jack enrolled in educational theory classes, but no classes in educational theory. He completed many science classes because he originally planned to be a physical therapist. Jack graduated from college with approximately 160 credit hours.

If he could repeat his professional career, Jack said he would again choose some form of education. He would also choose the alternative certification program over the traditional program. "I would do it the way I did it because I saw a lot more. I took computer classes...physiology...I feel I have a lot more to offer," Jack said.

"I'm not an expert in a ton of areas. I feel like I know my stuff in a few areas...but I can speak intelligently about a lot of different areas...medicine, accounting and the business field," he said. Jack said, "because of the way I went through things, I feel I'm more well-rounded." Due to the assorted courses he took, Jack said he saw the relationship between math and the world of science and math. Jack said he recommended that people who work with alternatively certified teachers involve the teachers "in as many different things as you can because they will benefit from knowing...knowing how things work in the honors program...in athletics...in the counseling office...on field trips...get them involved in a lot of different things." Jack added, "don't worry about overwhelming them because the job itself...is an overwhelming job. Get them in there, get them involved in many different things so they can create their own styles." Jack said he wished the traditional certification programs were more like his alternative program. "I think I learned more by having to learn it myself than by being spoon-fed," he said. "But it all comes down to what kind of person it is, I think. Either you've got it or you don't. In a lot of ways, you can learn it, though," said Jack. "It's something you can learn, but it does come easier for some people than others. I'm a strong believer in that some people just aren't cut-out for it."

Susan's Experiences

Susan earned a bachelor's degree in pre-law with a minor in sociology. She also earned a master's degree in counseling. For the past six years Susan taught

geography and state, American and world history classes. She taught grades seven through 12. Susan's early educational experiences were positive. "I have always loved school. It has always been my favorite thing," said Susan. "I had a 4.0 in high school and I didn't miss a day of college until I was a junior. I was afraid to miss. I was afraid I'd miss something," she said. "There hasn't been any bad experiences as far as education for me."

Even before she had received her first teaching contract, Susan's great classroom experiences had already begun. "I was substituting because there were no jobs to be had. I was going to college...to get my master's and I was subbing for the home economics teacher and I don't know anything about home ec." Susan involved the class in a mock marriage activity. Students paired up and had to create a budget. Since that positive experience, she attempted to intersperse real-life experiences throughout her lessons. "Those are the kinds of things kids are going to remember. Things that aren't in a textbook," she said. "Everything you need to teach isn't necessarily in a book...I interject all kinds of life experiences. Everything you need to learn in school isn't between two covers of a book."

Several factors led Susan into teaching. She and her husband were transferred with his job and she wanted to have a family. Susan discovered her love for teaching during experiences as a substitute teacher. She said she thought, "this would be perfect for your family and that is something that you really enjoy, and I felt like I could relate to teenage kids." A love of continuous learning also aided Susan's teaching. "Kids need to hear that. They don't need to think that your education stops

once you hit high school or once you hit college," said Susan. "I'm an example of that. Just because you think you know what you what to do when you graduate from college doesn't mean things won't change." Susan was also willing to share her life experiences with her students. "I have an openness, not so much that I share personal things, but that I'm not afraid to say 'look, this is where I screwed up'," she said. Susan said her people skills added to her positive experiences as a teacher. "I think people skills are probably the most important thing that I have in my favor because if I don't know, I can find out," she said.

Education was the career in which Susan said she planned to stay. "The only time I thought about getting out of education and coaching, I probably cried all night. I couldn't sleep when I really did think 'I'm going to quit coaching,' and I could not imagine doing anything else beside that." Susan said, "I'm saying right now I can't imagine me not being in education in some way." Susan was aware of differences between her teaching and that of traditionally certified teachers. "I think because of my pre-law background and a sociology minor, I went through some experiences that regular teachers might not," said Susan. "Now I didn't go through the audio-visual class, and it might have helped me if I had done that, but I think I have an advantage in some ways."

The university she attended called Susan's first semester of teaching her own class student teaching. "I don't think you have a real taste of education until you're on your own, all alone in the classroom without someone there to back you up if the kids start acting up," said Susan. When asked about content knowledge, Susan said

that most of her subject area classes were law-based. She said teaching was often difficult, especially when new textbooks are adopted and knowledge is presented in different ways. As far as instructional knowledge and presentation skills were concerned, Susan said, "I never was nervous getting up and talking in front of kids." When comparing her instruction to that of traditionally certified teachers, Susan said, "I think I learned through trial and error, just like they did. They don't teach you how to get up in front of kids and deal with the different personalities of a classroom." Susan added, "you've got to adjust...your teaching style. I think that has more to do with what kind of person you are. I don't think I was any less prepared than they were." The university Susan attended required her to take several education classes, plus a few more history courses to receive certification in certain social studies areas. Susan said she had no interactions with the SDE. Her college advisor worked with the state department on her behalf.

Various struggles have influenced Susan's teaching careers. "The hardest thing for me at first was the fact that history is always changing," she said. Her struggles have been mild because "I'm not afraid to say 'I don't know'. If they ask me a question and I don't know, I say 'I don't know, let's look it up.'" Another struggle occurred before Susan became certified. "They changed the tests right in the middle of my getting certified and I took the wrong test three times, and that was already after I had gotten hired," she said. Susan also discovered that her university did not advise her to take a class that studied exceptional children. The course was required for her certification. She completed the class though correspondence work.

As an alternatively certified program participant, Susan said she was not aware of certification test study guides. She took one particular test three times before passing it.

Susan said that if she repeated her educational career, she would again participate in an alternative certification program. "I think I learned things about myself, especially through the sociology area. I think college is a time when you have to learn about yourself and I learned a lot," she said. Susan's class on religion allowed her to reevaluate her beliefs. A class on human sexuality allowed her to deal better with high school students. Advice Susan would give to other alternatively certified teachers would be to work with children and in classroom environments as much as possible. "People skills, not only getting along with teachers, but relating to kids, probably is a weakness I'd say alternatively certified teachers might have," Susan said. Susan suggested that alternatively certified teachers observe first to see if teaching is the right career for them. "I wouldn't change a bit the way I've been certified. It worked for me and my life and my situation," said Susan.

Kathryn's Experiences

Kathryn earned a bachelor's degree in a medical-related field and completed nine years of public school teaching experience. She was certified to teach science and taught in both junior and senior high schools. In an effort to become certified, Kathryn received a list of classes to take and forms to complete for the application process. She taught in a junior college while taking the courses required for

alternative certification. Kathryn took courses to learn about exceptional children, audio-visual techniques and multicultural issues. Her college also required her to enroll in five hours of student teaching while she worked as a paid teacher. Though she enrolled and paid for the hours, she was not required to do anything special and no one observed her while teaching. She made an A in the course.

Kathryn was told that the alternative certification process required at least ten years of work experience. She worked in her field for ten years and submitted paperwork to document her employment. She also submitted a list of classes taken to the SDE. Kathryn said that if she could repeat her professional career, she would have applied the required courses toward a master's degree. "I enjoyed (teaching) at the community college level and I felt like I was capable of teaching more at lower levels," said Kathryn. She said she wanted to create a curriculum and "get involved more with the kids, the activities, be off more when [my kids] were off and when my husband was off." Kathryn attempted to teach to multiple learning styles. "A lot of times it's hard to be auditory and visual learners all at the same time. If they don't get what you're saying, maybe they'll get what you've written down," she said.

When asked to discuss her classroom experiences, Kathryn said, "sometimes it's probably more the little things that you smile about...because the big things you don't find out about until years after you've had a child." She enjoyed visits from past students. "Somebody...comes back a year later and says, 'remember what we were talking about that one day' and they'll describe something," she said. Kathryn said students sometimes say, "we're doing it again and I remember it was really easy

when we did it in your class...or I understand it really well now that you've explained it to me on my level." She said one of her life's philosophies is that you cannot teach anything at too low of a level. "If it takes drawing a picture in crayons, I'll try it," she said. Kathryn also had students write to her. She described, "a Christmas card...saying thank you for being there for me when I needed you."

"My husband probably is my role model for teaching. I think he's probably the best teacher I have ever seen or heard," said Kathryn. "He just has some good, innovative ideas." Kathryn's husband often acted as her sounding board and helped provide ideas. Her father also taught for over 30 years. Kathryn also learned from a college professor who she felt knew his subject well. "What he taught was what he tested over," she said. Kathryn was also fond of his organizational skills and thought processes. She disliked teachers who "played games" by not testing over the material they taught. "If you're going to test on this, then that's probably what you should be teaching. Granted, sometimes you want to test to see what they can deduct from what they've learned, but that's kind of higher level thinking testing," Kathryn said. The mentor Kathryn had during her first year of teaching provided teaching suggestions for day-to-day use and survival techniques.

Many of Kathryn's ideas were received at workshops. "I love to go to workshops and seminars and I can honestly say at even the worst ones I've ever been to, I always take something away," she said. "It's really important to go to workshops because not only does it give you different ideas in teaching, it also motivates you to keep going and gets you some new ideas to try in the classroom."

Kathryn was assisted by education classes and participated in professional organizations. "Psychology of the exceptional child was very important," she said. Kathryn said she learned "different types of behaviors that [she had] never seen before in the other profession." Also helpful was learning about ability levels, learning styles and multicultural issues. "I do think that those classes were very worthwhile...very informative," she said. Kathryn was involved in two subject area organizations and was also a former member of the State Education Association and National Education Association.

Several personal characteristics have assisted Kathryn in the classroom. "I am a good listener. I try to listen to the problems the kids have...I'm not the typical female who wants to whine and gripe about things," she said. "So if there's a problem, there's a problem. And to me it's something that needs to be settled and you go on with life, not something that you want to drag out, and then hold grudges towards," said Kathryn. Kathryn said her female students "have a tendency to want to hold onto things." She also said she was a hard worker. "When I want something, I really work hard to go after it and I can't remember necessarily anything coming all that easy for me," she said. Kathryn stated that she encouraged students to study harder after making a low grade. "But a lot of times their attitude is well, I studied an hour and made a C. I just won't study at all next time," she said. Kathryn encouraged students to study, adding, "It's important they learn how to study now to be prepared for college later." She encouraged students to work hard and participate in extra-curricular activities. "I was (encouraged) and I know what a big influence

that made on my life...had I not been involved in all of those extra-curricular activities, I know I would not have been as happy as I was," she said.

Some of the most frustrating experiences Kathryn had dealt with were discipline issues. "Probably the most negative thing...is knowing how to deal with discipline...knowing when it's time to send them to the principal...when you should have taken care of it yourself in the classroom...it's different for whatever school system you're in.". Kathryn said she did not believe being traditionally certified would have helped. "I don't think I would have learned that, even if I would have taken all the education courses available to me. I think it was kind of learned by experience," she said.

When comparing her teaching to traditionally certified teachers, Kathryn said her classroom management was the same, but her content knowledge was definitely greater. She also said her instructional techniques were good when compared with traditionally certified teachers. "I use as many (different instructional techniques), if not more, than some of the others. But we have a good staff...I'm also good about borrowing creative ideas," Kathryn said. When asked if she would stay in the teaching profession, Kathryn said, "probably always in some form of teaching...but you also have to realize this was the one area I was never going to get into, and I did."

