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**Providing Support for First Year, Alternatively Certified,
Bilingual Teachers in High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools**

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**Providing Support for First Year, Alternatively Certified,
Bilingual Teachers in High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools**

by

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Dedication

When I began this process, I knew it would be a challenge. But I never imagined that the journey would include the loss of a young and vibrant stepson and my beloved mother. I am incredibly blessed to have the support and encouragement of loving and patient family and friends without whom I would not have been able to complete this journey.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Dean and Marian Allen; my daughters, Katina and Starla Henderson; my husband, John Casey; and my favorite sister, Barbara Schneider. I am also indebted to my friends and mentors Karen Holt, Linda Skrla, and Brenda Beatty for their support and counsel. Last but certainly not least, I am forever grateful to Camy Young, Debbie Leyva, and the entire staff, my extended family at Wooten Elementary School, who have supported me without fail.

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**Providing Support for First Year, Alternatively Certified,
Bilingual Teachers in High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools**

Publication No. _____

Patricia Jeanne Casey, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2004

Supervisor: Martha Ovando

This study sought to explore the experiences of first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. The three areas of focus for this study were (a) the support and professional growth needs of these particular teachers, (b) the strategies and sources identified that best meet those needs, and (c) the experiences of the participants.

Data for this study were collected using in-depth interviews and observations with three, alternatively certified, bilingual, first year teachers, their teacher mentors, and their principals. The interviews began with open-ended questions; subsequent questions were generated from the participants' responses. As each interview was completed, the interview was transcribed and analyzed. Data analysis began with a process of coding the participants' responses to develop categories and themes.

Themes that emerged from the participants' responses in the first area of focus included the need for praise, recognition and appreciation, professional autonomy, self-confidence, technical information about school operations, and

needs related to professional development. Most dominant in the study was the beginning teachers' need to manage time and stress.

The themes that emerged from the data in the second area of focus included that the teachers employed personal background experiences, applied professional development learning, and engaged in reflective practice. Also, the teachers received support from school staff members including the teacher's mentor and the principal. Outside of the school, the alternative certification program cohort group, family, and friends provided support.

Two themes dominated the data in the third area of focus for this study—the experiences of the first year teachers. First, each of the beginning teachers expressed a strong personal sense of calling to be a teacher and dedication to their students. Second, the home/family lives of the students served, given the particular circumstance of poverty and a home language other than English, were cited both as a source of challenge and as a source of reward.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Teaching is the profession that makes all professions possible. For that reason, what teachers know and can do is of critical importance to our nation as we prepare the next generation to achieve a rich and productive future. Learning to teach well is complex and difficult work. Critical teacher shortages coupled with societal changes and recent studies demonstrating the importance of quality teachers in accelerating student achievement have created an unprecedented challenge for the educational system. The challenge created by these circumstances is compounded by societal changes that dictate that educators be prepared to serve students who are more diverse—racially, culturally, and linguistically—and more at risk of failure in school than ever before in our history. Societal changes have resulted in increasing of numbers of students who come to school with differences resulting from changing family structures; poverty; poor nutrition, housing, or health care; and other adverse conditions at home. In addition, powerful economic trends require a changing workforce—students must be skilled to think in order to participate in the new workforce, and teachers are challenged to develop new skills to respond to these demands of the new workforce. This changing face of society demands that educators prepare all children for new roles because quality schools and, especially, quality teachers, are the only lifeline for many American children.

Today's demand for new teachers is more geographic and subject-matter specific than ever before. The demand for new teachers is increasing because the current shortage of qualified teachers is exacerbated by several factors. For example, as many as half of the nation's public school teachers will reach retirement age by the year 2010, almost half of all new teachers leave the profession within five to seven years (Tell, 2000), class size reduction initiatives require more teachers in the primary grades, and the number of student entering public school systems is projected to increase two to five percent. Current projections indicate that if teacher education programs graduate approximately 100,000 new teachers, this represents only about half of what will be needed by 2010. Thus, as the changing face of public school education in the United States compels educators toward new imperatives for teacher preparation, the debate over methods of teacher preparation and licensure intensifies.

The challenge of attracting and keeping quality teachers is accentuated by increased pressures for school accountability in the form of high-stakes testing. Given that urban areas are turning more frequently to alternative certification programs to provide certified teachers in high need areas (Kwiatkowski, 1999), it is critical to determine whether alternatively certified teachers are at least as effective as their traditionally certified counterparts. Moreover, it is essential that educators begin to explore and articulate the conditions of teacher preparation programs that ensure an adequate number of qualified, competent teachers to

eliminate shortages, adequate representation of traditionally underrepresented minority teachers, and new teacher success for high student achievement.

Traditional program proponents presume that teachers need prescribed university-based coursework and training and a supervised practicum before assuming teaching responsibility (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1999). Alternative program proponents, on the other hand, presume that persons with certain characteristics and subject-matter expertise can learn to teach on the job with certain specific training and support. Alternative programs became increasingly popular in the 1980s and 1990s due to vacancies created by a shortage of certified teachers. These programs were designed to attract a more diverse teaching population; to attract brighter, more qualified candidates to the profession; and to fulfill state legislative mandates (Kwiatkowski, 1999).

States are looking at alternatives to teacher preparation programs such as urban education service corps, loan forgiveness programs, career change programs such as the military Troops to Teachers program, short-term alternative programs, programs to train educational paraprofessionals to become teachers, and national public service programs (Finn & Madigan, 2001). Such alternative forms of teacher preparation and certification typically attract candidates that are more racially/ethnically diverse, are more likely men, are more likely older (Feistritzer, 2000), are more likely to have experience in other occupations (Feistritzer, 2000), more frequently speak the students' language, and have roots in the community and, as a result, have more staying power (Kwiatkowski, 1999).

Still, little research exists confirming the actual effectiveness of any traditional or alternative preservice education program to improve the quality of teaching (Allen, 2000). Further, given the reluctance of teachers to teach in urban schools and the high attrition rate of those who do, urban principals struggle to maintain a full staff of qualified teachers (Jones & Sandidge, 1997). Because of the wide variety of preservice preparation programs now available and the consequent variety in teacher skills and abilities, principals must provide the instructional leadership to support and develop beginning teachers' capacity in order to maintain a quality staff.

More and more, urban principals are seeking a balance between competing demands for effective school management and instructional leadership. The principals rally resources to close the achievement gap that exists between White and higher economic status students and poor and minority students, to raise the bar by increasing academic rigor for all students, and to engage families and communities. However, variations in teacher preparation programs lead to variations in the skills and abilities of new teachers, presenting challenges for building administrators who are increasingly accountable for high student achievement. So, urban principals are under pressure to ensure that all teachers, even beginning teachers, produce high student achievement.

Moreover, principals are in a key position to establish school-based support structures to help new teachers. Busy urban principals are most likely to hire beginning teachers and most likely to be confronted with the most needy

student populations; they also are hard pressed to find the time to provide direct support for new teachers of the needed nature and quality. Therefore, urban principals are most in need of strategies to develop organizational structures and culture to support new teachers.

Context of the Study

The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Peske, 2001) found that the key to addressing teacher shortages is not in recruitment incentives, but in the support and training available to new teachers at the school site. They suggested that the success or failure and, more importantly, the retention of new teachers are dependent on what happens at the school site.

The literature is scarce about the principal's involvement in new teacher induction, especially induction of teachers in urban schools (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). Bolman and Deal (1997) lay a foundation for the examination of the principal's role in new teacher development in addressing conditions and elements in the workplace environment that allow people to survive and evolve. They contended that when there is a good fit between the organization and the individual, "individuals get meaningful and satisfying work and organizations get talent and energy they need to succeed" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 102). Further, the literature specifically suggests some examples of how principals or supervisors organize to assist new teachers:

1. School-based hiring processes—involving teachers helps to build a culture of professional empowerment (Johnson et al., 2001);
2. Involvement in matching mentors (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999);
3. Allocating time for observations (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999);
4. Visiting classrooms (Johnson & Kardos, 2002);
5. Providing regular, specific feedback (Johnson & Kardos, 2002);
6. Maintaining focus on improvement of teaching and learning (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999);
7. Providing professional development in the form of conferences or institutes (Johnson & Kardos, 2002); and
8. Cultivating a culture of teamwork and camaraderie (Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

Others have suggested that the need for support systems for new teachers is most prominent in urban schools (Fullan, 1991). In order to maintain a quality staff capable of meeting the demands of high-stakes accountability, then, the principal is called on to focus on leading instruction (Schmoker, 2002). Principals are the primary individuals who focus on capacity-building efforts to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to support learning (Brock & Grady, 2001; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Kardos, 2002). Available research provides descriptions of behaviors of good instructional leaders and demonstrates that effective instructional supervision has positive effects on teaching and learning, whereas ineffective instructional supervision has negative effects on teaching and

learning (Blase & Blase, 2001). In addition to effective instructional supervision, principals are key to effective implementation of mentor programs that appear to be effective in controlling new teacher attrition. Additionally, outcome data from mentor programs suggest that high-quality mentor programs can lead to gains in teacher quality and consequent gains in student achievement (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999).

