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Elementary Administrators' Perceptions of Support for Novice Alternatively-certified Teachers in High-Poverty Schools

Kelle Wilson Lofton
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Kelle Wilson Lofton

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Dr. Kathryn Swetnam, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
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Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

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Abstract

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Kelle Wilson Lofton

MEd, Lamar University, 2009

BS, Texas A&M University, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Novice alternatively-certified teachers are hired to teach in high-poverty schools at a higher rate than traditionally-certified peers. These teachers are often unprepared to teach in challenging environments and struggle to manage their classrooms and achieve student academic success. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern U.S. state. Burns's transformational leadership paradigm informed the study. The research questions focused on how elementary principals and assistant principals perceived transformational practices to support novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with 11 purposively-selected elementary school administrators with at least 3 years of administrative experience. Content analysis using open and pattern coding was used to identify three themes: novice alternatively-certified teachers require (a) support through coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training; (b) opportunities to gain experience and pedagogical knowledge by observing model teachers; and (c) a culture with a growth mindset and a shared vision. Principals and assistant principals need to obtain training and development to provide individualized support for novice alternatively-certified teachers. District-level training that differentiates across teachers to address specific needs is needed. Knowledgeable, effective, transformational leaders are catalysts for change in high-poverty schools whose practices can permeate into high-poverty communities to create lasting social change. Information gleaned from this study may lead to positive social change by helping to retain teachers and provide consistency for students to increase academic achievement.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Benjamin and Rheba, who have always believed in me, cheered me on, and made me promise to dream big and let nothing stand in my way. The completion of this journey is not just a goal achieved, but also a promise fulfilled. Though my dad may not physically be here to celebrate my accomplishments, I know that he is looking down on me with pride. My mother has gently nudged and encouraged me to keep moving forward in all facets of my life. She is my peace in the storm and my light in dark places. I thank God for the unconditional love, support, and guidance from my parents, and I dedicate my work and my successes to them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This study is about the support that administrators provide to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools. These teachers have less training and experience in education than their traditionally certified counterparts. This study includes information concerning how administrators can best provide individualized support to this growing group of educators to prepare them to be effective in the classroom. When administrators help teachers become successful, the students they teach have opportunities to be successful.

This chapter includes background information for this study, as well as a summary of the research on administrative support to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The chapter also includes a statement of the problem, purpose, conceptual framework, and nature of the study. Additionally, I define key terms used throughout the study, provide the assumptions, describe the scope and delimitations, and note the methodological limitations related to the design of the study. The chapter concludes with the significance of the study and a summary of the chapter.

Background

Hiring highly qualified teachers is a challenge that administrators face annually. Many states chose alternative teacher certification programs to staff their schools. The alternative route to teacher certification is often abbreviated, meaning teachers who have been certified through alternative means receive less experiential and pedagogical preparation than their traditionally certified peers (Bowling & Ball, 2018). Administrators need to know how to individualize support for these teachers to ensure they are

successful. This study contributes to the mitigation of the gap in the research about practice concerning principals' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty elementary schools. Administrators must be mindful that the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers differ from those of their traditionally certified peers; they have less training in special education, classroom management, and curriculum. Administrators need to be aware that training in these areas will be necessary for these teachers to be successful in the classroom.

Problem Statement

School districts hire alternatively-certified teachers with little to no experience in the field of teaching at higher rates because of teacher shortages. Researchers' findings revealed such teachers are frequently placed in high-poverty schools with more demanding classroom environments in terms of maintaining high student engagement and managing classroom discipline (Redding & Smith, 2016). Teachers certified through alternative methods are more likely to have issues with classroom management than their traditionally certified peers (Flower et al., 2017; Stough & Montague, 2015). As a part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), district administrators must report equity gaps, which display the extent that students of poverty and students of color are taught by inexperienced teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2018). In fall of 2017, to fulfill the state requirement, an equity plan committee convened in a medium-sized suburban district in the Southern United States. The members determined that the schools within the district with the highest percentage of poverty also had the highest percentage of inexperienced teachers. Of that population of teachers, several were certified through

alternative certification programs, as opposed to traditional university-based programs. Redding and Smith (2016) reported, "Because many alternatively-certified [AC] teachers work in demanding classroom environments—often with less training or support" (p. 1090), they are more difficult to retain, creating high turnover rates at the neediest schools. The research problem was that little is known about how elementary school principals and assistant principals understand and address the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. To address this gap in the research about practice, I used a basic qualitative approach with semistructured interviews. Based on the findings of this study, I will provide recommendations to administrators to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers to improve their classroom instruction and management practices.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used in this study was transformational leadership, which is an approach to leadership that influences change in social systems and individuals. Burns (1978) introduced this leadership approach after studying transforming political leaders, and transformational leadership is now the leading theory in the leadership research community (Berkovich, 2017). Transformation leadership behavior in a school is inspirational, people oriented, democratic, and focused on reform through the principal's leadership practices (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Transformational leadership theory is centered on the concept of shared decision-making with the school leader to improve the school culture. Studies have provided evidence that transformational leadership has positively affected school culture and teacher self-efficacy (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017).

The four components of transformational leadership are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In idealized influence, leaders serve as role models; with inspirational motivation, leaders motivate and inspire by providing meaningful and challenging experiences. Through intellectual stimulation, leaders encourage followers to be creative and try new approaches. In individualized consideration, leaders provide individual attention to followers' needs through coaching and mentoring (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership can increase the level of professional quality and performance in an organization (Andersen et al., 2016). Damanik and Aldridge (2017) found that a principal's leadership practice has a direct effect on a teacher's self-efficacy, particularly when principals follow the individualized component of transformational leadership. A principal's knowledge of the transformational leadership components will be beneficial to alternatively-certified teachers who need individualized coaching and professional development.

I considered Bass's (1999) conceptual lens of transformational leadership practices in my methodological approach of this research. I included effective transformational leadership practices in the research questions. I developed a semistructured interview protocol and questions, based on transformation leadership, to gather data to ascertain the role elementary administrators play in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. During the data analysis stage, I applied Burns's (1978) framework using a research journal. I used open coding and pattern coding, applying the lens of transformational leadership to begin to develop categories and themes to answer the research questions (see Bengtsson, 2016; Yin, 2016). In Chapter 2, I provide a more detailed discussion of the conceptual framework related to the literature.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative research operates under multiple paradigms and assumptions that serve as guiding principles. Researchers can take several approaches to complete this type of research and use a variety of methods of data collection, to include interviews,

case studies, observations, and introspection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Qualitative

research takes place in a natural setting in which participants are interviewed face to face

at the site where they experience the problem being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Generic or basic qualitative studies focus on understanding an experience. A basic

qualitative approach was the best approach for this case study, because I used the

purposeful sampling strategy to identify elementary principals and assistant principals to

interview. Use of this strategy ensured that all participants were able to provide valid and

reliable content to answer the research questions of this study.

I used individual, semistructured interviews to gather information concerning the

perceptions of the role elementary administrators play in providing support to novice

alternatively-certified teachers. The population was in a medium-sized suburban district

and were administrators from elementary schools with the highest poverty rates,

determined by the percentage of free and reduced-price lunch recipients, and a higher

percentage of inexperienced teachers. The school district has a population of

approximately 20 elementary school principals and 20 assistant principals, from which a

convenience sample of 11 participants was selected from elementary schools.

I collected the data through interviews. I transcribed each interview into a

spreadsheet. I used open coding and pattern coding of the raw data from the interviews to

analyze the data to assign meaning (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016) to determine the

effectiveness of the support provided to novice alternatively-certified teachers. I used

member checking to ensure the findings of this study were accurate. The rights of the

participants were protected by ensuring that ethical behavior was maintained, participants

understood the nature of the study, and participants were not pressured to participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I will provide a full explanation of the methodology of this study in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The following key terms, specific to this study, are as follows:

Alternative route/alternatively-certified: Teachers who are certified in an abbreviated preparation period, usually 4–8 weeks, and complete their training during their 1st full year of teaching are considered alternatively-certified . These teachers generally received their college degrees in a field other than education (Kee, 2011).

Novice teacher: Novice teachers are teachers in their first 5 years of teaching (Çakmak et al., 2018).

Traditional route/traditionally certified: Teachers who were certified to teach after completing a teacher-education program through a college or university are defined as traditionally certified. These teachers receive up to 2 years of preparation and are certified before teaching full time (Kee, 2011).

Veteran teacher: Veteran teachers have more than 5 years of teaching experience (Rahman et al., 2017).

Assumptions

In qualitative studies, an assumption is that information presumed to be true that likely cannot validated (Burkholder et al., 2016). I made two assumptions for this study. The first assumption in this study was that some administrators in high-poverty schools are unsure of how to support alternatively-certified teachers yet would be able to answer

the research questions. It was important to the validity of the study that all participants have experience in the area of the study and could provide definitive answers to interview questions. Second, critical to the meaningfulness of the study was that the participants shared their experiences honestly. This assumption was important for the findings of this study to provide recommendations concerning the way school districts train administrators to support novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Scope and Delimitations

This study included 11 elementary administrators of varying years of experience from elementary schools with the highest percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. I interviewed each participant only once for this study. I chose these campuses because high-poverty schools typically have a large number of novice teachers, many of whom participated in an alternative certification program (see Redding & Smith, 2016). The administrators from these campuses have had opportunities to observe and work with all teachers at their campus, both novice and veteran, and therefore have an ability to speak to the needs of their teachers who are alternatively-certified.

This study had several delimitations. I chose to include only elementary principals and assistant principals as participants. Middle and high school administrators were not included in the study. Campuses with a smaller contingency of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches were not chosen. Additionally, I confined this research to one suburban school district in a Southern state.

Transferability is the ability to transfer findings from a study to other contexts. Transferability is an important aspect of qualitative research (Burkholder et al., 2016;

Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). I provide a rich narrative description in this study with sufficient detail for readers to determine transferability of this study to their individual setting. I was careful to interpret the data appropriately and present the findings using member checks (see Yin, 2016). Each of these qualitative strategies assists readers to decide if the study is transferable to other areas.

Limitations

Limitations in a qualitive study are weaknesses in the design or methodology of the study. Such limitations are typically related to transferability and dependability (Burkholder et al., 2016). Three limitations may influence the transferability of the findings of this study: participant size, my bias as the researcher, and confirmability.

The small sample size could serve as a limitation for this study. The sampling of administrators chosen included those who represent the highest poverty schools in the district and who also support novice teachers certified through alternative methods. If the sample size were increased, I would have interviewed administrators from schools with a lower percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced-priced lunches. Doing so would not be a true reflection of the needs of teachers in high-poverty schools.

Researcher bias is another potential limitation for this study. Researcher biases often affect the interpretation of the data, so steps have to be taken to ensure that, though the biases exist, the findings still can be confirmed. Given that I work in the same school district as the participants, and consider them to be colleagues, the potential for researcher bias existed. To address this potential bias, I used semistructured interviews, using the same set of interview questions with all participants so that the same types of

data were gleaned from each participant. Another form of researcher bias is having my own thoughts or opinions on my topic that could influence my findings (see Lambert, 2012). To further check any bias I might bring to this study, I used a reflective journal and applied a process called bracketing (see Ahern, 1999). Steps such as verifying my findings by allowing the participants to confirm the conclusions of the study, also known as member checking, were taken to eliminate bias (see Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

A third limitation of qualitative studies is confirmability. Qualitative researchers must be able to confirm their findings. The use of triangulation can ensure that the data are confirmable (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I used data-source triangulation by interviewing both principals and assistant principals with varying years of service and experience to gain multiple perspectives. Through triangulation, I could enhance the information I received and confirm the findings as accurate.

Significance

Hiring qualitied teachers in urban school districts is a challenge for administrators. Schools in areas of high poverty typically have more inexperienced teachers than schools in areas of a higher socioeconomic status (Redding & Smith, 2016). According to Educate Texas (2017), more than half of all novice teachers in a Southern U.S. state are alternatively-certified. A study on how principals provide support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools could inform district and campus level administrators concerning possible professional development and support through mentoring and coaching in the areas of classroom management and curriculum and instruction.

In this study, I addressed the gap in the research about practice by investigating the perceptions of administrators to support novice alternatively-certified teachers. Information gleaned from this study may lead to positive social change in districts with high numbers of inexperienced alternatively-certified teachers. Principals will understand more about how to support these teachers in ways that may help retain teachers and provide consistency for the students, which will help increase student academic achievement.

Summary

In this chapter I outlined the problem and purpose of this exploratory qualitative basic study, which was the investigation of elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools. Possible implications of this study may be to determine ways these teachers are supported and what changes may be needed to ensure they are successful in the classroom. I used transformational leadership as the conceptual framework to ground the study. In Chapter 2, I will include an in-depth review of the conceptual framework along with peer-reviewed literature addressing administrative support to novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I explain the research strategy and conceptual framework for this study. I also provide an exhaustive review of current literature to include discussion on administrator perceptions of novice alternatively-certified teachers' need of professional development, mentoring or peer support, and instructional coaching. The chapter concludes with a summary and transition to the research method in Chapter 3.

Little is known about how elementary school principals and assistant principals address the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. The literature supported a need for administrators to implement individualized professional development, mentoring, and coaching for these novice alternatively-certified teachers. Without a degree in education or years of internship training, these teachers need guidance to develop their skills classroom management, curriculum, and instruction (Bowling & Ball, 2018; Flower et al., 2017).

Literature Search Strategy

When looking for literature relevant to the study, I searched the following databases: Thoreau, SAGE Journals, Education Source, ERIC, and ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. I used the National Center for Education Statistics, the Texas Education Agency, and Every Student Succeeds Act websites to find data related to the study. I used books related to the conceptual framework, research design, methodology, and data analysis. Additionally, I used Google Scholar to search for

academic literature to augment the literature of this chapter. Using relevant education databases on Thoreau, I entered one concept per box and grouped concepts together to guide database searches. As additional keywords evolved, I combined similar terms and concepts to identify the germane scholarship for the literature review. I searched broadly at first to gain a holistic sense of the research available.

After reviewing the results using an iterative process, I narrowed the search to select peer-reviewed articles published from 2014 to 2020. I used the subject terms found in the search results that helped to narrow the keywords and used these keywords and Boolean phrases that coincided with the topic, such as *alternative certification*, *administrator support*, *novice teacher*, *new teachers*, *beginning teachers*, *non-traditional certification*, *mentoring*, *support*, *urban, high poverty*, *low income*, *disadvantaged*, *administrator perception*, *administrator attitudes*, and *transformational leadership.* When I found articles relevant to my study, I used forward chaining and backward chaining to find related literature. I used Google Scholar for chaining with articles that were not considered recent literature by using the "cited by" function to review current articles that cited the older article. I also looked at the references of recent articles and dissertations that were relevant to this topic to find additional resources. I continued to search multiple databases with various combinations of keywords and phrases until I reached saturation.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used in this study was transformational leadership, a leadership approach introduced by Burns (1978). This approach, according

to Berkovich (2017), is now the leading theory in the leadership research community and is considered the ideal leadership model for school principals. Burns defined two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership is based on reciprocity, where both the leader and follower benefit from synergistic exchange. Transformational leadership, conversely, is a leadership practice where the leader seeks to develop a relationship with the follower by understanding and satisfying the follower's needs. The follower evolves into a leader because of the structure established by the leader, and the result is an increased level of commitment and capacity for achieving mutual goals (Burns, 1978).

