

2015

Stakeholders' Perception of Alternative Certification Program

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Walden University

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Stakeholders' Perception of Alternative Certification Program

by

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M.Ed., Grand Canyon University, 2009

BS, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, 1983

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

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Abstract

The diminution of Alternative Certification Program (ACP) teachers contributes to the teacher shortage and complicates the challenges of hard-to-staff schools. Some ethnic minority, economically challenged districts have experienced a growing attrition rate of teachers prepared by ACPs, resulting in a scarcity of qualified teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of stakeholders, including teachers currently in the program, teachers who left the program before completion, and program administrators, in order to understand the ACP program. A conceptual framework was based upon theorists Feistritzer and Klagholz, the originators of the ACP movement. Ten participants were selected for this qualitative case study using purposeful sampling, and data were collected through open ended interviews focused on training, challenges, support, and improvements. The hand analysis method was used to generate codes and subsequent themes. The themes developed from the interview questions and that provided some insight into stakeholders' perceptions included the influences of a positive school environment, the detriments of lack of support and preparation, and the apparent need for program restructuring. An ACP training manual based on study findings was designed to address the immanent training and support needs of ACP teachers. The manual may be implemented to train and retain ACP teachers in the district of study. Positive change implications of this study and of this manual may include more relevant professional development and a more structured ACP.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to my husband and children who so patiently waited as I missed family movies; and to my parents who taught me the value of hard work.

Although my parents are no longer here, the lessons that I learned from them have left an indelible mark. I also dedicate this to all of my family members and friends who supported and cheered me through this process.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Mandates of Section 1119 of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) and the mounting teacher turnover rate are two of the most critical issues facing educational leaders and school districts across the United States. Recent legislation such as Race to the Top (RttT) was designed to afford school districts a degree of flexibility regarding efforts to improve student achievement; however, NCLB teacher qualification criteria remain compulsory (North Carolina Public Schools, 2012a, 2012b). Consequently, many school districts continue to face the arduous task of staffing all classrooms with highly qualified teachers. Policymakers in North Carolina recognized the difficulty of locating, securing, and retaining highly qualified teachers as well as the challenges created by teacher turnover; thus, they designed and implemented the North Carolina Teachers Corps to recruit and train alternatively certified or lateral entry teachers and enhanced the Teach for America program via RttT to address the issues.

Recruiting qualified teachers and deterring teacher turnover are essential for the success of any school or school district. Excessive teacher turnover is disconcerting because it undermines teacher quality and impedes academic progress as well as augments many of the struggles inherent to hard-to-staff schools. The literature revealed that school improvement efforts are hampered and adversely influenced by teacher turnover and the absence of qualified teachers—problems caused to a large degree by the attrition of new teachers (Balu, Bêteille, & Loeb, 2010; Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wychoff, 2009b). Balu et al. (2010) found that teacher turnover often demolishes instructional coherence and disrupts and destabilizes learning environments.

Boyd et al. (2009b) noted that the impact of high teacher turnover often manifests in low student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores. This is especially true in economically depressed rural and urban school systems because of their proclivity to utilize long-term substitute teachers to staff classrooms.

Some educators deem the attrition rate of new teachers a national crisis. Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008) noted that the attrition rate of teachers in their first 3 to 5 years has been as high as 30% nationwide. This tendency has resulted in the degradation of both the quality and quantity of teachers in many school districts across the nation. The fact that the demand for qualified teachers has exceeded the supply for decades prompted educational leaders to rethink when and how prospective teachers may enter the profession (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). Consequently, the nation's education arena experienced a paradigm shift, and in 1983 an alternative means of certification was introduced by the State of New Jersey. Feistritzer (2009) noted that the principle behind the formation of this alternative certification program (ACP) was that experienced, degree-holding candidates accomplished in specific subject matter would transition into teaching and fill the gaps created by teacher attrition. Since the inception of the first ACP, 46 states in the nation have developed or adopted some form of ACP, and according to Feistritzer (2009), these programs have supplied approximately one third of the nation's teachers over the past decades.

Three years after the formation of the first ACP in the nation, the state of North Carolina developed an ACP called Lateral-Entry to address the paucity of qualified teachers which propagated as a result of the rapidly growing population (Stuart, 2011), the increasing attrition rate, the number of teachers leaving education for other

professions, (Gonzalez et al., 2008; Thomas, 2007), and the growing number of teachers reaching retirement age (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). These factors combined with the state's decision to fulfill the mandates of NCLB by eliminating emergency permits, provisional and temporary licenses, and endorsements (North Carolina Public Schools, 2011c) exacerbated the struggle to staff classrooms with qualified teachers.

Consequently, potentially qualified individuals were sought from alternate routes in greater number. Thus, between the 2006–2007 and 2008–2009 school years, the State of North Carolina experienced an approximate 36% increase in the number of teachers certified through the state's ACP (Feistritzer, 2010).

Feistritzer (2009) and other proponents of ACPs advocated an increase in the employment of ACP teachers to fill the gaps created by new teacher attrition.

Unfortunately, the attrition rate of ACP teachers in their first 3 to 5 years exceeds those of their counterparts. Boe, Sunderland, and Cook (2007) found that approximately 42% more ACP teachers leave the profession within the first 3 years than those from traditional certification programs. The attrition of ACP teachers in North Carolina supports this study as data indicate that the attrition rate of ACP teachers in the State surpasses that of teachers from traditional programs (Corbell, 2009; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008). Henry, Bastian, and Fortner (2011) indicated that ACP teachers' attrition rate in North Carolina has been as high as 60% for middle school and 57% for high school teachers after the first 3 years.

Although ACPs are gaining prominence in both the United States and abroad, an ideological divide exists regarding their effectiveness. Opponents argue that they diminish the quality of teaching. Glass (2008) suggested that the ACP movement will

eventually deskill the profession and degrade the quality of education. However, other scholars feel that it adds to the profession. A study by Rockoff, Staiger, and Kane (2007) found that most teachers who received certification through alternate routes performed as well or better than their counterparts, especially in the areas of math and science. The effectiveness of ACP teachers may also be supported by the fact that the 2005 national teacher of the year entered the profession through an alternate route.

Definition of the Problem

Despite the fact that many school districts in North Carolina have been beleaguered by high teacher attrition rates, the state's posture regarding how best to adhere to Section 1119 of NCLB included measures that directly impacted the attrition rate of teachers licensed through the ACP. One of the primary measures included a reduction in the time allotted for program completion. Prior to the initiative, ACP candidates were given 5 years to complete mandatory coursework which consisted of at least 18 credit hours of education related courses. As a result of Section 1119 of NCLB, however, ACP teachers found themselves having to complete the same coursework within 3 years; 6 credit hours must be completed yearly (North Carolina Public Schools, 2011b). The change in the amount of time allowed to complete ACP requirements intensified the demands placed on ACP teachers who also had to quickly learn how to interpret and teach specific standard courses of study. In addition to rapidly absorbing and implementing formal and informal school policies and procedures, these teachers also needed to manage mandatory district and local school level professional development sessions, along with personal and family issues.

North Carolina's decision to adhere to Section 1119 of NCLB by requiring ACP teachers to complete the mandatory 18-hours of coursework in 3 years instead of 5 years created challenges for some school districts in the state. The problem for one southeastern North Carolina regional school district is that the reduction in the amount of time allotted by the state to complete required coursework intensified the demands placed on ACP teachers. After the reduction in the amount of time allotted, teachers began to leave the ACP without completing mandatory coursework within the program's timeframe. As a result of the attrition of ACP teachers, the district has experienced a shortage of qualified teachers. Data from the North Carolina School Report Card revealed that during the 2010–2011 school year, high schools in this district were staffed with 84% fully licensed teachers and 16% nonfully licensed teachers versus the 94% fully licensed teachers recorded statewide. During the same period, only 89% of the middle school teachers of the school district of this study were fully licensed compared to 96% statewide (North Carolina School Report Card, 2011). ACP teachers' attrition has been especially ominous to the school district of this study because of its composition of 70% rural schools, because of its 70% ethnic minority student populace, and because it is situated in an economically deprived environment whose abject state has caused it to be identified as the third most impoverished area in the nation (H.R.1954, 2007). The appellation associated with a district comprised of such challenging demographics is a disincentive for attracting teachers.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The increased ACP teachers' attrition rate has resulted in adverse ramifications for the school district of this study, including adding to the mounting teacher shortage and necessitating the extensive use of nonfully licensed and/or long-term substitute teachers. During the 2011–2012 school year, a middle school administrator noted that the year began and ended with long term substitute teachers in one half of the seventh-grade science classes in one middle school in the district of this study (C. Clark, personal communication, June 15, 2012). Such use of long-term substitute teachers may have damaging repercussions. Clotfelder, Ladd, and Vigdor (2009a) found that a 10 day span of a qualified teacher's absence is equivalent to about half the effect size of a student's socioeconomic status, which equates to an estimated 3% decrease in math scores and an estimated 2% decrease in reading scores. Thus, it may be surmised that little to no student academic growth occurs when substitute teachers are placed in classes for long periods of time.

Moreover, the chronic failure of the school district in this study to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) may be attributed, in part, to the attrition of ACP teachers and the subsequent use of nonfully licensed and long-term substitute teachers to staff classrooms. During the 2009–2010 school year, only 13 of 42 or 31% of the schools in the district made AYP. Figures for the 2010–2011 school year were even more dismal with only 7 of 42 or 16.7% of schools meeting AYP requirements (North Carolina Public Schools, 2010, 2011a). The importance of qualified teachers is endorsed by Clotfelder, Ladd, and Vigdor (2009b) who found that in North Carolina ensuring that classrooms are staffed

with capable teachers is more effective on student achievement than reducing the class size by 5 students. Given the impact of teacher attrition on the quality of teaching and the struggles inherent to the school district because of its composition of 70% rural schools, a 70% ethnic minority student populace, and a socioeconomic condition that has been ranked as the third most impoverished in the nation, an examination of the ACP teachers' attrition was inevitable.

Additionally, ACP teachers who do not complete required coursework within the program's timeframe experience detriment because the State of North Carolina (North Carolina Public Schools, 2011b) does not allow them to reapply to the program until 6 years from the time of their initial licensure. These teachers are forced to seek employment elsewhere or agree to a pay cut and work as a teacher assistant. Some of these teachers uproot their families or drive extensive distances to a neighboring state to apply to its ACP. Many of the career changers who are able to rely upon retirement from previous careers simply work as substitute teachers at various schools or depend entirely upon their retirement income (J. Kelly, personal communication, September 1, 2011).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The exact factors contributing to ACP teachers' attrition in many of the nation's school districts are not known. However, many ACPs have stringent timeframes to which participants must adhere. Studies have shown that programs without obligatory timeframes for completion of mandatory coursework have a greater propensity for retaining ACP teachers than do their counterparts. For instance, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (2009) found that some of the programs without obligatory timeframes retain more than 90% of their teachers after 3 years.

Additional studies by researchers such as Sass (2011) and Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) indicated that ACP teachers tend to perform better and remain in the profession longer when coherence between school factors such as school supported professional development, induction programs, and grade-level or departmental meetings exists, and when a streamlined approach that only requires courses directly related to practice is utilized.

Furthermore, since research indicates that effective ACPs contribute to the development of skilled, confident teachers (Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008), and that a link exists between students' test scores and teachers, including the institutions or pathways that prepared them (Cochran-Smith & Power, 2010; Lubienski, 2007), an in-depth understanding of the experiences of ACP teachers was needed. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the experiences of the ACP participants to gain a greater understanding of their perceptions of the program, including factors that are deemed to influence attrition and retention. Gaining an understanding of some of the causes of attrition through this study added to the emergent body of knowledge on the attrition of ACP teachers within the first 3 years. Study findings are of particular benefit to the school district of this study because they provide research-based data for the program that produced 29% of the teachers employed during the 2010–2011 school year (North Carolina School Report Card, 2011). Data garnered through interviews may be used by policymakers to determine the most effective ways to deter or dissuade ACP teachers' attrition.

Definitions

The following terms are pertinent to the understanding of this study:

Alternative certification: Any program that has been specifically designed for the purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree in some program other than education (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008).

Fully licensed teacher: Any teacher who has a clear initial or clear continuing license regardless of the certification route (North Carolina School Report Card, 2012a).

Highly qualified teacher: One who possesses at least a bachelor's degree, full state certification (regardless of certification route), the ability to demonstrate competency through the passing of a state test, the completion of coursework, and/or an advanced degree (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008).

Lateral entry: "An alternate route to teaching for qualified individuals outside of the public education system" (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2012, para. 5). The term lateral entry is used interchangeably with the term alternative certification.

Race to the Top (RttT): An assessment program authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) which provides funding to states to assist in the formulation of viable assessments that may be used to reinforce instruction and to provide specific data about students' abilities and performance based on pre-established standards designed to help foster the skills that students need to be successful in college and in the workplace (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Stakeholders: Individuals with a stake or interest in some process (Glesne, 2011). Stakeholders refer to ACP administrator, teachers who currently participate in the ACP, and teachers who left the ACP prematurely.

Teacher attrition: Teachers leaving the profession. Teacher attrition is defined as teachers leaving the school district of the study either for another profession or for another school district in another state (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008).

Teacher turnover: The definition of teacher turnover has three dimensions, including within-district movers, cross-district movers, and leavers. Within-district movers are those teachers who leave one school and teach at another within the same school district. The cross-district movers are those who leave one school district and teach at another school district, and the leavers are those teachers who leave the profession (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2012). Teacher turnover will include both cross-district (in another state) movers and leavers.

Significance

Studying the issue of ACP teacher attrition was significant because it provided research-based best practices that may be implemented by a rural, socioeconomically deprived school district that has struggled to retain qualified teachers. The hiring of ACP teachers is a growing practice that has proliferated throughout the nation, the State of North Carolina, and throughout the school district of this study. Data from the North Carolina School Report Card (2011, 2012b) indicated that during the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years, 29% of the teachers employed by the school district of this study entered the program through an ACP route, a percentage that is slightly higher than the 28% employed by districts throughout the state; and if North Carolina experiences the expected 14.7% projected increase in enrollment in its public schools by the year 2015, these percentages are likely to increase dramatically over the next few years. The increasing dependence of the school district of this study on the use of ACP teachers as a

means to staff classrooms with highly-qualified teachers has necessitated greater knowledge of the factors leading to their increased attrition.

Furthermore, information acquired from this study added to the professional literature as it demonstrated a level of erudition regarding some of the significant contributors to the premature attrition of ACP teachers. Hence, understanding the dynamics of the experiences and subsequent attrition of ACP teachers is crucial; failure to build an understanding of contributing factors may create a costly cycle of degradation of the state's schools because of an inevitable teacher shortage on local and state levels.

A consistently increasing attrition rate may further complicate the many educational issues faced by the predominantly rural school district of this study whose populace consists primarily of students of minority ethnic backgrounds and low socioeconomic status. Additionally, the awareness of the perceptions and experiences of ACP teachers generated through this study may help to ameliorate the structure of the ACP currently implemented by the school district. Moreover, any restructuring or streamlining resulting in the retention of ACP teachers will improve the quality of education for the children of the school district of this study as well as encourage qualified individuals to enter and remain in the profession.

Guiding/Research Questions

The escalating attrition rate of ACP teachers is arguably one of the most problematic issues facing most schools and school districts across the nation. However, the literature regarding the most prevalent factors influencing the attrition of ACP teachers is inconclusive. Some studies have cited external factors such as better paying noneducation related jobs in the labor market as major contributing factors, while others

have identified ACP features such as mandatory completion of graduate-level coursework within stringent timeframes as key contributors; and yet others have indicated that the attrition or retention of ACP teachers is primarily contingent upon the personal lives and characteristics of individual ACP participants. Additional studies have indicated that retention of ACP teachers may be increased through the utilization of streamlined programs. Many studies have focused on the attrition of ACP teachers in urban schools; few studies, however, have examined the experiences of ACP teachers who endeavor to work within the obligatory timeframes mandated by Section 1119 of NCLB to complete mandatory coursework, while facing the harsh realities of providing a quality education to a predominantly ethnic minority student populace in an economically deprived rural school district. Through this study, I examined the experiences of ACP teachers working under a stringent timeframe in a rural school district and explored and illuminated their experiences and perceptions of their current ACP. Since this study was problem-based and designed to uncover and explicate the perceptions and experiences of some ACP stakeholders (ACP administrator, teachers who are currently participating in the ACP, and teachers who left the ACP prematurely), I employed a case study approach. The overarching, guiding question framing this case study was, “What are the perceptions of Alternative Certification Program stakeholders?” The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1 (RQ 1): What are current alternative certification teachers’ perceptions of the alternative certification program?

Research Question 2 (RQ 2): What are the perceptions of alternative certification teachers who withdrew from the alternative certification program?

Research Question 3 (RQ 3): What are alternative certification program administrators' perceptions of the alternative certification program?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was constructed upon the premise that teacher retention improves with appropriate preparation offered through a streamlined program. This framework was undergirded by the findings of individuals, such as Emily Feistritzer, President and CEO of the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCEI), and Leo Klagholz, originator of the first alternative certification program (ACP) in the nation (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; NCEI, 2010), who are deemed authorities in effective ACP practices. These advocates of ACPs hold that the most effective alternative programs are those that are well-organized and that only mandate courses and instructional activities pertinent for state certification and success in the classroom. Well-structured programs tend to produce better prepared teachers and experience lower attrition rates than less structured ACPs. Donaldson (2008) found that ACP teachers prepared by Teach for America (TFA), a traditionally well-structured program, are more likely to remain in the profession than are some of their counterparts who were prepared in less structured programs. However, studies by Boyd et al. (2009) and Noell and Gensle (2009) contradict studies that suggest that TFA teachers remain in the profession longer. In fact, they purport that although TFA may be well-structured, as many as 85% of their teachers have left the program after 4 years. It must be noted, however, that the high attrition rate of TFA teachers may be due to the fact that participants are only contracted to complete 2 years of service in the designated schools; when those teachers decide to

not seek contract renewal after the contracted 2-year period, they are deemed leavers by some researchers.

Additional studies support the idea that the attrition rate of ACP teachers is linked to the program that prepared them. Fuller (2009) found that ACP teachers prepared through private ACPs in Texas have a higher attrition rate than those prepared by public ACPs. A study by Pabon (2011) noted that the attrition of ACP teachers seemed to be the product of both the program that prepared them and the school environment in which they were placed. The study found that ACP teachers prepared by the New York City Teaching Fellows Program were not adequately prepared for urban schools, which traditionally are very challenging because of the disproportionate number of economically disadvantaged, ethnic minority students. Since these teachers were not specifically prepared for the demographics and geographical areas—such as large inner-city and extreme rural areas—in which they were going to teach, many of them felt overwhelmed. Consequently, the program experienced a high attrition rate.

The needs to specifically prepare teachers for the geographical location in which they will teach and the effectiveness of a streamlined approach have both been recognized by the literature. Henry, Bastian, and Fortner (2011) found that ACP teachers who were both prepared in and taught in the State of North Carolina performed better than ACP teachers prepared in other states. ACP teachers who were prepared in and taught in North Carolina were also almost twice as likely to remain in the profession longer than 3 years. Sass (2011) noted that ACPs that required no additional coursework were more effective than their counterparts, and the United States Department of Education (2009) indicated that requiring ACP participants to complete additional hours

of pedagogical training did not yield any positive results. When teachers are confident and feel that they are effective, they are more likely to remain in the profession.

The importance of contiguity and coherence between school factors as a means to deter attrition has been acknowledged by the literature as well. Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wychoff (2009a) emphasized the importance of utilizing preparation strategies that are directly linked to practice. The study by Boyd et al. (2009a) endorsed an earlier study by Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) who found that ACP teachers performed better when coherence between school factors (which may include professional development, induction programs, and grade-level or departmental meetings) existed. Additional studies by researchers such as Boyd et al. (2009b) and Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) endorsed the idea that ACP teachers are more likely to remain in the profession longer than 3 years when coherence between these factors exists.

Further, research has indicated that successful programs, such as the District Intern Certificate program available in California, that do not have a set number of credit hours and that allow 2 years to complete professional development retained as many as 80% of participants after 5 years (National Center for Education Information, 2010). Other studies tout ACPs, such as New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Preparation–Alternate Route Program, that do not mandate that a specific number of credit hours be completed within a given timeframe as exemplary programs regarding the retention of ACP teachers. The District Alternative Certification Programs offered by the State of Florida, which do not obligate participants to complete additional coursework in prescribed timeframes, have also been heralded as model programs in terms of ACP

teacher retention. These programs have maintained an attrition rate of less than 10%. Less restrictive ACPs, such as those found in California, New Jersey, and Florida, are effective because they deter attrition and add to student achievement. The National Center for Policy Analysis (2009) found that National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test-score gains increased in states such as these with less restrictive certification programs or programs that do not simply mimic traditional programs in terms of coursework requirements.

Use of this conceptual framework was paramount because it guided the lines of reasoning and influenced the main focus of the research of this study. Some of the perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs regarding the primary factors contributing to the increased attrition rate of the ACP teachers of the school district of this study were also informed by this conceptual framework. Additionally, this conceptual framework was essential because through it, I determined a case study design was the most appropriate methodological approach to answer the research questions that seek to ascertain the ACP stakeholders' perceptions of their program, including factors affecting retention and attrition. Finally, this framework helped to connect every aspect of the study as well as assisted in bringing meaning to the findings.

Alternative routes to certification have become staples of most teacher preparation programs as a result of the need to increase teacher quality and the need to reduce the teacher shortage (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). However, the increasing attrition rate of ACP teachers is becoming a disquieting issue for many school districts across the nation. The literature is indecisive regarding the exact causes of attrition, in part because these causes may be a function of individual ACP teachers, the programs that prepare them, and the

professional development requirements of the local school districts in which they will teach.

The following literature review provided some insight into some of the factors that have influenced the attrition and retention of ACP teachers. These factors include the need to ensure that ACP participants are provided a well-crafted, well-organized program that adequately prepares them for the geographical location in which they will teach. Although the literature review in this study is inconclusive regarding the major contributors to ACP teacher attrition, there is substantial evidence to support the effectiveness of a streamlined approach as a retention mechanism. This streamlined approach includes limiting coursework to only courses that are essential for the effectiveness of the ACP teacher as well as the elimination of redundant activities and idealistic time constraints.

The selected literature positioned this study in the context of previous studies. Findings from various studies have revealed that ACPs that do not deluge participants with ineffective coursework or inundate them with time constraints or superfluous activities unrelated to successful classroom experiences are more apt to retain teachers. Additionally, these selected studies provided some insight into the relationship between the attrition of ACP teachers and the configuration of ACPs as well as the school environment and thus served as the structure upon which I framed interview questions by which I designed the overall study.

Peer-reviewed literature appropriate for this study was identified through an examination of research on alternative certification (AC) or lateral entry teacher attrition. Using key terms and phrases such as *lateral entry teacher attrition* and *alternative*

certification teacher attrition, I conducted an extensive online search of numerous databases through Google Scholar and the Walden University library. The databases included Education Research Information Center (ERIC), Education Research Complete, Education: A Sage Full-Text Database, and ProQuest Central. These searches yielded a limited number of studies; therefore, I included additional keywords and phrases such as *new teacher attrition* and *teacher turnover*. Searches included published and unpublished reports. These searches located more than 200 documents. I supplemented the online searches with studies from peer-reviewed journals, policy briefs, and conference presentations.

To ensure that articles were apposite, only research conducted within the last 5 years that identified both study and data analysis methods were utilized. Relatively few studies directly focused on ACP teacher attrition and/or retention. Consequently, I also viewed studies that addressed related topics such as practices of ACPs, retaining teachers of color, and teacher turnover. Using these criteria, I found approximately 50 studies; however, many of them included the same information and cited the same primary sources.

The Role of Alternative Certification in Hard-to-Staff Schools

Sputnik's launching and *A Nation at Risk's* publication decades later prompted a firestorm of public concern regarding the ability of America's children to remain globally competitive. Consequently, after years of debate, the NCLB accountability legislation was enacted and obligated school districts across the nation to staff classrooms with highly-qualified teachers to ensure high student achievement. However, the task of staffing classrooms with highly-qualified teachers presented challenges for some school

districts, in part, because as teachers from the baby boomer generation reached retirement age, fewer new teachers from traditional education programs were available to fill vacancies. Therefore, many school districts in North Carolina have relied upon the employment of ACP teachers or teachers certified through ACPs in unprecedented numbers; thus, a quality ACP is imperative to the state and to the school district of this study.

As a result of the unprecedented demand for ACP teachers, North Carolina utilized components of Race to the Top (RttT)— a federally developed initiative designed to reward states for innovative education reform efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) —to increase the number of ACP teachers available. North Carolina’s RttT Proposal data (2010) has indicated that almost twice as many of the state’s teaching force entered the profession through an ACP than did through traditional programs—2,062 and 1,143, respectively—and the number of ACP teachers is expected to multiply rapidly over the next several years. Impelled by the expected increase in the need for teachers certified through an alternative route, North Carolina’s legislature directed the State Board of Education to further reduce barriers to entrance into the program (North Carolina RttT Proposal, 2010). Consequently, policymakers are now prompting and endorsing the development of new and ingenious approaches to ACP licensure— approaches that are not executed by the state or by an institution of higher education.

The increased dependence upon ACP teachers is especially true of school districts whose populace consists predominately of ethnic minorities and students from limited socioeconomic families and communities, such as are often found in rural schools. Thus, in addition to the trepidation regarding the escalating need for the use of ACP teachers to

staff classrooms with highly-qualified teachers, policymakers in the State of North Carolina are also disquieted by the association between low-performing, high-poverty schools and the number of ACP teachers in them. Data from North Carolina's RttT Proposal (2010) indicated that low-performing, high-poverty schools employ a higher proportion of ACP teachers than do higher-performing schools, and low-performing schools have a higher teacher attrition rate than their counterparts. Thus, it is crucial for ACP administrators to gain a greater understanding of the primary causes of the attrition of ACP teachers in the school district's high-poverty, low-performing schools.

Barley and Brigham (2008) noted that rural schools tend to face crucial shortages of highly-qualified teachers in critical areas such as science, math, and special education. They also noted that these schools face unique challenges in ensuring that classrooms are staffed with highly-qualified teachers for a variety of reasons. In addition to having to acclimate to the nature of small schools in rural communities, many teachers in rural schools frequently teach multiple subjects. However, to continue in their current positions and to meet the mandates of Section 1119 of NCLB, many of these teachers find themselves having to complete coursework in multiple disciplines. The National Center on Rural Education Support (2010) noted that the issue of staffing rural schools with highly-qualified teachers poses a nationwide challenge. Data from a national rural teacher retention study (National Center on Rural Education, 2010) revealed that 84.1% of responding rural school districts reported having some difficulty filling teacher vacancies and 50.3% reported having moderate to severe difficulties filling vacancies. Many rural school systems address the challenges of staffing classrooms with qualified teachers through the use of some type of Grow Your Own program, including various state or

district level ACPs. These programs are relatively effective in rural areas because individuals with ties to the community are trained, which increases the chances of retention after certification. Other rural school systems utilize nationally known ACPs. Teach for America (2012) noted that in one southern state comprised primarily of rural school districts, the number of corps members increased more than 275% in one year.

Furthermore, many urban areas rely upon Troops to Teachers (TTT) as teachers to fill vacancies in hard-to-staff schools. Nunnery, Kaplan, Owings, and Pribesh (2010), citing data from Owings et al. (2005, 2006), noted that the results of a national survey indicated that over 80% of teachers entering the profession through the TTT program planned to remain in the profession although they were employed in challenging schools and taught critical subjects such as math, science, and special education. Data from the Florida based study did not provide clear evidence as to why TTTs are effective; however, many participants credited military experience for their ability to work with diverse people and to maintain classroom management.

The findings of Zientek (2007) indicated that ACPs offer viable sources of high-quality teachers for classrooms. The study found that ACPs attract a greater number of individuals with advanced degrees than do traditional certification programs. Although many teachers certified through ACPs need additional assistance with lesson planning and curriculum related activities, their sense of self-efficacy was as great as their traditionally certified counterparts. The findings of the study are significant since the literature has revealed that hard-to-staff rural and urban schools are often comprised of high-poverty, low-performing students who need quality instructions from educators competent in their disciplines.

Causes of Alternative Certification Teacher Attrition

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2007), teacher attrition is a problem that is spiraling out of control. Nationally, the teacher attrition rate has increased by about 50% over the past decade. Data from NCTAF (2007) indicated that in one school district the teacher dropout rate exceeded the student dropout rate. Such high teacher attrition rates undermine teacher quality and hinder student achievement. Consequently, understanding the dynamics of the factors contributing to ACP teacher attrition is paramount.

Extensive studies have been performed to ascertain the most prevalent factors impacting teacher attrition. In a meta-analysis of 34 quantitative studies on factors that contribute to teacher attrition, Borman and Dowling (2008) identified five major categories or factors. These factors included issues such as personal characteristics and qualifications of teachers, characteristics of the student populace, the availability of various resources, and the general personality of the school. Utilizing the work of Borman and Dowling (2008), Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, and Freitas (2010) restructured the five major categories into two broad domains which they referred to as personal and professional backgrounds and school context. One of the major findings of the works of Borman and Dowling (2008) and Achinstein et al. (2010) is that although some factors such as the personal backgrounds of teachers (e.g., age, marital status, and family obligations) cannot be altered by policymakers, many others may be manipulated by school leaders to dissuade attrition (e.g., student discipline, instructional resources, facilities maintenance, and effective professional development).

Evidence from the literature indicated that causes of ACP teacher attrition are as diverse and sundry as the states, school districts, and schools in which the teachers are employed. However, studies revealed that their attrition is influenced by many of the same factors that affect the attrition of traditionally certified teachers. Ng and Peter (2009) concluded that ACP teachers' decisions regarding whether or not to leave or remain in the profession are contingent upon a multiplicity of capricious and sometimes even conflicting issues rather than on one single factor or issue. Ng and Peter (2009) also indicated that the gamut of issues influencing attrition ranged from early struggles during the teaching profession, to decisions made based on personal interests, and to pervasive unexplained choices made by school and/or district officials. Additionally, because of the capricious nature of the causes of teacher attrition, the authors noted that increased efforts must be made to gain a greater understanding of the influences of various types of school programs on teacher retention.

Schonfeld and Feinman (2012) endorsed the idea that personal characteristics of individual ACP teachers have a bearing on factors identified as triggers of attrition. Data from the study revealed that in high-risk schools the ethnicity of ACP teachers was a factor in determining the amount of hostility experienced. The research revealed that Hispanic and African American teachers were less likely to experience classroom brutality than were Caucasian and Asian teachers. New teachers' exposure to brutal acts may result in attrition.

The idea that a diametrical connection exists between personal characteristics of individual ACP participants and attrition is further supported by the research of Friedrichsen, Lannin, Abell, Arbaugh, and Volkman (2008). These authors found that

recent college graduates who were uncertain about an occupation exploited ACPs as a means of merely exploring the prospect of teaching as a career. However, more than half of the participants who enrolled for mere exploration purposes left the profession impetuously. Conversely, those participants who were true mid-career changers remained in the profession. The study also found that many of the ACP participants had a multiplicity of experiences and obligations that either reinforced or clashed with their personal teacher identities. The findings of the study support the belief that attrition of ACP teachers is the result of an array of multifaceted, conflicting issues.