Research on teacher quality has looked at how teachers' characteristics, skills and preparation programs impact their effectiveness with students. Additionally, there are some, albeit limited, studies that provide insights into the characteristics of effective instructional leadership. For example, based on the set of standards for school leaders developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) redefined the role of principals. Principals who have traditionally managed schools and overseen budgets, buildings, staff, and students should be primarily instructional leaders. The 2001 NAESP booklet, *Leading Learning Communities*, specifies six steps principals should take to improve test scores: (a) balancing management and leadership roles, (b) setting high expectations, (c) demanding rigorous content and instruction, (d) fostering adult learning, (e) using data, and (f) engaging parents and community. Using the ISLLC standards and assessments, the NAESP booklet provides a theoretical framework for the principals' instructional leadership in developing the capacity of beginning teachers. Research is needed to identify strategies that are used to

support and foster professional development of beginning teachers so that they can be effective.

Rationale

Beginning teachers have much to learn about the process of teaching and learning (Dollase, 1992; Ryan, 1970). The support and assistance that are provided during the early years (first through third) of teaching help to ensure teacher quality and retention (Billingsley, 1993; Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Dollase, 1992). Many state education agencies have established alternative certification programs for teachers that do not require the same teacher preparation content as traditional preservice teacher preparation programs (Kwiatkowski, 1999). These alternative certification programs with shortened preservice requirements have developed formal induction programs in response to the growing need for enhanced inservice development (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999).

In most cases the principal is the person formally charged with hiring, developing, and evaluating new teachers. Although researchers have identified some principal behaviors that impact teaching and learning and contribute to teacher satisfaction and development (Blase & Blase, 1998), the literature does not extensively or clearly define the principal's role in supporting new teachers, particularly those who are alternatively certified. While recent research suggests that principals and mentors directly support new teachers in specific ways, organizing the environment to support the new teachers—although indirect—is

also key to teacher success (Johnson et al., 2001). As such, further research needs to examine how and by whom beginning teachers are effectively supported. Specifically, much remains unexamined about systems or strategies that effectively support new teachers coming from alternative certification programs and working in urban, high-poverty, bilingual classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

Alternatively certified bilingual teachers are most likely to begin their careers in high-poverty, urban schools with large numbers of English language learners. To ensure effective teaching and successful implementation of the instructional program in the school, the development and supervision of the new teachers is critical. Because a higher percentage of alternatively certified teachers begin teaching in urban schools (Kwiatkowski, 1999), urban schools face significant challenges related to the induction of these teachers from varying backgrounds who are new to the profession (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001; Tell, 2000). Some of the factors involved in the situation follow:

1. Increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students are economically disadvantaged in the urban schools (Sparks, 1999).
2. Pressures of local, state, and national accountability systems continue to rise (Johnson et al., 2001).
3. Unlike other professions with entry-level positions, first year teachers are expected to be as effective as experienced teachers (Lortie, 1975).

4. Due to high rates of attrition and shortage of qualified teachers, most states now offer some form of non-traditional, alternative routes to teaching (Kwiatkowski, 1999).
5. Each state and each alternative certification program establishes unique requirements for obtaining teaching certification, creating enormous variation. The increasing variety of preservice preparation programs produces beginning teachers who are equipped with differing pedagogical skills and knowledge (Feistritz & Chester, 2001).

Successful induction and ongoing training are linked to retention and vital to the success of programs addressing the need for teachers. Moreover, alternative routes to teaching differ from traditional teacher preparation programs in degree of emphasis on subject matter, pedagogy, and the role of personal experience in learning to teach (Stoddart & Floden, 1995). Thus, it is important to understand the unique needs of the nontraditionally trained teachers in order to support them, build capacity, and retain them.

Planning and implementing an induction program that is helpful and effective for the beginning teachers requires examining the forms of assistance that are perceived as helpful by both principals and teachers. The literature identifies some forms of induction-year assistance perceived as helpful by most teachers and principals. However, limited research has focused on how new teachers, especially alternatively certified teachers, perceive support as they

transition into the profession. Research is needed to better understand the nature and the perceived impact of actions to support first year, alternatively certified teachers and to foster professional growth based on the unique needs of beginning teachers in urban schools.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and perceptions of alternatively certified bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. Specifically, this study sought to identify and report how these teachers perceived and experienced their support and professional development needs during the first year of teaching. Further, this study sought to identify and describe how and from whom the teachers perceived that these needs were best met. Additionally, the study sought to describe experiences of the beginning teachers.

Areas of Focus

This study explored the experiences of three first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. There were three areas of focus for this study.

1. This study described the perceived growth needs of the teachers, expressly the perceived needs for support and professional growth.

2. This study focused on the strategies identified that best met those needs, including how and from whom the teachers perceived these needs to be best met.
3. This study documented the experiences of alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools.

Methodology

This exploratory qualitative study examined the support and professional growth needs of alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. The study was a case study exploring the experiences of three first year, alternatively certified teachers. Data was collected using in-depth, individual interviews with the first year, alternatively certified teachers and group interviews with each first year teacher, his/her principal and his/her mentor.

A pool of bilingual teachers who were enrolled in an alternative certification program was identified as containing potential candidates for the study. From the list of schools where these potential candidates were assigned, three schools were selected from one urban district. The schools were purposefully selected as having more than 50% economically disadvantaged student population and no less than 40% of the student population enrolled in the bilingual education program. In all a maximum of three schools was selected representing one urban school district.

Data collected focused on interviews with and observations of principals and teachers. Open-ended questions formed the basis of the interviews. Interview

questions were designed to prompt in-depth discussion, and new questions arose as a result of respondents' answers.

Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Additionally, field notes were examined to enhance descriptions and interpretation of the interviews and observations. Through analysis, the researcher identified themes and commonalities surfacing in the responses and field notes that pointed to behaviors that support the new teachers.

Definition of Terms

Alternative certification refers to any nontraditional program through which a person may pursue a teaching certificate without participation in a traditional college- or university-based teacher preparation program.

Beginning teacher, novice teacher or *new teacher* refers to a teacher of record during first year of service. In the case of the alternatively certified teachers, during the first year the new teacher often is referred to as an *intern*.

Culture is a system of shared meaning that is held by members that distinguishes an organization from other organizations. For example, these beliefs center on such characteristics of the organization as orientations about risk taking, outcomes, teams, or individuals (Robbins, 2000). *Professional culture* focuses on professional norms. *School culture* is often described as “the way we do things around here.”

Induction refers to the systematic assistance, support, and professional activities provided to beginning teachers to transition them into teaching.

Mentor teacher is an experienced teacher who is assigned to support, assist, and guide the new teacher during the first year of teaching.

Professional growth or *development* refers to acquisition of skills or knowledge to improve teaching and learning.

Teacher capacity refers to the teacher's knowledge, skill, and disposition necessary for the teacher to be effective in the classroom.

Urban refers to school districts in cities that serve no fewer than 50,000 students.

Significance of the Study

The results of this investigation generate information to expand the existing body of knowledge that supports effective induction programs and processes for increasing retention and success/effectiveness of teachers from nontraditional preparation programs who are beginning their careers in challenging settings. The study reveals ways to improve instruction and achievement in the classroom. This information is useful to teacher education institutions, principals, supervisors, and professional development personnel. Additionally, the information adds to a growing body of knowledge about successful practices for urban schools with high numbers of economically disadvantaged, bilingual students.

Delimitations

This study focused on description of the support and professional growth experiences of three first year, bilingual, alternatively certified teachers. As such, the study did not attempt to isolate differences in these three new teachers' background, prior preparation or certification program, stages of teacher development, or teacher retention issues, but rather to better understand their individual experiences.

The study focused on three first year, alternatively certified teachers in urban elementary schools that are characterized by a high percentage of students who are English language learners, economically disadvantaged, students of color. As a result, the study did not seek to offer any information regarding the specific role of the principal in developing capacity in experienced teachers or beginning teachers for suburban or rural schools.

Further, the study explored the experiences of a small number (three) of teachers who were from the same alternative certification preparation program. Accordingly, the study did not attempt to offer information about all first year teachers compare this preparation program with other traditional or non-traditional (alternative) certification programs.

Summary

This dissertation began with an introduction to set the stage for the research problem in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature related to teachers' support and professional development needs during the first

year of teaching and how and from whom the teachers perceive that these needs were best met. Chapter 2 reviews the literature that addresses teacher turnover, trends in teacher preparation programs, teacher quality, the support needs of new teachers, induction programs, and the principal's role in new teacher induction. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology and the procedures that were utilized to gather and analyze the data. The data are presented in Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter examines the literature pertaining to support and professional development needs of first year teachers. Much literature about effective induction-year professional development practices has focused on mentor programs that pair experienced teachers with beginning teachers for support and guidance and that rely very little on the principal's direct influence or the influence of school culture. Other authors have taken a broader perspective in examining the influence of the school culture and environment in the initiation of the new teachers. This study looks at how and from whom first year, alternatively certified bilingual teachers experience support and capacity building.

This chapter reviews the literature that addresses the experiences of first year teachers in urban schools. First, the literature associated with the teacher shortage and turnover lays a foundation for the significant need for skills and knowledge to build capacity in first year teachers. Second, related literature about current trends in preparation programs, teacher quality, and school effectiveness is examined in order to develop further understanding of the context. Third, the research about the specific support needs of new teachers, components of known induction programs, and the influence of school culture is addressed. Fourth, the principal's role and the role of school culture in new teacher induction as they are depicted in the literature are explored. In conclusion, the observed shortcomings

of the research will be revealed followed by a brief discussion of how these related influences define the induction-year experiences of the first year, alternatively certified bilingual teachers.