When asked if she would repeat her professional life, Kathryn said, "I don't regret it. I don't know if I would repeat it or not...I really like teaching in my original teaching field." Kathryn added, "if we were still living in the same area, I probably would have stayed with [medical technology] a little longer, but because we

were moving, it kind of made me go ahead and start going in this direction." Kathryn said she did not regret her career change. She said she knew she could always return to her original career if teaching did not work out. Kathryn said she was glad she entered teaching via the alternative certification program. "I feel like I knew what I was doing. It was more of a definite decision, that yes, I do want to go into teaching, and I'm willing to sacrifice [medical technology] so I can get to that point." Kathryn recommended other alternative certification candidates have at least five years of experience working in their primary fields.

Tim's Experiences

Tim was an alternatively certified teacher who entered teaching via the Troops to Teachers program. He taught almost all subjects, including social studies, science and math, to secondary students enrolled in an alternative school situation. Tim was completing his fifth year of teaching. His parents were retired teachers and one of his siblings was also in the profession. Tim's past careers included work in a trade as well as military enlistment. When Tim began college he believed he wanted to major in physical education and become a coach. After a short stay in college, he dropped out to join the military. Tim said that in high school his school's racial problems were ignored, as were the many fights. Tim hated school, but while in the military he said he started to see things from a different viewpoint. He chose his military career path because he wanted to make the military better and chose teaching to help students learn.

Often Tim provided opportunities for his students to work to mastery. His program was demanding, but he was consistent in his dealings with students and parents. He kept records and statistics as indicators of his accomplishments. Tim kept work samples so students could monitor their improvement and victories. At the time of this study, no students had dropped out of his classes during the school year. Tim created many parts of his curriculum, based upon students' needs. "Kids from the street...do respect some things. You've got to figure out what it is that they show respect for and that's what you have to use against them," said Tim. "In order to motivate them you have to appear to become one of them. Once you become one of them, you can become their leader. Once you become their leader, you can change how they think," he said. Tim had been challenged to a fistfight nine times, but had never been in a fistfight in his program with kids. "I can't ever appear to be afraid, otherwise I lose control because these are street kids," he said. Tim provided copies of his philosophies for his students. He refused to "spoon-feed" his students, but instructed them in self-discipline skills. Another factor that Tim said contributed to his achievements was substitute teaching.

When Tim took his first education class at a university he said he felt like the class was going to be a waste of time and money. Tim contacted other universities and other college professors told him about alternative certification. He contacted the SDE. Tim provided the SDE with information about his life. After interviewing with a person from the SDE, Tim was called and told that to become certified he needed to take one course, a class dealing with working with exceptional children. The SDE

employee told Tim he needed to take a test, but that he could be hired immediately. It was also required that he have a college sign a form indicating that he would take the exceptional child course within three years. The person from the university he had been attending refused to sign the form. According to Tim, the professor said, "you will not be effective as a teacher. Not only that, nobody will hire you if you manage to get certified." Tim happened to know a professor from another university, however. When Tim had shared his dilemma, the professor signed his paper. Tim was surprised, but was told by the professor that if he were serious about teaching, he would take the class. Tim immediately enrolled in the exceptional child course at that professor's university.

According to Tim, his classes have accomplished great things. "The principal told me at Christmas he had never seen so many classes completed by the students in here," said Tim. "The average student last year increased their reading level by two grade levels. I don't know about things like that. All I know about is that I'm here to teach these kids to read and write and do math," he said. When asked about the differences between alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers, Tim said someone told him he "wasn't tainted by traditionalism because [he] (doesn't) know what teachers are supposed to do." Tim added, "all of my training was in the military, in real life." Tim's students signed in and out at a time clock and were able to earn leave. "I just do what a boss would do. I do what works....I don't know what other teachers do," he said. "I don't know what all they would have taught me in a traditional teachers' program," said Tim. "I know when I looked at the list of

courses, I thought half of them would be a waste of my time and sitting in the ones that I did, I just felt like, this is a waste of my time," he said. "And the suggestions that they gave us...if a student is bad, write their name on the board. Yeah, right, and when you're turning around they're going to hit you in the back with a can. Just be real," said Tim.

Tim said he was comfortable with his knowledge of discipline and instructional techniques. "In the military we had what we call performance-oriented training. You trained to a standard, and if it takes you 48 hours, you don't go to sleep until you've accomplished that standard, or whatever that learning objective is for the day," he said. Tim said he planned to stay in the teaching profession and did not regret his decision to become an educator. "In the same way that doctors don't look for people that are well, teachers shouldn't look for people that are self-motivated," said Tim. "And this is the ripest crop of teacher-needing people out there, so this is where I want to be." Tim said, "I bond with every person in my class and I feel like I'm effective in their life."

Advice was suggested to other alternatively certified teachers. "Don't feel that just because you have not gone through the teaching program that you are a less qualified teacher. My first year that I was a teacher I wouldn't even go in the teachers' lounge," Tim said. "As soon as I would walk in there I would just feel so intimidated...all these people with all their degrees and they're all so smart. They'd sit around talking about this and that," he said. "And I was intimidated by all these people....but if you have confidence...if you're good at whatever it is that you're

teaching, you know your subject and you want to help people, then really, that's all you need," said Tim. Other advice included, "never say anything that you're not willing to follow through with. Never make a promise that you can't keep. Never make a rule that you can't enforce. And be fair. The kids have to believe that you're being fair." Tim added, "You can be the strictest teacher in the world or the easiest teacher in the world as long as you're consistent and fair, the kids will adapt...don't be afraid to raise the standards because, again, the kids will adapt."

Recently Tim was nominated for an excellence in teaching award. Though he did not receive the award, Tim said he enjoyed reading the recommendation letters from a student, parent and teacher. "I feel like I was winner, I mean, just reading my packet that they wrote up on me. It was just very flattering. I have no doubt that I have been successful in this career," said Tim. "And this is just my fifth year. I believe things are going to get better, even than they are now," he said.

Irene's Experiences

Irene had a bachelor's degree in a business-related field and a concentration in management information systems. She was certified to teach business math, accounting, business English, finance, and assorted other business classes. She had taught grades seven through twelve during the past four years. Before teaching, Irene worked in data processing for 10 years, during which time she went to school on and off. "After ten years of that...my philosophy was I was tired of being watered and I was ready to grow," said Irene. At that point Irene said she was either going to

complete her college education or stop pursuing it. Irene completed her education. Upon graduation, she worked for an oil-related company. After approximately eight years of working for the company, Irene heard about a local catastrophe. "As kind of a result...I had a...life changing evaluation of what was important and where I wanted to go with my life," she said. "Teaching was always my childhood dream, but in the late 70s the money was not there for sure and my interest was math and computers and I sought other degrees."

Before leaving her prior position, Irene learned about the alternative certification process. She contacted the SDE to request the necessary paperwork. Irene submitted the papers and provided information about her past interactions with children. "Obviously they wanted to know had you ever had any teaching experience, be it in a classroom, be it in a staff development in the workplace, Sunday school teacher," said Irene. "And you had to really emphasize and focus on the teaching...the student teacher relationship that you might have had with anyone over the years," she said. She also provided information about what in her work experiences could assist her in the classroom. "The state department basically reviewed that...my work experience, my work history, the courses that I took in my bachelor's degree, and then from that they evaluated and determined what courses that they would like for me to take," she said. Irene was required to take six credit hours of course work. One class she was required to take was psychology of the exceptional child. The other course she took pertained to technology in schools.

After Irene's husband retired, she had "the realization that...we are secure in our life, where we want to be financially, where we need to be. It's time to do things that we want to do." Irene said her company was also downsizing and she realized she wanted to teach. "I just went to the boss and said, 'look if somebody's going to go, I'll go,' and had an excellent out package." The package assisted Irene for the next year as she completed the hours necessary for certification. "It was a time of challenge, but it was also a time of realization...after having gone through that, we just kind of reevaluated that whole situation of what's important...it opened my eyes." Irene said she believed she had excellent classroom management. "My challenge in the classroom comes from within...my expectations are so much greater and often times...I have to remind myself that this person is 15 years old," she said. Irene said she also struggled when students did not have a good work ethic and did not employ proper time management skills.

While describing alternative certification, Irene said, "It was really a much simpler process than what I'd ever expected, and it was really a surprise to me to realize that all I needed was six hours, two classes, and I could be a teacher." "In a way, it was a blessing that obviously I was thankful for," she said. "But in a way I thought, you know, it would really frustrate me as a professional if someone came in and said, 'all I have to take is six hours and I can be the systems analyst that you are," Irene said. "From a professional standpoint, it was kind of an eye-opening experience." Irene said she felt her content knowledge was as good or better than that of traditionally certified teachers. When asked about her instructional techniques,

Irene said, "I have been told by other teachers, I'm very abrupt, I'm very straight-forward. But I'm very consistent." Irene added, "if I'm the toughest cookie they have to challenge, then they'll be lucky in life. I've prepared them for the challenge."

Irene said she encouraged interactions with her students. "But one of the big things that I really demand from my students is...the concept of you build your case before you go to the courtroom. Build your case before you get in my face," she said. "Maybe they teach this in traditional education, but I really believe that more teachers should be more open, should be more honest and should be more abrupt with high school kids," Irene said. When asked about other differences between her teaching and that of traditionally certified teachers, Irene said, "To this day I can't write on a chalkboard...I think that's a skill you acquire. And I really believe sometimes...that I have higher expectations and some of that is because of my career experiences." Irene added,

> School should be a good, fun place, but I think that once a child gets to the high school level, they need to recognize that it's not la-la land anymore, and it's not all about having fun and being social. It's about responsibility and trying to better their situation and themselves...maybe sensitivity...a traditional educator may be taught a little more sensitivity than someone that comes though an alternative (program). To me business is black and white and education is all that gray matter in between. That was a concept that was somewhat of a challenge to recognize...there's not always a right and a wrong, sometimes there is some of that gray matter, because in corporations and businesses you don't have that gray matter.

Teaching is Irene's last planned career. "I like it; it's challenging and everyday's a new day. Every kid is different. Challenge motivates me." Irene said she liked the quote "this too shall pass." "When the day is difficult I take that

philosophy. When the semester gets lingering on, I take that philosophy and realization that you'll have a break every now and then to refresh and come back and I like that," she said. "I honestly believe that I can make a difference with the kids and...as long as I believe that, and as long as they tell me that I do, then I'll stay in the profession," said Irene. "When I reach that level of mediocrity, I'll get out." Irene added, "The challenge in traditional educators that come up through the education college, after they've been in the program, after they've taught for, let's say, five years, maybe I'll give them eight years, I see a complacency there," said Irene. "I see them getting into a style and a routine that, from an outside looking in, they could write it on the board and never have to show up because it's the same thing every year," she said. "I'm a big believer in education is only education if you can use it outside of the city limits. And I don't want to teach a child something that is not a marketable skill in today's market for them," she added.

