

2021

## Alternative Certification Teachers' Perceptions About Teacher Preparation Programs

Mary Kathleen Huffman  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Mary Kathleen Huffman

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Alternative Certification Teachers' Perceptions About Teacher Preparation Programs

by

Mary Kathleen Huffman

MA, Western Illinois University, 2008

BS, Western Illinois University, 2001

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2020

## Abstract

Due to the teacher shortage in a U.S. southeastern state, administrators at Unified School District (USD, a pseudonym) hired alternative teacher certification program (ATCP) teachers enrolled in graduate level education courses through ATCPs while teaching full time. These ATCP teachers have bachelor's degrees and work experiences in various professions. The problem investigated in this study was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. The conceptual framework was Shulman's pedagogical content knowledge model. Ten ATCP teachers participated in semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed using open and axial coding, and the following 5 themes emerged: teachers felt that their ATCP prepared them for teaching the College and Career Readiness Standards; their prior experiences prepared them to teach; they felt prepared to integrate effective pedagogical practices; they did express the need for continued professional development training; and they noted the lack of instructional support in the school. Based on the study results, a professional development training was created to continue the preparation of ATCP teachers. The implications for positive social change are that future ATCP teachers may be more confident and satisfied in their new career and hence, help USD to have enough teachers for their students that can offer them quality education.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this study to all of the diverse students in higher education. You deserve a strong educational system to support your goals.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the faculty, family members, and friends who have helped me reach this point in my academic career. I have always pushed myself to achieve as many goals as possible throughout my lifetime, but I could not have done it without you. My parents and family are key factors for me continuing my education to the doctoral level. They encouraged me when the road became challenging, and they have cheered me on all the way through the doctoral finish line. I truly treasure and love each of you from the bottom of my heart!

Dr. Sara Simonson has always been my role model in education. She continues to lead in the field of education, and I cannot wait to follow in her footsteps. Barbara Hairfield is another role model in my life because she works tirelessly to provide resources and active professional development training for teachers. She motivates educators to strengthen their instructional strategies while providing lessons that meet the needs of all learners. These women are true inspiration for all women in the field of education!

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **The Local Problem**

In the 1980s, alternative teacher certification programs (ATCP) were developed to attempt to relieve the teacher shortage in the United States (Miller, Elder, Seymour, Brenner, & Cheatham, 2019). Since that time, ATCPs have proliferated throughout the country. The Unified School District (USD, a pseudonym) in the southeastern United States has hired ATCP teachers since 1984 in order to address severe teacher shortages (U.S. Department of Education, 2019a). At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, USD employed 105 ATCP teachers in 85 schools. These ATCP teachers were prepared by six different ATCP programs based on the type of teacher training needed.

To be enrolled in an ATCP program, individuals must have a bachelor's degree in a noneducation discipline and pass a Federal Bureau of Investigation background check. Once the ATCP teachers are hired by USD and individual principals, they simultaneously complete three graduate-level education courses through one of the six ATCP 3-year programs while teaching full time. Prior to applying for a standard teaching license in the third year of the ATCP, ATCP teachers must pass the same teacher certification exam as a traditional teacher with a bachelor's degree in the field of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2019a). The problem investigated by this study was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers in USD.

Stakeholders were concerned that ATCP teachers left the profession or the local school district because they may not have received the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom. One principal in USD questioned the practice of placing ATCP teachers

in fulltime teaching positions when they had neither student teaching experience nor time to practice teaching with the students before having their own classroom of students.

Another principal within USD expressed concern regarding a trend toward high teacher attrition among ATCP teachers who worked at the elementary and middle schools across USD. Concerns with teacher attrition across the target southeastern state are identified in Table 1. Table 1 includes the USD teacher attrition rates and the southeastern state's teacher attrition rates from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. The southeastern state's attrition rates account for teachers who left the state for any reason and teachers who moved into a nonteaching position within the southeastern state.

Table 1 includes a summary of both the overall teacher attrition rates for the USD and the southeastern state where the USD is located. Teacher attrition rates mostly increased over a 5-year period.

Table 1

*Southeastern State: Teacher Attrition Rates Over a 5-Year Period*

School year	USD teacher attrition rates	Southeastern state teacher attrition rates
2013-14	10.7%	7.0%
2014-15	11.4%	7.3%
2015-16	11.4%	7.4%
2016-17	13.3%	7.7%
2017-18	13.9%	7.8%

*Note.* Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) 2013-2014; 2014-2015; 2015-2016; 2016-2017; 2017-2018.

USD is the second largest in the target southeastern state. This is significant because there is a trend toward high teacher attrition across the target southeastern state.

According to USD's state department of education website from 2017, researchers

analyzed district report cards from the 2013-2014 to the 2017-2018 school year and reported that the USD had a teacher attrition increase of 3.2% over a 5-year period. The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA; 2018a) reported an increase between the 2015-2016 and the 2017-2018 school year, with a rise of 1.9% in 1 year. All across the target southeastern state, teacher attrition is on the rise (CERRA, 2019). From the 2013-2014 to the 2017-2018 school year, an .8% increase in teacher attrition has been reported, according to USD's state department of education's 2017 website post. Researchers also identified on the USD's state department of education website in 2017 the rise of teacher attrition means that there are more teacher vacancies to fill with international and ATCP teachers

A growing trend of ATCP teacher attrition across the target southeastern state was identified (CERRA, 2019). Table 2 includes the total number of teachers and ATCP teachers who left their teaching position at the end or during the school year across the target southeastern state. From the 2013-2014 school year to the 2017-2018 school year, a rise of teacher attrition was identified for all teachers and ATCP teachers in the target southeastern state.



Table 2

*Southeastern State: Teacher Attrition Rates for All Teachers Versus ATCP Teachers*

School year	Total ATCP teachers who left their position	All teachers who left their position	ATCP teachers who left with 1 year or less experience	ATCP teachers who left with 2-5 years of experience	ATCP teachers who left with over 5 years of experience
2013-14	102 (1%)	5,278	37	52	13
2014-15	186 (3.5%)	5,352	77	96	13
2015-16	209 (3.2%)	6,482	55	125	29
2016-17	270 (4%)	6,705	81	136	53
2017-18	237 (3%)	7,340	98	72	67

*Note.* Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) 2014-2015; 2015-2016; 2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019.

It was reported that within the 2013-2014 school year, 1% of all teachers leaving their positions in the southeastern state were ATCP teachers (102; CERRA, 2014). This number increased to 4% of ATCP teachers (270) leaving their position during the 2016-2017 school year, with a 3% increase in 3 years (CERRA, 2017). ATCP teacher attrition rose for those who left with 1 year or less teaching experience from the 2013-2014 school year (37 ATCP teachers) through the 2017-2018 school year (98 ATCP teachers; CERRA, 2018). Because these ATCP teachers had 1 year or less of teaching experience, they did not complete an ATCP, so they did not earn a teaching certificate. An additional yearly rise in ATCP teacher attrition was reported between the 2013-2014 school year and the 2017-2018 school year for the ATCP teachers who left the classroom after teaching more than 5 years, with a rise from 13 to 67 ATCP teachers (CERRA, 2018). During the 2015-2016 school year, 209 ATCP teachers left the classroom. Of the 209

ATCP teachers, 21% left because of personal choice, 11% changed jobs, and 14% left after teaching 2 years (CERRA, 2016). Due to the rising trend in ATCP teacher attrition, stakeholders are concerned that ATCP teachers leave the profession or the local school district because they may not have received the tools needed to be successful in the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools.

### **Rationale**

I became interested in researching ATCP teachers and the contribution they have made at the local school district after speaking to the principal of the school at which I teach. The principal frequently expressed the value of ATCPs privately and in presentations to groups. Additionally, an interview of this principal was posted on the state Department of Education website to endorse ATCPs and describe the transition from a prior career to a job in teaching (U.S. Department of Education, 2019a). However, the principal stated that improvements were necessary to strengthen these programs. According to a district-level administrator, ATCP teachers lack teaching skills, yet they are teaching full time.

After speaking with the principal at my school, I wanted to gather additional perceptions of ATCPs from people within USD. A different school administrator, not at my school, who earned an education degree through an ATCP, described the difficulty of teaching classes without participating in student teaching while attending graduate-level courses. Moreover, two school-level administrators from USD, not at my school,

expressed concerns regarding the capabilities of ATCP teachers. Many of these same concerns about the preparation of ATCP teachers have been identified in professional literature (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Curry, Webb, & Latham, 2016).

Curry et al. (2016) cited classroom management as a significant concern for ATCP teachers while Lewis-Spector (2016) identified the lack of literacy training as an area of weakness. After learning about ATCPs, I spoke to the director of certification for USD to inquire about the ATCP attrition rates and the increase or decrease in ATCP teachers. The director of certification could not share the teacher attrition rates with me, but the director speculated there was an increase in the hiring of ATCP teachers within USD. Therefore, I reviewed data from the Southeastern State Department of Education to identify ATCP teacher attrition rates from the 2013-2014 school year through the 2018-2019 school year in the Yearly CERRA Reports. In the 2015-2016 school year, seven ATCP teachers were hired at USD and that number increased to 40 ATCP teachers by the 2018-2019 school year. With the increased hiring of ATCP teachers at USD and concerns with teacher preparation across the United States, I decided to explore the perceptions of ATCP teachers to identify strengths within teacher preparation. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Alternative certification:* Teacher certification programs that move candidates into the classroom immediately after a short training to fill teaching positions while attending

evening or weekend classes (U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, 2014).

*Stakeholders:* People who have a stake or interest in some process (Glesne, 2011).

*Teacher turnover rate:* The rate that teachers leave or separate from a school district to leave classroom teaching to move into another position (Colorado Department of Education, 2018).

### **Significance of the Study**

Through my study, ATCP teachers in the classroom were a voice to state what help they wanted in order to be better teachers. This study is significant because my research findings may provide information to support current and future ATCP teachers. The stakeholders, which included the district school board, school district administrators, and the school district principals, may find the results of this study useful to provide support in areas that ATCP teachers identified as areas of weakness in their teaching. Similarly, the findings from this study may assist college institutions in ensuring ATCP teachers have real-world teaching experiences they can use to prepare them for success in the classroom.

### **Research Questions**

The problem investigated by this study was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers at USD. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. Within the literature, there was limited knowledge of ATCP teachers' perceptions of the preparation they

received; moreover, within USD, there was no knowledge of ATCP teachers' perceptions of the preparation they received from their ATCP, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools. The following research questions were addressed:

Research Question 1: What are ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher after being trained in the ATCPs in USD?

Research Question 2: In addition to ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences, what else do ATCP teachers at USD wish they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools?

### **Review of the Literature**

To begin my literature review, I read recently completed project studies to use as exemplars and models to understand the flow of a literature review. I examined many peer-reviewed journals, textbooks from my doctoral program, and primary sources related to ATCPs. The Walden University Library, ProQuest, ERIC database, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Dissertations were used for my review of literature.

The following search terms were used while I was reviewing the literature: *United States teacher shortage, alternative certification programs, perceptions of teacher preparation, adult education, professional development for adults, teacher preparation, teacher certification, teacher turnover, Emily Feistritzer, Program for Alternative Certification for Educators, and Teach for America*. These search terms were used individually and in combination to search for literature published within the past 5 years. After repeated searches did not reveal new literature and the only literature found was older than my target publication dates, I felt my search was complete.

In the first section of the literature review, I describe the conceptual framework that grounded my study. Then I include logical connections between the framework, study approach, and research questions. Next, I present research about ATCPs, concerns with ATCP programs, and the teacher shortage in the United States. In the remainder of the literature review, I discuss research about ATCP teachers' concerns, the Program for Alternative Certification for Educators, and Teach for America.

### **Conceptual Framework**

While preparing for this study, I researched Shulman's (1986) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) model using ERIC and Education Research Complete database. After reading a variety of sources for and against ATCPs, I determined that Shulman's (1987) work was an appropriate framework for my study. Shulman (1987) concluded that the most effective teacher preparation was well-organized and included standards-based instructional activities. Shulman's (1987) PCK model provided an appropriate framework to investigate the perceptions of ATCP teachers who received their preparation from ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools.

### **Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge Model**

Shulman's (1986) PCK model emerged in the parlance of pedagogical theory in the mid-1980s. Shulman developed the theory after investigating the test scores of teacher licensing candidates from five states. There are three types of knowledge distinct to teachers: (a) knowledge of subject matter, (b) knowledge of pedagogical practice, and (c) knowledge of how to teach (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Knowledge of subject matter is

the understanding of the fundamental concepts that are distinct to an academic discipline (Ravgiala, 2002). Knowledge of pedagogical practice is the understanding of teaching practices (Ravgiala, 2002).

Knowledge of how to teach is the convergence of understanding the fundamental concepts of an academic discipline and understanding teaching practices (Shulman, 1986). The convergence of the depth of knowledge of an academic discipline and the understanding of teaching practices were the foundation upon which Shulman developed the PCK model (Feltre, 2016). Ravgiala (2002) stated, “Applied to all disciplines, pedagogical content knowledge is the domain of knowledge that describes the integration of process and content” (p. 28). By integrating the understanding of the concepts of an academic discipline and the understanding of teaching practices to develop PCK, Shulman (1986) conceptualized not only how to present and convey information to promote students’ understanding of content but also how to identify the factors inhibiting or promoting their understanding.

By placing an emphasis on the inextricable link between knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of pedagogical practice, Shulman (1987) prompted a paradigm shift within teacher education. This paradigm shift involved teachers reconsidering the manner in which they perceived the practice of teaching (Jing-Jing, 2014). To promote PCK development among preservice teachers enrolled in teacher education programs, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) expanded upon the PCK model by clarifying its various components.

Gudmundsdottir and Shulman (1987) described the first component as knowledge of concepts germane to the subject matter and knowledge of figurative language such as to help explain content to students. The next component they explicated were knowledge of the various teaching practices to use when presenting subject matter and the various advantages and disadvantages of those practices. The final components they elucidated was knowledge of the barriers students encounter in acquiring new knowledge and knowledge of the negative influence of students' misconceptions on the knowledge acquisition process (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Jing-Jing, 2014). As the prominence of the PCK model increased, researchers made further clarifications and added components to the model (Jing-Jing, 2014).

By the end of the 20th Century, the PCK model was an accepted part of teacher training and practice in the content area of science (Barendsen & Henze, 2019). As the PCK model gained currency among education stakeholders, teacher education programs used the PCK framework to prepare preservice and alternatively certified teachers. ATCPs began to strengthen across the United States because of the teacher shortage, and the PCK framework increased in prominence in the body of knowledge.

A review of the related literature revealed that other researchers have used the PCK model as a conceptual lens to determine if ATCPs are effective mechanisms for promoting teacher effectiveness. Scott, Bruno, and Willis (2019) included approximately 100 provisionally certified teachers who enrolled in an ATCP to complete the requirements for their professional teaching license. Scott et al. noted that school districts across the target southern state hired these provisionally certified teachers to



work with students with disabilities. The provisionally certified teachers were also enrolled in content- and pedagogy-specific coursework in special education.

Using the PCK model as an instructional framework, Scott et al. (2019) developed a two-part survey called the Special Education Teacher Preparation Towards Standards survey (p. 5). Scott et al. found that 92 of the 93 participants rated the ATCP as extremely effective, very positive, or positive for teacher ATCP preparation. The components of the ATCP that participants perceived promoted their success in the program were the online course delivery and the opportunity to participate in field-based learning experiences in K-12 classrooms. The courses that participants believed prepared them to transition successfully into a K-12 special education teaching assignment were those wherein they developed a precise understanding of the learning characteristics of students with disabilities, learned about various classroom management strategies, and increased their capacity to implement individual education programs (IEPs).

Scott et al. (2019) believed that the PCK framework was an appropriate construct for addressing the needs of teachers enrolled in ATCP. They also underscored the importance of investigating the experiences of teachers enrolled in ATCPs and giving them the opportunity to express their positive educational experiences. Scott et al. recommended that educational policymakers mandate that ATCPs incorporate strategies that increase the capacity of teachers to meet the professional teaching standards of one southern state.

Similar to Scott et al. (2019), Feltre (2016) conducted a qualitative case study and used Shulman's PCK conceptual framework to investigate the experiences of teachers

who completed their teacher licensing requirements through ATCPs. Specifically, Feltre sought to investigate the experiences of three first-year science teachers from two different ATCPs to determine if they perceived that ATCPs were effective in promoting their pedagogical content knowledge. Two themes emerged from the data analysis. The first theme was the inability of teachers to transfer their learning experiences in the ATCPs to their instructional experiences in their classroom settings (Feltre, 2016). The second theme was that teachers did not perceive that their learned pedagogical experiences in the ATCPs were effective mechanisms for promoting their pedagogical content knowledge (Feltre, 2016). Participants also perceived that creating relevant learning experiences and providing opportunities for reflection were methods for the translation of learning experiences in ATCPs into classroom practice and for the acquisition of pedagogical content knowledge (Feltre, 2016). On the basis of those findings, Feltre recommended that ATCPs examine their curriculum and course sequences and configure their programs to promote the transferability of learning experiences within ATCPs to the classroom experiences of first-year science teachers.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

#### **Purpose of Alternative Teacher Certification Programs**

In school districts across the United States, a disproportionately high number of K-12 teachers have either retired or have left the teaching profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). According to the results of a nationally representative staffing survey, the teacher turnover rate is especially high in the southern part of the United States, with approximately 17% of teachers beginning the school year in a fulltime

teaching position and leaving the profession by the beginning of the subsequent school year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Given the high teacher turnover rate, the demand for fully certified teachers far exceeds the supply of certified teaching candidates (Black, 2016; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

In one western state, the demand for certified teachers exceeded the supply of certified teachers by about 40%, and this gap has increased in subsequent school years (Black, 2016). At the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, administrators from the school district were unable to fill 300 teacher vacancies (Zeichner, 2017). These teacher vacancies prompted further research regarding teacher shortages in school districts across the United States.

After analyzing many studies about the teacher shortage, Garcia and Weiss (2019) found that the teacher shortage in school districts across the United States has increased, especially in high-poverty schools, and that the demand for teachers has far exceeded the supply of teachers. Garcia and Weiss also found that the number of teacher vacancies in school districts across the United States increased from about 2,000 during the 2012-2013 school year to approximately 110,000 during the 2017-2018 school year, which represents an increase of approximately 108,000 vacancies over a 5-year period. CERRA (2018) reported that at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, 550 teaching positions were vacant in the target southeastern state, which represented a 16% increase when compared to the number of vacancies at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, with the most significant being at the early childhood and elementary level.

Given the 550 teacher vacancies in the target southeastern state during the 2017-2018 school year, educational policymakers created an alternative path to teacher certification for those who wanted to leave their career fields and enroll in an ATCP (CERRA, 2018). The individuals who enroll in ATCPs have diverse educational and professional backgrounds and varying perceptions of the teaching profession. Despite creating an alternate route to teaching across the target state, educational policymakers have not explored ATCP teachers' perceptions of the preparation they received in their bachelor's degree to help teach in K-12 schools. There is also limited information about an ATCP teacher's career and prior experiences preparing them to teach in K-12 schools. ATCP teachers' perceptions of the preparation they received while being trained in an ATCP was another area wherein research was limited.

### **Leader in the Field of Alternative Certification Programs**

Teacher preparation through ATCPs has evolved over the past 50 years. Emily Feistritzer, President and CEO of the National Center for Alternative Certification is a leader in the field of ATCPs across the United States. Using her 50 years of experience in education as a point of reference, Feistritzer concluded that a collaborative approach between ATCP teachers and professors was the most effective teaching method (Feistritzer, 2008). Feistritzer used collaboration and support as the foundation for her Troops to Teachers program, which she began in 1994 to transition military personnel into the classroom (Feistritzer, Hill, & Willett, 1998).

Over 3,000 service members have become teachers through Troops to Teachers programs (Feistritzer et al., 1998). Because of her success in the field of education, Inc.