Teacher Turnover

The beginning of the new century has brought many new challenges for educators. The demand for teachers is unprecedented and this shortage is not likely to go away any time soon. The job market for teachers varies by geographic area and subject matter. Shortages are most severe in inner cities that are often overcrowded and face higher crime and poverty and in remote rural areas where salaries are the lowest. Subject areas of mathematics, science, bilingual education, and computer science are also subject to serious shortages. Additionally, the shortage of minority teachers is expected to intensify with minority student enrollments increasing. Several factors contribute to this problem (U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000).

Contributing factors include, for example, that up to half of the nation's teachers will retire in the first decade of the 21st century (Sullivan, 2001). Almost 10% of new teachers do not complete the first year (Weiss & Weiss, 1999), and approximately 50% of new teachers have left the profession by the end of the fifth year, with the highest numbers in urban areas (DePaul, 2000; Streisand, Toch, & Lord, 1998; Sullivan, 2001). In the first decade of the 21st century, an estimated 1.7 million more teenagers will enter high school, a 13% increase, and an increase of 5% is projected at the elementary level (Sullivan, 2001). In 1998–2002,

approximately 40% of the public school students were students of color, compared to approximately 10% of teachers (Freeman, 1999; Wilder, 2000). Additionally, teachers in central-city public schools were the least likely to stay in their positions and the most likely to move to other teaching positions; teachers in both rural and suburban schools were more likely to stay in their positions (Ingersoll, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Villegas & Clewell, 1998). Most significantly, schools with 50% or more economically disadvantaged students have higher teacher turnover rates than schools with less than 50% poor students (Ingersoll, 2001).

Results of the *Teacher Demand Study* by the Institute for School–University Partnerships at Texas A&M University (2001a) indicated that 25% of the 38,400 new teachers hired in Texas for the 2000–2001 school year were not fully certified in the subject area they taught. “This research confirms the pressing issue facing our state’s school districts in not only recruiting someone for a position, but making sure that person is well-prepared to teach students,” said Commissioner of Education Jim Nelson (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2001b, p. 1).

Although the *Teacher Demand Study* (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2001a) found that approximately 75% of the teachers hired for 2000–2001 in Texas were fully certified, in major urban school districts 36% of teachers lacked appropriate certification, compared to only 19% in rural areas. While nationally the highest numbers of teachers who were not certified in their

fields were in foreign languages, special education, and mathematics (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2002), the largest numbers of teachers who were not fully certified in Texas were in the following subject areas: (a) elementary bilingual or English as a Second Language (48%), (b) secondary bilingual or English as a Second Language (41%), (c) secondary foreign language (36%), (d) secondary technology and secondary special education (33%), and (e) secondary science (30%).

A devastating effect of the teacher shortage is its inevitable impact on high-poverty, urban schools and students who most need quality teachers (Jones & Sandidge, 1997). Sadly, this phenomenon is not new as new teachers are frequently assigned to teach the students who are most at risk, and the “expert” teachers are “rewarded” with high-achieving, motivated students. Teachers who are not licensed, for example, are more likely to teach in elementary schools with poverty rates above 75% (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 1998). Thus, teacher shortages in urban, impoverished, minority, or low-achieving districts widen the academic divide. Students of color are the most likely to be placed in classrooms with the least experienced, least qualified teachers, even though it has been well proven that effective teachers can make a difference for these children and reduce the academic achievement gap (Berry, 2001).

“For children and youth in poverty from diverse cultural backgrounds who attend urban schools, having effective teachers is a matter of life and death. These children have no life options for achieving decent lives other than by experiencing

success in school” (Haberman, 1995, p. 2). This creates a dilemma: Raising certification requirements may improve the quality of teachers but produce fewer of them.

In addition to the shortage of teachers certified to teach in areas considered to be “critical shortage” areas, the teacher shortage is further complicated by the declining number of already underrepresented minorities entering teaching (Dandy, 1998; Stoddart & Floden, 1995). National data projections have shown that about 5% of teachers are minority, compared to approximately 33% of the student population (Kwiatkowski, 1999). This shortage of minority teachers and role models is viewed as an added detriment to the education of minority students (Johnson & Montemayor, 1991). Some researchers have described this detriment and the consequent disparity in minority student achievement in terms of teacher–student dissonance resulting from the sociocultural differences between teachers and students (Anyon, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Nonminority teacher candidates expect to teach as they were taught, expect students to learn the same ways they do, and often have negative attitudes toward culturally different students (Stoddart, 1993).

Thus, in many ways the teacher shortage and teacher turnover result in a significant cost not only to the students but also to both the school systems and to the individuals who have invested time and money in their preparation to teach. The Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER, 2000) estimated the costs of separation, hiring, training and support associated with teacher turnover to be

approximately 25% of the person's salary. Although the costs to individual districts vary widely, the TCER (2000) estimated that Texas school districts lose between \$329 million and \$2.1 billion when teachers leave to go to other districts or leave teaching, with a general estimate of \$3,000–\$4,000 per teacher. States and school districts have put in place, for example, higher base salaries, other financial incentives (like extra duty pay and loan forgiveness programs), smaller class sizes, school safety and student discipline initiatives, and more professional development opportunities in efforts to retain teachers (TCER, 1999).

In addition to the demographic trends contributing to the existing teacher shortage, organizational phenomena such as low salaries, inadequate administrative support, and low levels of faculty participation in decision making also contribute to problems of new teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001). Further, because the number of newly certified teachers is not projected to fill future needs, policies to keep teachers in the classroom have increased in many states. Despite the efforts of states and local districts to improve retention, it is clear that, as the Secretary of Education stated, “The traditional certification system has failed to produce enough teachers, at least in certain areas or for certain schools” (USDE, 2002, p. 39). The Secretary of Education's report called the traditional certification system “broken” and encouraged states to promote alternative routes into teaching.

Trends in Teacher Preparation Programs

Thus, teacher shortages in specific subject areas and for certain student populations, a decline in the number of minorities entering the teaching field, and criticisms of traditional teacher preparation programs have combined to create increasing demands for both improved quality of traditional teacher preparation programs and for quicker nontraditional or alternative methods of certification. To further complicate the situation, new teachers entering the profession in urban areas are held accountable for raising the performance of a more diverse and more disadvantaged student population (Sparks, 1999).

Even if efforts to retain teachers meet with some success, a gap will remain due to increasing enrollments. With current teacher shortages, teacher preparation programs must increase numbers of candidates entering the profession, especially those who are trained to work in and who will stay in the areas of greatest need. When school districts are unable to hire or keep traditionally certified teachers, they hire either uncertified individuals with emergency permits or individuals from a wide range of nontraditional programs. A body of evidence has suggested that uncertified teachers are inferior to certified teachers (Neumann, 1994). However, Allen (2000) contended that it is not possible to make general conclusions about alternative certification programs because the quality of the programs varies substantially. High-quality, nontraditional programs are increasingly popular in those areas where needs are greatest. In Texas, for example, a highly successful model has been developed in which districts, state agencies, and colleges work together; and policymakers

expect all teachers to meet the same standards and pass the same tests as the traditionally trained teachers (Tell, 2000). In 2001, 45 states reported implementation of one or more forms of alternative certification programs, up from eight states in 1983 (Kwiatkowski, 1999). An estimated 150,000 or more people have been certified through these programs (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001).

The current demand for teachers is quite specific to geographic area and subject matter; further, as alternative certification programs are market driven, they are designed to meet the demands of local areas or school systems and tailored to the needs of people with specific degrees or those changing from certain professions. Many of the programs are collaborative efforts of state departments of education, colleges and universities, and local school systems. Although some excellent programs have been identified, the responsive nature of the alternative programs has created many variations of the alternative certification program (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001).

Although requirements for licensure through alternative programs do vary widely, high-quality alternative certification programs have some identifiable characteristics:

1. Candidates already have a bachelor's degree and pass a rigorous screening process including tests and interviews.
2. Programs are field based but include coursework and experiences in professional education before and during teaching.
3. Candidates work with trained mentor teachers.

4. Candidates meet high performance standards for certification

(Feistritzer & Chester, 2001; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

Candidates entering teaching through the alternative certification process more often are older, are people of color, are men, have degrees outside of the field of education, and have experience in other occupations (Feistritzer & Chester, 2001; Stoddart, 1993; Stoddart & Floden, 1995).

Thus, evidence has indicated that alternative forms of certification draw upon a large group of eager professionals (Hickok, 1998) to give potential teachers opportunities for careers through such models and the pedagogical knowledge to survive the rigor of today's urban classrooms (Whiting & Klotz, 2000). Above all, teachers who reside in a particular area are more likely to remain in that area, and certification programs that have a strong, field based, mentor component show a higher retention rate. Although opinions vary and the numbers are not conclusive, some authors also have argued that alternatively certified teachers tend to stay on the job as long or longer (Streisand et al., 1998). As a result of the emerging evidence that alternative certification programs are an effective means to prepare and certify sufficient numbers of qualified teachers, many states have implemented such programs.