Irene was not an advocate of tenure. "You know there are a lot of really good teachers, but I really believe that there should be some kind of a system to inspire, motivate or get rid of teaches," she said. "I'm not a real...fond person of the three years, you're in like Flynn. You would never have that anywhere else and I don't believe that that should be the case with education either," said Irene.

Other skills Irene said she possessed included responsibility, time-management and communication. "I tell my students you can relay any message your heart desires as long as you pick the appropriate words and the tact and the delivery and that comes with communication skills," she said. When asked if she would

choose education as a career again, she said "I would probably do it just the way I did...my work experiences are very valuable to me." "I don't think you can take a bachelor's degree in just anything and convert it to a teacher." When she was pursuing her alternative teaching certificate, Irene said she understood that her opportunity to do so was short-lived.

Irene's advice to others who wish to become alternatively certified was to work in a school. "When I subbed for that one year...it opened the doors to me, the opportunity to see and focus in on the age group that I liked...I would highly recommend the substituting," she said. "Take the challenge for the reason that you want to make a difference in the kids' lives, and not as a means for a paycheck, because, as far as careers go...it has been by far the most demanding career," said Irene. She said her first year of teaching she stayed at school each so late that her husband asked her what time school was over. Irene said she was challenged to improve each day. Irene also said teacher candidates "need that experience of interacting with kids and communicate with kids, and even if they have children of their own, you need to be out there with kids that don't know who you are." Irene added, "Do it for the compassion of the profession, not just as a second change...my first choice didn't work so I'll do...the runner-up. Don't allow education to be a runner-up. Choose it."

Frank's Experiences

Frank had earned a bachelor's of science degree in a law-related field and a master's degree in a counseling-related field. Frank held a counseling certificate and was certified to teach various social studies classes as well as psychology. For the past six years he had taught students in eighth through twelfth grades world history and psychology and served as the high school counselor. Frank was the only teacher is his family and was the first person in his family to go to college. Before teaching, Frank worked with juvenile delinquents for over 10 years. He also served in the military before entering the teaching profession.

When asked about his alternative certification process, Frank said, "I went through it early and pretty well had to find things out on my own. I contacted the state department of education, got the applications...and they directed me off to the other places I needed to go." After receiving his alternative certification, Frank started teaching through Troops to Teachers. Frank said the personnel from Troops to Teachers and the alternative certification department of the SDE provided him with much assistance. While in high school, Frank participated in Future Teachers of America. Through that organization he had opportunities to serve as a teacher's aide and even teach one day of classes. When Frank began college, he originally wanted to become a teacher. "I went my first year of college and that was when the Vietnam War was going on, a lot of protesting going on the campus....so I did my own protest. I enlisted in the army," he said. When Frank later returned to college, he chose to major in the area in which he was working. While serving in the military, Frank said,

"I started thinking, if I was to go ahead and take the early release money, what would I do? Teaching...I enjoyed that...and they were talking about Troops to Teachers at that time to help people get into the classrooms," he said. "And I thought, sounds like a pretty good deal. So I decided to go into teaching at that time... the seeds were sown...but then I just, they just sprouted," said Frank.

The state department evaluated Frank's transcript and told him what certification tests to take. Frank was required to take 13 hours of education classes. Two of the courses were specified: a teaching methods and an exceptional child course. "I came into teaching out of a time warp, I guess...the way I was taught in the '60s," said Frank. "I didn't go through the '70s and the '80s in the teaching program...they changed quite a bit during those times...I carried forward, pretty much, the old standards that you had back then," he said. "The biggest drawback I can tell you about is the first day in the classroom. We didn't have the student teaching period and it was something I was worried about," said Frank. The experience ended up being a positive one. Frank said things have gone well thus far. "The administration...has a lot to do with it...in the army what we called the command climate....I pretty well just go on and do my own thing and...don't let outside things throw me off too much," he said.

Frank said his biggest frustration was waiting to be hired to teach. He had given up on teaching when the friend he had met in a class told his wife about an opening. "I was an alt. certificate person and kind of an outsider...and it was tough breaking in. I tried that for almost three years," he said. At the time his friend

contacted Frank's wife, Frank was working out of state. He contacted the school and was hired through phone interviews. "What helped break the ice was the Troops to Teachers... because at that time they had the money to spend...they gave 50% of your first year's salary and dropped that ten percent every year through the five year mark," said Frank. Frank said that at the small schools the money was a big incentive. The school that hired him had a tight budget. The biggest problem with the program, according to Frank, was the delays.

When comparing his instructional skills to those of traditionally certified teachers, Frank said he was primarily a lecturer, but also facilitated group work and discussions. "I'll even take a chapter and say, okay, you teach the class, and then I'll just kind of sit back and...draw things out," he said. Frank said he asked students questions to get them involved. Frank said he used humor in his lessons. "I use humor in the classroom, and I think it works out. You know, they start going to sleep or something, I will...lighten up the mood," he said. "That's one of my big things that sets me off....there's a lot of them that do that, but I think the ones that do use humor effectively in the classroom get their lessons across a lot better," said Frank. Another difference between him and most traditionally certified teachers was the ability to being in real work experiences. "Bringing in the posters, the pictures, the postcards and just the experiences, describing the things that I've seen...the kids pick up on that," said Frank. Frank said his classroom management skills were particularly strong. "I set the standards and expect them to meet those standards, and if they don't, they suffer the consequences....no excuses," he said. Frank said his

subject knowledge was strong. "If I'm weak in a area, I'll pick up a book and study up on it myself so I can present a good lesson to the students," Frank said his content knowledge is as good as or better than people who have taken all of the traditional education program classes.

Frank said he planned to stay in teaching, that it is his "final frontier." Frank said he would choose education again and would also repeat the alternative process. He said he had a student teacher and would not want to be one. "I would rather do it the way that I've done it," Frank said. He said, "the way we did it in the military, we would study...we had the lesson plans and we had to study those lesson plans and the material, and then had to rehearse ourselves." Frank added that then the instructors would present the class in front of someone else. Each instructor was told his or her weak spots and whether or not he or she passed and could present the class to soldiers. Frank's advice for others pursuing alternative certification was to be persistent. "The biggest problem that I had was...getting that first job. It's tough, it really is. If it hadn't been for Troops to Teachers, I might have just given up on it totally," said Frank. "Make sure you're prepared....get your resumes out and try to get that job," he added. Frank also suggested meeting face-to-face with the state department personnel. "Having a Troops to Teachers guy down there in the education department helped. Once I started going through him, I had no delays," said Frank.

Kent's Experiences

Kent obtained a bachelor's degree in a science-related field and an advanced degree in law. At the time of the study, he taught upper mathematics classes to students in grades nine through 12. He had been teaching in the same school district for ten years. Before beginning his teaching career, Kent worked as an intern at a firm, then practiced law. "I originally didn't think of teaching as a career, probably because of the monetary aspect, maybe the prestige aspects," said Kent. "When I graduated from high school I thought I would be an engineer, but I knew in the back of my mind, someday I would really like to teach," he added. Kent said he quickly became disillusioned with the law. "I got to thinking about things, other things I would like to do. Teaching was at the forefront," he said.

"Growing up I really loved teaching as a student. I was able to do a lot of peer tutoring and things. When I was younger I was a teachers' aide for four or five years," said Kent. "And back then teachers' aides could teach, at least tutor, if they wanted to, and grade papers, and do all that. I really loved it," he said. Kent's decision to return to the classroom was also aided by his wife's career progression. "We really had very little time to raise a family when I was practicing law and I thought it would be good for one of us to kind of scale down," he said. "And teaching allowed me more time with my family, and time off in the summers and time to grow that side of me rather than the professional side. I really sought that opportunity because of the time more than anything," said Kent.

One of Kent's classroom victories was seeing his students' eagerness to take a variety of his courses. "They're always very anxious to get in a second and a third and a fourth course with me," he said. "So to me that's the greatest level of success...to have students who have already come into close contact with you decide that they want to go through that same stuff again," said Kent. Kent also had students who entered his class hating math but exited it being able to tolerate or even enjoy the subject. "And I've actually had a student who...felt like she could not do math, and by the time I had had her for two different courses...was saying things like, 'I think I would really like to be a math teacher,'" he said. Kent received several teaching-related awards and received national teacher certified. Kent had few major struggles. "I seem to come naturally to just handling a class," he said. Kent added that he was easy-going when compared to some teachers, but at the same time demanded that students learn. "I have a sense of humor where I can kind of deflect some of the anger that might arise in the classroom between students or even with me. It just seems to come naturally," he said.

When Kent found out about the alternative certification program, he contacted the SDE for information. He was instructed to take 18 credit hours of education courses. Kent took a portion of the courses while continuing to practice law. He applied for and received a position in the district where he continued to teach at the time of the study. Kent said he believed the differences between himself and other math teachers had nothing to do with certification type. "Maybe it has to do with our personalities," he said. Kent said he had no troubles with classroom management or

content area knowledge. When asked about instructional techniques, Kent said, "I think I did a lot of stealing early on. But I had a pretty distinct idea of how I wanted to run the classroom anyway." He added, "And I would bet that...I use more varied techniques than...the people who have education degrees because...I like to learn. I like to do things differently myself and I use technology as a major resource." When asked if he would repeat his professional career, Kent said, "I don't know. It would be hard for me to say I would do it differently because...I've gained so many valuable plaudits, if nothing else, because I am alternatively certified." Kent said that his strange background set him apart from other teachers. "I would definitely stay in education...in any level," he said. Kent added that if he could choose a teaching assignment again, he might have been a kindergarten teacher.

Kent's advice to others who wished to become alternatively certified was to "get into the schools long before they make the quantum leap of...quitting their job and getting into the program." He had been in classrooms and talked to teachers and administrators a great deal before making the decision to teach. "I think, unfortunately, a lot of people come in...thinking that schools are like they used to be. Well, they're not. They're not...anything like they used to be. Students have a lot more say in...what is done in the classroom," said Kent. He said that alternatively certified teachers often fail because "they're not prepared for the personality conflicts." Another suggestion Kent made to alternatively certified teachers was making sure their skills were strong. "I would suggest anybody that...is thinking about alternative certification not overlook the curriculum that they'll be teaching,"

he said. Kent said that the candidates needed to take enough courses to ensure "they feel they're capable with the curriculum." Kent took several college math classes to hone his skills.

Daniel's Experiences

Daniel had a bachelor's degree in a government-related field as well as a law degree. He was certified to teach various history courses, but mainly taught students in a lower high school grade. According to Daniel, the alternative teacher certification process "was neat...it was an excellent thing for me." Daniel said he was only required to take six credit hours of additional college work because of his law degree. After practicing law for more than 15 years, Daniel went into business with a few other people for eight years. He was an executive officer in the company. After selling his interest in the company, Daniel said he was not interested in returning to a practice of law. He said he substitute taught some. "I just wanted to be sure...that I could handle the kids and handle the situation...and when I decided that I could do that, I went ahead and took the examinations and passed the tests I needed to pass," he said. Daniel was offered a last minute teaching position. He worked quickly to prepare for the classroom. "There was a lot to do to get the...approval, get the course work set up. I had to take a methods course, a three hour course, and then the one for exceptional child," he said.