Bass (1999) expanded on Burns's (1978) work by defining the qualities that leaders practice, which allow them to transform their followers. Bass also determined the four components of true transformational leadership: idealized influence, where leaders serve as role models; inspirational motivation, where leaders motivate and inspire by providing meaningful and challenging experiences; intellectual stimulation, where leaders encourage followers to be creative and try new approaches; and individualized consideration, where leaders provide individual attention to followers needs through coaching and mentoring (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Avolio and Bass (1995) developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to measure these components.

Although Burns (1978) and Bass (1999) researched the transformational leadership approach as it pertained to politics, military, education, and business, Leithwood and Jantzen (1990) were influential in bringing the idea of transformational leadership to the world of educational leadership. Leithwood (1994) suggested that

transformational leaders attempt to accomplish the goals of (a) helping staff members develop a collaborative school culture, (b) fostering the development of teachers, and (c) assisting teachers with working together to solve problems.

Transformational leadership practices are ideal for school leaders because they incorporate managerial tasks with expectations to increase student outcomes and develop teachers (Anderson, 2017). These leadership practices are inspirational, people oriented, democratic, and reform focused (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). Transformational leadership is centered on the concept of sharing decision-making among teachers as well as the school leader to improve the school culture. Researchers' findings have shown that transformational leadership positively affects school climate and teacher self-efficacy (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017). For example, Damanik and Aldridge (2017) found that a principal's leadership practices have a direct effect on a teacher's self-efficacy, particularly when principals follow the individualized component of transformational leadership. Findings from this and other recent studies suggested a positive relationship between transformational school leadership practices and student academic achievement (Anderson, 2017; Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019; Mendez-Keegan, 2019).

The principal's leadership contributes to the success of both teachers and students in the classroom (Makgato & Mudzanani, 2019). When principals use transformational leadership practices, they become role models with the ability to effect change in their schools, empower and inspire teachers to an increased level of commitment and motivation, and build trust and collaboration through high expectations and a shared vision (Anderson, 2017). Use of the components of transformational leadership will be

beneficial to administrators as they determine the types of support novice alternatively-certified teachers need to be successful in high-poverty schools.

Transformational leadership grounded this study, first as the basis of the research questions, then the four components being used to create an interview instrument. Data collected from the interviews were coded and categorized into themes based on the components of transformational leadership. This study may help principals use the ideas and practices of transformational leadership to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers grow in practice. These ideas are particularly important for novice alternatively-certified teachers who have needs that differ from their traditionally certified peers. Transformational leadership practices will allow administrators to individualize support and create meaningful experiences that novice alternatively-certified teachers need to be successful in the classroom.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. This review of transformational leadership scholarship situates my study within the current discourse. Using journal articles, books, and websites, I explored principals as transformational leaders to include an in-depth review of the fundamental components that establish a shared vision, develop people through professional development and mentoring, build school climate and culture, and provide instructional support.

Principals as Transformational Leaders

Principals' use of transformational practices has a positive effect on the attitudes and performance of beginning teachers (Thomas et al., 2020). Stewart (2006) suggested that leaders need to be properly prepared and educated in the different types of support needed in the educational environment. Transformational leadership practices center around four behaviors: (a) developing a shared vision that cultivates autonomy, (b) providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation through feedback, (c) building a school culture that forefronts collaboration and community engagement, and (d) improving the instructional program through high expectations and modeling (Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2018; Thomas et al., 2020). These behaviors closely align with the four components of true transformational leadership from Bass (1999): idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Principals who use these leadership behaviors become more effective leaders with a greater ability to effect change.

Inspiring Vision

Establishing a clear vision and direction is a fundamental function of leadership (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Lee and Nye (2016) stated that transformational leadership practices foster empowering leadership behaviors that are essential in building capacity in teachers. When principals act as effective transformational leaders, they set goals and create shared vision while remaining aware and attentive to the teachers' needs. The motivating practices of transformational leadership promote teachers' effectiveness, productivity, creativity, job satisfaction, and performance. When principals set the

direction of the school with shared values and high expectations, staffs achieve a sense of harmony, purpose, motivation, and self-efficacy (Sayadi, 2016). Lee and NY stated that transformational leadership practices foster empowering leadership behaviors that are essential in building capacity in teachers. Principals who are well versed in transformational leadership practices effectively guide novice alternatively-certified teachers to be successful in the classroom.

    Setting Direction. Direction-setting practices are rooted in transformational leadership. An essential function of leadership is the ability to set the academic goals and direction of the school. A school mission must be clear and amenable to the entire staff. Transformational leadership practices provide an avenue for principals to set the direction of the school. Transformational leaders communicate the goals for learning in a clear and concise way, keeping in mind the need for both community and individualization (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Sun and Leithwood (2015) found that direction-setting practices, as a part of transformational leadership, significantly affected teacher empowerment and efficacy. The researchers also found that student academic achievement increased when administrators used direction-setting practices that influenced the ability to create a safe and orderly environment, motivated achieving a shared goal, affected teachers' ability to use data to inform instruction, encouraged collaboration among the staff, and allowed instructors to create effective lessons (Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Novice alternatively-certified teachers need specific direction, common goals, collaboration, and support to be successful in the classroom.

Autonomy. School autonomy is an important practice for school leaders to promote increased student achievement. Autonomy in schools also improves parental involvement, school climate, teachers' commitment and satisfaction, and school effectiveness (Dou et al., 2017). When policy makers grant schools autonomy, the principal controls the school climate and can better manage job satisfaction and commitment. Autonomy enhances the sense of ownership that principals have as the leader of the school and motivates teachers to self-initiate tasks that were not mandated or assigned by the principal (Chamberlain, 2017).

In their research on transformational leadership practices, Lee and Nie (2016) conducted a quantitative study with 304 teachers of varying years of experience and levels in education. Each participant completed a questionnaire to measure their perception of the school leaders' empowering behaviors, including (a) idealized influence, where leaders serve as role models; (b) inspirational motivation, where leaders motivate and inspire by providing meaningful and challenging experiences; (c) intellectual stimulation, where leaders encourage followers to be creative and try new approaches; and (d) individualized consideration, where leaders provide individual attention to followers needs through coaching and mentoring (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Data analysis revealed a significantly positive relationship between principals who exhibited empowering behaviors and the teachers' feeling of autonomy (Lee & Nie, 2016). When a principal encourages teacher autonomy in the classroom, teachers are more likely to take risks and be innovative and creative. Empowering practices of transformational leadership increase teacher motivation and feelings of competency.

Novice alternatively-certified teachers especially need to feel empowered. They also need autonomy of the classroom to plan lessons that motivate students.

Developing People

Effective transformational leaders develop people within their organization and create an environment that supports innovation and risk taking (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016). Sun and Leithwood (2017) identified three specific leadership practices crucial in developing people: individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and modeling of desired practices ultimately lead to student learning and increased academic achievement. These fundamental practices are necessary for novice alternatively-certified teachers, who need the principal to motivate them to teach effectively, increase job satisfaction, and elevate self-efficacy (Thomas et al., 2020). When principals and other school administrators provide induction and mentoring to novice teachers, which is viewed as a schoolwide collective responsibility, they promote teacher leadership and developing supportive relationships (Bryant et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). Transformational leadership practices include teachers in the change process (Liu, 2015). Additionally, consensus can be built between teachers through the feedback and support that transformational leadership provides (Vanblaere & Devos, 2016). The motivation, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation these practices provide will bolster the growth of novice alternatively-certified teachers need to be successful in the field of teaching.

Principals as Professional Development Leaders. As school leaders, principals typically engage in administrative and technical responsibilities as opposed to

pedagogical and developmental tasks that lead to the professional development of

teachers (Pinkas & Bulić, 2017). For novice alternatively-certified teachers to be

successful in the classroom, administrators must determine these teachers' needs and

provide the required support and training. Classroom management is a significant

challenge and a determination of success or failure for novice teachers (Kwok, 2018;

Uriegas et al., 2014). Researchers found that only 58% of alternative certification

programs offer courses or experiences in classroom or behavior management, compared

to 88% of college and university certification programs (Flower et al., 2017). These

findings affirm the need for administrators to serve as the professional development and

pedagogical leaders with the ability to provide continuous learning opportunities for their

staff (Hauber et al., 2015; Kindall et al., 2018; Pinkas & Bulić, 2017). Principals need the

confidence to develop an effective professional development plan individualized to each

teacher's needs (Koonce et al., 2019).

Researchers described obstacles to administrators taking on the role of a

professional development leader. Some lack the organization, planning, and

communication skills to engage in the professional development process. Others neither

accept the responsibility nor enjoy it. Administrators often feel intimidated or burdened

by this additional role and feel like their main purpose is management (Campbell et al.,

2019; Koonce et al., 2019). Designing effective professional development for teachers

has become a new challenge for principals who are attempting to integrate leadership and

professional development (Chang et al., 2017). Administrators need support concerning

the change in perceived roles from building manager to instructional leader, which will

allow them to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers with instruction and classroom management (Costa et al., 2019).

      Mentoring. Principals who are transformational leaders understand that novice alternatively-certified teachers, particularly in urban schools, benefit from mentoring programs led by veteran teachers. According to Curry et al. (2016), a novice teacher requires professional support through formal and planned mentorship. As a part of developing people, principals work with teacher leaders to establish the support system that mentoring provides. The encouragement and social/moral support received from a mentor foster a culture of collaboration, which is a fundamental component of transformational leadership practices (Urick, 2016). In high-need urban schools, teachers encounter unique situations not experienced as frequently in suburban schools, such as high concentrations of low-performing or low-income students. Principals who use transformational leadership practices aim to build capacity in veteran mentor teachers to assist and guide novice teachers in instructional practice, classroom management, and discipline (Morettini, 2016). These practices build a community of support where veteran teachers who provide mentoring also assist with retaining novice alternatively-certified teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016). To have successful mentoring programs, the principal should facilitate opportunities for the mentor and mentee to meet formally to discuss their specific needs as novice alternatively-certified teachers, thereby building community and establishing a collaborative culture.

Principals who are well versed in transformational leadership practices value the ability to shape the emotional experiences of teachers (Berkovich, 2017). Support systems have multiple layers that can include both formal mentoring from a veteran teacher and peer support from other novice teachers (Tricarico et al., 2015). Novice teachers should be encouraged to form their own learning networks comprised of other novice teachers. This approach, called comentoring, is another opportunity for transformational principals to develop alternatively-certified novice teachers using emotional experiences, social and emotional support, shared vision, and collaboration. Principals have found this model to benefit novice teachers as well as the campus because it negates the cost of a formal mentoring program (Morettini, 2016). Administrators should facilitate the organization of peer support groups for novice alternately certified teachers to take advantage of comentoring opportunities.

Building School Climate and Culture

Positive school climate is fundamental to the growth and success of a school. Increased student achievement and teacher retention come from the development of a clear vision that promotes a positive school climate. Transformational leadership practices increase the ability to enact positive change and organizational improvement (McCarley et al., 2016). In a quantitative study, McCarley et al. (2016) collected and analyzed data to determine a relationship between being a transformational leader and the school climate. High school teachers ($N = 399$) from five larger urban high schools used questionnaires to assess perceived transformational leadership practices. Findings from the study support the perception of a principal being more supportive and reliable with

the ability to create a network of engaged, collegial, and supportive teachers through transformational practices, thus promoting a positive school culture.

In a similar study regarding school climate, Ross and Cozzens (2016) investigated how principals' leadership practices affected teachers' perception of school climate. The quantitative study involved surveying 375 teachers from all grade levels in both public and private schools. Data were collected using the Leadership Behavior Inventory. A multiple regression analysis determined that school climate was influenced by diversity, professionalism, and professional development. The findings indicated a statistically significant relationship between the perception of principals' leadership practices and school climate. If the principal's leadership practices are perceived in a positive way, then the school climate is also perceived positively (Ross & Cozzens, 2016).

Leadership practices and increased teacher effectiveness are correlated. Transformational leaders encourage quality instruction and effectiveness that lead to increased student achievement. They also use individualized supportive measures such as mentoring, coaching, and professional development. A transformational leader motivates and challenges teachers but also has high expectations of teamwork (Stewart, 2006). Through transformational practices, principals can build the positive school climate and culture that is necessary for a novice alternatively-certified teacher to thrive.

As a part of strengthening the school culture and climate, the principal is responsible for creating an environment open to change in a supportive and direct way. Transformation in a school setting is based on the principal's ability to support and lead the change process through creation of goals and values (McCarley et al., 2016). Urick

(2016) focused on transformational leadership practices to encourage innovation, communication, and professional learning leading to an increase in student achievement. A systems approach is needed as changes to the environmental and instructional structures are made. The principal, as the instructional leader, can address the challenge of sustaining the changes and improvements through transformational leadership practices (Campbell et al., 2019).

Instructional Support

Principals who use transformational leadership practices can effect change directly and indirectly in teacher motivation, quality of teaching, and depth of learning (Berkovich, 2017; Day et al., 2016). The literature revealed these practices can effect organizational change and commitment because of the way transformational leaders are able to leverage emotional experiences and build relationships with staff. In this way, principals can alter their focus from managerial tasks to instructional leadership and support and can positively influence student outcomes (Berkovich, 2017; Urick, 2016). An important practice in transformational leadership is the coordination of support for teachers such as instructional strategies and goals, collaboration with other teachers, and assessment of students. These support systems implement shared decision-making, which is a fundamental component of transformational leadership. When teachers take ownership in their development and make decisions collaboratively with the principal about their instructional needs, student outcomes are indirectly influenced in a positive way (Urick, 2016). Novice alternatively-certified teachers will need this type of instructional support to partner with their principal and other teachers to encourage

ownership of their learning. These teachers likely will develop instructional and

classroom management skills when transformational leadership practices and supports

are used.

Professional Learning for Principals to Improve Instructional Practices.

Findings from literature provided evidence that administrators benefit from professional

training to be effective transformational instructional leaders (Fullan, 2002). Principals

who do not experience or embrace their role as instructional leaders find the

responsibility of creating and providing professional learning for their staff to be stressful

and intimidating. These feelings are due to a lack of confidence in the professional

development process and their varying levels of engagement in the role of instructional

leader (Koonce et al., 2019). Principals need additional resources and support to develop

professional development that meets the individual and collective needs of all teachers.

The need for support is especially true of novice alternatively-certified teachers, who

have different needs than those of their traditionally certified peers. The level of training

received as preservice teachers is different, and therefore the level of support and

additional training also varies. Howley et al. (2019) recommend that principals

participate in a structured professional development program that (a) is fully funded, (b)

delivers a specifically designed curriculum, (c) is rigorously evaluated for effectiveness,

and (d) provides job-embedded opportunities for application of acquired knowledge.

When principals receive the professional learning needed to feel confident and effective

in helping teachers grow in the areas they need most, the teachers and the school will

experience greater success (Fullan, 2002).

Student Outcomes. Urick (2016) stated that principals influence student outcomes through coordinating collaborative opportunities for teachers to discuss curriculum, assessment, learning standards, and goal setting. Through transformational leadership practices, the principal builds capacity in teachers to implement best practices in instructional strategies. The principal becomes the expert in aligning teachers and students with the mission of the school, thus improving student academic achievement. Brown et al. (2017) found principals of high-performing schools had specific qualities that stood out as influential to student outcomes. These principals had a strong vision for the school and the ability to effectively implement professional learning communities. The teachers at the high-performing schools trusted the principal as the instructional leader of the campus. Use of transformational leadership practices will aid principals in effective communication and collaboration with novice alternatively-certified teachers as administrators guide instructors to create classroom environments that yield high-performing students.