An earlier study by Ng and Thomas (2007) suggested that the attrition and retention of ACP teachers is based, to some degree, upon their productivity in previous careers as well as upon their ability to focus primarily upon the task of teaching, which is not always possible when teachers are required to complete additional coursework. Data from the study indicated that only 45% of the teachers from the highly selective Transition to Teaching Program, who were required to complete a sequence of graduate-level education courses in order to meet the conditions of state certification, remained in the program after the first year. Some of the data from the study support the belief that requiring additional coursework for certification negatively influences the attrition rate of ACP teachers. An indirect finding of the study also substantiates the idea that a correlation exists between the personal characteristics of participants and attrition in hard-to-staff schools. All of the Caucasian participants left the ACP after the second year.

A qualitative study performed by Castro (2012) corroborated earlier studies that maintained that a link exists between the characteristics of individual ACP teachers and attrition. The author found that understanding ACP teachers' visions and metaphors about

the responsibilities and actions of teachers and students may determine whether or not they will strive when they experience the gamut of challenges often faced in urban schools. Britzman (as cited in Castro, 2012), noted that teachers who presume that effective teaching is instinctive and may be accomplished without much effort or assistance from colleagues may become disenchanting and leave the profession.

Additionally, researchers have identified factors such as the lack of strategic placement of newly appointed ACP teachers as contributing elements of attrition. Studies have indicated that ACP teachers are often placed in more challenging environments than traditionally certified teachers. Linek et al. (2009) endorsed the notion that the practices of some school systems encourage ACP teacher attrition. Despite the fact that research has revealed a positive correlation between strong mentors and retention of ACP teachers, the authors found that the ACP teachers in the study, which was situated in a small rural school district, were left on their own without proper mentoring and without necessary instructional supplies and resources—two practices identified as eminent triggers of attrition.

A study by Evans (2011) further legitimized the claim that the actions and politics of school systems may engender attrition. The study found that ACP teachers are frequently employed in disadvantaged schools that are poorly maintained with limited resources, such as those often found in rural and urban areas, because more affluent suburban schools are less likely to hire them. Findings of the study seem to suggest that certification through an ACP ultimately results in attrition for some ACP teachers in various geographic locations. This study is in contrast to an earlier study by Cohen-Vogel and Smith (2007) which found that ACP teachers are no more likely than their

counterparts to teach in subpar, high-poverty, low-performing rural or urban schools. It may be theorized, however, that the findings of the studies may differ because of the antiquated data used by Cohen-Vogel and Smith (2007) to formulate their conclusion (1999–2000 SASS data).

Carter and Keiler (2009) noted that because of the nature of small schools, ACP teachers placed in them often struggled. Two of the tenets of the small school movement are shared leadership and decision making; consequently, teachers who work in small schools may be assigned both types of tasks. However, many newly certified ACP teachers are not prepared to handle the added responsibilities. This study indicates that ACP teachers should be given a few years to acclimate to the task of teaching before being assigned leadership positions in schools. Alternative programs that allow newly certified candidates to be coerced into leadership positions in their initial years of teaching may experience high levels of attrition. Although small schools offer some advantages such as close relationships with students and colleagues, assigning ACP teachers to them may prove unproductive, especially to those in their first few years of teaching.

A dissertation by Douglas (2010) endorsed the idea that requiring ACP teachers to complete mandatory noninstructional duties may result in increased attrition. The results of the longitudinal study of lateral entry teachers in North Carolina indicated that ACP teachers should be assigned a limited number of noninstructional duties as well as a limited number of difficult and exceptional children in order to prevent feelings of inundation and to dissuade attrition. Multiple noninstructional duties and an excessive number of difficult students coupled with the fact that some ACP teachers concluded that

teaching is much more time-consuming and difficult than they had originally anticipated have shown to result in premature attrition. Data also revealed that many of the ACP participants in the study lacked adequate pedagogical knowledge and were unprepared to handle challenging situations; this too often resulted in attrition.

The findings of the study by Douglas (2010) supports the findings of an earlier study by Chin and Young (2007) which suggested that ACP teachers enter the profession for various reasons without a real knowledge of the true difficulty of the task of teaching; thus, some of them leave the profession after having invested an inordinate amount of time and money and without completing program requirements. Research also suggests that additional measures such as careful screening of participants should be conducted in order to maximize opportunities for success and for retention of ACP teachers.

A survey study by Casey et al. (2011) reinforced the literature regarding causes of ACP teacher attrition. The study found that most of the participants felt overwhelmed and inundated because of a lack of time management skills and because of the struggles inherent to addressing the diverse needs of challenging students. The data further explained that ACP special education teachers were assigned additional noninstructional duties which resulted in feelings of inundation, as noted by Douglas (2010). Furthermore, the authors noted that study participants felt overwhelmed by paperwork and did not feel comfortable asking for assistance, as observed by Cuddapah and Clayton (2011). Finally, the study found that participants did not fully understand the involvedness of teaching prior to enrolling in the program, as observed by Chin and Young (2007). The study by Casey et al. (2011) identified several factors that may adversely influence ACP teacher attrition. However, the vast array of participants' characteristics coupled with the

complexity of the various ACPs across the nation creates tremendous difficulty in pinpointing exact causes of ACP teacher attrition.

Alternative Certification Teachers' Retention Strategies

Many researchers have conducted studies to identify effective ACP teachers' retention mechanisms. In a survey study designed to determine the perceptions of teachers' regarding the key factors influencing the shortage of math and science teachers in Texas, Chaudhuri (2008) found that ACP teacher retention may be related to the school environment. More specifically, the majority of study participants agreed that effective student discipline measures would deter attrition of ACP teachers. The study also identified other school environment related issues, such as decreasing class sizes, reducing paperwork and workload, offering teachers' support programs, higher salaries, and ensuring that teachers are not teaching out of their fields, as retention strategies. A significant finding of the study was that ACP requirements may directly impact teacher attrition and retention. Results of the study revealed that participants stated that restructuring of the ACP by "streamlining the licensing process" (Chaudhuri, 2008, p. 15) would help to retain ACP teachers. Additionally, a large number of study participants felt that restructuring the ACP by utilizing professional development opportunities to replace certification requirements could also serve as a retention mechanism. This portion of the study supports the findings of Ng and Thomas (2007) who found that ACP participants were more likely to exit the program without fulfilling requirements when required to complete additional coursework.

A study by O'Connor, Malow, and Bisland (2011), designed to explore the views of ACP teachers who participated in the New York City Teaching Fellows Program,

further endorsed the idea that school environment factors may directly impact the retention of ACP teachers. Approximately 30% of participants who decided not to return to the program stated that their decisions were greatly influenced by lack of support from school executives and by formalities. Study participants also cited lack of opportunities for vertical movement and poor student management procedures as attrition factors. Although retention mechanisms vary according to the state and ACP, the literature has identified several strategies that have helped to successfully retain teachers. Included in the successful strategies are streamlined ACP programs which may include the use of professional development instead of additional coursework to meet certification requirements.

Implications

The findings of this project study may challenge the assumptions of policymakers in the school district of this study regarding the best way in which to prepare ACP teachers for the rural school district that serves a large quantity of low-performing, high-poverty, ethnic minority students. Current methods require ACP teachers to complete at least 18 hours of education related courses in addition to local level professional development sessions within a 3-year timeframe. However, the course requirements coupled with the time constraints seem to negatively influence teacher retention.

The North Carolina General Assembly has promoted the development of new innovative approaches to ACP or lateral entry licensure as well as mandated easier entry into the program by removing some of the barriers. This project study provides the framework for an innovative ACP designed to utilize reiterative professional development to replace some of the coursework.

Summary

Teacher quality and quantity are likely to continue to be issues across the nation. With the looming retirement of rapidly aging baby boomers, the plummeting number of educators entering the profession via traditional preparation programs, and the mounting teacher attrition rate, securing qualified educators has become a daunting task, especially for high-poverty urban and rural school districts. Consequently, many such districts have relied upon ACPs. Although opponents of these programs argue that they will eventually debase the profession, many states now realize that they are a viable solution. However, since teachers entering the profession through ACPs must quickly develop pedagogical knowledge and skills, while completing mandatory coursework, a substantial number of them are leaving the program prematurely. If this mounting exodus of ACP teachers continues, many of the nation's children will be limited by a low quality education. Therefore, concerted efforts must be made to gain a greater understanding of the experiences and perceptions of ACP teachers, and policymakers must endeavor to find the most effective ways to remove barriers and increase their retention.

This project study includes four sections, appendices, and references. Section 2 defines the research design, research questions, measures for ethical protection of participants, the role of the researcher, criteria for participant selection, data collection tools and methods, and an explanation of how and when data analysis occurred, including methods to address validity. Section 3 provides an explanation of the project, and Section 4 culminated with the findings, a discussion of the evidence, an interpretation of the data, implications and recommendations for social change, recommendations for further study, and a reflection.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The guiding question for this qualitative case study was, “What are the perceptions of alternative certification program stakeholders?” The following research questions were used to address the problem:

Research Question 1 (RQ 1): What are current alternative certification teachers’ perceptions of the alternative certification program?

Research Question 2 (RQ 2): What are the perceptions of alternative certification teachers who withdrew from the alternative certification program?

Research Question 3 (RQ 3): What are alternative certification program administrators’ perceptions of the alternative certification program?

In order to illuminate the invisibility of the everyday experiences of the ACP stakeholders of the school district of this study, I implemented a case study design. Since this study was problem-based and designed to uncover and gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of some ACP stakeholders (ACP administrator, teachers who are currently participating in the ACP, and teachers who left the ACP prematurely), a case study design was an appropriate approach.

Description of the Qualitative Tradition

Case study research has become an invaluable tool in education research. Schram (as cited in Glesne, 2011) noted that “its strategic value lies in its ability to draw attention to what can be learned from the single case” (p. 22). Consequently, its use has been voluminous over the past decades. Some of the many uses of case study research include exploring the relationship between the rate of development of speaking and writing

proficiencies in the Spanish language classroom (Hubert, 2013), investigating the alignment between elementary teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and experiences and their teaching practices in math (Harbin & Newton, 2013), and exploring the influences of sociocultural factors on teaching and learning in an adult financial literacy education program (Sprow-Forté, 2013).

Justification of the Choice of Research Design

Qualitative research designs have been used to explore, investigate, and/or understand the meaning of the experiences and perceptions of individuals, groups, activities, or societal issues; however, not all qualitative designs are appropriate for this study. This study was not designed to investigate a cultural group in its natural setting; therefore, an ethnography design was not suitable; nor was the narrative research approach appropriate because no individuals were asked to tell the story of their lives. Since an objective of this study was to collect thick, rich, detailed, and descriptive data in order to gain insight into the experiences and perceptions of the ACP stakeholders instead of developing a theory based upon their perceptions (such as with the grounded theory approach), the most appropriate research design to utilize was a case study.

Participants

Criteria for Selecting Participants

Moreover, to gain a greater understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the ACP stakeholders of the school system of this study, I used a purposeful sampling technique to select participants. The use of this type of sampling is often implemented to select samples with specific characteristics. Thus, I selected a sampling of participants from a population of middle and high school ACP participants who are currently enrolled in the program as well as middle and high school participants who left the program before completion and program administrators. Selecting participants with the desired characteristics provided the types of perspectives that I needed to properly represent the perceptions of ACP participants. Each group of participants was able to share experiences that informed the project study.

Justification of the Number of Participants

One goal of this case study research was to gain insight into the perceptions and experiences of current ACP teachers, teachers who left the program before completion, and ACP administrators; therefore, an ample sample size was needed. A sample size is deemed large enough when it reaches saturation. Saturation is defined by Holosko and Thyer (2011) as "A mode of research immersion in which a researcher completely surrounds himself or herself with the participant and subject matter" (p. 111). Holosko and Thyer (2011) contended that during saturation, no new information is uncovered and redundancy occurs. However, the nature of a case study mandates the use of a relatively small participant pool to ensure that ample time is available to adequately delve into and analyze data in order to gain an in-depth insight into the perceptions of the ACP

stakeholders. Consequently, to ensure that saturation was achieved as well as to ensure a deep inquiry and ample analysis of data, I used a sample size consisting of 10 participants, including four current participants, four participants who withdrew from the program, and two program administrators. The use of a small sample size of 10 participants prevented inundation and allowed me to effectively management the laborious task of face-to-face interviews.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

Creswell (2012) maintained that research projects should not be intrusive or disruptive to the research site and that researchers should make every effort to demonstrate respect and to minimize distractions. Thus, he suggested the use of a gatekeeper, or an individual to help the researcher gain entrance into the research site. Consequently, to obtain access to key people in the district office of the school district of this study, I made phone calls to the human resource specialist. The human resource specialist scheduled a meeting with the associate superintendent to allow me to discuss the project study with her. During the meeting with the associate superintendent, I obtained a letter of cooperation and permission to be placed on the agenda of a district level new teacher professional development meeting. I attended the professional development meeting to explain the objective of the study and to seek participants; a consent form that included my personal contact information was issued. After receiving calls from individuals who agreed to participate, I selected participants and scheduled interview dates, times, and locations based upon the availability of the interviewees.

The human resource specialist also scheduled a time for me to meet with the ACP administrators. Contacting the human resource specialist to schedule a meeting with the

associate superintendent and ACP administrators was necessary because it was the only way to gain access to them. Gaining access to ACP teachers who left the program before completion was accomplished by contacting teachers whom I had personal knowledge of who did not complete the program.

Method of Establishing a Researcher–Participant Working Relationship

The primary reason for meeting with the ACP stakeholders was to collect data that were used to inform the project study. The quality of the data that were collected, however, was largely contingent upon the quality of the researcher–participant relationship or the relationship between me and the interviewees. Creswell (2009) stated that one way to develop quality researcher–participant relationships is to exhibit mutual respect. I demonstrated respect for the participants by: (a) scheduling interviews at times that were convenient for the interviewees, (b) ensuring that participants fully understood the purpose of the study so that there were no feelings of deception, and (c) providing a safe environment in which the participants could express their perceptions and experiences. I also demonstrated respect by not sounding condescending or judgmental when interviewing or probing for additional information.

Measures of Ethical Protection

Data collection was a pivotal part of the study; however, I did not begin until I received appropriate clearance and permission from the school district and Walden University and until participants had been provided a copy of the purpose and objectives of the study. In addition to an explanation of the purpose and objectives of the study, my personal contact information and the contact information of the Walden University representative (see Appendix D) were included on the cover letter. Through both the

consent form and through verbal communication, I informed participants of their prerogative to contact the Walden representative if questions should arise as well as their right to not participate or to stop participating at any point without fear of detriment. Once consent forms were signed, I provided a copy to each participant and stored a copy in a secured location. In addition to securely storing the consent forms, I ensured confidentiality through techniques such as: (a) removing any form of data that could identify specific interviewees or that could specifically identify the school system, and (b) keeping raw data under lock and key until they are destroyed after 5 years in the manner prescribed by Walden University policy.

Data Collection

Interviews

Gaining multiple perspectives of a program or an event requires the collection and use of a multiplicity of data. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) recommended the use of a compendium of data collection. For this study, data were collected from participants with diverse characteristics and roles. These characteristics and roles included: (a) different grade levels, (b) current participation in the ACP of the school system of this study, (c) former participation in the ACP, and (d) ACP administration.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to get at the heart of the experiences and perceptions of the ACP participants. Merriam (2009) noted that this data collection method is the best technique to use when endeavoring to access the inner thoughts of others, or when attempting to get into their minds. This technique was essential to the study because it provided participants the opportunity to describe and detail their personal experiences and provided me a glimpse into their perceptions. As the

interviewees shared their perceptions and personal thoughts in the interviews, it was imperative to retain every word of the dialogue for analysis. Merriam (2009) also maintained that one of the most effective ways to ensure the preservation of every utterance and to provide benefits to interviewees, as they listen for ways to improve and to hone their interviewing skills, is the tape recording of interviews. Consequently, I tape recorded each interview.

Plan for Amount of Time and Duration of Interviews

Capturing the full complexity of the experiences and perceptions of the ACP participants of this study required that an appropriate amount of time be spent collecting data. The literature, however, does not clearly prescribe or recommend a specific length of time for a data collection period in terms of contact hours or time span. Suggestions are made, however, as to the most effective way to determine the appropriate amount of time. Knox and Burkard (2009) noted that the number of contact hours or the specific number of interviews conducted by a qualitative researcher should be contingent upon costs and benefits. Although extended numbers of interviews may yield more and better data, their benefits may be negated by cost, especially the cost of the participants' time. Glesne (2011) indicated that in order to maintain focus and to prevent the diminishing of the quality of interviews, session lengths should not exceed an hour. Thus, to ensure that the benefits were not negated by too much demand on the time of participants and to prevent diminishing of the quality of individual interviews, I conducted one 45- to 60-minute individual face-to-face interview with each participant.

How and When Data Are Collected and Recorded

The dependability of a qualitative research study, such as this case study, is immensely reliant upon the researcher's ability to methodically and meticulously document the processes and procedures used to collect and record data. Consequently, I methodically collected data from interviews by tape recording each participant separately in a private setting using an interview protocol that included a heading, the interview questions, and a thank you note at the end. The format of the interview protocol was designed to allow for capturing gestures such as smiles, frowns, and other nonverbals or paralanguage that could not be captured by the tape recording.

Process for Generating, Gathering, and Recording Data

Information used to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of the ACP participants of this study was generated through audio taped interviews of various stakeholders. Creswell (2012) noted that one way to maximize the effectiveness of an audio taped interview is to ensure that the physical setting is situated in a location free of distractions. Thus, I interviewed current ACP teachers after school in private locations, including their individual classrooms and a study room of a public library. All former ACP participants were also interviewed individually in a study room in the county library. The study rooms in the library were conducive to tape recording because they were closed off from other sections of the library. Upon the request of ACP administrators, interviews were conducted in their offices.

Each interview began with a thank you to the interviewees for agreeing to participate and an announcement of the beginning of the tape recording. Once the recording had begun, the names of the interviewees were stated; however, names were

not mentioned in the study. The interview was structured so that each question was read, and repeated when necessary. Participants were given one question at a time on an index card. I used this method to help interviewees remain focused on the question at hand. Furthermore, I demonstrated patience and respect as participants expressed their perceptions and described their experiences. When necessary, some probing occurred to clarify responses. The tape recorded interviews continued until all questions were discussed, which varied from approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Each interview ended with a thank you to the interviewees for participating.

System for Keeping Track of Data

The findings of a study are only as reliable as the system used to track and secure the data. Thus, once interviews were completed, interview protocols and audiotapes were catalogued and kept in a field journal, which was in the form a binder with protective sleeves into which audiotapes were inserted. The field journal was securely stored in a locked attaché case and eventually securely safeguarded in a private room in the researcher's home. Audiotapes were transcribed in a secluded room within 24 hours of each interview. All transcribed data were filed away after analysis in a locked file cabinet in my home and will be destroyed after 5 years in accordance with Walden University's policy.

I used a matrix to organize the extensive data generated through the transcription process. The matrix was organized in columns by participant's code, participant response, code, theme, and inductive theme. These inductive themes were used to capture the principle findings of the study.

Role of the Researcher

As a result of my affinity with various teachers and officials in the school district, there is always the possibility of bias; in fact some would argue that it is inevitable. In this study, bias or impartial judgment may stem from personal associations, or it may be based upon my experiences as an ACP teacher in a different state, or it may originate as a result of cognitive limitations. Regardless of the point of emanation of bias, it is imperative that it is controlled. Consequently, I made several efforts to control, or at least minimize, it. These efforts included: (a) not interviewing teachers who work under my direct supervision; (b) selecting participants of different characteristics to provide multiple perspectives; and (c) the inclusion of negative or discrepant case analysis. The incorporation of negative case analysis was used as a mechanism to ensure that findings of the study were reflective of participants' perceptions and experiences rather than a function of researcher bias.

As a researcher, it was imperative to examine and reflect upon any personal assumptions and experiences that may influence, either positively or negatively, the findings of the study. Lincoln and Guba (as cited by Merriam, 2009) maintained that it is essential for researchers to reflect upon themselves as human instruments to preserve the integrity of the research. As the researcher in the study, my role as interviewer may have been affected and filtered through the lenses of personal perceptions and expectations that were cultivated by experiences as an AC teacher in another state. However, personal experiences may also afford a special understanding of the experiences of all ACP stakeholders. As a current school administrator (elementary principal), some personal bias may be tempered by the many hours of professional development training devoted to

objectively evaluating teachers. Additionally, member checking was utilized to ascertain whether my findings were swayed in any way by personal bias.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2012) stated that the qualitative data analysis process is often an iterative process which initially entails the development of a general sense of the data. Thus, I began data analysis by recording notes from memory immediately following each interview and by transcribing and ruminating on data transcribed from private interviews. Once data was transcribed and organized, it was hand analyzed. The hand analysis method was employed because of the small database which produced less than 500 pages (Creswell, 2012) and because of the cost associated with purchasing and learning how to properly use a qualitative data analysis program.

After completion of the preliminary transcription process, the coding process was used to bring meaning to all of the interview information. The coding process consisted of making notations in the margins of the transcripts near words, sentences, and phrases that were pertinent to the study. Analytical coding was used to add further meaning. Richards (as cited by Merriam, 2009), explained that “analytical coding goes beyond descriptive coding; it is ‘coding that comes from interpretation and reflection of meaning’” (p. 180). Codes were generated and recorded in a matrix. Numerous themes were formulated from the codes; however, some themes were combined and inductively derived themes were created to limit the total number of themes to a manageable number of no more 10.

Emanating themes were used to gain an insight into the experiences and perceptions of individual ACP stakeholders. Member checking, the use of thick, rich

descriptions to immerse readers into the ACP participants' experiences, and the presentation of discrepant information were used to ensure accuracy of the findings. The presentation of discrepant information was especially important since it helped to increase the credibility of the study. Themes, patterns, and the overall findings of the study were used to answer the overarching research question framing this study which sought to determine the perceptions and experiences of Alternative Certification Program stakeholders as they pertain to teacher attrition.

AC teacher attrition is a multifarious matter that hinders student achievement. However, addressing the problem requires an illumination of some of the personal experiences and perceptions of ACP stakeholders. The most effective research method to elucidate causes of attrition in this study was a case study design. Through the use of data collection techniques such as face-to-face interviews, this qualitative method was used to gain valuable firsthand, thick, rich, descriptive information that was used to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions and experiences of ACP stakeholders regarding causes of teacher retention and attrition.

The Study

Global competition has necessitated the employment of qualified teachers capable of making immediate impacts on student achievement. The attainment of such adept teachers from traditional programs, however, is increasingly arduous— especially in critical areas such as mathematics, science, and special education. Consequently, most states have expedited entrance into the classroom through some form of nontraditional route. In fact, the past couple of decades have experienced a dramatic increase in the number of teachers certified through an alternate route. According to the National Research Council (2010), approximately 20% to 30% of the nation’s teachers entered the field through an alternate program; and in some states the percentage is much greater. North Carolina’s Race to the Top (2010) data revealed that “approximately 48% of all teachers in the State hold at least one license earned through an alternative route.” (p. 116). The data also revealed that in 2009 the number of new teachers in the State entering via the alternative certification program (ACP) nearly doubled the number entering through traditional mean—2,062 and 1,143 respectively.

A vast number of teachers in North Carolina entered the profession through the ACP; however, studies (Corbell, 2009; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008) have revealed that the attrition rate of teachers from the state’s program exceeds that of the nation. Since the ACP in North Carolina, like those of many other states, is designed to attract degreed individuals who possess no formal instructional training, participants enter the program with varying backgrounds, perceptions, and experiences. To understand the perceptions of ACP teachers in one Southeastern district in North

Carolina, I performed a qualitative case study. More specifically, I sought to ascertain and understand the perceptions of ACP.

Methods and Analysis

Upon Institutional Review Board approval (#12-05-0235312), I used a qualitative case study design to explore the experiences and perceptions of 10 alternative certification (referred to as lateral entry in North Carolina) stakeholders from a school district in Southeast North Carolina. Four of the stakeholders were teachers who are currently enrolled in the ACP; four were teachers who left the ACP before completing requirements; and two were ACP program directors. All of the participants volunteered to participate and each of them were interviewed and audio taped individually in a private setting. Interviews lasted approximately 45- 60-minutes. Immediately after the interviews, audiotapes and interview protocols were secured in an attaché case until they were safeguarded in a private location in my home.

Data analysis is often a recursive process that requires the researcher to continuously review data at various stages. Thus, the first stage of analysis began immediately after each interview as notes were recorded on the interview protocol from memory (see Appendices G & H). The second stage of analysis continued with me listening to each audio taped interview and then completing verbatim transcriptions in a private room. Following the transcription of each interview, I read each transcript to correct obvious errors made during the transcription process (Creswell, 2009). Transcripts were then printed and placed into one of three groups based upon the role of the stakeholder and the research question. Next, each transcript was re-examined to acquire a sense of the data, to ruminate upon responses, and to ensure that the collected

data were sufficient to answer the research questions. After deciding that the data were appropriate to answer the research questions, I implemented the hand analysis method to generate codes as Creswell (2012) noted that this method is often used for small databases that produce less than 500 pages. Implementation of the hand analysis method entailed manually highlighting specific terms and phrases and making notations in the margins of each transcript. Codes were generated from the notations and recorded in a matrix in preparation for the third phase. Participants' names were coded to ensure confidentiality. An excerpt from the matrix which was developed based upon participants' responses to the interview questions is available in appendix C. In the third phase, codes were used to develop themes. Ten themes were inductively and analytically derived from the data. These themes emanated from each group of study participants and are delineated and further discussed with each research question under study findings.

Participants were invited to engage in member checking to validate findings and to ensure that their experiences and perceptions were properly represented. Each participant was given a list of the themes and afforded an opportunity to read the findings. All participants verbally indicated that they felt that the study was an accurate representation of their perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, since the nature of a case study prevents generalization such as with quantitative studies, the intent of the study is not to generalize. However, individuals and sites may gain valuable information from what is learned from this single case study (Glesne, 2011).

Participants

All of the study participants possessed at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Three of the eight current and former teacher

participants entered the ACP as a second or third career; these included a former environmental engineer, an Information Technology technician/Social Worker, and a software developer. Four of the current and former teacher participants were in their first career; however, one of the four had worked with individuals who were attempting to complete the GED program. One former teacher participant had taught in a private school, but was not required to possess any type of licensure or certification. Participants were assigned codes to ensure confidentiality. The code and teaching assignments of each participant are listed in the table that follows:

Table 1

Participant Code and Teaching Assignment

Participant Code	Teaching Assignment
CT 2- Shay	MSM
CT 3- Kathy	HSH
CT 4- Lamont	HSS
FT 1- Olivia	HSE
FT 2- Tony	HSM
FT 3- Susan	MSS
FT 4- Sheila	HSM
AP 1- Katie	APD

Note. CT means current ACP teacher, FT means former ACP teacher, and AP means ACP director.

Study Findings

ACP teachers have become a mainstay for many local school districts because of the daunting task of staffing classrooms with qualified teachers. Thousands of ACP teachers enter the teaching profession in various locations annually; and are believed by some to be better matched to the needs of specific school districts than teachers prepared by traditional teacher education programs (Grossman & Leob, 2008). However, the literature suggests that the attrition rate of teachers certified through this process is alarmingly high (Boe, Sunderland, & Cook, 2007) and that teachers certified through ACPs are more likely to leave the profession than their counterparts (Marinell & Coca, 2013). This section describes the findings of a case study designed to investigate the perceptions of Alternative Certification Program stakeholders.

Acquisition of ACP stakeholders' perceptions was accomplished through the use of interview questions (see Appendices F and G) that were divided into four categories as follows: (a) training, (b) challenges, (c) support, and (d) improvements. Analysis and coding of participants' responses in each category revealed 10 inductively derived themes. The themes are as follows: (a) personal background and community connections; (b) positive school environment; (c) collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort; (d) lack of understanding of standard courses of study; (e) lesson planning; (f) organizational skills and time management; (g) lack of adequate preparation; (h) insufficient types of support; (i) relevant professional development; and (j) restructure and clarify program requirements. The first three themes reveal participants' perceptions of the training component of the ACP. Themes four through seven disclosed stakeholders' perceptions of challenges encountered by ACP participants; and study participants' perceptions of

ACP support and program improvements were educed through theme eight and themes nine and 10 respectively. Direct quotes and descriptions of participants' responses used to derive each theme are chronicled and accompany each research question and category.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What are current Alternative Certification teachers' perceptions of the Alternative Certification Program?

Training. Research findings for RQ1 revealed the following themes relevant to the perceptions of teachers currently enrolled in the Alternative Certification Program regarding training: (a) personal background and connection to the community, (b) positive school environment, and (c) collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort.

Personal background and connection to the community. The backgrounds of this group of participants were similar in that three of them felt that their training extended beyond the confines of the ACP to include a university degree and connections to the community. All four currently enrolled teachers felt that they had a working knowledge of their discipline as each taught in their degreed area. However, Shay a very young first year teacher felt that she was not prepared or properly trained to handle the grade level to which she was assigned. She states, "I would kind of request to start with a younger group being that's my first year." Shay felt that some of the middle school students were not very receptive of her because of her age and small stature. She states, "At first it started off kind of rough. They saw that I was young so they were kind of giving me a hard time." Three of the four teachers felt that the fact that they are natives to the area provided an extra dimension of preparation and served as a retention factor, as is noted by the following quotes:

- 1) Lamont: “I really do feel that because of me knowing how the community is and understanding a lot of the young folk – understanding where they come from kind of motivates me a little bit more”;
- 2) Kathy: “By me being raised in this area... I have the Madea attitude and that’s what these kids are used to because in this county you have a lot of grandmothers that are raising their grandkids”; and
- 3) Evan: “I came from a small town in the area so I am familiar with a lot of the struggles the education system here goes through.... I think I have an understanding ...I can relate to the kids a little bit.”

Shay is a single parent from a neighboring state in her first career and did not have a connection to the community. Participants felt that the ACP did not provide any specific training. However, three of the four currently enrolled participants felt that their personal ties to the community encouraged them to remain in the program despite inadequate training. Recruiting teachers from the community may be one way to encourage retention.

Positive school environment emerged as the second major theme regarding training, with participants using terms such as supportive administrators, supportive staff, and a good mentor to describe their positive training experiences while participating in the ACP. Three of the four participants described collegiality amongst teachers in their departments or on their hallways as an invaluable part of both their formal and informal training. The strong collegial support helped encourage their decisions to remain in the program. Kathy, a high school history teacher, was not fortunate enough to experience a

strong collegial support system. In fact, she indicated that although she had a very supportive mentor who always “provided a listening ear” and allowed her to vent, her overall school environment was very negative, especially the first year. She experienced a situation in which she was not sure about school procedures and policies; however, she received no assistance from her department members who were extremely unsupportive, and the principal addressed her lack of knowledge of school policy and procedure by essentially telling her to shut up without giving her an opportunity to clarify. She explains, “He pretty much stated what he had to state, and I was not to open my mouth about it; and I was pretty much dismissed.” She had thoughts of leaving the school but remained because of the relationship with her students who she said kept her encouraged after the death of her mother. The strong bond between Kathy and her students is reflected by the following quote: “It makes me want to leave the program...but the students keep you here; you’re here for them...every time you feel like you want to leave – they’re the reason – they pretty much hold you here.” A supportive school environment, including administration, staff, and students, seems to serve as a retention mechanism.

Collaboration with beginning teachers’ cohort. Lamont described one of his most positive experiences in the ACP by stating, “It was real good to actually get to know some of the other teachers and get to learn from their experiences... I’m not the only one in these shoes...them sharing some of their experiences kind of helped me out.”