"I was always a good student and always loved school...I've always had a very positive attitude toward school and education and reasonable success," Daniel

said. Daniel's family encouraged him to receive a good education. Two specific teachers influenced his life. An elementary teacher made a special impact. "I can remember so many things that I learned...in that class....That's how far back I can...remember learning things...I could probably stop and name...some lasting impressions from almost every teacher," he said. A coach also positively influenced Daniel. Daniel said he originally would have liked to have become a coach and teacher, but he did not believe he could afford to do so. Daniel's wife was a teacher, as were various aunts and uncles. He said his wife was not sure about his decision to teach. "She didn't think I would enjoy it. She was not too hot on the idea at first...she was concerned that I would like it," he said.

Daniel said teaching was a more difficult job than he thought it would be. "And I don't say that negatively because I love it. It's the most enjoyable thing I've ever done," he said. Daniel added, "the continuous pressure of teaching is second to nothing as far as I can think of, as far as the work and pressure...involved." Daniel said he has experienced many classroom accomplishments. "I would say that the successes come in seeing young people who enjoy history, enjoy being in the class," he said. Daniel said some parents told him that for the first time their children were enjoying social studies. He also said he enjoyed watching his students grow up. "I regret that I don't have the time left to teach long enough...to start teaching the kids of my kids, for instance. I know more of their grandparents than I know of their parents," said Daniel. Daniel said he planned to teach for approximately ten to 15 years.

If he repeated his professional career, Daniel said he would definitely choose teaching again and would also choose alternative certification. "I looked into teaching before I knew about the alternative certification program and it was so preposterous...having to come back...60 hours of other...stuff. I just put it aside," he said. "When the alternative certification law was passed, that was when I decided that maybe it was something I could now get into," he stated. Daniel said he was not encouraged to become a teacher by administrators and other teachers, but was accepted by his peers. He said that the upper administrators might have been uncertain about alternatively certified teachers. Daniel said the administrators wondered how the teachers would work out and whether it was right for people to be able to get jobs and begin teaching without taking education-related courses. "But my attitude's been, if a school will go with you, then who's gonna suffer but you and the school?" asked Daniel.

When compared to traditionally certified teachers, Daniel said awareness of terminology was "really the only difference that I am aware of, of course from my perspective, I may not be aware of things that other people observe or think they know." Daniel said that he had decided the terminology was not that important. He also said he had a better than average grasp of his content area. "I've always loved history, loved government, always read, always stayed up on politics, always stayed up on current events. And there's nothing, there's not an education in the world like law to prepare you for anything," said Daniel. "I always felt like if you give me two

weeks I can probably do about anything...because that's what you have in law. You have to become an expert on just about anything in about two weeks," he added.

Daniel described his classroom management as "a constant, consistent project", but said he had been relatively successful. As far as instructional techniques were concerned, Daniel said, "I think I'm more sensible, in a way." He said many people believe "older folks" are "reluctant to change for negative reasons...but generally it's a matter of perspective....you've really got to see a worthwhile likelihood of a worthwhile change." Daniel said that lack of classroom experience "is a daunting thing...for an administrator thinking in terms of hiring somebody." According to Daniel, "it's...a formidable situation in high school with the high school kids and...the fact that you can't just strong arm them....They have to want to do what you want to do in order for you to get anything done." Daniel had few classroom struggles, however he said his knowledge of the material and sense of humor contributed to his achievements. "I've been always able to just cajole and laugh and bring students along with good-natured humor and acceptance of them and they seem to be comfortable with me," he said.

The classes Daniel was required to take also helped him. Daniel said he probably appreciated the methods class more than the students preparing to be teachers did. "I was dealing with the things that the teacher was talking about every day and I probably got something every class meeting. I was hungry for something. He was giving ideas and I was teaching lessons right behind him, practically," said Daniel. The two required courses helped, said Daniel. "There are probably others

that would have helped," he added. Daniel said he had no desire to be teacher of the year or nationally certified. "On the other hand...I'm not turning a deaf ear toward anything I think that sounds like it would work or help because I love the kids, I love the association with them, I want them to be successful," he said. Daniel said that as an alternatively certified teacher, education was a very difficult thing to get into. But, to him, teaching had been a good thing. "I've enjoyed it and I plan to teach as long as I feel good and my health holds out and I'm pretty healthy," he said.

Glen's Experiences

Glen was a math teacher with a bachelor's of arts degree in mathematics. He just started pursuing a master's of arts degree in teaching mathematics. At the time of the study, Glen had been teaching for eight years to students in grades nine through 12. Glen's sister and grandmother-in-law were teachers and his wife taught adult education courses through her job. Glen worked as a security officer, at a distribution warehouse and served in the military. Several experiences and interactions led Glen into teaching. Through a high school language class, he taught weekly language courses to younger students. "Somehow, I ended up in Future Teachers of America...and I was always being a smart aleck in high school. Somebody said, "You want to teach?" I said, 'Yeah, I'll make enough money to starve off," said Glen.

During Glen's first semester of college, an English teacher said that he should perhaps think about teaching. "I blew her off," he said. Glen completed his degree, but had not decided on a career choice. "I...got into the service, and then in basic

training...they told me I should have either been a priest or a teacher and all the jokes that go with that," Glen said. "The military mindset is they tell you to do something, you do it. And...everytime they told me to do something, my instinctive reaction was to say why and that's kinda, that's actually more of a teacher mentality," he said. Glen said he received calls and letters from family members that described the trouble his niece and nephews were having in school. "They kept saying, the teachers don't understand us. They're not helping....and I needed something to do, some sort of career." Glen's sister informed him that the state needed math teachers. His sister shared the details of the alternative certification program. "So I got my early out, came back, started working ...during the day, went and checked on the alternative...program," said Glen.

The first two years of Glen's career were spent teaching in an alternative school. In his quest to become certified, Glen provided the state department of education with his transcript. The state department reviewed it and provided him with the number of courses he was required to take. Glen took an exceptional child class, testing class, and an independent study course while he taught part-time. Glen completed the required course work during his first two years of teaching. Overall, Glen said school was a positive experience for him. Several teachers affected his life, one of whom he recently visited. A language teacher, a math teacher, a computer and math teacher and an English teacher assisted him. "We had just started with...computers and I got into a computer science class...and (the teacher) let me come in the off time and work with them," said Glen. "The English teacher was very

much literature-minded, broadened our horizons that way," he said. "I try to emulate those two math teachers," he added.

Glen described various positive classroom experiences. He recently talked with one of his troubled students and helped the student get help. "He was very appreciative I took time to listen to him," said Glen. "Little 'feel goods'...a student takes time to say good morning, takes time to say have a good day... a get well card" all helped revive Glen's spirits. Glen provided an injured student with a textbook for school and one at home so she did not have to take it back and forth. The student said he was the only one who had shown concern for her. Glen e-mailed her other teachers, suggesting they also provide extra textbooks. Glen helped students prepare for and pass state mandated tests. "As teachers it's not the big hooray wins," he said. Glen also helped write and received a technology grant.

Teachers in Glen's school district were required to participate in 30 hours of professional development activities each year. "It is a lot of time outside of class...but they helped quite a bit," he said, though he added that many times that workshops are tricks passed off as miracles. Glen said alternative certification did not prepare him for classroom management difficulties and for teaching many levels in one classroom. Recently he had a student threaten him who was not punished. However, Glen said he planned to stay in teaching "for now." He said, "No one goes into teaching for the money...I wanted to make a difference. I wasn't making a difference in the military. I was just one cog in a big machine. They didn't miss

me." Glen said he liked to think he was making a difference with some students. Glen added,

> But more and more I hear things like people who graduate from high schools, they go on to tech schools for a year or two. They get out, they're making $40,000 a year You get students you do all this stuff for. It's hard to keep doing all that stuff and not get thank yous and those students, there's always a lot of students that will say think you, or they'll get the bright look on their face, and that's a thank you. You get administrators that it seems like, as long as they have happy students, they're really not too concerned about anything else and they seem real concerned about the students, but if the teachers have a problem, they won't hear about it.

When asked about how his teaching differs from that of traditionally certified teachers, Glen said, "I've seen some more experienced teachers handle things a little bit differently. You have to go back and you have to dissect what you've done for the day." Glen said, "I think the alternative certification [program] is great in the fact that you get more teachers out there and I guess that's a good thing, but...I don't think that it fully prepares or adequately prepares people to teach in the classroom." He added, "Anybody who knows material doesn't necessarily mean they can teach it." According to Glen, alternative certification "is like a Band-Aid on a big, hemorrhaging wound." Glen added that alternative certification is not solving the problem of the need for more teachers. "The United States needs more teachers. They need to have the teachers they've got be better respected, better paid, and boost their morale so they'll stay there," said Glen. "Instead of having these stopgap measurements like this alternative certification. I think it is really lacking in real work situations...at least from the courses I took," he added.

Glen said he had a friend who was genius who decided to teach. The friend lasted a month in the classroom. He told Glen, "I didn't think teachers had to work this hard." Another lady Glen knew stopped teaching after a month and a half. The teacher told Glen that the students were rude and the administrators were not supportive. Glen said,

> Alternative certification, if this is something that's not going to go away...they've got to have more real world situations. You can't just say just because someone knows something means they can teach it. And if you don't prepare people for it they're going to burn out. Maybe they've got the heart to be a teacher, they just...didn't get their teaching certificate....There's only so many times you're going to hit your head against the wall."

Content knowledge was one of the things in which Glen said he was lacking. "That's one of the fundamental reasons why I'm working on my masters of arts in teaching mathematics. I want to be a better teacher. Sounds corny, but it's true," he said. Glen said he learned more about math while working on his master's degree than he learned during his bachelor's work. He was attempting to catch up. Glen said that taking classes also allowed him to walk in the shoes of his students.

Glen was a member of a group of teachers that regularly met with the school district's superintendent. He was also a member of a mathematics teachers' organization and was in Who's Who of American Teachers. Glen sponsored two academic-related student organizations. If he was to repeat his professional life, Glen said he would probably earn a bachelor's degree in teaching mathematics. Glen's advice for those teachers who wished to pursue alternative certification was "Go back and get your teaching degree...you're going to suffer, and if you have any type of

conscience, you're going to realize your kids are suffering." Glen said that if teachers did not understand the material and "if they don't have the understanding of how to deal with the student, deal with the parents, deal with the administrators, and all that combined together, then they're (education courses) useless. They're worse than useless. They're a detriment." Glen added,

> I don't think the alternative certification program is a good thing and I know the irony is I'm a product of it, more or less, but I really think that it's not answering the problem, the lack of teachers. If anybody wants to be a teacher, really wants to be a teacher, then they would not mind, or they would have the fortitude to go back and get a teaching degree....A school is made up of teachers who can teach. And if you don't have that, you don't have a school. I don't care how much money you've got.