Principals' Perceptions of Support Needed for Novice Alternatively-certified teachers

Teachers can express their self-efficacy in the profession as well as perceived gaps in learning from various teacher preparation programs. Principals also play a significant role in determining the support needs of novice teachers. Principals are qualified to make these decisions based on their years of experience supporting novice teachers (Harju & Niemi, 2020). Harju and Niemi (2018) stated that novice teachers would benefit from administrative support in (a) personal, (b) professional, and (c) social

aspects of the educational setting, despite their teacher preparation program. The personal

dimension related to self-esteem, self-efficacy, and how a novice teacher views teaching

and learning. Principals are able to help novice teachers in this area by guiding them to

feel more confident with teaching diverse learners. The professional dimension is specific

to a novice teacher's pedagogical knowledge. Principals may be able to assist new

instructors to improve instructional strategies by providing appropriate professional

development and professional learning communities. The social dimension is about being

accepted into the school community; principals can support novice instructors by

assigning competent mentors for new teachers. Novice alternatively-certified teachers do

not have extensive training and thus require individualized support to ensure they receive

the pedagogical knowledge in curriculum and instruction as well as classroom-

management techniques. When novice teachers, particularly those who are alternatively-

certified , are well versed in all dimensions, they have an increased opportunity to be

successful in the classroom.

Induction Programs

An induction program provides a way for novice teachers to receive training and

support in curriculum and instruction as well as classroom management. Novice teachers,

particularly those certified through alternative methods, require an in-depth induction

program (Baker-Gardner, 2015). Guiding novice teachers to becoming high-quality

instructors who can deliver effective lessons and confidently manage the classroom is the

purpose of induction. The principal plays a fundamental role in establishing an effective

and consistent induction program for novice teachers. Under the leadership and guidance

of the principal, mentoring programs should be developed and implemented. The

principal must recruit mentors and pair them intentionally with novice teachers in need of

support. The principal needs to meet regularly with the pairs to monitor the growth of the

novice teachers and to provide guidance and support as needed. The principal must

monitor the culture, climate, and work conditions for the novice teachers to ensure they

are not getting frustrated with their workload. Frustration has the potential to negatively

influence the teacher, students, and the entire school environment.

As an instructional leader, a principal needs to know how to successfully

implement an induction program for novice teachers (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Walker &

Kutsyuruba, 2019). In a longitudinal, mixed methods, pan-Canadian study, Walker and

Kutsyuruba (2019) used document analysis and New Teacher Surveys completed by

1,343 participants. Thirty-six of those participants participated in telephone interviews.

Findings from the study revealed that a lack of administrative support led to teachers

feeling isolated, resulting in novice teachers feeling stress and anxiety. Walker and

Kutsyuruba emphasized the importance of the principal being fully engaged in the

induction process to show teachers that they were valued and that the principal wanted

them to succeed. Principals being engaged in the induction process also affected novice

teachers' desire to remain in the profession. The participants in the study shared they

were more likely to continue teaching when they felt encouraged and supported and

could count on positive feedback and encouragement from the principal. Another critical

finding was that the majority of the participants in the Walker and Kutsyuruba study were

appreciative of principals who allowed them the autonomy to experiment with classroom

instructional strategies, were nonjudgmental, and were positive and supportive. These qualities increased job satisfaction in novice teachers and made them feel resilient and confident in their ability to teach effectively.

All novice teachers need the support and learning opportunities that an induction program can provide. This is especially true for novice alternatively-certified teachers who did not have formal preservice classroom teaching experience (Bowling & Ball, 2018). Such alternatively-certified new teachers need guidance and support to develop skills in curriculum, instruction, and classroom management. Under the leadership of the principal, these teachers should be provided the skills and support needed to be successful in the classroom.

Instructional Coaching

Novice alternatively-certified teachers are more likely to be hired in high-need, high-poverty schools that have a higher percentage of ethnic minority students from low-income households (Redding & Smith, 2019). Alternatively-certified teachers have fewer preservice training hours than their traditionally certified peers and therefore require more in-service support, training, and feedback. Administrators can provide this assistance by ensuring that novice alternatively-certified teachers have extra classroom assistance through instructional coaching (Redding & Smith, 2019). Instructional coaching is an opportunity for a teacher to work with a peer or coach skilled in best practices and strategies in curriculum, instruction, and behavior management. Through this process, teachers receive feedback and support as a form of professional development.

Instructional coaching helps novice alternatively-certified teachers implement effective instructional strategies and classroom-management practices in the classroom. An instructional coach or an administrator skilled in providing feedback and support can work with a novice teacher to collaboratively identify areas of improvement and create a plan to work towards growth in those areas. Although the instructional coach does not have to be in an evaluative role, having an administrator as a coach helps the novice teacher feel supported by administration. Instructional coaches provide professional development and training on a specific area or strategy and then can provide feedback to the teacher on the implementation of the strategy (Hirsch et al., 2019). Providing the novice teacher with assistance in areas of strength and areas of improvement will help the teacher grow and develop a repository of instructional and classroom-management strategies (Hirsch et al., 2019).

The principal, as the instructional leader, needs to provide leadership and offer in-service opportunities to novice instructors to learn and grow. A comprehensive induction program can provide support to teachers through mentoring. Administrators also need to provide coaching opportunities, both evaluative and nonevaluative, for novice alternatively-certified teachers, allowing them to learn, grow, and feel supported.

Supporting Novice Teachers in Challenges Associated With Teaching in High-Poverty Schools

The teachers who are hired in high-poverty, urban schools are often not prepared for teaching in that environment. Teaching in high-poverty schools is challenging, and novice teachers often leave the school and profession after their 1st year (Gaikhorst et al.,

2017). Kwok (2018) revealed that the high amount of turnover at urban schools results in such school administrators hiring more than double the number of inexperienced teachers, compared to nonurban schools. Teacher shortages in low-income areas yield job opportunities for novice, alternatively-certified teachers who, in addition to being inexperienced in the teaching field, lack the preservice training of traditionally certified teachers.

Gaikhorst et al. (2017) completed an exploratory qualitative study using semistructured interviews to identify the challenges teachers in high-poverty, urban schools face and determine how the principal can address those challenges within the induction program. The 15 purposively selected participants in the Gaikhorst et al. study were novice teachers from primary schools. According to Gaikhorst et al., novice alternatively-certified teachers felt confident and competent in their content area and in planning lessons but found three main areas to be the most challenging: (a) workload and stress, (b) cultural differences, and (c) behavior management. Novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools can benefit from a supportive principal and individualized professional development plans to help them to grow in these challenging areas. The findings provided evidence that the principal, as the instructional leader, is needed to support novice teachers in high-poverty schools with the issues they determined were the most challenging.

Support With Workload and Stress

According to Bottiani et al. (2019), 46% of teachers in high-poverty schools experience high stress due to smaller budgets, fewer resources, large class sizes, and

diverse student populations. A principal can support a novice teacher by decreasing the workload and stress of classroom instructors. Novice teachers in low-income environments typically feel they do not have enough time to address the variety of needs of their students, who are often at risk academically and in need of academic intervention. Teachers in high-poverty schools often work long hours and weekends attempting to prepare to meet the academic needs of their students (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). In addition to the long hours, novice alternatively-certified teachers have less experience and training in teaching students who have faced trauma, poverty, and violence at a higher rate than their affluent peers. These factors can influence teacher burnout and a level of stress that is associated with depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems (Bottiani et al., 2019). Principals are needed to assist novice teachers and provide guidance and support by tailoring their induction process to the specific needs of newly hired novice teachers.

Novice alternatively-certified teachers lack resources and instructional materials needed to be successful in the classroom, because they are beginning their career and building their instructional toolbox of skills and techniques. This need is particularly true for teachers in high-poverty schools with unequal access to resources, materials, and supplies (Medina et al., 2020). Administrators need to be aware of how the added stress of lack of valuable resources affects novice alternatively-certified teachers and should work to support them by determining ways to assist with supplying resources to these classrooms.

Not only does a lack of resources result in unnecessary stress, but insufficient assistance adds to the widening gap in achievement that is frequently observed between

students in poverty and their more affluent counterparts. Despite an increasing demand for higher achievement and academic success for all students, high-poverty schools often experience underachievement (Medina et al., 2020). The self-efficacy of novice alternatively-certified teachers is affected when they lack the tools to determine whether the reason for the gap in achievement is related to low motivation, disengaged parents, or lack of appropriate educational opportunities and strategies. Principals who use transformational practices value collaboration and recognize that the way to support novice teachers is to work closely with them to plan and prepare curriculum and instruction to foster academic success. The support that novice alternatively-certified teachers receive from their principals is directly, inversely related to the amount of stress that the teacher feels (Walker & Kutsyuruba, 2019). A teacher with a principal who is supportive, collaborative, and available to the teacher experiences a lower stress level than a teacher who feels unsupported. Principals, despite their own extensive workload, need to intentionally plan opportunities to mentor and support novice alternatively-certified teachers to experience less stress in an already highly challenging environment.

Support With Cultural Differences

Gaikhorst et al. (2017) noted that teachers working in high-poverty schools frequently have different cultures, backgrounds, and languages from students and parents. Without support from their principals, novice teachers likely will struggle with how to bridge this gap and become an effective teacher. Additionally, according to Gaikhorst et al., novice teachers need support communicating with parents from a different background or culture, with different values, or speaking a different language. Principal

support also helps ensure that ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups have access to effective teaching and resources (Bottiani et al., 2019). Principals need to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers with developing cultural competency so they are equipped to address their students in culturally sensitive ways (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). Training in culturally responsive practices will help novice teachers reduce bias and provide optimal learning opportunities for all students (Bottiani et al., 2019).

Novice teachers of students affected by hunger because of poverty, anger or violence, fear or anxiety, and increased familiarity with illness and death are under stress because these teachers lack knowledge of how to handle these challenges (Gaikhorst et al., 2017). The aspects of low-income environments that create barriers to academic achievement can include language barriers; linguistic or social differences; as well as imperceptible signs of poverty, such as lack of sleep, anxiety and depression, and food insecurity (Medina et al., 2020). Novice teachers teaching in low-income areas are often unversed in cognitive and language development of students because of a cultural incongruence between the students and the teachers. This cultural deficit leads to the assumption that the lack of achievement by certain cultural groups indicates an inability to achieve as opposed to a systemic issue that requires individualized support to overcome. When principals focus on developing a robust mentoring program that tasks mentors to share their experiences overcoming specific challenges related to cultural differences, novice teachers are more successful in high-poverty schools (Albright et al., 2017).

Support With Behavior Management

One of the most challenging areas for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools is classroom and behavior management (Blake, 2017). In high-poverty schools, multiple factors relate to the need for effective behavior management, including overcrowded classrooms and increased numbers of students with academic and mental health needs. According to Hirsch et al. (2019), approximately 12% of students display moderate to severe emotional and behavioral disorders, including inappropriate outbursts, oppositional defiance, physical and verbal aggression, or withdrawn conduct. Effective classroom management is an underdeveloped skill for novice teachers and affects students' ability to learn. Novice teachers are hired in high-poverty areas at a higher rate than at affluent schools and often are unprepared for the challenges they face in the classroom. Few alternative certification programs or professional development courses offer proper training on effective, research-based strategies that can be replicated in the classroom. Principals need to provide ample professional development opportunities in behavior management within the context of a comprehensive induction program that includes training, mentoring, and coaching.

Novice alternatively-certified teachers require support from principals and peers to understand the importance of a well-managed classroom and to gain strategies to build relationships with students that will affect classroom dynamics. The support novice teachers receive must begin during the induction period. Novice teachers in high-poverty schools have a great need for the modeling, coaching, and professional development that a comprehensive induction program provides. Researchers found that novice teachers'

instructional developmental requirements can be addressed through instruction on behavior management, opportunities to practice those skills, and feedback from the principal on their progress (Hirsch et al., 2019). In a study on factors that affect novice teachers in urban school districts, Albright et al. (2017) found that principals who provided robust induction programs and ample support for their novice teachers were able to develop these teachers. Although learning to manage student behavior is challenging for novice alternatively-certified teachers, assistance from the principal through support, training, and feedback will allow teachers to acquire these skills.

Principals, with the proper training and support, have the ability and the duty to support and guide novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools as they navigate the various challenges that accompany teaching in low-income environments. The support provided should allow novice teachers not only to address challenges all new teachers experience, but also to overcome unique challenges of high-poverty schools. Principals can provide the support required to overcome both types of challenges through well-constructed induction programs with individualized support and expectations for student academic success. Costa et al. (2019) found that when principals focus strengthening teachers' pedagogical knowledge, skills, and self-confidence through induction programs and support systems, the novice teachers are more successful in the classroom.

Summary and Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I provided an in-depth review of the literature regarding the support that administrators should provide to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The

conceptual framework, based on Burns's (1978) transformational leadership, provided a guide to how novice alternatively-certified teachers have been supported based on previous studies. The paradigm also offers a road map to administrators concerning how to support novice teachers in the future. Principals as transformational leaders inspire vision by setting direction and allowing autonomy, provide individualized support and intellectual stimulation, and develop staff through feedback and support. Transformational leaders build a school climate and culture that creates collaboration and engagement from the school community, and they improve the instructional program through high expectations and modeling.

I also provided literature in this chapter concerning administrators' need to ensure the success of novice teachers. The literature determined that novice alternatively-certified teachers benefit from comprehensive, robust induction programs; mentoring programs that allow the novice teacher to collaborate with a veteran teacher; and professional development. Professional development should be provided in the areas considered to be the most challenging for novice alternatively-certified teachers, such as classroom management, cultural differences, and workload and stress.

A substantial body of literature is specific to the needs of novice teachers; principal perceptions; and the needs of teachers in urban, high-poverty schools. Yet, little is known about how elementary school principals and assistant principals understand and address the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools. The purpose of this study was to add to the research about practice with results specific to high-poverty elementary schools and novice alternatively-certified teachers.

In Chapter 3, I will explain the exploratory qualitative study to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternately certified teachers in high-poverty schools. I will share the research design and rationale and the role I took as the researcher. I will describe the methodology I used, to include recruiting and selecting participants, developing the data collection instrument, collecting data, and analyzing the data. I also will explain in detail how I ensured that the study was trustworthy and followed ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this exploratory case study using a basic qualitative approach was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a Southern U.S. state. Because of teacher shortages, school districts are hiring alternatively-certified teachers at higher rates with little to no experience in the field of teaching. Redding and Smith (2016) found that such teachers are frequently placed in high-poverty schools with more demanding classroom environments in terms of maintaining student engagement and managing classroom discipline. Researchers' findings revealed that teachers certified through alternative methods are more likely to have issues with classroom management than their traditionally certified peers; however, little is known about how elementary school principals and assistant principals understand and address the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers (Flower et al., 2017; Stough & Montague, 2015).

Essential aspects of a qualitative research design, according to Ravitch and Carl (2016), include (a) developing a rationale of the study, (b) creating research questions, (c) selecting a conceptual framework to ground the study, (d) selecting a research design and methodology, and (e) ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the study. I used a basic qualitative design (see Yin, 2016). I chose an exploratory case study using a basic qualitative approach because this design focuses on the experiences of people in their daily roles and the findings in the study are transferable to broader contexts. I used purposeful sampling to identify 11 elementary principals and assistant principals to collect data using semistructured interviews. Results from qualitative research are defined

by the participant's real-world situation, as opposed to quantitative research, where researchers define results in numerical values. The contextual conditions of this study were best defined through a qualitative study.