Lamont’s feelings were echoed by Shay who stated, “I like whenever we have to meet and we get ideas from other new teachers – what worked and what didn’t work.” Evan also benefitted from the collaboration with the beginning teachers’ cohort because he was able to ask other teachers for ideas. Unfortunately for Kathy the only positive

collaborative experience was with her mentor. However, collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort emerged as a key factor in the training of new teachers. The participants found solace in knowing that they were not alone in their experiences through collaboration with their colleagues. The collaboration with beginning teachers coupled with the mentors provided by the school district offered a multidimensional support system, which may help to deter attrition

Challenges. Lack of experience often results in numerous challenges for most ACP participants. The type of challenges, however, may vary from individual to individual and from one ACP to the next. Findings of this study suggested four major themes pertinent to the challenges faced by teachers currently enrolled in the ACP. These themes are: (a) lack of understanding of standard courses of study, (b) lesson planning, (c) organizational skills and time management, and (d) lack of adequate preparation.

Lack of understanding of standard courses of study. North Carolina utilizes Common Core and Essential Standards to detail what K-12 students should know, but for many ACP teachers understanding and teaching these standards add to the challenges of becoming a certified teacher. When asked to describe, in detail, the most common challenges faced while participating in the ACP, Evan stated, "Getting used to the Common Core and getting an understanding of exactly what it is that I'm supposed to teach." Evan voiced the sentiments of most of the other participants. Kathy, a high school teacher who felt that her school environment was not very positive, indicated that she needed someone to help her understand the Essential Standards; however, she did not receive any assistance her first year. Kathy's lack of understanding of the Essential Standards occasionally frustrated her to the point that she contemplated leaving the

profession. Shay, a first year teacher, was concerned about trying to find activities that she felt would meet the requirements of Common Core.

Lesson Planning. Fully understanding Common Core and Essential Standards was just one challenge faced by participants. Most participants also expressed difficulty attempting to develop lesson plans. Evan indicated that at times he felt overwhelmed as he endeavored to develop rigorous lessons that would meet Common Core requirements as well as address the needs of diverse learners. Shay stated that one of her greatest challenges was to develop lessons that were on the middle school level. She states, “It’s hard for me, I still have like that college mindset...and at first I was thinking that they would be able to catch on like that, but now I’m like they can’t.” Lamont, who is now in his fourth year in the ACP, described his challenges of preparing lesson plans by explaining the time involved in lesson planning and how it sometimes consumes him. His experiences are expressed by the following statement, “...getting up early in the morning thinking about how do I modify this lesson for the next day.” Kathy, the high school history teacher in her third career, who appeared to have experienced the most unsupportive and difficult environment, explained “I needed someone to help me build lessons, find additional resources....” All participants struggled with lesson planning and felt that additional support in that area is greatly needed.

Organizational skills and time management. Teachers must learn to multitask or manipulate a multiplicity of issues at once if they are to be effective. The ability to multitask is especially vital for ACP teachers as they are forced to balance tasks of teaching, adapting to the culture of their schools, attending new teacher meetings, and completing courses required for certification – all while maintaining family relations and

personal health. All four of the currently enrolled participants indicated that they have felt overwhelmed by all of the daily, weekly, and monthly requirements such as mounds of paperwork, organizing all of the materials given by the ACP and the mentors, remembering dates of school, mentor, and new teacher meetings, grading papers, completing required coursework, and all of the other responsibilities. Lamont, a high school Spanish teacher in his fourth year states, “Even now I still think like is this workload really worth it.” Kathy felt overwhelmed because, “everything was due yesterday”, and Evan stated that sometimes, “...being able to keep your sanity” is a challenge because the tasks are so voluminous. All participants expressed a struggle to organize all of the information and to find time to do everything that has to be done. They also indicated that the ACP did not provide the type of instruction or training needed to assist them in development of organizational and time management skills.

Lack of adequate preparation. New teachers, regardless of entry route, encounter various and sundry challenges inherent to the profession. Unfortunately, this group of participants felt that the ACP did not prepare them to meet the challenges of teaching. When asked how the ACP prepared them to face the challenges as a teacher, the theme of lack of adequate preparation reverberated throughout their responses. Shay states, “I feel like I wasn’t prepared...we had the orientation...they gave me the information, but to a certain extent I feel like I was kind of thrown into the class. I thought there would be more training.” She also indicated that the mentor was not providing as much assistance as she had expected. Kathy stated, “I don’t think it prepared me. I really don’t. I don’t think I was really prepared for what I was going into, so I don’t think it succeeded in that aspect.” Kathy added that although the mentor was great, they only met monthly so there

were many issues that went unresolved for months. Lamont noted, “There are certain aspects of just teaching in general that I can say that I was not prepared for.” Evan’s description of his perception of the meetings that were designed to help prepare ACP teachers explains to some degree why participants felt unprepared. Evan explained, “...lateral entry meets on a regular basis, but they don’t so much meet to discuss the challenges that you have...instead they meet to discuss the things that you have to do to keep teaching, like meeting your hours of coursework.” Kathy, Shay, and Lamont all indicated that their lack of preparation had at times caused them to reconsider their desire to remain in the ACP. Challenges associated with overall feelings of lack of understanding, unpreparedness, and inundation may trigger the attrition of some ACP teachers.

Support System. Individuals entering the ACP are generally lacking in basic instructional and pedagogical expertise. Consequently, their expectations are that the ACP will provide the types of support needed to develop and foster needed skills. The theme of insufficient types of support, however, resonated throughout the perceptions of the participants in this group.

Insufficient types of support. All participants reported having a good mentor, but Shay indicated that she would have been better served by a mentor who taught the same discipline and on the same grade level; and Kathy indicated that she needed a mentor that she could have met with at least weekly. Both Shay and Evan experienced the support of a collegial staff and supportive administrators, but they both indicated that the ACP failed to provide support in areas such as understanding curriculum and pedagogy. Evan remarked, “...I don’t feel like the lateral entry program did barely anything. For most

lateral entry teachers I've talked to that's their biggest fear coming into the classroom—what am I supposed to teach.” Kathy and Lamont both felt that the level of administrative support that they received was inadequate. Kathy noted that because of a lack of adequate support and guidance from the administration and teachers in her department, she had to “...pretty much learn by failure.” She describes her experiences by stating, “I needed someone...to give constructive feedback. I've been here for 2 years and no one has helped me until now. The new assistant principal and the curriculum specialist are helping me now.” Lamont expressed his feelings of lack of support by stating, “The type of support I feel I needed but did not get was having random, pre-scheduled walk-in observations more frequently during my first year.” Shay and Lamont also indicated that they needed test-taking skills in preparation for the Praxis. The overall sentiment of the group was that although some support was provided, it was not sufficient to meet their numerous needs.

Recommendations for Improvement. No universal ACP has been identified; consequently, ACPs such as the one in this study are constantly endeavoring to identify and remove nonproductive practices and implement effective components. Two recommendations for improvement pertinent to the ACP of this study are relevant professional development and the need to restructure and clarify program requirements.

Relevant professional development. All participants in this group felt that the professional development offered by the ACP was mostly useless to them. Kathy and Evan both noted that most of their professional development focused on classroom management. Kathy was frustrated because she felt that there was nothing that prepared her to understand school district policies and procedures or to deal with hostile staff

members. Lamont felt that his professional development experiences were futile as he states, “We would have these meetings, we would meet often and they would give some of the craziest advice even as far as guys make sure you wear your necktie just above your belt.” One suggestion made by individuals in this group was to have professional development that will help them deal with the factors that they may encounter as they instruct their students. For instance, Kathy suggested more professional development related to district policies and procedures for planning curriculum related activities such as field trips. Evan explained, “Their main focus is getting people to understand what courses they have to take so they are here to work—they should focus more on ...helping prepare the people for what they face once they step into the classroom.”

Restructure and clarify program requirements. The overall consensus of this group of currently enrolled participants was that the ACP is a good program because it offers some an opportunity to explore the teaching profession as a second or third career, and for others it offers opportunities for immediate employment; however, one caveat is that program requirements are not clear. Evan, who started teaching in December, was very frustrated when he learned that if he did not enroll in and complete two classes (6 hours) before June he would lose his employment. He knew that he had to take 6 hours within the first year but felt that there were no guidelines regarding what constituted a year. He states, “I feel like that process could be simpler. And there is no help for me financially when I’m taking my classes.” Evan also explained that as a new teacher, paying \$900 out-of- pocket to complete the courses was difficult and because he was completing certification through the Regional Alternative Licensing Center (RALC) he could not receive financial aid. He noted, “If it wouldn’t have been for my family being

able to help me out, I wouldn't be able to take classes and stay in education." One reason that Evan was so confused about when coursework had to be completed was because no one has ever sat down face-to-face and explained his plan of study, or the courses that he is required to take in order to receive certification. Instead his plan of study arrived in the mail from the RALC with no explanations. Evan expressed frustration as he stated, "Honestly I don't understand the plan of study...they don't clarify exactly what—they don't outline like in college in your undergrad." He also noted that he did not know specifically which courses he needed to take nor did he know how many courses he had to take. When asked for recommendations for improvement, Evan said, "I feel like they could set up some kind of packet, some kind of something where you can go online, punch in your name and see where you need to be headed, like a degree audit." Shay, who has only been teaching for 6 months, also expressed concern regarding having to complete 6 hours of coursework within her first year. Her recommendation was that "we start our coursework the second year." Kathy's suggestion for improvement was, "Instead of just having speakers come in and go through everything, focus in on what they need to prepare for as everything outside of classroom management." Participants in the group felt that in order to make a good program better, some program requirements such as the currently used plan of study and the timeframe for course completion should be revamped and that the professional development that they were forced to attend should be more useful.

RQ 2: What are the perceptions of Alternative Certification teachers who withdrew from the Alternative Certification Program?

Training. Findings of research relevant to training experiences of teachers who withdrew from the Alternative Certification Program (ACP) revealed the same three major themes as that of teachers currently enrolled in the ACP. The themes are as follows: (a) personal background and connection to the community, (b) positive school environment, and (c) collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort.

Personal background and connection to the community. Three of the four participants in this group felt that their educational training came more from their personal backgrounds such as their college degrees and connections to the community than from any specific training by the ACP. Sheila, a former environmental engineer, felt that her training came from the long line of family educators and from her work with students in the local youth center. Susan worked with students who were studying for a GED at a nearby community college and felt that much of her training was developed from her experiences in that program. She also believed that her connections to the community bestowed an extra measure of preparation to work with the students in the school district. She states, "I feel that being from the population I work with, I can help them identify related real world situations to their education." Although Olivia was a native of the area, she attended a private school in a neighboring state and felt that much of her training was based on that private school's practices. Three of the four participants are native of and currently reside in the county and felt that their residency gave them an edge when they were in the classroom. The fact that they are residents of the area also influenced their decisions to enter the lateral entry (ACP) program. Tony, a former software developer, was not native to the area.

Positive school environment. Supportive, charismatic, and intellectual were the terms used by Sheila to describe her principal during her time in the lateral entry program. Sheila also indicated that most of the staff members in her building were very supportive. She explains the supportiveness of the staff by stating, “I had a lot of positive people around me that showed me the right thing to do instead of going to a school that had a lot of negativism.” Susan indicated that her school environment was very positive with effective administrators as well. All of the teachers on her hallway would meet to discuss things such as handling difficult students. She explains the collegiality between her and the teachers on her hallway in the following statement, “We met all of the time to discuss the issues on our hall and to decide what we needed to do about them.” Tony indicated that he had received support from staff members as well as the district math curriculum supervisor. The theme of positive school environment was the consensus of this group of participants. ACP teachers formerly enrolled in the program were of the opinion that a positive environment is essential for participants’ success.

Collaboration with beginning teachers’ cohort. As with the teachers who are currently enrolled in the ACP, most of the teachers who withdrew from the ACP relished the opportunity for collaboration with cohorts. When describing one of the positive experiences during her participation within the ACP, Olivia stated, “I enjoyed the meetings as far as being able to talk with some of my other lateral entry teachers and find out problems they were having because it kind of gave us all a chance to chat and talk.” Both Sheila and Susan enjoyed the opportunity to talk with cohorts; however, they also felt that many of the meetings were pointless and often struggled to get to them. Tony was not very enthusiastic about collaborating with cohorts; however, he did benefit from

them. He described his experience by stating, “We worked together. I mean they helped me out. Somebody had to point the way for me.”

Challenges. The findings of this study relating to the challenges encountered by ACP teachers who withdrew from the program revealed the same themes as those currently enrolled in the program. Those themes are: (a) lack of understanding of standard course of study, (b) lesson planning, (c) organizational skills and time management, and (d) lack of adequate preparation.

Lack of understanding of standard course of study. Sheila was representative of most lateral entry teachers as she noted that one of her most common challenges was, “understanding the best practices available or understanding what was required of you to teach.” Olivia did not have a lack of understanding of the standard course of study; however, she felt that her method of teaching the standard course of study differed from what her colleagues were suggesting. She explains, “I very much believe in the writing aspect which I feel like a lot of English classes have lost. It’s more about here read this and prepare for a test and I don’t take that standpoint.” Tony, a former software developer who entered the program for 3 years, left for 5 years, and then reentered for 1 year, struggled with understanding why he had to teach the standard course of study the way it was outlined. He felt that his personal experiences added to the course. He explains, “I had a Master’s in Computer Science and I’m good with the Internet –I thought I added a lot to the class because I pulled in some stuff from the Internet.”

Lesson planning. Tony noted that during his last year of teaching, he never did lesson plans. When asked why he refused to do lesson plans, Tony replied, “They put too much on teachers with lesson plans.” He had taught the course previously at another

school; and therefore, felt that he had all the materials that he needed, but he struggled putting all the information into a lesson plan format. Lesson planning was also a task for Sheila as she struggled to plan for so many diverse learners. She noted, “If you got 31 kids it’s almost 31 different lesson plans because all of them are such an individual.” Both Susan and Olivia had had some experience writing lesson plans in their previous employment, but they both admitted that they had to adjust to writing lesson plans according to prescribed standards. However, the ACP did not provide adequate training.

Organizational skills and time management. “Finding the time to complete assignments, yet still having to prepare the lessons for the class I’m teaching” is how Susan described her most common challenge in the ACP. Susan is not alone in her struggles. Having had some teaching experience at a private school, Olivia explained that she understood the challenging aspects of the ACP by stating, “If you are a brand new teacher coming in like some of the lateral entry participants are, it is very, very daunting to have to do lesson plans, and teach, and try to get your courses in...” Sheila admitted that she was overwhelmed by all of the paperwork and that she struggled with time management; however, she felt that additional demands from the local school to which she was assigned ultimately resulted in her failure to complete mandatory ACP coursework. She states, “I would stay after school and work and tutor kids...so that took away my study time, that took away me taking classes that I should have...that’s what happened to me, my last class I did not do as well.” Sheila was staying after school because she was afraid of what the principal would say if she did not stay. Her contract was not renewed because she did not complete mandatory coursework. This group indicated a need for organizational and time management strategies.

Lack of adequate preparation. The consensus of the ACP participants in this group was that the ACP did nothing to prepare them to face challenges as a teacher. Tony felt that the program was useless in terms of preparation. He noted, “To me it was a go through the hoop type of thing.” Olivia felt that collaboration with staff members and cohorts prepared her better than the ACP. When asked how the ACP prepared her to face the challenges as a teacher, she replied, “It didn’t really. I hate to say it. I did a lot of relying on my fellow teachers.” Sheila stated, “I didn’t see where there was any help.” Susan, who left the ACP of the school district of this study and is now employed in an ACP in another school district, indicated she was not provided any preparation until she started teaching in a different school district.

Support System. All the participants in the group of teachers who left the ACP without completing requirements felt that support, whether through the ACP or fellow teachers, was vital for their success. However, adequate support was not always provided. Thus, the prevailing theme of this group of participants is insufficient types of support.

Insufficient types of support. Tony and Sheila both agreed that they received support from their mentors. Susan and Olivia had similar negative experiences. Susan states, “The support that I received from the lateral entry director was a lack thereof. The support that I received in ██████ County led me to seek employment in another county.” Olivia completed an entire year with no support from her mentor or anyone else in the ACP. Her lack of guidance and support resulted in her taking the wrong course. Therefore, she did not fulfill the annual coursework requirement. Consequently, her contract was not renewed which forced her to take an \$11,000 yearly pay cut as she worked as a teacher assistant to maintain employment. In addition to the pay cut, Olivia

had to drive 50 miles round trip further than she had been driving. Fortunately, she has begun to receive support from a mentor who is helping her work through her issues. However, the mentor who is currently working with her has told her not to tell anyone because all mentors are assigned mentees and should only work with the mentee assigned. Olivia noted, “I don’t feel like they gave the help that they tell you that they are going to give you in order to help you get to where you want to be in lateral entry.” She contemplated leaving the program and enrolling in the ACP of a neighboring state because of her struggles and lack of support. Her decision to remain in the program was influenced by a mentor who was not actually signed to her. She states, “With the support that I’ve gotten this year, it really, really cemented me staying because I was already looking at South Carolina.”

Recommendations for Improvements. Olivia was very happy to have an opportunity to earn certification through the ACP, although she felt that it needed some changes. She described the ACP by saying, “It’s an excellent program...like a lot of excellent programs, it looks good on paper, but once you start doing it there’s a lot of room for human error—on the lateral entry teacher part and on the supervisory part.” Her statement voiced the perceptions of all of the participants in this group, and the two themes that surfaced as recommendations for program improvement were relevant professional development and restructure and clarify program requirements.

Relevant professional development. Olivia feels that her professional development experiences in the ACP were very unproductive. Her feelings of frustration and futility toward the program were caused, to some degree, by the structure and contents of the sessions. Attending the professional development sessions required many

participants to drive an extended distance to a designated site only to have a curriculum specialist or some designated person come in and give information, such as websites, that could very easily have been emailed to each participant. Olivia admitted that some of the websites were very helpful, but she also felt that they were not worth the time, energy, and money expended to attend the meetings. Susan, felt that the professional development did not provide her any assistance. In fact she stated, “I felt as if the program failed me in my first year in the program.” Tony felt that the orientation session was the only good professional development that he attended.

Restructure and clarify program requirements. Tony, who indicated that he was “almost done with teaching now”, felt that the required coursework was a waste of time for him. Therefore, he refused to complete it. Consequently, his recommendation for improvement was to require something more informal. Olivia also felt that the program should be restructured and explained, “I think they need to relook at their guidelines as far as the courses and things like that because it gets expensive at times getting all these courses in.” She further suggested that efforts need to be made “to lighten that workload a little bit and not scare them half to death” as well as help provide some type of financial assistance, which she felt would cause teachers to remain in the program longer. She described her perception of the program by stating, “it’s an awesome program, but there are a lot of kinks in it...but the kinks, I think are what – when teachers leave, the kinks are what cause them a lot of times to leave.” Susan’s recommendation for improvement was “to be completely clear on all details” as she felt that she did not have a clear understanding of the program which caused her contract to not be renewed. Sheila also indicated the need for program clarity. She felt that additional improvements may be

made to the program by ensuring that local schools adhere to state guidelines regarding the amount of extracurricular duty assignments new teachers should receive. Sheila was frustrated because she felt that she was unable to complete program requirements due to local school mandates such as tutoring, staff meetings, and various types of game duties. She feels that the program should be restructured and explained how local schools could help to make the program better as she states, “To implement the rule which I thought was if you are lateral...those first 3years...certain things that you didn’t have to do within the school, such as we didn’t have to do the extracurricular activities because we had to study.”

RQ 3: What are Alternative Certification Program administrators’ perceptions of the Alternative Certification Program?

Training. A staggering 29% of the teachers employed during the 2010-2011 school year (North Carolina School Report Card, 2011) by the school district of this study entered the profession through the ACP (lateral entry), yet there is not an official ACP director. Katie, an individual who works directly with licensure, explained that “the Alternative Certification Program is a part of my ‘Licensure’ duties and responsibilities.” Katie, who has been in education for 21 years in various positions in the school district, has received no formal training regarding the ACP program. Her assignment only requires her to monitor participants’ progress to ensure that they are completing the mandatory 6 credit hours required annually. Marilyn, a former lateral entry teacher, indicated that she is responsible for teacher recruitment and offering beginning teacher support, but she does not work directly with the ACP.

When asked about training of ACP teachers, two of the same themes that emerged and resonated from both groups of ACP teachers were reiterated by the ACP directors. The themes are: (a) personal background and connection to the community, and (b) collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort.

Personal background and connection to the community. Enrollment in the ACP requires all participants to possess a 4-year degree from an accredited college or university. This degree is essential as it is a sufficient part of the specific content area training. ACP participants are expected to be adept in their specific subject areas when entering the program. In some cases, however, ACP participants choose a career in education because of limited opportunities in their area to make use of their degrees and the subject area that they are assigned to teach may be tangentially related to their degree. Katie explains that such is a characteristic of some ACP participants in the school district. She states, "In some cases, these participants didn't know what they wanted to do and just did something to complete a degree. Some of the participants find that they can't find a job with their degree so they pursue education." Many of the recent ACP participants are individuals from the community who either returned to the area or did not want to leave the area to seek employment. Katie also noted that finding a job is enough to keep some ACP participants in the program. Although the ACP offers an opportunity for immediate employment, Katie acknowledged that it does not provide specific training for ACP participants.

Collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort. Marilyn is not directly responsible for working with or providing training for ACP teachers, but from personal experience she noted that one of the most positive things about the ACP is "being able to

meet with others in the program and discuss challenges and how to deal with them.”

Collaboration with cohorts resoundingly emerged as a positive experience from both groups of ACP participants, yet the school district does not provide opportunities for collaboration specifically designed for ACP teachers. Instead, ACP teachers are only afforded such opportunities during new teacher meetings which are held after school at one central location. These new teacher meetings are not held in high regard by some former ACP participants, as they indicated that the meetings were a waste of time because they did not address specific ACP requirement needs.

Challenges. Regardless of the method of certification, teaching is often a stressful and onerous task for most beginners. The level of stress experienced by new teachers may be minimized by adequate preparation and skills. A major theme that emerged in responses to the research question regarding the most common challenges faced by ACP participants was the same as that of both groups of teacher participants, which was organizational skills and time management.

Organizational skills and time management. Katie described the ACP by explaining, “The program is challenging in itself. Not only do participants face the day to day challenges that the state and district require, but they must also juggle the coursework and other requirements that they must attend to at the same time.” ACP teachers are not provided any specific training geared toward helping them develop organizational or time management skills. Marilyn, the other ACP director, described her personal experience as a former ACP teacher by stating, “The most common challenge that I faced was attending school at the same time that I was working and learning about strategies to become an effective teacher, all while raising a small child.” Former participants who were unable to

cultivate organizational and time management skills were unable to complete ACP requirements and consequently unable to complete the program.

Support Systems. The school district of this study offers beginning teacher meetings and mentors to provide support for all new teachers, but there is no specific school district support intended specifically for ACP teachers, prompting many of them to feel that the program lacks sufficient types of support. The ACP directors concur with the sentiments of the participants regarding the type of support available to them.

Insufficient types of support. When asked to describe the type of support that the ACP provides participants, Katie replied, “There isn’t a lot of support through the program itself. There is a regional person in charge in which the participants can email for advice on what to take and where to find the courses.” ACP teachers have limited opportunities to speak with the regional director in person as his office is approximately 50 miles away from them and because of the large number of ACP teachers that he monitors while serving multiple counties; consequently, most of them are often forced to rely upon communication through emails. If their concerns are not addressed in the emails, some ACP teachers are left in limbo to figure things out with limited to no support. Participants have left the program because of lack of support. Katie acknowledged that lack of support may lead to attrition as she states, “Support through the program itself is very little; therefore, if the individuals are not self-disciplined and goal oriented, the program may be discouraging.” The following statement explains her posture regarding the amount of support offered by the ACP: “I personally feel that these individuals should know what they are up against prior to entering the program and should not expect to be spoon-fed.” Marilyn stated from personal experiences in the ACP

that participants desire “more direction in coursework needed and more directions in where to find courses that are needed.” The school district relies upon the regional director to provide ACP teachers support regarding required coursework.

Recommendations for Improvements. Successful programs are those that are able to grow, evolve, and make changes and improvements according to the needs of the participants. The theme that became apparent from the responses of the ACP directors regarding changes and improvements that need to be made to the ACP is relevant professional development.

Relevant professional development. ACP teachers’ often possess limited knowledge of effective classroom procedures and strategies; thus, they have a greater need for professional development than do their counterparts who entered through traditional programs. Therefore, one suggestion for improvement by Marilyn is “more support from the LEA in offering workshops to help prepare for the classroom.” Katie and Marilyn differed in their suggestions for improvement. Katie stated, “Regardless of statistics, I feel teacher retention would be better if salaries were better.” The belief is that teachers are not being paid enough to really submerge themselves into their work.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this case study designed to understand the perceptions of three groups of ACP stakeholders regarding training, challenges, support systems, and recommendations for improvements as it relates to the ACP revealed 10 pertinent themes that reverberated throughout the experiences of each group. These themes include: (a) personal background and community connections; (b) positive school environment; (c) collaboration with beginning teachers’ cohort; (d) lack of understanding of standard

courses of study; (e) lesson planning; (f) organizational skills and time management; (g) lack of adequate preparation; (h) insufficient types of support; (i) relevant professional development; and (j) restructure and clarify program requirements.

Study findings regarding ACP stakeholders' experiences specifically relating to training revealed that the ACP did not provide any specific training for participants. However, personal backgrounds of the participants, including their connection to the community, often served as a retention factor. Grossman and Leob (2008) suggested that ACP teachers may be more suited to local school districts than teachers certified through traditional programs. Many of the study participants entered the ACP because they either wanted to remain in or return to their communities. Some also felt that their connections to the community provided an extra level of preparation. This finding is supported by The National Center on Rural Education (2010) which noted that many rural school districts rely upon ACP teachers with ties to the community to increase the chances of retention. Findings relating to training also suggested that positive school environments (i.e., staff, administration support, students, and mentors) and opportunities for collaboration with cohorts may also serve as retention mechanisms. One participant in the study contemplated leaving the profession because of a lack of administrative support but stayed because of the support and relationship with students, while others suggested that supportive administrators, staff members, and mentors helped "cement their commitment to the program". The findings of this study which suggest that school environment and collaboration with cohorts may influence retention are also consistent with the literature. Studies such as that of Chaudhuri (2008) noted a correlation between school environment and teacher retention. Koehler, Feldhaus, Fernandez, and Hundley (2013) indicated that

ACP teachers identified their cohort experiences as one of the strengths of their program as participants indicated that they gained confidence when they worked with cohort members.

Four major themes emerged regarding the challenges experienced by the ACP stakeholders. These themes are: (a) lack of understanding of standard course of study, (b) lesson planning, (c) organizational skills and time management, and (d) lack of adequate preparation. All ACP stakeholders acknowledged a lack of adequate preparation of ACP teachers as well as their struggles with knowing what to teach and how to teach it. However, the greatest concern was organizational skills and time management which seems to be an attrition trigger as some of the teachers who withdrew from the program indicated that they had a difficult time trying to keep up with all of the mandated activities while completing coursework. Works of researchers such as Casey et al. (2011) and Douglas (2010) also found that lack of time management skills and inundation with paperwork and other activities often resulted in attrition. Thus, these themes are endorsed by the literature.

A resounding theme that emerged in this study relating to the support system available for ACP teachers was insufficient types of support. ACP directors acknowledged that although support is provided for all new teachers in general, no support is provided specifically for ACP teachers. ACP teachers must seek support and any assistance related specifically to the ACP from a regional person who is at least 50 miles away. ACP stakeholders felt that lack of support may cause participants to become discouraged which may culminate in attrition. These findings are corroborated by studies such that of O'Connor, Malow, and Bisland (2011) which found that ACP teachers

identified lack of adequate support as one factor that caused them to not return to the program and that of Evans and Leonard (2013) which noted that lack of school district support ultimately led to attrition. As stated by Shockley, Watlington, and Felsher (2013), “A culture of support is critical for teacher retention” (p. 372); thus, it is incumbent upon ACP program directors and policymakers to ensure multidimensional support for program participants.

The school district does not provide any type of professional development specifically designed to meet the needs of ACP teachers; therefore, one of the major recommendations for improvement was relevant professional development. Teachers entering the ACP have limited to no knowledge of best practices and effective instructional and pedagogical techniques; hence, professional development in these areas is imperative. One participant indicated that the school district devoted an extensive amount of time on classroom management techniques with limited focus on instructional best practices. However, she felt that classroom management was one of her strengths. This participant’s ability as an ACP teacher to effectively manage students’ behavior is not unique. Uriegas, Kupczynski, and Mundy (2014) found no significant difference in the classroom management abilities of teachers certified through traditional programs and those certified through an ACP.

The second and arguably the most momentous recommendation for improvement is the suggestion to restructure and clarify program requirements. One ACP teacher felt that the requirements of the program that obligate them to take 6 credit hours during the first year of teaching should be changed to allow them to begin in their second year. Another felt that professional development should be utilized and contact hours from

those sessions should replace some of the required coursework, and another felt the coursework was too much and should be discontinued. A study by Ng and Thomas (2007) noted that requiring additional coursework has often resulted in attrition.

Program clarity was a major concern for most stakeholders. Some ACP teachers were very upset because they knew that 6 hours of coursework had to be completed each year, but they had no guidelines or criteria to determine what constituted a year. They were also concerned that they did not know exactly how many courses they were required to take or even which specific courses to take, resulting in some of them wasting time and money taking courses that did not meet their needs or fit their plan of study; or in a couple of cases resulting in them losing their jobs. As one participant indicated, “there are a lot of kinks in it...but the kinks I think are what—when teachers leave the kinks are what cause them a lot of time to leave.” Lack of program clarity and time constraints regarding when coursework must be completed have been attrition factors according to the findings of this study. The suggestions of the ACP teachers regarding overhauling the program and utilizing professional development to streamline the certification program is supported by Chaudhuri (2008) who found that a sufficient number of study participants felt that restructuring the ACP by replacing certification requirements with professional development would serve as a retention mechanism.

The participants of this study experienced numerous circumstances that have been shown to influence attrition. These experiences may be used to inform the project study and to provide the framework for the development of an innovative ACP that will address such issues as: (a) positive school environment, (b) collaboration with cohorts, (c) lesson

planning, (d) teaching the standard course of study, (e) relevant professional development, (f) and program clarification.

The Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) program was developed as a mechanism to address the findings of the project study and will offer a means of restructuring the current ACP to ensure that participants are provided unambiguous program requirements as well as step-by-step guidance through the North Carolina Standard Professional 1 Licensure (SP1) process. Through Implementation of the program, the school district will be able to speak to the issue of attrition as it utilizes a program consisting of intensive, reiterative professional development sessions coupled with mandatory courses to train individuals with ties to the community. The program will employ relevant professional development sessions to replace current obligatory foundational type courses. However, the demographics of the student populace mandates a comprehensive understanding of factors such as abject poverty, cultural diversity, knowledge of exceptional children, teaching reading in various contents, and using technology to enhance learning. Consequently, participants will complete courses that provide intense instructions in these areas. Mandating the completion of coursework in the areas noted above is vital as the literature has revealed an increase in the retention rate of teachers specifically prepared for the geographic locations in which they will teach (Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011; Pabon, 2011)

The training program addresses the 10 major themes of the study findings as individuals with ties to the community will collaborate with cohorts in relevant professional development sessions designed to foster the development of lesson planning, organizational, and time management skills through opportunities to authentically

practice unpacking and implementing the standard course-of-study. Cohort collaboration will help to provide a multidimensional support system for ACP participants as they are deliberately guided through the program.