Magazine (2019) named Feistritzer to the 2019 Top 10 Innovative Women Building Mega-Successful Businesses and Top 100 Female Founders. Inc. Magazine recognized Feistritzer for the innovative Teach-Now Graduate School of Education, where 99.5% of all program completers earned their teaching license (Teach-Now, 2019).

With about 70 million kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in the world and 3.8 million teachers in the United States, Feistritzer recognized the global and domestic influence of teacher education in a variety of school settings (Taie & Goldring, 2017). Feistritzer's motto was that teacher mentoring and classroom experiences for ATCP teachers were effective methods for developing highly qualified teachers. Feistritzer has integrated her motto into The Teach-Now Graduate School of Education (Barwani, Flores, & Imig, 2018). Feistritzer believed that effective teaching and learning were collaborative, interactive, engaging, and were modeled (Barwani et al., 2018). ATCP teachers needed exposure to the same learning strategies they would use when teaching their students (Barwani et al., 2018).

In her 2007 testimony to the Committee on Education and Labor in the U.S. House of Representatives, Feistritzer spoke confidently about The Teach-Now program, noting that one third of new teachers came from ATCPs and that ATCPs were integral components in solving the problem of teacher shortages across the United States (U.S. House of Representatives, 2007). Through her experience with ATCPs and research efforts, Feistritzer has developed an effective ATCP program to train ATCP teachers for their own classroom (Barwani et al., 2018).

### **Program for Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE)**

There are various ATCPs across the United States, and program requirements vary from state to state. One certification program in a state in the southeastern region of the United States is the Program for Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE). This program has been used to hire people who have earned a bachelor's degree, passed an FBI background check, and had no prior student teaching experience (PACE Guidelines, 2016). Two cohorts are created based on when the PACE teachers receive their statement of eligibility, and PACE teachers must attend a summer or winter Pre-Service Institute (PACE Guidelines, 2016).

The pre-service institute typically lasted for 10 days and PACE teachers also received training on state-adopted curriculum (PACE Guidelines, 2016). New teachers also received training in classroom management, lesson plan development, personalized learning, and differentiated instruction (PACE Guidelines, 2016). The Department of Education PACE instructors provided support and training for 2 years while PACE teachers were teaching. The goal of the PACE program was to provide a smooth transition into the field of education (PACE Guidelines, 2016).

### **Teach for America (TFA): An Alternative Certification Program**

Another ATCP is Teach for America (TFA) which began in 1990 and had 50,000 corps members and alumni teaching in regions across the United States (TFA, 2017). Through interviews with TFA teachers, Thomas (2018) identified challenges TFA teachers encountered in their school settings. Thomas found that TFA teachers felt compelled to conceal their affiliation with TFA to avoid being bullied by traditionally

trained ATCP teachers who often bullied TFA teachers. Hoping to conceal their association with TFA, TFA teachers referred to their summer institute training as student teaching (Thomas, 2018). TFA teachers who were unable to conceal their affiliation with TFA noted that colleagues neither ate lunch with them nor visited their classrooms (Thomas, 2018).

Like Thomas (2018), Thomas and Mockler (2018) found that TFA teachers concealed their association with TFA. One of the TFA teachers described their teaching experiences as a time where they had to become something they were not in their teaching role. Another TFA teacher acknowledged her inadequacy in the field of education (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). They perceived their identities as outsiders, apprentices, and free agents (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). In both Thomas's 2018 and Thomas and Mockler's 2018 studies, the researchers revealed that TFA teachers concealed their identities as ATCP teachers.

Like Thomas and Mockler (2018), Gottfried and Straubhaar (2015) investigated the perceptions of TFAs' teachers regarding their ATCP. They also sought to elucidate the reasons TFA teachers left the teaching profession. Gottfried and Straubhaar found that 57% of the TFA teachers viewed the ATCP as a phase in their life rather than the start of their teaching career. Multiple TFA teachers described the reasons for their short-term commitment as stress, lack of work-life balance, working at low-income schools, and difficult administrators (Gottfried & Straubhaar, 2015). Gottfried and Straubhaar (2015) further noted that 47% of the TFA teachers agreed to stay for 3 years, which was 1 year longer than the required 2-year assignment due to a feeling of responsibility to the

students. Therefore, none of the 30 TFA teachers changed their long-term plans to stay in the field of education because of their teaching experience (Gottfried & Straubhaar, 2015).

Tatto et al. (2016) found results similar to those of Gottfried and Straubhaar's in relation to TFA teachers' desire not to return to low-income schools after only a few years teaching (2015). TFA teachers were placed in low-income schools with high needs, resulting in higher teacher turnover, which led to a shortage of teachers in these locations (Gottfried & Straubhaar, 2015; Tatto et al., 2016). The consequences of teacher shortages were increased class sizes and lower student achievement. Researchers from the U.S. Department of Education (2016) found that TFA teachers' students had low test scores in both social studies and English language. McNew-Birren, Hildebrand, and Belknap (2017) interviewed a cohort of TFA science teachers whose students had low standardized test scores. TFA science teachers expressed concern with the practice of using students' test scores as the criteria for measuring teacher effectiveness. TFA teachers attributed the low test scores to students lack of academic ability and they blamed the kids' inabilities and behaviors instead of self-reflecting on their own teaching (McNew-Birren et al., 2017). Even with the low student test scores, TFA and other ATCPs continued to train and place ATCP teachers in schools across the United States to combat the teacher shortage.

### **The Alternative Teaching Certification Population**

On the basis of results from the 2015-16 National Household Education Survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published in 2018, ATCP



teachers were identified as Black (13%), Hispanic (15%), male (32%), and White (66%). Close to 20% of public-school teachers earned their teaching certificate through ATCPs. The following was a breakdown of the specialty areas and the corresponding percentage for each area in which school districts hired ATCP teachers: technical education (37%), natural sciences (28%), foreign languages (26%), English as a second language (24%), math and computer science (22%), and special education (20%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, November 1). Prior to enrolling in an ATCP, 5% of ATCP teachers cared for family members, served on active duty in one of the U.S. military branches, or retired from a job outside the field of education and 30% of ATCP teachers worked in a field outside of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, November 1). With respect to this study, many ATCP teachers in my study may have worked in a field outside of education prior to and while attending their ATCPs, which may have influenced their perceptions of the ATCPs' effectiveness.

High schools hired more ATCP teachers than middle and elementary schools combined (25% vs. 20%; U.S. Department of Education, 2018, November 1). Researchers attributed the discrepancy between the number of ATCP teachers hired at the high school level and the number at the middle school level and elementary level combined to the high schools needing to fill teacher vacancies for 14 eligible certification fields (U.S. Department of Education, PACE, 2017). Charter schools hired more ATCP teachers than public schools (25% vs. 17%; U.S. Department of Education, 2018, November 1). Since various stakeholders created charter schools, they may not have had the funding to pay teachers a competitive salary. Therefore, the teacher turnover rate was

high, and these schools were more likely to hire ATCP teachers. High-poverty schools hired a high percentage of ATCP teachers, with approximately 21% of ATCP teachers working at these schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, November 1). Redding and Smith (2016) concluded that urban schools with a high low-income minority student population were more likely to hire ATCP teachers for hard-to-staff teaching positions.

### **Hiring Alternative Certification Teachers**

Woods (2016) described the ATCP as a quicker path to the classroom for adults who seek a career change when compared to the traditional path in which individuals earned a bachelor's degree in education. The ATCP path to certification has changed from a traditional one-size-fits-all classroom model to a personalized, competency-based, and rigorous model wherein instructors focused on meeting the needs of all learners (Sturgis, 2015). Stakeholders across the United States underscored the importance of recruiting teachers who had the ability to implement measurable learning objectives and meaningful assessments and promoted students' capacity to apply knowledge (Sturgis, 2015).

Redding and Smith (2016) analyzed results from four waves of a nationally representative schools and staffing survey. Redding and Smith (2016) found that in the 1999-2000 school year, ATCP teachers were less likely to leave the teaching profession than teachers certified through a traditional certification program (6% compared to 11%). By the 2007-2008 school year, 27% of ATCP teachers left the field of education or changed schools compared to 17% of traditionally certified teachers. From 1999 through 2008, school districts hired 13-15% ATCP teachers for high-need subjects including

mathematics, science, special education, and English as a second language. They underscored the need to conduct further study into the perceptions and experiences of ATCP teachers to reduce the teacher turnover rate.

Dye's (2018) study related to Redding and Smith's (2016) study because Dye analyzed the movement of ATCP teachers after the ATCP teachers graduated from the ATCP. In Texas, Dye studied the state's alternative route to certification program for people who chose to become music teachers. Dye found that most ATCP teachers were hired to teach music in urban school districts, charter schools, and Title I schools. Urban school districts hired 24% of ATCP teachers while 64% of ATCP teachers worked in low socioeconomic schools as music teachers. During his study, Dye also noted that about a tenth of the ATCP music teachers in Texas did not have any formal education or experience in music. Therefore, principals did not vet potential ATCP music teachers before hiring them in Texas schools, especially those hired in high-need schools.

In addition to high-need schools, schools residing in hurricane-prone states hired ATCP teachers. School- and district-level administrators across these states, most of which were in the southeastern part of the United States, depended on ATCPs to fill teacher vacancies in high-need areas (Lincove, Barrett, & Strunk, 2018; South Carolina Department of National Resources, 2018). After Hurricane Katrina crippled New Orleans and the surrounding communities, administrators from charter schools in New Orleans filled 35% of their vacancies with ATCP teachers (Lincove et al., 2018). By hiring ATCP teachers to work in charter schools in New Orleans, the number of inexperienced teachers in the region increased. South Carolina has been hit by 11

tropical storms and hurricanes over the past 10 years; consequently, school administrators across the state have depended on ATCPs to fill teacher vacancies in high-need areas (SCDNR, 2018).

Special education is another high-need area (Bruno, Scott, & Willis, 2018).

Special education (SPED) teachers were responsible for providing specialized instruction and inclusion services for K-12 students with varying disabilities and ability levels (Bruno et al., 2018). Mulvihill and Martin (2019) stressed the importance of preparing ATCP teachers to use theory-informed inquiry to educate a diverse classroom of students with varying ability levels and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Since there were many challenges for teachers, Mulvihill and Martin suggested choosing an ATCP that prepared educators to teach all students including SPED students, provided ATCP teachers with classroom simulations, and encouraged the development of a professional mindset to promote professional growth.

There were a variety of accommodations ATCP teachers needed to know when entering the classroom. Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019) interviewed 12 ATCP special education teachers and they identified four areas of concern. One of the concerns they identified was ATCP teachers' limited knowledge of federally mandated SPED policies and procedures. Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to ensure students with disabilities received an equal and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment, with the least restrictive environment being the regular education setting whenever possible (U.S. Department of Education, 2019b). Although ATCP teachers received instruction in SPED laws, they did not receive in-depth

instruction in how to write Individual Education Plans and implement accommodations in the classroom (Scott, 2019).

### **Concerns With Alternative Teaching Certification Programs**

Lewis-Spector (2016) identified and described several concerns regarding alternative teaching certificate (ATC) regulations in various states. Lewis-Spector noted that the ATCP regulations in several states were geared toward mid- to post-career adults with 2 to 3 years of work experience. ATCP teachers in most states had to earn a bachelor's degree in a noneducation field with a minimum grade point average of 2.50 (Lewis-Spector, 2016). Early childhood and elementary ATCPs were available in 47 states but only 13 states offered ATCPs with secondary content-subject certification (Lewis-Spector, 2016).

Lewis-Spector (2016) found that 60% of prospective teachers who enrolled in ATCPs across the United States had noneducation bachelor's degrees and received no training on how to teach literacy to their students while 40% of prospective teachers received only minimal training on how to teach literacy. Of the 47 states across America that had ATCPs, nearly 77% of high school ATCP teachers did not receive any literacy instruction while the remaining 23% of high school ATCP teachers received "some preparation" to teach literacy (Lewis-Spector, 2016, p. 9). Literacy is integrated into all subject disciplines; therefore, the preparation of ATCP teachers to teach literacy in high school is not sufficient. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) found that ATCP teachers completed less coursework than traditionally prepared teachers and taught more students from low-income families. ATCP teachers were often hired to teach

mathematics and science high school classes with minimal or no teacher training (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Consequently, some K-12 students will receive literary instruction from ATCP teachers with either no or limited training. To decrease the likelihood of students receiving substandard instruction, Lewis-Spector recommended ATCP teachers participate in a student teaching or field experience with an experienced cooperating teacher prior to teaching their own students.

An additional concern is that although ATCP program administrators required teachers to complete student teaching with a cooperating teacher, they did not require them to complete 30 hours of field experience (Fuller, Pendola, & Young, 2018). When Fuller et al. (2018) investigated field experience requirements for ATCP teachers in the state of Texas, they found that 90% of ATCPs, 83% of ATCPs residing at community colleges, and 75% of regional service center ATCPs did not require prospective teachers to complete a minimum 30-hour field experience before they could be alone with children in the classroom setting. In other states, Fuller et al. found some ATCP teachers completed their field experience over the summer in a setting that was not an accurate reflection of the conditions teachers worked in during the regular school year. The summer school setting was significantly different from the traditional classroom setting because classes had fewer students, teachers used a modified curriculum, and each student had distinct learning expectations (Xu & De Arment, 2017).

Prospective teachers who worked in high-poverty, high-demand school settings and had limited or no field experience encountered considerable challenges as they

lacked the professional experience and knowledge to provide effective instruction for their students (Redding & Smith, 2016). Because ATCP teachers did not receive adequate classroom preparation, they were 150% more likely to leave schools in which more than 50% of the student population were composed of nonCaucasian students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) noted that public schools in the southern part of the United States had the highest teacher turnover rates, with disproportionately high rates in urban (17%) and rural (15%) areas.

### **Concerns of Alternative Certified Program Teachers**

Curry et al. (2016) identified five themes of concerns among ATCP teachers. The first theme was the concern for students' behavior, needs, and home life. ATCP teachers identified concerns with students' home life as a contributing factor to behavior problems in the classroom. The second theme of education quality and excessive accountability was documented by using pictures and symbols created by ATCP teachers to express their concerns with their ATCP. ATCP teachers expressed 25 concerns about educational quality and accountability through pictures and symbols. For the next theme of issues with administration, ATCP teachers described the pressure of using scripted curriculum units as a roadblock and a one size fits all set of ineffective lesson plans. Administrators encouraged the scripted curriculum, especially for high-poverty schools (Curry et al., 2016).

The inability to establish substantive relationships with others was the fourth theme ATCP teachers identified. ATCP teachers noted the lack of parent involvement in

children's education and their poor relationship with parents (Curry et al., 2016). Curry et al. (2016) found that ATCP teachers identified the lack of work-life balance 34 times, which they classified under the fifth theme of feeling overwhelmed. Curry et al. noted that some of the ATCP teachers underscored the aforementioned themes as their reason for leaving the field of education. NCES (2018) noted that 90.1% of ATCP teachers returned to both the classroom and the ATCP program for their second year, but 79.1% of those ATCP teachers left the classroom by their fifth year.

Flower, McKenna, and Haring (2017) investigated the behavior and classroom management skills of teachers who completed their teacher training through traditional college certification programs and those who completed their teacher training through ATCPs. Flower et al. found that universal approaches to classroom management were taught in more than 95% of the traditional programs, and they noted that teachers received training in how to establish and implement classroom rules, manage the classroom, grade assignments, and communicate with parents. Flower et al. also found that only 58% of ATCP teachers had specific courses or hands-on experiences in the area of behavior and classroom management; conversely, 89% of teachers who attended traditional college certification programs had coursework in behavior and classroom management. Without training and coursework in behavior and classroom management, ATCP teachers felt unprepared to prevent or manage students' behavior problems (Flower et al., 2017).

ATCP teacher support and training was a foundational element of Shulman's theoretical framework, and in the school district in which my study occurred, ATCP



teachers received comprehensive training and support. Teacher preparation was important to both the USD and Gudmundsdottir and Shulman's (1987) three-part PCK framework. The PCK framework comprised knowledge of academic concepts, knowledge of pedagogical content, and knowledge of students' understanding of content (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987). By narrowing down and clarifying the PCK model, ATCP teachers received content-specific lessons on the core instructional standards in the content areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts (Jing-Jing, 2014). Once experienced educators used the PCK model when teaching academic content to students, they should have exposed ATCP teachers to various pedagogical strategies and modeled the application of these strategies across core content areas (Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987).

A strong alignment between the conceptual framework and the research questions was significant when conducting a research study. During the data collection phase of this study, ATCP teachers provided rich detail about their ATCPs. ATCP teachers' perceptions of preparedness to provide effective classroom instruction was the focus of this study. Therefore, Shulman's conceptual framework about pedagogical content knowledge for effective teacher preparation for ATCP teachers was the focus of my research questions.

ATCP teachers described the training, coursework, careers, and prior knowledge that helped them become stronger teachers. I collected qualitative interview data and used open-ended questions to delve deeper into the ATCP teachers' experiences within their program. I used the software program NVivo when coding the interview data to

help identify emerging themes from the 10 interviews. To strengthen and reinforce ATCPs, I plan to present the themes that emerged to stakeholders from USD during a professional development training session.

Even though the current teacher shortage in public schools across the United States is a significant problem, teacher shortages in America date back to the first half of the 20th Century. During the 1930s, teacher shortages were a concern that continued after the Great Depression (Sherratt, 2016). The shortage of teachers was in the traditional areas of mathematics, science, and the liberal arts. In 1959, a family and consumer sciences report identified a shortage of teachers for classes that included domestic sciences and home economics (see Duncan, Werhan, & Bergh, 2017).

Special education is another area of concern for ATCP teachers and stakeholders who include school board members and school district administrators across the United States. In 2015-2016, 48 states reported a shortage of special education teachers, and the shortage was greater in the rural areas than in suburban and urban areas (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2019). Chamberlin-Kim, Tarnay, and Wells (2019) used a marketing-lens approach to investigate the factors that contributed to the shortage of special education teachers in school districts across the United States from 1997 to 2018. Chamberlin-Kim et al. found the factors that contributed to the shortage of special education teachers were poor interpersonal relationships with co-workers (94%), the school's location (94%), and the types of programs and supports in the special education program (88%). In 2015, school administrators across the United States opened their schools with substitutes and interns while others consolidated classes to

make up for the teacher shortage of traditional classroom teachers in addition to special education classrooms (Black, 2016). There is not a quick fix to the teacher shortage across the United States, but understanding ATCP teachers' perceptions of the preparation they received may increase the capacity of stakeholders to create effective teacher preparation programs that are similar to the one Shulman identified in his PCK conceptual framework.

### **Strategies for Teaching Adults in Alternative Teacher Certification Programs**

The process of training teachers has evolved from a lecture-driven strategy to a more student-centered approach. One illustration of this shift to a student-centered approach was the emphasis within ATCP classes on teachers modeling and practicing problem-solving strategies (Guerra, Hernandez, Hector, & Crosby, 2015). By modeling and practicing problem-solving strategies, teachers increased their capacity to implement the strategies in their own classroom (Guerra et al., 2015). Guerra et al. (2015) conducted a 2-year study in which they investigated self-identified problems and problem-solving strategies of ATCP teachers at the beginning of their ATCP and at the end of their ATCP. Over a 2-year period, the 12 participants in Guerra et al.'s study received training and reinforcement in the listen-identify-brainstorm-reality-test-encourage problem-solving model.

Guerra et al. (2015) found that ATCP teachers activated self-awareness and self-directed problem-solving skills when they used the listen-identify-brainstorm-reality-test-encourage problem-solving model to determine the solution of a problem faced within the classroom. After monitoring, identifying, evaluating, and processing the self-identified

problems, ATCP teachers who used the model perceived they were in control of their classroom. Guerra et al. concluded that although the model helped them control the problem, ATCP teachers still needed additional opportunities to self-reflect on their teaching skills, to develop multi-tasking strategies to manage the rigors of taking ATCP courses, and teaching full time.