In Chapter 3, I explain the research design used and rationale behind choosing a qualitative study. I describe my role as a researcher, the methodology used in conducting interviews with campus-level administrators, and the plan for analyzing the data gleaned from the interviews. I share the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness of the data and use of ethical procedures. I then summarize Chapter 3 and introduce Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

Little is known about how elementary school principals and assistant principals understand and address the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers. School districts are hiring alternatively-certified teachers with little to no experience in the field of teaching at higher rates because of teacher shortages (Redding & Smith, 2016). The following research questions were grounded in transformational leadership and used to guide this study:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

The findings of this study provide recommendations to administrators to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers to improve their classroom instruction and management practices. Because this study aimed to make connections and observations in a real-world setting (see Yin, 2016), qualitative research was the logical choice for the research tradition.

Qualitative research is a range of approaches and methodologies that are not easily defined (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This type of inquiry can be used across several disciplines and paradigms. Researchers can take several approaches to complete this type of research and use a variety of methods of data collection: interviews, case studies, observations, and introspection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Qualitative researchers engage with participants of studies to gain insight into their experiences and to make meaning. Qualitative research is less about research methods and design and more about capturing the experiences of the participant with fidelity (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative research operates under multiple paradigms and assumptions that serve as guiding principles.

Creswell and Poth (2018) identified five qualitative approaches to choose from when designing a research study: (a) narrative, (b) phenomenological, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnographic, and (e) case study. Narrative research is well suited for studies designed to gather a detailed story from a small sample of participants. A phenomenological study replaces participants' individual experiences with the commonality of the experiences as a single concept. Grounded theory research is conducted to generate a theory from the processes shared by the participants of the study

that explains the actions presented. Ethnographic research requires observations over time of participants within the same culture-sharing group. Case study research focuses on experiences in a natural setting using multiple sources of information to collect data. The experiences shared by participants contributes to understanding the problem of the study.

An additional approach to qualitative research is the basic qualitative study, also known as a traditional or generic study. Generic or basic qualitative studies focus on understanding an experience (Kahlke, 2014). A basic qualitative approach was the best approach this study, because I used purposeful sampling to identify elementary principals and assistant principals to interview. This basic methodological design was amenable to scientific study and addressed the problem of this study in a naturalistic setting (see Caelli et al., 2003). By using this exploratory approach, I ensured that all participants were able to provide valid and reliable content to answer the research questions of this study.

Role of the Researcher

I was the instrument used to collect data in this study. As such, I was an observer who developed interview questions and conducted interviews, as well as collected, analyzed, and interpreted data for the study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) emphasized that positionality is a main component of understanding the researcher's role in a qualitative study. Positionality is the researcher's role and identity in relationship to the participants, setting, and topic and was a critical aspect for me to reveal in this study to ensure the trustworthiness of the research.

I have worked in the school district of study for 16 years; 8 years as a teacher and 8 years as a campus administrator. I have known several of the potential participants in the study for more than 5 years, which could create bias. However, I did not have an evaluative or supervisory relationship with any of the participants in the study. To avoid researcher bias, I established a strong ethical standard. I monitored my work for bias and endeavored to maintain research integrity, so that the research I present is trusted as an honest representation of the data collected (see Yin, 2016). I also used a reflective journal, which required self-examination, and applied a process called bracketing (see Ahern, 1999). Bracketing is an approach used in qualitative research to eliminate any potential harmful effects of bias that could negatively affect the collection of data and interpretation of research findings. Through bracketing, I acknowledged my preconceptions prior to the research so I could better prevent such bias from interfering with data collection and analysis. Additionally, I verified the findings by allowing the participants to confirm the conclusions of the study, also known as member checking, to eliminate bias (see Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). By using these strategies, I conducted this study with ethical principles to produce trustworthy research that answered the research questions.

Methodology

In this section, I describe the components of the basic exploratory qualitative approach that I used to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a Southern U.S. state. First, I explain how I selected participants for the study in a medium-sized

school district. Next, I detail the instrument used to conduct the study. Then, I describe the procedures I followed to recruit participants and for collecting data. Finally, I share the plan for data analysis.

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling to select participants for this study. Purposeful sampling, also called strategic or purposive sampling, means that participants for the study are chosen based on their specific experiences or point of view that will contribute to answering the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). When selecting participants for a study, a researcher must consider who is needed to reach the goal of the study and who is knowledgeable about the topic or phenomenon of study. Researchers also consider any specific roles or experiences of the potential participant that can help with further exploration into the topic of study.

The participants I interviewed for this study were administrators from elementary schools in a medium-sized suburban district; the chosen schools were elementary schools with the highest poverty rates, determined by the percentage of free and reduced-price lunch recipients, and a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers. The school district has a population of approximately 20 elementary school principals and 20 elementary school assistant principals, from which a convenience sample of 10–12 participants were to be selected from elementary schools; the final sample was 11. All elementary schools in the district are designated as Title I schools; however, some schools have a significantly higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students than others. To meet the selection criteria for participation in this study, candidates had to (a) be an

elementary principal or assistant principal from within the partner district, (b) have a

minimum of 3 years of experience in school administration, (c) work at a campus with at

least 60% students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch, and (d) have experience

working with novice alternatively-certified teachers. I chose eight schools with high

poverty rates. Of the 14 potential participants who met these criteria, 12 administrators

agreed to conduct individual interviews; one administrator dropped out of the process. I

chose the administrators from these campuses were chosen because of their opportunities

to observe and work with all teachers at their campus, both novice and veteran educators;

therefore, the participants could speak to the needs of their teachers who are alternatively-

certified. Qualitative approaches focus on the participants' experiences to collect data.

One participant can share multiple concepts relevant to the study; therefore, large

samples are not needed to collect sufficient data necessary to complete the qualitative

study (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

The partner district of choice allowed me to sign an agreement to interview

administrators from within the district. I was able to gain preapproval through the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) preapproval process. The preapproval process included

parameters to ensure that I complied with ethical standards required by the Walden

University IRB process. I could invite elementary principals and assistant principals from

the partner district to participate in the study after formal approval by Walden University

IRB.

Upon receiving final approval, I sent email invitations to principals and assistant

principals in high-poverty elementary schools to set up a meeting to complete an

interview. I used data reported to the state to determine which elementary campuses had

the highest poverty rate in the school district to ensure the administrators being invited to

voluntarily participate met the criterion. In the email, I asked potential interview

candidates to respond with their consent within 7 days. If a potential candidate did not

respond within 7 days, I sent a follow-up email. Once consent emails were obtained, I

selected candidates to participate and set up a time mutually beneficial to both participant

and me.

Instrumentation

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary

school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in

high-poverty schools in a Southern U.S. state. To conduct this study, I used individual,

semistructured interviews to collect data (see Appendix). Semistructured interviews

include questions prepared in advance that narrowly focus on answering the research

questions but also allow the researcher to ask additional questions or include additional

topics in the conversation that were not planned in advance. An advantage of

semistructured interviews is the flexibility to gather in-depth information through probing

questions (Lambert, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The interview questions invited open-ended responses. I developed an interview

protocol to ensure that the research questions were addressed and would be answered,

using sources from the conceptual framework of transformation leadership from Burns

(1978) and Bass (1999). The interview questions were grounded in the peer-reviewed

literature of Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), who were influential in bringing the concept of

transformational leadership to the world of educational leadership. I used the interview

protocol to guide my interactions with each participant, wrote observations during the

interview, and took notes about the participant's responses. The interview protocol listed

the open-ended questions and provided space to script essential information about the

purpose of the study, confidentiality, and closing comments (see Yin, 2016). In addition

to using the interview protocol to take notes, I audio recorded each interview so that I

would have a record of all pertinent data collected.

     As a researcher-developed instrument, the interview protocol for this study was

composed of questions that would answer the research questions for the study, provide

structure and organization to the interview, and yield opportunities for follow-up

questions or additional probes when needed (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I ensured content

validity by collaborating with three educational leaders who were not part of the study

but had experience in leadership roles in Title I elementary schools. Administrator A is a

veteran principal of 35 years and served as a mentor principal. Although not currently

working in a Title I school, this administrator was previously a principal of Title I schools

for over 15 years. Administrator B is currently a high school principal but has served the

district in various capacities including as an administrator at a Title I elementary school

for 3 years. Administrator C is a district-level administrator who has 3 years of

experience in leadership at Title 1 elementary schools and also led the district in creating

the state-required equity plan. I asked these three administrators to provide feedback on

the interview protocol questions and made modifications based on their recommendations

to increase the validity of the interview protocol.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Selecting participants for a study is an essential step. Participants should have experiences that complement and also vary from other participants, should be knowledgeable in the area of study, and should be able to provide evidence for the conclusions made in this study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this section I detail how I obtained participants for this study to ensure a valid and trustworthy collection of data.

Recruitment and Participation

Participants were recruited from a medium-sized school district in a Southern U.S. state. The partner district has 20 elementary schools, each with one principal and one assistant principal. As already described in the participant selection section, all selected participants were elementary school principals and assistant principals with a minimum of 3 years administrative experience who had firsthand knowledge of the needs of novice alternatively-certified teachers.

To determine that a potential candidate met the established criteria, I contacted the partner district's human resources department via email for a list of current principals and assistant principals with at least 3 years of administrative experience within the partner district. I then emailed the Public Education Information Management System department of the state education agency to verify the elementary campuses that had a high percentage of poverty, yielding nine campuses. Once I determined which principals and assistant principals met the criteria to participate in the study, I began preparing to invite candidates to participate in the study. This step of procuring purposely selected

participants who met the criteria for this study was important to answer the research questions of this study.

After I obtained IRB approval from Walden University, I sent individual emails using my Walden email account to the principals and assistant principals who met the criteria: 14 potential participants at nine elementary schools. I provided an overview of the research study and detailed informed consent within the email sent to each potential participant. I asked each administrator who was interested in participating in the study to respond to the email with their consent, acknowledging that they understood the nature of the study and were not forced or pressured to participate. I maintained that email as evidence of informed consent for each participant, as required by IRB. I followed up with candidates who had not responded within 7 days. Scheduling interviews occurred through email. I set up interviews to be completed virtually using a videoconferencing program. I sent confirmation emails with the agreed date and time as well as reminder emails before the meeting.

Data Collection

I collected data through interviews, as I already described. Although interviews took place virtually, creating an environment comfortable for all participants to be able to share their experiences was still important (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews were scheduled for 45–60 min, with the knowledge that some interviews might not need that amount of time or might run over the allotted time. I attempted to minimize disruptions and distractions; however, in the event of an interruption, I would stop the recording and note the question last addressed in the interview protocol. Once able to resume the

interview, I would begin with reviewing where the participant left off to allow the interview to proceed in a consistent manner. Should the interview require rescheduling, I would make future arrangements that best suited the participant's agenda.

I conducted semistructured interviews and used probing questions to obtain the administrators' perceptions on the topic of the study (see Yin, 2016). I obtained permission from each participant to audio record the interview. I used a digital recorder as well as the audio record feature on the virtual platform for one-on-one videoconference sessions as a back-up. I did not save the video recording of any videoconference call. After I completed the interview, I uploaded the audio recording onto my laptop and saved it in a password-protected file. I also saved the recording to a USB drive, which is kept in a secure location. Audio recordings from virtual meetings not only allowed me to capture the words of the participant accurately for transcription purposes, but also provided me with reminders of facial expressions, gestures, or voice inflections that might be important to note as part of the record of the participant's interview (see Yin, 2016). During the interview, I took notes on the interview protocol, recording both the nonverbal cues of the interviewee and any follow-up questions I might have, so as not to interrupt their line of thinking.

After each interview, I thanked the participant for sharing their experiences and for their participation in the study. I also let each participant know that after I analyzed the data, I would reach out to them to member check the findings. No other follow-up meetings would be required for this basic study. Then, I used the recordings to transcribe the interview. I completed transcribing within 3 days after the interview so everything

that occurred during the interview was fresh in my mind (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The

next step of the data collection process was the analysis stage.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analyzed were from 11 individual interviews using a protocol based on

the research questions:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational

   leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified

   teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective

   transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice

   alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

While interviewing, I kept these research questions, rooted in Burns's (1978)

transformational leadership theory, in mind. During the interview, I made notes of the

participant's tone, gestures, and overall manner to help me analyze the interview later in

the process. Transcription of each interview within 3 days allowed me to review the

conversation and familiarize myself with the contents of the interview. Becoming

familiar with the interview transcripts is an important step of the analysis process

(Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To analyze the interview data, I used content analysis. Content analysis is a

detailed process that allows the researcher to make inferences from collected data

(Bengtsson, 2016; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Downe-Wamboldt (1992) stated that the

content analysis method is multifunctional in enabling the researcher to glean trends,

detect patterns, and observe themes. With this method, a researcher is also able to determine the meanings, context, and intentions of the data collected. Yin (2016) suggested a five-phase cycle of analyzing data: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding. I used this cycle for the content analysis of the data collected from the interviews.

Compiling

This first phase of Yin's (2016) cycle is to compile information received during the data collection period of the research process. After interviewing participants, I transcribed the conversations and included any notes that I took during the interview. I entered the raw data from the transcripts, without considering patterns or themes, into a Microsoft spreadsheet. I continued to read and reread the transcripts to become familiar with the collected data and identify how the data aligned with the conceptual framework of transformational leadership. The notes that I scribed while interviewing were arranged in a way to help me make connections and see patterns throughout the analysis process (see Yin, 2016).

Disassembling

The next phase after becoming familiar with the data is to disassemble or decontextualize the data by dissecting them into smaller parts or meaning units that will help to provide insight on the meaning of the data (Bengtsson, 2016). I coded in two stages. First, I used a priori coding and identified key words based on Burns's (1978) conceptual framework of transformational leadership. Next, I used open coding and pattern coding to assign labels and make connections. A code is a word or phrase that

summarizes or captures the meaning of the data presented (Saldaña, 2016). Coding is a deeply reflective process that could take several cycles to achieve refinement of the codes derived from the data. I did not use commercial data-management software but used a Microsoft spreadsheet to manually code and sort the data.

Reassembling

The third phase of Yin's (2016) process is to reassemble the data. In this phase, the data are regrouped and sequenced in a different way as the researcher looks for new meaning. I reread the original text with all of the codes as a way to recontextualize and ensure that the codes aligned with the original raw data (Bengtsson, 2016). The findings in the reassembling phase could be different those of the original codes, and thus, a second and third cycle of coding could occur. Reassembling and disassembling could cycle more than once before moving to the fourth phase. I needed to carefully refine all of my codes and patterns to ensure an accurate interpretation of the data.

Interpreting

The fourth phase of analysis is to take the categorized data and bring subjects together to observe emerging themes. I used Bengtsson's (2016) process to identify themes, which are the overall concepts based on the codes, patterns, and categories found in the data. According to Yin (2016), interpreting the data may cause the researcher to cycle back through the disassembling and reassembling phases. The purpose of readdressing previous phases after the initial interpretation is to look at the data from all angles to ensure correct interpretation. In this phase, as I took a deeper look at categories and themes, I needed to be mindful of negative instances, also known as discrepant cases.