Patrick's Experiences

Patrick earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree from a United States military academy. At the time he graduated from the academy there were no specific majors. He earned a master's degree in a computer-related field. Patrick retired from the military and substitute taught for three months before becoming a full-time teacher. Patrick's wife was a teacher, as were both of his parents. Patrick was certified to teach secondary math and science. At the time of the study he taught junior high science. He had been teaching for six years. "I've set my goals a little differently. My first goal is for five years. My next goal is for 10 years....I do not know what it would require for me to retire...I never really thought that I would teach," said Patrick. "I'm not real sure that it will be a lifetime for me, but I am definitely thinking about 10 years."

A friend of Patrick's informed him about the alternative certification program. When the state department of education evaluated Patrick's experiences and transcripts, he was told to take six hours of course work: the exceptional child and a methods course. Patrick took additional hours above the six required ones. "Most of my degrees and background are in science and engineering and a majority of my life experiences prior to coming into the program was in small unit leadership," said Patrick. Patrick said he completed military leadership classes and learned management of companies. He also taught military courses.

Patrick said some of his greatest classroom accomplishments involved using real-life examples in his lessons. "For example, it may be in pre-algebra and I'll be talking about ratios, and I'll want to talk about miles per gallon or cost per ounce or something like that," said Patrick. "Sometimes it catches the children's interest," he added. "As far as engineering, I'm able to answer a lot of questions....I can pretty much give an educated answer to a what-if question that I wasn't prepared for before it was asked," he said. "My successes are when I find somebody who actually believes that there is an application for science or math in real-life and it's pretty satisfying when you run across that in ninth grade, or younger," Patrick said. Patrick said he continued to work on his classroom management skills. "I'd like to learn how teachers who've taught for an awful long time have gotten past that. I'm still searching," he said. "I thought I was suited to be a school teacher right out of high school or college, but I think my expectations are a lot higher than the average class is prepared to meet," Patrick said. Patrick said he turned to his state's student skills

manual for guidance and that the state department and Troops to Teachers program had been of much assistance as he made the transition into the classroom.

If he could repeat his professional career, Patrick said he would choose education as first choice and would go through the traditional certification process. Patrick's advice to people who wished to become alternatively certified was to contact the state department of education. He suggested teacher candidates bring their enthusiasm and background experiences and apply those experiences to whatever area they teach. Patrick said the teachers should "learn that you have to coexist with the people who've been doing it for their whole lifetime." The teachers should also "set a goal of longer than they think they should stay....but don't say that I'm going to go in because I'm not happy with my previous life."

CHAPTER V

LONGEVITY FACTORS

Introduction

Morgan (1999) wrote, "The health of our nation and the strength of our medical profession depend on knowledge and competency developed through training in the classroom, internship and residency. Likewise, our intellectual vigor and national strength depend on competent and successful teachers developed through training in the classroom, internship and residency" (p. 374). The teachers interviewed for this study lacked the teacher education classes required for traditional teacher certification. Only two participated in a form of internship. The internship in which they participated was conducted during their first semester of teaching. Rather than having a supervisor in the classroom with them, the educators participated in the internship on their own. They were solely responsible for their respective classes.

"A strong teaching profession requires highly qualified teachers who are prepared for the rigors of the classroom and who continue their professional development through the support of mentors" (Morgan, 1999, p. 374). All of the teachers interviewed had worked in another non-education field that they believe helped ready them "for the rigors of the classroom" (Morgan, 1999, p. 374). Each teacher cited at least one person who served as a formal or informal mentor. The school district or university assigned formal mentors. Informal mentor relationships developed through interactions with others.

All 10 participants have received tenure. Through data analysis, patterns were revealed. The patterns shed light on the factors that led to the career longevity of these alternatively certified teachers. The teachers were influenced by skills learned in their past work experiences and by mentors who assisted them during their tenure. The participants indicated that their work experiences assisted in the development of such skills as interpersonal communication, instruction and technology. Each felt as if his or her job provided much assistance and most did not regret the certification route they took, due to the experiences they had as a result of their former jobs.

Various people played a large part in assisting the alternatively certified teachers. Spouses, parents and friends helped some of them. Former teachers and college professors, fellow teachers and administrators assisted others. Each of the aforementioned people took on the role of mentor while providing words of encouragement or helpful suggestions. The mentors also served as role models and allowed their ideas to be "stolen" by the alternatively certified teachers.

Work Experiences

The alternatively certified teachers all described various work experiences and skills that had helped them acquire tenure as teachers. The skills ranged from instructing in a non-education field to acquiring communication skills in the workplace. "Teachers do not all follow the same occupational career path, nor are their lives necessarily similar in other respects—each has their own idiosyncratic biography" (Sikes, 1985, p. 29). This is especially true for this study's alternatively

certified educators who have had at least one other set of work experiences. The work experiences of the alternatively certified teachers were significant in assisting them achieve longevity. Goodson (1992) found that "from the teachers' own accounts, but also from more detached research studies, it is clear that the teachers' previous *life experience and background* help shape their view of teaching and essential elements in their practice" (p. 243).

Relationships with Others

Past work experiences allowed Jack and Tim to work successfully with others. The summer jobs Jack had during college allowed him to interact well with staff members, students and parents. Tim said he believed his approximately seven years of military experiences greatly assisted him in the classroom. He learned how to work better with other people and think on his feet. Susan said her job experiences helped her in her social studies classes. "I think through my life experiences I learned how to deal with people and I think that helped me just as much as any education class did," she said.

Problem Solving

The problem-solving abilities of Jack, Kent and Glen were assisted by their prior positions. Working in a bank helped Jack learn to answer mathematical questions on the spot and improved his problem-solving abilities. Kent said that "You have to be able to problem solve and I don't mean just in the area of

mathematics, I mean really be a problem solver." Kent added that one must be able to handle a great deal of input from a variety of sources in a small amount of time. "I think...to be a good lawyer...you have to be a real logical thinker. You have to be able to make connections and mathematics is all about making connections. As I'm teaching, and teaching students, I've learned that," he said. According to Kent, most students think of math as arithmetic. He said he thought of it as problem solving and was able to demonstrate that to his students. Glen brought into his classroom real world math problems. He strived to answer the age-old question "Where will we ever use this in the real world?" He attempted to show kids where they would later apply their acquired knowledge and skills.

Sharing Experiences

Susan, Kathryn and Frank's past work experiences helped them in their teaching. Susan's work experiences as a jailer, waitress and substitute teacher assisted her in achieving tenure as a teacher. "I think I can relate to all aspects of kids' lives. I can talk about booking a prisoner in and if the subject got off in history about any kind of legal rights, I could help," said Susan. "I wasn't just somebody that went to college and straight into a classroom. I had some real-life situations. I waited tables for a living," she said. Susan added that sharing life experiences was especially important when teaching high school students. Her past experiences allowed her to identify with her students. "I don't care if it's because their dad's been in jail," she said.

Kathryn's 10 years of work experiences allowed her to add real-life examples to her lessons. She also occasionally worked in her field during the summers. "I can bring in the outside world and show them how it applies, also give them some ideas in the medical field, as to the jobs that are out there," Kathryn said. Some of Frank's best classroom experiences were aided by his ability to relate to real world scenarios. Frank said he especially enjoyed teaching his world history class. "I...traveled through Europe and have seen a lot of the places we talk about in the book and I can bring things in that I've picked up in the travels," he said. "In particular, the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany...I've got pieces of the Berlin Wall that I actually chipped off of it, right after the wall came down," Frank said. Frank added that he saw a change in his classroom when he spoke about his life experiences. "They just kind of sit back and relax and listen...and I think that helps my credibility in the classroom," he said.

Communication and Instructional Skills

The communication skills and instructional techniques of Frank, Kent, Tim and Patrick improved through the help of their work experiences. While working in defense, Frank taught the use of military equipment and served as a military instructor. Frank said he learned to teach while in the military. He called the military teaching preparation for the classroom. "Call that my student teaching period," he said. Frank said he learned that being a teacher is being a role model. He said his past careers have helped him. "I found myself...and carrying myself in the military

manner...I think that has assisted me quite a bit," he said. "I learned to teach in the army...I think that helped prepare me for going into the classroom," he said. Frank realized he enjoyed teaching while serving as a military instructor. "I realized I was pretty good at it...so why not get into it as a living?" Frank asked. While in the military Frank said he had to be able to brief other people at a moment's notice. He said he had to "be able to gather the material that we needed, the data...come up with slides...the whole presentation type thing, and I think that helped me, working in a high stress environment like that." Frank said he had very little stress in his classroom, compared to military life. "I just feel like...all that has guided me and feel like I could pretty well teach just about anything, except maybe the highly technical fields," he said. Frank's communication skills helped him, as he was able to "digest [information] and be able to spit it back the way people can understand it."

Kent practiced law for approximately five years. "I think as an attorney you have to be a very effective communicator, both orally and in writing," said Kent. "I think that's a big part of being a good attorney and I think that's a big part of being a good teacher also. You have to be able to think on your feet," he said. Various skills from his previous occupation assisted Kent in the classroom. He said that while practicing law "you really had to be able to think on your feet, stand in front of a group of people...and present an argument, justify your argument and be able to answer questions and anticipate those questions." Kent said that he also sometimes had to ask the questions for the individual if he or she did not know how to phrase them. Kent said he also did that in the classroom. "That's how a teacher teaches and

should teach. You solicit all sorts of feedback from your students...get them to think and come up with questions that they may not be aware they have to ask or want to ask," he said. Kent said he "came armed with that skill." He also believed he was organized and thorough. "I know I can tell you exactly what I'm going to be doing for the next two or three weeks in each of my classes," he said.

Tim also said his communication skills had improved. "As a school teacher I feel like it was the same kind of a thing. When I decided I wanted to be a schoolteacher, I wanted to create an environment where people could learn," said Tim. "And I got the idea from my last job in the military in recruiting. It was like, look at the people who are coming in here," he said. "And so again, being the eternal problem-solver of the world, I wanted to find out what I could do to make a difference....Okay, maybe I can be a schoolteacher," said Tim. The military also helped Tim improve his instructional techniques. "When you begin a class in the military, you have to state the purpose, why they're there, and you have to give them a reason to want to learn," he said. "The teacher is required to motivate the students and you can't just say 'because you might die if you don't learn this'". In the military Tim also learned about making eye contact and monitoring students by walking around the room. Patrick's past experiences have allowed his to relax in the classroom. "I feel honestly very comfortable on a daily basis that there's just almost nothing that would be asked of me in my subject area that I haven't heard of....it just came from experience," said Patrick. He said,

> I didn't come into the classroom out of college. My skill is the opportunity to provide things that I've done in real life....I have to be careful and reign it in a little bit because...the children use that to try to get me off track, so unfortunately I've really kinda toned that down the last couple of years. I'd found myself not getting to the end of what I'd intended to do quite regularly and now I'm teaching science, which is more of a lecture type, as opposed to math, which to me was more of a short discussion, followed by everyone working their work and I'd drop in on each one of them and see what their problem was, whereas in science, they could keep me going the whole hour and I don't want that to happen. I want them to have time to work, so they'll get started and have the hurdles already covered before they go home.