Given the rigors associated with taking ATCP courses and teaching full time, ATCP teachers need applicable time-management strategies. Jennings (2012) recommended that ATCP teachers be provided with lesson plans that they could use within their classrooms. Jennings discussed the evolution of the strategy and the need for ATCP teachers to guide student learning and to model appropriate learning techniques. Van Aalderen-Smeets and Walma Van der Molen (2015) found that face-to-face instruction within their ATCP was the most effective strategy for ATCP teachers.

Providing opportunities for ATCP teachers to collaborate within their ATCP programs is another effective teaching strategy. Moore and Mamiseishvili (2012) conducted an exploratory correlational study in which they investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and collaborative learning among 157 teachers. With a specific focus on emotional intelligence from Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, Moore and Mamiseishvili used a 7-point WEIP-S Likert-type scale to measure the four constructs of emotional intelligence and the Group Cohesiveness Scale to measure group cohesiveness among all group members. Moore and Mamiseishvili found that participants who communicated their feelings with peers demonstrated higher emotional achievement than those who did not. Moore and Mamiseishvili concluded that

individuals demonstrated higher academic achievement when they communicated their feelings and collaborated with others.

Collaboration was also pivotal in another program called the Comprehensive One-to-One iPad Initiative Model (Nguyen et al., 2016). Nguyen et al. (2016) developed a multi-phase program aimed at promoting ATCP teachers' capacity to use iPads when instructing students and when collaborating with other ATCP teachers. While using the tech-for-you, tech-for-us, and tech-for-them phases of the model, ATCP teachers strengthened their own technology skills, increased their capacity to create technology-based lessons for their classrooms, and increased collaboration with their peers. Nguyen et al. found that collaboration was an effective strategy for ATCP teachers.

A teacher residency program is another effective strategy for preparing ATCP teachers for the classroom. Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2017) found that a year-long teacher residency program was an effective strategy for creating partnerships between ATCP teachers and schools and provided hands-on training for teachers. Under the partnership model, ATCP teachers received ATCP training beyond their student teaching. This extended training generally lasted 3 months. By completing the teacher residency, 80-90% of ATCP teachers stayed in their teaching positions for 3 years while 70-80% stayed for 5 years (Guha et al., 2017). Hence, the program was successful in reducing teacher attrition.

Recruiting a diverse set of teachers is a goal of the 50 ATCP teacher residency programs across the nation. Guha et al. (2017) found that the percentage of African American ATCP teachers who completed the year-long teacher residency program and

taught for the entire 2015-16 school were more than double that of African American teachers who did not. Because African American ATCP teachers received training through teacher residency programs, they were less likely to leave the profession (Guha et al., 2017).

Preparing ATCP teachers to deal with discipline issues in the classroom is an area of emphasis within ATCP programs. Pankowski and Walker (2016) compared traditional college-graduating teachers and ATCP teachers' ability to motivate students to learn and to deal with noncompliance within the classroom. By allowing ATCP teachers to use simulations as a learning tool, Pankowski and Walker found ATCP teachers improved their classroom preparation, pedagogical, and content knowledge skills and their dispositions. They also noted that ATCP teachers had to correct student behavior at the beginning of unit simulations, but by the end of the simulations, teachers exhibited care and control when interacting with students, which differed from the traditionally trained teachers who used more control than care. Pankowski and Walker further concluded that ATCP teachers used self-regulation as their classroom management style more frequently than traditional teachers did. Pankowski and Walker believed that ATCP teachers needed to find the strategies that worked best for them in their classroom and that ATCPs should prepare teachers to teach their classes effectively.

By equipping ATCP teachers with the strategies they need to be successful, ATCP program leaders increased the capacity of school administrators to assuage the increasing teacher shortage in the United States. The National Center for Education Statistics found that 3.8 million teachers were working in a K-12 classroom during the

2015-2016 school year, and approximately 18% (676,000) of the teachers were teaching through ATCPs (McFarland & Hussar, 2018). Charter schools hired 25% of the ATCP teachers while public schools hired 17% of these teachers (McFarland & Hussar, 2018). High schools hired the most ATCP teachers (25%) while elementary schools hired the least (13%; McFarland & Hussar, 2018).

Given that almost one fifth of America's teachers are from ATCPs from various settings, the teacher shortage across the United States is significant. The level of concern among stakeholders was high as school administrators had to fill teaching positions with people who did not hold a teaching license and were not enrolled in an ATCP (McFarland & Hussar, 2018). This is significant because school administrators recognize the difficulty of preparation for ATCP teachers. McFarland and Hussar's (2018) findings related to my qualitative study and conceptual framework because Shulman's (1986) PCK model had a strong foundation of preparation and support for ATCP teachers.

With the teacher shortage in America's schools increasing each year, researchers sought to identify solutions to the problem. Preparation, support, and communication were three strategies Miller et al. (2019) identified as effective elements of the ATCP they created. Miller et al. created an ATCP program to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers in rural middle school classrooms in the southeastern region of the United States. Since the program's inception, they have had 113 ATCP teachers complete the program and earn their full teaching certification. Miller et al. attributed the growth of their program to the positive reviews of former ATCP teachers who earned their teaching certification. Miller et al. found that stable support from teachers and administrators and

modeling by exemplary teachers were necessary to prepare teachers for the classroom. Miller et al. recommended establishing strong relationships between ATCP teachers, school principals, and ATCP professors as a means of support for ATCP teachers. They believed that ATCP teachers developed strong relationships when they had regular opportunities to communicate with their peers, administrators, and professors.

Like Miller et al. (2019), Sutchter et al. (2019) wanted to find solutions to the teacher shortage in America's schools. Sutchter et al. found that in 2017-2018, school district administrators across the United States hired 109,000 uncertified teachers. They also noted that schools with disproportionately high percentages of students from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to hire uncertified, underprepared, and inexperienced teachers (Sutchter et al., 2019). School administrators from schools with high percentages of students from at-risk backgrounds hired uncertified teachers to reduce class sizes and to ensure students received differentiated instruction. Compounding the problem for those administrators were the numbers of teacher vacancies that far outnumbered the pool of available teacher candidates and the challenges of retaining the teachers they hired (Sutchter et al., 2019). The high attrition rate of teachers has a negative influence on the academic achievements of students from minority and low socioeconomic backgrounds.

One strategy that Sutchter et al. (2019) recommended was increasing teacher salaries in states with significant teacher shortages. Researchers found a decrease in teacher shortages in states that increased teacher salaries (Lindsay, Wan, Berg-Jacobson, Walston, & Redford, 2016). Lindsay et al. (2016) suggested a component summation



approach to determine teacher shortage in a specific district or state. Under this model, educational stakeholders created an itemized list of specific states and school districts that had a large number of teaching vacancies and determined if an increase in teachers' salaries resulted in a decrease in the number of teacher vacancies (Lindsay et al., 2016).

By analyzing five components of teacher supply and demand (teacher retention, ATCP teachers, traditional college-based teachers, migrant certified teachers, and willing-able, but not employed teachers), stakeholders could have determined the severity of the shortage and identified specific components that were contributing factors (Lindsay et al., 2016). With recommendations for decreasing the teacher shortage in the United States and for developing supportive ATCPs, stakeholders may be able to improve ATCP program delivery, thereby increasing ATCP teachers' level of preparedness and decreasing the attrition level among ATCP teachers.

### **Implications**

On the basis of this study's findings, a professional development training may be an appropriate venue to disseminate my results. Three groups of teachers could attend the professional development training: current ATCP teachers, new ATCP hires, and if desired, prior ATCP teachers. I chose a professional development training because I want to fill the gap in practice between the ATCP teachers' preparation and the teaching strategies they wished they knew. This professional development training could occur over a 3-day period (8 hours each day = 24 total hours) in which I describe the professional knowledge ATCP teachers wished they had, the challenges they encountered

before and after COVID-19, and the resources they wished they had to assist in teaching students.

### **Summary**

The problem investigated by this study was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers in USD. The gap in practice was the difference between ATCP teachers' preparation and the teaching strategies they wished they knew. Because of the national shortage of fully certified teachers, school districts across the United States are hiring ATCP teachers to fill vacant teaching positions. Stakeholders were concerned that ATCP teachers left the profession or the local school district because they may not have received the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. Within the literature review, I introduced the conceptual framework for my study, which was Shulman's PCK model. Implications for a project included a 3-day professional development training.

Within Section 2, I review the methodology of my study. I used a basic qualitative research design to investigate the perceptions of ATCP teachers. I interviewed 10 ATCP teachers within USD in a southeastern state. The data collection instrument was a series of semistructured interview questions. After the interviews, I transcribed the interview transcripts. Next, I used NVivo software application to organize and analyze data and to identify and connect emerging themes in the interview data. I used open coding and axial coding to allow themes to emerge.

In Section 3, I describe my project. This section includes an overview of my project, the rationale, review of literature, project evaluation plan, and project implications. In Section 4, I reflect on my study and draw conclusions about the results. This section also includes a description of the project's strengths, limitations, and deliverability. I then provide alternative approaches to address the local problem, personal learning growth as a scholar, and a reflection of the importance of my research. I conclude Section 4 by discussing the potential influence of the project study for positive social change and by providing recommendations for future research.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Research Design and Approach**

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. A qualitative study is appropriate for studying a problem to understand a central phenomenon by collecting data from a small group of participants because researchers look for emerging themes through analyzing text (Creswell, 2012).

With the increase in the number of ATCP teachers filling vacancies across the southeastern state, it is necessary to understand ATCP teachers' perceptions of the teacher training they received as well as how their bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences prepared them to teach in K-12 schools. After ATCP teachers described their preparedness to be a teacher, I used the interview data that I collected to identify patterns and themes.

#### **Description of the Qualitative Design**

Researchers use a qualitative approach when their overarching purpose is to investigate a phenomenon within its natural setting and to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon through rich, meaningful, and in-depth descriptions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2010). Researchers have various types of qualitative research designs from which to choose. The most common types of qualitative designs are narrative, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, and generic qualitative.

Narrative research is appropriate when researchers provide a rich, detailed account of a phenomenon through the lens of one person's chronological account (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). The narrative research design was not appropriate for this study because I did not provide a rich description of a particular phenomenon through one person's chronological account. Researchers use an ethnographic design when they seek to conduct an in-depth investigation of a culture, and for an extended period of time, they immerse themselves in the day-to-day lives of the members of the culture and provide an in-depth description of the members' beliefs and values (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I did not immerse myself in a culture and provide an in-depth investigation of the beliefs and values of the members of a culture.

Qualitative researchers select a grounded theory design when they seek to generate a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A grounded theory design was not suitable for this study as I did not generate a theory. Researchers use a phenomenological design to understand how individuals experience a phenomenon and the meaning individuals attach to their experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). By describing the meaning individuals attach to their experience, phenomenological researchers go beyond individuals' rudimentary perceptions (Yin, 2014). I did not use a phenomenological design because I did not describe the meaning ATCP teachers attached to their experiences.

Researchers who use a case study design investigate a bounded system within its natural context, collect in-depth and multiple forms of data, and provide a descriptive

analysis of the system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This bounded system can be a specific person, program, or event (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The varied forms of data researchers collect in a case study are interviews, archival records, field notes, and physical artifacts and the process of collecting and analyzing data are iterative, meaning they are repeated and concurrent (Yin, 2014). Researchers use an iterative process to ensure that they cannot glean any additional information from participants (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019). When researchers cannot glean any additional information from participants, they reach data saturation (Kalpokaite & Radivojevic, 2019). ATCPs are part of a single bounded system; therefore, I considered using a case study design. However, upon considering the iterative nature of the data collection, analysis process, and the use of multiple forms of data, I determined a case study design was not appropriate for this study.

### **Justification**

The basic qualitative design, also referred to as a generic and interpretive design, is appropriate when researchers investigate the perceptions, attitudes, or beliefs of participants regarding a particular phenomenon (Kennedy, M., 2016). Rich, detailed information is what qualitative researchers seek to collect as they enter a setting and to describe a phenomenon. Patton (2015) stressed the importance of analyzing the data and identifying themes within the data. Kahlke (2014) described the advantages of using a basic qualitative design as a methodology, noting that researchers who conducted basic qualitative studies were able to identify different perspectives and to identify gaps in the body of knowledge and areas for further research.

Upon identifying gaps in the body of knowledge, researchers develop research questions and increase the body of knowledge (Kahlke, 2014). Kennedy, M. (2016) discussed the significance of asking participants to describe their perceptions of an experience for which there was limited knowledge and the appropriateness of researchers using the qualitative generic design to promote an understanding of an experience while not being “bound by specific methods to generate knowledge” (p. 132). The basic qualitative design was appropriate for this project because I wanted to glean a comprehensive understanding of ATCP teachers’ perceptions of preparation from ATCPs, bachelor’s degrees, careers, and prior experiences to teach in K-12 schools, and by asking probing questions to teachers’ responses, I could provide rich in-depth descriptions of their perceptions.

## **Participants**

### **Criteria for Participant Selection**

At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, there were approximately 3,000 fulltime teachers, including 105 ATCP teachers and 2,000 part time teachers in 85 schools across USD. The target population for this study was all 105 ATCP teachers who were enrolled in an ATCP at the time of this study and who worked as a teacher at one of USD’s 85 schools (see U.S. Department of Education, 2019a).

The age range of potential participants was from 25 to 60+ years old. All ATCP teachers were enrolled in 1 of the 6 ATCP programs that lasted 3 years. These programs included graduate-level courses such as 21st Century Teacher: Authentic Assessment and Read to Succeed: Content Area Reading and Writing for all ATCP teachers (U.S.

Department of Education, PACE, 2017). In addition to taking graduate-level courses, first-year ATCP teachers who were in the first year of their ATCP program had to attend a 3 to 5 day noncredit training seminar. As part of the participant selection criteria, I used all first-, second-, and third-year ATCP teachers as possible participants for my study. Although first-year ATCP teachers did not have the breadth and depth of experiences that second- and third-year ATCP teachers had, they were also participants in this study. I included first-year ATCP teachers because I wanted to provide a comprehensive description of the phenomenon.

This study's participants were from six different ATCPs, with two from Teach Kids (a pseudonym), two from Teach for America, two from PACE, one from Teachers of Tomorrow, one from the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence, one from the American Board, and one from Advanced Fine Arts. Seven of the ATCP teachers were in the first year of their program, two were in their second year, and one was in her third year. Eight teachers taught at the middle school level (Grade 6–8), one taught at the elementary level (Grades K–5), and one taught at the high school level (Grades 9–12). They taught different academic disciplines and elective courses, including English/language arts (two), mathematics (two), science (two), special education (two), dance (one), and business/entrepreneurship (one).

### **Justification for the Number of Participants**

In determining the sample size for my study, I considered the purpose of my study and the need to conduct an in-depth analysis of the data and provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon (see Sandelowski, 1995). I planned to interview



approximately 10 teachers as I wanted to conduct a deep inquiry into ATCP teachers' experiences. Kuzel (1992) noted that 12 to 20 participants were an adequate number for a qualitative study. The sample number does not need to be too high because qualitative researchers do not seek to generalize their findings to the broader population (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003). Kuzel's participant number is higher than Johnson and Christensen's (2004) participant number of six to 12. Langford, Schoenfeld, and Izzo (2002) and Morgan (1997) concluded that six to 10 participants were an appropriate number to reach data saturation in a basic qualitative study. After determining the approximate number of participants to meet data saturation for this study, I determined the procedures for gaining access to participants.

### **Gaining Access to Participants**

I sought approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board to conduct this study (06-12-20-0398677). After the proposal was approved, I received a letter of cooperation from USD for gaining access to all ATCP teachers. Then I worked with the school district director of certification to determine all ATCP teachers. USD maintained an updated list of the contact information for all ATCP teachers, and the district-level director of certification referred to that list. Because the school district's director of certification would not give me email access to ATCP teachers, the school district's director of certification emailed the invitation letter to all ATCP teachers. The email included the informed consent form and a description of the nature and purpose of my study and the related procedures for contacting me through my Walden University email address and my personal phone number.

### **Method for Establishing Researcher-Participant Working Relationship**

Prior to beginning the interview phase of the study, I established a working relationship with participants by exhibiting respect (see Creswell, 2009). At the beginning of the interview protocol, I reviewed key points from the consent form with each participant prior to asking any interview questions. I encouraged participants' choices by allowing them to complete their interview through Skype, Zoom, or phone because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing mandates. Participants chose a time and day that was convenient for them.

### **Methods for Ethical Protection of Participants**

I protected the rights of each participant by providing him or her with an informed consent form in which I described the potential risks associated with participating in my study. Participating in the study may have caused stress above normal daily conversation. Participants signed the informed consent form, acknowledging that they read and understand the information in the form and agreed to participate in the study. Included in the consent form was the statement that at any time a participant could withdraw from my study without consequences. I protected the confidentiality of each participant by assigning him or her a unique identification number that only I could link to the participant. Data were locked in a secure location in my office and will be stored for 5 years in accordance with Walden University's Institutional Review Board policy. After 5 years, all data and interview transcripts will be deleted from my laptop, and hard copies will be shredded.

## Data Collection

### Interviews

A semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix B) was the data collection instrument for this study. The semistructured interview protocol is appropriate when researchers want to ask open-ended interview questions and to facilitate and promote interactions with their participants and when they need the flexibility to delve deeply into participants' responses by asking probing questions (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). By asking probing questions, researchers can obtain rich, in-depth responses from participants (Lodico et al., 2010). By using a semistructured interview format, I could ask participants to expand on their responses to gain additional insight about their experiences. ATCP teachers described in their own words their perceptions of their preparation from ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools. I asked ATCP teachers questions created for this study to keep the interview focused on the topic of teacher preparation.

Upon receiving participants' informed consent forms, the school district's director of certification gave me the participants' district email addresses, which I used throughout the remainder of the study to communicate with participants. After receiving the email addresses of ATCP teachers, I contacted them via email and asked them to send me the days and times they were available for an interview and their preferred method of interview. Participants had the option of completing the interview via Zoom, Skype, or telephone as face-to-face meetings were inappropriate during the pandemic. I was the only person who had access to my email correspondence with ATCP teachers. Each

participant gave me permission to audio record the semistructured interview, and the interviews lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. My data collection commenced when I began recording the interviews. If participants did not provide detailed responses, I calmly asked them probing follow-up questions to gather more detailed responses, without putting pressure on them.

### **Systems for Keeping Track of Data**

I transcribed each interview after the interview concluded to ensure I documented all the nuances of the ATCP teacher's response. Throughout the data collection period, I maintained a research log in which I documented the location, time and day of the interviews, and the ATCP teacher's identification code. Throughout each interview, I used a reflective journal to document ATCP teachers' body language (if using Zoom or Skype), emerging ideas from the interview, and connections that I made during the data collection process. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described the significance of a detailed, accurate, and reflective journal. In order to safeguard the interview data, I locked the external audio recorder, research log, and reflective journal in a lockbox, to which only I had a key and access, within my home office.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I am a classroom teacher at an elementary school in USD. I did not serve in the role of a supervisor or administrator for any of the ATCP teachers nor did I have any personal connections with any of the ATCP teachers who participated in my study; in addition, no ATCP teachers worked at my elementary school. Nevertheless, my role of a fellow teacher and employee in USD might have affected the participants' responses.

Minimizing bias during the data collection and analysis process was a challenge for me. I recognized that I had biases and preconceived notions regarding education in the target southeastern region of the United States because I have taught in this region for 19 years. To minimize bias, I maintained a reflective journal, made audio recording for all interviews, and included all negative or discrepant cases.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Analysis of Interviews**

I transcribed each interview within 24 hours, using my personal computer, and then I began the coding procedures by inserting the transcripts into the NVivo software application. NVivo is a computer software application that researchers use to help them organize and analyze data and to identify emerging relationships across the interview transcripts (QSR International, 2017). NVivo first analyzed one interview and then when additional interviews were added to the program, relationships between repeated themes emerged (QSR International, 2017). I used two coding procedures to identify emerging themes in the data. Open coding was appropriate for analyzing each transcript and for labeling repeated concepts.