These are cases that initially seem to go with the other cases but may be an outlier upon further examination (Yin, 2016). I developed a comprehensive interpretation that was the basis for the narrative that I constructed. From the emerging themes, I constructed the underlying interpretation of the data.

Concluding

The fifth phase is to draw conclusions and reach a deeper understanding of the study. Bengtsson (2016) referred to this stage of content analysis as a compilation process that uses the words from the data to stay close to the text for the themes and conclusions of the study. During this process of concluding and compiling, I used the themes derived from several cycles of coding to draw conclusions that encompassed broad concepts and ideas (see Yin, 2016). I completed this process in a neutral and objective way so that I analyzed the data in a nonbiased manner. In this phase, I did not simply restate the findings, but ensured that the findings related to the literature, used the conclusions to explain how the study may be useful in the district of study, and identified areas needing additional research. I validated the outcomes of this study by asking the participants to member check the findings (Bengtsson, 2016) Additionally, I asked the administrators who assisted me with the instrument validation, who were not participants of this study, to review the themes with me to reduce bias and increase validity (see Yin, 2016).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is necessary to ensure that the experiences of participants in a study are captured and represented in an authentic and accurate way. To achieve trustworthiness in a research study, the researcher must construct a quality

interview protocol, collect the data with fidelity, and represent the findings accurately (Yin, 2016). Central to each research study is the use of strategies to achieve credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2016)

Credibility

Credibility is a critical aspect of qualitative research. Credibility relates to the research design, instruments used to collect the data, and the data collected to ensure the findings and interpretation of the study are reasonable (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To establish credibility, I used triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing to ensure the data from the study were accurately interpreted and precisely represented the participants' experiences (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2016). To provide credibility in the study, I used a combination of these strategies.

Triangulation is a strategy that requires the researcher to find multiple ways to confirm the findings of the study or the data collected (Yin, 2016). I used triangulation of the participant selection by ensuring that participants had varying degrees of experience and viewpoints (see Patton, 1999). I also interviewed both principals and assistant principals from different schools across the district of study to obtain a wide variety of experiences.

Second, to ensure the creditability of the study, I asked the participants to member check the findings of the study. Feedback from the participants to review the emerged themes of a study and to check alignment with their experiences provided objectivity in the findings (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Finally, I ensured credibility by collaborating with three educational leaders who were not part of the study but had experience in leadership roles in Title I elementary schools, as a form of peer review. I asked these three administrators to provide feedback on the interview protocol questions and made modifications based on their recommendations to increase the validity and credibility of the interview protocol. Upon completion of the study, I asked the same three administrators to review the findings of the study to ensure that I captured the experiences of the participants without bias.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research is a process where the findings of the study are applicable and relevant in broader contexts beyond the specific study (Burkholder et al., 2016). To allow findings to be generalized in broad contexts, researchers can use specific methods. Ravitch and Carl (2016) described one method to obtain transferability as thick description. Thick description is the use of detailed, specific descriptions of the setting, participants, and findings of the study that allow for comparisons to other contexts by other researchers or practitioners (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I was explicit in the descriptions of the data collected and resultant findings so readers can discern whether the findings are transferable to their context. I also invited participants with a variety of experiences to share, with differing years of experience in administration, to create a robust pool of data.

Dependability

For a qualitative research study to have dependability, a researcher must use consistency in collecting and analyzing data as well as representing and sharing findings

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although qualitative research is a subjective approach, the process must have consistent procedures to collect data, analyze data, and report findings so that if other researchers were to attempt to complete a comparable study, they would obtain similar results (Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Dependability provides the necessary information to allow the study to be repeated in another context and have consistent findings. To establish dependability, I first had a peer review or debrief conducted on the data protocol; three colleagues who were not participants in the study but had specific knowledge of the topic of study offered feedback. I then conducted all interviews using the same interview protocol, used a recording device during each interview, took extensive fieldnotes as the participants shared their experiences, and transcribed each interview within 3 days. I used audit trails to keep an accurate account of how decisions were made through the coding process to the findings of the study (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Use of audit trails allowed the study to be replicated by following the steps that I took to conduct the interviews and analyze the data.

Confirmability

Another aspect of trustworthiness is confirmability, which aims to reduce subjectivity in a qualitative research study (Burkholder et al., 2016). To ensure confirmability, I needed to be aware of my biases as a researcher. To reduce the potential for bias, I had the participants member check the findings to verify that I captured their experiences accurately (see Bengtsson, 2016). Additionally, asked the administrators who assisted me with the peer review of the interview protocol, who were not participants of

this study, to review the themes with me to reduce bias (see Yin, 2016). To further check any bias I might bring to this study, I used a reflexive journal and applied a process called bracketing (Ahern, 1999).

Reflexive bracketing is a thoughtful process that assists a researcher to be objective and unbiased in gathering and analyzing data (Ahern, 1999). One way to use this strategy was to have a reflexive journal to reflect on any biases that I had that could influence the credibility of the study. According to Yin (2016), the best studies recognize the influences that affect the study, while keeping those biases under control so as not to risk the trustworthiness of the study. Ravitch and Carl (2016) mentioned two specific times when being mindful of one's own interpretations and biases are important: (a) while engaging in interviews and (b) while reading through and analyzing data. When I interviewed participants, I recorded my personal thoughts and beliefs on the statements made in my reflexive journal as a way to keep these biases from influencing the data collection process. While reading through and analyzing data, I again kept notes of any biased thoughts. I later included the bracketed information in with my findings so that readers of the study would be aware of any personal biases that might have influenced the outcomes of the research findings.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical considerations in a qualitative research study must be present from the beginning stages of the study to include the plan and design of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Throughout each stage of the research process, the researcher must consider solutions to ethical issues to ensure the integrity of the study. Creswell and Poth (2018)

explored ethical issues by phase of the research process. The aspects of the study that must be considered are IRB approval, recruitment of participants, data collection, steps for keeping collected data confidential, and other issues that may be applicable to the study.

The IRB ensures that dissertation proposals comply with a set of ethical standards that have been put in place by the researcher to guarantee the protection of the academic institutions, participants, and the district of study. Walden University has established an IRB preapproval process for students in the Advanced Educational Administrative Leadership (AEAL) program. As a part of this program, I completed a preauthorization process that included a Partner Organization Agreement providing me preauthorized permission to collect data within the district. This form was submitted to IRB through the program coordinator, who maintained a copy.

The next step that I took to receive IRB approval based on the AEAL program was to resend the preauthorization to the program coordinator and my committee chair. I then completed a form that indicated that the study I would complete was aligned with the parameters of the AEAL specialization, and I waited for feedback from the IRB. I made any changes necessary that might be suggested in the feedback to ensure all ethical procedures were followed. When proposal approval was obtained and the IRB confirmed that my proposal fell within ethical standards, I received an IRB number (No. 01-12-21-0748887) and was able to progress to the participant-recruitment phase in the research process.

To recruit participants, I sent individual emails using my Walden email account, as opposed to my district email account, to the principals and assistant principals who met the criteria, and with whom I had no supervisory relationship. Within the email I provided an overview of the research study and detailed informed consent. I shared the following interview procedures with potential participants: (a) Each interview could take up to an hour; (b) all interviews would be audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed; (c) as the researcher, I would uphold the highest level of confidentiality; and (b) participants would have the opportunity to review the draft findings for accuracy. Each administrator was asked to respond to the email to indicate that they gave their consent, acknowledged that they understand the nature of the study, and were not forced or pressured to participate. Informed consent was maintained for each participant as required by IRB. Because of the voluntary nature of the study, if an invited potential participant declined to participate in the study, I thanked them for notifying me and for their time and attempted to recruit another participant if needed. If a participant had withdrawn their consent, I would not have included any data collected from them within the findings of the study. Notes and recordings as a result of data collected from that participant would have been destroyed.

The protection of participants is critical to collecting data for the study. I attended a web-based training course entitled "Protecting Human Research Participants" by the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research to ensure that I was well versed in strategies to protect the individuals who chose to participate in this study. In addition to protection, Rubin and Rubin (2012) emphasized the importance of the

relationship between the researcher and interviewer. Researchers must not pressure potential participants to agree to be interviewed. This consideration was especially important in the context of this study because I had worked in the district of study for 16 years and considered myself to be colleagues with the participant pool, as well as friends with many of them. To maintain ethical standards within the study, I needed to assure potential participants that they were in no way obligated to participate in the study. I also needed to maintain neutrality and confidentiality so that the participants felt comfortable to share their experiences. During the interview, a disruption was possible. If the disruption was too great, I would ask the participant for a time to reschedule the interview. If the disruption was a brief interruption, I would remind the participant of where we were in the conversation and resume the interview.

Collecting data from participants requires appropriate confidential and security measures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All participants were assigned a number and were referred to by that number in the findings of the study (e.g., P2, P5). To maintain confidentiality, the name and email addresses of the participants were stored separately from the recordings and transcriptions. Data and any materials collected are securely stored and maintained. I have used a password-protected file on my laptop to upload and store audio recordings and transcriptions of the interviews. I also have kept the fieldnotes on the interview protocols in a secure lockbox in my home. I will store the data collected for 5 years before destroying the documents and deleting the electronic files, as required by Walden University.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I reviewed the methodology that I used in the study, including the criteria for participants to be selected and the instrument used to collect the data. I reviewed in depth the procedures for recruiting participants and the process used to collect and analyze data. An integral part of a qualitative study is trustworthiness. I reviewed the steps that I took to ensure trustworthiness in the study, as well as the ethical procedures that I followed to maintain the integrity of the study. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the setting of the study, address the data analysis process, and provide the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a Southern state. I used semistructured interviews with an interview protocol constructed to glean data from the experiences of participants in the study (see Appendix). I analyzed the data collected during these interviews to create categories and develop themes. I used the transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978) as the framework and foundation of the study that was instrumental during the coding process. I provided recommendations from the results of this study to administrators to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers improve their classroom instruction and management practices. Two research questions guided this study:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

Findings from the study are provided in this chapter. Also included in this chapter are a description of the setting, an explanation of the data collection and data analysis process, the results, and evidence of trustworthiness. I conclude with a summary of the overall chapter.

Setting

District Site

The study took place in a medium-sized, suburban district in a Southern state. The

district had a 67% economically-disadvantaged student population, determined by the

percentage of free and reduced-price lunch recipients in a school setting (Texas

Education Agency, 2007). Administrators selected as participants for this study currently

served in elementary schools with an economically disadvantaged student population

over 60%. Both principals and assistant principals were purposively chosen as

participants to answer the research questions and provide a broad perspective regarding

support to novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Demographics of Participants

Fourteen participants from nine schools met criteria and were invited to

participate. Twelve administrators volunteered for the study, but one declined to respond

to attempts to schedule an interview. Ultimately, I scheduled interviews with 11

administrators from eight schools via a videoconference program. Of the 11 participants,

six were principals, and five were assistant principals. All participants worked at the

elementary level with students in prekindergarten through Grade 5. The participants were

all female, with varying years of experience in administration, spanning 3 to 20 years. Of

the 11 participants, P2, P8, P9, and P10 shared that they began their careers in public

education as alternatively-certified teachers. Although no interview question specifically

addressed whether participants went through an alternative of traditional certification

program, all participants shared their specific experiences with their method of

66

certification in relation to the novice alternatively-certified teachers they now support. No

additional information was requested, to ensure confidentiality of the participants. Prior

to completion of the study, one of the participants of the study passed away. This

occurrence might affect the interpretation of the study results because the findings of the

study did not include all participants' member-checking input. Table 1 shows the

demographic information of each participant.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants and Percentage of Economically
Disadvantaged Students at the Campus

Participant	Administrator role	Years in education	Years of administrative experience	% economically disadvantaged students at campus
P1	Principal	22	8	86
P2	Assistant principal	13	4	86
P3	Principal	24	7	79
P4	Principal	23	6	98
P5	Assistant principal	22	11	74
P6	Assistant principal	20	6	86
P7	Principal	30	20	85
P8	Assistant principal	15	3	79
P9	Principal	14	9	98
P10	Assistant principal	14	3	85
P11	Principal	15	10	88

Data Collection

During the data collection process, I followed the procedures outlined in Chapter 3. To obtain a list of potential candidates based on the participant criteria in the study, I contacted the human resources department of the partner school district and received a list of elementary administrators with 3 or more years' experience in administration. I also emailed the Public Education Information Management System department to ensure I invited potential participants who were administrators of schools with an economically disadvantaged student population greater than 60%. Results yielded nine elementary schools, with eight principals and six assistant principals meeting study criteria. From that pool of potential candidates, in compliance with the Walden University IRB ethical standards, and in partnership with the preapproval agreement of the district of choice, I sent emails with invitations to participate in the study to elementary principals and assistant principals. I sent all potential candidates an email containing information about the data collection procedures through the Leader Interview Consent Form. This consent form provided basic information to potential candidates regarding interview procedures; participants' right to privacy; the voluntary nature of the study; risks and benefits that participation in the study could provide; and contact information for university staff, should the potential candidate have further questions. Eleven participants responded to my email with their consent. I responded to these emails and scheduled interviews with each individual participant. I sent a follow-up email to consenting participants to schedule a time to meet for the interview. Once a date and time were agreed upon, I sent a confirmation email with a link to the videoconference program to each participant.

I collected data from 11 principals and assistant principals through individual semistructured interviews. I developed the interview protocol (see Appendix) used to guide the data collection. I based the questions in the protocol on the conceptual framework for this study, transformational leadership from Burns (1978) and Bass (1999). I created questions that were narrowly focused to ensure I was able to answer the research questions of this study and gather in-depth information (see Lambert, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Each participant was interviewed via a videoconference program because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All interviews were scheduled at a time that was mutually agreeable to the participant, after the school day, to ensure the interviews did not interfere with school responsibilities. The semistructured nature of the interviews allowed the participants to feel comfortable to share their experiences openly and honestly regarding their perception of support to novice alternatively-certified teachers. I included probes in the interview protocol to glean additional or clarifying information from the participant. Before each interview began, I asked the participant for permission to audio record. I then used the audio recordings for transcription, coding, and data analysis after the completion of each interview.

I began each interview with general questions about the participants to place them at ease with the interview process and to gather basic information about their level of experience in education and administration. I allowed participants to speak freely concerning their experiences as I asked each question and probed for clarification as needed. I allotted 45–60 min for each interview as described in Chapter 3; however, no interview exceeded 45 minutes. I interviewed participants over 2 weeks until all 11

volunteers had been interviewed. No follow-up interviews were required, and I encountered no unusual circumstances during the data collection process.

I completed each interview transcription manually while listening to the audio recording. I slowed down the playback to be able to type along with the recording. After transcribing all of the recordings, I reread each transcription several times to become familiar with the content prior to beginning the data analysis and coding process.

Data Analysis

In the process of analyzing the data, I used a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to organize the raw data and move inductively from coded units to larger representations including categories and themes (see Bengtsson, 2016). Data were from the 11 semistructured interviews I conducted. According to Yin (2016), qualitative research can be prone to bias, and thus, I read the transcribed interviews and recorded my thoughts in a reflective journal to acknowledge any bias. To analyze the data, I used content analysis, which allowed me to make inferences from the raw data (see Bengtsson, 2016; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Using content analysis, I could find trends, patterns, categories, and observe themes (see Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). I used Yin's five-phase cycle of analyzing data to complete the content analysis of the data collected from the interviews.