The configuration of the LETT program is described in the following: The program consists of intensive, reiterative professional development sessions that will continue throughout the year as well as mandatory coursework that will be completed during evenings and weekends. The professional development sessions and mandatory courses are divided into tiers; an explanation of each tier follows. Completion of the entire program requires approximately 18 months. However, program administrators have the option to modify any components of the program deemed necessary for participants' success.

Credit for completed professional development sessions will result in Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) at a rate of 1 CEU per 10 contact hours (1 contact hour equals 60-minutes) as defined by College Board (2003), and course completion will culminate with credit hours based on Carnegie Units (Excelsior College, 2014). In accordance with the Carnegie Units system, each course will require participants to engage in at least 9-hours of activities such as class discussion, completion of assignments, and homework per week for a period of 15 weeks or 18-hours per week for 8 weeks (Excelsior College, 2014). Once all requirements have been completed, the program director will assist in filing documents needed to obtain SP1 licensure.

Tier I is referred to as "Fundamentals" and will consist of essential knowledge of local school board policies and procedures and State and federal guidelines that will provide participants an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as well as hints

to avoid potential litigious situations. Participants completing Tier I will receive 1CEU; professional development session hours are as follows:

- Program requirements – one 2-hour session
- District/School Policy and Procedure – two 2-hour sessions
- Education Ethics – two 2-hour sessions

Tier II is entitled “Framework” and will provide the foundation, structure, and undergirding of teachers’ knowledge of how to use the standard course of study to effectively foster the development of 21st century skills by actively engaging and empowering students to succeed in a globally competitive society. The professional development strategies in this Tier are both integrative and reiterative; thus, rudimentary knowledge of specific subject areas will be incorporated and amalgamated into successive modules and classroom experiences throughout the year. Ten CEUs will be awarded upon completion of Tier II. Session time allocations are as follows:

Common Core/Essential Standards – four 2- hour sessions

- Instructional Strategies – one 2-hour session
- Learning Styles – one 2-hour session
- Assessments – two 2-hour session
- Lesson Planning – four 2-hour session
- Classroom Management – one 2-hour session
- Time Management/Organizational Skills – one 2-hour session

- Integration and implementation of all Tier II modules –2-hours per week in the classroom for 36 weeks or during summer months in through activities such as summer school or credit recovery courses.

Tier III–which is entitled “Building Blocks” –requires participants to complete four courses that present a thorough knowledge of education principles and methodologies as well as initiatives and practices explicitly designed to meet the instructional and pedagogical needs of a gamut of learners. Course completion is based upon the intensive study premise which obligates participants to complete each course within an 8 week periods.

Course credits are as follows:

- The Exceptional Child–3 Credits (18-hours per week for 8 weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Reading in the Content Area –3 Credits (18-hours per week for 8 Weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Technology in the Classroom –3 Credits (18-hours per week for 8 Weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Cultural Diversity(including dealing with poverty– 3 Credits (18-hours per week for 8 weeks, totaling 144 hours)

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

With the findings of a qualitative case study and the suggestions of the literature serving as the impetus, I devised a lateral entry teacher training program to address the alarming attrition rate of the ACP teachers of the school district of this study. This section provides a description, goals, rationales as well as a review of the literature as they relate to the program. Also included is a description of needed resources, existing supports, potential barriers, a proposed implementation timeline, roles and responsibilities, the project evaluation, implications for social change, and a conclusion.

Description and Goals of Project

The need for and use of Alternative Certification Program teachers –ACP (referred to as lateral entry in North Carolina) has increased exponentially from the time of the program’s inception in the 1980s. To address the burgeoning practice, policymakers in North Carolina are promoting the development of innovative ACP initiatives that are not directly managed by the state or by institutions of higher education (North Carolina Race to the Top Proposal, 2010). Moreover, the creation of such programs in North Carolina is vital because of the escalating attrition rate of ACP teachers. The increasing attrition rate of ACP teachers over the past few years has resulted in a call for focused efforts to devise programs that address the specific needs of participants. Thus, based upon findings of this case study and the findings of the literature, a Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program that will provide the framework for one such novel ACP venture has been crafted. As suggested by the literature, the LETT Program addresses the issue of attrition by streamlining and tailoring

ACP requirements to meet the specific needs of participants in the school district of this study. The program is a partnership between the school district and the local community college and consists of a combination of professional development sessions and undergraduate level coursework taught by school district employees who possess qualifying community college credentials; the community college cosigns on the qualifications of program instructors.

Further, works such as that of Henry, Bastian, and Fortner (2011) sanction the idea that specifically preparing ACP participants for their geographic location (e.g. a specific school district) often serves as a retention mechanism. Consequently, one goal of the LETT Program is to lessen the attrition rate of ACP teachers by restructuring the current program to include pertinent professional development and coursework needed to help anchor them in the profession. A second goal of the program is to improve the retention rate of ACP teachers by offering local supervision and assistance to ensure that unambiguous program requirements are effectively communicated to participants.

Rationale

The Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program was chosen to address the issue of attrition of ACP teachers of the school district of this study for several reasons. First, the literature suggests that streamlining the ACP to include only relevant professional development and coursework specific to the needs of ACP teachers may deter attrition (Chaudhuri, 2008). The National Center for Education Information (2010) noted that programs that utilize professional development to replace some mandatory coursework have an increased propensity for retention. Furthermore, findings of this case study endorsed the streamlining of ACP requirements and the use of professional

development to replace some of the mandatory coursework. As a result of the nature of the ACP, most participants have little to no formal instructional or pedagogical training. However, study findings revealed that the school district does not provide any training specifically designed to meet the needs of ACP teachers, leaving some feeling distraught and befuddled. The LETT Program would provide a way for the school district to cater to ACP teachers' specific areas of need through professional development and coursework.

Secondly, the LETT Program is an innovative way for the school district to locally supervise, instruct, monitor, and ensure the successful completion of requirements needed to obtain the North Carolina Standard Professional License. Providing local supervision, instructions, and monitoring is essential as study findings revealed that some participants were frustrated and others left the ACP prematurely because of lack of program clarity and lack of direct interaction with ACP supervisors. Currently, the school district does not have a local individual who is directly responsible for assisting ACP participants. Instead, a plan of study is mailed from the director of the Regional Alternative Licensing Center (RALC) with little to no explanation; and the local director of licensure is only responsible for monitoring and informing appropriate officials of ACP participants' progress. The LETT Program would provide local step-by-step guidance for ACP participants; thus, addressing issues such as program clarity and other factors that may influence retention.

The LETT Program fits into the findings of this study as outlined professional development sessions and required coursework are based upon themes that emerged from the data analysis. Data analysis indicated that connections to community and collaboration with cohorts were viewed as positive training components of ACP

participants' experiences and influenced the retention rate. The LETT Program will provide opportunities for ACP teachers from the community to collaborate with and learn from peers. Further analysis of the data revealed that the challenges experienced by ACP participants included lack of understanding of standard courses of study, struggles with lesson planning, need for improved organizational and time management skills, and lack of adequate preparation. These challenges influenced the attrition of some participants and caused others to consider leaving the ACP. The LETT Program provides specific training in these areas. This program also provides the types of multidimensional support and program restructuring that some ACP stakeholders identified as needing improvement.

Review of the Literature

Numerous studies have attempted to demarcate Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) that produce the most effective teachers and to delineate the specific features that foster retention. However, because of the enormity of the diversity between the participants, the school systems, and the structures of the various ACPs nationwide, a simplistic characterization is extremely difficult at best. Although no one-size-fits-all ACP exists, several suggestions have been made regarding effective designs. In a Stanford Center for Opportunity in Education-SCOPE-Policy Brief (2009), Darling-Hammond noted that effective preparation programs should include the following components: (a) high quality pre-service experiences; (b) research-based best instructional and pedagogical practices; (c) sufficient amounts of content specific coursework; (d) adequate training in content specific teaching methods; (e) the use of local district standard courses of study in participants preparation activities; and (f) a

capstone project to demonstrate candidates readiness. Darling-Hammond's (SCOPE Policy Brief, 2009) suggestions are corroborated by the literature. Studies such as that of Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) noted that effective ACPs should be well-crafted with sequenced coursework that is relevant to the challenges of ACP teachers. Boyd et al. (2009a) corroborates the use of the standard course of study to prepare ACP teachers.

Works such as that of Darling-Hammond (SCOPE Policy Brief, 2009), Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008), and Boyd et. al (2009a) serve as the foundation for some ACPs as they provide the research-based blueprint from which effective programs may be constructed. Hence, recommendations of studies such as these, coupled with the findings of this case study influenced the design and fabrication of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program (LETT); as each component of the program is a derivative of a suggested ACP module.

Darling-Hammond's (SCOPE Policy Brief, 2009) contention that effective ACPs should include preteaching experiences, research-based best instructional and pedagogical practices, adequate training in content specific teaching methods, and the use of local district standard courses of study in participants' preparation is supported by the findings of this case study. Most participants identified lack of understanding of standard courses of study (i.e., Common Core and Essential Standard) and lesson planning as major challenges during their experiences in the ACP. Study participants also indicated the need for relevant professional development, including training in areas such as instructional strategies, as most of them stated that they were not adequately prepared for the classroom. Consequently, a component of the LETT Program provides modules in

which participants are taught how to plan lessons based on Common Core or Essential Standards goals and objectives. Participants will be guided through the process of lesson planning and will be instructed how to determine appropriate instructional and pedagogical strategies and learning styles activities. Opportunities to gain preteaching experience will be afforded as participants will either teach their peers, summer school students, or year-round students.

In addition to assertions by Darling-Hammond (SCOPE Policy Brief, 2009), studies such as that of Scribner and Akiba (2010) contend that content focused pedagogy should be a part of ACP training. Intense focus on content specific pedagogy is vital for ACP teachers since most of them have no formal instructional training. Thus, another component of the LETT Program includes mandatory completion of courses such as Teaching Reading in the Content Area and Technology in the Classroom. Studies such as that of Smith, Brantlinger, and Cooley (2009) found that ACP teachers need specific training in student diversity. Furthermore, findings of this case study revealed that some participants experienced difficulty planning lessons and providing instructions for diverse students. Therefore, also included in the LETT Program are mandated courses in Exceptional Children and Cultural Diversity. The final phase of the LETT program is based upon Darling-Hammond's (2009) suggestion that ACPs should include a capstone project. One requirement of the capstone project is that participants will demonstrate competency in each professional development session and course by creating lessons that implement Common Core or Essential Standards goals and objectives. Lesson prepared by participants will become a part of their weekly, monthly, or yearly lesson plan units.

Although there is not a general consensus regarding the most effective type of ACP, the literature has identified some components as essential for adequate ACP teacher preparation. The following literature review offers some practices and components that are deemed efficacious. These components include features such as effective preservice experience, relevant professional development, the use of school district specific standard courses of study, content specific pedagogy, and intensive support.

To locate peer-reviewed literature suitable for this study, an exploration of research on Alternative Certification Program (ACP) and lateral entry program components was performed. Using terms and phrases such as *components of alternative certification programs* and *components of lateral e Program*, an online search of numerous databases was conducted through Walden University library and Google Scholar. The data bases included Education Research Complete, Education Research Information Center (ERIC), Pro Quest Central, and Education: A Sage full-text database. These searches yielded only a few studies; therefore, additional phrases such as *alternative certification program practices*, *lateral entry program practices*, *alternative training programs*, and *components of an effective teacher training program* were added and the online database searches were conducted again. Searches included both published and unpublished studies and reports. Approximately 95 documents were located from these searches. Peer-reviewed journals, policy briefs, and conference presentations were used to supplement online searches. To ensure that articles were suitable, only research conducted within 5 years prior to the beginning of this study that identified both study and data analysis methods were utilized. Using these criteria, approximately 45 studies

were found; however, many of them included the same information and cited many of the same primary sources.

Components of an Effective Alternative Certification Program

Efforts have been made to recognize an archetypal ACP, but the reality is that no universal ACP exists. Although many states have endeavored to emulate the ACP developed by Leo Klagholz, the former New Jersey education commissioner who devised the nation's first alternative entry program, a study by Walsh and Jacobs (2007) revealed that many of them fail to adhere to the essential components of the initial plan, which included: (a) academic selectivity of highly qualified individuals who possess strong subject-matter knowledge, (b) a streamlined program with practical sequencing, and (c) intensive support for new teachers (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

A primary intent of the alternate education entry program was to attract academically talented individuals who would not have otherwise entered the teaching profession. However, data from the study by Walsh and Jacobs (2007) found that many such programs are relatively nonselective regarding academic prowess. In fact, most of the programs in the study indicated that applicants only needed to have a 2.5 GPA—the same as that of candidates who enter through traditional means. Some alternative programs accept every candidate who applies.

A longitudinal study by Xu, Hannaway, and Taylor (2009), conducted to determine the effect of teachers trained through the North Carolina Teach for America (TFA) program on high school End-Of-Course (EOC) scores, sanctioned the idea of the importance of academic selectivity as an essential component of an effective ACP. They found that the effect of these teachers was particularly strong in math and science, and in

all cases the TFA effect was several times larger than the effect of teacher experience. Proponents of TFA suggest that this program is effective for several reasons. First, it is well-organized. Secondly, it selects and places academically competent teachers in some of the lowest-performing schools in the country. Data from the Xu, Hannaway, and Taylor (2009) study revealed that a significant number of TFA teachers graduated from higher education institutions that were very selective in their enrollment. Data also indicated that TFA teachers scored higher on the Praxis than their counterparts and that more TFA teachers were licensed in their specific content area.

The Xu, Hannaway, and Taylor (2009) study supports an earlier study by Walsh and Jacobs (2007) that identified academic selectivity as a key component of an effective ACP. Conversely, Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2008) found that although most TFA teachers attended academically selective universities, their impact on student performance did not exceed their counterparts. A study by Harris and Sass (2008) endorsed the finding of Kane, Rockoff, and Staiger (2008). Harris and Sass (2008) presented an exception to the idea that all AC teachers from academically selective programs perform better than those from nonselective programs. In fact, Harris and Sass (2008) found a very limited to no positive correlation between the academic selectivity of the university and the performance of teachers, regardless of entry route.

In addition to not adhering to the academic selectivity outlined in the original design, Walsh and Jacobs (2007) also noted that many alternate programs have become mirror images of traditional programs in terms of the coursework required. A second intent of the initial ACP was to streamline coursework not directly related to teacher preparedness and productivity in the classroom. However, most programs in the study

required teachers to complete 30-hours—enough for a master’s degree—as well as courses, such as education foundation, that are not deemed necessary for new teacher preparation. ACPs that require too much additional coursework may be counterproductive, as a study by Jacob (2012) revealed that certification programs with overly restrictive requirements, such as the ones that require extensive coursework, may actually impede recruitment of quality teachers. Furthermore, it may be surmised from studies, such as those of Harris and Sass (2008) and Jacob (2012) that utilizing criteria such as academic performance on standardized tests and the completion of additional coursework as a means of determining teacher quality or teacher retention is not an effective practice.

Although the literature is indecisive and there is an overall lack of agreement regarding the necessary components of an effective ACP, many studies agree that adequate training of and strong support for new AC teachers are very critical elements. Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) performed a study that examined seven ACPs to ascertain the characteristics of an effective program. Data from the study revealed that one of the essential components is a trained mentor who is able to devote time and energy into helping participants manage the multiplicity of daily tasks such as lesson planning, classroom management, and curriculum ideas. Study findings, however, indicated that the mentoring provided to many of the participants in the study was either limited or of low quality. Concerted efforts to provide necessary training and resources for mentors seemed to be a missing component of programs in the study by Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008).

A qualitative study by Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) added to the validity of the findings of Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) which identified effective mentors

as essential components of an efficient ACP. The research of Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) found that a beginning teachers' cohort was an effective way to complement the mentor and induction programs for novice teachers. Study findings revealed that cohorts, such as the one in the study, afforded participants a multidimensional support system which allowed them to reveal their vulnerabilities. Cuddapah and Clayton (2011) warned, however, that such novice teacher support systems are not attrition silver bullets; and thus should not replace one-on-one mentoring.

An additional endorsement of the significance of an effective mentor was noted in a dissertation by Hogan (2010), which studied nonuniversity-based ACPs. Good mentors were identified as a major strength of the program and were described as individuals who take time to build relationships and encourage mentees. Other characteristics of a good mentor included the ability to build relationships, good content and grade level knowledge, and the ability to offer suggestions and interpersonal skills. Data from the study by Hogan (2010) also indicated that mentoring was a major topic of discussion in most focus groups and that many participants received adequate mentoring either through the mentor appointed through the ACP or from their district mentor. Additional studies, such as those by Scribner and Akiba (2010) and Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) sanctioned the assertion that mentoring and support for new AC teachers are critical elements of a successful ACP. Scribner and Akiba (2010) revealed that lack of support coupled with the realities of teaching may create a ceiling effect which often results in the inability of teachers to learn and grow professionally, ultimately culminating in attrition.

In addition to identifying mentors as a critical component of an effective ACP, factors such as school environment have also been documented by the literature as crucial

ingredients. Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) noted that AC teachers fared better in schools with collegial work environments, adequate supplies and materials, and strong leadership. Teachers in these ideal situations demonstrated greater confidence in their teaching ability and were more likely to stay in the teaching profession longer than their counterparts in schools with unruly and undisciplined students, poor leadership, limited basic supplies, and isolated teachers. One suggestion of Humphrey, Wechsler and Hough (2008) is that in order to be effective, ACPs must place participants in schools where the leadership presents a clear vision for the school and ensures that the building is clean and well-maintained—even if it is old—where an ample supply of materials is available, and where the interaction between teachers is positive. This study is supported by the work of Robertson and Singleton (2010) and Chaudhuri (2008) which indicated that school environment directly impacted AC teachers' retention.

A study by Humphrey and Wechsler (2007), which investigated seven different alternative programs, corroborated the notion of a direct correlation between school environment and teacher retention. Data from the study revealed that programs that are able to ensure coherence between factors such as school supported professional development and induction programs produce more effective teachers than their counterparts. Coherence between school factors is essential because teacher development in alternative programs seems to be a direct function of the interaction between the implemented program and the individual teacher. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) indicated that participants learned both formally (instructional strategies, classroom management, and district policies and procedure) and informally (general tone of the school) from the school environment or culture. Thus, a positive school culture is

paramount as a negative culture can undermine the most elaborately designed program and result in attrition. When school components are fragmented, programs are not apt to meet expected outcomes of increased student achievement, improved teacher quality, and increased teacher retention.

Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) noted that effective alternative programs must be well-crafted with sequenced coursework that is relevant to the challenges that AC teachers may face. This is especially necessary as many study participants reported not feeling prepared to teach English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education students. As a result, these teachers were also more likely to leave the school and even the profession. Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) also contend that effective ACPs must accurately assess the abilities and needs of each individual participant through the use of multiple methods such as portfolios, observations, student work, and interviews; and that such assessments should occur during critical stages of their training, beginning with their selection for hiring and continuing throughout the licensure process in order to deter early attrition.

A longitudinal study conducted by Boyd et al. (2009a), designed to estimate the effect of specific features of several teacher preparation programs on value added to student test score performance, found that specific features of teacher preparation programs can make a difference in the outcomes of student performance. According to the study, one particular aspect of AC preparation that consistently impacted student learning and test scores was preparation directly linked to practice. Boyd et al. (2009a) found that first year teachers who were afforded opportunities to study what they were actually going to teach seemed to be more effective than their counterparts in the initial

year, especially in science and math. The study by Boyd et al. (2009) gives a measure of credence to the assumption that new teachers should be prepared by actually using standard courses-of-study and the curricula of the state in which they plan to teach. Thus, it may be theorized that programs that do not use actual state curricula to prepare new AC teachers may have inbuilt deficiencies that may result in attrition.

Adequate preparation has been identified by the literature as a critical component of an effective ACP. Hogan's (2010) findings revealed that many study participants felt inadequately trained in classroom management and that others felt ill-prepared to teach and/or relate to students; and still others did not have adequate training on the importance of assessments and time management. Many participants in the study by Hogan (2010) noted that they were not prepared for the amount of additional time that teaching requires. This portion of the study endorsed a study by Douglas (2010) which indicated that many individuals who entered teaching through an alternative route had false assumptions about teaching. Consequently, many of them left the profession after only a few years.

Hogan (2010) also found that coursework varies between programs, with some being mirror images of traditional programs and others being designed specifically for AC teachers or to meet the needs of the district. Although teachers entering the profession through alternate routes receive a type of on-the-job training, it is only as good as the participants' background and the environment of the school. Finally, data from the study revealed that even though mentoring is a vital component of ACPs, it is of sundry quality and unpredictable amounts. Thus, AC teachers who enter the classroom with

high-quality mentoring, a solid set of teaching skills, and a reasonable teaching assignment are rarities.

Data from the study by Walsh and Jacobs (2007) further revealed that only about one third of the programs in the study required a mentor to visit the new teacher's classroom on a weekly basis. Less than half of the programs in the study provided opportunities for new teachers to practice teaching in the summer prior to their first year or first semester of teaching. Several studies support the idea that AC teachers who are prepared through well-structured programs such as Teach for America are better prepared, have more confidence in their ability, and tend to remain in the profession longer.

An empirical study by Smith, Brantlinger, and Cooley (2009), which examined the preservice training of New York City Teaching Fellows AC candidates at four different universities, further validates the idea that adequate training is an essential component of an effective ACP. The candidates were provided training in middle school and secondary mathematics at four different university partners. The study revealed that participants' perception of their preparedness to teach mathematics and to handle classroom management was dependent upon the university attended. Those teachers whose preparation program placed greater emphasis on general education issues such as lesson planning and classroom management and less on mathematics content and specific mathematic teaching methods viewed their coursework more favorably than their counterparts. Those participants whose university's preservice program placed more emphasis on mathematics content and specific mathematics teaching methods felt less

prepared to handle classroom management than their counterparts, although they may have been better prepared to teach math.

After the preservice training, many of the participants felt prepared to teach mathematics; however, the majority did not feel prepared to teach mathematics to ELL students or those with learning disabilities. This study reiterates the fact that ACPs must include a component that allows for continuous learning of issues such as student diversity; failure to help AC teachers understand how to instruction diverse students may result in frustration and attrition. This study supported an earlier study by Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008).

Additional support for the need of adequate teacher training is corroborated by Jean Pierre (2007) in a case study of three AC science teachers. Findings indicated that novice AC teachers felt that their success in urban schools was dependent upon their belief in their students' ability to learn and from support from administrators, mentors, and parents. Helping teachers understand the impact of their beliefs on student achievement is vital because their beliefs influence their teaching practices.

The study by Jean Pierre (2007) also noted that AC teachers—like their counterparts— must learn how to teach science; these teachers cannot assume that because they were able to successfully apply science skills in real-world situations that they are already adequately prepared to teach science in the classroom. Those teachers who are not able to come to this realization are likely to leave the profession in a few years. However, teachers who emerge from high-quality preparation programs with high-quality mentors are more likely to remain in the profession. The findings of the study were endorsed by a dissertation by Hogan (2010) which stressed the importance of mentors

and by Smith, Brantlinger, and Cooley (2009) who noted the need for continuous training in student diversity. AC programs deficient in these areas are not likely to experience a high retention rate.

Adding to the literature regarding the importance of adequate teacher training as a vital component of an effective ACP is a pre- and posttest quantitative study by Stryker and Szabo (2009). The study found that when AC teachers felt confident in their abilities to teach reading, they demonstrated a greater sense of efficacy which eventually translated into student achievement. This study suggests that teachers must have confidence in themselves before they are able to effectively influence student achievement. The authors noted that self-efficacy is an important indicator of how much effort teachers will expend on activities as well as how they will handle adverse situations. It is also a determinant of teachers' resilience and perseverance; teachers need to have confidence in their own ability to use various teaching methods before they can be effective. Self-efficacy seems to be the product of both academic and content knowledge and individual self-confidence. Lack of self-confidence or self-efficacy maybe manifested in teachers becoming frustrated when students do not learn, resulting attrition. Eckert (2013) found self-confidence to be a better indicator of teacher retention in high-poverty schools than the amount of education coursework or length of student teaching. AC programs that do not incorporate opportunities for individuals to explore personal beliefs about themselves may not reach prescribed standards.

The literature indicates that a troubling disconnect exists between the views of various ACP stakeholders regarding the critical elements of a successful ACP. Arbaugh, Abell, Lannin, Volkmann, and Boone (2007) performed a study to gain an understanding

of the views of interns, their mentor teachers, and university personnel regarding the best structures for field experiences for AC teachers. The study revealed that the perceptions of what is important and why it is important varied between AC stakeholders.

Perceptions regarding the importance of various aspects of the program were primarily based on the personal needs of the stakeholders. Data indicated that the interns in the study were concerned more about having time for coursework and work as well as time for their personal lives. The mentors, on the other hand, were more concerned about teaching their own classes and their personal relationships with their mentees. The university personnel were multidimensional in their focus; consequently, they viewed various aspects of the programs as important. Their focuses included: (a) recruiting enough students to sustain the program, (b) finding quality sites to place interns in, (c) meeting state, federal and university requirements, and (d) staying within the beliefs of the program. Data revealed that stakeholders' views regarding specific aspects of the program were influenced by both their personal perspectives of what it means to be a teacher and by their experiences in education.

Although Arbaugh, Abell, Lannin, Volkmann, and Boone (2007) acknowledged that the data of the study did not provide the type of evidence needed to find the perfect model to help AC teachers transition smoothly and effectively into the teaching profession, they do, however, suggest that an essential key to ensuring successful experiences for all AC stakeholders is to explicitly identify the expectations of each group. Programs that do not explicitly identify expectations or anticipate differences in the perceptions of AC candidates, their assigned mentors, and other stakeholders may experience high attrition rates.

As a result of the disconnect between states and school district regarding essential components of an effective ACP and the views of stakeholders regarding what should be a major focus, Glass (2008) suggested the creation of a national ACP accrediting agency and Abell et al. (2008) suggested the need to revamp the way in which research regarding AC is conducted. Abell et al. (2008) suggested that current methods focus more on the inputs (types of students) and outputs (such as retention) of the program with little regard to what teachers actually learn in alternative programs, how teachers learn, and how best to help them reach the highly qualified status required by NCLB. Findings of the study by Abell et al. (2008) indicated that some ACPs have produced more successful teachers than their traditional counterparts, while others have produced less effective teachers. Consequently, the researchers have concluded that research should not fixate on whether ACPs are viable teacher preparation sources; instead, it should explore when, why, and how these programs are most successful.

Abell et al. (2008) also suggest that evaluating the effectiveness of ACPs based on current research methods may yield misleading results, especially if the goal is to improve teacher quality and retention. According to Abell et al. (2008) ACPs are effective when they are able to understand how to facilitate learning and how to remove constraints of participant's knowledge acquisition. It may be theorized that understanding how best to help participants learn and implement learning will result in improved teacher quality and teacher retention. Walsh and Jacobs (2007) recommend that ACPs should add an accountability piece and hold directors accountable for monitoring the efficaciousness of the program through collection and analysis of goals and objectives and measurable data on both program and graduate effectiveness. Failure to monitor

graduate effectiveness may lead to attrition because those teachers who feel unprepared or inundated are more likely to leave the profession.

Perhaps one of the primary reasons why some scholars are calling for national criteria to govern these programs may be explained by the diversity of ACPs that exist in California. Mitchell and Romero (2010) found that California has four ACPs that are distinctly different in vision and design. Some programs are attempts to change the nature of teacher training while others have been accused of helping to deskill the profession by lowering high-performance expectations in lieu of increasing market shares. Mitchell and Romero (2010) also admonished policymakers regarding the consequences of providing subsidies intended to expand teacher recruitment and training without sufficient guidelines.

Implementation

The Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program is comprised of a four-tier, 532-hour rigorous curriculum, which will be completed through both integrative, sustained professional development and nondegreed coursework. The program begins with an intense summer internship. The summer internship utilizes integrative methods to provide fundamental knowledge of education ethics, district and school level policies, education methodologies, and assessments. Summer sessions will consist of participants' collaboration with cohorts to unpack Common Core and Essential Standards and lesson planning development which will be used to team teach summer school and credit recovery students.

The reiterative professional development sessions continue throughout the school year with participants collaborating, incorporating, and implementing learned strategies

in their classes. Based upon the literature and the findings of this case study which suggested that specific features of the ACP may be overhauled to increase retention, the following professional development is used to replace some of the coursework, to add program clarity, and to remove some financial constraints(a) ACP licensure requirements; (b) district and local school policies; (c) education ethics; (d) time management and organizational skills; (e) classroom management; (f) lesson planning; (g) instructional strategies; (h) learning styles; (i) understanding Common Core and Essential Standards; and (j) understanding and using assessments. Furthermore, mandatory coursework completion will be modeled after the intensive study concept, with participants meeting 1 weekend per month. The undergraduate level courses will include the following: (a) The Exceptional Child; (b) Reading in the Content Area; (c) Cultural Diversity; and (d) Technology in the Classroom. The program culminates with a capstone project which requires participants to develop an instructional unit to demonstrate competency of each professional development session and course completed. Course completion is necessary to provide an in-depth understanding of how to deal with some of the challenging characteristics, such as low-economic status, that are prevalent throughout the school district's student populace.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Implementation of the LETT Program may be accomplished, in part, through a strategic reallocation of both human and financial resources. Included in the necessary human resources are individuals capable of providing undergraduate level instructions. Financial resources include funds to staff a full-time program director as well as remunerations for evening and weekend instructors. Remunerations for evening and

weekend instructors may be accomplished by reallocation of funds; however, assigning a full-time program director may require rewriting job descriptions. While a listing of all individuals in the school district who possess qualifying degrees and a complete itemization of the school district's budget are beyond the scope of this study, several school district practices and policies reveal the existence of some available human and financial resources. Currently district level curriculum supervisors (who must possess at least a Master's Degree) are required to provide professional development for new teachers, regardless of entry route. These individuals may be trained and employed to provide professional development tailored to the needs of ACP teachers during summer institutes and throughout the school year during designated professional development times. Qualified staff members may be contracted to teach evening and weekend courses. Additionally, all teachers are reimbursed up to \$1,000 yearly for successful completion of undergraduate and graduate level coursework, staff members are also paid to teach summer school and credit recovery classes. Funds allocated for reimbursement of ACP teachers who complete the mandatory 6 hours of required coursework as well as funds used as wages for staff who teach summer school and credit recovery could be reallocated for evening and weekend instructors' wages.

Potential Barriers

Although some funding for the LETT Program may be acquired from the reallocation of funds from current budget items, one potential barrier that may prevent immediate implementation of the LETT Program may be the funding needed to secure a full-time program director. This issue of funding may be addressed, however, through reshuffling of Title One funds or through state provided low wealth funds. Another

potential barrier may be lack of staff members willing to contract for evening and weekend employment. This barrier may be addressed by obligating the LETT Program director to either serve as the evening and weekend instructor or to secure instructors.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The LETT Program may be implemented within three months of local school board approval, with all incoming ACP teachers being required to begin the summer institute at least one month prior to the start of school. However because of the various levels, not all current ACP teachers will be required to enroll in the LETT Program. For instance, ACP teachers who have not received the North Carolina Standard Professional License but have completed all coursework will not be required to complete additional coursework. They may, however, be required to complete professional development sessions if deemed necessary by local school principals or mentors.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

As the program developer, my role will be to serve as the initial program director. As program director, my job description would include duties such as maintaining a list of program participants, developing and maintain a list of qualified school district employees interested in serving as course instructors, serving as a liaison and interfacing with the local community college, organizing summer institutes and ongoing professional development, providing step-by-step guidance to ACP teachers, assigning mentors, serving as an instructor for various courses, and ensuring adherence to state and federal regulations. In addition to the outlined responsibilities, the program director would also ensure that ACP teachers' progress is reported to the director of licensure, who will then either report to appropriate school district officials or file needed reports with the

Department of Public Instructions to ensure licensure acquisition. Funding of the LETT Program would be the responsibility of school district officials including local school district board members and superintendents who could reallocate state and federal funds for this purpose.