Next, I used axial coding to review the open codes and to develop clusters of concepts. Themes emerged from the interview transcripts when I identified repeated words or uncommon words and key words in context and then compared content across interview transcripts (Creswell, 2012). After axial coding, I analyzed the axial codes and identified emerging themes. The themes helped me answer my two research questions.

### **Evidence of Quality**

I increased the accuracy and credibility of the findings by using member checking procedures and reviewing the NVivo analytical codes before identifying emerging themes in the data. Member checking is a step in the data analysis phase in which participants review the initial themes that emerge from the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Participants reviewed my preliminary findings to identify initial themes they believed did not accurately represent their intentions.

While analyzing the data, I identified discrepant cases and included these cases in the results section of my study to increase the overall credibility of my findings. By including the discrepant cases, I improved the quality of my study by describing data that combated confirmatory bias (Morrow, 2005). I included discrepant cases as evidence that I did not provide a simple interpretation of the data (Morrow, 2005).

### **Data Analysis Results**

A basic qualitative research design was used for this study. After emailing all 105 ATCP teachers in USD, 10 of those teachers volunteered to participate in semistructured interviews. All participants taught full time while enrolled in an ATCP. Interviews were transcribed and a synthesis of the results was completed in order to answer each of the research questions.

To ensure the quality of the data, I used NVivo to help organize and analyze data and to identify emerging relationships across the interview transcripts. I reviewed the data multiple times using open coding. Twenty-one open codes were found, including

relationship building with students, learning the methodology of teaching, and behavior management.

To begin the axial coding process, I developed clusters by identifying connections and relationships among the open codes. Five clusters were identified and then the clusters were grouped and aligned to the research questions. The five clusters were teaching career standards, prior experiences, pedagogical practices, professional development, and instructional support. The axial codes were reviewed again and arranged on a Microsoft Word document to allow me to manipulate the data. After rearranging the axial codes into different categories, I identified the emerging themes. I went back again to the transcripts to provide evidence and examples to support each of the emerging themes. After the codes were established and reviewed, themes emerged based on the two guiding research questions. After identifying the five themes, I sent the preliminary findings to the 10 interviewees and they all participated in member checking. The interviewees reviewed and validated the preliminary findings. All 10 participants then stated, “My member checking is complete.”

Research Question 1 was as follows: What are ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher after being trained in the ATCPs in USD? Themes emerged from data analysis. I used the themes to answer the research question revealing ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be a teacher in K-12 schools after being trained in an ATCP. The themes are as follows: prepared for College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRSs), prepared from prior experiences, and prepared

to integrate effective pedagogical practices that contribute to ATCP teachers' positive perceptions of preparation.

### **Theme 1: Prepared for College and Career Readiness Standards**

This theme includes a summary of the 10 participants' perceptions of their preparedness to teach CCRS. The CCRSs are the core content skills students need to master to be successful in their postsecondary educational and professional endeavors. All 10 ATCP teachers felt prepared to teach full time as they had worked in various professional fields and had a clear understanding of the skills students needed to succeed in their chosen career fields. Participant 1 stated, "I modeled for my students the soft skills they would need in the professional field, and the students had opportunities to develop soft skills in my classroom." Because of their prior experience working in the fields of science, Participant 1 and Participant 7 believed they could seamlessly integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) into their classrooms. Participant 1 stated, "I wanted to foster a desire for students to go into those fields since I had a master's in science and knew there were a lot of job openings in STEM." Participant 7, who worked in the medical field, encouraged her students to learn the competencies needed by professionals in the medical fields by participating in job shadowing programs. Participant 7 stated, "I always fell back on what I've experienced as a student and I liked teachers who really knew what it was like out in the job field, so they were my role models."

In addition to having a clear understanding of the required skills, participants felt prepared to establish a link between classroom content and professional experience. Two



participants established this link by bringing in experts within pertinent fields to speak to the students. Participant 1 described an instance in which an expert from a particular field asked her eighth-grade students to investigate how much they could make in that field and to determine what it would take to “move out of your mom’s house, drive a nice car, and realize what you’ve got to do.” Participant 9 had an entrepreneur speak to her business and entrepreneurship students to link classroom content to real-world situations. Participant 9 also designed a job preparation simulation wherein students became entrepreneurs and promoted their product on a Shark Tank presentation. Participant 9 stated, “We started with personal finance, so they would get an understanding of entrepreneurship and then kids made new inventions while parents lined the halls as investors for kids’ businesses.” Through these experiences, participants believed students learned about different careers before they graduated from high school.

Theme 1 answered Research Question 1 because it provided examples of ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher after being trained in the ATCPs in USD. After enrolling in an ATCP, participants were taught pedagogical strategies by an ATCP instructor to effectively integrate College and Career Readiness Standards into their classroom. Prior careers and bachelor’s degrees were utilized by ATCP teachers to foster students’ desire and knowledge to make informed decisions about a future career.

## **Theme 2: Prepared From Prior Experiences**

The second theme to emerge was ATCP teachers felt prepared to teach because of their prior experiences in different settings. The 10 participants had varying and multiple

noncontractual and contractual teaching experiences, including long-term substitute teaching, teaching assistant positions, fulltime K–6 teaching positions, and university level teaching. Participant 1 had distinct prior teaching experience as she intermittently taught English in South Korea to over 100 kindergarteners over a 4-year period.

Participant 1 stated, “When we were in session, we were teaching English to kindergarteners and doing activities, so when I went back to my classroom, I used many of the teaching strategies that I learned.”

Participants perceived that other experiences prepared them to teach in a K–12 classroom. Three participants reported that raising children prepared them for the classroom. Participant 10 often used life experiences of her teenaged daughter to connect with her students. Participant 10 stated, “I understand my students better and the more experiences that I include into my classroom, the more of a role model I became.” Participant 1 described her experiences raising a child with a disability and the efficacy of sensory-based strategies in the home setting. Students that had physical or learning disabilities may have had deficits in reading, math, or writing, but their mental intellect and senses may not have be affected (Foster, 2020). Therefore, sensory-based instruction may increase learning because it uses a students’ strength as a tool to teach students with a disability. After enrolling in the ATCP program and beginning her teaching career, Participant 1 used sensory-based strategies in her classroom and found they were effective for students with and without disabilities. Participant 1 stated, “From the first day, I just realized that just like my kid, sensory-based instruction helped take some of the agitation out of the room.” Participant 6 taught at a dance studio while she attended

college, and through her experience at the dance studio, she learned how to manage behavior, engage students, use intonation as a teaching strategy, and to project her voice throughout instruction. Participant 6 stated, “I was stuck in the classroom with many kindergarteners and I was not formally trained, so I remembered experiences back in the studio taking care of 2 year old children crying. I had to just figure it out.” Four participants referenced their experiences coaching basketball, volleyball, baseball, and soccer. Participant 7 believed high school students who participated in sports had the ability to focus on achieving a goal and students would leverage that ability to help them advance in their professional careers.

Participants also perceived that their prior experiences observing other teachers were factors in preparing ATCP teachers to teach in a K-12 classroom. All 10 ATCP teachers referenced their childhood experiences wherein they observed the relational and instructional practices of effective teachers. Three of the participants’ parents were K-12 teachers, and they helped their parents grade papers and learned how to interact with students with a disability. Participant 3 watched her parents successfully “control the sass from students.” Four participants learned effective strategies from their former K-12 teachers. Participant 10 discussed her positive experience with her fifth-grade teacher, noting that he challenged her to use metacognitive practices to synthesize information. Participant 10 also noted that she challenged her advanced students in a similar manner. Participant 10 stated, “I challenged each of my students to get involved in discussions, involved in collective grief management, and make a raw connection between home and our classroom environment.” Participant 1 grew up in a military home and had to learn

to adapt to a new school every couple of years. She struggled adapting to some of the school settings. Because of her experiences as a child, Participant 1 stressed that she went above and beyond the call of duty to create an accepting and safe learning for military children. Participant 1 stated, “I really knew how it was being a military brat myself, and I had many years where I went to several different schools in one school year.”

Participants’ experiences as undergraduate students were additional factors that helped prepare them to teach. Six of the 10 participants referenced their experiences in their bachelor’s degree programs and the instructional practices their professors used. Participant 6 referenced her kinesiology course content as significant as she learned how to do the splits correctly and how to help her students from her elementary dance class avoid injuries. Two participants believed they were prepared to teach mathematics at the elementary level because they took advanced-level mathematics courses as undergraduates. Participant 2 stated, “I used my math classes to teach the required one hour a day of just math to my special education students, so I just went to the basic skills to teach my class.” Participant 8 believed she developed a strong understanding of fundamental mathematics concepts while earning her bachelor’s degree; hence, she was able to differentiate her instructional practices to help two sixth-grade students whose mathematics achievement scores were disproportionately low when compared to their grade-level peers.

Learning to overcome hardships they encountered as children was the final factor participants referenced. Participant 2 grew up in a low-income, high-crime city in the

northeast part of the United States, and many people believed she would never be able to overcome her circumstances and be successful. Participant 2 referenced her childhood experiences when interacting with her students, and she reminded them they had the ability to make something of themselves despite their current circumstances. Participant 1 stated, “I had Child Protective Services in my life for quite a while, so I was able to use my own stories to help my students.” Participant 5 had pneumonia as a child, and she often told her students: “Don’t let disappointments take over you. Just focus on the good part of it and not the bad part of life.” Participant 10 was another interviewee who was transparent with her students about her childhood as she described her parents’ divorce, the death of her mother, and her uncle’s cancer battle. She believed that sharing those childhood experiences enabled her to bond with her students and she was “not afraid to cry or get mad when there is an injustice in a novel. I was not afraid to use prior experiences to evoke a feeling of love or security within my students.” As participants shared their prior experiences, students understood that they would encounter challenges in their life, and they had the ability to overcome those challenges.

Theme 2 answered research question 1 because it provided examples of ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be fulltime teachers after being trained in the ATCPs in USD. All 10 participants had varying and multiple noncontractual and contractual teaching experiences prior to enrolling in an ATCP. Incorporating prior experiences as assistant teachers, coaches, parents, and students, ATCP teachers integrated effective pedagogical strategies they learned. Some of the prior experiences

led to making strong connections with students who had disabilities, divorce, and death in their lives.

### **Theme 3: Prepared to Integrate Effective Pedagogical Practices**

The participants provided insight regarding the preparation they received to integrate effective pedagogical practices. Building a positive interpersonal relationship with students was one of many pedagogical practices taught in an ATCP. Six out of the 10 participants underscored the need to develop positive interpersonal relationships with students. Participants noted that ATCP instructors emphasized the importance of the relationship-building process between teachers and students throughout the ATCP training. Participant 7 saw fewer behavior problems within her class because she built relationships with her students. Participant 7 stated, “I knew behavior management was a big thing because we learned about behavior management strategies over and over again.” Through the diversity and racism training she received in her ATCP, participant 2 learned the importance of knowing her students’ backgrounds and interests to develop positive interpersonal relationships with them. Participant 2 stated the phrase “teach with love” several times during the interview. Participant 10 believed effective teachers understood “that students are still defining themselves and have an excitement to learn. We’re still their rock and it may get tricky, but we are always there to help light their fire.”

ATCP instructors stressed the importance of establishing an effective classroom management plan. Five of the 10 participants were confident in their ability to manage student behavior, and they attributed their confidence to the preparation they received in

their ATCPs. Throughout her interview, participant 1 used the term “relationship building” when discussing effective behavior management because ATCP instructors taught her that teachers manage deviant behavior when they have an interpersonal relationship with their students. Participant 8 discussed the importance of promoting positive behavior management in her classroom the first week of school by developing relationships, setting expectations, and holding students accountable, “but every room is different and expectations change once you get to know your kids.” Participant 2 and Participant 5 noted their ATCPs’ pedagogical preparation and training in behavior management systems as integral components of their training program.

Participants learned the methodology of teaching. Participant 1 and Participant 8 believed they gained a comprehensive understanding of the various methods of teaching in their ATCP program. Participant 1 received pedagogical training on how to use instrumental music and a diffuser to activate all students’ senses. Participant 1 stated, “I used music the whole time, instrumental is the kids’ favorite. For example, I used NASA as a backdrop for a unit, and I included space music for imagery activities.” Sensory-based instruction was an integral part of Participant 1’s pedagogical repertoire because she had several students with disabilities in her regular education classroom. ATCP instructors modeled sensory-based instruction for ATCP teachers. One ATCP instructor taught Participant 4 how to integrate technology into her instruction while another instructor told Participant 2 to “never sit down while teaching. You will stand and police your kids to help manage student behavior.”

Most participants reported effective modeling and lesson planning preparation by ATCP instructors before they entered the classroom. Participant 1, Participant 7, and Participant 8 learned how to create lesson plans during their ATCP training, and their ATCP instructors gave ATCP teachers time to collaborate with each other and write engaging lessons during the training sessions. Participant 4 learned how to write an Individualized Education Plan that she believed was an essential skill at the middle school level. Participant 4 stated, “I learned about the proper wording to prevent legal mistakes. This way, I felt like I was prepared walking into the students’ meetings.” Teaching and unpacking the state teaching standards were significant components of Participant 1’s ATCP. Unpacking state teaching standards meant that teachers analyzed the teaching expectations for each subject taught that school year. State teaching standards were interwoven throughout each lesson, and since Participant 1 learned how to unpack the standards, she was able to model how to unpack the standards with her middle school students.

Further analysis of the participants’ responses revealed that the number of observations and the extent of feedback from ATCP instructors varied across the programs. The ATCP instructor for Participant 8 conducted one to two observations a week and provided constructive criticism during her first year of teaching whereas the Participant 8 stated, “The observations would last ten to fifteen minutes to see if I was ok. I had an open relationship with her, so I could always go to her for help.” The ATCP instructor for Participant 2 conducted one to two observations a month and provided immediate and effectual feedback. All 10 participants were observed at least once by



USD representatives during the school year, and they all discussed the significance of observations to get concrete feedback on their teaching. USD administrators observed three of the 10 participants, but ATCP instructors did not observe those same three teachers. Participant 3 was grateful for her school district mentor who brought in a content specialist to help Participant 3 in areas that she needed additional training, “so anytime I needed help in a certain area, she would search for the help that I needed.” Participant 5 had similar assistance from USD as she had a school district mentor who helped her create collaborative learning groups, provided one-on-one training on the district’s mathematics program, and taught her how to assess student work.

The USD assigned an on-staff mentor at seven of the 10 participants’ schools to observe ATCP teachers and provide them with feedback, assist ATCP teachers with classroom management, and to answer their questions regarding classroom instruction. All 10 participants praised and expressed overwhelming appreciation for the teachers at their schools. Fellow teachers in the school were not assigned to the participants, but they did help with lesson planning, technology issues, and student discipline issues. Participant 5 stated, “My grade level teachers worked together with me because they had similar situations with students. I became a better teacher because I was working with my peers which is something that I couldn’t get from a book.” Participant 7 reciprocated the help that she received from the teachers at her school by sharing her expertise in technology integration from prior medical work experiences to “help teach peer teachers about different technology programs or answer questions because I was familiar with

technology due to my prior medical career.” All 10 participants perceived that feedback from observations and help from teachers at their schools were essential to their success.

Theme 3 answered Research Question 1 because it provided examples of ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be fulltime teachers after being trained in the ATCPs in the USD. ATCP teachers felt prepared to teach because they participated in hands-on pedagogical practices before entering their own classroom. Some pedagogical training included racism and diversity training, establishing an effective classroom management plan, and building interpersonal relationships with students. Observations and feedback also increased ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparation before and throughout the ATCP program.

Research Question 2 was as follows: In addition to ATCPs, bachelor’s degrees, careers, and prior experiences, what else do ATCP teachers at USD wish they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools? Themes emerged from data analysis. The themes were able to answer the research question by revealing additional resources ATCP teachers’ wish they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools. Themes included the need for continued professional development training and the lack of instructional support that contribute to ATCP teachers’ description of resources they wish they had to prepare them for the classroom.

#### **Theme 4: The Need for Continued Professional Development**

ATCP teachers wished they had continual professional development training to prepare them to teach in a K–12 setting. Most participants identified specific district-based technology as their areas of weakness, including PowerSchool and Review 360.

PowerSchool is a technology program into which teachers entered their attendance, lunch counts, and students' grades and access parent contact information. Eight of the 10 participants never received training on how to use the PowerSchool program. Review 360 was a program teachers used to document parent-teacher conferences and discipline measures. Six participants discussed the need to train teachers on how to use the program. Participant 1 stated, "There was an assumption that I should already know how to use programs set up by the school and school district even though no one actually told us how to set them up." Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, five participants discussed their need for training on how to use Google Classroom so they could provide virtual instruction to their students. Teachers used Google Classroom to post instructional videos, lesson plans, and expectations for assignments. Participant 8 stated, "I had to learn about Google Classroom all by myself and that was the same with PowerSchool. I was told to ask my neighbor."

ATCP teachers identified areas of weakness in their teaching preparation, which included how to teach SPED, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and struggling students. Three participants noted their need for professional development training on how to implement IEPs in the general education classroom. Participant 2 was a special education teacher who witnessed general education teachers not implementing IEPs and Section 504 plans, which was a violation of either the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Because an IEP and a Section 504 plan are legal documents, all teachers, including special area teachers, must implement the accommodations in a student's IEP or Section 504 plan.

Participant 2 spent many days helping train general education teachers on how to implement a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan. Participant 1 was the only interviewee who needed professional development training on how to teach ESOL students while Participant 2 was the only participant to request professional development training on how to “incorporate multiculturalism and relevant literature into the classroom to teach using culturally-relevant resources. I knew that the content could relate to my students and it was relevant, but I didn't know how to incorporate it.”

Theme 4 answered Research Question 2 because it provided examples of additional resources ATCP teachers wished they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools. ATCP teachers wished they had continual professional development training to prepare them before and throughout the ATCP program. Specific professional development training desires included the following district-based technology: PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom. ATCP teachers described their lack of technological knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another professional development training was requested for implementation of SPED services and pedagogical strategies to teach ESOL and struggling students.

#### **Theme 5: The Lack of Instructional Support**

During the interviews, many participants identified the lack of instructional support from their ATCP. Five participants described their lack of help or training from their alternative program. Participant 3 noted that she wanted her ATCP instructors to help her develop classroom expectations and the beginning of the class activities, and to build resources for her classroom. Participant 5 wanted her ATCP instructors to include

training on how to implement pedagogical practices, classroom management strategies, and testing procedures and strategies on how to resolve conflicts between students.

Participant 6 expressed a desire to receive training and support in classroom management, stating, “I had no training, no testing to get into the program, no advisor, no mentor, no help at all.” Participant 10 described the feeling of entering the classroom without ATCP support as “a system that is setting everyone up for failure. People believed that when you were young, you had a teacher, so just take this test and you’ll be a teacher too.” Four of the five aforementioned participants were thankful for the support they received from USD teachers and administrators. Participants noted that teachers and administrators answered their questions and provided the requisite training they should have received in their ATCPs.

All 10 participants described the lack of support from parents during the spring of 2020 when the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools across the United States to close in-person instruction and educators taught virtually using Zoom and Google Meets. Participants noted the poor assignment completion rates among their students during the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of parental support they received in the home setting. Participants believed the parents should be held accountable for their children’s work completion rates. Half of the participants noted that students did not submit their daily assignments. Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 9, and Participant 10 had disproportionately low assignment completion rates, and Participant 8 failed 19 of her 140 students. Participant 9 stated, “I had to follow up with the parents by telling them their child is failing my class this quarter, but I heard back

from very few parents.” The unwillingness of parents to ensure their children attended virtual instruction sessions was another instance in which parents did not provide instructional support. Participants provided instruction through the Zoom platform during the pandemic; however, seven participants reported that many of their students did not attend the virtual instruction sessions. Participant 8 noted that only 20 of her 90 students attended the virtual instruction sessions. Participant 8 stated, “I had an old school type of mentality of how learning should work, model the strategies, do the explorative activities, but bottom line, if they don’t come to class, I can’t help the kids.” Participants expressed frustration about the school district not requiring students to attend the virtual instruction sessions. According to Participant 3, the poor student attendance rates and the lack of student participation at the virtual instruction sessions were causes “of a lot of stress in my life. I had headaches all the time because I had to contact kids twice a week with a call, grade everything, and review old content.”