I began the analysis process by compiling the data into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet without considering patterns or themes. I read and reread the transcripts so that I was familiar with them and how they aligned to the conceptual framework of this study. Next, I disassembled or decontextualized the data by dissecting the raw data into smaller units (see Bengtsson, 2016). I used a priori coding to identify key words based on

my conceptual framework of transformational leadership (see Burns, 1978). I then used

open coding and pattern coding to make connections and capture the meaning of the data

presented (see Saldaña, 2016). The next step I took was to reassemble or recontextualize

to ensure that my codes aligned with the raw data and were accurately interpreted (see

Bengtsson, 2016). In the fourth step, I was able to use the categorized data to observe the

emerging themes.

Codes, Categories, and Themes

A Priori Coding

After putting the raw data into the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, I used a priori

coding to guide the coding process. A priori coding is using predetermined codes to

categorize the data collected (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this case, the four elements of

transformational leadership were used to categorize the data into a priori codes: (a)

individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and

(d) idealized influence (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, each

text excerpt from the raw data was categorized by one of the four elements. I found no

discrepant cases and was able to categorize each excerpt by the conceptual framework.

Table 2 illustrates the a priori coding I did based on the transcripts of the 11 interviews.

Table 2

Sample a Priori Coding

Role	Excerpt from interview	A priori code
Principal	I think they missed a lot of opportunities to observe and do field studies and watch good models.	Intellectual stimulation
Principal	I try really hard to not be superficial with my staff, saying, "Hey, let me know what you need," but more concrete in coming in and saying, "You know, I noticed when you delivered this lesson, you did this really well. What do you think you could work on?"	Individualized consideration
Principal	We did a lot of training on trauma-centered practices, on diversity, and inequities.	Idealized influence
Principal	Good leaders make more leaders, they don't make more followers. I always tell them, "The answer is in the room." One of us in here can determine, whatever the problem is, how to fix it and how to answer that question.	Inspirational motivation
Assistant principal	They're able to trust me with what it is that they need.	Inspirational motivation
Assistant principal	We try to have a smaller meeting with just the new teachers.	Individualized consideration
Assistant principal	I think some people may just come in with some prerequisite skills, some natural skill, ability, and talent.	Intellectual stimulation
Assistant principal	Whatever it is they need help with—if they come to me or if I go to them—because I've noticed it, I am side-by-side with them learning it.	Idealized influence

Open Coding

In the next phase of analysis, I used open coding to break down the data into smaller segments by assigning labels or codes (see Saldaña, 2016; Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) referred to this analysis stage as disassembling the data. I continued to use the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to organize the codes of the substantial amount of raw data. Once I

went through a first round of open coding, I used a pivot table to provide a summary of the codes that I assigned to the data, so that I could observe the coding in a meaningful way. After seeing the numerous similar codes that I had assigned under each a priori code, I combined some under during a second round of open coding to provide a narrower focus. Table 3 shows how I used the first a priori coding to determine open codes.

Table 3

A Priori Coding to Open Coding

A priori code	First open coding	Second open coding
Idealized influence	Trust	Transforming culture
Idealized influence	Communication	Collaboration
Individualized consideration	Support based on needs	Support
Individualized consideration	Professional development	Instructional leadership
Inspirational motivation	Collaboration	Collaboration
Inspirational motivation	Relationships	Relationships
Intellectual stimulation	Observation	Challenges for alternatively-certified teachers
Intellectual stimulation	Experience	Challenges for alternatively-certified teachers

Pattern Coding

I then used another pivot table to look for patterns in the open codes. The pivot tables provided me with a count of how many times I used a specific code, and patterns in

the data began to emerge. I went back to the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and used the patterns from the pivot table for pattern coding. In this round of coding, I was able to compare codes that I had previously combined and narrow the focus further by combining the codes that were similar in nature. For example, in the second round of open coding, I had collaboration, communication, and support as separate codes, yet the pattern that emerged through the use of the pivot table is that all three were about support. For that reason, all of the data previously coded as collaboration or communication were updated to the code of support. Through this process, I was able to go from 10 separate codes to six focused codes. Yin (2016) called this stage of analysis the reassembling phase. Table 4 illustrates narrowing the focus from open codes to pattern codes.

Table 4

Sample of Open Coding to Pattern Coding

Second open coding	Pattern coding
Transforming culture	Transforming culture
Relationships	Transforming culture
Collaboration	Support
Support	Support
Communication	Support
Instructional leadership	Instructional leadership
Challenges for alternatively-certified teachers	Challenges for alternatively-certified teachers

Categories and Themes

After narrowing the focus from a priori to open coding to pattern coding, I was able to see clear categories and themes beginning to emerge. I then further narrowed the focus from six pattern codes to three categories that assisted the interpretation of the data (see Yin, 2016). For example, I was able to combine transforming culture and vision into the category of transforming culture through creating a shared vision. The theme that emerged from that category was that principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator. Table 5 shows an example of the process I used to interpret and conclude the analysis process.

Table 5

Pattern Coding to Categories to Themes

Pattern coding	Categories	Themes
Instructional leadership and support	Administrators as instructional leaders	Theme 1: Principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training.
Challenges for alternatively-certified teachers	Perceived challenges for alternatively-certified teachers	Theme 2: Principals and assistant principals perceived the challenges of novice alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of experience, lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical knowledge.
Transforming culture	Transforming culture through creating a shared vision	Theme 3: Principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator.

Final Themes

In the concluding phase of the data analysis, I identified themes based on the codes, patterns, and categories found in the data (see Bengtsson, 2016). Through this content analysis process, I used several cycles of coding that helped me draw conclusions that encompassed the broad concepts (see Yin, 2016). Three themes emerged from this process of compiling and concluding:

1. Principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training.

2. Principals and assistant principals perceive the challenges of novice

    alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of experience, lack of opportunities

    to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical knowledge.

3. Principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of

    the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice

    alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an

    educator.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, and to verify that I captured the experiences of the participants accurately, I sent the findings to the participants. This strategy of member checking the findings was completed with 10 of the 11 participants. One of the participants passed away prior to being able to review the findings for feedback.

Discrepant Cases

According to Yin (2016), discrepant cases are rival explanations that cannot coexist in the same study. In the event that a study has divergent findings, the researcher must provide reasons to reject or accept the discrepancies. While collecting data, I was cognizant of interview responses that could be considered discrepant or rival. As I spoke to the participants, and again when reviewing the transcripts, I made note of these responses. After a thorough analysis of the data, I determined there were, in fact, no discrepant cases that rivaled the emerging themes.

Results

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. I interviewed 11 participants: six principals and five assistant principals. Using content analysis of the interview data, I used open and pattern coding to identify categories that emerged into themes. These three themes aligned to the conceptual framework of transformational leadership practices (Damanik & Aldridge, 2017; Leithwood, 1994; Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2018; Thomas et al., 2020) and the research questions that informed the study. The research questions were the following:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

I analyzed the data by administrative role and found no distinct differences between the responses of principals and those of assistant principals. Within the interviews, principals and assistant principals shared their experiences in working with novice alternatively-certified teachers and their perception of how their transformational leadership practices support teachers. The responses from the participants were compiled, and three themes emerged.

Theme 1: Support Required for Novice Alternatively-certified teachers

The first theme that emerged in this study is that principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training. This theme and categories that developed were the foremost responses received from participants during the interviews. All 11 participants in this study expressed the importance of support to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The noteworthiness of this theme was expressed by P2, who shared, "Any time you support a teacher, whether it's emotionally, academically, [with] resources, or pep talks, you are impacting the student." P2 also said that "the amount of support makes a big difference" and that support for novice alternatively-certified teachers must be provided "based on what they need." The types of support participants mentioned most frequently were coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individual training.

The supportive practices that participants deemed necessary for novice alternatively-certified teachers to be successful in the classroom are supported by transformational leadership practices, the conceptual framework grounding this study. The transformational leadership behaviors aligned with the experiences shared by the participants are (a) providing individualized support by developing people through coaching and modeling and (b) intellectual stimulation and improving the instructional program through feedback and instructional support (Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2018). When novice alternatively-certified teachers receive these specific types of support, they are able to develop in the areas where growth is needed.

Coaching

The first category of Theme 1 was that novice alternatively-certified teachers need coaching by a valued, more experienced colleague. Coaching was a perception of support mentioned by P9 as "offering a different perspective" for teachers as they learned their craft. P4 said that an important part of supporting teachers through coaching is "encouraging them to try new things, to be risk-takers; encouraging them to be continuous educational learners and growers and attend professional developments."

Six of the participants shared that coaching takes building a trusting relationship that will allow honest interaction between the coach and novice teacher. P4 shared that the "biggest thing to coaching is they [novice teachers] have to be coachable." P7 stated the importance of selecting a qualified instructor for an alternatively-certified teacher and shared that one of the most important aspects is that coaching is "done not by whoever wants to do it, but that it's done by an experienced teacher with a real wealth of knowledge that's willing to go in and coach and support." Other participants shared that coaching should have a major effect on classroom instruction. P9 said, "If they [novice alternatively-certified teachers] are armed with what they need to really deliver instruction and they can speak to sound instruction and speak to sound content, it has a huge impact on where the kids go." Coaching, according to the data collected, is an important part in the growth and development of novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Mentoring

Mentoring was the second category of Theme 1 that principals and assistant principals stated would offer support for alternatively-certified teachers. All 11 of the

participants expressed that providing a mentor was important to encourage the growth of

novice teachers. P6 said that an essential part of mentoring was

> linking them [alternatively-certified teachers] up with those key people that are on
>
> campus that have been here a long time, so that they know who to ask if they
>
> can't come to us [administrators], then they can go to them.

According to P5, mentoring provides "more support and providing strategies and then the

opportunities to put those practices into place." P4 spoke of a mentoring program, with

the academic coach as the lead mentor, where "she meets with them through our mentor

program very regularly. They have monthly meetings, and she also does check-ins."

Mentoring programs on all of the campuses represented in the study were viewed

as a district expectation. Each campus administrator mentioned having a lead mentor on

the campus and mentees who were paired with a mentor. The campus administrators had

different ways to set up their programs, which indicated autonomy for each campus. Each

campus paired novice teachers with veteran teachers as mentors. P10 shared that before

the mentor/mentee pairs were made, the campus administration met with the mentor to

share the expectations of the mentoring program and ensure that the mentor knew what

the mentee needed for support.

P11 stated the best way to choose a mentor was to "link them [the novice teacher]

up with people [mentors], so they can see different styles of potentially what they're

struggling in." P8 shared that their mentoring program is about "providing feedback, but

it's also looking at what they want to look at and providing that feedback in a

nonthreatening way, nonevaluative way." P8 also stated that the most effective way to

have a mentoring program was to do "authentic check-ins" and have "somebody to bounce ideas off of." P10 reported that scheduled weekly meetings were necessary for the growth of the novice alternatively-certified teachers at her campus. P7 shared that the best part of a mentoring program is "the cognitive coaching of identifying a problem together, coming together on a problem of practice, working together on possible solutions and things to implement, and then bringing back products or observations and then discussing how it went." Mentoring and supporting teachers in their initial years of teaching were major transformational leader practices that the participants of the study perceived as needed and put into practice on their campuses.

Modeling

The third category of Theme 1 emphasized the value of observation in classrooms. All 11 of the participants in the study stated that having novice alternatively-certified teachers watch veteran teachers teach was critical for novice teachers to grow in pedagogical and classroom-management skills. The principals and assistant principals specifically mentioned the value of providing time for novice teachers to observe other classrooms, especially because alternatively-certified teachers did not have the benefit of student teaching in a traditional teacher educational system.

Many of the participants also went into classrooms with the novice teacher or modeled practices. P3 expressed, "We do a lot of going and watching other people teach" on campus and stated that peer observations were an important part of their campus culture. P5 also spoke about the importance of having novice teachers "go and observe other classrooms" and described the necessity and benefits of observing model teachers

to help new teachers grow professionally. When teachers are modeling for novice alternatively-certified teachers, according to P8, they are "modeling teaching and modeling building relationships" for those new teachers. P8 stated modeling teaching and modeling building relationships were equally important for a novice teacher to learn and see in action. P9 shared the benefits of not only having novice teachers observe model teachers, but also required accountability after each classroom observation. "For our new teachers, we have where they do a rotation, so they can observe others. And then they fill out a reflection tool, and we discuss what they've seen." At P9's campus, the learning comes from the reflection and discussion after the observation of the model lesson. Modeling for novice alternatively-certified teachers, according to the participants of the study, provides a visual representation of methods for delivering instruction and for classroom management that are integral in teaching success.

Individual Training

The fourth category of Theme 1 revealed that principals and assistant principals recognized the value of individual training for novice alternatively-certified teachers on their campuses. Providing teachers with individualized training in the areas that would most benefit them is an important practice in developing effective teachers. P9 stated individual training is necessary for novice teachers, because "if they're armed with the information, they're able to provide good solid instruction." According to P1, novice alternatively-certified teachers need "professional development in the areas they feel they are not as strong in," including curriculum and classroom management.

P8 shared that she had been certified through an alternative certification program. P8 felt the experiences learned in that program created a more supportive administrator, particularly to that group of teachers. P8 said, "I spent [time] in the new teacher's classroom and then also applied my own struggles, like when I was in that place." P8 disclosed that when supporting and providing individual training for novice alternatively-certified teachers, administrators or mentors must reflect on "how did I feel?" P10 was also certified through alternative methods and explained that attending to each individual teacher's needs is the most important way to help them grow. P10 shared that the campus leader can provide one-way individual support by "writing lesson plans with them." P10 also said, "We find classes, we take courses together." These important elements of support were evident throughout the study and were a clear part of the overarching Theme 1.

Theme 2: Challenges of Novice Alternatively-certified Teachers

Theme 2 is that principals and assistant principals perceive the challenges of novice alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of experience, lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical knowledge. All participants acknowledged the perceived challenges that come with being a novice alternatively-certified teacher. P4 shared examples of challenges for novice alternatively-certified teachers and stated, "The challenge is not being prepared, not really knowing what to expect." As I analyzed the interview transcripts, using the data from the study, the three supporting categories in this theme were (a) lack of experience, (b) lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, (c) and lack of pedagogical knowledge.

Participants' responses to interview questions regarding the challenges that novice alternatively-certified teachers face, which were based in their years of experience in supporting novice teachers, showed that the challenges are different from those of traditionally-certified peers. These differences stem from dissimilarities in preservice learning. Novice alternatively-certified teachers need individualized support to bridge the gap in their pedagogical knowledge and provide learning opportunities in both delivery of instruction and classroom management.

Lack of Experience

The first category of Theme 2 was that principals and assistant principals who participated in the study perceived novice alternatively-certified teachers lacked practical classroom experience. All 11 participants stated that the lack of experience in the classroom, prior to becoming a teacher, was the largest challenge for novice alternatively-certified teachers. P3 said, "I also think they miss lots of conversations about best practices" by not having preservice training and shared that novice teachers miss out on the value of collaborating and learning from other teachers prior to going into the classroom. P4 stated that because of the limited interaction with veteran teachers on a professional level,

> They spend less time . . . experience in the classroom and so, what they're bringing to the table is maybe what they had remembered 10, 15 years ago [when they were in school], sometimes even 20 [years ago], depending on the age of the person coming in. And we know things have changed a lot since then.

Participants perceived having to rely on the way they were taught as students was a challenge for novice alternatively-certified teachers.