Project Evaluation

The LETT Program is a strategically developed training plan designed to meet the specific needs of the ACP teachers of the school district of this study; however, analyses must be performed to ascertain the quality of its implementation as well as the effectiveness of each program component. Thus, formative evaluation will initially be the primary evaluation method employed to determine efficacy. Martin Tessmer, as quoted by Virginia Tech (2008), defined formative evaluation as “a judgment of the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in its developing stages, for purposes of revising the instruction to improve its effectiveness and appeal.” Formative evaluation is appropriate for this study as Spaulding (2008) noted that this type of evaluation is paramount for newly implemented curricula. Although the LETT program is not a newly implemented curriculum, if implemented in the school district of this study it will be the first of its kind in the district. Therefore, formative evaluation will be an appropriate means. Formative evaluation is a critical aspect of new program implementation because it provides the type of crucial feedback needed for the decision-making process as it relates to any changes necessary for improvement.

Formative evaluation will continue throughout the life of the LETT program to determine its effectiveness and efficiency. The overall goals of the program are as follows:

- Provide local supervision and step-by-step guidance for Lateral-Entry teachers (ACP) by offering clearly defined program requirements so that teachers can more competently complete Alternative Certification Program requirements.
- Implement a new training program for lateral entry teachers (ACP) using relevant professional development and coursework so that teachers are better able to acquire a North Carolina Standard Professional License.

In addition to the formative evaluation process that will be used throughout the life of the program, a goal-based evaluation will be employed at the end of each program cycle. Zinovieff (2008) defined goal-based evaluation as "...evaluating the extent to which programmes are meeting predetermined goals or objectives." The following are the goals of the evaluations:

- To document lateral entry (ACP) stakeholders' perceptions of improvements that need to be made to the overall lateral entry teacher training program
- To document lateral entry (ACP) teachers' perceptions of improvements that need to be made to professional development sessions and required courses
- To document the number of teachers who successfully complete the lateral entry teacher training (ACP) Program and obtain a North Carolina Standard Professional License at the end of the program cycle

The primary stakeholders from whom formative information is collected are lateral entry (ACP) teachers. Formative evaluation data will be used by the LETT Program director and professional development and course instructors to make immediate changes. Stakeholders such as local school board members, superintendents, the LETT

Program director, and professional development and course instructors will receive an end-of-the-year report regarding evaluation results. The LETT Program director will use end-of-the-year evaluation results for program modifications.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

The school district of this study is situated in an economic environment that has been identified as the third most impoverished area in the nation. This abject economic state coupled with the fact that the school district is comprised of 70% rural schools with a 70% minority populace exacerbates the struggle to employ and retain qualified teachers, as is evident by the fact that only 84% of the staff members in the high schools of the school district are fully certified compared to 94% statewide. The LETT Program will serve as a type of Grow Your Own Program and provide the school district with a way to train individuals from the community as effective educators. Grossman and Loeb (2008) purports that ACP teachers are often believed to be better suited for specific environments than teachers certified through traditional teacher training programs. Furthermore, the literature (National Center on Rural Education, 2010) and the findings of this case study have revealed some correlations between teacher retention and community connections; some study participants indicated that they remained in the program because of community connections. The LETT Program, then, is important to students, families, instructors, administrators, community partners, and other stakeholders because it provides the type of training and support needed by ACP teachers to ensure retention. Increased teacher retention will ultimately result in a more educated school district citizenry.

Far-Reaching

As a result of the increased reliance of the State of North Carolina on teachers certified through an ACP, legislators are encouraging the development of innovative programs that are not directly controlled by the State or by institutions of higher education. The LETT Program provides the framework for such a program and may be adapted to meet the needs of ACP teachers in school districts across the state, as it is crafted upon the findings of this case study which are corroborated by the findings of the literature. The LETT Program has far-reaching implications, then, as it may serve as the impetus for additional autonomous school district level ACPs.

Conclusion

The attrition rate of ACP teachers is alarmingly high across the nation and especially high in the State of North Carolina; consequently, state legislators are promoting the formation of innovative autonomous programs that are not directly controlled by the state or by institutions of higher learning. Although there is no globally effective program, there is a general consensus regarding some practices that have been deemed retention mechanisms. Included in the identified retention mechanisms is a streamlined program that uses relevant professional development to replace some of the mandatory coursework and addresses the specific needs of the ACP teacher. The LETT Program is designed to implement some of the professional development deemed relevant for ACP teacher effectiveness

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The findings of this research study, coupled with the literature, have been used to undergird a Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program project specifically designed to address the issue of the increasing attrition rate of ACP teachers of the school district of this study. This section discusses several aspects of the project, including the project's strengths, recommendations for remediation of project limitations, project development and evaluation, the project's potential implication for social change, and implications, applications, and direction for future research. Also included in this section is a reflection about scholarship and leadership and change, as well as an analysis of myself as a scholar, a practitioner, and a project developer. The section culminates with a conclusion.

Project Strengths

One of the major strengths of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program in addressing the issue of ACP teacher attrition is that is constructed upon the findings of this case study as well as the finding of the literature. Through this program, participants will receive step-by-step guidance through the licensure process. A second strength of the program is that each professional development session will be tailored to address specific needs of ACP participants. Although there are explicitly outlined professional development sessions and courses required for completion, the program is flexible enough to allow for insertion of additional instruction as deemed necessary by stakeholders. A final strength of the program is that each professional development session and required course will be taught by individuals whose familiarity with the

intricacies of the school district will allow them to provide a level of instruction not available from external sources.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

Two of the most significant limitations of this project study are generalizability and the use of a limited number of data sources. As with all qualitative case study designs, this research study was not intended to produce universally applicable results. Thus, this limitation was acknowledged from the inception of the study. However, since the study generated clear findings that are supported by the literature, researchers should be able to development generalizable quantitative studies that may be employed to support the findings of this case study without a great deal of difficulty. A significant limitation of the project or the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program is that it is based upon the findings of a limited number or ten participants all from the same school district. This limitation may be addressed by expanding the study to include more participants from the school district or by including participants from other school districts across the state of North Carolina

Further, the use of only one type of data source (i.e., individual interviews) coupled with my marginal expertness in probing question development limitation may have potentially detracted from the accuracy of the findings as the ability to fully answer research questions may have been influenced. Creswell (2012) contends that triangulation of data from multiple sources should be used to increase both accuracy and credibility. Consequently, the project study may have been strengthened by using a diversity of data sources and methods of collecting data and by an improvement in interviewing skills.

Additional data may have indicated that attrition of ACP teachers is as much a product of the characteristics of individual teachers as the result of ACP requirements.

Scholarship

One lexical definition of scholarship offered by Concordia College (2014) states “Scholarship is significant, creative, original engagement with an idea. Scholarship includes research that advances theoretical knowledge, professional application of disciplinary knowledge, or the production of a work of art.” (p.2). As I engaged in this project study, I learned that significant engagement with an original idea requires both a multidimensional understanding of the concept and the willingness to entertain novel beliefs and ideas. It is only through a comprehensive understanding of some of the causes of attrition that I am able to support or add to the literature regarding causes of the attrition of ACP teachers. This comprehensive understanding, however, was only developed after voluminous research.

Project Development and Evaluation

Furthermore, as I endeavored to devise a plan to address the issue of ACP teacher attrition based upon study findings, I learned that project development and the evaluation process are methodical and meticulous procedures that must also be reiterative as there are no perfect solutions. Since there are no universal solutions to issues caused by a multiplicity of simultaneous factors, such as the attrition of ACP teachers, project development plans must provide a degree of fluidity in order to accommodate needed changes. Providing opportunities for fluidity only happens with the realization that all projects will have limitations and weaknesses. From this study, I have also learned that it

is highly unlikely for the ACP to experience an increase in the retention of teachers unless there are clearly defined expectations and perspectives for all stakeholders.

Leadership and Change

Completion of this project study reinforced my understanding that change does not happen without deliberate intellectual efforts of leaders who are able to effectively articulate their visions. Leadership, however, is not limited to the ability to articulate a vision; instead it includes a demonstration of expectations through professional excellence. Leadership requires a personal commitment and the willingness to defy the status quo to improve situations and societal issues. Engagement in this project study afforded me the opportunity to see the need for quality leadership in the area of ACP teacher retention to resolve or at least address the issue.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As I reflect upon my experience of completing the project study, I feel that I have grown as a scholar, and I have learned that I am able to effectively engage in the research of original ideas and efficaciously communicate the findings to other professionals in the field of education. Completion of this project study enhanced my ability to apply research knowledge in a professional manner, but more importantly it advanced my ability to competently add new information to an existing body of knowledge. Although I have experienced tremendous growth as a scholar as a result of this project study, I also learned that I will always have a hunger for knowledge.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As an education practitioner, I have always been cognizant of my influence on the lives of those around me, especially my students. Consequently, I have always endeavored to remain abreast of the most recent research-based pedagogical and technological strategies to ensure that my students were being prepared for global competition. Thus, I read journals, attended conferences, and participated in professional learning communities. As a result of my efforts I have received several local, state, and national accolades. However, as I moved from the role of classroom teacher to a leadership role as a local school administrator, I realized that knowledge consumption is merely one step in the continuum. As a practitioner, I learned that I am no longer satisfied with the consumption of knowledge. I must now utilize the knowledge and skills fostered through completion of this project study to engage in scholarly research and produce the type of knowledge that may be used to effect change in the lives of those around me. As a practitioner, I am troubled by the lack of leadership that seems to prevail in the public school system. I have also learned I must become an impetus of the change that I desire or expect to occur.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

While reflecting upon my endeavor to develop a project to address the issue of ACP teacher retention, I learned that I possess some of the basic skills needed to create a project of this nature. Included in those skills is the ability to engage in the type of scholarly research needed to ensure that the project is useful, viable, and sustainable. I have always been able to think of creative projects; however, I often struggled to develop

various aspects of the project, particularly the evaluation component. As a result of my experience in project development, I am cultivating the skills of a scholar-practitioner as I am now able to use my leadership skill sets to both formulate a project and guide its implementation and evaluation. As a project developer, I also realize that I am intrigued by the challenge of creating a project that will potentially improve the quality of education for the children of the school district of this study.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

For a school district comprised of a 70% ethnic minority populous, 70% rural schools, 84% fully certified teaching staff, and an escalating ACP teacher attrition rate, this project study is imperative as it provides a way to begin to address the issue of ACP teacher retention. Confronting the issue of ACP teacher attrition is crucial because of the substantial number of teachers relying upon the ACP for completion of certification requirements. This study, then, has the potential to improve the teacher preparation program and the quality of education for all students in the school district by providing step-by-step guidance to foster the development of ACP teachers. The increasing attrition rate has forced some schools in the district to train new teachers each year only to have to repeat the process the next year, resulting in the loss of valuable instruction for students who are also struggling with the ill-effects of an abject socioeconomic status.

Participating in this project study reiterated the idea that it is much easier to acquiesce to the status quo than to rise to the challenge and become an advocate for change. Acceding often results in inequality and poor social conditions for those without

a voice, such as the children of this school district. I have learned that I need to become a voice for the children of this school district.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this research supported two assumptions regarding ACPs. First, it endorsed the idea that some ACPs may have inbuilt deficiencies that may cause attrition. Several study participants indicated that they did not complete program requirements because of ambiguities and recommended program clarity as an area of improvement. However, other participants who received the same instructions in the ACP successfully completed the program and obtained licensure. A possible area of future research would be to investigate why some participants were unable to complete program requirements while others were successful under the auspices and guidelines of the same ACP program.

Secondly, the study findings supported the idea that professional development is an invaluable tool that, when modified to meet the specific needs of ACP participants and when implemented with fidelity, may serve as an effective ACP teacher retention mechanism. Some study participants suggested the use of professional development to replace some coursework. However, others felt that their professional development was useless. Further research may explore how school leaders decide which professional development is appropriate for ACP teacher preparation.

Conclusion

The findings of a case study crafted to investigate the experiences and perceptions of ACP stakeholders of one southeastern North Carolina school district that has

experienced an increased attrition rate among its ACP teachers, were used to formulate a training program guide. One of the major strengths of the program is that it is tailored to the specific needs of ACP teachers. However, limitations such as the use of a case study whose findings are not generalizable and the use of a limited number of data sources may have potentially influenced the accuracy of findings from which the program was formulated. The project, in spite of its limitations, has the potential to increase the retention rate of ACP participants and subsequently improve the education of children in an economically depressed environment. The project study investigated the experiences of ACP teachers as it relates to attrition, but it left some questions for future research such as why some participants thrived and completed program requirements while others decided to leave the program prematurely. Development of the project is a demonstration of my ability to thoroughly engage in research as a scholar-practitioner striving to effect change through leadership and personal excellence.

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Appendix A: The Project



LETT PROGRAM

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program

❖ **LETT Them Teach**

❖ ***LETT Them Learn***

- ❖ Relevant Professional Development
- ❖ Cohort Collaboration
- ❖ Multidimensional Support
- ❖ Lesson Planning
- ❖ Organizational and Time Management Skills
- ❖ Common Core
- ❖ Essential Standards
- ❖ Education Ethics
- ❖ Local and District Policy and Procedure

**Preparing 21st Century Teachers
To Meet 21st Century Challenges**

Motto
*"To educate all students
by building a foundation
for learning in an ever-
changing global society"*

About the Author

Mrs. Sherry Hines Park is a doctoral student at Walden University and has been an educator in the school district of this study since 1994. She has been employed in various capacities in the school district, including a high school Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Physical Science teacher, a middle school assistant principal, a high school assistant principal, and currently an elementary school principal. As an educator in the school district of this study, she received numerous accolades and presented at several state and national conferences. Some examples of her accolades and conference presentations include: school district teacher-of-the-year, three time local school teacher-of-the-year, National Science Teacher Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching NC State Recipient, Wellman Inc. TV-13 Golden Apple Award, the High Schools That Work Conference, the Tennessee Tech Prep Conference, the North Carolina Networking Conference, and the North Carolina School To Work Conference.

Observations of the revolving door of teachers (especially math and science) during her tenure in the school district served as the impetus for a project study under the auspices of Walden University and the subsequent construction of this Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) manual.

Research Base of Lateral Entry Teacher Training Manual

This Lateral Entry Teacher Training Manual is based on a qualitative case study design which employed a purposeful sampling technique to select participants with various characteristics. Ten Lateral Entry (Alternative Certification) stakeholders that included four teachers currently enrolled in the program, four teachers previously enrolled in the program, and two program administrators were interviewed in an effort to gain a better understanding of their experiences and perceptions of the program as it relates to attrition.

The outlined professional development sessions and required coursework delineated in this training manual are based upon themes that emerged from study data. The following are the ten major themes that resonated from the case study and that serve as the foundation upon which this Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program was crafted:

- (a) Personal background and community connections
- (b) Positive school environment
- (c) Collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort
- (d) Lack of understanding of standard courses of study
- (e) Lesson planning
- (f) Organizational skills and time management
- (g) Lack of adequate preparation
- (h) Insufficient types of support
- (i) Relevant professional development

(j) Restructure and clarity of program requirements.

Professional development sessions for themes such as positive school environment and collaboration with beginning teachers' cohort are not explicitly detailed in the training manual; instead, they are interwoven into other professional development sessions that require ACP participants to meet and work together, and into the mentor and buddy teacher system already mandated by the school district.

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Capstone

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Introduction to the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program

The escalating utilization of teachers certified through the alternative certification or Lateral Entry Program in the state of North Carolina compelled legislators to sanction and encourage the development of innovative programs not directly controlled by the State or by institutions of higher education. This Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program provides the framework for such a program and may be adapted to meet the needs of Lateral Entry teachers in school districts across the State, as it is crafted upon the findings of a qualitative case study and corroborated by the findings of the literature.

The literature suggests that streamlining the Alternative Certification Program (ACP) or Lateral Entry Program to include only relevant professional development and coursework specific to the needs of ACP teachers may deter attrition (Chaudhuri, 2008). The National Center for Education Information (2010) noted that programs that utilize professional development to replace some mandatory coursework have an increased propensity for retention. Moreover, study findings endorse the streamlining of ACP requirements and the use of professional development to replace some mandatory coursework as a potential retention mechanism. Further, little to no formal instructional or pedagogical training is inherent to the position of Lateral Entry teachers. However, study findings revealed that the school district does not provide any training specifically designed to meet their needs, leaving some feeling inundated and bewildered. This LETT Program focuses on specific needs and provides a vehicle through which the school district may cater to Lateral Entry teachers by implementing defined professional development and coursework.

Furthermore, the LETT Program is an innovative way for the school district to locally supervise, instruct, monitor, and ensure the successful completion of requirements needed to obtain the North Carolina Standard Professional License (SP1). Providing local supervision, instructions, and monitoring is essential as study findings revealed that some participants were perturbed and others failed to complete Lateral Entry program requirements because of lack of program clarity and lack of direct interaction with supervisors. Currently, the school district does not have a local individual who is directly responsible for assisting Lateral Entry participants. Instead, a plan of study is mailed from the director of the Regional Alternative Licensing Center (RALC) with little to no explanation. Communication with the RALC director occurs primarily through emails, resulting in a multiplicity of unanswered questions. The LETT Program provides local step-by-step guidance for Lateral Entry participants; thus, addressing issues such as program clarity and other factors that may influence retention.

Overall Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program Goals

The goals of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program are as follows:

- To provide local supervision and step-by-step guidance for Lateral Entry teachers (ACP) by offering clearly defined program requirements so that teachers can more competently complete Alternative Certification Program requirements.
- To provide training for Lateral Entry teachers (ACP) using reiterative and relevant professional development and coursework so that teachers are better able to obtain a North Carolina Standard Professional License.

North Carolina Teaching Standards

1. Teachers demonstrate leadership
2. Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students
3. Teachers know the content they teach
4. Teachers facilitate learning for their students
5. Teachers reflect on their practice

“The single most influential component of an effective school is the individual teacher.”

(Robert J. Marzano, 2009).

NORTH CAROLINA LATERAL ENTRY PROGRAM

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/licensure/lateral/>

- ✓ Must have at least a Bachelor's degree from a Regionally Accredited College or University and
- ✓ Meet (1) of the criteria from each side of the table below

ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:	A N D	ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
Relevant Degree <i>*see note below</i>		2.5 GPA
OR		OR
24 Semester Hours of Course work in core area <i>*see note below</i>		Five years of experience considered relevant by the employing LEA
OR		OR
Passing score on the Praxis II subject assessment test(s) for the area of license Or The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) <i>(The ACTFL is only for World Languages except English)</i>		Passing scores on Praxis I, <u>or</u> a total SAT score of 1100, or a total ACT score of 24 <u>plus</u> one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GPA of 3.0 in the major field of study <u>or</u> ○ GPA of 3.0 in all courses in senior year <u>or</u> ○ GPA of 3.0 on a minimum of 15 semester hours of courses completed within the last five years after the bachelor's degree.

*NOTE

- Qualifying for a lateral entry license requires a bachelor' degree from a regionally accredited college/university and one of the items from both sides of the above table. Further requirements will be outlined upon receipt of a lateral entry license to be satisfied in order to qualify for a clear, Standard Professional I or II license.
- Qualifying for a lateral entry license in Elementary Education OR Exceptional Children (Teacher of Record) requires prior to employment, the Praxis II subject assessment and at least a bachelor's degree.
- Qualifying for a lateral entry license in English as a Second Language requires a degree in English OR 24 semester hours in English OR **Linguistics** OR passing the Praxis II subject assessment.
- Effective 7/1/08, individuals who do not fulfill the requirements of their lateral entry license within the three years they are initially given may be issued another lateral entry license provided:
 - They have passed the required Praxis II exam(s) for the specialty area in which the license will be issued and
 - At least six years have passed since the prior lateral entry license was issued.

Example

- The initial license was issued 2005-2008;
- Applicant did not complete all requirements
- The ineligible time period of 2008-2011
- Upon employment, the applicant is eligible for another lateral entry with passing Praxis II effective 7/1/2011

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program of Study Outline

Program of Study Outline

Divisions	Professional Development/Courses	Hours
Tier 1	Fundamentals ❖ Program Requirements ❖ District/School Policy ❖ Education Ethics	10hrs
Tier 2	Framework ❖ Common Core/Essential Standards ❖ Instructional Strategies ❖ Learning Styles ❖ Assessments ❖ Lesson Planning ❖ Classroom Management ❖ Time Management/Organizational Skills	100hrs
Tier 3	Building Blocks ❖ The Exceptional Child ❖ Reading in the Content Area ❖ Technology in the Classroom ❖ Cultural Diversity(including dealing with poverty)	432hrs
Tier 4	Capstone	10 hrs
18months		552 hrs

Explanation of Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program

The Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program is an effort to restructure the current ACP to ensure that participants are provided unambiguous program requirements as well as step-by-step guidance through the North Carolina Standard Professional 1 Licensure (SP1) process. The program consists of intensive, reiterative professional development sessions that will continue throughout the year as well as mandatory coursework that will be completed during evenings and weekends. The professional development sessions and mandatory courses are divided into tiers; an explanation of each tier follows. Completion of the entire program requires approximately 18 months. However, program administrators have the option to modify any components of the program deemed necessary for participants' success.

Credit for completed professional development sessions will result in Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) at a rate of one CEU per ten contact hours (one contact hour equals 60-minutes) as defined by College Board (2003), and course completion will culminate with credit hours based on Carnegie Units (Excelsior College, 2014). In accordance with the Carnegie Units system, each course will require participants to engage in at least nine hours of activities such as class discussion, completion of assignments, and homework per week for a period of 15 weeks or 18-hours per week for eight weeks (Excelsior College, 2014). Once all requirements have been completed, the program director will assist in filing documents needed to obtain SP1 licensure.

Tier I is referred to as "Fundamentals" and will consist of essential knowledge of local school board policies and procedures and State and federal guidelines that will

provide participants an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as well as hints to avoid potential litigious situations. Participants completing Tier I will receive one CEU; professional development session hours are outlined below:

- Program requirements – one 2-hour session
- District/School Policy and Procedure – two 2-hour sessions
- Education Ethics – two 2-hour sessions

Tier II is entitled “Framework” and will provide the foundation, structure, and undergirding of teachers’ knowledge of how to use the standard course of study to effectively foster the development of 21st century skills by actively engaging and empowering students to succeed in a globally competitive society. The professional development strategies in this Tier are both integrative and reiterative; thus, rudimentary knowledge of specific subject areas will be incorporated and amalgamated into successive modules and classroom experiences throughout the year. Ten CEUs will be awarded upon completion of Tier II. Session time allocations are as follows:

- Common Core/Essential Standards – four 2- hour sessions
- Instructional Strategies – one 2-hour session
- Learning Styles – one 2-hour session
- Assessments – two 2-hour session
- Lesson Planning – four 2-hour session
- Classroom Management – one 2-hour session
- Time Management/Organizational Skills – one 2-hour session

- Integration and implementation of all Tier II modules – 2 hrs per week in the classroom for 36 weeks or during summer months in through activities such as summer school or credit recovery courses.

Tier III – which is entitled “Building Blocks”– requires participants to complete four courses that present a thorough knowledge of education principles and methodologies as well as initiatives and practices explicitly designed to meet the instructional and pedagogical needs of a gamut of learners. Course completion is based upon the intensive study premise which obligates participants to complete each course within in eight week periods.

Course credits are as follows:

- The Exceptional Child – 3 Credits (18-hours per week for eight weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Reading in the Content Area – 3 Credits (18-hours per week for eight Weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Technology in the Classroom – 3 Credits (18-hours per week for eight Weeks, totaling 144 hours)
- Cultural Diversity(including dealing with poverty)– 3 Credits (18-hours per week for eight weeks, totaling 144 hours)

Participants will also be required to join a professional organization such as Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Tier I-Fundamentals

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program Requirements

When you complete this module, you will possess the following:

- € A list of Lateral Entry Program Requirements
- € Knowledge of what happens if participants are absent
- € Knowledge of what happens if participants fail to complete professional development and course requirements
- € Knowledge of the difference between North Carolina SP1 and SP2 Licensure
- € A binder to maintain as documentation of participation and program completion
- € Knowledge of the district level mentor who has been assigned to you
- € Knowledge of the school level buddy teacher who has been assigned to you
- € A copy of your signed Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program Agreement

INTRODUCTION

An understanding of the requirement of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program requirements is imperative for the success of all candidates. This module will define and delineate prescribed requirements and provide participants an opportunity to clarify concerns as well as meet assigned mentors and buddy teachers.

GOALS

The goals of this session are:

- To delineate program expectations.
- To ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of the requirements for licensure.

The following topics will be discussed during this module of Tier I:

- Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program Outline
- Attendance
- Participation
- NC Standard Professional Licensure 1(SP1)
- NC Standard Professional Licensure 2 (SP2)

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program Requirements

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ 10 hours of professional development relating to fundamental information regarding:
 - The components/requirements of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program
 - School district and local school level policies and procedures
 - Education ethics

- ❖ 100 hours of professional development relating to the framework of effective classroom teaching including:
 - Common Core and Essential Standards (Unpacking, understanding and using the standards)
 - Lesson Planning
 - Instructional Strategies
 - Learning Styles
 - Assessments
 - Classroom Management
 - Time Management and Organizational Skills

- ❖ 432 hours of mandatory coursework including:
 - Reading in the Content Area
 - Technology in the Classroom
 - Understanding Cultural Diversity (including deal with children of poverty)
 - The Exceptional Child

- ❖ 10 hours of Portfolio Development which includes:
 - Developing Unit lesson plans using Common Core/Essential Standards
 - Developing Assessments
 - Planning and implementing extracurricular activities to enhance student learning

ATTENDANCE

- ❖ All participants must attend each professional development session and report in a timely manner.
- ❖ If participants are absent from a professional development or course session, they must contact the ACP director to schedule a makeup time.
- ❖ After the second missed professional development or coursework session, participants will be required to meet with local school principal and ACP director to schedule mandatory makeup sessions.
- ❖ After the third missed professional development or coursework session, participants may be required to use sick leave to attend special makeup sessions.
- ❖ After the fourth missed professional development or coursework session, participants may be placed on leave until issue is rectified.
- ❖ Refusal to attend professional development or coursework sessions may result in termination from the program.
- ❖ *Efforts will be made to conduct professional development sessions on teacher workdays as often as possible.*

PARTICIPATION/CONDUCT

- ❖ Participants are expected to participate in all activities during professional development and coursework sessions as well as any homework assignments.
- ❖ Participants are expected to display professional and courteous attitudes toward instructors and peers at all times.
- ❖ Participants should not text, tweet, view Facebook, grade papers, or engage in any activity unrelated to the topic at hand during professional development or coursework sessions.
- ❖ Failure to adhere to professional conduct may result in removal from the program.
- ❖ Participants must pass each class with a letter grade of “B” or higher.
- ❖ *Students who fail to meet program requirements must follow state guidelines to re-enter program, which includes waiting six years from the initial lateral entry licensure date.*

LICENSURE

- ❖ Once lateral entry licensure has been obtained, participants must complete all Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program requirements to receive a North Carolina Standard Professional License 1 (SP1)
 - This license is intended for teachers with 0-2 years of experience
 - Your time in the lateral entry program does not count toward licensure until after you have completed all program requirements; therefore, you may teach for a couple of years before possessing a SP1
 - This license is valid for three years
- ❖ Once lateral entry participants have satisfied the requirements for a North Carolina Standard Professional License 1, they may become eligible for a North Carolina Standard Professional License 2
 - This license is intended for teachers with 3 or more years of experience
 - This license is valid for five years
 - Teachers with this license must also meet NCLB's definition of highly qualified

You may view the following website for additional information:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/licensure/>

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program

Participant Agreement

My signature below indicates that I have read, fully understand, and agree to adhere to the Lateral Entry

Teacher Training Program requirements which include:

- € Attending and participating in all professional development sessions, including homework
- € Attending and participating in all coursework sessions, including homework
- € Reporting to professional development and coursework sessions in a timely manner
- € Conducting myself in a professional manner, including not text, tweeting, grading papers, or engaging in any behaviors that are not conducive to the learning environment.

I further understand that if I fail to meet program requirements, I may be dismissed from the program and may only re-enter the program after six years from the date of my Lateral Entry license.

Participant (Please Print)

(Date)

Participant (Signature)

(Date)

Local School Assignment

Principal's Name

School District Level Mentor

School Level Buddy Teacher

Lateral Entry (ACP) Director

(Date)

Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program Requirements

Participant's Self-Assessment

Answer the following questions true or false without the use of notes. Please do not discuss answers with anyone until told to do.

1. My lateral entry license is valid for three years. *True* _____ *False* _____
2. I will not have to apply for the SP1 because lateral entry will take almost two years to complete; therefore, I will have taught long enough to apply for the SP2. *True* _____ *False* _____
3. I will never have to apply for a NC license again once I receive the SP2. *True* _____ *False* _____
4. The last phase of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program is Tier 3. *True* _____ *False* _____
5. If I fail to complete the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program, I may re-apply to the program after three years. *True* _____ *False* _____
6. It is okay for me to grade papers during professional development sessions because teachers must learn to multitask. *True* _____ *False* _____
7. All coursework will be completed during school district designated teacher workdays. *True* _____ *False* _____
8. I will have to complete some coursework on weekends. *True* _____ *False* _____
9. If I miss a session, it is my responsibility to contact the program director to schedule a makeup session. *True* _____ *False* _____
10. I may be dismissed from the program if I fail to adhere to attendance and conduct expectations. *True* _____ *False* _____

Notes/Reminders

- € Have students to complete the self-assessment. They will not be collected; however, participants should answer questions and honestly determine if they are clear about program requirements
- € Stress the importance of signing in and out of each session or class
- € Issue binders to each participant
- € Issue participants a copy of lateral entry requirements to insert into binder
- € Emphasize the consequences of not attending each session
- € Emphasize the consequences of unprofessional behavior
- € Collect a Participant Agreement form from each participant
- € Announce the date, time, and location of next meeting
- € Require students to either go online or go to local school library and locate a policy manual. Skim through manual and be prepared to ask at least one question about any issues or concerns

Self-Assessment Answers

1. **False** - the program will take 18 months to complete, after which SP1 will be applied for
2. **False** - individuals with 3 or more years may apply for SP2.
3. **False** -SP2 is only valid for 5 years.
4. **False** - Tier 4 is the last Tier
5. **False** -failure to complete program means waiting six years
6. **False** – presenters/instructors should have your undivided attention
7. **False** – coursework will be completed evening and weekends
8. **True**
9. **True**
10. **True**

School District and Local School Policy

When you complete this professional development module, you will possess the following:

- € knowledge of requirement of a regular workday
- € knowledge of why extra duties are important
- € Knowledge of the purpose of staff meetings
- € knowledge of how sick days are acquired and how they may be used
- € Knowledge of how to request the use of sick leave
- € knowledge of what annual vacation leave days are and when they may be used
- € Knowledge of how to request the use of annual leave days
- € knowledge of how personal days are acquired and how they may be used
- € Knowledge of how to request the use of personal leave days
- € Knowledge of what professional leave days are and how they may be used
- € Knowledge of how to request the use of professional leave
- € Knowledge of the difference between mandatory teacher and optional teacher workdays
- € Knowledge of how salary is determined
- € Knowledge of protection against discrimination
- € Knowledge of what constitutes sexual harassment
- € Knowledge of how to make sexual harassment claims
- € Knowledge of prohibited staff behavior including the use of prohibited items in the Workplace
- € Knowledge of acceptable faculty/staff appearance
- € Knowledge of appropriate staff-student relations
- € Knowledge of staff member's responsibility for supervision during extracurricular activities
- € Knowledge of how to resolve a grievance
- € Knowledge of how to complete the homework assignment

INTRODUCTION

All teachers and school district employees must be knowledgeable of and adhere to the policies and procedures of the local school district. This professional development session will provide an overview of some school district policies and procedures. Local school policies and procedures are based upon school district policies and procedures; therefore, this session will also cover local school policies and procedures to some degree. The school district policies and procedures manual is too voluminous to state verbatim; however, hard copies may be located in either the principal's office or the library of each local school and electronic versions are available on the school district's website.