Still, representatives of traditional teacher preparation programs and teacher associations dispute alternative approaches to teacher certification. For example, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AATCE, 1986, 1999) has stated that alternative certification programs that do not recognize

the importance of professional education are a shortsighted response to the teacher shortage problem and may have a detrimental effect on children living in poverty. Additionally, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education has contended that over 100 studies have shown that “qualified” teachers outperform teachers with little or no supervised preparation and that the “data do not support the preconceptions of the administration that alternative routes to teaching are better than spending time in colleges of education and learning to teach” (Keller & Galley, 2002, p. 2). Furthermore, whereas critics of alternative certification programs argue that those programs lack academic rigor and are based on low academic standards, critics of college-based programs see the time and expense required for formal training as a barrier to individuals wishing to enter the profession (Stoddart & Floden, 1995).

In spite of the protests of traditional teacher educators and teacher unions, the No Child Left Behind Act required for the 2002–2003 school year that all new teachers in schools that receive Title I funds be highly qualified. By 2005–2006, all teachers are required to be highly qualified (USDE, 2002). As a result of the failure of traditional teacher preparation programs to provide enough teachers, states are forced to reconsider their certification and licensure procedures and to embrace alternative programs that streamline the system while maintaining standards that consistently produce highly qualified teachers. Thus, as the mechanisms for preparing teachers are changing, the diverse preparation

programs remain focused on teacher quality as all strive to prepare highly qualified teachers.

Although proponents of both traditional and alternative certification preservice programs presume that they are preparing highly qualified teachers, debate about the effectiveness of nontraditional programs has intensified. Even more significantly, recent research has suggested that principals perceive traditionally certified teachers to have greater capacity than alternatively certified teachers (Ovando & Trube, 2000). This ongoing dialogue and the related research have yielded information pertinent to the discussion of new teachers' support needs in two ways. First, the variations of preservice training and resultant variations in both pedagogical and content knowledge and skills warrant consideration when developing support systems in early service years. Second, and perhaps more importantly, at the core of the varied programs striving to produce qualified, certified teachers is a larger concern about teacher quality and effectiveness that fuels this ongoing debate.

Teacher Quality

Despite a number of proposed definitions for quality teachers, the USDE (2002) has recently defined a highly qualified teacher for purposes of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization of 2001. Citing evidence that verbal ability and content knowledge are the only two factors demonstrated to impact student achievement, new teachers with a bachelor's degree who pass a rigorous state competency test in the academic subjects that the

teacher is assigned to teach are considered to be highly qualified (USDE, 2002). This represents a nontraditional point of view because of the emphasis on content and lack of requirements for pedagogical training.

The traditional point of view is that teachers must have substantial instruction in both content and pedagogy. Evidence supports the assertion that a teacher's knowledge of content is related to the teacher's effectiveness in some areas. However, because certification is used a proxy for pedagogical knowledge in most studies, identifying the critical aspects of pedagogical knowledge is difficult (Wilson et al., 2001). Still, according to Darling-Hammond (2001), for example, the percentage of teachers with full certification and a major in the field is the most critical indicator of teacher quality and, as a result, student achievement. The argument for certification as a proxy for quality largely correlates student achievement with a percentage of certified teachers but does not specifically identify components of teacher preparation programs that improve student achievement. For example, a 1996–1997 Charles A. Dana Center study determined that Texas students performed better on the state exams when their teachers were fully certified in the subjects they taught (Rivkin et al., 1998).

This traditional argument disregards a large body of evidence that demonstrates the existence of certain teacher attributes that impact student achievement regardless of preparation program (Walsh, 2001). Furthermore, given the lack of evidence that college-based teacher preparation programs made a difference in the quality of teaching (such as that reported by the Carnegie

Forum on Education and the Economy and the Holmes Group of education deans in 1986), many states abolished old education majors. Instead, future teachers were required to have a rich, full baccalaureate program and preparation in pedagogy as a minor or as graduate study. Moreover, advocates for deregulation of traditional teacher preparation programs have asserted that the public lost confidence in the system of teacher preparation that failed to produce sufficient numbers of quality teachers to sustain high levels of achievement for all students (Fraser, 2001).

Indeed, some authors have used increases or improvements in student learning to define teacher quality (Finn & Madigan, 2001). Others have contended that evaluations by a supervisor or a passing score on standardized tests for teacher certification can determine quality. Other authors have argued that passing rates are set too low and candidates are certified even when they score poorly (Hickok, 1998; Villegas & Clewell, 1998).

These examples demonstrate that reliable external criteria for assessing teacher quality are lacking. A discrepancy exists between the notion of quality that can be determined by having completed a certification program and the notion of effectiveness that is determined by on the job performance and subsequent results. As a result, schools increasingly emphasize the use of student achievement accountability, testing programs, and locally defined evaluation instruments for assessing teacher quality.

The evidence is growing that teaching is the most important factor in student achievement. Sanders and Rivers (1996) found that the achievement levels of two equally performing second graders were separated by as much as 50 percentile points by fifth grade because of being taught by teachers whose effectiveness varied. Additionally, studies in 1997, 1999, and 2001, for example, found that certain teachers achieved far better results than others who were teaching in the same school, contradicting long-held notions that socioeconomic factors of the student population drive achievement (Schmoker, 2002).

Some evidence exists that effective teachers score higher on tests of verbal ability and other standardized tests (Walsh, 2001). Along the same lines, a recent report by the Abell Foundation questioned whether preservice coursework is effective, arguing that at the elementary level little evidence shows a correlation between the amount or type of college coursework and teacher effectiveness. The one exception cited is that at the secondary level, mathematics and science teachers who are proficient in their subject matter generally produce higher student achievement (Walsh, 2001).

To increase teacher quality, some call for more testing. The most vocal advocates for far-reaching accountability provisions in the Higher Education Act have been New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman and California Congressman George Miller. Disturbed that the least qualified teachers were being placed in economically disadvantaged California schools, Miller accused collegiate-based

teacher education programs of “perpetrating a fraud on the public because they are graduating teachers who aren’t prepared to teach” (Earley, 2000, p. 2).

In contrast, David Berliner (as cited in Scherer, 2000, p. 18) contended, “The time of shortage is not the time to come down with a heavy fist in the form of a teacher test. We need to open doors, not close them.” Furthermore, attrition rates are highest in the first five years of teaching, which causes constant turnover and substantial difficulty implementing reform in urban schools (Tell, 2000). This suggests a need for both effective preservice education and additional training for new teachers in order for urban schools to meet rising standards and accountability for quality.

In addition, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America’s Future* (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996, p. 6) reported, “What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn.” The report listed three important components of teacher effectiveness as (a) knowledge of subject matter, (b) knowledge of teaching methods, and (c) knowledge about how to diagnose student learning. Similarly, the National Board for Teaching Standards listed five core standards for teacher quality that are not based on outputs nor linked to easily quantifiable attributes:

1. Teachers are committed to students and student learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects that they teach and know how to teach those subjects to students.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Whereas much of the literature about teacher quality focuses on teacher behaviors and competencies, the National Board Standards are one example of a much broader perspective that includes the teacher's role in the larger environment, which is called a learning community.

Given that effective teaching occurs within a complex and diverse set of social, cognitive, and behavioral conditions, this evidence suggests that traditional methods of preparing teachers may not be effective in all situations in light of societal changes. Furthermore, ongoing support and professional development could compensate for variations in preparation programs (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999). Accordingly, Haberman (1995, p. 2) wrote, "Completing your first year as a fully responsible teacher in an urban school has nothing to do with having been 'successful' in a college preparation program."

For decades, then, researchers have sought to articulate a knowledge base for effective teaching, connecting preservice programs with initial teaching work (Lawson, 1992). Bridging the gap between teacher preparation programs to promote the quality and effectiveness of teachers requires an understanding of the support needs of new teachers.

Support Needs of New Teachers

An understanding of the significant trends in teacher turnover and the variations in preservice preparation programs and teacher quality suggests that urban principals will have on their staffs the largest number of new teachers, with the most widely varying preservice training and the most need for ongoing support in order to be effective. Data further indicate that urban schools have larger numbers of alternatively certified teachers (Feistritz & Chester, 2001), and that principals perceive that alternatively certified teachers require more instructional guidance than traditionally certified teachers (Ovando & Trube, 2000). This necessitates an examination of the support and professional development needs specific to new teachers. Although research is limited about the specific needs of alternatively certified teachers, studies have revealed needs common to beginning teachers that are both emotional or personal and clinical or professional (Billingsley, 1993).

With optimal preservice training and support, new teachers might be “off and running at the outset” (Goodlad, 1999, p. 5). However, when teachers begin teaching, the struggle to survive typically becomes overwhelming; many leave the profession or are personally insecure, lack confidence, and have a sense of not being in control of themselves or their environment. Along with these psychological symptoms, new teachers report physical fatigue, stress, financial worries, loneliness, and disillusionment (Gold, 1999). These pressures, left

unsupported or unresolved, are factors in a teacher's decision to leave the profession, thus contributing to the high rate of turnover among new teachers.

Ryan (1970) and, later, Veenman (1984) found that new teachers face a "reality shock" or "culture shock" when they encounter the realities of classroom life. The process of acculturation—socialization into the profession—begins in the first year of teaching but continues through the first few years of teaching (Brock & Grady, 2001). The sociological setting varies between schools, and beginning teachers are expected to apply general knowledge from preparation programs to diverse school settings and diverse student populations.