P1 attributed the lack of experience to being in a shorter training program that did not allot time for student-teacher classroom experience or opportunities to plan with and learn from veteran teachers. P6 shared a similar thought when mentioning that novice alternatively-certified teachers received "only a short period of time of experiencing the things that other regular teachers get to do." P5 gave an example of how the lack of experience is a challenge and described teachers who "need to use technology in the classroom, but they don't know how to integrate it yet because they don't have any experience."

As a part of the interview protocol, participants discussed one of the most challenging areas, according to Blake (2017), for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools: classroom and behavior management. P7 provided further insight: "Our alternative certification people do not have a really big background in behavior management with kids." P7 shared that lacking this experience prior to going into the classroom could prove to be challenging and could hinder instruction as well.

In addition to having little to no experience in the classroom, those novice alternatively-certified teachers who teach in high-poverty schools face additional challenges, according to P7 and P9. P9 shared, "A lot of the children that we service, they come to us with a lot of just your basic unmet needs." P7 expressed, "We often have teachers that have never really experienced poverty." P7 made the point that novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools can find the environment to be

challenging because it is not something they have experienced, and therefore they have no schema on how to teach students successfully in that environment.

P8 became certified through alternative methods in another state and shared the process to receive a teaching certification, which included specific experiences in the classroom. P8, an assistant principal, shared, "When I learned that an alternately certified teacher could just literally be somebody who graduated and is now in a classroom, I was super shocked." P8 expressed that a person with more experience in the classroom "will probably do a lot better than someone who hasn't spent time in the classroom in some capacity." Lack of preservice experience is a challenge for novice alternatively-certified teachers but can be overcome with guidance and support.

Lack of Opportunity to Observe Model Teachers

The second category of Theme 2 pertained to the need of alternatively-certified teachers who require opportunities to observe model teachers. Seven principals and assistant principals observed a deficit in the training that novice teachers obtain in their alternatively-certified program that did not provide them classroom teaching experiences. According to the administrator participants, an essential practice is to schedule time for experienced teachers to model lessons for alternatively-certified teachers to observe to mitigate this lack in alternatively-certified teacher training.

P10 said, "I think they [alternatively-certified teachers] miss a lot of opportunities to observe and do field studies and watch good models." P10 shared that the lack of opportunities is a challenge; novice alternatively-certified teachers do not receive the

same training or opportunities to watch good models as traditionally certified teachers, which, therefore, may inhibit the effectiveness of the novice teacher. P10 said,

> I think that instructionally, the traditional [teacher], they get the classes, they get the reading classes, they have student teaching, and they've had some type of experience and people [other teachers] to kind of look at to guide them that they can call upon, and alternative certified [teachers] may not always have had that [chance to observe other teachers].

P1 shared the importance of having opportunities to observe veteran teachers so novice teachers can "spend time seeing lots of different teachers, so they can pick out the pieces that work for them because they've [experienced teachers] been exposed to so many different models and learning styles." P2 reiterated the importance of novice teachers working with veteran teachers and watching them teach. P2 noted, "Traditionally trained teachers have much more experience" and opportunity to observe master teachers in the classroom. P3 also described the differences between traditionally certified and alternatively-certified teachers who are new to the profession: "As far as classroom management is concerned, the only difference would be is that when you are student teaching, you have someone to watch." P6 explained that when novice alternatively-certified teachers have not had the opportunity to observe model teachers, "they don't always get the entire big picture of what it is to be an educator." Novice alternatively-certified teachers need the opportunity, according to the data collected, to observe teachers with effective instructional and classroom-management practices.

Lack of Pedagogical Knowledge

The third category of Theme 2 revealed that novice alternatively-certified teachers often lack pedagogical knowledge. Seven participants of the study agreed that this lack of knowledge is a challenge. P5 said, "It seems that they don't get enough, I'm going to say the pedagogy of it [knowledge]."

The lack of knowledge of teaching methods and practices is challenging for novice teachers as they enter the classroom. P11 stated that alternatively-certified teachers are "going to need a little extra TLC [care] because they don't have that extra foundation." Lack of pedagogical knowledge is a challenge that leads to other challenges. P8 shared thoughts on the perceived challenges dealing with pedagogical knowledge and said, "I would think the very first thing they're going to struggle with is classroom management, timing, planning, probably in that order." P11 explained that lack of pedagogical knowledge creates challenges with routines, procedures, transitions, and confidence.

P2 and P3 had similar thoughts on teachers who lack pedagogical knowledge. P2 said, "They face challenges with delivery." P3 said, "I think they miss sometimes some of the science behind things. . . . They miss lots of conversations about best practices." P3 emphasized, "Their challenge in instruction is that they don't know the material that they're teaching."

Several participants expressed that novice alternatively-certified teachers might not understand the standards to be taught. P4 and P10 stated that alternatively-certified

teachers do not know the state academic requirements and how each specific standard should be taught. P7 concurred:

> I think that the alternative certified programs do a decent job of the basics, but I think that in education now it's that deep planning and that deep understanding of the [state academic standards] that I think we're missing.

Another challenge associated with lack pedagogical knowledge, expressed by P9, is the lack of "ability to teach kids to read. . . . Our alternatively-certified people don't come in with [this pedagogical skill]." P9 and P10 also stated that the lack of schema and formal training is challenging for a novice alternatively-certified teacher.

In summary, participants agreed that novice alternatively-certified teachers face different challenges from their traditionally certified peers. Traditionally certified teachers have opportunities to work with and observe in-service teachers and have time to develop their pedagogical knowledge and management styles through feedback and collaboration. The data collected in this study revealed administrators' perceptions that novice alternatively-certified teachers need individualized support, which can be provided through transformational leadership practices.

Theme 3: Providing a Positive Foundation for Alternatively-certified teachers

Theme 3 is that principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator. The participants in this study shared how they use transformational leadership practices to create a shared vision that would be used to help novice alternatively-certified teachers

develop. P3 said that a shared vision is "getting a collective group all on the same page and modeling what you want done." From their responses, I determined that transforming the culture on the campus could best be accomplished through effective communication and building relationships.

McCarley et al. (2016) supported transforming the culture and campus through creating a shared vision as a theme rooted in transformational practices. The researchers found that a positive school culture creates collegial and supportive teachers, creating an environment conducive to development. Trust building, a shared vision, and the collaborative environment are necessary to transform the culture of a school and help administrators build capacity in novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Effective Communication

The first category identified in Theme 3 was that principals and assistant principals described communication as an integral part of creating a transformed culture on the school campus. Part of transforming the culture of the campus, according to P1, is to ensure that the campus administrators "keep the line of communication open . . . be open and honest with your staff." P4 noted the importance of honesty in communication: "I am so transparent and honest from the get-go."

In addition to open and honest communication, participants shared that effective and meaningful interaction was important. P2, P4, and P9 mentioned using restorative justice practices on their campus and indicated that equitable supportive approaches were a means to enhance communication with all stakeholders on their campus. P9 explained that restorative practices were not only for students but also for teachers; understanding

that adults can use restorative practices "provided an avenue for them [novice teachers] to start to process what they were hearing, see all of those feelings of just struggling, dealing with this." Communication is an important tool that leads to building strong relationships on campus, according to P11. This elementary school principal said that administrators should "take that time to have a conversation and ask them, 'Where do you feel that you need help?'" Effective communication is key in working with novice alternatively-certified teachers. Helping novice teachers understand systems and process, welcoming two-way communication, as well as providing open and honest feedback will aid in their progress as new teachers.

Building Relationships

The second component of Theme 3 was that principals and assistant principals perceived building relationships helped to transform the culture of the campus for novice alternatively-certified teachers. The participants described relationships as a critical part of transforming the culture, creating a shared vision, and helping novice alternatively-certified teachers grow in their profession. Eight participants shared how they chose to build relationships with novice teachers on the campus. P2 observed that two important pieces of building relationships were about "gaining their trust and ensuring . . . equity." P6 shared, "It [community building] builds that trust if I know just little things about them," so she takes the opportunity to get to know the teachers on both a professional and personal level. This type of openness was important so the novice teachers feel comfortable with the administrator. P6 elaborated, "I hope that it [being open] helps them understand that they can come to me if they need help, that they're not here alone, that

you're not an island." P6, an assistant principal, stated starting a relationship with novice teachers was imperative at the beginning of the school year when they first arrive on the campus. P6 stated,

> Relationship building before I have to (or if I have to), have those really struggling conversations [providing feedback on progress], makes it a lot easier when they can trust me and know that I'm going to help them through that struggle, whatever it may be.

P10 described similar strategies, using previous experiences as an alternatively-certified teacher to make connections. P10 said, "It's so that they [novice teachers] know that they're not alone on campus because I was that teacher at some point [in the past]."

Building relationships, according to P4, P6, P7, and P10, can transform the culture and create a shared vision only if relationships involve staff, students, parents, and community. P4 works with novice alternatively-certified teachers so that they are "learning to build relationships with kids." P6 said that these teachers need to learn to "build their own relationships with parents and being a part of the community as a whole." P7 acknowledged that building relationships in high-poverty areas, where the student may have more extensive needs, can be challenging, but she expressed, "You have to come with a lot of empathy, but you also have to come with a lot of desire, that tough gut, that tough love, because many of our kids are going to let it all hang out." P10 shared that building relationships is key to be able to "start to change the culture in order to give students the want to learn and want to be present in the campus."

For all of the participants, creating a shared vision that focuses on a positive school culture is imperative to the growth and development of novice alternatively-certified teachers. P7 summed up the response and stated, "Positivity breeds positivity"; to maintain a shared vision, the culture must remain positive. P6 shared a similar idea, stating, "We work as a team, and we know what the vision is for our students, and that's their success." Building positive relationships is fundamental to the growth and success of novice alternatively-certified teachers.

In summary, administrators perceived that a shared vision, positive culture, and meaningful relationships are important to the development of novice alternatively-certified teachers. Building relationships and using effective communication will create an environment that is conducive to growth through transformational practices.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate elementary principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. Ensuring the trustworthiness of the study was important by using strategies to achieve credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2016).

Credibility

Credibility provides internal validity in a qualitative approach and ensures that the results of a study are believable. To achieve credibility, I triangulated data sources, used member checking, and worked with a peer debriefer. Credibility meant the data were

accurately interpreted and that I correctly represented the experiences shared by the participants (see Burkholder et al., 2016; see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; see Yin, 2016).

Triangulation requires the researcher to confirm the findings of the study or data collected in multiple ways (Yin, 2016). Participants' experiences were the source of data in this qualitative study. To achieve triangulation, I selected participants with varying years of experience and viewpoints (see Patton, 1999). I also interviewed both principals and assistant principals from different schools across the district of study to ensure that I obtained a wide variety of experiences that answered the research questions.

In additional to triangulation, I used member checking. This strategy allowed participants the opportunity to review the findings of the study and provide feedback on the themes that emerged. Member checking provided objectivity and allowed me to ensure that the findings were aligned with the experiences of the participant (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The final strategy I used to ensure credibility was using peer debriefers. I collaborated with three educational leaders who were not part of the study but had leadership experience in Title I elementary schools. These three administrators, who provided feedback on the interview protocol questions prior to me completing interviews, also reviewed the findings of the study to ensure that I accurately captured the experiences of the participants without bias.

Transferability

Transferability, in a basic qualitative study, is the phenomenon by which a reader determines the relevancy of the findings from a study and ability to apply them to a new

context or setting (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). To ensure that the findings of my study were relevant and applicable in broader contexts, I used thick description (see Burkholder et al, 2016; see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Using thick, rich narratives is a strategy to obtain transferability through providing detailed and specific descriptions of the setting, participants, and findings of the study. Other researchers can compare the results and context of one study to other contexts using the explicit descriptions to determine whether the findings are transferable to other settings.

Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative counterpart to reliability used in quantitative studies (Ellis & Levy, 2009). To ensure dependability, I used consistent procedures to collect and analyze data and to report and share findings (see Creswell & Poth, 2018). I also had a peer debriefer review the interview protocol, prior to conducting interviews. Three colleagues, who did not participate in the study, but had knowledge of the topic of study, provided feedback on the interview protocol. I used the same interview protocol for each participant when conducting interviews. I recorded each interview and took fieldnotes as the participants shared their experiences. I used audit trails to keep an accurate account of how decisions were made throughout the coding process that led me to the findings of the study (see Burkholder et al., 2016; see Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confirmability

Confirmability involves the assurance that the results of a study could be confirmed by others and are not based on the researcher's opinions (Shenton, 2004). As a researcher, it was important to be aware of my biases to maintain confirmability.

Confirmability aims to reduce the subjectivity and potential for bias in a qualitative research study (Burkholder et al., 2016). I used member checking to achieve confirmability, by having the participants review the findings to verify that I captured their experiences accurately (see Bengtsson, 2016). I also had administrators, who were not a part of this study, review the themes to reduce bias (see Yin, 2016). I used a reflexive journal to apply a strategy called bracketing (see Ahern, 1999). While conducting the interviews, transcribing the interviews, and analyzing the data, I wrote in the journal any biased thoughts or feelings I had that could influence the credibility of the study.

Summary

In Chapter 4 I presented the findings that resulted from an extensive analysis of the data collected from 11 semistructured interviews. The data were collected to investigate elementary principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. Three themes emerged from analyzing the data:

1. Principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training.

2. Principals and assistant principals perceived the challenges of novice alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of experience, lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical knowledge.

3. Principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the

campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-

certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator.

In addition to presenting the findings in this chapter, I also offered evidence of the

trustworthiness this study. In Chapter 5, I provide an interpretation of the findings,

limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a Southern state in the United States. To address this gap in the research about practice, I used a basic qualitative approach. Generic or basic qualitative studies focus on understanding an experience (Kahlke, 2014). A basic qualitative approach was the best approach for this case study because I used the purposeful sampling strategy to identify elementary principals and assistant principals to interview to ensure that all participants were able to provide valid and reliable content to answer the research questions of this study (see Caelli et al., 2003; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2016). The following research questions that guided the study were aligned with the conceptual framework of transformational leadership:

1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?

The themes that emerged from the data I collected and analyzed were: (a) principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training; (b) principals and assistant principals perceived the challenges of novice

alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of experience, lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical knowledge; and (c) principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator. In this chapter, I share the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

I designed this exploratory case study using a basic qualitative approach to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a Southern U.S. state. Upon completion of the study, I found that the emergent themes closely aligned with the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. In this section, I review the findings from the study, provide an interpretation of the findings, and share how the findings relate to transformational leadership.

Administrators Must Provide Individualized Support for Novice Alternatively-Certified Teachers

The first theme to emerge in this study is principals and assistant principals perceived the support that was needed for novice alternatively-certified teachers as coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training. One of the four behaviors of transformational leadership practices is individualized support and consideration (Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2018). The need to individualize the support for novice alternatively-certified teachers was reiterated multiple times in both the comprehensive

review of the literature and the responses from the participants. Similar to the findings of

Damanik and Aldridge (2017), the participants of the study cited transformational

leadership practices as a way to help novice alternatively-certified teachers overcome the

challenges they faced in instruction and classroom management. The findings in the

study suggest that through individualized mentoring, coaching, and professional

development, novice teachers can be successful in the classroom.