GOALS

The goals of this session are as follows:

- To provide access to school district and local school policies and procedures
- To provide practice implementing school district policies and procedures

The following topics will be discussed:

- School Year
 - Regular Workday (hours)
 - Extra duties
 - Staff meetings
 - Sick Days
 - Annual Vacation Leave Days
 - Personal Leave Days and Absences
 - Professional leave
 - Mandatory Teacher Workdays
 - Option Teacher Workdays
 - Salary
- Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities
 - Discrimination
 - Sexual harassment defined
 - Claims of sexual harassment
 - Prohibited Items in the Workplace
 - Faculty Appearance
 - Staff-Student Relations
 - Extracurricular Activities
 - Grievances

School District/Local School Policy

School Year/School Day

(Paraphrased and quoted from school board policy manual)

The School Day (Legal Ref.: 115c-84(a)) - The school day for students must be at least six hours which must include at least five and one-half hours of instructional time. However, the school day may be less than six hours in the event of an emergency, inclement weather, or other events that require class termination. For many schools, the school day is from 7:35a.m. until 3:15 p.m. with staff being paid for seven and one-half hours per day; since principals are the Chief administrators of the school, however, they may decide the actual working hours as long as those hours are within guidelines (G.S. 115C-84).

Extra Duties – Principals may assign teachers and other school staff members extra duties as necessary to ensure student supervision and safety. However, extra duties shall be kept to a minimum and “shall be distributed fairly and equitably among all qualified staff members.” In accordance with state law, lateral entry teachers will have limited extra duties.

Staff Meetings –The principal has the responsibility of scheduling and conducting timely, necessary staff meetings that must be attended by all teachers, including lateral entry teachers.

Sick Days –“A regular full-time employee earns sick leave at the rate of *one day per month* of employment. Sick leave is accumulated indefinitely and is transferable between administrative units. Upon retirement, an employee’s unused sick leave may be counted in determining whether the employee has 30 years of creditable service. At no time can employees be paid for unused sick leave.” Teachers must complete appropriate sick leave forms (forms may be located on local school websites as well as obtain from the local

school bookkeeper). If sick leave is planned, such as in the case of a doctor's appointment, the appropriate form should be submitted prior to the absence. *If teachers use more sick days than are earned, the daily rate of pay will be deducted from their paychecks for each day of overage.* It is the responsibility of the teacher to contact the principal or designated individual to inform of absences and the need for a substitute teacher. Sick leave may be used for reasons such as employee's illness, pregnancy, illness of immediate family members (spouse, children, parents, other dependents living in the home), and death in immediate family. A statement from a medical doctor or other acceptable proof that the teacher was unable to work may be requested to prevent the abuse of sick leave privileges.

Personal Leave Days – Teachers earn personal leave at the rate of one-half day for every two and one-half months. Teachers shall earn a maximum of five personal leave days and must request personal leave at least five days in advance. Personal leave may not be taken the first day of school, during required teacher workdays, or the day before or the day after scheduled holidays, except with permission from the principal.

Professional Leave Days – Teachers requesting absence for professional purposes must do so in writing at least two weeks in advance. If the teacher is engaged in an activity as a representative of the school or school district, reimbursement will be granted on an actual expense basis up to the maximum of the state reimbursement schedule. The board will pay for the substitute teacher. Professional leave forms may be obtained from the school districts or local school website.

Annual Vacation Leave Days – Annual vacation leave days are earned based on the length of service in North Carolina. Classroom teachers cannot take vacation leave when students are scheduled to be in attendance. Annual vacation leave may be used for absences caused by adverse weather conditions. Annual leave may be used in lieu of sick leave except that teachers may not use annual vacation leave when students are in

session. A request to use annual leave days must be submitted to the principal at least one week in advance. There is no maximum number of annual leave that may be accumulated; however, all annual leave days over 30 will be converted to sick leave after June 30. Deductions will be made from teachers' pay check if they have overdrawn leave days.

Mandatory Teacher Workdays – The school district will identify specific days that must be used for events such as professional development and preparing grades for report cards. All teachers must report to work on all days that have been specifically identified as mandatory workdays.

Optional Teacher Workdays – Teachers are not required to report to work on optional workdays; however, they must use either a sick day or an annual leave day.

Salary – A teacher's salary is based on the state salary scale. Teachers' checks are based on 10 month employment; however, teachers may choose to have their salaries divided into 12 months.

School District/Local School Policy

Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities

Discrimination – Teachers are protected from discrimination based on age, race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicapping condition, creed, or political affiliation.

Sexual Harassment Defined– “...All employees and students are entitled to work and learn in a school-environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment shall be defined as unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature...” Superiors (including principals) may not explicitly or implicitly base an individual’s employment, academic progress/benefits, or completion of school related activities on sexual favors. “Examples of sexual harassment may include, but in no way limited to, continued or repeated offensive sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, continued or repeated verbal remarks about an individual’s body; sexually degrading words used toward an individual or to describe an individual; and the display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures. The fact that words or actions may be couched in what appears to be humor does not make it any less offensive. Sexual harassment does not include personal compliments welcomed by the recipient, or desirable social interactions or relations freely entered into by employees or prospective employees.

Claims of Sexual harassment “shall be promptly and thoroughly investigated and appropriate action shall be taken. Violations shall be deemed to be serious disciplinary infractions. All complaints of sexual harassment shall be confidential. Information shall be given only to those individuals who need to have access to it in order to appropriately investigate and address the complaint.” All complaints should be reported in writing with details to the immediate supervisor or if the complaint is against the immediate

supervisor or if it is unwise to report to the immediate supervisor, the complaint should be made to the superintendent.

Prohibited Items in the Workplace – A drug-free workplace shall be maintained.

Teachers are not allowed to possess any type of controlled substance while on any property owned by the Board and at any time during which an individual employee is acting in the course and scope of his/her employment with the Board. School district employees are prohibited from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of any controlled substance whether on or off school board premises. Violators may be terminated. Tobacco products are also prohibited on school campuses.

Faculty Appearance – “The Board of Education believes that the appearance and the conduct of its faculty are of supreme importance in establishing a positive image for education in the community and for presenting a wholesome example for students.

Therefore, the Board affirms its expectations that: 1) professionals should wear attire that does not disrupt or distract the educational process; 2) all personnel will dress with good taste, appropriately attired for the work to be done; 3) principals will set a good example in personal appearance and good manners; and 4) principals will encourage and expect teachers to dress neatly and in good taste.”

Staff-Student Relations – Teachers are expected to treat all students with dignity and respect. Teachers should not degrade or otherwise demean any student.

Extracurricular Activities –All extracurricular activities or activities that occur outside of the classroom must be approved by the principal. All extracurricular activities, including field trips, must provide for careful supervision of students. When planning school sponsored field trips, clearly written objectives must be submitted to the principal. Only students whose parents provide written permission may participate in the field trip activity. Appropriate forms must be submitted before students will be allowed to leave

the school campus. Both the superintendent and the principal must approve overnight and out-of-state trips. No student shall be denied attending a field trip because of finances.

Grievances – “Any employee who has a complaint or inquiry is encouraged to use tact and diplomacy to resolve it in an informal manner with his immediate supervisor.

However, should such an informal process fail...a formal grievance process, at the option of the employee, shall be initiated.” All grievances shall be in writing and should include things such as violation of federal or state laws or regulations, discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, or age; or physical conditions that may pose a health risk.

School District/Local School Policy

Scenarios

Use the school district information provided and the school district policy manual to answer the questions about following scenarios.

Scenario I – Ms. Wonderful decided to take her students to a science museum. She provides all of her students with a permission slip, and all of the students except Marsha returned the slip. On the morning of the trip, Marsha cried and begged Ms. Wonderful to take her on the trip. Marsha had not seen her mother in two weeks; therefore, she did not get the permission slip signed. Ms. Wonderful decided that it was not Marsha’s fault that her mother was never home so she decided to take Marsha with her. The students had a wonderful time, but on the way back home Marsha had a severe asthma attack and a rescue unit was called. The next week, the school district was notified of a lawsuit that had been filed by Marsha’s mother. Ms. Wonderful was also named in the lawsuit.

- 1. Does Marsha’s mother have a legitimate claim? Explain your answer based on school district policy.*
- 2. Is the school district obligated to support Ms. Wonderful? Explain based on board policy*

Scenario II – Fatima is a first year teacher who has taken at least one sick day per month. She has taken a sick day every month because she felt that she needed time to herself. One month before the close of school, Fatima experienced some medical issues that may require her to miss 15 instructional days and 5 work days.

- 1. Based on school board (district) policy, what will happen if Fatima has to take the absences?*
- 2. What type of leave will Fatima need to cover her absences?*

Scenario III – Evan is a band director at a middle school who loves children. He spends a great deal of time with them after school preparing for upcoming events. The students love Evan because they know that he is genuinely concerned about them. One day Evan kept the students after school to prepare for an upcoming parade; and because he knew that many of the children would not have a meal after they left school, he left the students practicing and went to McDonalds to buy food for them. However, while he was away two students got into a fight and one student suffered a broken nose. Two weeks later, the injured student’s parents filed a lawsuit against the school and named Evan in the lawsuit.

1. *Is the school district liable?*
2. *Did Evan violate in school board policies? Explain*

Scenario IV–Mariota is a very attractive young lady who loves to dress in the latest fashions, and each day she is complimented by most of the male staff members. One day the principal overheard a male staff member complimenting her and asking her for a date, so he told the male staff member that his comments were inappropriate. However, Mariota informed the principal that she did not mind the compliments because they made her feel good about herself. After receiving a below standard peer evaluation from the male staff member who had previously asked her for date, Mariota filed a sexual harassment complaint against him. The male staff member admitted that he had made remarks about how well Mariota’s clothes looked on her, but he did not feel that his actions constituted sexual harassment.

1. *Based on school board policy, is the male staff member guilty of sexual harassment? Explain*

Scenario V – All teachers are assigned some type of extra duty at an elementary school. Each month a different teacher is assigned the early morning duty. When it was Mr. Rodger's week for duty, he decided that he did not think that it was fair for veteran teachers to perform extra duties. Therefore, he refused to get to school before 7:30. One morning two children were pushing and shoving and one child accidentally hit the other child in the mouth and fractured his tooth. The parents filed a negligence lawsuit.

1. *Based on school board policy, was Mr. Rodgers negligent?*

Scenario VI –Austin has been a dedicated employee in the county for 30 years. During his time of employment, he accumulated 280 sick days. Upon retirement, he requested to be paid for the sick days which amounted to about one year of employment. However, he was told by the school district that they could not pay him a year's salary for the days. Austin hired an attorney to investigate.

1. *Based on school district policy, does Austin have a legitimate claim or this just another example of the litigious society in which we live? Explain*

Homework Assignment

Find a field trip that may be used to support or enhance your subject area. Then following school district policy, plan the field trip and include the actual forms that you will need based on the destination. Be sure to include the correct number of chaperones and be prepared to explain which documents are needed for the trip and why. This trip should be something that is actually doable.

List of Forms That Should Be Complete

Explain Purpose of Forms



Notes/Reminders

Be sure to:

- € Provide copies of school district policy manuals for all groups of participants
- € Emphasis the fact that 10 month employees will not receive a paycheck for two months if they don't sign up for 12 month pay
- € Emphasis the fact that if a teacher is absent without an adequate number of days to use, the absences will be deducted from their paycheck
- € Provide a copy of a leave form
- € Provide a copy of permission slips (for extracurricular activities)
- € Provide a copy of a field trip form
- € Explain that the same leave form is used for all types of leave
- € Thoroughly discuss the field trip form and student permission slip and the importance of not allowing students to leave campus without permission slips

Tier I - Fundamentals

Education Ethics

“To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

–Theodore Roosevelt

When you complete this professional development module, you will possess the following:

- € An understanding of what constitutes inappropriate relationships with students
- € An understanding of how social media, such as Facebook, can affect your job
- € An understanding of FERPA
- € An understanding of the law regarding IEPs
- € An understanding of how classroom teachers are evaluated

INTRODUCTION

In order to be effective educators must not only teach a prescribed curriculum, but they must also subscribe and adhere to ethical behavior toward their students, toward their colleagues, and in their personal lives. This session on education ethics is designed to address some of the common ethical and legal issues that teachers may encounter.

Most of the information will be presented by the school district’s attorney, and participants will have an opportunity to ask questions. Much of the session is based on the North Carolina State Board of Education Code of Ethics for Educators which may be located at: <http://www.fcschools.net/departments/teachingcodeofethics.pdf>

GOALS

The goals of this session are as follows:

- To address some of the common ethical issues faced by classroom teachers
- To explain the teacher evaluation process

The following topics will be discussed:

- Inappropriate Relationships with Students
- Social Media
- Family Education Rights and privacy Act (FERPA)
- Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- The Teacher Evaluation Process

You Be the Judge

An Introduction to Education Ethics

Before beginning the session, you will watch several video clips. The purpose for watching the following video clips is to allow you to gage your understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. After watching each video segments, decide if there were any ethical violations. Share your thoughts with your neighbor.

The following video clips will be viewed:

- € Teacher Brings Under Age Students to Strip Club
- € Superintendent Reacts to Facebook Pages
- € Students Suspended for Seeing Teacher in Bra on School iPad
- € Boy, 5, Records Teacher Berating Him in Class
- € Teacher Cuts Off Girls Braid in Front of Class

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMJM-SQjUBc>

.....
After the video, list any questions you may have for the presenter.

Questions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Education Ethics

Use the scenarios below to answer the following questions.

Scenario 1 – In a staff meeting, teachers were told that they needed a way to hold students accountable for their test scores. One teacher decided that she would hold students accountable by taping scores to the desks and forcing students to look at them every time they sat down.

1. *Did the teacher violate any policies by taping the students' test scores to their desk or was it an excellent idea? Explain*

Scenario 2 – Mr. Colifer is a veteran teacher who has been teaching for more than 20 years. According to some, he is the best teacher in the school, and others say that he is the best teacher in the county. Mr. Colifer has been known to bring out the best in all of his students; therefore, many parents in the community request that their children are placed in his class. Mrs. Stoner, the mother of a 7th-grade special needs child, has requested that her child be placed in Mr. Colifer's class. Therefore, the counselors and the special education teacher met with Mr. Colifer to discuss the child's IEP; however, Mr. Colifer refused to follow the modifications because he feels that he knows how to bring out the best in the child and does not need an IEP to tell him what to do. At the end of the year, the student failed to achieve growth. Mrs. Stoner wanted to sue the school district.

1. Does Mrs. Stoner have a legitimate claim?

Notes/Reminders

- Be sure that the videos are watched before the presenter so that teachers will have some idea regarding their understanding of ethics and laws.
- Be sure to provide participants an opportunity to ask questions
- Provide a copy of an IEP that was developed for a make believe student.
- Be sure participants understand that IEPs are legal documents and therefore must be adhered to.
- Provide a copy of the Evaluation document

Homework

Read the information posted on the following websites. Select one incident and be prepared to discuss it in terms of ethics.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp->

[dyn/content/article/2008/04/27/AR2008042702213_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/27/AR2008042702213_pf.html)

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/08/12/studentsteachers.online/index.html?iref=newssearch>

Tier II – Framework

INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure continuous school improvement, all classroom teachers must possess a myriad of knowledge and skills, including the ability to interpret and implement research-based pedagogical and instructional strategies. Tier II of the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program is designed to provide the framework upon which essential skills may be constructed. Reiterative, integrative professional development will be used to cultivate and augment skills needed for success in the following areas:

- Common Core & Essential Standards
- Instructional Strategies
- Learning Styles
- Lesson Planning
- Assessments
- Classroom Management
- Time Management & Organizational Skills

Common Core and Essential Standards

When you complete this professional development module, you will possess the following:

- € An understanding of the vocabulary for the Common Core and Essential Standards
- € An understanding of how to deconstruct Common Core and Essential Standards to prepare classroom instructions.

INTRODUCTION

“Currently, North Carolina’s *Standard Course of Study* consists of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics and the North Carolina Essential Standards in all other subjects, including social studies, the arts, healthful living, career and technical education, and world languages.” “The New Essential Standards are written using the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (RBT)... North Carolina has chosen RBT to help move to the complex thinking expected from 21st Century graduates. The RBT was chosen because it has well-defined verbs and is built on modern cognitive research.” Additional information about Common Core and Essential Standards may be found at North Carolina Department of Public Instructions website at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/>

Goals

The goals of this session are to:

- Provide practice interpreting Common Core and Essential Standards
- Provide some resources that may be used to assist in unpacking or interpreting Common Core and Essential Standards goals and objectives.

The following topics will be discussed:

- Common Core and Essential Standards Vocabulary
- Analyzing and Interpreting Common Core and Essential Standards Goals and Objectives

Resources

- € <http://www.corestandards.org/>
- € <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/common-core-tools/>
- € <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards/>
- € <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/support-tools/#tools>
- € Marzano, R. J., & Simms, J. A. (2013). *Vocabulary for the Common Core*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- € Marzano, R. J., Yanoski, D. C., Hoegh, J. K., & Simms, J. A. (2013). *Using Common core standards to enhance classroom instruction and assessment*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- € Illinois State Board of Education/SSOS English Language Arts Content Specialists Team/Summer Regional Conference

Notes/Reminder

- € Provide each participant with a hard copy of specific Common Core or Essential Standard goals and objectives

- € Use the templates from the Iowa State Board of Education/SSOS English Language Arts Content Specialists Team/Summer Regional Conference

- € Provide participants an opportunity to practice deconstructing the Common Core or Essential Standards goals and objectives

- € Use textbooks to provide assistance in understanding the vocabulary.

- € Explain to participants that information from this session will be re-visited when actual lesson plans are being developed

Instructional Strategies

When you complete this professional development module, you will possess the following:

- € Knowledge of the definition of the term instructional strategy
- € An understanding of when to use lecture
- € Knowledge of how to establish cooperative learning and small groups
- € Knowledge of how to effectively use compare and contrast techniques
- € An understanding of when whole group instructions is necessary
- € Knowledge of how to develop and use content specific hands-on activities
- € Knowledge of how to identify various types of graphic organizers and when to use them
- € Knowledge of how to use previewing as an instructional strategy
- € Knowledge of how to use summarizing and note taking as instructional strategies
- € An understanding of what nonlinguistic representations are and how to use them
- € An understanding of effective questioning techniques
- € An understanding how to effectively use teacher-made notes
- € Knowledge of what reciprocal teaching is and how to use it

INTRODUCTION

Research has revealed countless numbers of effective methods or instructional strategies that may be used to motivate and engage students in the learning process.

However there is no one best strategy, as a variety of combinations of strategies may be

used in most lessons. This professional development is designed to introduce some of the more commonly used instructional strategies and to provide examples of their effective use in the classroom.

GOALS

The goals of this professional development unit are the following:

- To define the term instructional strategy
- To identify some of the most commonly used instructional strategies
- To provide examples of effective use of instructional strategies
- To provide participants an opportunity to practice using various learning strategies

Some topics to be discussed include:

- Lecture
- Cooperative learning
- Compare and Contrast
- Whole group discussion
- Small group discussion
- Hands-on activities
- Graphic organizers
- Previewing
- Summarizing and note taking
- Nonlinguistic representation
- Questioning
- Teacher-prepared notes
- Reciprocal teaching

Resources

- € Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- € Marzano, R. J., & Pickering, D. J. (with Heflebower, T.). (2011). *The highly engaged classroom*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- € <http://www.ntuaft.com/TISE/ResearchBased%20Instructional%20Strategies/marzanos%209%20strategies.pdf>
- € <http://www.palmbeachschools.org/qa/documents/Handout5-MarzanoHighYieldStrategies.pdf>
- € <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol4/418-toc.aspx>
- € <http://www.edmondschools.net/Portals/0/docs/Bloom'sTaxonomy.pdf>
- € <http://www.unc.edu/learnnc/kinetic-connect/noframes.html>

Notes/Reminders

- € After discussing the various instructional strategies, require participants to complete the activity found at this website <http://www.unc.edu/learnnc/kinetic-connect/noframes.html>

- € Allow participants to work in small discipline groups and select an instructional strategy to teach a topic from a textbook that they will be using in class. Have participants to explain why they selected the specific learning strategy for the topic that they selected. They should develop at least three to five questions.

Learning Styles

When you complete this professional development module, you will possess the following:

- € An understanding of how to identify activities designed for auditory learners
- € An understanding of how to identify activities designed for visual learners
- € An understanding of how to identify activities designed for tactile/kinesthetic learners
- € An understanding of how to design activities to address specific learning styles
- € An understanding how to differentiate between learning styles and multiple intelligence
- € An understanding of how to identify activities that address various types of intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Some children learn best by sitting and listening, while others thrive in an environment that requires them to sit quietly and read, and yet others perform best when they are allowed to move. Some children perform better in one type of learning environment than they do in others because of their various learning styles. Learning styles refer to ways in which children process new information. This professional development module is designed to provide an understanding of learning styles and to assist teachers in identifying and using activities that address the various learning styles.

GOALS

The goals of this professional development module are as follows:

- To define and explain learning styles
- To provide participants an opportunity to create or find various types of activities to address specific learning styles

- To differentiate between learning styles and multiple intelligence

The following topics will be discussed:

- Learning styles
- Auditory learners
- Visual learners
- Tactile/Kinesthetic learners
- Multiple Intelligence

Resources

€ Barnier, C. (2009). *The big what now book of learning styles*. Ywam Publishing.

ISBN-13:9781932096606

€ Gardner, H. & Davis, K. (2013). *The app generation: How today's youth navigate identity, intimacy, and imagination in the digital world*. Yale University Press: New Haven and London

€ <http://www.2learn.org/learningstyles.html> (participants take this test)

€ <http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/strategies/topics/Learning%20Styles/diversity.html>

€ <http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-learning-styles-quiz>

€ <http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-howard-gardner-video>

Notes/Reminders

- € All participants should complete the learning styles online test
- € All participants should create or find activities that they feel will address various learning styles and be prepared to explain how or why they created or selected the activity for the specific learning style(s)
- € Learning styles and multiple intelligence may be discussed in different sessions in order to avoid confusion

Assessments

When you complete this session, you will possess the following:

- € Knowledge of the difference between formative and summative assessment
- € Knowledge of how to determine the most appropriate assessment to use with each lesson

INTRODUCTION

The instruction process is comprised of many integral parts, including assessments. Assessments are essential components of the instruction process because they help teachers to determine if instructional goals have been met as well as assist in determining appropriate next steps. This professional development module is designed to introduce various types of assessments, including formative and summative assessment.

GOALS

The goals of this professional development module are the following:

- To identify and explain various types of assessments
- To differentiate between formative and summative assessment

The following topics will be discussed:

- Types of Formative Assessment
- Types of Summative Assessment

Resources

- € <http://www.edudemic.com/the-6-types-of-assessments-and-how-theyre-changing/>
- € <http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/basic/basic.html>

- € <http://www.slideshare.net/jcheek2008/formative-assessment-vs-summative-assessment>

- € Garrison, C., Chandler, d., & Ehringhaus, M. (2009). *Effective classroom Linking assessment with instruction*. NMSA & Measured Progress. ISBN: 978-1-56090-228-7

- € Marzano, R. J., & Heflebower, T. (2012). *Teaching and assessing 21st century skills*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory

- € Marzano, R. J. (2006). *Classroom assessment and grading that work*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

- € Marzano, R. J. (2010). *Formative assessment and standards-based grading*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

Notes/Reminders

- € Demonstrate formative assessment using dry erase boards
- € Announce the date, time, and location of next meeting

Lesson Planning

When you complete this module, you will be able to do the following:

- € Use the school district's lesson plan template to construct usable lesson plans using Common Core or Essential Standard goals and objective

INTRODUCTION

Lesson plans are critical elements of the teaching process because they provide an idea of what will happen in the classroom each day. Having a specific plan for what will be taught and how it will be taught increases the likelihood of student productivity and decreases the amount of chaos and classroom disruptions. This professional development module is designed to assist participants in the development of lessons based on Common Core or Essential Standards goals and objectives. It is also structured to integrate information from the instructional strategies, learning styles, and assessment modules and to utilize the school district mandated lesson plan template to facilitate the development of lessons.

GOALS

The goal of this professional development module is as follows:

- To facilitate the development of usable lesson plans using the school district mandated template

The following topics will be discussed:

- Components of the school district mandated template
- Deconstructing Common Core and Essential Standards goals and objectives
- Constructing lesson plans
- Using various types of assessment

Resources

- € School district's lesson plan template
- € <http://www.bsos.org/bsos-5e-instructional-model>
- € <http://www.agpa.uakron.edu/p16/btp.php?id=learning-cycle>
- € https://summit.cesc.ucf.edu/lesson_manager/data/e...
- € <http://www.lehigh.edu/~inexlife/learning.html>
- € Cavallo, A. & Marek, E. The learning cycle: Elementary school science and beyond. ISBN-13: 978-0435071332 ISBN-10: 0435071335

Notes/Reminders

- € Provide copies of school district mandated lesson plan template
- € Provide handouts on information about learning cycle
- € Participants should watch video
- € All participants should have at least a month's worth of lesson plans

Classroom Management

When you complete this module, you will possess the following:

- € A repertoire of classroom management strategies
- € A self-developed classroom management plan

INTRODUCTION

Even the most well-crafted and carefully planned lessons are likely to fail if students are constantly unfocused and off task. Consequently, before attempting to provide any type of instructions, teachers must ensure that students remain focused and that disruptive behaviors are kept to a minimal. Effective classroom management strategies are one way to ensure that classroom disruptions are minimized and that each lesson is productive. This professional development module is designed to provide research-based classroom management strategies that may be implemented with relative ease.

GOALS

The goals of the professional development module are as follows:

- To provide participants a list of easily implemented research-based classroom management strategies
- To demonstrate the correlation between planning and classroom management issues

The following are some of the topics will be discussed:

- € Establishing Rules and Consequences
- € The importance of being fair, firm and consistent
- € High Expectations
- € The importance of over planning
- € The importance of forming relationships with students
- € The importance of parental contacts

Resources

- € <http://youtu.be/LdF5ry5g5-w>
- € <http://tinyurl.com/mrhmanage>
- € <https://www.teachingchannel.org/videos/new-teacher-classroommanagement>
- € <http://www.takecontrolofthenoisyclas.com>
- € <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XUTdaQIdKI>
- € <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vvIR7o81x2Q> (middle school)
- € <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9yOOwGYYfU> (middle school part II)
- € <http://712educators.about.com/od/discipline/tp/disciplinetips.htm>
- € Marzano, R. J. (with Marzano, J. S., & Pickering, D. J.). (2003). *Classroom management that works: Research-based strategies for every teacher*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Notes/Reminders

- € Provide a list of suggested classroom management strategies and watch videos that provide strategies first
- € Show video of first week, first day and have teachers identify strategies that they notice that are being used
- € Have teachers create a classroom management plan that they will implement in their classes

Time Management and Organization Skills

When you complete this module, you will possess the following:

- € An assessment of personal time management and organizational skills needs
- € A self-developed personal time management plan to use in the upcoming school year

INTRODUCTION

Inherent in the duties of educators are the responsibilities of handling thousands of pieces of paper, recording hundreds of grades, and filing dozens of reports. These responsibilities, coupled with the many professional development sessions, staff meetings, extracurricular activities, and extra duties that most teachers encounter, leave many feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. This professional development module is designed to offer time management and organization strategies that may be used by participants to lessen the feelings of inundation.

GOALS

The goals of this professional development module are as follows:

- To provide effective time management strategies
- To foster the development of organization skills

Some of the topics that will be discussed include:

- The importance of time management and organization
- Procrastination
- Recognizing when you are in over your head
- Asking for help

Resources

- € Allen, D. (2001). *Getting things done: the art of stress-free productivity*. Penguin Books. ISBN 0-14-200028-0
- € Covey, S. R. (2013). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 978-1-4767-4005-8
- € Dodd, P. & Sundheim, D. (2009). *The 25 best time management tools & techniques: How to get more done without driving yourself crazy*. Chelsea, MI: Performance Press, Inc.
- € Murphy, P.W. (2012). *How to be organized at work – High achiever secrets to taking control, saving time and achieving goals faster*. (kindle Edition)
- € Tracy, B. (2004). *Time power: A proven system for getting more done in less time than you ever thought possible*. New York, NY: AMACOM. ISBN 0-8144-7247-8

Resources (online)

- € http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/videos/video_tm.html
- € <http://psychcentral.com/lib/6-tips-to-improve-your-time-management-skills/00015735>
- € <http://www.gvtc.org/Contents/Organization.pdf>
- € <http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/2293>
- € <http://lor.gvtc.org/uploads/SEA166/player.html>
- € <http://lor.gvtc.org/uploads/SEA122/Organizational%20Skills%20Assessment.pdf>
- € <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/high-octane-women/201109/8-easy-organizational-tips-increase-your-productivity-work>

Notes/Reminders

- € Have participants to complete the assessment activity first.
- € Provide handouts from the various websites
- € Participants watch video and determine which strategies are being used
- € Be sure that each participant develops and provides a copy of their personal plans

Tier III – Building Blocks

INTRODUCTION

In order to be effective educators, teachers must be knowledgeable of the attributes and characteristics of the students in their classes as well as understand how best to positively influence and direct them. The purpose of Tier III is to provide an in-depth study of some of the special characteristics and circumstances of many of the students enrolled in the school district. A detailed study of strategies that may be implemented to teach all students to read specific content and the effective use of a variety of technology are also provided in this tier.

The Exceptional Child

When you complete this course, you will possess the following:

- € An understanding of theories relating to human development as it relates to student differences and special education practices.
- € An understanding of legal policies, ethics, rights, and responsibilities relating special education practices.
- € An understanding of how to implement modifications and accommodations of an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- € Knowledge of various types of technology used to teach and assess exceptional children.
- € Knowledge of formal and informal assessments used to evaluate student learning and emotional behaviors
- € An understanding of appropriate classroom behavior strategies to implement with students with disabilities

INTRODUCTION

Federal laws mandate specific services for all students enrolled in the exceptional children's program. To ensure that program participants possess a full understanding of special education laws and required services, the goals of this course are adapted from those of the University of North Carolina system.