Other Assistance

Irene's past work experiences assisted her on the state certification test. While she completed the two courses, Irene worked as a substitute teacher. "It was just my personal insights and my personal dealings with school that I had to go on, and I did start subbing," she said. Irene also took nine additional hours of college credit. "But...it's the professional experience that teaches my classroom, more so than the courses that you would receive in a basic education degree," she said. Aspects of Daniel's previous jobs contributed to his tenure as a teacher. He had many opportunities to work with children. "I've seen a lot of situations that are on the very bad end of what kids experience," he said. "The actual teaching part, I tell people it's like trying a case before a judge but never getting to sit down and listen to the other side very much. You've got to be in charge all the time," said Daniel.

Glen said his work experiences positively affected his teaching. The organizational skills he learned while working assisted him in his daily teaching activities. Patrick said serving as a military instructor changed his teaching

philosophy. "I still had a little difficulty translating the standards that I thought that I was required to meet versus what I think the children have to meet today," said Patrick. "My goals now are to set standards, like I did in the army, where the standards are achievable by a high percentage of the students," he said. Patrick added,

> The army's standards helped me become more realistic with a larger population, depending on educational levels because I've had children and men and adults that ranged probably from third or fourth grade level in reading and so forth to children that were probably in the tenth grade equivalent in a junior high. And so the army probably got me ready for that. I would have been hard pressed to deal with that right straight out of high school and college because...I...came from a small town and we just didn't have the cross-section of people that I saw in the army.

Mentors

The teachers described mentors who positively influenced them and contributed to their longevity in the classroom. The mentors were present in various roles, from college professors and residency mentors to colleagues and family members. Each participant described the benefits of the relationships with those people who served as mentors. "A mentor is well-advised to probe and listen carefully to a new protégé's previous experiences. These experiences are the rich soil in which the effective mentoring experience is to be grown" (Fraser, 1998, p. 48). The experiences of the alternatively certified teachers were different from most teachers who enter the classroom via a traditional certification process. Shulman (1989) found that teachers "without a firm foundation of educational methods and guided experience," like those interviewed for this study, need mentors to "play a role

similar to that of a university supervisor, whose job it is to link research to practice and to encourage their protégés to reflect on their teaching" (p. 6).

The teachers felt indebted to those people who helped them. "Most alternate route programs provide mentor teachers to support and guide candidates in their first year of teaching. Such mentors help teacher candidates negotiate with the school system and provide feedback on instructional practice" (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990, 1992, as cited in Stoddard & Floden, 1995, p. 9).

For over a decade, induction programs and mentors have helped ease the transition of beginning teachers into full-time teaching. Some researchers believe that working with an experienced teacher will help beginning teachers' instructional practices and increase teacher retention. The early stages of mentoring tend to focus upon providing information rather than on curriculum and instruction (Odell, 1986).

According to Darling-Hammond (1990), a main difference between "short-term" alternative certification programs and other programs is "the absence of a student teaching experience, presumably to be replaced by intensive supervision in the initial months of full-time teaching" (p. 138). When the supervision does in fact take place, "recruits perceive the help as a key factor in helping them learn to teach. However, a number of studies have found that promised mentors do not always materialize in AC programs" (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 138). The teachers interviewed had mentors who came forward and provided assistance or helped after they were approached by the alternatively certified teacher.

From the statements of the teachers interviewed, their mentors have addressed items that are usually skimmed over. Whitaker (2000) wrote,

> It appears that mentors are addressing areas such as curriculum/instruction, discipline, and management infrequently and with limited effectiveness. Mentors may need guidance in ways to provide more effective assistance in these areas. The areas of content that best predict the overall effectiveness of the mentoring, however, are emotional support, system information related to the school/district, system information related to special education, and materials/resources. Mentors should be made aware of the importance of these aspects of mentoring, especially the role of emotional support, so they can maximize the effectiveness of the mentoring they provide. (p. 564)

Family Members and Friends

Family members assisted Jack, Susan, Kathryn, Tim, Irene, Kent and Glen in their quest for tenure and success in the classroom. Jack's wife, friends and other family members assisted him in achieving tenure as a teacher. Those people close to him have helped him see the positive side of his occasional negative experiences. Family members also influenced Susan. Her aunt taught past retirement age and her mother instructed preschool children. Susan's mother also helped inspire her. "My mother...always made me feel like education's important...she's always reading, trying to learn," said Susan. Kathryn said that her husband was her role model for teaching. "I think he's probably the best teacher I have ever seen or heard," she said. "He just has some good, innovative ideas." Kathryn's husband often acted as her sounding board and helped provide ideas. Her father also taught for over 30 years. Tim's mother assisted him in building part of his curriculum.

Irene said she attributed her classroom tenure to her father. "He's always given me words of wisdom to go by and in my classroom I share those with my students," she said. Irene posted "food for thought concepts" on her bulletin board. Several people influenced Kent's love for education. His mother and father provided the means for Kent and his siblings to go to college. Glen called his wife his "off duty supervisor." While Glen was teaching at his first assignment at an alternative school, one of the classes he needed for full certification fell on the evening he was supposed to be teaching. His sister assisted him by substitute teaching for him one night per week for an entire semester.

Formal and Informal Colleague Mentors

Jack, Susan, Kathryn, Tim, Frank, Kent, Daniel and Patrick were helped by formal and informal colleagues. Jack's "awesome mentor teacher" and cooperative peers and colleagues assisted him. Jack said he was always willing to ask questions. "Just like in a classroom, a student who doesn't know something needs to feel comfortable enough to ask questions," he said. "I think having the colleagues and the staff I've been associated with...made me comfortable. I've been able to ask questions and on the occasions that I've messed up....I've had someone explain to me the way it should be done," said Jack. Jack also observed other teachers. "I feel like I've taken bits and pieces of everyone's teaching styles and kind of created my own from that. And I think that's what you have to do. There's nothing wrong with taking what works, and seeing what doesn't," said Jack.

Jack's supervising administrators required many meetings with him. According to Jack, he was paired with the best math teacher in the school because Jack was alternatively certified. Jack team-taught a couple of classes with his mentor. After teaching together, the two often shared ideas. Jack received support similar to the mentors of the Connecticut alternative certification program. Connecticut's alternatively certified teachers "receive extensive on-the-job supervision from mentors whose primary responsibility is to support the development of the beginning teacher's skills as specified in the Connecticut Teacher Competencies" (Bliss, 1992, p. 47). The teachers "meet with a mentor once a week over the course of 2 years; other beginning teachers have a mentor for one year (Bliss, 1992, p. 48).

Susan's mentor taught for over 20 years, although the subject area she taught was different from Susan's area. "She taught me about realizing if you're talking to one side of the classroom more than you are the other," said Susan. "Those are things that I probably should have learned in college, but she really did help me in those areas...she introduced me to Love and Logic, which later on helped me with my own child," she said. After her first year of teaching, Susan continued to ask her mentor questions. According to Shulman (1989), mentors need to make sure their protégés "become educated teachers, not solely teachers coping courageously with the complexities of a classroom" (p. 6). Another of Susan's mentors was a former coach. "He wasn't afraid to express his belief in God. In today's society I know that sometimes isn't a good thing, but I think that sometimes it is a good thing. That they

know where you stand," said Susan. Susan said her students also knew her beliefs on marriage issues.

Both Kathryn and Tim were assisted by other teachers. The mentor Kathryn had during her first year of teaching provided teaching suggestions for day-to-day use and survival techniques. Mentor research conducted on the Los Angeles Unified School District intern program indicated that "mentor teachers, in line with the Program's context-specific emphasis, tend to induct interns into current school policy, procedures, and instructional practices rather than engaging them in reflection on a variety of approaches to instruction" (Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1990, as cited in Stoddart, 1992, p. 110). Two fellow teachers also influenced Tim. He called one of the teachers "inspirational." "Every student at school loves her, respects her and learns from her class. She teaches with extremely high standards and she doesn't give in on that. When I wanted to be a teacher I wanted to be just like her," he said. Another of Tim's mentors was a teacher with a different style, but he said her approaches still worked. "What I do fits my personality. What she does fits her personality. She has just as much control over her classroom as I do over mine," he said. Tim's mentors have guided him to "realize that classroom management and appropriate instruction are interdependent" (Shulman, 1989, p. 6).

Frank met a fellow teacher in one of his courses that affected his career by letting him know about a teaching position opening. "I'm an eclectic type person. I just pick up bits and pieces from everywhere," Frank said. During his first year of teaching Frank was assigned a mentor teacher. He also talked with his peers in the

social studies department. Many of the alternatively certified teachers developed informal mentoring relationships. In a study described by Bush, Coleman, Wall and West-Burnham in *Mentors in Schools: Developing the Profession of Teaching* (1996), "Mentoring practices were based along a continuum of formality: from the informal—pretty on the hoof, *ad hoc* conversations over a cup of coffee – to the formal – organised mentoring meetings within a structured framework" (p. 123). Whitaker (2000) wrote, "It is important...not to overly standardize and regulate the relationship, because much of the benefit of mentoring seems to be in the informal contacts and supports that are provided" (p. 564).

Kent said that each year in his school district he interacted with educators who motivated him to learn. "I've tried to draw on some of their characteristics in how I teach in the classroom," said Kent. "I've tried to show students I care and...that...learning is a lot more than just what you do in the classroom. It's...how you apply it in your life," he said. The mentor assigned to Kent for his first year of teaching also assisted him. "She would come and observe class and...make comments, usually 'just keep doing what you're doing, you seem to be a natural'...really positive comments," he said. Mentors need to "share materials, act as a sounding board, observe their colleagues in the classrooms, and provide appropriate feedback that will enable the newcomers to become independent learners" (Shulman, 1989, p. 6).

A large contributor to Daniel's longevity was his former principal who had "the vision and the courage" to hire him. "I thought I had a lot to offer but there were

other people who said it would be a cold day in blankety-blank before I'd get a job, and you know, I wouldn't argue with them," he said. "The odds were basically against me in social studies. I didn't want to come in and coach. Although I think today people don't realize most of the coaches that come in are not social studies teachers," said Daniel. Daniel also received assistance from a fellow teacher who opened his eyes to alternative ways of doing things. He described the teacher as "gifted." Daniel's other co-workers were positive and tactful. When criticism was necessary, the people never made Daniel feel threatened. Peers can assist other teachers, despite experience level (Fraser, 1998).

College Professors

College professors helped Jack, Kathryn, Irene, Frank and Glen survive as teachers. As Jack observed and learned from his professors, he said he thought, "I'm going to do this like they do it or I'm not going to even touch that...that's too out there." A college professor who knew his subject well helped Kathryn. "What he taught was what he tested over," she said. Kathryn was also fond of his organizational skills and thought processes. Some of Irene's instructors assisted her. The college professor on her entry year committee provided information. Other instructors provided "a lot of support, sources of ideas" and her professional organizations promoted a "sharing of ideas." Frank said his master's program in counseling contributed to his longevity in the classroom. A professor from the counseling program was particularly helpful. Also providing assistance was his

teaching methods class and exceptional child class. A particular college professor also assisted Glen in accepting himself and his mistakes. "The guy is the only professor I've ever met...who not only knows his material backwards and forwards, but he can teach it....He has helped me...think outside the box...think past a problem...he's a big motivator," said Glen. Glen had talked with the professor for hours about being a better teacher and making a difference in the lives of students.