Ambiguous grading procedures throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by school district administrators was another area for which some participants reported lacking support. Because of the lack of or limited support within the home setting, USD district administrators, with support from the state department of education, prohibited teachers from teaching new content standards and giving students zeros for not submitting assignments. USD administrators also informed teachers that students’ fourth quarter grades could not be lower than their third quarter grades. Participant 9 and Participant 10 found that students stopped submitting assignments upon learning that teachers would not grade their assignments. Participant 10 stated, “As you can imagine, when middle school

students figured out that they weren't going to be graded, they stopped doing anything. I was terrified of what to do next." Both Participant 5 and Participant 9 cited the precipitous decline in the assignment completion rates once students found out that their overall grades would not be lower than their third quarter grades. Participant 8 discussed the limited effort students put forth on tests and quizzes because students knew they would not be held accountable for their performance. Participant 8 stated, "In fifth grade alone, parents and students were living out of the zoned school area, Internet was inconsistent, and now this. Teachers didn't have a chance." Because of a lack of accountability from the state, school district, and teachers, students did not perform to their potential.

Participants also discussed the lack of support from fellow teachers. Participants discussed the poor collegial relationships among teachers during the COVID-19 lockdown. Participant 2 and Participant 4 were SPED teachers who reached out to general education teachers with the hope of providing SPED instruction to specific students, but the general education teachers did not respond to the participants. Participant 4 stated, "Teachers didn't want to listen to my ideas because I was in an alternative program." Participant 6 expressed dissatisfaction when teachers refused to send students a link to her Zoom dance class, thereby students were not able to attend her class.

Participants identified a lack of instructional supplies because they did not have all the materials needed to support their instruction. Three participants reported a lack of nonconsumable teaching materials in their classrooms. Participant 6 did not have a

SMARTBoard and was unable to play music or to help her students visualize dance routines, but other teachers at her school had the interactive technology tool. Participant 7 wanted lab equipment for her chemistry and physics classes while Participant 8 wanted mini dry-erase boards and math manipulatives like fraction dice and plastic food items. Three participants wanted consumable supplies. Participant 7 stated, “I want consumable materials for life science experiments. Kids learn a lot better when they have the right supplies for learning.” Participant 8 requested big post-it notes for class discussions while Participant 10 taught novel studies and needed novels in which students could write their ideas. Participants also requested technological instructional materials to support their instructional practices. Participant 1 needed access to application/software programs including GIM kit, Legends of Learning, Nytro Type, and Learning Blade. She believed those computer programs enhanced student engagement and were appropriate for promoting students’ content knowledge. Participant 3 described why she wanted access to [commonlit.org](https://www.commonlit.org/). She explained that this program “integrates learning standards, short stories, spelling, genre, reading, guiding questions, and assessments to my instruction.”

Theme 5 answered Research Question 2 because it provided examples of additional resources ATCP teachers wished they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools. ATCP teachers identified the lack of instructional support that contributed to a description of resources they wish they had to prepare them for the classroom. Instructional support was lacking in training from their ATCP, parental support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and ambiguous grading procedures. Additional instructional



support was lacking from fellow teachers and from instructional supplies because they did not have all the materials needed to support their instruction.

### **Evidence of Quality**

To ensure accuracy and credibility in my study, I used member checking for the process of review and validation by the participants (Birt, Scott, Carvers, Campbell, & Walker, 2016). Member checking is a step in the data analysis process wherein participants review the initial themes that emerge from the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). All 10 participants participated in member checking and verified the accuracy of the initial themes. No changes or recommendations were presented by any of the participants. I also used a research log during the data collection phase. In my research log, I documented the location, time, and day of each interview, and the ATCP teacher's identification code. I also kept a reflective journal in which I wrote down the participants' body language, emerging ideas from interviews, and connections that I made during the data collection process. Biases were recorded in my reflective journal by bracketing out my perceptions.

While analyzing the data, a discrepant case emerged. I included the case in the results section of my study. I included the discrepant case to increase the accuracy and credibility of my results. I also included discrepant cases to combat confirmatory bias (Morrow, 2005). During data analysis procedures, a discrepant case emerged within theme 2. Although 9 out of 10 participants incorporated prior experiences from contractual and noncontractual teaching, one participant had distinct prior teaching experience. She intermittently taught English in South Korea to over 100 kindergarteners

over a four-year period. Teaching overseas was an immersive experience for the participant which provided specific details that helped answer research question 1.

### **Project Deliverable**

Based on the findings from this basic qualitative study, I created a professional development training that trains ATCP teachers in the implementation and use of USD's technology initiatives. The professional development training also includes strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their children's academic success in the home setting. I developed a 3-day professional development training for ATCP teachers, new ATCP teachers, and former ATCP teachers if they choose to attend. The professional development training will be presented virtually using PowerPoint presentations and professional development training guides that includes an outline of the professional development presentations. All ATCP teachers are able to record notes in a professional development training guide electronically or they may print a paper copy of the professional development training guide while actively participating in instructional simulations.

Instructional simulations provide an instructor-modeled navigation of USD's technology initiatives including PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom. Additional professional development training content provide strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their children academically in the home including organizational learning tools, creating a learning environment at home, and training on the use of Google Classroom. These simulations and strategies are integrated with Shulman's (1987) PCK conceptual framework of knowledge that is distinct to teachers.

Professional development training participants gain the knowledge of subject matter, pedagogical practice, and how to teach. My goals in this project are to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of technology initiatives and strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their students at home using a virtual learning platform.

### **Summary**

The problem investigated in this study was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers in USD. Stakeholders including USD's board of directors and school administrators were concerned that ATCP teachers left the profession or the school district because they may not have received the tools needed to be successful in the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. I interviewed 10 ATCP teachers who were enrolled in ATCP programs while they taught full time in K-12 schools. Data were collected using semistructured interview questions. After data were collected and analyzed, five themes emerged. The themes from this study were as follows: prepared for CCRSs, prepared from prior experiences, prepared to integrate effective pedagogical practices, the need for continued professional development training, and the lack of instructional support.

Shulman's (1987) PCK model was the conceptual framework for this study. Shulman's model is based on three types of knowledge distinct to teachers: (a) knowledge of subject matter, (b) knowledge of pedagogical practice, and (c) knowledge of how to teach (Shulman, 1986, 1987). Ravgiala (2002) described knowledge of subject

matter as proficiency and understanding of curriculum content in order to provide direct instruction with confidence. Knowledge of pedagogical practice was the understanding of teaching practices (Ravgiala, 2002). The convergence of understanding the fundamental concepts of an academic discipline and understanding the teaching practices were the knowledge of how to teach (Shulman, 1986). The understanding of teaching practices, the depth of content knowledge, and the knowledge of how to teach were the foundation of Shulman's PCK model.

The first three themes that emerged from this study aligned with the three types of knowledge that were distinct to Shulman's PCK model. Participants gained knowledge of subject matter, specifically the CCRSS, through their prior experiences in K-12 schools and college settings working as long-term substitutes, teaching assistants, college professors, program coordinator, or fulltime teachers in other states. They also gained knowledge of subject matter through working in various professional industries, including healthcare, telecommunications, professional dance, or hospitality. More than half of the participants (60%) gained knowledge of pedagogical practice and knowledge of how to teach through their ATCP programs. The six participants referenced the in-person training they received in their ATCP prior to entering the classroom as fulltime teachers. Participants noted that they participated in simulation activities in which they were students and ATCP instructors modeled effective pedagogical practices. During the simulation activities, ATCP teachers placed participants in collaborative learning groups and integrated sensory-based instructional strategies. ATCP teachers also learned how to integrate technology into the classroom and to develop engaging lessons. After

developing their lesson plans, participants taught their lessons to their fellow ATCP teachers. Participants self-reflected on their lessons and received feedback regarding their performance from their fellow ATCP teachers.

The first research question was “What are ATCP teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher after being trained in the ATCPs in USD?” The first three themes that emerged from the data were positive, with all 10 participants referencing and describing the preparation they received from prior careers, prior experiences, and their ATCPs. The participants described the preparation they received on how to integrate effective pedagogical practices. Six out of the 10 participants were confident in their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher, and they attributed their confidence to the preparation they received in their ATCPs. Participants underscored the effectiveness of ATCP instructors modeling effective pedagogical practices for ATCP teachers and providing opportunities for ATCP teachers to not only apply those practices in simulation lessons but also self-reflect on their performance during the lessons and receive constructive feedback from their ATCP peers about their performance.

This study’s findings aligned with those of Guerra et al. (2015) and Van Aalderen-Smeets and Walma Van der Molen (2015). Guerra et al. (2015) found that ATCP teachers felt prepared to teach full time when their ATCP instructors provided modeling and allowed them to teach simulation lessons and to receive constructive feedback from their ATCP peers regarding their performance. Van Aalderen-Smeets and Walma Van der Molen (2015) concluded that in-person instruction in which ATCP instructors modeled effective pedagogical practices and gave ATCP teachers

opportunities to develop effective lessons plans promoted ATCP teachers' belief in their preparedness to teach full time in K–12 settings.

The second research question was, “In addition to ATCPs, bachelor’s degrees, careers, and prior knowledge, what else do ATCP teachers in USD wish they had to prepare them to teach in K-12 schools?” Theme 4 was the need for continued professional development training while theme 5 was the lack of instructional support. Most participants identified district-based technology initiatives as their area of weakness, and they stressed their need for professional development training on how to use PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom to increase their ability to manage the classroom, teach lessons, and to track students’ progress.

To varying degrees and in different contexts, all 10 participants referenced a lack of instructional support. Half of the participants indicated in one way or another that they did not receive any help or training from the alternative program. One participant wanted ATCP instructors to provide training on how to implement pedagogical practices and to apply her knowledge of core content. These findings were similar to those of Lewis-Spector (2016) who found that 60% of ATCP teachers received no literacy training and 40% received limited literacy training in their ATCP programs.

The data analysis revealed that ATCP teachers felt prepared to teach full time as they had worked in various professional fields and had a clear understanding of the skills students needed to succeed in their chosen career fields. ATCP teachers also reported they felt prepared to teach because of prior experiences in different settings. Literature supports the findings of this research study. Knowles, Swanson, and Holton (2011) and

Foster (2020) described the role of personal experiences in learning. Adults and children used similar student-centered and self-directed learning strategies while reflecting on new learning experiences and making connections to their prior learning experiences (Foster, 2020). Therefore, ATCP teachers used what they learned from prior careers and experiences when they taught in K–12 settings.

ATCP teachers also felt prepared to integrate effective pedagogical practices into their instruction because they participated in an ATCP. Literature supports the findings of the research. Pankowski and Walker (2016) found ATCP teachers improved their dispositions and their classroom preparation, as well as their pedagogical, and content knowledge skills when simulations and role play were part of their ATCP programs. ATCP teachers in my study noted the importance of simulations and role playing in preparing them for their K-12 classrooms. Feistritzer is one of the leaders in the field of ATCPs, and she discussed the success of her ATCP, the National Center for Alternative Certification (Barwani et al., 2018). Feistritzer described the foundational beliefs of her ATCP, which were as follows: effective teaching and learning is collaborative, interactive, engaging, and modeled and ATCP teachers need exposure to the same learning strategies they will use when teaching their students (Barwani et al., 2018).

The data analysis also revealed the need for continued professional development training and the lack of support. Miller et al. (2019) found that providing consistent instructional support to ATCP teachers was a strategy school districts used to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers. This strategy supports the importance of preparing ATCP teachers to teach in K-12 schools while continuing to provide instructional support.

Schools can provide instructional support through professional development training.

The professional development training allows ATCP teachers, new ATCP hires, and prior ATCP teachers to address the gap in the pedagogical practice knowledge they gain from their ATCP programs and the knowledge they wished they had.

Shulman's (1987) three-part PCK conceptual framework underscored the importance of knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of pedagogical practice, and knowledge of how to teach. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) found that when ATCP teachers did not receive adequate classroom preparation, they were more likely to leave the teaching profession. Given the results of this study, ATCP teachers possess knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical practice, but they need professional development training in the implementation and use of USD's technology initiatives and strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their children's academic success in the home setting.



### Section 3: The Project

The project for this doctoral study is a professional development training wherein ATCP teachers will receive training in the implementation and use of USD's technology initiatives. The 3-day (8 hours each day, for a total of 24-hours) professional development training will be presented virtually because of the risks associated with an in-person professional development training during the COVID-19 pandemic and because "the more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020, Deciding to Go Out Section). Throughout the professional development training, ATCP teachers will participate in teaching simulations and small-group discussions, and receive training on how to integrate a variety of instructional materials.

To protect the health of all ATCP teachers and presenters, the professional development training will be presented virtually using Zoom breakout rooms as a forum for small group interaction. Professional development planning suggestions will be provided to transition the virtual professional development training to an in-person training. The title of the professional development training will be *Alternative Certification Teacher Training: Technology Implementation, Supporting Virtual Learning, and Meeting the Needs of All Students*. The goals of the professional development training are to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, provide strategies to increase virtual learning support, and participate in teaching simulations to meet the needs of all learners.

## **Rationale**

I chose to create a professional development training because participants in my study identified the need for continued professional development training following the 1-week training prior to teaching within K-12 schools. I created professional development training to address the following problem: The high attrition rate among ATCP teachers across USD. School district stakeholders were concerned that ATCP teachers left the profession or the local school district because they may not have received the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom. Therefore, I aim to resolve the problem of my study by providing a professional development training on technology integration, virtual learning support, and pedagogical practices to meet the needs of all students.

## **Review of Literature**

For my literature review, I used ERIC, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Dissertation databases. I searched for peer-reviewed journals and other primary sources pertaining to professional development training in K-12 education. I used a variety of search terms to gather information to plan my professional development training and created the presentations used throughout the 3-day training.

The following search terms were used for my review of literature: *professional development, virtual professional development, technology professional development, Google Classroom, PowerSchool, Review 360, support for virtual learners, student motivation, teaching ESOL students, teaching SPED students, transitioning to online teaching, developing online courses, online organizational tools, and learning*

*environment at home*. I used individual search terms and combinations of search terms to identify literature published within the 5 last years. I conducted repeated searches for literature and identified only research that was no more than 5 years old.

In the first section of the literature review, I describe the best practices for creating a professional development training, the most effective type of professional development training, and the significance of professional development training for ATCP teachers. Next, I discuss the connections between Shulman's (1986) PCK model and professional development training. I then present research about effective technology training for ATCP teachers and provide strategies to enhance parent and student virtual learning support. In the final section of the literature review, I discuss research about pedagogical practices to meet the needs of all students, including ESOL and SPED students.

### **Effective Professional Development Training**

Teachers should have received professional development training throughout their careers (Burns & Lawrie, 2015). Supporting teachers through effective professional development training could improve teacher retention and improve the quality of instruction for students (Evers, Van der Heijden, & Kreijns, 2016; Polly et al., 2015). Evers et al. (2016) noted the positive influence that professional development training had in reducing skill gaps among new teachers and cultivating their desire to be lifelong learners. Teachers who regularly participated in professional development training stayed current with the latest trends in pedagogy and increased their ability to address students' distinct learning needs (Badri, Alnuaimi, Mohaidat, Yang, & Rashedi, 2016).

In addition to regularly scheduled professional development training, teachers need opportunities for follow-up training. Bickerstaff and Cormier (2015) found that one-time professional development trainings did not allow teachers to delve deeply into questions about their students' learning. They found that the most effective professional development training was either multiday models or follow-up monthly training sessions (Bickerstaff & Cormier, 2015). Participants received training, returned to their classrooms, and received additional training throughout the school year (Bickerstaff & Cormier, 2015). Collaborative, long-term, and content-driven professional development training was effective in K-12 schools (Kennedy, M., 2016). Professional development training for my study includes collaborative lesson plan development sessions for ESOL and students with disabilities. Pehmer, Groschner, and Seidel (2015) stressed the importance of providing focused professional development training activities involving curriculum and lesson plan development. Focused professional development training allows time for teachers to make sure that all students, including students with special needs, are included for modified instruction while being mainstreamed into a K-12 classroom.

Incorporating long-term and focused training was also found effective in Gerken, Beusaert, and Segers's (2016) study. They stated that the ATCP teachers in the study attended up to 200 hours of professional development training a year (Gerken et al., 2016). While attending professional development training, ATCP teachers in the study were able to receive feedback from each other that led to more expertise in teaching (Gerken et al., 2016). Czajka and McConnell (2016) also found that the situated

instructional coaching process was an effective method for professional development training. In that process, the presenters modeled and practiced integration and implementation of transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction (Czajka & McConnell, 2016). Czajka and McConnell asserted that feedback from peers and instructors and opportunities to watch exemplar teachers model strategies increased transfer of knowledge from the professional development training setting to the classroom.

A review of the professional development training related literature and revealed other characteristics of effective professional development training for teachers. Flint's (2016) study of adult learning indicated positive results with the effective switch from teacher-centered lectures to a student-driven pedagogical framework. Adult learners took responsibility for the information they learned from their courses, instructors, and peer discussions (Flint, 2016). Consequently, I included multiple instructional sessions in my professional development training that incorporate content experts, curriculum integration, and ATCP teacher discussion groups.

Professional development training also increased teachers' intrinsic motivation to gather additional instructional resources to share during follow up training (Flint, 2016). Echols, Neely, and Dusick (2018) noted the importance of promoting participant engagement during professional development training. The researchers found that adult learners had increased levels of confidence because they had multiple collaboration opportunities with fellow teachers (Echols et al., 2018). Cook et al. (2018) found an improvement in teacher-student relationships when educators participated in frequent

professional development training on the establish, maintain, or restore method of instruction. This method of instruction included a concrete list of relationship building strategies that teachers used within the classroom. By providing training, communication, and collaboration among teachers, K-12 students were positively affected with higher academic grades (Cook et al., 2018). Therefore, I integrated six collaboration opportunities during the professional development training session.

### **Connections Between Shulman's PCK Model and Professional Development**

Shulman's (1987) PCK conceptual framework of knowledge related directly to teachers and the use of professional development training to enhance learning. Shulman (1986) concluded that the most effective teacher preparation was well organized and had standards-based instructional activities. Additionally, Shulman (1986) described the importance of opportunities for teachers to integrate teaching practices and subject-matter knowledge. Adult learners were more likely to use relevant information as a stimulus for sustaining interest during a professional development training (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2017) noted that adult learners wanted to demonstrate their knowledge through real-life simulations and used their prior experiences to formulate new knowledge.

Shulman's (1986) PCK model identified the knowledge of how to teach, and this knowledge emerged during the data analysis. Most of the ATCP participants expressed a desire to attend additional professional development training to learn effective teaching strategies for ESOL and students with disabilities. By participating in my professional development training, ATCP teachers may increase their knowledge of effective

pedagogical practices and their ability to implement those practices to meet the educational needs of all students. With many changes occurring in the field of education, the highly interrelated and competitive world demanded that teachers are prepared to teach the diverse student population using the most current methods of teaching (Stronge, 2018).