GOALS

The goals of this course are as follows:

- To provide an understanding of the theories and research relating to human development as it relates to student differences and special education practice
- To provide an understanding of legal policies, ethics, rights and responsibilities, and other knowledge that are used to establish the basis for special education practice
- To provide instructions on how to provide modifications and accommodations for an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- To provide knowledge of the use of technology to support teaching, classroom assessment and related services
- To provide an understanding of the use of formal and informal assessment to evaluate student learning, behavior, emotional, and other education-related functions
- To provide knowledge of how to manage various education environments to deliver appropriate education to students with disabilities
- To teach participants how to respond to the needs of students with learning, behavior, and emotional disabilities who are diverse in culture, learning style, and otherwise
- To provide knowledge of how to select and adapt instruction practices to deliver appropriate education to students with disabilities
- To provide knowledge of how to maximize cooperation with parents, professionals, and organizations to deliver appropriate education to students with disabilities

Resources

€ Hallahan, D.P. (2008). *Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education* (11thed.). ISBN-13: 978-0205571048 ISBN-10: 0205571042

€ Hunt, N. & Marshall, K. (2012). *Exceptional children and youth*. (5thed.) ISBN-13: 978-1111833428 ISBN-10: 1111833427

€ Vaughn, S., Bos, C.S., & Schumm, J.S. (2010). *Teaching students who are exceptional, diverse, and at risk in the general education classroom*.(5thed). ISBN-13: 978-0137151790 ISBN-10: 0137151799

Reading In the Content Area

When you complete this course you will possess the following:

- € Knowledge of how to implement word attack and vocabulary building skills in your specific content area
- € Knowledge of how to implement specific reading strategies to develop reading comprehension in your specific content area
- € Knowledge of how to implement techniques to help students understand and identify text structures in your specific content area
- € Knowledge of how to implement graphic organizers as reading comprehension aids
- € Knowledge of how to implement strategies to assessing comprehension strategies
- € Knowledge of how to implement strategies to address fluency
- € Knowledge of how to implement strategies to provide support for low-performing readers and ELL students
- € Knowledge of how to implement strategies to teach words and parts to increase vocabulary
- € Knowledge of how to implement content area reading strategies

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental component of the learning process and is necessary to fully function in many aspects of society. This course is designed to provide strategies that may be used to teach students reading in any content area. The goals of this course are adapted from and aligned with the goals of the University of North Carolina system.

GOALS

The goals of this course are to provide the following:

- Explicit methods for teaching word attack skills and vocabulary building
- Specific reading strategies that develop and reinforce reading comprehensions
- Techniques that may be used to help students understand and identify text structures
- Strategies that may be used to help motivate students to become lifelong readers
- Strategies that may be used to teach students how to use graphic organizers as aids
- Specific strategies for assessing comprehension skills
- Strategies to address issues with fluency
- Strategies for working with low-performing readers and ELL students
- Strategies that may be used for teaching words and parts to increase vocabulary
- Strategies that may be used to teach content area vocabulary

Resources

€ Fisher, D., Brozo, W.G., Frey, N., & Ivey, G. (2010). *50 instructional routines to develop content literacy*. ISBN-13: 978-0137057191 ISBN-10: 0137057199

€ Hill, R.S., Daniels, H., & Zemelman, S. (2004). *Subjects matter: Every teacher's guide to content-area reading*. ISBN-13: 978-0325005959

€ McLaughlin, M. (2009). *Content area reading: Teaching and learning in an age of multiple literacies*. ISBN-13: 978-0205486618 ISBN-10: 0205486614

Technology in the Classroom

When you complete this course, you will possess the following:

- € An understanding of how to locate and implement web-based tools to enhance specific content
- € An understanding of how to identify and use various types of technology to enhance specific content

INTRODUCTION

The ever changing requirements of the 21st century mandate the effective use of technology; therefore, it is imperative for teachers to be able to utilize technology as an integral part of the lesson. This course is designed to provide some examples of web-based and digital technology that may be used in any discipline. The goals of this course are adapted from the University of North Carolina system.

GOALS

The goals of this course are as follows:

- To assist participants in locating and practice using web tools that are available for lesson plan development
- To assist participants in the integration of web tools and resources in the teaching of Common Core and Essential Standards.
- To introduce other types of technology that may be used in various disciplines

Resources

- € Cennamo, K., Ross, J., & Ertmer, P. (2014). *Technology integration for meaningful classroom use: A standards-based approach*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth ISBN-13: 978-1133594208 ISBN-10: 1133594204

- € Magana, S. & Marzano, R. (2013). *Enhancing the art & science of teaching with technology (classroom strategies)*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

- € Tucker, C.R. (2012). *Blended learning in grades 4-12: Leveraging the power of technology to create student-centered classrooms*. USA: Corwin Press. ISBN-13: 978-1452240862 ISBN-10: 1452240868

- € *Using the technology of today in the classroom today: the instructional power of digital games, social networking simulations and how teachers can leveragethem*. http://education.mit.edu/papers/GamesSimsSocNets_EdArcade.pdf

Cultural Diversity

When you complete this course, you will be able to do the following:

- € Identify any personal bias or stereotypes that may negatively influence your teaching of diverse students
- € Implement strategies to create an inviting multicultural classroom
- € Understand how to identify hot moments in the classroom
- € Implement strategies to effectively deal with hot moments in the classroom
- € Identify some specific characteristics of low-socioeconomic students
- € Identify some specific needs of low-socioeconomic families
- € Implement strategies to successfully address some needs of low socioeconomic families

INTRODUCTION

One responsibility of all educators is to create a safe, orderly, and inclusive environment for all students. However, this type of environment will only occur if instructors are considerate of the various backgrounds, ideas, cultures, and beliefs of their students. Cultural awareness is essential as the backgrounds of students in classrooms across the nation are becoming increasingly varied. This course is designed to provide participants with strategies that may be used to address student diversity and to create an environment conducive to learning.

GOALS

The goals of this course are to provide the following:

- Strategies that may help to identify any personal biases or stereotypes
- Strategies that may be used to create multicultural classrooms
- Strategies that may be used to deal with hot moments in the classroom
- Strategies that may be used to address specific needs of students of low socioeconomic families

Resources

- € Davis, B.G. (2009). *Tools for teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
ISBN – 13:978-0787965679 ISBN- 10:0787965677
- € Kendall, F.E. (1996). *Diversity in the classroom: New approaches to the education of young children (Early childhood education series (Teachers College Pre) (Early Childhood Education (Teacher's College Pre))*.
ISBN-13: 978-0807734988 ISBN-10: 0807734985
- € Payne, R.K. (2005). *Framework for understanding poverty* (4th Ed.). Highland, TX: Aha Press ISBN-13: 978-1929229482 ISBN- 10: 1929229488

Tier IV – Capstone Project

Portfolio

In order to complete the Lateral Entry Teacher Training (LETT) Program, participants must develop lesson plans for a unit of study. The unit must include the following:

- € Specific Common Core or Essential Standards goals and objectives
- € Instructional strategies/activities that address at least three different learning styles
- € Both formative and summative assessment
- € A field trip (including correct documentation that has been properly completed)
- € The use of technology
- € Accommodations for exceptional children
- € Content- specific reading strategies
- € Strategies that address cultural diversity

All participants must receive at least a grade of “B” on the assignment in order to be successful. Participants submitting portfolios that do not include all of the above components will be asked to resubmit until requirements are met.

**Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program
Module/Class Evaluation**

All participants should complete an evaluation form after the completion of each module and course.

Title of Module _____ Date _____

Presenter _____ Location _____

Directions: Read through the description below and circle the number that best represents your perception of the usefulness of this module or class; use “1” as strongly disagree and “5” as strongly agree.

Description	Rating				
1. The information provided in this module/class is very useful	1	2	3	4	5
2. The information provided in this module/class is very easy to understand					
3. The information provided in this module/class is sufficient					
4. The information provided in this module/is insufficient					

5. Describe any improvements that you feel need be made to the information presented in this module/class _____

6. Describe any improvements that you feel need to be made to the method of presentation of information in this class or module _____

**Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program
Program Evaluation**

Completion of this evaluation form is required immediately after program completion.

1. Please describe the most effective part of this Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program.

2. Please describe the most ineffective part of this Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program.

3. Please provide a description of any changes that you feel need to be made to the Lateral Entry Teacher Training Program. _____

*Additional forms may be used if necessary.

Notes/Reminders

- € Participants should be allowed to respond anonymously unless they desire to include their names.
- € Collect forms from each participant and verify that each participant has completed a form by checking off names as are forms are collected.

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Appendix B: Transcripts of Interviews

Transcript of Interview of a Teacher Who Is Currently Enrolled in the ACP

An Examination of an Alternative Certification ProgramTime of interview: 3:40 p.m. Date: December 17, 2013 Place: ██████ School

Interviewer: Sherry Park

Interviewee: CT1-Interviewee #1**Section I - Training**

1. *Researcher*: Tell me a little about yourself, professionally and personally, to help me understand your background.

Participant: I did my undergrad at ██████, I majored in history. I didn't have any teaching background before I actually stepped into the classroom. I always thought that I wanted to work with the youth because I really enjoyed working with children, and I knew I loved history, so being able to go into education for social studies is kind of like a dream of mine. I came from a small town in the area so I am familiar with a lot of struggles that the education system here goes through because I was a part of it. I think I have an understanding and I feel like I can relate to the kids a little bit. I've been teaching for – I just finished my first full year this month - had a lot of great experiences - had a lot of interesting experiences of course, but I enjoyed every bit of it. I love teaching and I am glad I was able to get the position. I feel comfortable, I feel pretty comfortable here.

2. *Researcher*: What were the reasons you decided to enter the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Well, I guess kind of at that time – even though I had an idea I wanted to teach – this was like the best option for me. With the degree that I had the only other option that I had was higher education to get a real stable job in the area. Of course I knew I wanted to go back to school, but at the same time I had been in college for four years and I wanted to see some turn out for my education so I needed to get a job quick. I knew about the Lateral Entry program and it would give me the opportunity to kind of hit the ground running. I could actually start working and still be going to school at the same time. So it was kind of the like the best of both worlds for me. So it was a little bit of both, I wanted to go into education and I needed a job also, so I guess that just kind of worked out for the best.

3. Researcher: How do you think your personal characteristics, culture, and life experiences have influenced your teaching?

Participant: I think probably with everyone you sort of teach what you know, what've been taught. So looking back on my experiences, growing up – of course education has changed so much now, the way I was taught and the way that I teach are kind of well opposite ends of the spectrum; but at the same time I still try to go back to some of the things that I knew worked for me. For example, reading I know the education system – of course they promote reading – but I guess sitting and reading and answering questions isn't good enough. So I try to do different things a side from just answering questions. I think reading is probably one of the most critical parts of education. I think that is one of the things that we suffer the most from in our area is reading for comprehension. So I go through and I try to model reading for the kids. Of course I try to integrate technology into the classroom. But that wasn't such a big deal when I was in school; when I was in high school, the Internet starting or just coming around and being widely available for people. So in using what I gained when I was in middle school and definitely what I gained in college in the classes that I've taken – that's probably shaped the way that I go about things. And I just kind of teach the way that I am. I don't really try to change much, my culture, my background being from this area – the kids they kind of know my dialect and things – being from the area we have so much in common that it just kind of translates over to them so I can really be myself while I'm in the classroom. And I think that helps me respond to the kids or helps the kids respond to me rather.

Researcher: What do you mean when you say you teach like you are?

Participant: I guess – I'm not the most properly spoken person and there are things that I use in the classroom that you probably wouldn't see in a classroom if you left out of this county – like my mannerism and I guess you could say some of the examples and things that I use that I feel like they can relate to – in other areas might not work out so well. So I guess what I mean is that I am just a simple guy from the local area; that's just how I teach in the classroom, simple local area. I teach the kids the way that I was taught, the way that I am.

4. Researcher: Describe your positive experiences during your participation within the Alternative Certification Program.

Participant: Coming out each day, having an opportunity to teach the kids overall it has been a positive experience; I feel like - and some of the classes that I have to take for my certification I've learned a lot of things and I've had a lot help in taking those courses. The program, I think they go out of their way to kind of try to help you out. I have a

mentor that comes out to speak to me. I have of course the principals, they knew I was Lateral Entry, they knew I didn't have any prior experience in the classroom and I think they try to help me in any way possible. Everybody I work with knowing that I didn't have any experience tried to help me as much as they could. So I guess support. I feel like I've had all the support that I could possibly have received entering into this program - Lateral Entry. That's probably one of the best things about it. As I'm in the classroom learning as I go, I've got help - it's better than just in an undergrad course you're sitting there, taking classes learning about that situation, but to actually teach you don't know what's going to work until you're in that situation. You can sit all day and hear about this example and what worked here and what worked there but I guess in coming in lateral entry and being able to teach you kind of get to hit the ground running and that get real situation experience.

Researcher: You said you came in, you hit the ground running, which leads to the next question.

Section II – Challenges

5. *Researcher:* Describe, in detail, the most common challenges you faced while a participant in the Alternative Certification Program.

Participant: Getting use to the standards, the Common Core. Trying to get an understanding of exactly what it is I'm supposed to teach and how I'm supposed to teach it. Probably my biggest issue now, not so much as before - coming in I was just trying my best to figure out what I needed to teach on a daily basis. What content am I supposed to cover, what should I do, and then trying to plan lessons, good lesson where the students would be engaged, where they would be producing work that is rigorous - that stuff is difficult, especially when you face the other challenges where the kids, their learning abilities are so diverse. You have some that are way ahead, and some not, and you still have to teach them regardless of what they know or what they don't know. So to me some of the most difficult things is trying to jump over that barrier, trying to plan good lessons, trying to keep up with grades, meetings and all of the other responsibilities that I have on a daily basis. It could be a little overwhelming - so a little bit of all of it. But I guess I've kind of try to do the best that I can in the classroom. I realize that I'm only human. I don't want to stress myself out and not be able to come and perform my job.

6. *Researcher:* How did the challenges influence your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Well, I guess coming I knew I liked working with the kids and I knew if I wanted to continue to teach and to be effective at it, I needed to be like a sponge and soak up as much as I could. So I would really go out to people and I would ask them what

could I do here. I tried to step into as many classrooms and observe them as I could. Observe as many people as I could, meet with as many people as I could, see what strategies worked, what strategies didn't. I would ask people for their lesson plans, I would ask people to come in and see if there was something they could do different; conducting research, I would be on the Internet as much as I could trying to figure out lessons. When I got enrolled in my classes, I really tried to make the most of it and get as much as I possibly could out of it. It's an ongoing process, no matter how much you take in today – just like with everything else in life – there is always something you can do to improve. So there's still challenges, I just try to get through them, just try to access as much information as I possibly can.

7. Researcher: How did the Alternative Certification Program prepare you to face challenges as a teacher?

Participants: Well, Lateral Entry meets on a regular basis, but they don't so much as meet to discuss the challenges that you have, but instead they meet to discuss the things that you have to do to keep teaching, like meeting your hours or the coursework that you have to submit. I don't know if the beginning teacher program falls along the Lateral Entry or not, where they send out the mentor. So aside from the classes that I take which are set up through RALC and they have to approve the plan of study of course and fulfill so many requirements. From that aspect that is helpful – taking those education classes, figuring out what strategies to use – of those different things – aside from the mentor coming out, everything is – you're going to get out of it what you put into it. A lot of it is kind of personal stuff. I think if you want to be a teacher you're going to take that extra step to try to better yourself.

Researcher: What are some examples of some education courses that you have taken?

Participant: A took a child psychology class, which honestly I think was a waste. And then I took – probably the most helpful class that I've taken was Literacy in the 21st Century. Basically what the class was about was being able to teach kids in the 21st century using technology and different things. And I remember coming across the book – I think everybody should have the book, and was 50 instructional routines to improve content area literacy. What the book talked about was how all teachers, regardless of their content - social studies, science, math, art, PE – every teacher should teach literacy because reading and writing are two of the most important skills that anybody can every have in life. So it had different things like KWL charts, graphic organizers, raft writing, and these different activities, I think they were extremely helpful. So that class in particular was one that really stuck with me and I think was helpful – and I would recommend that everybody take that class because I think it was excellent.

8. Researcher: Describe the challenging aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.

Participant: Just getting in the classroom and being able to keep your sanity. It's a lot to take on. Of course there are people to help you out, but I think anybody, regardless of whether you are planning to be a teacher or not, is prepared for some of the things that you're going to face when you step into that classroom. So it's just being able to think on your feet, keeping a positive mindset and just being able to react to the things that you have to handle. Cause the program is there to help people out. The program is not difficult and I feel like that they go out of their way to help as much as they possibly could. If I need someone to talk to they're there. So it's just really me staying in the profession and wanting to be a teacher, willing myself to do it because it's something I really want to do. I think the biggest issue for somebody as a Lateral Entry teacher would not be that they could not do, it's just they come to the realization that it's difficult and not something they could do for a long period of time. Teaching is not about the money, it's not about the day to day things, it's something that you have to love doing.

Section III – Support

9. Researcher: What kind of support did (or do) you receive from the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Earlier, like I said, there's the lady who's head of the licensure department, the lady who's head of the beginning teacher program – there's people out there you can call and they're always willing to talk to you and there's my mentor Ms. [REDACTED] and I have other people that I can talk to, all of the people that I work with here to help me out. There's always somebody there to talk to if I need them; always somebody to bounce ideas off of; people coming out to try to show you different things. So that's probably the biggest thing.

10. Researcher: How has the support that you have received influenced your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Being in such a supportive environment it's really made me appreciate the people that I work with. The job that I had before this was, of course it was not a job like teaching, it was more like a manual labor job – but it was either you come and do your job, you get paid or you don't want to work we'll find someone else who's willing to do it. The teaching environment is a lot different. I feel like if they find someone – even if you are not the best teacher – if you have that passion for it, that enthusiasm, I work with people that are willing to go that extra mile to help me become the best teacher I possibly can. So definitely I love the people that I work with. And getting up coming to work every day is no problem. I feel like everybody wants me to be here and we're all trying to make the situation better.

11. Researcher: What type of support do you feel was needed but not provided by the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Probably a better understanding of what my role in the classroom was. Of course you know as a teacher you're there for management, but the content is so – this new Common Core thing it can be confusing. I think it's confusing for people that went through the education program – of course it's new for them – but for me, I was just completely and totally lost on exactly what I was supposed to be teaching, and with the testing coming into play – factor, – I had no idea what was going to be on the test, I had no idea what to teach – understanding what's expected of you from that. Classroom management is not – the principal and other people are there to help you through that – but the actual teaching of content doing that Common Core and the strands and all this different stuff is overwhelming. And I don't feel like – I mean for professional development, the school takes steps – but I don't feel like Lateral Entry program did barely anything. For most of the Lateral Entry teachers I've talked to that's their biggest fear coming into the classroom, what I'm supposed to teach.

Section IV – Improvements

12. Researcher: Describe the positive aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.

Participant: I would tell them that everybody that I've encountered in the Lateral Entry program is as a polite as they can possibly be and they are genuine about wanting to help and offering advice. I've never had anybody just kind of chew me out for anything. Even on days when I've had bad days and I know I didn't do the best job in the classroom that I could have, nobody comes around and says you know, if you do that again you're going to get fired – it's always positive. Anytime I have issues, there's always somebody I can talk to, always somebody I could ask. With the principal, he works with the people in the Lateral Entry program – anytime I have issues about what classes I need to take, he's more than happy to give them a call so we can go ahead and get everything figured out. So once you get into the Lateral Entry program, if you have any questions or concerns, there's always somebody to call, if I feel like they will do their best to help sure up whatever it is that you're unsure about.

13. Researcher: If you could, would you enroll in the Alternative Certification Program again? Why or Why not?

Participant: Definitely! If I had to do it all over again I would have did it because it has been for me a positive experience. I have learned a lot. Of course I've got a job, I started working. They're working with me helping me out, making sure that I meet everything that I have to do. I had the opportunity to step into the classroom and begin teaching and really having no background in education. They've supported me along the way, giving

me the opportunity to support myself. They've put every possible lifeline out there that I could use if I needed, and I've never had any real negative experiences with the people – Lateral Entry. Of course, there's the time where I didn't feel like I was as prepared as I should have been, but going to them and trying to prepare myself, they always helped, always there, always willing to work with you.

14. *Researcher:* If you had the chance to make recommendations to the Alternative Certification Program director, what would you recommend?

Participant: I would probably tell them their focus – of course understandably so – I think their main focus is getting people to understand what courses they have to take so they are here to work – think they should focus more on kind of helping prepare the people for what they face once they step into the classroom. Which I guess in a way taking the courses they are, but you can start teaching today and it can be almost a year from now before you are required to take any class. So that can be that whole year you're kind of out there on your own floating around doing your own thing. And unless you go out of your way to ask them or to ask somebody for help, the option is not there, you have to go and seek the help for yourself. It makes logical sense, you know if you have questions you need to ask them, but there is that and the coursework is so confusing – understanding what classes that you have to take. I don't feel like it's just laid out –take this class, take that class, take that class. I feel like that process could be simpler. And there is no help for me financially when I'm taking my classes. So last year, I took my classes during the summer; because when I started teaching it was December. So it was middle of January before I found out that I had to have six hours submitted in June. It was too late to enroll in classes then. The only option I had was to take summer classes. Since that was my first year teaching I was set up on ten month pay. So I had to figure out a way to pay for my classes this summer out of pocket which was almost impossible. I couldn't get any financial aid because RALC does not allow financial aid. I really couldn't get a loan. If it wouldn't been for my family being able to help me out, I wouldn't be able to take any classes and stay in education.

Researcher: So you were not reimbursed?

Participant: I was reimbursed, afterwards – so they reimbursed you, but like I said that was all of my classes this summer, \$900 that I had to come up with basically out of nowhere. There is the reimbursement, but still it was difficult for a first year teacher to come up with that much.

Researcher: So who helps outline your courses that you take?

Participant: There is a guy, he's from [REDACTED], he's like head over everything. He sent the plan of study– honestly I don't understand the plan of study. It's not take this course, take that course, it's you need so many hours of whatever this is, so many hours of

whatever that is, and they tell you some of it is automatically – they don't really clarify what exactly, they don't outline –like in college in your undergrad, you want to graduate you sit down see what courses you have to take, how many hours. I know how many hours but I don't know what courses qualify as this. So what I had to do, I took the plan of study to the university I was enrolled in, and they're not as positive as the Lateral Entry people are, so asking them what do I need to take, it's kind of like they didn't tell – that was a hassle because I feel like for a while I was getting run around in circles. So I'm going to call later on probably later on this week because I've got to take my classes to be able to still teach so I am going to call and try to figure out what classes I need to take and how many I have left because nobody – I know I've got to have so many hours but nobody has told me exactly how many hours I need.

Researcher: So nobody has met with you to discuss your plan of study, it was just sent to you?

Participant: My plan of study was sent to me, I looked at, I asked the people that I work with about it, I asked my principal and he kind of looked at it and told me that I didn't have any classes to take. Nobody sat down with me one on one and outlined for me to take this class, you have this many hours, we can set it up. You know, you'll be done after so many – nobody – I haven't had that happen; and I've talked to them and I've told them that I didn't understand the plan of study, and I was told to take it to the university because apparently that was not what they were supposed to do – they were like take it to the college they'll know, they'll explain it to you. And then when I got to the college they act like it was supposed to be explained to me before that. So that was a little bit of a hassle.

Researcher: So what kinds of things are on the plan of study?

Participant: I'm not even sure. There is educational pedagogy, a few different areas. Of course there's like the history courses that I have to take, as far as social studies education. But most of those for me are fulfilled so the classes that I am taking are more geared more toward education. There is a breakdown for it but I'm not sure of the different areas. And it's not like this course falls under that area. There are so many technology credits you have to receive, so many education credits you have to receive, so on and so forth.

Researcher: So they might say something about education pedagogy, but they don't tell you which courses fulfill that requirement of education pedagogy?

Participant: And then there's like – when they are telling you to take the courses – the last meeting that we went to they showed us how to search what university to let you know what classes were offered. All of that's – they pretty much leave the responsibility to you. It makes logical sense, it's your job, you're an adult you should have to do it – and I'll gladly do that, but nobody has really sit down and explained the process to me.

I'd feel a whole lot better if I knew my first year I can take these three classes, my next year I take these three classes, and I'll be finished, because you only have three years to fulfill the requirements. As far as I know I don't have 20 some hours to fill but I could.

Researcher: So they don't tell you how many hours you need to do?

Participant: No one has, nobody has told me. I know you have to do six hours each year. But as far as how many I have to go before I get my teaching license, I don't know so I have to set up a meeting with them. I have been in education a year, nobody has stepped out of their way to tell me this is — how many you have to take so on and so forth. I think it was coming up on — I've been teaching for a while before I got my first memo — I mean they told me I had to take courses, but nobody told me that if you don't take six hours you're going to be fired so that was kind of a shock; and then I thought actually if started teaching in the middle of the year they would give me until that time next year to get the courses taken. If I started in December why do I have to take six hours before June — I hadn't had the full year like everybody else. At first I was kind of like I should have until December, but that's not the case, I still had to have my coursework submitted by June. So the whole process was basically rushed because I was trying to get enrolled in classes so I could maintain my job. So each time I talked to somebody it wasn't let's sit down and talk — it was I need to get in this course — try to get it figured out. Now that I have some more time I'm going to go back and try to set up a meeting and have somebody sit down and explain to me how that plan of study works and how much I've got into it; but at the meetings there is no sit down one-on-one because there's so many Lateral Entry teachers, I guess. I guess they're doing the best that they can with it, it not really clear. I feel like they could set up some kind of packet, some kind of something were you can go online, punch in your name and see where you're at and where you need to be headed to like a degree audit at a university. I think there should be a similar process. And you can go anywhere and take your courses — so why am I having to go out to the university that I decided to go to and have them tell me? What happens if I decide not to go to that university because they are too expensive and I move to another one? How does that work out? So I do have some concerns with it. But as far as I know I guess I should be alright.

Researcher: So if you take your plan of study to the program director, what happens?

Participant: From my understanding, the program director is in ■■■ and that's a bit of a travel, you email him and he basically checks off and let you know whether or not it's going to work. Now the head of licensure is the person that I'm going to call and set up the meeting with and see if they will sit down with me and fully explain the process. She's extremely nice - I'm guessing that she will do everything to help me. But when I received the plan of study from them there was no sitting down and walking me through the process like I thought there should have been.

Researcher: So the plan of study came directly to you from the person in [REDACTED], or did it come from the director of licensure.

Participant: Basically I guess it was sent from him to licensure and from licensure to me at the school.

Researcher: So there is no one in this county who is directly responsible, other than licensure?

Participant: Not as far as I know. Other than the head of licensure, she's not the director. It's the RALC program which stretches from [REDACTED] County into [REDACTED] County so it more than just here.

Researcher: So you don't have to go through that RALC?

Participant: Right, but I wasn't 100% sure about how the process worked so I was going with them to see. I looked online and seen you could do Lateral Entry but first you had to get a job. So that was first thing first. I came out and interviewed and got the job, check. I expected them to kind of say hey this is next, and when they were asking me, well what is your plan. I was like I'm not sure, I'm not in education, I don't know how this works. I don't know if it's automatic. I don't know how it works. I got set up through the RALC.

15. Researcher: Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Participant: No I guess that's really about it. Coming in Lateral Entry – I guess it puts you at a slight disadvantage because there are those teachers that have that experience in their undergrad taking education courses but still until you step foot into that classroom by yourself – I talked to people who did student teaching, I talked to people that their undergrad was all in education, and pretty much I think everybody says it's just a different experience when you step into that classroom, and it's not so much as could you or could you not have been better prepared for it, but it's you are or aren't willing to do. I guess teaching is not really – it's a learnable trait, you can improve somebody that wants to teach, but at the end of the day it's a trait that just wasn't meant for everybody. I think it's more about personality and what your goals and ambitions are that determined whether you're going to stick in teaching more than anything else.

Researcher: Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Interview of Teacher Who Did Not Complete ACP

An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program

Time of interview: 4:00 p.m. Date: 1/24/2014 Place: Study Room in Public Library

Interviewer: Sherry Park

Interviewee: FT 1- Interviewee #5

Section I - Training

1. Researcher: Tell me a little about yourself, professionally and personally, to help me understand your background.

Participant: I actually taught over 2 ½ years at [REDACTED] Academy— loved it, taught grades 8-12 without licensure or anything. I just had my degree in English and history. Taught English there and found that was my niche – got out when the school closed and did a couple of other different things; and then ended up at [REDACTED] School for the 2012-2013 school year. And I am actually working on my licensure right now through the Lateral Entry program. This year I am a teaching assistant over at [REDACTED] School with 1st graders and it's driving me crazy. I'm ready to get back to the high school, so...

2. Researcher: What were the reasons you decided to enter the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Basically it was a way for me to be able to teach and do what I really enjoy, but also be able to go back and get my certification under their rules rather than having to do the whole four year education degree, it was a lot easier.

3. Researcher: How do you think your personal characteristics, culture, and life experiences have influenced your teaching?

Participant: Because I was educated at a private school with teachers who really pushed us to do our best - we had, whenever I was out there - very high caliber teachers, and I use a lot of the things in their methods in my classroom. I very much believe in the writing aspect which I feel like a lot of English classes have lost. It's more about here read this and prepare for a test and I don't take that standpoint. I tell them here read this and write this so you have a better knowledge of what's out there in the world, what you're going to come up against; and if you want to go to college then this is what you're going to have to do. And my teachers that I had did that for me and it helped me enormously and I want to be able to do that for my students.

Researcher: So when you say you take their stance, do you mean the university that you attend or the high school that you attended?

Participant: The high school that I attended.

Researcher: Which was?

Participant: █████ Academy

Researcher: So you attended █████ Academy and then went back and taught at █████ Academy)?

Participant: Yes

4. Researcher: Describe your positive experiences during your participation within the Alternative Certification Program.

Participant: I enjoyed the access that they gave us to possible routes to technology and working with the kids. I enjoyed the meetings as far as being able to talk with some of my other lateral entry teachers and find out problems they were having because it kind of gave us all a chance to chat and talk. And I think it's been beneficial to be able to have a chance to go back to school and but still be working as well so.

Section II – Challenges

5. Researcher: Describe, in detail, the most common challenges you faced while a participant in the Alternative Certification Program.

Participant: I did not have that great of a mentor so that because questions I had went unanswered I had to drop back to a TA position this year instead of having my classroom. I don't feel like they gave the help that they tell you that they are going to give you in order to help you get to where you want to be in Lateral Entry.

Researcher: Give me some of examples of the kind of help or the questions that you didn't have answered.

Participant: When I was trying to get my courses, █████ lost my information like 8 or 9 times - where I'm trying to get in to take my courses. So I called the main office as well as asking the mentor that I had what are my other options, what is a site that I can go to find out where else I go because that is where I was told to go; and I could not get people

to return my calls. I could not get answers from anybody, and it wasn't until this year as a TA that the teacher I'm working with in 1st grade, her mentor was the one that said "oh sweat heart you can go through these universities, here's a site that you can go to it's got all your information and everything." So and then they really build you up with the beginning teachers' meeting about you need to be using your Smart Board, you need to be using all of this technology. And when I walked into my classroom all I had was a desk top computer - that was it. I did not even get an overhead, like old school project, until like a month and a half into the school year. I did not get a standard projector that I could hook to a laptop until late October. I did not get an actual laptop until about a week and half later. Then that was my technology. I did get an iPad in the middle of all of that but then it doesn't do you a whole lot of good when you don't have everything else. So we did a lot teaching old school. So I think that when they do the Lateral Entry preparation for these new teachers coming in they really need to listen – about look I don't have this technology, but you're telling me that it's supposed to be standard, and you're also telling me that as part of my evaluation you're going to be looking for this. And yet I'm getting low scores on technology when you haven't even provided it. So those were my fun challenges.