Typically, a teacher who has received a license to teach is considered to be ready for practice (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). New teachers are expected to fit into the school system with as little disruption as possible. Traditional college teacher preparation programs are designed to train traditional teachers and to socialize teachers into an existing system rather than changing it (Haynes & Chalker, 1997). The "sink or swim" process of transition to the classroom adds to problems of new teacher attrition and erects barriers to the effectiveness of the new teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 40; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986). Consequently, the literature has proposed an emerging view of the preparation and continuing education of teachers as a developmental continuum extending beyond the end of the preservice preparation program (Dollase, 1992; Howey & Bents, 1979; Tickle, 2000).

One frequently mentioned barrier to new teacher success is difficulty organizing time; new teachers spend more time and have more difficulty planning instruction (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Freiberg, 2002). This extra time is added to already typically long working hours. A 1999 study of elementary school teachers' time showed that elementary school teachers spend almost two hours daily at work outside of contract hours and a comparable amount of time doing work at home (Drago, Caplan, Costanza, & Brubaker, 1999). The researchers concluded that the time pressure is a significant factor in job stress.

Difficulty with time management results in added hours of work and feelings of exhaustion and being overwhelmed (Dollase, 1992). One multinational study by the USDE (1997) found that new teachers everywhere feel overwhelmed. Moreover, new teachers are frequently placed in the most challenging assignments with the most disadvantaged, difficult-to-teach students, with extra curricular duties and a new curriculum to learn (Ingersoll, 2001; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

Unlike the norms for many other professions, new teachers are rarely given reduced assignments or entry-level positions. New teachers in some countries are assigned classes that are less difficult and reduced classroom hours and duties (USDE, 1997). In contrast, in the United States the usual expectation is that new teachers will be fully responsible and accountable. According to DeBolt (1992), when the preservice preparation program is complete, support usually is withdrawn, and subsequent training is optional, limited, and often informal.

Ryan (1970) stated, “Inability to maintain discipline or classroom control is the most serious contributor to teacher failure” (p. 177). In his study of beginning teachers, Dollase (1992) also identified classroom discipline as the number-one problem for both new and experienced teachers. Even more recently, a survey by Fideler and Haselkorn (1999, p. 40) found “inadequate classroom management skills” and “disruptive students, discipline problems” as the top two barriers to beginning teachers’ success. As Ryan (1970) reported, discipline “has little to do with teaching per se, except that it is a necessary condition for teaching to take place” (p. 177).

New teachers also struggle with the pedagogical strategies for instructing and assessing students (Freiberg, 2002; Varah et al., 1986). Even beginning teachers with extensive preservice preparation need school-site support; however, many alternatively certified teachers lack knowledge about students, curriculum, pedagogy, and school routines, although they may have more maturity and strong subject-matter experience (Johnson & Kardos, 2002).

Isolation is another common complaint of new teachers that is often cited as a barrier to success. Not unlike the experiences of many new public school teachers, the first two years of teaching in higher education are also characterized by loneliness, lack of collegial support, heavy work loads, and time constraints, prompting new faculty members either to leave or find ways to cope with the stress during this period of adaptation to the organization (Tierney & Rhoads, 1994). The research has suggested that maximizing interaction among new and

experienced teachers to include observation/modeling and group planning constrains the negative effects of isolation (USDE, 1997).

Collaboration and collegial interaction are critical needs of new teachers (Dollase, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991). Research during the 1990s revealed more about how beginning teachers acquire teaching competency (Huling-Austin, 1992). As focus turned more toward the process of adult learning in induction programs, collaboration and collegial interaction became valued as a strategy for teaching, in addition to its value in counteracting the effects of isolation. Barth (1990) found that in some schools, many teachers work collaboratively; in others, teachers practice what he termed *congenial isolationism*. Similarly, Lawson (1992) reported that contriving collegiality was a problem in many induction programs, as forced relations often have a negative effect of undermining trust and support. Others who advocate for increased collaboration have found that organized interaction can be satisfying and rewarding as it “deepens learning” and provides “interpersonal support and synergy” (National Staff Development Council, 2001, p. 26). Interestingly, although experienced teachers prefer a collaborative approach, new teachers show a preference for a more directive, informational supervisory approach by the supervisor (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

Meanwhile, mounting evidence demonstrates (a) that individual teachers’ effectiveness significantly impacts student achievement despite socioeconomic conditions, (b) that more new teachers end up in urban schools with high rates of

poverty, and (c) that new teachers have identifiable needs for emotional and professional support. One recent study revealed that many teachers find that they need more support, encouragement, and direction than they receive at the school (Johnson et al., 2001). To provide this needed psychological and professional support, many large urban districts—facing teacher shortage, high turnover, high numbers of disadvantaged students and, in many cases, inadequate preservice teacher training—turn to formal induction programs to support teachers during their first three years of teaching. Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) studied the induction programs in 10 cities and documented the level of efficacy of those programs in developing and retaining new teachers. Consequently, it is important to examine induction programs as a means to identify practices for effectively supporting, developing and retaining new teachers.

Induction Programs

The transition from being a student of teaching to a teacher of students is known to be difficult and complex (Lortie, 1975; Ryan, 1970). This complexity is augmented by the increasing variation in preparation programs. In contrast to “sink or swim” practice, many researchers refer to the positive influence of organized initiation systems or induction programs that result in professional socialization (Lawson, 1992). Johnson and Kardos (2002) emphasized the importance of organized support for new teachers:

The variety in backgrounds of today’s new teachers increases the importance of providing useful and sustained professional development at the school site. The current teacher shortage and changes in certification

requirements in many states have led schools to hire teachers with varying degrees of preparation. (p. 14)

History of Induction Programs

Consistent with the tradition that once certified, teachers are fully capable of being responsible for a classroom, interest in induction programs as an addition to college-based teacher training is relatively recent. The notion of preservice field work, student teaching, or internships for new teachers has a longer history, seems to appear in waves in the literature, and is tied to the social, economic, and political environment. Howey and Bents (1979) traced the history of internship or student-teaching programs in the last century. In 1900–1930, when social conditions were progressive and the economy was inflationary, enrollment in high schools increased dramatically, resulting in a teacher shortage. As a result, teachers were needed in the schools as quickly as possible and internships were typically paid if required. In 1930–1940, the economy was bad and public schools were able to employ beginning teachers for a period as interns without salary. In 1940–1967, social and economic conditions improved and the federal government became more involved in education. Internships became more a part of an expanded preservice teacher education program. Many programs in the period 1968–1978 were characterized by collaboration of colleges with other entities to provide preservice fieldwork as part of the preparation program (Howey & Bents, 1979). Ryan's (1970) *Don't Smile Until Christmas* and Lortie's (1975) *School Teacher: A Sociological Study* are examples of the literature of the 1970s that was

characterized by an interest in the experiences of new teachers, invoking decades of research about transition processes as a logical continuation of the teacher training that is received in college (Huffman & Leak, 1986) and beginning the evolution of mentoring and induction programs.

Components of Induction Programs

Induction programs are designed to help new teachers effectively use teaching skills and help them to adapt to the school's social system (McDonald, 1980; Varah et al., 1986). Generally, induction is designed to help teachers adjust to the teaching environment. Lawson (1992) took a much broader perspective of induction as a process of professional socialization through which beginning teachers accept the "profession's dominant definitions of appropriate language, norms, missions, knowledge, technology, and ideology" (p. 163).

However, most induction programs are based on goals that are determined by using the perceived needs of new teachers. Research from the 1970s and 1980s examined the adjustments new teachers make. Studies such as Veenman's 1984 review of 83 studies of beginning teachers led to interest in improving teacher education using induction programs and training protocols (Lawson, 1992).

The perceived needs of new teachers often were determined using questionnaires. So, in an effort to improve the reliability of responses given to those questionnaires, Odell additionally recorded the help requested by new teachers and observed the help offered in response. The data collected were summarized and the support categories then ranked. New teachers were found to

need both emotional and clinical support (help with formal teaching processes). New teachers appeared to need school and system information at first. As they became comfortable with systems, they requested more help with teaching strategies, indicating, “Providing a context that attenuates concerns extraneous to the teaching mission...allows the new teachers to focus on the business of teaching” (1986, p. 29).

Induction programs were developed that satisfied such criteria, coupling school and system information with ongoing mentoring programs. Huling Austin (1990) considered that induction began to specifically refer to a “planned program intended to provide some systematic and sustained assistance, specifically to beginning teachers for at least one year” (p. 535). These programs typically included short-term assistance with some formal structure (Lawson, 1992).

Teacher development literature has indicated that beginning teachers can benefit from lessons of success shared by experienced teachers (Glickman et al., 2001). However, according to John Goodlad (1999),

The daily circumstances of schooling do not lend themselves well to easing teachers gradually into their responsibilities....The notion of experienced teachers mentoring new ones is an appealing myth; the experienced teacher down the hallway is fully preoccupied with his or her own responsibilities...even a modest provision for in school staff development interferes with family schedules, creating home-school dissonance. New teachers must be off and running at the outset. An ill-prepared beginner is likely to be an ill-prepared experienced teacher. (p. 5)

However, some carefully constructed, beginning-teacher support programs based on mentoring by experienced teachers have been shown to successfully facilitate the transition for new teachers. Glickman et al. identified components of such

programs as careful screening of candidates, assignments of mentors based on compatibility, structured orientation and coaching sessions, and specific support for mentors by the district.