### **Effective Technology Integration for ATCP Teachers**

Ching, Hsu, and Baldwin (2018) identified that effective technology integration for ATCP teachers started with a well-planned professional development training. To create effective online experiences while increasing teachers' capacity to integrate technology into the classroom, presenters should have allowed ATCP teachers to use the learn-by-doing method, to participate in technology-specific discussions, and to conduct self-assessment of their competencies (Ching et al., 2018). With the various technology-based learning materials being integrated into K-12 schools, ATCP teachers needed to be proficient in using them to provide effective instruction (Ching et al., 2018). I use Zoom breakout rooms to assign participants into small discussion and simulation groups. Within the small groups, multiple professional development training sessions are led by multiple experts in learning and communication tools. Engagement and interaction with participants enabled presenters the opportunity to challenge and motivate ATCP teachers throughout professional development training (Dell, Dell, & Blackwell, 2015).

Desimone and Pak (2017) determined that alignment between content standards, curriculum, daily lessons, and professional development training content was the most effective method to ensure ATCP teachers taught using effective technology integration

in their classroom. ATCP teachers should have be able to provide their input regarding content, context, and relevance throughout professional development training to become stakeholders in their own professional development training (Bernhardt, 2015). ATCP teachers were actively involved in their own learning and drew from the strengths of the presenters (Kahu & Nelson, 2017). Presenters for my study present content and materials based on the needs of ATCP teachers. Results from my data analysis provided content themes, including Review 360, PowerSchool, and Google Classroom.

### **Virtual Learning Support: Parent Engagement and Involvement**

Most of the participants in my study expressed concern about parent engagement and involvement in their student's learning. Because of COVID-19, parents and caregivers are faced with virtual instruction in the home setting platforms to help students learn. Akinsooto and Akpomuje (2018) identified different types of informal learning that teachers used to increase parents' ability to acquire the knowledge and skills to support virtual learning. An instructional topic for my professional development training is training parents on how to use technology to support learning outside of the classroom using Zoom breakout rooms. Shepherd, Bollinger, Dousay, and Persichetti (2016) identified that ATCP teachers received training on strategies they used to help parents use various file-sharing tools and applications, including Learning Management Systems, Prezi, YouTube, Skype, Google Drive, Dropbox, and Google Classroom. Parent engagement can improve when parents are trained to use technology at home because students are participating in virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Roth, Pure, Rabinowitz, and Kaufman-Scarborough (2018) found that teachers and parents needed additional digital and professional resources to meet the needs of all students. Students with disabilities was a subgroup of the student population that Roth et al. (2018) studied and they found evidence to support the need for a digital glossary of disability-related terms, a Disability Services Digital Manual, and assistive technology. To help parents and caregivers during remote learning, my professional development training trains ATCP teachers how to increase parents' ability to use SPED assistive technology resources such as Forecast Memo, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and LiveScribe SmartPen. To support instruction of special needs students, their parents and ATCP teachers can integrate these assistive technology resources into students' virtual learning classrooms.

### **Virtual Learning Support: Student Engagement and Involvement**

Researchers identified various video, audio recording, and editing tools teachers can use to promote student engagement and involvement in the learning process and to provide feedback regarding student performance. Audacity, Voki, iMovie, Movie Maker, Photo Story, Jing, and Camtasia are some of the digital tools teachers used to increase student engagement (Shepherd, Bollinger, Dousay, & Persichetti, 2016). Shepherd et al. (2016) found that students exhibited increased levels of engagement when teachers gave them opportunities to communicate concepts using Blogger, PB Works, iTunesU, and Ning. The use of interactive polling was another motivator for ATCP teacher to capture students' ideas and progress using Poll Everywhere and LMS tools (Shepherd et al., 2016).

In addition to digital tools, teachers must consider the format of their virtual lessons. Stone and Springer (2019) found positive feedback from students who described the presentation of information through prerecorded Webcam videos with the length of eight to 10-minutes. Accompanying the short videos were unassessed mini quizzes for the students to take to self-assess their learning (Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018; Stone & Springer, 2019). This type of e-learning program was a multi-format program because teachers used a variety of course designs to reach curricular goals and instructional needs of the students (Sener, 2015). By providing student choice, varying methods of presentation, synchronous meetings, and web-enhanced instruction, teachers promoted student engagement in the learning process (Sener, 2015). Student engagement included designing and conducting their own investigations, use of a variety of resources, presenting and defending their writing orally along with the use of technology tools, and revisions to improve learning (Turnipseed & Darling-Hammond, 2015).

### **Meeting the Needs of All Students: ESOL Pedagogical Practices**

ESOL students were the fastest growing student subgroup in United States' public schools (Eichhorn, Lowry, & Burke, 2019). Meeting the needs of ESOL students was challenging when teachers lack the pedagogical knowledge to transfer their content knowledge to effective instructional practices (Gan & Yang, 2018). Preservice teachers in Gan and Yang's (2018) study identified the need for additional preservice training and the use of ESOL simulations to increase their ability to address the learning needs of ESOL students. I include a professional development training session in which I introduce instructional pedagogical practices for teachers that can be integrated into a

traditional and virtual K-12 classroom. Gan and Yang (2018) suggested teachers include target vocabulary in context with the content while giving examples and allowing time for ESOL student examples. They also recommended using real-world examples when teaching difficult grammatical concepts. ESOL students described the positive effect of prerecorded Webcam content presentations that lasted around eight minutes and included captions accessible in different languages (Stone & Springer, 2019).

Along with pedagogical practices and resources to help ESOL students, teachers needed to be culturally responsive to learner needs and interests by explicitly connecting oral and the written classroom content (DeCapua, Marshall, & Frydland, 2018). Eichhorn, Lowry, and Burke (2019) identified that by acknowledging ESOL students' social, linguistic, and academic backgrounds, teachers supported ESOL students rather than focusing on the challenges they experienced. Another strategy that supported ESOL students was through the use of the universal design for learning engagement. The universal design for learning engagement included a unique purpose of eliminating barriers during the lesson planning phase rather than adapting lesson plans after an ESOL student was struggling. ESOL students could become more engaged with academic content as teachers increased student choice to practice and assess skills using the universal design for learning engagement (Eichhorn et al., 2019). Individual goal setting was another strategy teachers used to teach organizational skills while increasing engagement for ESOL students with tools such as checklists, models, and assignment reminders (Eichhorn et al., 2019). Minimizing threats and distractions was another way ESOL learners met their goals each day because it provided a break in the lesson for the

students that need time to process the content without disturbing peers (De Bruin, 2018). Teachers that use these strategies provide a break in the lesson by integrating smaller sections of time for lessons that need intense focus instead of waiting to break and discuss the lesson after an hour of instructional time. Through sustained effort and persistence from both the teacher and ESOL student, ESOL students could meet their academic goals (De Bruin, 2018).

### **Meeting the Needs of All Students: SPED Pedagogical Practices**

ATCP teachers have identified the difficulty to develop and implement effective pedagogical practices because they were not taught these strategies while enrolled in an ATCP. Most American students with disabilities in K-12 schools were not having their educational needs met (Morina, Cortes-Vega, & Molina, 2015). Morina et al. (2015) suggested that there should have been professional development training that taught about different disabilities and how to respond to the needs of disabled students. Online professional development training for teachers and higher education faculty increased knowledge, attitudes, and confidence in organizing class materials and content presentation (Wynants & Dennis, 2017).

Online professional development training was effective as long as presenters focus on the content and participants' engagement throughout the training (Kennedy, M., 2016). Roth et al. (2018) developed the Disability Awareness, Training, and Empowerment professional development training program to provide professional development training to examine activities, myths, technologies, and pedagogical practices that could have limited inclusion of students. Utilizing online readings, videos,

interactive presentation, and collaborative learning exercises, teachers were able to use short real-life scenarios to collaboratively diagnose a possible problem and implement changes to SPED instruction to prevent unawareness of a disability from happening again (Roth et al., 2018). At least one member of Roth et al.'s (2018) research team presents during my professional development training and discusses SPED accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, and hosts discussions based on real-world instructional strategies. Since teachers come to a professional development training with various levels of professional experience and pedagogical content knowledge, I provide Zoom breakout rooms to allow participants the choice of small group SPED discussions led by a presenter (Badri et al., 2016).

### **Conclusion**

Continued professional development training is important for teachers because it allows them to fill the gap in knowledge of what they know and what they want to know (Evers et al., 2016). Developing effective virtual professional development training is important for ATCP teachers and their students. Integrating collaborative discussion groups using Zoom breakout rooms and teaching simulations increases teacher engagement throughout the 3-day professional development training. A training that takes place over several days allows for deeper discussions among teachers and provides opportunities for teachers to engage in discussions, ask questions, and participate in hands-on learning (Bickerstaff & Cormier, 2015). Professional development training sessions focus on technology integration, virtual learning support, and pedagogical practices to address the needs of all learners.

## **Project Description**

### **Needed Resources and Existing Support**

To begin my 3-day professional development training implementation planning process, I need the approval from both the district superintendent and the district-level director of certification at USD. After they give their approval, I will work with them to schedule the professional development training on USD's calendar. Next, the district-level director of certification will send an announcement regarding the professional development training to all ATCP teachers who were hired during the 2020-2021 school year and all former ATCP teachers who still teach in USD. The district-level director of certification will also post information about the professional development training in class announcements. No computers will be needed because teachers across USD have a school district issued Dell Chromebook or a MacBook Air they can use during the professional development training. The only supplies I will need to provide ATCP teachers are post-it notes and up-to-date copies of state standards across all core content areas. I will not need to get district-level permission to conduct the professional development training at a school site as the entire 3-day professional development training will be virtual via the Zoom web-based conferencing program. I will provide training on the Zoom program to any presenters and technical support to presenters if issues arise during their presentations. If I cannot provide technical support, then a representative from the school district's help desk will be available throughout the entire 3-day professional development training to help presenters troubleshoot any technology-related issues.

The existing support for the professional development training will be the Canvas learning management system. To support instruction for virtual learning, all teachers in USD have access to both the Canvas learning management system and an email account. I will use Canvas to provide ATCP participants with the Zoom link to the professional development training and the requisite passcode to maintain security while on the Zoom program.

### **Potential Barriers and Solutions**

The greatest barrier may be scheduling the 3-day professional development training after the 1-week ATCP summer training. I will need to schedule the professional development training between the 1-week summer ATCP training and the school district's mandated professional development training for all teachers at the beginning of August. A possible solution is to contact the district-level director of certification after the school district sets the dates for the 1-week summer 2021 training and to schedule the 3-day professional development training after ATCP teachers complete their 1-week training.

### **Implementation and Timeline**

To address the gap in the pedagogical practice knowledge ATCP teachers gain from their ATCP programs and the knowledge they wished they had, I plan to implement the 3-day professional development training at the end of July 2021, which will be after they complete their 1-week ATCP training. I plan to present the training virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it may be also presented in-person at one of USD schools because it is free of charge. Day 1 of the training will include training

sessions on the district-based technology initiatives including PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom. Day 2 of the professional development training will include training sessions on virtual learning support strategies. To wrap up the professional development training, day 3 will include training sessions on meeting the needs of all learners utilizing teaching simulations.

The professional development training will begin at 8:30 a.m. each day and end at 4:30 p.m. The morning session will last 2.5 hours and the focus will be a topic of the day. ATCP teachers will then take two 30-minute breaks. During these 30-minutes, ATCP teachers will have an opportunity to meet with the presenters in small groups using Zoom breakout rooms and ask them questions they may not have had a chance to ask during the morning session. If the professional development training is held in person, participants can stay behind and ask their questions while the rest of the participants take their break. After the 30-minute break, the teachers will return for one more hour-long session. From 1:05 to 2:00 pm, participants will have lunch and training will resume at 2:00pm. The remaining training hours will continue with the topic of the day and end with a question and answer session.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Professional development training coordinator and presenter.** My role as the professional development training coordinator will include facilitating the virtual training, ensuring ATCP teachers and presenters adhere to the agenda, and encouraging interaction between participants during Zoom breakout rooms. My role as presenter will include setting up the participants' link access to the Zoom presentation. My role as a



technology assistant will involve being an assistant Zoom host in the event a presenter has Internet or Wi-Fi connectivity issues. I will also monitor the chat feature throughout the presentations to moderate and integrate participants' questions. If the training were presented in person, I would also need to make sure that the room is secured and set up to accommodate the participants, and provide refreshments in the hallway for everyone.

**School principal.** Because of the virtual format of the professional development training, I will not need to receive permission from a USD principal, but if the training is in-person, I need to get a principal's permission at least 3 months prior to training. If the training is in person, I would not need to organize lunch for the participants because most of USD's schools are located within a mile of fast-food restaurants.

**Technology help desk.** The employees from the technology help desk work all year long, so they will be available to assist during my virtual and in-person professional development training. Their responsibilities will include remaining in the entire Zoom session and correcting problems presenters encounter throughout the Zoom session. When participants and presenters practice implementation of SPED assistive technology resources such as Forecast Memo, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and LiveScribe SmartPen, the technology district representative will provide assistance if necessary.

**Presenters.** Presenters' roles will include presenting content on district-based technology initiatives (PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom), describing virtual learning support strategies, and meeting the needs of all learners using teaching simulations (specifically ESOL and SPED students). Presenters will also include facilitating Zoom breakout rooms, initiate small-group discussion, and lead simulation

groups. The presenters will also need to involve participants in their own learning and draw upon their own personal experiences while leading active discussions.

**ATCP participants.** ATCP participants' responsibilities will include staying focused and actively participating throughout the 3-day professional development training. During small groups using Zoom breakout rooms, they will be expected to provide feedback during teacher simulations, to share experiences, and to activate prior knowledge. Participants will also need to experiment with a variety of student engagement tools such as Audacity, Voki, iMovie, and Photostory. While in the SPED presentation session, participants will also be asked to try SPED assistive technology resources such as Forecast Memo, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and LiveScribe SmartPen.

**District-level director of certification.** The district-level director of certification will be responsible for contacting all ATCP teacher who were hired during the 2020-2021 school year and all former ATCP teachers who still teach in USD. Because of USD's confidentiality protection policy, I do not have ATCP teachers' contact information. The district-level director of certification will email the ATCP teachers one month prior to the scheduled dates of the professional development training.

## **Project Evaluation Plan**

### **Summative and Formative Evaluation**

Evaluation is an important tool in determining the effectiveness of a project (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers, 2010). Summative evaluation aims to summarize what happened as a result of a project implementation (Reeves et al., 2016). ATCP teachers who participate in the professional development training will complete a

summative evaluation at the conclusion of the 3-day professional development training. The summative evaluation will be used to determine if the professional development training positively impacts ATCP teachers' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, virtual learning support strategies, and pedagogical teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners. The summative evaluation is included in Appendix A. The formative evaluations will be administered at the end of each day during the professional development training during the review and reflect session. I will conduct a formative evaluation because I will modify the next day's presentations based on daily on going feedback from participants. I will use a short answer questionnaire for the formative evaluation. The formative evaluation can be found in Appendix A.

### **Overall Goals of the Project**

The overall goals of the project are to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, provide strategies to increase virtual learning support, and increase their capacity to address the needs of all learners by having them participate in teaching simulations. The evaluation questionnaire will include information to determine strengths and weaknesses of the professional development training. I will also use a formative evaluation for my professional development training because I want to know the impact of the professional development training and suggestions on improvements for future professional development trainings on the same topics. I can use the feedback from ATCP teachers to modify the professional development training and to prepare ATCP teachers to teach in K-12 schools.

### **Instrumentation to Evaluate Using a Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is the summative evaluation instrument the ATCP teachers will use to evaluate the professional development training. The overall goal will be to evaluate participants' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, strategies to increase virtual learning support, and simulations to meet the needs of all learners. It is important to inform stakeholders about the results of a program evaluation (Adams, Nnawulezi, & Vandenberg, 2015). By having ATCP teachers complete a questionnaire, I will be able to inform stakeholders and ATCP teachers in USD of the impact of the professional development training.

The key stakeholders of the evaluation will include district- and school-level administrators in USD, ATCP instructors, ESOL and special education program district coordinators, and members of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Most key stakeholders will assist in disseminating evaluation findings from the professional development training to ATCP teachers and traditionally trained teachers who did not attend the professional development training. The PTO will use the schools' biweekly newspapers as a medium to inform students' parents of the virtual learning support training ATCP teachers received. In iterations of the schools' biweekly newspapers, schools can seek feedback from parents regarding their experiences implementing the virtual learning support strategies taught to them by ATCP teachers.

## **Project Implications**

### **Possible Positive Social Change**

Possible positive social change may impact ATCP teachers at USD by providing them with the skills they need to meet the needs of ESOL students and students with disabilities. It may increase virtual learning support for parents and increase their engagement and involvement in their children's learning by providing them technology training. Possible social change from the professional development training may include increased virtual learning support for parents and student engagement may increase within the virtual classroom.

### **Importance to Local Stakeholders**

There is a gap in practice at USD as ATCP teachers are not receiving professional development training and support from USD once their 1-week ATCP training ends. This professional development training will close the gap in practice at USD and provide support for ATCP teachers. As training and support for ATCP teachers increase, ATCP teachers may feel more connected to their work environment and it could positively affect how they teach (Law, Chung, Leung, & Wong, 2017). By participating in this professional development training, ATCP teachers could effectively implement the district-based technology initiatives. Possible positive social change could occur within the classroom because ATCP teachers could implement more effective pedagogical strategies to teach ESOL students and students with disabilities, thereby resulting in these students improving their academic performance as evidenced by their report cards and

standardized test scores. Higher academic performance could lead to more students being prepared for college or a career after high school.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. Increased professional development training was identified as a need by participants in this study. Therefore, I created a professional development training to address the following problem: The high attrition rate among ATCP teachers across USD. Increasing the amount of professional development training and support for ATCP teachers may increase job satisfaction and retention among ATCP teachers as well as their confidence to implement effective pedagogical practices. The professional development training will benefit not only ATCP teachers but also USD and the K-12 students. This professional development training could have far-reaching implications including increasing the amount of research performed at USD to develop additional professional development trainings.

### **Conclusion**

During data analysis, I found that participants identified the need for continued professional development training after they completed their 1-week summer training prior to teaching in USD. The goal of the 3-day professional development training was to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, provide strategies to increase virtual learning support, and increase their capacity to address the needs of all learners by having them participate in teaching simulations. I designed the professional development training to use best practices, collaborative discussion, and

instruction-based simulations. As ATCP teachers progress through the professional development training, they will learn to effectively implement district-based technology initiatives, which include PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom.

Participants may also increase their knowledge of strategies to increase virtual learning support for both parents and students. Lastly, participants may participate in teaching simulations and learn how to meet the needs of all learners, including ESOL and students with special needs.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

This section includes an overview of the project study. I also provide recommendations for alternative approaches to address the problem of the study. Next, I reflect on how I developed as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer throughout the research process. I end this section by discussing the potential positive influence my professional development training may have on ATCP teachers, students, USD, and the field of education.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

#### **Project Strengths**

The project deliverable I developed was a 3-day professional development training aimed at closing the gap in practice between ATCP teachers' preparation and the teaching strategies they wished they knew. The problem I investigated was the high attrition rate of ATCP teachers at USD. According to the findings in Section 2, a need exists to provide continued professional development training to ATCP teachers as ATCP teachers are not receiving professional development training and support from USD once their 1-week ATCP training ends. The professional development training structure will incorporate large group presentations, small-group Zoom breakout room discussions, and teaching simulations to improve pedagogical practices. Throughout the professional development training, the presenters will scaffold learning by modeling content for participants, using teacher simulations, and reinforcing effective instructional strategies. Throughout the 3-day training, presenters will focus on practical, engaging instructional



strategies that promote participant discussion, which is critical for virtual and in-person teaching (see Shepherd et al., 2016).

One strength of my project is that the disseminated information will be grounded in theoretical and research-based professional development training strategies, and the session topics are linked to the outcomes of the data analysis. By implementing a 3-day professional development training, I may provide opportunities for ATCP teachers to identify their gaps in knowledge prior to entering a K-12 classroom and to reduce their gaps in knowledge. Professional development training content will include characteristics of students with disabilities, pedagogical teaching strategies, and teaching resources to use within the classroom and at home. Some of the teaching resources include Audacity, iMovie, and Photo Story. Another strength of this project is that ATCP teachers may learn how to implement district-based technology initiatives, which are PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom. Students and parents may also benefit from focused technology instruction with classroom integration of these tools. Parents and students may also be affected by ATCP teachers' ease of communication using PowerSchool and Review 360.