Past Teachers

Jack, Susan, Irene, Kent and Patrick were helped by their former teachers. Growing up, Jack observed many teachers. "My mom was a kindergarten teacher. I was always at school and grew up around teachers," he said. One special math teacher affected Jack's life. The teacher instructed him for two years. Jack admired the way the teacher "handled herself and conducted her classes." The teacher "never had anything negative to say. She was always so positive. I always thought I wanted to teach like her. I always wanted to be like her. I still go in and see her," he said. A high school English teacher influenced Susan's teaching style. Susan said the classroom "had a different kind of environment...it was kind of a self-paced. We actually taught ourselves sometimes," she said. "I think the kids really remember the things you did in the classroom that were different, like making up their own country and the rules and what you do with people who break the rules."

Irene said she saw her own teachers in herself. One particular math teacher inspired her. "She was one of those teachers that went that extra mile...She is truly a

teacher that chose to be a teacher...for the joys of seeing children learn...She...was always very consistent, and I felt like she was real open and honest," said Irene. Kent was formerly taught by some of his fellow teachers. He was close to one such teacher. "He is somebody that I share experiences with and share ideas with and ask about problems with and things like that," said Kent. Kent also had other close colleagues. "They're people that I can go to when I have a problem or go to when there's a certain situation in the classroom that I just need to discuss with somebody," he said. "So I think all of those resources have helped me be an effective teacher." Several teachers influenced the lives of Kent and Patrick. One particular elementary teacher was special to Kent. "She is wonderful. She did some of the most creative things," he said. Another junior high teacher also encouraged him. Kent served as a teacher's aide for that teacher and, as a seventh grader, tutored seventh and eighth grade students. The teacher taught Kent algebra on the side. About one teacher, Kent said, "she was one of those people who had such a distinct personality that I always decided...when I become a teacher, if I become a teacher, that's the kind of personality I want to have." He said that in certain ways he saw the teachers in himself. Two teachers positively influenced Patrick's career. One teacher was straightforward. The other was very intelligent and taught Patrick things he was able to use through college. Patrick said the knowledge that particular teacher imparted 25 years before helped him pass the science certification test. "He was that good....he taught in ways that I could remember. I was pretty impressed by that, and I try to do the same thing when...I have that opportunity," said Patrick.

Conclusion

Work experiences and mentor relationships played a major role in assisting the alternatively certified educators interviewed. Four of the participants, Frank, Glen, Patrick and Tim, had previous military work experience. Daniel and Kent practiced law. Daniel, Irene and Susan worked as substitute teachers. Jack, Susan and Kathryn worked in service-oriented professions. Jack worked in a bank, Susan was employed as a jailer and waitress and Kathryn worked in the medical field. Irene worked in the business field and Glen served as a security officer and worked in a distribution center. All of the educators cited their work experiences as contributors to their longevity in the teaching profession.

Family members mentored all teachers except Frank, Daniel and Patrick. Jack, Tim, Frank, Kent, Daniel and Patrick received assistance from colleagues. The elementary, middle school and high school teachers of Jack, Susan, Irene, Kent and Patrick provided influence. Friends also assisted Jack. Mentor teachers helped Jack, Susan, Kathryn, Frank and Kent. Jack, Daniel and Patrick had supervisors that positively influenced them. College professors mentored Kathryn, Irene, Frank and Glen. The mentor teachers had their work cut out for them, as "mentors who participate in the training of alternative route candidates must take on the additional responsibility of teacher educator and linker to good educational practice" (Shulman, 1989, p. 6). It is ironic that Jack, the educator with the least outside work experience, cited the most mentors. He described help from more sources than any other participant. Perhaps the many mentors that assisted Jack compensated for his lack of

previous work experiences. Glen spoke out against alternative teacher certification more than any other participant. He was also the person who cited the least number of mentors.

Each teacher described knowledge attained through prior employment and dealings with mentors. The mentors provided the teachers with instruction, support and suggestions. The participants acquired skills from their past jobs. Together, the work experiences and mentor relationships assisted the educators in their achievement of longevity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Factors identified that led to the longevity of the alternatively certified teachers were previous work experiences and mentor assistance. The presence of and assistance of mentors and the skills learned and experiences gleaned from past work experiences helped make the teachers successful. The mentors of the alternatively certified teachers helped them learn skills many mentors do not assist their protégés with, such as instructional and behavioral management skills (Whitaker, 2000). The teachers cited their mentors as influencing their longevity in the classroom. Perhaps the fact that the mentors addressed much needed skills also helped the teachers in their quests for tenure.

The alternatively certified teachers interviewed were the successful ones. They were the ones that survived in the professions. Many others have left the occupation, resulting in a sample of those people who are the exceptions. Because the sample is so limited, more research is needed on the subjects of alternatively certified teachers.

All but two of the participants said that if they could repeat their professional careers, they would again choose an alternative teacher certification program over a traditional teacher certification program. Those two teachers felt their knowledge and skills were lacking and could be improved by a traditional certification program. The

other eight participants believed their past work experiences assisted them to such an extent that they would repeat the alternative teacher certification process.

Much literature was found on the topic of mentors, as well as specifics about the mentorship of alternatively certified teachers. I recommend establishing guidelines for and training all mentor teachers. Evertson and Smithey (2000) studied a mentoring program that helped mentors learn how to assist other teachers. Some of their motivation to conduct the study came from a realization that "moves to more field-based licensure programs would mean that collaborating or mentor teachers would need ways not only to encourage the survival of new teachers but also to lay the foundation for innovative practice" (Evertson & Smithey, 2000, p. 295). The study found that "protégés of trained mentors showed increased evidence of developing and sustaining more workable classroom routines, managed instruction more smoothly, and gained student cooperation in academic tasks more effectively" (p. 302). Finally, "the presence of a mentor alone is not enough; the mentor's knowledge and skills of how to mentor are also crucial" (p. 303).

The educators had mentors who they believed were competent in their respective fields. Gratch (1998) wrote that mentor training is an integral part of teacher induction programs. Evertson and Smithey (2000) described their study.

> We focused on the effects of training mentors to support new teachers at the beginning of the year and in a limited set of practices known to help with classroom management and instruction. We feel there is evidence that this training promoted useful mentoring skills. For example, in the analyses of the video conferences, we investigated whether and how trained mentors supported the new teachers' analytical skills. We identified evidence of the

> mentors' ability to help their protégés identify and articulate teaching issues and brainstorm solutions. (p. 303)

Such a mentor training program needs to be implemented in all states as "simply mandating mentoring at the state level is not enough to ensure that adequate mentoring support will be provided to beginning teachers" (Whitaker, 2000, p. 563). Whitaker's (2000) study described the great extent to which mentors helped their protégé teachers. The study upheld the findings of studies "regarding the significant role the mentor may play in providing support and assistance to the first-year teacher" (p. 564). Whitaker suggested that "if mentors are given more information regarding mentoring and some general guidelines as to the forms and content of the mentoring that is generally perceived as most effective, they may be able to further maximize the impact of the mentoring" (p. 564). I recommend that mentoring for alternatively certified teachers be more in-depth than mentoring for traditionally certified teachers. As the alternatively certified teachers lack much traditional training and knowledge of instructional techniques, increased mentoring could help meet their needs.

In the state examined, after teachers successfully complete the alternative certification process, they may take a variety of other subject area tests. Passing each test can provide the teacher with another area of certification. It does not matter that the teacher may have no training, work experience or course work in the particular area. In the state, certified teachers with a certain number of years of teaching experience and a master's degree in any field who pass an elementary and/or secondary administrator test may become certified to be a school principal. Those

who pass the superintendent test with a certain number of years of experience may become a superintendent. More research could be conducted to examine the experiences of school administrators who did not participate in a traditional teacher education program, but instead partook in an alternative certification program.

More information may be contributed to the alternative teacher certification knowledge base if a longitudinal study of the participants was conducted. One could track the teachers' continued longevity or attrition over the next five to 10 years. It might be significant to interview another group of alternatively certified teachers who entered the profession under the new guidelines. At this time, these teachers are in their first year, but interviews could be conducted after tenure is earned.

Additional research needs to be conducted to investigate the effects of age and years of experience upon the efficacy of alternatively certified teachers. According to Feistritzer and Chester (2000), alternatively certified teachers are more apt to be older than traditionally certified teachers. In contrast, Sandham (1997) found that only 4.5 percent of the alternatively certified teachers who responded to the USDE's School and Staffing Survey, 1993-1994, were over 50 years of age. Perhaps further research can provide information on how the alternatively certified teachers' knowledge and skills evolve with age and experience.

Of a recent group of state alternative certification candidates, approximately 27 percent of the candidates were between the ages of 20 and 25. Almost 29 percent were between 26 and 30 years old. The 31 to 35 year old age group was comprised of almost 17 percent of the candidates. There were about 12 percent of the candidates in

the 36-40 year age range, approximately four percent in the 41-45 group, about six percent in the 46-50 age range and almost six percent in the 51-55 age group. There were five candidates in the 56-60 range. Approximately one percent of the alternative certification candidates were in the age ranges of 61-65 and 66-70 (SDE. 2001).

The alternatively certified teachers interviewed cited work experiences as factors that led to their longevity. The current state alternative certification program requires two years of work experience for program entry if the candidate has only a bachelor's degree in the area in which s/he requests certification. One of the items of advice from Participant Kathryn to alternatively certified teacher candidates is that the candidates have five years of prior work experience. Based upon the assistance the alternatively certified teachers said they received from past employment, I also recommend that all alternative certification program candidates have at least five years of experience before entering the classroom. Jack, one of the math teachers interviewed, circumvented the system. The various summer jobs he held while in college were counted as his work experiences, though he did describe the work experiences as contributing to his classroom longevity. Those short-lived experiences were probably truly beneficial, but may have been even more helpful if they had lasted longer and been more intensive.

It seems ironic that some states have removed from their alternative program prerequisites the requirement of prior work experience that this sample of teachers believed assisted them so much. If one of the purposes of alternative certification is to bring talented and skilled teachers into classrooms to share their experiences, one

would think a few months or even no experience in the field would not increase the prospective teachers' abilities to help children learn. Alternative certification is justified by its proponents when they state that pedagogical skills are not needed and that the real world experiences possessed by the teacher will make up for a lack of traditional education course work. Since work experiences are no longer necessary in some programs, traditional teacher preparatory programs may be completely circumvented. McDiarmid and Wilson (1991) described a purpose of alternative certification.