Administrators need to develop and implement mentoring programs where the

principal recruits mentors and pairs them intentionally with novice teachers in need of

support. Principals who are transformational leaders understand that novice alternatively-

certified teachers, particularly those teaching in urban schools, benefit from mentoring

programs led by veteran teachers (Curry et al., 2016). When principals focus on

developing a robust mentoring program that tasks mentors to share their experiences

concerning how they have overcome specific challenges, novice teachers are more

successful in high-poverty schools (Albright et al., 2017). All 11 of the participants in the

study shared the importance of a strong mentoring program and the immense impact on

novice teachers.

Novice alternatively-certified teachers have fewer preservice training hours than

their traditionally certified peers and thus need intentional and individualized

instructional coaching. Novice teachers require more support and coaching in instruction

and classroom management (Redding & Smith, 2019). The literature and conceptual

framework support the finding that novice alternatively-certified teachers will develop

professionally in their areas of need through individualized coaching. Novice

alternatively-certified teachers need to see a veteran teacher model instruction and effective classroom management. The ability to watch a veteran teacher and gain insight on what best practices in instructional delivery and classroom management look like will help the novice alternatively-certified teacher be more effective and successful in the classroom. Morettini (2016) found principals used transformational leadership practices to build capacity in veteran mentor teachers, so they could assist and guide novice teachers in instructional practices, classroom management, and discipline.

The need for individualized training shared in the findings mirrors the literature. The level of training received as preservice teachers is different, and therefore, the level of support and additional training also will vary. Whereas all of the participants expressed their perceptions of the importance of providing professional development to novice alternatively-certified teachers, the majority shared that they had not received professional development on how to specifically individualize support for novice teachers. Principals need structured professional development that provides opportunities to apply the knowledge they acquired. By receiving specific training to work with alternatively-certified teachers, principals will have the knowledge and confidence to determine the needs of novice teachers and meet those needs (Howley et al., 2019).

Schools in areas of high poverty typically have more inexperienced teachers, many of whom are alternatively-certified (Educate Texas, 2017; Redding & Smith, 2016). The implications of Theme 1 reveal that to be successful in the classroom, novice alternatively-certified teachers would benefit from coaching, mentoring, modeling, and

individualized training. However, the data suggest that administrators require targeted

professional development to implement these practices effectively.

Administrators Must Provide Assistance for Classroom Challenges Faced by Novice

Alternatively-Certified Teachers

The second theme to emerge from the data is that principals and assistant

principals perceived the challenges of novice alternatively-certified teachers to be lack of

experience, lack of opportunities to observe model teachers, and lack of pedagogical

knowledge. Bowling and Ball (2018) also discussed the challenges that novice

alternatively-certified teachers face in experience and pedagogical preparation. The

participants of the study agreed that novice alternatively-certified teachers confront

different challenges than their traditionally certified peers do and therefore require

differentiated support.

The challenges for novice alternatively-certified teachers can hinder their success

in the classroom. Leithwood (1994) suggested that the role of transformational leaders is

to foster the development of teachers. The administrators who participated in the study

agreed their role in developing teachers is to seek opportunities to observe veteran

teachers and provide professional development for novice teachers on state standards and

instructional strategies. Other challenges are cultural deficits that some novice

alternatively-certified teachers face from lacking experience with students living in

poverty. The challenges that novice alternatively-certified teachers face ultimately affect

student academic achievement. Principals and assistant principals who provide support

and intellectual stimulation through transformational leadership practices will address the

challenges and help the novice alternatively-certified teacher be successful in the classroom by providing opportunities to gain experience, observe model teachers, and develop pedagogical knowledge.

Administrators Must Provide a Transformative Campus Culture for Novice Alternatively-Certified Teachers

The third theme revealed principals and assistant principals perceived that transforming the culture of the campus through creating a shared vision would provide novice alternatively-certified teachers with a positive foundation to grow as an educator. Leithwood (1994) found that helping staff members develop a school culture that fosters collaboration is a key practice of transformational leadership. The administrator participants stressed the importance of building a shared vision on the campus. The administrators also reported that ensuring their campus was collaborative and building relationships through trust and honesty were important to the development of novice alternatively-certified teachers. The participants shared novice teachers must feel safe to ask questions and share ideas with veteran teachers and administrators. When principals set the direction of the school with shared values and high expectations, staff members achieve a sense of harmony, purpose, motivation, and self-efficacy (Sayadi, 2016). Administrators need to be well versed in establishing and maintaining a shared vision and transforming the culture to one of collaboration and support. The ability to establish a collaborative culture will build capacity in novice alternatively-certified teachers. In summary, the implications of this study reveal that principals and assistant principals need to build (a) trust, (b) a shared vision, and (c) the collaborative environment

necessary to transform the culture, to assist novice alternatively-certified teachers in being successful in the classroom with instruction and classroom management.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are found in all research and are defined as weaknesses in the design or methodology of the study (Yin, 2016). In a qualitative case study using a basic approach, limitations affect the transferability and dependability of the study (Burkholder et al., 2016). The three limitations of this study are the sample size, my potential bias as the researcher, and confirmability.

The participant sample was a limitation for this study. I interviewed 11 administrators in this study, which could be viewed as a weakness because of the lack of multiple participants. However, qualitative research only requires a small sample, one to 10 participants, who are specifically and purposefully chosen because they meet the criteria of having experience in the area of study and can answer the research questions (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). To meet the selection criteria for participation in this study, I purposefully chose candidates who were (a) elementary principals and assistant principals from within the partner district, (b) had a minimum of 3 years of experience in school administration, (c) worked at a campus having a program that serves at least 60% of children with free and reduced-priced lunch, and (d) had experience in working with novice alternatively-certified teachers. Starks and Trinidad (2007) found that the sample size in qualitative research depends not only on how the participants are chosen, but also on the scope and design of the study. The study had a narrow focus designed to glean information from participants employed in the district of

study. I used semistructured interviews where the participants provided detailed experiences regarding the core elements of the phenomenon of study. The nature of the topic is also important to the sample size (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). I chose participants who were able to provide useful data because of their knowledge of the topic.

Researcher bias is always a potential limitation in a qualitative study. I took steps to address bias before, during, and after completing the study using a reflective journal to apply the bracketing process to address my personal thoughts and feelings about participants, my preconceived expectations, and the experiences they shared (see Ahern, 1999). I also used semistructured interviews with the same set of interview questions for each participant, which allowed me to be consistent in collecting the same type of data from each participant. I used member checking and requested participants to confirm the findings to address any possible bias during the analysis process (see Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Maxwell (1992) stated that participants who member check the findings of a study increase the "interpretive validity" (p. 288) of a study, which helps to reduce researcher bias. These strategies assisted me to address my personal bias, while acknowledging that bias was a limitation.

The third potential limitation of this study is confirmability. Confirmability in a qualitative study is vital because it provides a means by which the results may be substantiated by others. I provided confirmability by using a reflexive journal to apply a strategy called bracketing and recorded any biased thoughts or feeling I had while conducting the interviews, transcribing the interviews, and analyzing the data that could influence the credibility of the study (see Ahern, 1999). I had administrators, who were

not a part of this study, serve as peer debriefers and review the themes to increase the trustworthiness of the study (see Yin, 2016). I was able to confirm my findings by using triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing to ensure the data from the study were accurately interpreted and represented the participants' experiences (see Burkholder et al., 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Yin, 2016). I ensured that I had an equitable number of principals and assistant principals with varying years in education and in administration to answer the research questions. I was able to gain multiple perspectives because of the various experiences of the participants, which allowed me to confirm my findings.

Recommendations

This study presents principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. Based on the findings, opportunities to provide professional growth arise in the district of study, but opportunities remain for further research. Further research could be a quantitative study to investigate the significance of each type of support provided to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The literature provided several ways that principals support their teachers but was limited on which type of support was most beneficial to novice alternatively-certified teachers. A future study prioritizing the type of support needed would allow administrators to provide relevant and meaningful support to novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Additionally, the literature revealed that professional development is needed for principals to provide effective support to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The

administrators interviewed for the study shared that they did not feel adequately trained to support novice alternatively-certified teachers. The findings of the study aligned with the literature, indicating professional development for administrators to provide support is needed. Further research is needed to determine the needs of principals and assistant principals and thus produce professional development to benefit both the administrator and the teacher. A qualitative study designed to focus on how prepared principals and assistant principals believe they are able to provide support to novice alternately-certified teachers would build on this study. District leaders could use the findings of that study to create professional development programs for principals to guide them in supporting novice alternatively-certified teachers.

Although the findings of this study provide relevant and meaningful information for elementary school administrators, I did not collect data from middle or high school administrators. Because of the limited scope of the sample, transferability is limited to other elementary schools. A recommendation for future studies is to include administrators from middle and high school levels, who work in high-poverty schools, and compare and contrast the perception of support to novice alternatively-certified teachers.

<div align="center">**Implications**</div>

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to investigate elementary school administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state. The implications of the study may influence the induction of novice alternatively-certified teachers in the district of study and preparation

provided in principal preparation programs. Ensuring that all novice alternatively-certified teachers are prepared and supported when teaching in high-poverty schools has the potential to influence student achievement in schools where academic accomplishment typically may be lower. Increasing the administrators' capacity to support teachers; to individualize for differing needs; and to provide effective training, coaching, and feedback will, in turn, build capacity for the teachers they serve.

The results revealed that administrators' transformational practices are vital to support novice alternatively-certified teachers. The findings aligned with the peer-reviewed literature and conceptual framework in that the participants cited many of the same transformational leadership practices shared by the findings of other researchers (see Berkovich, 2017; Day et al., 2016; McCarley et al., 2016; Ross & Cozzens, 2016). However, the results also indicated that elementary principals and assistant principals had received no training and do not currently receive assistance regarding how to provide individualized support to novice alternatively-certified teachers. The following implications are provided to help close the gap in practice and assist administrators to provide assistance for novice alternatively-certified teachers.

The first implication is for individual administrators. Principals and assistant principals need to obtain training and development to provide individualized support for novice alternatively-certified teachers. All 11 participants stressed that they had received no training on creating induction programs, setting up effective mentoring programs, or using transformational leadership practices to determine the differing needs that novice alternatively-certified teachers have compared to traditionally-certified peers. Specific

professional development for administrators is required to guide principals and assistant principals to support novice alternatively-certified teachers. Fullan (2002) affirmed that administrators benefit from receiving professional learning rooted in transformational practices. This type of districtwide training will create consistency throughout the district in the mentoring programs, coaching and feedback, and professional development provided for novice alternatively-certified teachers. Administrators need to use transformational leadership practices to develop and support teachers. As administrators become more versed in transformational leadership practices, they will be able to lead, support, and facilitate teacher growth.

A second implication is that the school district of study should identify alternatively-certified teachers to distinguish professional needs that may differ from those of traditionally-certified novice teachers; then, administrators can provide individualized support, mentoring, coaching, and training for these identified novice educators. Throughout the interviews, the participants articulated that district training for teachers was similar for all teachers and not differentiated according to specific needs. Bowling and Ball (2018) found that the requirement for supportive induction programs that offer learning opportunities is especially important for novice alternatively-certified teachers, who did not receive formal preservice training. Because the percentage of novice alternatively-certified teachers who have courses or experiences in behavior or classroom management is much lower than that of their traditionally certified peers, administrators need to serve as professional development and pedagogical leaders (Flower et al., 2017; Hauber et al., 2015; Kindall et al., 2018; Pinkas & Bulić, 2017).

Implications from this study have the potential to provide a path for positive social change at campuses, districts, and principal preparation programs. Ensuring that administrators in high-poverty schools are prepared to support novice alternatively-certified teachers with the challenges they face in classrooms will directly influence student academic achievement in a positive way.

Conclusion

Novice alternatively-certified teachers have the capacity to be highly effective teachers when they receive the training, support, and mentoring they uniquely require. Although administrators are tasked with many managerial roles, their most essential role is to support teachers as they work to attain student achievement. This task is more challenging in high-poverty schools, because of the hardships that students in those schools face. To effect change in high-poverty schools, administrators must be well versed in using transformational leadership practices to (a) provide support through coaching, mentoring, modeling, and individualized training; (b) establish opportunities for novice teachers to gain experiences and pedagogical knowledge by observing model teachers; and (c) create a culture with a growth mindset and a shared vision. The responsibility of providing this level of support means that administrators need to be well trained on the varying needs novice alternatively-certified teachers have and how to provide individualized support to meet each of those needs. The progression of change is clear: Administrators who build a collaborative school climate and culture that support novice alternatively-certified teachers will retain teachers and increase student academic achievement. Therefore, a knowledgeable, effective, transformational leader is the

catalyst for change in high-poverty schools, and such practices will permeate into high-poverty communities to create lasting positive social change.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol and Questions

	Observations/Notes
Date: _____ Interview start time: _____ Interview end time: _____ Participant Name: _____ Participant Code: _____	
I. Introduction and Greeting Hello. My name is Kelle Lofton. Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview today. The purpose of this interview is to gather administrators' perceptions of the support novice alternatively-certified teachers in high poverty schools need. I will be recording the interview, which should last 45 to 60 minutes. I will take steps to maintain confidentiality by assigning you a participant code to ensure that your identity and personal information remain confidential. Please feel free to speak openly as you share your experiences. Do you have any questions before we begin?	
II. Background Information Before we start the interview, I would like to gather some background information on you as an educator and in your current position in an effort to get to know you better. 1. How many total years do you have in education? _____ 2. How many years have you served as an administrator? _____	

3. How many years have you served as an administrator at your present campus? _____ 4. How many years have you served as a Principal? _____ Assistant Principal? _____ 5. What kinds of experience do you have with supporting novice (teachers with 0–3 years' experience) teachers? _____	

III. Study Research Questions
 	
   1. What are elementary principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?
 	
   2. What are elementary assistant principals' perceptions of effective transformational leadership practices in providing support to novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools in a southern state?	

IV. Interview Questions	
1. How would you define transformational leadership practices?	
2. How are transformational leadership practices incorporated into your leadership? Do you have any examples of…? Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…?	
3. What challenges do novice alternatively-certified teachers face in the classroom? Probes: What challenges do they face with instruction? What challenges do they face with classroom management? Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…? Do you have any examples of…?	

4. How do the challenges that novice alternatively-certified teachers face differ from those of their traditionally certified peers? Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…? Do you have any examples of…? 5. What types of support do you provide for novice alternatively-certified teachers? Probe: What types of classroom management support? What types of instructional support Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…? Do you have any examples of…? 6. How do you individualize support for novice alternatively-certified teachers? Do you have any examples of…? Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…?	

7. As an administrator, how do inspire a shared vision? Tell me more about… Can you elaborate on… What did you mean by…? Do you have any examples of…? 8. How do your supportive transformational practices for novice alternately certified teachers affect student academic achievement? Share an example with me when… Can you elaborate more about…? 9. What types of professional development have you received that prepared you to support novice alternatively-certified teachers? Principal preparation program? District training(s)? Have you done book studies of your own…? Can you elaborate on…	

10. Is there anything else you would like to add?	
V. Close of Interview Thank you for meeting with me today and taking time to answer my questions. By participating in this study, you are helping me to further understand administrators' perceptions of support for novice alternatively-certified teachers in high-poverty schools. I hope that through the data collected based on your experiences, we will be able to improve transformational leadership practices in our schools particularly as it pertains to the induction of novice alternatively-certified teachers. Once I've completed transcribing this interview, coding the data, and looking for themes from our interview, I will send you with a draft of my findings by email. After you receive my email I'd appreciate you contacting me if you have additional information to share with me, or have questions, so that we can set up a time to discuss your comments about the findings. Do you have any additional questions for me at this time?	