### **Project Limitations**

The first limitation of this project is the timing of the professional development training. Although first-year ATCP teachers may not want to participate in 3 full days of professional development training after they complete a mandatory 1-week ATCP training, they are more likely to participate in professional development training during the summer than during the school year. The second limitation is that my professional

development training will not be mandatory for ATCP teachers; hence, fewer teachers may attend, thereby decreasing the likelihood of having a blend of newly hired ATCP teachers, ATCP teachers, and former ATCP teachers. One benefit of having fewer participants is that presenters may have more time to focus on teachers' concerns and provide them with a personalized learning experience. Regardless of the number of participants, a professional development training is effective when presenters provide feedback, include teaching simulations, and help participants improve their skills (Marzano, 2017).

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

#### **Alternative Approach**

I planned and created a 3-day professional development training for ATCP teachers. However, I could have developed an alternative approach to address the local problem. I limited the number of participants by using a basic qualitative approach and interviewing only 10 participants. Instead, I could have used a quantitative approach and collected quantitative survey data from all newly hired ATCP teachers, ATCP teachers, and former ATCP teachers at USD. By using a quantitative approach and including all ATCP teachers across USD, I would have increased the scope of this study by investigating a larger sample of ATCP teachers regarding their perceptions of their preparation from ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools.

**Alternate Solution**

Alternative solutions to the local problem could be to provide a policy recommendation. Through the use of a policy recommendation, written advice for a particular group could help provide information to make decisions for the school district (Pianta, 2017). A policy recommendation would be an appropriate alternative solution because it could be used to provide recommendations for addressing the problem of teacher attrition at USD. I could also create a policy regarding requirements for ATCP teacher training. The policy would address the amount of professional development training hours required in preparation for teaching in K-12 schools.

**Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change****Scholarship**

As I reflect on the doctoral process, I realize that one of my personal goals was to produce effective scholarship in the field of education (see Bagaka, Badillo, Bransteter, & Rispinto, 2015). To accomplish that goal, I realized the significance of developing and improving my research skills. I found that my research skills improved during this project study, and I used the knowledge I acquired about research skills to teach my fifth-grade students the importance of research throughout their whole life. During my instruction, I showed my fifth-grade students that anyone who has an interest in a specific research topic can exhibit scholarship and promote an understanding of a topic. Conducting research and writing a project study were difficult tasks, but I grew as both a teacher and a researcher as I explored ATCPs.

### **Project Development**

Through the development of this project, I learned that the findings from the data analysis and the original research problem must relate back to the project. Project planning should include opportunities for participants to develop knowledge, skills, and teaching strategies to promote their learning (Girvan, Conneely, & Tangney, 2016). Because I have been a seminar coordinator for multiple professional development trainings over the past 5 years, I had an easier time developing the project than I did collecting and analyzing research data. As a project developer, I learned to reflect on every aspect of the professional development training to ensure that participants will be engaged in the content and that the content will be relevant to their needs in the classroom. I also learned that the project evaluation should include project goals to determine if the goals will be met and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the professional development training.

### **Leadership and Change**

Throughout the whole research and project development process, I learned that leaders should self-assess their own strengths and weaknesses. I also learned that I struggle adhering to APA format guidelines and the conventions of standard English grammar, so I knew that I needed to take advice from professionals to strengthen that area of my writing. I also learned that I have an unrelenting desire to grow and learn through my research efforts and to help others in my local education community. Throughout this process, I developed confidence in my research and communication skills and used those skills to contact change agents in USD when I needed help

throughout the research process. With their leadership and guidance, I have become a local leader who has taken the initiative to be a change agent within USD. I know that not all of the stakeholders will become involved in my initiative, but it takes only a few people to research and a receptive school district to allow the fostering of new pedagogical strategies to meet the needs of ATCP teachers and their students.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

As I reflect on myself as a scholar, I have strengthened my researching skills through the doctoral process and my ability to use various research databases to find relevant peer-reviewed articles. I learned that the process of developing and organizing a literature review takes many months because each research article may include information for multiple subtopics. Organizing articles by theme was an effective strategy, and as I continued researching, I found it easier to comprehend the researchers' findings. By conducting a comprehensive review of the related literature pertaining to the topic and immersing myself in the data analysis, I have become a scholar and have developed an effective professional development training to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge on technology integration, virtual learning support, and pedagogical practices to meet the needs of all students.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

As a practitioner, I have developed a greater appreciation for and understanding of the need for continued professional development training in K-12 schools. I always knew that professional development training was significant to the continuing education of teachers, but now I understand the direct correlation between improving teachers'

pedagogical knowledge and increasing student achievement. As a fifth-grade teacher, my responsibility has been to provide effective instruction and to enhance student learning. As a practitioner, I now understand how teachers can take new pedagogical knowledge they acquire in professional development training and apply their knowledge to facilitate student learning. A professional development training is a medium for disseminating research information. On the basis of this project study's findings, I found evidence to support the significance of professional development training to ATCP teachers and their students.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

As a project developer, I learned that planning and implementing professional development training is an encompassing, time-consuming process that involves integrating the data analysis results, considering the needs of the participants and the presenters' expertise, establishing an agenda, and developing an assessment instrument. In my role as a researcher, I feel confident planning and developing a professional development training because I reviewed hundreds of research articles as I developed my project. Using the knowledge, I gained during my research efforts, I identified the details and focus for my ATCP professional development training. I also challenged myself by developing a virtual professional development training and creating adaptations for transitioning my training to an in-person delivery model. I will continue to use these professional development planning and implementation strategies as I develop teacher trainings in the future.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

As I reflect on the overall work, this professional development training may be a valuable asset to ATCP teachers and their students. ATCP teachers may receive essential professional development training on technology integration, virtual learning support, and pedagogical practices to meet the needs of all students, which in turn may enhance student learning. I believe the most important consideration when ATCP teachers begin a school year is for them to feel supported and prepared to teach using effective pedagogical strategies. As I developed the 3-day professional development training, I reflected on the results of my study, the best practices supported by research, and the needs of ATCP teachers. Those reflections can be identified throughout the professional development training to support ATCP teachers as they begin teaching in K-12 schools.

This research and professional development training are important because they can be used to positively impact ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparedness from ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences. To become effective teachers, ATCP teachers need continual professional development training to close the gap in knowledge of what they know and what they want to know. ATCP teachers impact the lives and futures of their students every day, and they are agents for initiating positive social change.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

#### **Implications**

This project has implications for positive social change that could impact USD, ATCP teachers, students, parents, and society. The implications for social change at a

local level would be increasing the professional development training of ATCP teachers, which can positively impact their perceptions of their preparedness to teach. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. In reflecting on the review of the related literature and the results of this study, teacher preparation is not only an issue among ATCP teachers at USD but also ATCP teachers and traditionally prepared teachers across the United States.

A 3-day professional development training may help ATCP teachers increase their knowledge of effective technology integration, virtual learning support, and strategies to address the needs of all students. Potential implications for positive social change could affect parents' ability to acquire the knowledge and skills to support virtual learning. Implications for positive social change may also affect students as their engagement and involvement in their learning could increase as a result of ATCP teachers participating in the professional development training and integrating digital learning tools into their classrooms. Positive social change could also occur in society as students who use those learning tools are more likely to graduate from college, gain employment, and contribute to society.

### **Applications**

This project could have positive implications by increasing the amount of needed professional development training. As noted in their interviews, ATCP teachers need continual professional development training to fill their gaps in knowledge. This project



could help foster open communication between ATCP teachers and their ATCP instructors to address any knowledge gaps during the following year's 1-week ATCP training. This could also lead to an increase in teacher retention because teachers would receive the requisite training to be successful in the classroom.

Theoretical implications could confirm Shulman's (1987) PCK theory as the findings of this study align with the pedagogical content knowledge model. Shulman (1987) concluded that the most effective teacher preparation was well-organized and included content-based instructional strategies. My professional development training could also be applied to traditional teacher preparation programs because the understanding of content was integrated with the understanding of teaching practices to create an effective teacher training (Shulman, 1986).

### **Directions for Future Research**

Recommendations for future research could include a quantitative approach in which researchers collect quantitative survey data from newly hired ATCP teachers, ATCP teachers, and former ATCP teachers. By using a quantitative study, future researchers could expand the scope of this study by including a larger sample of ATCP teachers. Future researchers can expand the scope of this study by including ATCP teachers from across the entire USD and including not only ATCP teachers with 1 to 3 years of experience but also ATCP teachers with 5 or more years of experience. By expanding the scope of this study, future researchers could provide additional recommendations for the 3-day professional development training from a broader representation of ATCP teachers. The final recommendation for future research could be

the replication of this study at another school district within the state or southeastern region.

### **Conclusion**

I developed this project on the basis of the results of my interviews with ATCP teachers who were actively enrolled in an ATCP. Participants believed they needed professional development training to fill the gap in practice between ATCP teachers' preparation and the teaching strategies they wished they knew. To address their gap in knowledge, I created a 3-day professional development training for newly hired ATCP teachers, ATCP teachers, and former ATCP teachers on technology integration, virtual learning support, and pedagogical practice to meet the needs of all students. The literature review information was incorporated into the professional development training and training was provided to ATCP teachers on the most effective pedagogical practices, virtual instructional tools, and strategies to enhance student and parent engagement during virtual instruction. Even though the professional development training was designed for ATCP teachers, it could be used for traditionally prepared teachers. The professional development training could improve the retention rate of ATCP teachers at USD as they would receive the necessary tools to be successful in K-12 classrooms.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### Overview of the Professional Development Training

#### **Alternative Certification Teacher Training: Technology Implementation, Supporting Virtual Learning, and Meeting the Needs of All Students**

**General Overview:** At USD, there was a high attrition rate of ATCP teachers.

Stakeholders were concerned that ATCP teachers left the profession or the school district because they may not have received the tools needed to be successful in the classroom.

Therefore, a basic qualitative study was conducted to explore the perceptions of ATCP teachers within USD regarding their preparation from ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools. Based on the findings from this study, I created a professional development training that will train ATCP teachers in the implementation and use of USD's technology initiatives. The training will also include strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their children's academic success in the home setting.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of district-based technology initiatives, provide strategies to increase virtual learning support, and participate in teaching simulations to meet the needs of all learners.

**Goals:** The goals for this professional development training are to increase ATCP teachers' knowledge of technology initiatives and strategies for promoting parents' ability to support their students at home using a virtual learning platform.

**Target Audience:** The target audience for the professional development training will be ATCP teachers, new ATCP hires, and experienced ATCP teachers.

**Timeline:** The training will include 3 full days of training (8 hours each day for a total of 24 hours). Details are listed in the daily training plan.

**Materials:** The only supplies I will need to provide ATCP teachers are up-to-date electronic copies of state standards across all core content areas.

**Location:** The professional development training will be presented virtually because of the risks associated with an in-person professional development training during the COVID-19 pandemic. I will be using the Zoom web-based conferencing program. The in-person format will include the use of a local school, the library for large gatherings, and classrooms for the breakout room sessions.

**Description of the Professional Development Training:**

Day 1 of the training will include sessions on the district-based technology initiatives including PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom. Day 2 of the professional development training will include training sessions on virtual learning support strategies. To wrap up the professional development training, day 3 will include training sessions on meeting the needs of all learners utilizing teaching simulations.

The professional development training will begin at 8:30 a.m. each day and end at 4:30 p.m. The morning session will last 2.5 hours and the focus will be a topic of the day. ATCP teachers will then take two 30-minute breaks. During these 30-minute breaks, ATCP teachers will have an opportunity to meet with the presenters in small groups using Zoom breakout rooms and ask them questions they may not have had a chance to ask during the morning session. If the professional development training is held in person, participants can stay behind and ask their questions while the rest of the

participants take their break. After the 30-minute break, the teachers will return for one more hour-long session. From 1:05 to 2:00 pm, participants will have lunch and training will resume at 2:00 pm. The remaining training hours will continue with the topic of the day and end with a question and answer session.



**Day 1: Session -Technology Implementation****Total Time of Day 1:** 8 hours**I. Registration Period** 8:00 am to 8:30 am**II. Overview, Welcome and Group Introductions, Discuss the Agenda** (8:30 am to 9:00 am)

- Group Introductions
  - Name
  - Year in the ATCP program
  - Personal interests in the professional development training
  - Personal Expectations of the professional development training
  - Slides (1 to 5)

**III. Session 1 PowerSchool** (9:00 am to 10:40 am)

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know PowerSchool (15 minutes)
  - Slides (6 to 7)
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 8
- Activity #2 Implementation (30 minutes)
  - Slide 9

**IV. Break and Switch Sessions** (10:40am to 10:55am)

- Slide 10

**V. Session 2 Review 360** (10:55 am to 12:35pm)

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Review 360 (15 minutes)
  - Slide 11
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 12
- Activity #2 Implementation of Review 360 (30 minutes)
  - Slide 13

**VI. Break** (12:35pm to 1:05pm)

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with PowerSchool and Review 360 Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 14

**VII. Lunch (1:05 to 2:00pm)**

- Slide 15

**VIII. Session 3 Google Classroom (2:00pm to 3:40pm)**

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Google Classroom (15 minutes)
  - Slide 16
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 17
- Activity #2 Implementation of Google Classroom (30 minutes)
  - Slide 18

**IX. Break (3:40 to 4:00pm)**

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with Google Classroom Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 19

**X. Review and Reflect (4:00 to 4:30pm)**

- Slide 20

**Day 2: Session -Virtual Learning Strategies**

**Total Time of Day 2:** 8 hours

**I. Professional Development Training and Research Question and Answer Session (optional) 8:00 am to 8:30 am****II. Welcome Back and Discuss the Agenda (8:30 am to 9:00 am)**

- Slide 21 to 22

**III. Session 1 Effective Technology Integration (9:00 am to 10:40 am)**

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Technology (15 minutes)
  - Slide 23
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 24
- Activity #2 Implementation of Effective Technology (30 minutes)
  - Slide 25

**IV. Break and Switch Sessions (10:40am to 10:55am)**

- Slide 26

**V. Session 2 Parent Engagement and Involvement (10:55 am to 12:35pm)**

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Virtual Home Learning (15 minutes)
  - Slide 27
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations: Organizational Learning Tools (45 minutes)
  - Slide 28
- Activity #2 Implementation of Teaching Google Classroom to Parents While Creating a Learning Environment at Home (30 minutes)
  - Slide 29

**VI. Break (12:35pm to 1:05pm)**

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with Technology Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 30

**VII. Lunch (1:05 to 2:00pm)**

- Slide 31

**VIII. Session 3 Student Engagement and Involvement (2:00pm to 3:40pm)**

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Technology Engagement Strategies (15 minutes)
  - Slide 32
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations: Increasing Student Engagement and Involvement (45 minutes)
  - Slide 33
- Activity #2 Implementation of Technology Engagement Resources (30 minutes)
  - Slide 34

**IX. Break (3:40 to 4:00pm)**

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with Technology Engagement Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 35

**X. Review and Reflect (4:00 to 4:30pm)**

- Slide 36

**Day 3: Session -Meeting the Needs of All Students****Total Time of Day 3:** 8 hours**I. Professional Development Training and Research Question and Answer Session (optional)** 8:00 am to 8:30 am**II. Welcome back and Discuss the Agenda** (8:30 am to 9:00 am)

- Slides 37 to 38

**III. Session 1 ESOL Pedagogical Practices** (9:00 am to 10:40 am)

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Your ESOL Students (15 minutes)
  - Slide 39
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 40
- Activity #2 Implementation (30 minutes)
  - Slide 41

**IV. Break and Switch Sessions** (10:40 am to 10:55 am)

- Slide 42

**V. Session 2 SPED Pedagogical Practices** (10:55 am to 12:35 pm)

- Sign In
- Introduction: Getting to Know Your Students with Special Needs (15 minutes)
  - Slide 43
- Activity #1 Instructional Simulations (45 minutes)
  - Slide 44
- Activity #2 Implementation (30 minutes)
  - Slide 45

**VI. Break** (12:35pm to 1:05pm)

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with ESOL and SPED Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 46

**VII. Lunch** (1:05 to 2:00 pm)

- Slide 47

**VIII. Session 3 Lesson Planning to Meet the Needs of All Students (2:00 pm to 3:40 pm)**

- Sign In
- Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: ESOL Students (35 minutes)
  - Slide 48
- Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: SPED Students (35 minutes)
  - Slide 49
- Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: Technology Integration (30 minutes)
  - Slide 50

**IX. Break (3:40 to 4:00 pm)**

- Zoom Breakout Rooms with Lesson Planning Presenters for a Question and Answer Session
  - Slide 51

**X. Evaluation (4:00 to 4:30 pm)**

- Slide 52

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**Alternative Certification  
Teacher Training:  
Technology Implementation,  
Supporting Virtual Learning,  
and Meeting the Needs of  
All Students**

Dr. Mary Huffman

**Three-Day Professional Development  
Overview**

- Overview of research on novice ATCP teachers' perceptions of preparedness from ATCP, bachelor degree, course, and prior experiences to teach in a K-12 setting
- Your role in the success of this professional development
  - Please come on time and be prepared for each session
- Instructional simulations
  - You will have the opportunity to participate in instructional simulations each day
- Professional development evaluation
  - At the end of the 3-day professional development, you will complete a questionnaire to evaluate your knowledge of the school district's technology initiatives, strategies to increase virtual learning support, and simulations to meet the needs of all learners

**Purpose of This Professional  
Development**

- Learn to effectively implement technology integration
  - Powerschool
  - Review 360
  - Google Classroom
- Virtual Learning Strategies
  - Effective technology engagement
  - Parent engagement and involvement
  - Student engagement and involvement
- Meet the needs of All Students
  - ESCD Pedagogical Practices
  - IPED Pedagogical Practices
  - Planning purposeful use of the new resources and pedagogical practices that you learned during this professional development

**Welcome and Group Introductions**

- Dr. Mary Huffman
  - Ed Walden University College Teaching and Learning
  - Teacher for 20 Years and presenter for 5 years
- Group Introductions
  - Name
  - Year in the ATCP program
  - Personal interests in professional development
  - Personal expectations of the professional development

**AGENDA FOR TODAY and Conference  
Expectations**

- Expectations for the Conference
  - We are going to learn from each other, learn from experts in the field, and we are going to leave here feeling confident in implementing strategies we learned today
- Agenda for today: Technology Implementation
  - Powerschool
  - Review 360
  - Google Classroom

**DAY 1: TECHNOLOGY  
IMPLEMENTATION**

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**SESSION 1: POWERSCHOOL**

**Get to Know This Tool**

- Powerschool: Basic skills technology software accessible by administrators, teachers, parents, and students
- Purpose: Increase student operations with interactive. Allow for use technology to increase accountability for grades, attendance, and daily school tasks such as lunch orders.
- Access: Mobile apps, administrator portal, grades can report directly into Powerschool.
- Parts: Powerschool users spend 30% less time on their website due to management costs (March 2019).
  - Provides task engagement, PowerTeacher Pro Dashboard
- Pitfalls: setting up the gradebook can be difficult. Access codes for each student are provided by office staff each school year.
- Help: [www.districtschools.org](http://www.districtschools.org) 1-877-875-1330

**SESSION 1: POWERSCHOOL**

**Instructional Simulations**

- Improves instruction by maximizing time spent in the classroom, allows students to be held accountable for their work, and allows flexibility in grading rules.
- Grades are weighted based on the needs of the school and course content.
- Improves parent engagement.
- Parents can receive notifications when new assignments are put into Powerschool.
- Zero can be accounted for so that students do not fall behind.
- Administrators have access too.
  - Administrators can support teachers by reviewing students' grades and contact the parents doing with their family.
- **HOW IT IS USED:** Using your Powerschool access, participate in parent-teacher conference simulations to practice situations that you will have with parents describing the importance and use of the tool.
- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of two to participate in instructional simulations.