Beyond Formal Induction Programs: Effects of School-Based Support

Studies in the 1980s and 1990s focused on needs and concerns of new teachers, the role of the mentor teachers, induction program components, and the effects of programs on teacher effectiveness and retention. But induction programs designed to orient teachers to districts and schools do not provide enough support to ensure that new teachers are effective (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). Huling Austin (1992) pointed out that the research fails to bridge this body of research with research about how teachers learn to teach. She further cautioned, “It is crucial that research on learning to teach focus on the conditions of schools as well as on the individuals entering them” (p. 178).

Decades of research, from Brookover and Lezotte (1979) and Edmonds (1979) to Scheurich and Skrla (2003), have substantiated the predictable results of many organizational and instructional practices that improve student achievement and school effectiveness. Fortunately, emerging research is beginning to bridge the bodies of knowledge with evidence about organizational characteristics of high-performing schools to illuminate the role of the professional environment in improving the effectiveness of new teachers. Professional culture, embedded in the larger school culture, is known to shape the way teachers teach and the way they learn (Little, 1982). Most recently, professional culture has been found to

have a significant effect on the effectiveness and the retention of new teachers (Kardos, 2002).

The literature on teacher and school quality has demonstrated that student achievement is contingent on teachers' knowing what to teach and how to teach it (Schmoker, 2002). The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers at Harvard reported that new teachers

had little curricular support in deciding what to teach or how to teach it. Many districts were unprepared for the state's introduction of standards-based reforms and high-stakes tests, leaving new teachers to fend for themselves and rely on curriculum frameworks and lists of topics, rather than well developed curricula. (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002, p. 6)

Although allowing teachers to fend for themselves is common practice, it is not effective in promoting student or teacher success (Schmoker, 2002).

Evidence has demonstrated that students achieve at higher rates and teachers are more effective when provided with a curriculum that is aligned with assessed standards. The curriculum standards provide the "what" to teach. However, lessons from high-performing schools indicate that effective teachers not only focus on teaching the standards but also continuously engage in collaboratively learning and refining ways of teaching (Schmoker, 2002). The "how" to teach, or instruction, then, is developed in new teachers by means of collaboration and collegial interaction. Further, instruction is found to be most effective in schools with norms of collaboration and collegial interaction (Smith & Scott, 1990). Thus, new teachers who enter a school with a culture that is focused on clear goals or standards with high levels of collegial interaction are

more likely to feel supported and to be successful (Brock & Grady, 2001; Kardos, 2002; Schmoker, 2002).

Most studies and most induction programs point to the role of the experienced teacher as mentor to the beginning teacher. However, administrators are necessarily a part of the new teacher's support system (Marlow, Inman, & Betancourt-Smith, 1997). Well-designed induction programs therefore must consider the role of the site-based school administrator. Principals often are seen only as the facilitator of the induction activities or as providers of an array of discreet strategies that assist beginning teachers. But effective induction programs are conducted within the larger school culture, and principals are charged with establishing the vision and culture of the school. As such, the principal's role in new teacher induction is complex. The principal's role is direct or personal and indirect or organizational. In order to develop a rich description of the principal's role as perceived by new teachers and principals, it is essential to review the available literature.

The Principal's Role in New Teacher Induction: The Effect of Administrative Support

Because principals influence teachers' working conditions, teacher attrition and retention are understandably consistently connected to administrative support in the literature (Billingsley, 1993). Although many leave teaching due to low salaries or for personal reasons, those that cite job dissatisfaction as a reason for leaving often specify lack of administrative support or lack of participation in

decision making (Ingersoll, 2001). Higher levels of influence in decision making can even mediate the effects on teacher turnover of poor facilities, lack of resources, and overcrowding in high-poverty, urban schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

In addition, research suggests that teachers who report higher levels of principal support are less stressed, more satisfied, and more committed to their jobs (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). Moreover, the lack of administrative support has devastating effects on new teachers (Ax, Conderman, & Stephens, 2001).

The Principal's Direct and Personal Support for New Teachers

The role of principals, who have traditionally managed schools and overseen budgets, buildings, staff, and students, has become that of instructional leaders. The 2001 NAESP booklet, *Leading Learning Communities*, specifies steps principals should take to improve teaching and learning that include (a) balancing management and leadership roles, (b) setting high expectations, (c) demanding rigorous content and instruction, and (d) fostering adult learning. The NAESP booklet provides a theoretical framework for the principals' instructional leadership in developing the capacity of beginning teachers.

The research suggests that the support is extremely important in the success of the teachers and the schools perhaps because it causes teachers to feel more effective so they exert more effort and/or the support eliminates excuses for poor performance. Resources, professional development, and time for collaboration about instruction are instrumental in raising teacher quality as defined in terms of student achievement. Such research reveals the importance of

ongoing support and professional development in developing teachers who can be effective in diverse situations (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999).

Additionally, recent research indicates that principals perceive alternatively certified teachers to have different levels of capacity than traditionally certified teachers. Consequently, alternatively certified teachers require more guidance in instruction and principals should give more formalized feedback to alternatively certified teachers (Ovando & Trube, 2000).

In the *Handbook of Instructional Leadership: How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning*, Blase and Blase (1998) articulated principal behaviors that positively and negatively impact teaching and learning. The researchers identified three essential themes of instructional leadership: (a) talking with teachers, (b) promoting teacher professional development, and (c) promoting teacher reflection. Blase and Blase (1998) found that teachers experienced positive impact when principals used visibility, praise, and autonomy and negative impact when principals used abandonment, criticism, and control. In one study of high-performing urban schools, researchers found that the teachers perceived that support such as access to materials, assistance, and training was critical to their success (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999).

The literature suggests effective strategies principals implement to assist beginning teachers that correlate to the identified needs of beginning teachers. For example, principals often consider the teaching load, class structure, class size, or potential discipline problems in making work and class assignments for new

teachers to improve potential for success (Billingsley, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Availability of teaching materials or curriculum resources is crucial to teachers' success (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999). New teachers often report frustration with lack of materials, especially in high-poverty, urban settings. Principals who intervene to correct problems with shortages of teaching materials increase the probability of success for new teachers.

New teachers often gain information and skills about policies and procedures or about teaching and learning through professional development in specific instructional areas. Principals guide this learning by offering or suggesting such professional development.

New teachers need extra support for classroom management. New teachers specifically require better support from principals with student discipline problems. Principals' actions that back up teachers to improve classroom conditions positively impact instruction (Ballinger, 2000). Additionally, teachers who perceive themselves to be ineffective in handling discipline report low self-esteem (Billingsley, 1993).

Low self-esteem is not uncommon for new teachers. Therefore, new teachers require feedback, suggestions, praise, encouragement, and offers of help from principals (Blase & Blase, 2001; Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Warren & Wait, 2001). New teachers frequently cite physical fatigue and stress resulting from feelings of being overwhelmed, lacking confidence, and lacking control of

themselves or their environment (Gold, 1999). Principals' use of feedback, suggestions, verbal praise, encouragement, and offers of assistance can mediate the negative effects of these psychological conditions. Additionally, teachers view positively the principal's accessibility and report feeling supported when principals seek out and initiate conversation with them (Hope, 1999).

Beginning teachers' perceptions that administrators support their efforts relate directly to the level of comfort and desire to remain in the profession. Especially interesting are findings that new teachers tend to view positively their principals' support of creativity, granting of more autonomy, and encouraging teachers to try and share new ideas (Marlow et al., 1997).

Finally, and most importantly, the principal is the person who institutes and facilitates effective induction and mentoring programs for the new teacher. In doing so the principal ensures appropriate orientation to the school and district, assigns and provides training for an experienced teacher-mentor for the new teacher, and structures or schedules and facilitates appropriate mentor–new teacher contact. Role ambiguity increases stress in new teachers; thus, orientation procedures that clarify roles, responsibilities, policies, and procedures can mediate the negative effects of stress (Ax et al., 2001; Billingsley, 1993; Hope, 1999).

Ongoing mentoring programs during the first year of teaching improve both effectiveness and retention (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). However, emerging research substantiates the greater effectiveness of school-wide support. For instance, Johnson and Birkeland (2002) stated, "Our work suggests that schools

would do better to rely less on one-to-one mentoring and, instead, develop school-wide structures that promote the frequent exchange of information and ideas among novice and veteran teachers” (p. 36).

The Principal's Impact at the Organizational Level

Emerging research suggests that although direct and personal administrative support of new teachers is viewed positively as a component of a supportive professional environment, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of new teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002; Marlow et al., 1997). The principal’s most substantial impact on the new teacher’s capacity, effectiveness, quality, growth, development, and retention may occur indirectly and at the organizational (school) level.

The Council of Chief State School Officers’ (1996) ISLLC redefined the role of principals, clearly charging principals with knowledge of adult learning and professional development and utilization of a variety of supervisory and evaluation models among other knowledge and skills. “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student and staff professional growth” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 12).