6. Researcher: How did the challenges influence your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Well, I'm technically still in it, but at first I was told that "well we're not going to honor the RALC plan you're just going to have to go and get your full-fledged degree." That's what the university told me and what I had also been told by Central Office. But then about three months into the semester of me starting to take classes to fit my standard course of study to get that degree then I found out, "oh no sweat heart we will still honor that RALC plan, and oh by the way the course you're taking won't even count towards it"; and it was too late to drop it. So now I'm on the right track to get all of my courses in and hopefully I will be back in my classroom next year. So, but I like the program because I think it's good. I just think that they need to communicate better and be more helpful with their candidates.

Researcher: What type of communication do you feel that you should have received but did not receive?

Participant: I think they could have done a better job of telling me – telling us which specific courses we need to take. I mean I took the wrong course and some of my other Lateral Entry teachers say that they are confused about courses. I think they need to communicate more about whether are on the right track.

7. Researcher: How did the Alternative Certification Program prepare you to face challenges as a teacher?

Participant: It didn't really. I hate to say it. I did a lot of relying on my fellow teachers. It – with our meetings they gave us access to different things that you could use in our classroom, but what I found out the different things that they told us we could use in our classroom – like with any course or any preparation - it's completely different once you are sitting there in the classroom. I would say that my 2 ½ years at ■ Academy did more preparing me for what I was going to have to deal with than the program has. So (laugh)

8. Researcher: Describe the challenging aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.

Participant: Probably trying to get all of the documentation that they want - because like I've been out of high school for 14 years. So getting copies of transcripts sometimes can be difficult. I would also say that if you are a brand new teacher coming in like some of the Lateral Entry participants are, it is very, very daunting to have to do your lesson plans and teach and try to get your courses in; and now that they are requiring that you have to get 6-hours every year, that gets really rough because some of the courses that you need are offered in the summer. And they don't give a whole lot of leeway on some of it. So that's probably the biggest thing is trying to – especially that first year when you're getting use to your classroom and trying to learn all of the political aspects of the school, that gets really hard to balance all that and do coursework. So -

Section III – Support

9. Researcher: What kind of support did (or do) you receive from the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: This year I've gotten more support than I did last year. Because, again I found one of the mentors that actually goes out to the school that I'm at now, and she literally took about 3 days to really sit down with me and helped me and point me in the right direction. And so that's been a lot of the support that I've gotten; most of the time it's was calling and good luck getting a call back. But the mentor that I've found this year has been fantastic and I loved her so.

10. Researcher: How has the support that you have received influenced your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: With the support that I've gotten this year it really, really cemented me staying because I was already looking at going to SC; since I live so close to the border I can hop the border with no problem – that's not a big deal. So if it would not had been for the mentor that I met this year and the help that I got from her, I probably would have said, you know what, I'm going to SC.

11. Researcher: What type of support do you feel was needed but not provided by the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: I would say again just going back to when you ask questions, they need to have someone in place that can answer them and is actually going to come out and say you know look I understand that you are getting really bogged down. Let me help you, kind of help guide you where you need to go. And I think that – I think as far as with Central Office and the with actual State itself they just need to have – I think they need to re-look at their guidelines as far as the courses and things like that because it gets expensive at times getting all these courses in. And there are some of these courses they require that that we take that could be easily covered with an LEA or something like that.

Researcher: So do they reimburse you for the courses?

Participants: No

Researcher: They don't reimburse you?

Participant: The only thing that they will do is like with other teachers, they will grant you about \$1000 a year towards the courses that you take. But anything that goes over that you're responsible for. Well one course at say ■■■ is going to cost you close to \$700, and that's not including if you have to do a book. The course that I'm taking at ■■■ just this semester - and you have to pay that before you can show up at class because you also can't get financial aid because you're just seeking continued study. So you actually are paying out about – I think I paid out about \$800 just for this one semester, and then February 11 I've got to pay out another \$600 for another course that I'm taking. So all in all by the time I'm done, the five courses that I have to take are going to cost me roughly \$3500 and I'm looking at getting about probably \$2000 of that back.

Researcher: So \$1500 out of pocket.

Participant: Yea. So that hurts. (laughter)

Section IV – Improvements

12. Researcher: Describe the positive aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.

Participant: If they get a good mentor. That mentor is amazing. They are a great lifeline because you can call them up on those days when you are just in absolute tears and really ready to walk out the door. And they are excellent about just talking to you; and you know - look you've just had a bad day, let's talk about what happened, let's talk about some things you can do differently. I think that one of the positive aspects is that you

allow people who don't have licensure, that do want to teach the opportunity to go back to school and be able to do that. And I think that's a huge benefit.

13. Researcher: If you could, would you enroll in the Alternative Certification Program again? Why or Why not?

Participant: If I were to enroll in it again, I would definitely – whenever I didn't get all the answers that I wanted, I probably would have gone to different people to get the answers and maybe even outside of our county to find the answers that we need where I tried to stay within our area. So but I would definitely do it again.

14. Researcher: If you had the chance to make recommendations to the Alternative Certification Program director, what would you recommend?

Participant: I would definitely say re-look at the different courses that they require. May be talk with the local universities or you know whatever program you're looking at - kind of relying on for the Lateral Entry teachers - talk to that university or whatever and see if there is something that – some kind of partnership you can do – look we will fund the education of this teacher if they will teach in the state for X amount of years. I think that that will be – that will help lessen the burden on teachers, especially with what we make, and I also think that our state would be able to keep teachers longer if they would set something like that up for Lateral Entry teachers. I would also say that improving the communication and making certain that you really work with those Lateral Entry teachers to make sure that they have all of the information they need. And looking at the first year, give them credit for all of the LEA stuff that is on there and let that actually go as part of that 6-hours that they are required to have rather than requiring them to get two courses in as well as all of these beginning teacher meetings, because there's one to two at least a month, it seems like. And also you've got your regular workload as a teacher – it gets to be a bit much. Kind of - you know looking at what can we do to lighten that workload a little bit and not scare them half to death.

Researcher: What are some examples of the things you do in the beginning teachers' meeting?

Participant: Usually you have to be there by 3:30 which is pushing it because those meeting are usually in [REDACTED] and if you are in [REDACTED] some of the more outlying regions it gets really hard to get there by 3:30. And then you are usually in there from 3:30 until about 4:30 – 5:00. So that takes an hour and a half of time that I could be preparing for my next day. Usually it would be them having like a curriculum specialist come and okay this is what we are doing in math, these are some websites that we can access, this is how you get there, things like that. And okay now you're dismissed.

Researcher: How beneficial do you think those meetings are to you?

Participant: I found some really cool websites, but it's something that you could have easily done a quick little video of it and emailed it to me. I could have watched and been done as opposed to driving 30 minute to [REDACTED] and to turn around and drive 30 minutes back home or further. It gets rough, especially when we look at the price of gas, and we don't get reimbursed for that travel time at all.

Researcher: So it makes it a challenge?

Participant: Yea it definitely does. You know it's an excellent program, but like a lot of excellent programs, it looks great on paper, but once you start doing it there's a lot of room for human error – on the Lateral Entry teacher part and on the supervisory part.

Researcher: Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Participant: No, not really that I know of.

Researcher: So how far along are you now in the new course that you are taking – that you need to take?

Participant: Well I'm actually taking grammar, that's what I was actually doing when you came in. I'm about two weeks into it and it will go until May.

Researcher: Is that the one that you were taking and found out that you did not need?

Participant: No, I've already finished the other one. I'm really glad I took the course because I really liked the professor I had, but had I known I could have already had two other courses taken care of.

Researcher: How did you end up taking that course?

Participant: Whenever I went to [REDACTED], after they finally sent me my acceptance letter – because I got told that I had to be accepted into the university so I had to apply like I was an undergraduate student, didn't have a BA or anything – that's what I got told. Then I found out “oh no they told you wrong, you should've just applied to the school of education.” Well I had gone to the school of education and they were the ones that had told me that I had to apply to the university and be accepted.

Researcher: So is there kind of a disconnect between the Lateral Entry program and the university?

Participant: Yea - and so in talking to them finally after I got my acceptance stuff – and they had lost my things like 10 times – about 9 or 10 times, including the \$45 checks that I had written each time I had to apply – thankfully they didn't cash them - but they kept losing my stuff and it was kind of a touchy situation, I wasn't very pleased. But whenever I finally got my information, I went immediately to the board and I said look this is my dilemma, “well we'll work with you on it.” Well, their form of working with me on it was me getting a letter and saying I didn't have a job for this year. And then finding this out like August 1st and then getting told “well we found you a TA position”, which meant an \$11,000 cut in salary a year, and having to drive 66 miles round trip as opposed to 16 miles; so that's really been kind of irksome. But then through █████ University I got told well they're not going to honor - and we can't follow the RALC plan so you're actually going to have to seek your education degree. So we were looking at me having to take about 40 - 46 hours and okay well they told me one of the courses that I was going to have to take was Speech. By the time they finally got my plan of study it was the day that classes started. So I didn't even get to go to the first class, I had to actually go that Thursday. Well finally got signed up for everything. I asked when I have to pay tuition and I got told well we'll work with you on it and you know you just pay it along. Well you know, I needed to know a due date so I could get it together. I showed up for class at 5:30, the class started at like 6:00, but I wanted to be there a little bit early. As I'm pulling up in the parking lot – I had gotten an email at 3:00 saying that I was accepted into the course so I had to get over there by 5:00. Then I get an email at 5:30 as I'm pulling over or pulling up into the parking lot. “Well you've been dropped from the course because you haven't paid your tuition yet.” And so finally got all of that straightened out, got into the class – no problem- explained to the professor what was going on. He was like don't worry about it you'll be fine; went out the next day paid tuition, because, of course, when they sent me the email the registrar's office was already closed. So then in late October I talked with the mentor at the school I'm at now, and she told me she said “so what exactly is going on” cause she had heard my teacher and I talking about it. And she said let's look at what's going on, and she started asking questions. And when she started asking questions, I started filling in the blanks – you know – for her and that's when I found out – oh no we're going to talk to this person and we're going to talk to that person – you're going to get a copy of this but you're not going to tell anybody that I'm doing this for you because I'll get in trouble.

Researcher: They didn't want her to help you?

Participant: No. She was told that she's responsible for her section, and only for certain things, and- but she knew what to do and she's like “I don't care if they want me to help you are not, we're going to get this done.” So if it wouldn't have been for her, I would still be trying to get an education degree and stuck in a TA position for the next two or three years at least. And she was like “oh no, no, no this is what we're going to do.” So she was able to show me, you'll get a certificate for this, for this, and for this – for LEA stuff which they didn't even bother to tell us in the TA – excuse me – in the beginning

teacher program. They just handed you - mailed you this sheet that I didn't even get until like November saying these are the courses you need.

Researcher: So this is your plan of study and it's just mailed to you?

Participant: Yea, they just mail it to you.

Researcher: They didn't talk to you about it?

Participant: No they just send it to you. And what I was told by the mentor that I was talking to – “If you had been one of mine – I know when these get mailed out.” She said you should have had yours in September, the beginning of September – not November. She said “so had I known that” – she said “I would have been asking you September 1st, you got it yet, you got it yet, you got it yet, you got it yet.” My mentor never even asked about any of them; and whenever I'm asking “well just call Central Office and they'll help you.” And so now I'm on the right course – I did finish the other class and loved it which I think I mainly stayed in it – well partially because they weren't going to give me a refund because it was so late in the semester by the time I found out oh you don't need this course. But I think it'll help me in teaching speech and writing in all for my kids in the high school area. And then January 11, or whatever date it was, I started my grammar course. February 11, I will start the other four courses that I have to take through the University of Phoenix.

Researcher: You're going to do four at once?

Participant: Well I'm doing this one and then Feb. 11 and I start one – because they are only six week courses. And then when that six week course ends the next day or maybe a couple of days later I start the next one. And then I'm going to take like a two month break and then do the other two in August, I think it is. But I have been told by Central Office “well as long as you get at least two courses out of the way you'll be able to go back into teaching next year.” So... I guess it's an awesome program, but there are a lot of kinks in it. And I am not sure if it's on our county's end or if it's a statewide issue, or whatever; but the kinks I think are what – when teachers leave the kinks are what cause them a lot of time to leave.

15. *Researcher:* Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Participant: No that's it.

Researcher: Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Transcript of Interview of Alternative Certification Program Director

An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program

Time of interview: 4:00 p.m. Date: Jan. 28, 2014 Place: ██████ NC

Interviewer: Sherry Park

Interviewee: PA1 - Interviewee #9

Section I - Training

I. Researcher: Tell me a little about yourself, professionally and personally, and how you became the Alternative Certification Program Director.

Participant: I am an educator of 21 years. I taught all grades Kindergarten through 5th grade during my 16 years in the classroom. I was an AP for 2 years in a Pre-K thru 8th grade school. I was a principal for 1 year in a Pre-K thru 4th grade school. I am currently Director of Licensure, completing my 2nd year. I have always enjoyed the world of education and after 16 years in the classroom, I wanted to continue in education, but in a different capacity. I love administration being able to lead and guide others who have a passion for children. The Alternative Certification Program is a part of my “Licensure” duties and responsibilities. I enjoy the “ACP” aspect because I believe that people do sometimes find out that “children” are their passion and making a difference in the lives of children is something they want to do. Everyone doesn’t know what they want to do “professionally” in the beginning of their careers.

Researcher: Have you had any training specifically related to the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: Actually no, there has been no training specifically geared toward ACP. I’ve had to learn everything on my own.

Researcher: Without training, how do you decide what needs to happens if participants do not complete the required coursework within the allotted time?

Participant: I know form guidelines that their license with the state expires and they will be non-renewed. But it’s not like they just don’t know their status. Within those three years we have meetings and they have mentors to help them stay on track. If they do not

complete requirements, they receive certified letters from the superintendent indicating termination.

2. *Researcher:* Describe the major characteristics of the participants who enter the Alternative Certification Program in this school district?

Participant: Most of our “ACP” participants are people who decided later into their careers that they really had a passion for teaching and making a difference in the lives of children. They are people who have a four year degree, but started out doing something that they thought they wanted to do, but had a change of heart later. In some cases, these participants didn’t know what they wanted to do and just did something to complete “a degree”. Some of the participants find out they can’t find a job with their degree so they pursue education.

3. *Researcher:* How do you think the characteristics of the Alternative Certification Program teachers who enter the program in this school district influence their decision to remain in the program?

Participant: For some of the participants, finding a job is enough to keep them in the position. Others, finding their passion and helping children, doing what makes them happy is enough to keep them in the profession. Unfortunately, it isn’t that way for all participants.

Section II – Challenges

4. *Researcher:* What do you feel are the most common challenges faced by Alternative Certification Program participants?

Participant: One of the most common challenges is the example of the person who comes in because they can’t find a job in their field. In this example, a lot of times, these people do not stay in the profession because they find out teaching is a really hard job.

Researcher: Does the school district do anything to specifically help ACP teachers who no longer want to stay in the profession because it is more difficult than they thought?

Participant: No, other than offering them a mentor - all new teachers are provided a mentor who goes out to visit them and help them with whatever they need; but, the Lateral Entry program does not have anything specifically for them. That’s all we can do.

5. Researcher: How does the Alternative Certification Program prepare participants to meet those challenges that they might experience in this school district?

Participant: The “ACP” allows participants to work in the field and experience the advantages as well as the challenges as they pursue the licensure process. This allows them to drop out of the program if they see it is not for them.

Researcher: In your professional opinion, does the ACP do enough to help teachers in the program handle the challenges that they will face as new teachers?

Participant: In my opinion this is a professional position and opportunity that they are exploring and I think they should be self-motivated and ready for the experience. It’s a lot to take on but I think they should be ready for it. I don’t think they know what they are getting into. Many are not willing to take on the challenge. I think it is a wonderful opportunity because they are getting the same pay as a teacher who actually went through the process of getting a license.

6. Researcher: How do you think the challenges of the Alternative Certification Program teachers influence their decision to remain in the Alternative Certification program?

Participant: The program is challenging in itself. Not only do the participants face the day to day challenges that the state and district require, but the coursework and other requirements that they must attend to all at the same time. It isn’t an easy task, but if they meet all of these challenges and still have the desire to teach, they will probably continue in the program and stay in the profession.

Section III – Support

7. Researcher: Describe the type of support that the Alternative Certification Program offers participants.

Participant: There isn’t a lot of support through the program itself. There is a regional person in charge in which the participants can e-mail for advice on what to take and where to find the courses. Other than that, we at the district level only offer support through the Beginning Teacher Program.

8. Researcher: How do you think the type of support that the Alternative Certification Program offers participants influences their decision to remain in the program?

Participant: Support through the program itself is very little, therefore if the individuals are not self-disciplined and goal oriented; the program may be discouraging. They must be self-motivated.

9. Researcher: What type of support do you feel was needed for participants but not provided by the Alternative Certification Program?

Participant: I personally feel that these individuals should know what they are up against prior to entering the program and should not expect to be “spoon-fed”. I understand it is a very challenging task, but those teachers who went through the education program while in college did not have the advantages of those in the “ACP” program. One example is the pay scale. “ACP” participants get paid a teacher salary while earning their license. That is a great incentive in itself.

Section IV- Improvements

10. Researcher: What is your opinion concerning teacher retention based on?

Participant: Regardless of statistics, I feel teacher retention would be better if salaries were better. Teaching is the hardest job in the world if done properly and appreciated so little.

Researcher: Do you think that more money would help the Lateral Entry teachers remain in the program even if they feel that it is more difficult than they thought?

Participant: Absolutely not, because they are not willing to take on the sacrifice. That’s not all of them but many of them don’t read what’s required of them and they don’t take it seriously.

11. Researcher: If you could design your own Alternative Certification Program, how would it resemble the Alternative Certification Program of this school district?

Participant: I think the school district does a great job in supporting the “ACP” participants. They have a lot of support at the district level.

Researcher: What are some examples of some the support that they receive at the district level?

Participant: They have monthly meetings, they have mentors that they see on a weekly basis. We do offer a \$1000 reimbursement for coursework each school year. They have a buddy – buddy teacher assigned at the school level that they can see on a daily basis and the RALC representative.

Researcher: Is that RALC representative in the county?

Participant: No he is in [REDACTED] and they can communicate via email.

Researcher: Do you feel that the support offered by the ACP is sufficient to meet the needs of current ACP teachers?

Participant: Yes I think so, but I wish there was more up front – I wish the requirements were more up front. I don't think they have enough knowledge of dealing with students and classroom management.

12. Researcher: Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Participant: I think this program gives participants a second chance in choosing the career that is right for them by allowing them to work in the profession they love – hopefully – get paid for it and earn licensure at the same time.

Researcher: Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this interview and in this study.

Appendix C: Excerpt from Codebook Matrix

Table 2

Participant Code	Participant Response	Code	Theme	Inductive Theme
CT 1	<p>...It makes logical sense, you know if you have questions you need to ask them, but there is that and the coursework is so confusing – understanding what classes that you have to take. I don't feel like it's just laid out –take this class, take that class, take that class. I feel like that process could be simpler. And there is no help for me financially when I'm taking my classes. So last year, I took my classes during the summer; because when I started teaching it was December. So it was middle of January before I found out that I had to have six hours submitted in June. It was too late to enroll in classes then. The only option I had was to take summer classes. Since that was my first year teaching I was set up on ten month pay. So I had to figure out a way to pay for my classes this summer out of pocket which was almost impossible. I couldn't get any financial aid because RALC does not allow financial aid. I really couldn't get a loan. If it wouldn't been for my family being able to help me out, I wouldn't be able to take any classes and stay in education.</p>	<p>Unclear guidelines regarding course requirements</p> <p>Struggle to finance required courses</p> <p>Unclear guidelines regarding when courses must be taken</p>	<p>Program ambiguity</p> <p>Financial constraints</p> <p>Program ambiguity</p>	<p>Re-structure and clarify program requirements</p>
CT 2	<p>...One of my biggest issues is going back to school and trying to teach. I feel like they should give us the like second year to start our studies, besides like the first year. The first year we are just busy trying to get different materials and everything; so now we have to enroll in school at the same time and then somebody like me a single parent it's a lot.</p>	<p>Difficulty completing requirements in allotted time span.</p>	<p>Program time constraints</p>	
CT 3	<p>It's difficult to even ask questions when you call central office to get in contact</p>	<p>Unclear guidelines</p>	<p>Program Ambiguity</p>	

	with them to ask additional information about –like what additional classes do I need? Where am I headed? You get a little bit lost on it, and you don't have a mentor coming back for another month; and you have question. It's difficult to get answers.	regarding required courses	
CT 4	I am not sure how lateral entry works for every state, but I'll particularly say in my case, according to NC, the biggest challenge is the time span for taking your courses and completing that lateral entry to receive certification.	Difficulty completing requirements in allotted time span	Program time Constraints
FT1	When I was trying to get my courses, I lost my information like 8 or 9 times - where I'm trying to get in to take my courses. So I called the main office as well as asking the mentor that I had, what are my other options? What is a site that I can go to find out where else I can go because that is where I was told to go; and I could not get people to return my calls. I could not get answers from anybody.		
FT2	The one thing that I didn't get answered that I wish I had asked and that should be a mandatory question for this university should have been the after effects of not getting certified. Such as they give a probationary period and you're told that you can come back.		
FT3	I feel that complete knowledge of the ins and outs of the program is a must to be successful in this program, being guided by someone who is new and inexperienced would be a disadvantage to the new hire. I did not have a full understanding of the program. I didn't know about scholarships or ways to finance the courses that I had to take. I didn't know that I would not have a job until August 1.	Feels that courses do not meet needs No immediate supervision	Program restructuring Need for immediate supervision

FT4

I didn't find the program - I had three courses – this is what happened. They did not renew my contract after the third year because I didn't take three courses that they required. I forget what they were but they were education – strictly education courses. I had taken a couple of other courses, a math course at [REDACTED] and a reading for content I think was the other course I took, but there were three others that I had to take in order to get renewed for the fourth year or get the full certificate; and I didn't have those three. So that was the challenge. I didn't want to do those three courses. I mean I have so much time to do and even though they had the consortium and all that and it would have been cheap and online, I just didn't have the time to – if I want to learn something – I have things that I'm deficient in and I still want to learn and it's not education courses so that was the issue.

PA1

There isn't a lot of support through the program itself. There is a regional person in charge in which the participants can e-mail for advice on what to take and where to find the courses. Other than that, we at the district level only offer support through the Beginning Teacher Program.

PA2

One of the major challenges that I hear is that participants need more direction in the type of coursework needed, where to find courses that are needed

Appendix D: Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

As a doctoral student at Walden University, I am examining the Alternative Certification (Lateral-Entry) Programs (ACP) available to teachers in Southeastern North Carolina. My name is Sherry Park, but you may know me as a former teacher-of-the-year and a current administrator (associate principal) in this school district; however, this study is separate from those roles. It is being conducted by me solely as a doctoral student at Walden University. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your personal knowledge and experiences in the ACP of the school district of this study. Your knowledge and experiences will assist me in gaining an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of teachers who participate in programs such as this Alternative Certification Program (ACP).

This form is part of a process called “informed consent” and is designed to allow you to gain an understanding of this study before deciding whether or not to participate. Therefore, please read the information provided and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate. If you decide to participate, you may stop participating at anytime during the study.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a 45- to 60-minute face-to-face tape recorded interview for transcription purposes.
- Participate in a memberchecking procedure, which will include viewing my interpretations of your perceptions and experiences while in the Alternative Certification Program, to ensure accuracy

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Your decision of whether or not to participate will be respected. No one in your school or the school district will treat you differently if you decide not to be a part of this study. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind at any time during the study and your decision will be respected as well.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Participating in this study will yield no foreseeable risk to your health, safety, or well-being. However, others may benefit from your participation as you reflect upon and examine your experiences within the Alternative Certification Program. Your answers to interview questions may assist the Alternative Certification Program officials to change policies, rules, and/or regulations which may allow new participants to go through a more refined program.

Payment:

No one will receive any monetary or other types of compensation for participating in this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research study; neither will I include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study report. Data will be kept at my home in a locked storage room to which no one else has access. The audio recording device and raw data will be stored in

an attaché case secured by a combination lock until they are stored in locked file cabinets in the secured storage room. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years and destroyed thereafter, as required by Walden University policy. The right is reserved, however, to refer names of any individuals who disclose intent to harm themselves or others to counselors.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions at any time throughout the process. You may contact me by email at sherry.park@waldenu.edu .I may also be contacted at home by phone at 1-843-774-2339 or 1-843-632-1665. If you desire to speak privately about your rights as a participant, you may contact a Walden University representative by calling 1-612-312-1210 or e-mailing irb@waldenu.edu.

Walden University’s approval number for this study is 12-05-13-0235312 and it expires on December 4, 2014.

You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel that I am able to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above. I also understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation at any time.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of Consent _____

Participant’s Signature _____

Researcher’s Signature _____



Appendix E: Letter of Cooperation

Date:

Walden University
c/o Office of Human Subjects

Please note that Mrs. Sherry Park, a Walden University doctoral student, has the permission of the superintendent to conduct a qualitative case study in the schools of this district for her study entitled “An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program.”

Mrs. Park will contact potential study participants to recruit for the study at a New and Beginning Teacher Meeting. As part of this study, I authorize the collection of data through interviews of the ACP administrators and individual teachers who voluntarily participate. Furthermore, Mrs. Park is authorized to meet with participants after data have been collected and analyzed: (1) to allow them to review transcripts of their interviews; (2) to ensure that the findings accurately reflect and validate their thoughts and feelings; (3) to help improve the overall accuracy, credibility, and validity of the study; and (4) to disseminate overall findings.

Mrs. Sherry Park is granted permission to continue her study until results have been concluded; however, individuals’ participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

As a part of the study, I understand that the responsibilities of the school district includes the following: (1) providing Mrs. Park the opportunity to interview Alternative Certification Program administrators; (2) allowing Mrs. Park to attend the New Teacher Meeting to explain and seek participants for her study; and (3) informing principals at

respective schools that permission has been granted by the school district for Mrs. Park to visit the school for the purpose of interviewing ACP participants who volunteered to participant in her study.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in the public schools of this county. I also understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the university without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Sincerely,

Dr. [REDACTED]
Assistant Superintendent
Instruction and Curriculum

Appendix F: Certificate of Completion



Appendix G: Alternative Certification Participants Interview Protocol

An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program

Time of interview: _____ Date: _____ Place: _____

Interviewer: Sherry Park

Interviewee: _____

Section I - Training

1. Tell me a little about yourself, professionally and personally, to help me understand your background.
2. What were the reasons you decided to enter the Alternative Certification Program?
3. How do you think your personal characteristics, culture, and life experiences have influenced your teaching?
4. Describe your positive experiences during your participation within the Alternative Certification Program.

Section II – Challenges

5. Describe, in detail, the most common challenges you faced while a participant in the Alternative Certification Program.
6. How did the challenges influence your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?
7. How did the Alternative Certification Program prepare you to face challenges as a teacher?
8. Describe the challenging aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.

Section III – Support

9. What kind of support did (or do) you receive from the Alternative Certification Program?

10. How has the support that you have received influenced your decision to remain in or leave the Alternative Certification Program?
11. What type of support do you feel was needed but not provided by the Alternative Certification Program?

Section IV – Improvements

12. Describe the positive aspects of the Alternative Certification Program for anyone seeking to enroll.
13. If you could, would you enroll in the Alternative Certification Program again? Why or Why not?
14. If you had the chance to make recommendations to the Alternative Certification Program director, what would you recommend?
15. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you very much for your participation in this study.

Appendix H: Alternative Certification Program Administrator Interview Protocol

An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program

Time of interview: _____ Date: _____ Place: _____

Interviewer: Sherry Park

Interviewee: _____

Section I - Training

1. Tell me a little about yourself, professionally and personally, and how you became the Alternative Certification Program Director.
2. Describe the major characteristics of the participants who enter the Alternative Certification Program in this school district?
3. How do you think the characteristics of the Alternative Certification Program teachers who enter the program in this school district influence their decision to remain in the program?

Section II – Challenges

4. What do you feel are the most common challenges faced by Alternative Certification Program participants?
5. How does the Alternative Certification Program prepare participants to meet those challenges that they might experience in this school district?
6. How do you think the challenges of the Alternative Certification Program teachers influence their decision to remain in the Alternative Certification program?

Section III – Support

7. Describe the type of support that the Alternative Certification Program offers participants.

8. How do you think the type of support that the Alternative Certification Program offers participants influences their decision to remain in the program?
9. What type of support do you feel was needed for participants but not provided by the Alternative Certification Program?

Section IV- Improvements

10. What is your opinion concerning teacher retention based on?
11. If you could design your own Alternative Certification Program, how would it resemble the Alternative Certification Program of this school district.
12. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this interview and in this study.

Appendix I: Institution Review Board (IRB) Approval

Subject :	Notification of Approval to Conduct Research-Sherry Park
Date :	Thu, Dec 05, 2013 10:48 AM CST
From :	IRB <IRB@waldenu.edu>
To :	"sherry.park@waldenu.edu" < sherry.park@waldenu.edu >
CC :	Doctoral Study <DoctoralStudy@waldenu.edu> , " Nori Mora, Ed.D. (nori.mora@waldenu.edu) " < nori.mora@waldenu.edu >

Dear Ms. Park,

This email is to serve as your notification that Walden University has approved BOTH your doctoral study proposal and your application to the Institutional Review Board. As such, you are approved by Walden University to conduct research.



Please contact the Office of Student Research Administration at doctoralstudy@waldenu.edu if you have any questions.

Congratulations!

Jenny Sherer
Associate Director, Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

Leilani Endicott
IRB Chair, Walden University

Subject : **IRB Materials Approved-Sherry Park**
 Date : Thu, Dec 05, 2013 10:47 AM CST
 From : [IRB <IRB@waldenu.edu>](mailto:IRB@waldenu.edu)
 To : ["sherry.park@waldenu.edu" <sherry.park@waldenu.edu>](mailto:sherry.park@waldenu.edu)
 CC : [Doctoral Study <DoctoralStudy@waldenu.edu>](mailto:DoctoralStudy@waldenu.edu), ["Nori Mora, Ed.D. \(nori.mora@waldenu.edu\)" <nori.mora@waldenu.edu>](mailto:Nori.Mora.Ed.D.@waldenu.edu)

Attachments:  [Park Sherry Consent Form.pdf](#)


Dear Ms. Park

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "An Examination of an Alternative Certification Program."

Your approval # is 12-05-13-0235312. You will need to reference this number in your doctoral study and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on December 4, 2014. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 1 week of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained at the IRB section of the Walden web site or by emailing irb@waldenu.edu:

<http://researchcenter.waldenu.edu/Application-and-General-Materials.htm>

Researchers are expected to keep detailed records of their research activities (i.e., participant log sheets, completed consent forms, etc.) for the same period of time they retain the original data. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Please note that this letter indicates that the IRB has approved your research. You may not begin the research phase of your doctoral study, however, until you have received the **Notification of Approval to Conduct Research** e-mail. Once you have received this notification by email, you may begin your data collection.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKlmdiQ_3d_3d

Alex Dohm

Research Service Specialist
Center for Research Quality
Walden University
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900
Minneapolis, MN 55401

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