> Find young, smart people with arts and sciences degrees and put them in classrooms. The underlying assumption, of course, is that these well-educated people know enough to teach effectively. They may not know as much about teaching as they might, the party line goes, but they know much about subject matter from experiences in arts and sciences classes. What they do not know about teaching and learning, the line continues, they can learn from teaching. Because they will only teach elementary or secondary school subjects, their knowledge of content is considered adequate. A liberal arts education is sufficient preparation. (p. 93)

When describing mathematics teachers, McDiarmid and Wilson (1991) went on to explain the problems of the aforementioned statement. They reported, "In data collected through questionnaires and interviews with these new teachers...it appears that many of them lack fundamental knowledge of mathematics" (p. 94). In contrast, in *Alternative Certification for Teachers: A New Career for...You* (USDE, 1991), readers are told

> The nation's schools need bright, energetic, experienced professionals, who have demonstrated skills outside the education profession, to be certified to teach. Alternative certification is a nontraditional approach to meeting state certification requirements without having to complete a traditional teacher preparation program at a college or university. Because teachers are currently

> in demand, particularly in mathematics, science, special education, and foreign languages, many states have established alternative certification programs to attract qualified professionals to the teaching profession. (p. 1)

If schools are to indeed attract "bright, energetic, experienced professionals," serious assistance needs to be provided to alternatively certified teachers. Law, medicine, accounting, garbage collecting, construction, architecture...all of these professions require training. States need to reconsider the training and experiences required for teaching certification to help ensure high student achievement. In the words of the USDE (1991), "the nation's schools need good teachers of history, mathematics, science, English, special education, and foreign languages" (USDE, 1991, p. 1). Some alternatively certified teachers may provide such assistance. Others could do more harm than good.

REFERENCES

Adelman, N. E. (1986). An exploratory study of teacher alternative certification and retraining programs. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates.

Ashton, P. T. (1996). Improving the preparation of teachers. Educational Researcher, 25, 2122.

Banks, S.R., and Necco, E. (1987). Alternative certification, educational training, and job longevity. Action in Teacher Education, 9, 67-83.

Barnes, S., Salmon, J., & Wales, W. (1989, March). Alternative teacher certification in Texas. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Bliss, T. (1992). Alternate certification in Connecticut: Reshaping the profession. Peabody Journal of Education, 67 (3), 35-54.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bradley, A. (1998, October 14). Expiring 'Troops to Teachers' project outfits classrooms with professionals in demand. Education Week, 18, pp. 1, 13. [On-line]. Available: www.ncei.com.

Bradshaw, L. K. (1998). Policy, politics, and contradictions of alternative teacher certification. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Bush, T., Coleman, M., Wall, D., & West-Burnham, J. (1996). Mentoring and continuing professional development. In D. McIntyre & H. Hagger (Eds.) Mentors in Schools: Developing the Profession of Teaching (pp. 121-143). London, England: David Fulton Publishers.

Camp, W. G., & Heath-Camp, B. (1991). On becoming a teacher: They just gave me a key and said "good luck." Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Cheng, C., & Tsui, K. T. (1999). Multimodels of teacher effectiveness: Implications for research. The Journal of Educational Research, 92 (3), 141.

Cornett, L. M. (1990). Alternative certification: State policies in the SREB states. Peabody Journal of Education, 67 (3), 55-83.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1990, Spring). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternate certification for teachers. In W.D. Hawley (Ed.). Peabody Journal of Education, 67 (3), 123-154.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1992). Teaching and knowledge: Policy issues posed by alternative certification for teachers. Peabody Journal of Education, 67 (3), 123-154.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1996). The quiet revolution: rethinking teacher development. Educational Leadership, 53 (6), 4-11.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). Solving the dilemmas of teacher supply, demand, and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring, and qualified teacher for every child. New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). How teacher education matters. Journal of Teacher Education, 51, 166.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cobb, V. L. (1996). The changing context of teacher education. In F. Murray (Ed.), The Teacher Educator's Handbook: Building a Knowledge Base for the Preparation of Teachers (pp. 14-62). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hudson, L., & Kirby, S. (1989). Redesigning teacher education: Opening the door for new recruits to science and mathematics teaching. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Denzin, N. K. (1989). The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Dominice, P. (2000). Learning from our lives: Using educational biography with adults. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Etheridge, C. P., Butler, E. D., Etheridge, G. W., & James, T. (1988). The Effects of Type of Teacher Preparation Program on Internships in Secondary Schools. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, New Orleans. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 293 807).

Evertson, C. M. & Smithey, M. W. (2000). Mentoring effects on protégés' classroom practice: An experimental field study. Journal of Educational Research, 93 (5), 294.

Feiman-Nemser, S., & Parker, M. B. (1990). Making subject matter part off the conversation or helping beginning teachers learn to teach. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

Feiman-Nemser, S., Parker, M. B., & Zeichner, K. (1990, April). Are mentor teachers teacher educators? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Feistritzer, C. E. (1998). Teacher preparation and classroom size reduction. Testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, February 24, 1998. [On-line]. Available: ncei.com.

Feistritzer, C. E. (1999). Teacher quality and alternative certification programs. Testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, May 13 1999. [On-line]. Available: ncei.com/Testimony051399.htm

Feistritzer, C. E., & Chester, D. T. (1995). Alternative teacher certification: A state-by-state analysis, 1995. Santa Fe, NM: National Center for Education Information.

Feistritzer, C. E. & Chester, D. T. (2000). Alternate routes to teaching escalate in just the last 2 years. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Information. [On-line]. Available: www.ncei.com.

Fraser, J. (1998). Teacher to teacher: A guidebook for effective mentoring. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

Fuller, E. J. (1999). Does teacher certification matter? A comparison of TAAS performance in 1997 between schools with low and high percentages of certified teachers. Austin: Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Goebel, S.D., Ronacher, K., & Sanchez, K. (1989). Alternative certification program, 1988-1989. Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District, Department of Research and Evaluation.

Gomez, D. L., & Grobe, R. P. (1990). Three years of alternative certification in Dallas: Where are we? Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Goodson, I. F. (1992). Studying teachers' lives: An emergent field of inquiry. In Ivor F. Goodson (Ed.). Studying teachers' lives (pp. 1-17). New York: Teachers College Press.

Gratch, A. (1998). Beginning teacher and mentor relationships. Journal of Teacher Education , 49 (3), 220.

Grossman, P L. (1989). A study in contrast: Sources of pedagogical content knowledge for secondary English teachers. Journal of Teacher Education, 40, (5), 24-31.

Guyton, E., Fox, M. C., & Sisk, K. A. (1991). Comparison of teaching attitudes, teacher efficacy, and teacher performance of first year teachers prepared by alternative and traditional teacher education programs. Action in Teacher Education, 13 (2), 1-9.

Hawk, P. P., & Schmidt, M. W. (1989). Teacher preparation: A comparison of traditional and alternative programs. Journal of Teacher Education, 40, (5), 53-58.

Hawley, W. D. (1990). The theory and practice of alternative certification: Implications for the improvement of teaching. Peabody Journal of Education, 67 (3), 3-34.

Hutton, J. B. (1987). Alternative teacher certification: Its policy implications for classroom and personnel practice. Austin, TX: University of Texas.

Kridel, C. (1998). Writing educational biography. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Lutz, F. W., & Hutton, J. B. (1989). Alternative teacher certification: Its policy implications for classroom and personnel practice. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11 (3), 237-254.

Marchant, V. (2000). Why not teach next? All over the U.S., thousands are switching careers and taking their place at the head of the classroom. Time, 155, G1.

McDiarmid, G. W. & Wilson, S. M. (1991). An exploration of the subject matter knowledge of alternative route teachers: Can we assume they know their subject? Journal of Teacher Education, 42 (2), 93-103.

Miller, J. W., McKenna, M. C., & McKenna, B. A. (1998). A comparison of alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers. The Journal of Educational Research, 49 (3), 165.

Mitchell, N. (1987). Interim evaluation report of the alternative certification program. Dallas, TX: DISD Department of Planning, Evaluation and Testing.

Morgan, B. M. (1999). Passing the torch—Performance assessment benchmarks for preservice teachers and mentor teacher training. Education, 119 (3), 374.

Odell, S. J. (1986). Induction support of new teachers: A functional approach. Journal of Teacher Education, 37 (1), 26-29.

Raspberry, W. (1998, October 16). Untapped cohorts of teachers. The Washington Post, p. A27. [On-line]. Available: www.ncei.com.

Sandham, J. L. (1997). Study finds alternative teachers less qualified, but meeting needs. Education Week, 17.

Schaefer, N. (1999). Good teachers through the back door. The American Enterprise, 10 (4), 10.

Shulman, J. (1989). Blue freeways: Traveling the alternate routes with big-city teacher trainees. Journal of Teacher Education, 40 (5), 2-8.

Sikes, P. J. (1985). The life cycle of the teacher. In S. J. Ball & I. F. Goodson (Eds.), Teachers' Lives and Careers (pp. 27-60). Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press.

Smith, D. (1994). Special educators warn of worsening teacher shortage. Report on Education Research, 26 (8), 3.

Smith, D. C., Nystrand, R., Ruch, C., Gideonse, H., & Carlson, K. (1985). Alternative certification: A position statement of AACTE. Journal of Teacher Education, 36 (3), 24.

Soares, L. M. (1989). Correlates of self-attribution and competency of liberal arts graduates in teacher training programs. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Savannah, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 304 408).

Soares, L. M. (1990). Comparisons of student teachers and alternative route candidates. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

State Department of Education. (2000). School laws. Department of Career Technology.

State Department of Education. (2001). Commission for Teacher Preparation. State Department of Education.

Stoddart, T. & Floden, R. E. (1995). Traditional and alternative routes to teacher certification issues, assumptions, and misconceptions. National Center for Research on Teacher Learning: Washington, DC.

Symon, G. & Cassell, C. (1998). Qualitative methods and analysis in organizational research.. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Tryneski, J. (1998). Requirements for certification of teachers, counselors, librarians, administrators for elementary and secondary schools. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

United States Department of Education. (1991). Alternative certification for teachers (No. 496). Washington, D.C.: Author.

Van Manen, M. (1990). Researching lived experience. London: The State University of New York.

Whitaker, S. D. (2000). Mentoring beginning special education teachers and the relationship to attrition. Exceptional Children, 66 (4), p. 546.

Zumwalt, K. (1991). Alternative routes to teaching: Three alternative approaches. Journal of Teacher Education, 42 (2), 83-92.

Characteristics of the Alternatively Certified Teachers Interviewed

Name	Gender	Education Level	Past Profession(s)	Years in Profession	Certification
Daniel	Male	Government-related, law	Law, business, Substitute teaching	23	History
Frank	Male	Law-related, Counseling	Military	10+	History, psychology, counseling
Glen	Male	Math	Military, security, warehouse	5	Math
Irene	Female	Business	Business-related, Computers, Substitute teaching	18	Business Math
Jack	Male	Medical-related, administration	Banking, Training, Substitute teaching	Summers	Math Coaching
Kathryn	Female	Medical-related	Medical technology-related	10	Science
Kent	Male	Science-related Law	Law	5	Math
Patrick	Male	Military Academy Computers	Military, engineering, Substitute teaching	20+	Math Science
Susan	Female	Pre-law Sociology	Jailer, waitress, Substitute teaching	5	Social studies Counseling
Tim	Male	Sports-related	Military	7	All general areas

Participants' Mentors

	Family	Colleagues	Former Teachers	Friends	Mentor Teachers	Supervisors	Professors
Jack	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Susan	X		X		X		
Kathryn	X				X		X
Tim	X	X					
Irene	X		X				X
Frank		X			X		X
Kent	X	X	X		X		
Daniel		X				X	
Glen	X						X
Patrick		X	X			X	