“The process of teacher socialization is an interplay between a new teacher and the professional context of a particular school environment” (Brock and Grady, 2001, p. 36). School culture is the social and normative glue of values,

beliefs, and structures that characterizes a school (Lick, 2000). Of the known school culture factors, a positive school climate and an environment that fosters collegial interaction and encourages professional development most significantly impact new teachers' development (Sergiovanni, 1991). Kardos et al. (2001) coined the term *integrative culture* to describe the professional culture most effective in supporting and developing new teachers. An integrative culture is organized such that teachers of all experience levels engage in collegial and collaborative work (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002).

Much research has verified the positive effects of collaborative support systems in diminishing teacher isolation, which is associated with teacher satisfaction and retention (Ax et al., 2001; Billingsley, 1993; Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Hope, 1999). Because of strong needs of new teachers for emotional support, support for new teachers is better designed to come from the entire school community rather than from single identified mentors (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Moreover, the collaborative culture meets the needs of teachers in matters of curriculum and instruction leading to greater alignment between standards and goals for improved teaching and learning and consequent higher student achievement (Schmoker, 2002; Smith & Scott, 1990).

The evidence suggests that principals develop structures to support new teachers within a collaborative or integrative school culture. Some examples of such structures include (a) support collaborative processes such as coaching, open dialogue, and reflective conversations; (b) de-emphasize competition between

teachers; (c) emphasize training in theories of teaching and learning for all staff; (d) model teamwork and encourage peer observation; and (e) advocate sharing (Blase & Blase, 2001). The principal's role in supporting a collaborative culture is essential and includes providing a strong focus or goal orientation, allocating time and resources, and providing encouragement to sustain collegial interaction (Smith & Scott, 1990).

Organizational-level strategies that principals use such as providing vision and leadership or changing school governance or organization build capacity in new teachers. However, Ovando and Trube (2000) reported that the principals they studied used such strategies to build capacity but did not perceive a significant difference in how these strategies were used with alternatively certified teachers as opposed to traditionally certified teachers. The researchers attributed the lack of differentiation to the level of implementation.

When new teachers, especially inexperienced teachers, arrive at a school, they adopt the prevailing belief system and join the dominant culture. The culture of schools must often change to create schools that work better for all children. How teachers and students think about and value learning, how they go about the day-to-day routines and rituals, determines how schools work. (Allington & Cunningham, 1996, p. 240)

Summary of the Principal's Role

The principal's role in supporting and developing new teachers is complex. Individual, direct, and personal strategies are effective in mediating some of the problems that new teachers experience and in developing capacity, although not sufficient in isolation. The literature suggests that principals use

strategies at both the individual/personal level and the organizational level. Moreover, the literature points to some strategies that principals might use specifically with alternatively certified teachers. Most significantly, the literature suggests that new teachers are more effective, more satisfied, and more likely to stay in a school where principals sustain a school-wide professional culture of collaboration and collegial interaction.

Shortcomings

Research has addressed the need for induction processes, principal behaviors, and collaborative processes that increase the effectiveness, satisfaction, retention, and professional development of new teachers (Brock & Grady, 2001; Kardos, 2002; Schmoker, 2002). However, information relating specifically to the support needs of first year, alternatively certified bilingual teachers is limited. The greatest numbers of alternatively certified teachers begin their careers in high-poverty, urban schools. In order to ensure quality teaching and learning for the children in those schools, it is imperative to search for richer description of how and by whom the needs of the new, alternatively certified bilingual teachers can be met to encourage effectiveness and build capacity. The literature suggests that direct/personal support and support at the organizational level through mentorship, principal leadership, and a professional culture are necessary. It is critical to investigate strategies that can positively influence alternatively certified bilingual teachers' effectiveness and development.

Theoretical Framework

This study sought to suggest new interpretations thereby contributing to theory that can be applied (Patton, 2002) to formulate programs or interventions in response to issues presented (Patton, 2002). Strauss & Corbin (1998, p. 158) explained, “Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.” Merriam (1998) suggested that qualitative research is not completely atheoretical, but rather, the study shapes or modifies some existing theory and must always be discussed in light of some existing knowledge.

Grounded theory, then, is a process of induction and deduction that is guided by prior knowledge. In this instance, the literature about new teacher induction and development provides a theoretical framework for research and guides the inquiry. The grounded theory approach serves to illuminate the phenomenon.

Most of the literature reviewed for this study was conducted without a stated theoretical model. Rather, much of the literature represents inquiry for planning and decision making that informs practice. A theoretical framework or model is needed to guide further research and systematically improve practice.

Still, it is noted that some of the studies reviewed were conducted using models of teacher development stages. With this perspective, teachers move through a progression of stages of development such as those described by Katz (1972) or Moir (1990).

Katz (1972) identified four developmental stages: (a) survival, (b) consolidation, (c) renewal, and (d) maturity. In the first stage, survival, teachers focus on coping with the daily demands of their job. In the second year and the second phase, consolidation, the teachers begin to focus more on the individual needs of students and quality of instruction. Thus, teachers are more receptive to collegial interactions, exchange of ideas and staff development. During renewal, the third stage that typically occurs during the third or fourth year of teaching, teachers are competent in providing daily instruction to meet the needs of their students but are self-motivated learn new and better ways to improve instruction. With maturity, teachers are inclined to seek to make a greater impact and gain deeper and more substantial knowledge about their practice.

Whereas Katz (1972) proposed four stages of development over the course of the first several years of teaching, Moir (1990) proposed five phases of development that teachers experience during the first year of teaching: (a) anticipation, (b) survival, (c) disillusionment, (d) rejuvenation, and (e) reflection. Moir suggested that new teachers begin with an anticipation phase characterized by excitement and apprehension during preservice student teaching. Then, overwhelmed by the situation they encounter during the first month or so of school, new teachers experience a survival phase when they focus on day-to-day routines. After a couple of months of overwhelming work and stress, the new teachers experience a disillusionment phase characterized by high stress, self-doubt, disappointment with the requirements of the job, and often, illness. The

fourth phase, rejuvenation, usually begins in the spring semester and is marked by the teachers' feelings of accomplishment and a more hopeful attitude. At the end of the school year, teachers experience the fifth phase, reflection. With reflection, the teachers develop a vision for the following year that leads to a renewed sense of anticipation. Teachers move through the five phases, occasionally back and forth between phases, and then on to anticipation again.

Summary

This chapter presented the literature addressing the process of induction of first year teachers in urban schools. First, the literature associated with the teacher shortage and turnover lays a foundation for the significant need for have skills and knowledge to build capacity of first year teachers in urban, high-poverty schools. Second, related literature about current trends in preparation programs, teacher quality, and school effectiveness was examined in order to develop further understanding of the context. Third, the research about the specific support needs of new teachers, components of known induction programs, and the influence of school culture was addressed. Fourth, the principal's role in new teacher induction as it is depicted in the literature was explored.

In conclusion, the observed shortcomings of the research are revealed followed by a brief discussion of related theoretical frameworks that help to lay a foundation for understanding the support and professional development needs of first year teachers. Chapter 3 describes the methodology that was used to conduct

the study. Chapter 4 describes the findings of the study and Chapter 5 offers a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodological framework that was used for this qualitative exploratory study. The purpose of this study was to explore the needed and received support and professional growth of alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools.

This study focuses on the experiences of alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. The study describes the perceived needs for support, professional growth, and capacity building of the alternatively certified, bilingual teacher in a challenging, high-poverty, urban elementary school setting. The study further focuses on how and from whom the teachers perceive these needs to be best met.

Beginning teachers often face what Veenman (1984) termed *reality shock* when they begin teaching. Due to the demands of a teacher shortage that is most severe in specific subject areas such as bilingual education and most severe in urban areas, states and school districts turn to nontraditional, alternative certification programs to attract more teachers. Simultaneously, concerns about the quality of education and, particularly, the quality of teachers raised by such publications as *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) initiated a debate about the effectiveness of the traditional and nontraditional paths to teaching. This debate has been sharpened by the 2001

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Lockwood, 2002). The ESEA requires all states to have certified teachers in every classroom by 2005. Whereas nontraditionalists view alternative certification programs as a way to address the issues of both the quantity of teachers needed and the quality, traditionalists see alternative routes to teaching as shortcuts around a system designed to “maintain quality and regulate the profession” (Lockwood, 2002, p. 10). According to Walsh (2001), little compelling research has substantiated the effectiveness of either approach in preparing quality teachers.

Although alternative certification programs supply large numbers of teachers who are willing to teach in urban schools with minority children (Wilson et al., 2001), the associated variations in preparation programs necessarily result in variations of skills and knowledge of both subject matter and pedagogy. As a result, high-poverty, urban schools often are staffed with new teachers who enter the profession with widely varying preparation, knowledge, and skills. This situation suggests that those urban schools likely need to provide more widely varying support and professional development experiences for the new teachers.

Some studies have attempted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of beginning, alternatively certified teachers (Walsh, 2001). Some have looked at perceptions of the needs of the newly certified teachers (Wilson et al., 2001). However, a need remains for research to illuminate the process of supporting and developing capacity in the beginning, alternatively certified teacher.

Therefore, this chapter introduces the methodological framework for this qualitative, exploratory study. First, the suitability of the research design, the theoretical framework, the research design, and the limitations of the methodology are discussed. Second, the selection of the site and sample and methods of data collection and analysis are examined. Finally, credibility, transferability and dependability are considered.