**SESSION 1: POWERSCHOOL**

**Implementation**

- Create your gradebook for the upcoming school year.
- Meet with the Powerschool team to teach you how to weigh grades (classwork, quizzes, tests).
- Provide notifications to parents as grades are added.
- Label different classes that you will teach to stay organized.
- Print progress reports.
- Print report cards.
- You will have 30 minutes to set up your gradebook for the upcoming school year with people to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance.

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS**

**10:40-10:55am**

**SESSION 2: REVIEW 360**

**Get to Know This Tool**

- Review 360: a district-based progress monitoring system to track positive and challenging student behavior.
- Purpose: track and improve procedures for behavior management starting with the teacher managed behavior, all the way up to office referrals.
- Access: through a teacher's district portal.
- Parts: data can be used to write IEP and 504 plans, user friendly.
- Pitfalls: there are a lot of tabs and sections to go through in order to complete all progress monitoring sections.
- Help: [Review Assessments](#).

**SESSION 2: REVIEW 360**

**Instructional Simulations**

- Can be used to determine appropriate behavior management procedures and plans.
- Used to track appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of each student.
  - Analyze effectiveness of the behavior management plan and make modifications if needed.
- Tracks the time, occurrence, and activity when a student's behavior went wrong.
- Can create an analysis over an entire school, grade level, or class using current progress monitoring.
- **HOW IT IS USED:** Using your Review 360 access, participate in behavior management simulations to practice collecting data about a student with challenges.
- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of two to participate in instructional simulations.



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**SESSION 2: REVIEW 360****Implementation**

- Practice Review 360 for the upcoming school year
- Meet with the Review 360 team to teach you how to pull and print your progress monitoring to be analyzed for data
- Create a list of support procedures and instructional strategies that you could use for students who are challenging
- Create a list of optional plans for student behavior accommodations and instruction strategies
- Can be used for conference with parents
- You will have 30 minutes to prepare your behavior management procedures and Review 360 for the upcoming school year with people to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS:  
Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A**

- 12:35-1:05pm
- For the next 30 minutes, you are going to get to choose between speaking to the Powerschool and Review 360 presenters
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

**LUNCH**

1:05-2:00PM

**SESSION 3: GOOGLE CLASSROOM****Get to Know This Tool**

- Purpose:** Organize and relay educational resources and assignments to students
- Access:** google forms, assignments, integrate Kami into Google Classroom
- Perks:** easy integrations with outside applications, student work can be posted in their Google Calendar as a reminder
- Pitfalls:** not robust, not easy to organize because it makes a big list of all the resources you post
- Help:** [Classroom Help Center](#)

**SESSION 3: GOOGLE CLASSROOM****Instructional Simulations**

- Include tools that create more time to teach and engage students
- Free Google training courses including video and lesson plans for teachers
- Free digital literacy tools, instructional tools, STEM, coding/computer science, language arts and culture digital lessons
- Easy upload of primary sources, video clips, and oral histories to bring history to life
- Interactive student comment section for class discussion and peer instruction

**NOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** Using your Google Classroom access, participate in teaching simulations while integrating Google tools into your instruction.

- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of 3-4 teachers to participate in instructional simulations

**SESSION 3: GOOGLE CLASSROOM****Implementation**

- Create your Google Classrooms for the upcoming school year based on the subjects that you will teach in the fall
- Meet with the Google Classroom team to teach you how to set up your Google Classroom and invite students to join your class
- Create an assignment, quiz assignment, question for students, and upload instructional materials
- provide notifications to students' Google Calendar
- Stream assignments for a class (in list format for easier access)
- Take grades, set up assignments to feed directly into your Google Gradebook
- You will have 30 minutes to set up your Google Classroom for the upcoming school year with people to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

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### BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS: Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A

- 3:40-4:00pm
- For the next 20 minutes, you are going to get to speak to the Google Classroom presenter
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

### DAY 1: REVIEW AND REFLECT Exit Slip

- I will send each of you a Google Form as a break will do to answer the following questions
- What are three that you feel confident about from today's presentations and practice?
- What are some questions that you have about any of the topics today?
- Would you like to meet with one of our presenters in a small group to research some of the content?
- These questions will help us prepare for tomorrow's presentations
- We care about your opinions and feedback

### DAY 2: VIRTUAL LEARNING STRATEGIES

### WELCOME BACK

### Welcome Back and Today's Agenda

- Agenda for today: Virtual Learning Strategies
- Effective Technology Integration
- Parent Engagement and Involvement
- Student Engagement and Involvement

### SESSION 1: EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

#### Get to Know Technology

- Purpose: Learn by-doing method, technology-specific discussions, self-assessment of your own competencies
- Access: Throughout this training, we will be utilizing technology tools that you and your students can access through Clever (our district's app platform)
- Perks: modify instruction through use of graphic organizers, tech-based tools, and Zoom breakout rooms for small groups
- Pitfalls: maintaining engagement and involvement, slow or lack of connectivity to Internet
- Help: district student/parent help desk, district teacher help desk

### SESSION 1: EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

#### Instructional Simulations

- Used to provide effective instruction
- Challenge prior technology skills and motivate you to perform to your capability
- Integrate new content standards into technology-based lesson plans
- District-based curriculum guides can be effective in providing a baseline to start writing lessons as an novice AITP teacher
- NOW IT IS YOUR TURN: Using your computer, participate in technology integrated instructional simulations to practice using the variety of tools
- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of two to participate in instructional simulations

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**SESSION 1: EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION****Implementation**

- Create a standards-based technology integrated lesson plan for the upcoming school year
- Meet with the presenter to teach you how to effectively present the lesson that you are developing
- Use a resource that you have never used before
- Differentiate your instruction using Zoom breakout rooms for student discussion groups
- Allow more student-directed instruction
- You will have 30 minutes to create at least 1 technology integrated lesson for the upcoming school year with people to assist you in Zoom breakout rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS**

• 10:40-10:55am

**SESSION 2: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN VIRTUAL LEARNING**

- Purpose: Increase parent engagement and involvement in their student's learning and train parents how to use technology to support learning outside of the classroom
- Access: Learning Management Systems, Prezi, YouTube, Skype, Google Drive, Dropbox, and Google Classroom
  - SPED assistive technology resources-Forecast, Memo, Dragon Naturally Speaking, and LiveScribe SmartPen
- Perks: help parents use various file-sharing tools and applications
- Pitfalls: slow or lack of connectivity to internet, some tools might take multiple trainings to integrate with ease
- Help: digital glossary of disability-related terms, a Disability Services Digital Manual, and assistive technology

**SESSION 2: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT****Instructional Simulations**

- Teachers and parents need additional digital and professional resources to meet the needs of all students (Bluh, Purn, Rabinowitz, & Kaufman (Scarborough, 2018))
- Teachers and parents should be trained on the use of assistive technology resources
  - Model how to use: Dragon Naturally Speaking, LiveScribe, SmartPen, and Forecast Memo
  - Model how to use: Prezi, YouTube, Skype, Google Drive, Dropbox, and Google Classroom
- **HOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** Using your district teacher access, you will model for the other teachers how to use digital resources in your classroom, the teachers will pretend to be your students during the simulation
- You will be sent into Zoom breakout rooms in groups of three to participate in instructional simulations

**SESSION 2: PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT****Implementation**

- Create lesson plans for the upcoming school year using at least 3 of the instructional resources that we discussed in this session
- Meet with the presenter to teach you how to assess students using these digital tools
- Design a letter that can be sent to students and parents that explains the importance of engagement and involvement in learning
  - Include suggestions for the digital tools and a sample of how parents can use the resources
- Set up accounts for all the instructional tools described to prepare for the next ability and engagement of students in your upcoming school year
- Revisit with the presenter to research how to use strategies to implement various digital tools if needed

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS:  
Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A**

- 12:35-1:05pm
- For the next 30 minutes, you are going to get to speak to the technology presenter
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

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**LUNCH**

■ 1:05-2:00PM

**SESSION 3: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN VIRTUAL LEARNING**

- Purpose: Increase knowledge of various virtual tools, media recordings, and editing tools teachers can use to promote student engagement and involvement
- Access technology tools including Audacity, iMovie, iMovie Maker, Photo Story, Jing, and Camtasia
  - Communication tools including Flipgrid, Padlet, FutureMe, and iMazing
  - Interactive polling using H5P anywhere
- Future provides feedback to the student, student choice, differentiation of presentation methods
- iMovie: a lot of digital tools, so this can become overwhelming and shut down their learning
- Help: Contact the technology committee including [info@psdschools.org](mailto:info@psdschools.org)

**SESSION 3: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT****Instructional Simulations**

- Provide student choice
  - Designing and conducting their own investigations
- Encourage various methods of content presentations
  - Presenting and defending their writing orally with the use of technology tools
- Synchronous meetings with web-enhanced instruction
- **NOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** Using your district teacher access, participate in simulations leading instruction while providing student choice of digital instructional tools
- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of three to participate in instructional simulations

**SESSION 3: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT****Implementation**

- Use this independent time to create 8-10 minute pre-recorded Webcam videos for the upcoming school year
- Use the updated state standards and district curriculum to guide your video
- Meet with the technology team to research elements of the Webcam video process or if you are ready to add more rigor to your videos, they can provide that too
- Share your computer screen with the students to model and set clear project expectations
- You will have 30 minutes to pre-record Webcam videos for the upcoming school year with people to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS:  
Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A**

- 3:40-4:00pm
- For the next 20 minutes, you are going to get to speak to the student engagement presenter
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

**DAY 2: REVIEW AND REFLECT**

- I will send each of you a Google Form as a quick exit slip to answer the following questions
- What are three that you feel confident about from today's presentations and practice?
- What are some questions that you have about any of the topics today?
- Would you like to meet with one of our presenters in a small group to reteach some of the content?
- These questions will help us prepare for tomorrow's presentations
- We care about your opinions and feedback

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## DAY 3: MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

### WELCOME BACK

### Welcome Back and Today's Agenda

- Agenda for today: Meeting the Needs of All Students
  - ESOL Pedagogical Practice
  - SPED Pedagogical Practice
  - Lesson Planning to Meet the Needs of All students

#### SESSION 1: ESOL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

##### Get to Know Your ESOL Student

- Purpose: ESOL students are the fastest growing student subgroup in America's public schools (Bichham, Lowry, & Burke, 2019)
  - Prepare you to meet the needs of ESOL students by providing pedagogical knowledge to transfer your content knowledge to effective instructional practices (Gan & Tang, 2018)
- Facts: ESOL students become role models for other students and ESOL students' culture can be integrated into lessons throughout the school year
- Pitfalls: Communication with parents can be difficult, especially if a student's family is a first-generation American
- Help: Each school district has an ESOL program coordinator that will be able to provide assistance along with the ESOL teacher who probably rotates between schools

#### SESSION 1: ESOL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

##### Instructional Simulations

- Use real-world examples for teaching grammatical concepts
  - Use pre-recorded videos on content presentations that last 8-10 minutes with captions accessible in different languages (Stone & Springer, 2015)
  - Connect the oral and written content while being culturally responsive to learners' needs
  - Integrate ESOL students' social, linguistic, and academic backgrounds to support students rather than focusing on their challenges
  - Provide student choice
- NOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** You will now have time to participate in a simulation where you lead a grammar lesson by using real-world examples to teach the grammatical concepts along with making connections between the oral and written content
- You will be sent into Zoom Breakout Rooms in groups of three to participate in instructional simulations

#### SESSION 1: ESOL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

##### Implementation

- Use this independent time to develop individual goal setting checklists, models, and assignment reminders for the upcoming school year
  - Use visual cues
  - Include first language and English on the graphic organizer
- Use the updated state standards and district curriculum to guide your video
- Meet with the ESOL presenter to assist with creating student checklists
- You will have 30 minutes to develop goal setting student checklists with varying levels of assistance. There are people here to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

### BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS

➤ 10:40-10:55am

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**SESSION 2: SPED PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES****Get to Know Your Students With Special Needs**

- Purpose: Increase teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and confidence in teaching students with special needs (Wynarth & Dennis, 2017)
- Perks: You become a stronger teacher, more receptive to the needs of your students, and empowered to learn additional strategies to modify instruction
- Pitfalls: Some students with disabilities in the K-12 setting are not having their educational needs met (Morino, Cortes-Vega, & Molina, 2013)
- Help: Each school district has a SPED program coordinator that will be able to provide assistance along with SPED teachers in your building

**SESSION 2: SPED PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES****Instructional Simulations**

- It's important to examine activities, myths, technologies, and pedagogical practices that limit inclusion of students (Jubb et al., 2018)
- SPED accommodations
  - Test read to student
  - Receive copy of teacher's notes
  - Extended time to complete assignments
  - Redacting and organizational tools
- The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008
- **Q&A 15 MIN**: You will have different SPED presenters rotate into your Zoom Breakout room every 10 minutes to provide small group instruction about different disabilities and how to respond to the needs of disabled students. The topics include Dyslexia, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Autism.

**SESSION 2: SPED PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES****Implementation**

- Review online readings and videos to diagnose a possible problem and implement changes to SPED instruction
  - By watching these short real-life scenarios, you will be able to diagnose problems in other classrooms so that it doesn't happen in your classroom
- Develop a differentiated lesson plan and modify instruction for a student with Dyslexia, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Autism
- Create short templates with modification information so that you can easily access them throughout the school year
- You will have 30 minutes of independent time to develop lessons with people to assist you in Zoom Breakout Rooms for small groups or one-on-one assistance

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS:  
Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A**

- 12:35-1:05pm
- For the next 30 minutes, you are going to get to choose between speaking to the ESOL or SPED pedagogical practices presenter
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

**Lunch**

• 1:05-2:00pm

**SESSION 3: LESSON PLANNING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS****Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: ESOL Students**

- ACP teachers have identified the difficulty to develop and implement effective ESOL pedagogical practices because they were not taught these strategies
- Therefore, we are going to create small groups using Zoom breakout rooms to
  - share our lesson ideas with other teachers
  - modify our lessons to make them stronger
  - work with experts in the field to answer any additional questions
- This training was developed to provide opportunities for you to engage in discussions, ask questions, and participate in hands-on learning to create a deeper understanding of the content (Richardson & Corbett, 2012)
- **Q&A 15 MIN**: You will be put into groups of 4 teachers in a Zoom Breakout Room to share the lesson plans that you developed and modify them to make the lesson stronger

**SESSION 3: LESSON PLANNING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS**

**Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: SPED Students**

- Johnson's (1987) PCK model closely relates to you and how you use professional development to enhance learning
  - Use relevant information as stimuli for sustaining interest
  - Use real-life situations
  - Use prior experiences to formulate new knowledge
- Therefore, we are going to create small groups using Zoom breakout rooms to
  - share your SPED lesson ideas with other teachers
  - modify our lessons to make them stronger
  - work with experts in the field to answer any additional questions

**NOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** You will be put into groups of 4 teachers in a Zoom breakout room to share the lesson plans that you developed and modify them to make the lessons stronger

**SESSION 3: LESSON PLANNING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS**

**Lesson Planning and Sharing in Breakout Rooms: Technology Integration**

- Ching, Hsu, and Boddwin (2018) identified the process of creating effective online experiences
  - Using learn-by-doing method
  - Participating in technology-specific discussions
  - Completing self-assessments of your competencies
- Therefore, we are going to create small groups using Zoom breakout rooms to
  - share your technology-integrated lesson ideas with other teachers
  - modify your lessons to make them stronger
  - work with experts in the field to answer any additional questions

**NOW IT IS YOUR TURN:** You will be put into groups of 4 teachers in a Zoom breakout room to share the lesson plans that you developed and modify them to make the lessons stronger

**BREAK AND SWITCH SESSIONS:  
Zoom Breakout Rooms Q & A**

- 3:40-4:00pm
- For the next 20 minutes, you are going to get to speak to the lesson planning presenter
- You can ask additional questions to the presenter to prepare for the upcoming school year

**EVALUATION OF THIS  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Please complete the electronic professional development questionnaire
  - The evaluation will be sent to your school email
- Goal: to evaluate your knowledge of district initiatives, increase virtual learning support, strategies to meet the needs of all your students
- With the results of the evaluation, I will be able to inform stakeholders, current and future AICP teachers, and modify instruction for future AICP week-long trainings

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### Evaluating an ATCP Professional Development Training

**Directions:** Please complete this evaluation by circling the number that you feel best explains your opinions about this professional development training.

1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree

1. During the professional development training, I learned information and strategies that will assist me in the implementation of technology integration.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
2. I learned information and strategies that will assist me in the implementation of virtual learning strategies to engage students.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
3. I learned information and strategies that will assist me in the implementation of pedagogical practices to engage parents in their student's virtual learning.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
4. I learned about technology resources and implementation strategies that will assist me in meeting the needs of my ESOL students.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
5. I learned about technology resources and implementation strategies that will assist me in meeting the needs of my SPED students.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
6. I was provided time to plan with fellow teachers for the upcoming school year.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
7. I was provided time to meet with experts in the field of technology to answer my questions so that I can effectively implement the school district's technology initiatives including PowerSchool, Review 360, and Google Classroom.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree
8. I would recommend the professional development training to fellow teachers.  
1=unsatisfied 2=satisfied 3=neutral 4=agree 5=strongly agree



## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Guide for Teachers' Interview

Interviewer's Name: Mary Huffman

Position: ATCP Teachers

Participant number \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Research Study Purpose

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparation program, previous degrees, careers, and family life experiences in preparation for teaching in USD's K-12 schools. All ATCP teachers were chosen to participate in the study because the teachers are attending graduate level courses while teaching fulltime. Data about ATCP teachers' perceptions about their preparation will be collected through teacher interviews. Teacher confidentiality will be protected because teachers' names will not be used in the data or final project study report. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The study is voluntary and, even though the participants signed the consent form, participants may withdraw from the study at any point. An audio recorder will be used to ensure that data is collected accurately.

## Interview questions

RQ1 What are ATCP teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to be a fulltime teacher after being trained in the ATCPs in USD?

1. What is your bachelor's degree in?
2. Are there any courses that you remember taking that helped prepare you in your classroom?
3. What coursework within your alternative education program prepared you for your fulltime teaching position?
4. Reflecting on your first year(s) as a teacher, what were some of the benefits of your participation in an alternative teacher certification program that assisted you as a teacher?
5. Can you describe the types of support you've received as a new teacher, within either the ATCP, your school, or school district?

RQ2 In addition to ATCPs, bachelor's degrees, careers, and prior experiences, what else do ATCP teachers in USD wish they had to prepare them to teach in a K-12 schools?

6. What do you perceive to be the advantages of having a prior career before teaching?
7. What are some elements of your career that you integrate into your teaching style and classroom?
8. What additional prior experiences in your life have prepared you to teach in a K-12 school?

9. What additional training do ATCP teachers wish they had that would prepare them teach in a K-12 school?
10. What are the challenges you have concerning your teaching in a K-12 classroom?
11. What resources do you wish that you had to aid in teaching students?
12. What else would you like to share concerning your experiences in working within a K-12 classroom?

Probing Questions:

1. What led you to that decision?
2. Tell me more about the event.
3. What did you learn from that event?
4. What did you do after that happened?

### Appendix C: Follow-Up Email From Alternative Certification Teacher Representative

You are invited to take part in a research study entitled “Teachers’ Perspective of Teacher Preparation Programs.” The study will explore the perceptions of ATCP teachers within USD regarding their preparation from ATCPs, bachelor’s degrees, careers, and prior experiences for K-12 schools. The researcher is inviting teachers in an alternative teacher certification program. The interview will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes. If you would like to participate in the study, please read the attached consent form and contact the district representative using the email provided. If you have questions about the study, you can contact the researcher using the email provided on the consent form.

Thank you for your consideration,

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