Suitability of the Design

This study sought to identify and report how teachers experience their support and professional development needs during the first year of teaching. Further, this study sought to identify and describe how and from whom the teachers perceive that these needs are best met. This purpose did not lend itself to numerical data because it explored perceptions, processes, and relationships. Because the purpose of this study was to understand a relatively unexplored area involving the perceptions of the teachers and the principals in the teacher improvement process, a qualitative methodology was appropriate (Patton, 2002).

The process of qualitative research is inductive, as the research builds abstractions from the details (Patton, 2002). Further, inductive analysis seeks to uncover embedded information and make it plain (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). One source of such data is the interview. Interviews were used in this study because it was difficult to observe directly the processes and perceptions involved in support and meaningful professional development.

How the participants make meaning of their lives and their experiences drove this study. Therefore, the interviews and observations served to illuminate the participants' perspectives or the meaning that the participants associated with their experiences related to the support and professional development needed and received by the new teachers.

Research Design

According to Patton (2002), qualitative data emerge from three kinds of data collection: (a) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (b) direct observation; and (c) review of written documents. These data typically come from fieldwork. This study was a case study of perceptions and experiences of the first year teachers utilizing an inductive research strategy characteristic of qualitative research and based on intensive interviews and observations.

According to Merriam (1998), the principal concern of the qualitative research is to understand the meaning people have constructed from their experiences. How people make sense of their experiences is mediated by the perceptions of the researcher, who is the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data.

This study incorporated the following elements of qualitative design:

1. Focus on specific instances or cases.
2. Provide in-depth study of each case.
3. Study the phenomenon in its natural context.
4. Study the perspective of the participants (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Data Collection

The Research Site

The focus of the study was narrowed to a small, purposeful sampling of nine participants from a major urban school district in Texas, which was conducive to obtaining rich and diverse information. Guidelines for selecting the site followed Marshall and Rossman's (1995) criteria of access: (a) There was a high probability of a rich mix of people, structures, and interactions; (b) trusting relationships could be established; and (c) data quality and credibility were reasonably assured.

The participating schools were selected using a multistage model. First, one district was chosen for the probable access to the high-poverty, urban schools that most often hire new, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers. The Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2002) has defined major urban districts as those largest districts serving the six metropolitan areas in the counties with populations of 650,000 or more and with 35% or more of the students classified as economically disadvantaged. The independent school district selected is governed by a locally elected board of trustees and reports over 75,000 students with over 50% of the students eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program, a common measure of low socioeconomic status (TEA, 2002).

Next, the schools were purposefully selected according to specific criteria using a multistage model. The alternative certification training program generated

a list of names of elementary schools located in the selected urban district where bilingual, alternatively certified teachers were placed. The elementary schools were identified as potential sites that (a) had a student population of at least 50% economically disadvantaged, (b) had a student population with at least 40% receiving bilingual instruction, and (c) had a state performance rating of at least acceptable. The profiles of the selected schools are presented in the following paragraphs.

The first school, School A, had a student enrollment of 609 and 256 students who qualified for bilingual or English as a Second Language services. The school was approximately 62.7% Hispanic, 29.4% African American, and 7.0% White. Approximately 83% of the students qualified for the free or reduced-price lunch program. Even though School A had nine new teachers, the teachers at the school averaged 9.2 years of experience during the year of the study.

The second school, School B, was the oldest of the three schools and had 654 students. The student population was 80.0% Hispanic, 15.7% African American, and 4.0% White. Over 55% of the students enrolled qualified for the bilingual or English as a Second Language program. Almost 90% of the students qualified for the free or reduced-price lunch program. The teachers at School B averaged eight years of experience and the campus had four first year teachers.

The third school, School C, was the smallest of the three schools selected, with 597 students. The student population was approximately 80.0% Hispanic and over 20.0% African American. Over 60% of the students qualified for the

bilingual or English as a Second Language program, and more than 95% qualified for the free or reduced-price lunch program. The teaching staff had an average of six years of experience and included three first year teachers.

Research Participants

According to Merriam (1998), the sample in a qualitative study is typically purposefully selected, not random, and small. So, in an effort to constrain somewhat the exogenous influences and to maintain focus on the analysis of the experiences of the first year teachers, a small, somewhat homogenous sample group was desirable. Accordingly, three first year teachers from an alternative certification preparation program were selected. To obtain a deeper and more complex understanding of the experiences of the three first year, alternatively certified teachers, their mentor teachers and principals also participated in the study.

After the district and the potential school sites were selected, the nine participants were selected using a multistage model. First, the school district generated a list of alternative certification interns (i.e., first year teachers participating in an alternative certification program) as a pool of potential participants. Then the researcher contacted the superintendent of schools (Appendix B), following the protocol of the Internal Review Board (IRB) of University of Texas at Austin, to ask for permission for the teachers, their mentors and their principals to participate.

The district then contacted the principals at the schools that met the criteria for high poverty and high number of English Language Learners and obtained permission for the researcher to work in the selected schools. One beginning teacher was selected at each of the three schools identified. The three beginning teachers who were selected were interns from the same alternative certification program so that they had richly varying backgrounds and individual experiences but limited variation in their teacher preparation experience.

Additionally, the three participating first year teachers were all assigned to bilingual, fourth-grade classrooms. The pool of potential participants included first year, alternatively certified teachers assigned to a variety of grade levels. The fourth grade teachers were selected because each of the three schools identified had a first year, alternatively certified teacher assigned to a fourth-grade bilingual class, and this added similarity was consistent with the smaller, more homogeneous sample. Interestingly, unlike the other elementary bilingual teachers, the fourth-grade teachers had the additional demands of preparing students for the state writing test.

The three first year teachers (interns) were accepted and enrolled in the alternative certification preparation program beginning in April. The interns took preparation classes in the spring and summer and participated in a two-week summer field experience in the public school. The interns secured a full-time teaching position in the fall of the same year. During the school year, the beginning teachers were mentored by experienced teachers and continued taking

classes through the end of March. By the end of the year, the interns who met all of the program’s requirements and successfully completed all appropriate state competency exams became fully certified.

The three participating first year teachers’ principals and their mentors also participated at each school selected (see Table 3.1). As a part of the alternative certification program, each school principal was responsible for assigning an experienced teacher from the campus to serve as a mentor for the beginning teacher. The mentor teachers who participated in this study were those experienced teachers who had been assigned as mentors for the beginning teachers. The profiles of the nine participants are presented in more detail in Chapter 4.

Table 3.1

The Nine Participants

	School A	School B	School C
School details	609 Students 42% ELLs 83% Poverty	654 Students 55% ELLs, 90% Poverty	597 Students 60% ELLs 93% Poverty
Three first year teachers	First year teacher, Hannah	First year teacher, Christie	First year teacher, Marco
Three mentor teachers	Mentor teacher, Kim	Mentor teacher, Hector	Mentor teacher, James
Three principals	Principal, Irma	Principal, Mary	Principal, Linda

Note. ELL = English language learner.

Each participant was contacted by telephone or e-mail to describe the purpose of the interviews and ask for cooperation in scheduling three interviews not more than one month apart. The interviews were scheduled and conducted after the respondents signed consent forms (see Appendix B). The interviews were scheduled for a maximum of 90 minutes each at the participant's workplace. Beverages and refreshments were provided.

Researcher as Instrument

Qualitative studies have the capacity to expose a phenomenon to the reader through rich, detailed, concrete description (Denzin, 2001) in such a way that readers can understand and make meaning and significance from the data (Patton, 2002). In qualitative research, the researcher is the most significant instrument, and the validity of the instrument or credibility of the research depends to a great extent on the skill and competence of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the importance of this attribute of qualitative research: "Only the human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of the separate realities" (p. 39). Merriam (1998) added that the researcher must be alert and sensitive to cues and nuances provided during data collection as well as inherent biases.

Furthermore, Kvale (1996, p. 105) contended that the "outcome of an interview depends on the knowledge, sensitivity, and the empathy of the interviewer." I am an elementary school principal with experience as a bilingual

elementary school teacher, an assistant principal, and principal in both urban and rural school districts. I became certified to teach in the public schools through the alternative certification program in the early 1980s in Houston, Texas. As a school principal, I have had many experiences hiring, supervising, and supporting beginning teachers from a variety of preparation programs. In addition, the researcher has been trained in the use and interpretation of the Gallup Corporation's Urban Teacher Perceiver instrument (Gallup Organization, 1993) that is designed to assess candidate's strengths based on teacher themes and used to select candidates for the alternative certification program. These experiences constitute a solid foundation for understanding the perspectives of the first year, alternatively certified teachers in this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Ensuring that participants were fully informed and exposed to minimal risk, the IRB of the University of Texas at Austin approved this study before any contact was made. When the pool of potential teacher participants was identified, the researcher contacted the superintendent of schools (Appendix B), and permission to contact employees of the selected district was requested in writing from the superintendent. Following the protocol of the IRB of The University of Texas at Austin, the participating teachers, mentors, and principals were fully informed about the student and any possible risks. Informed consent was then obtained from each participant.

This qualitative study was designed to explore complex human interaction between principals and teachers, and data were collected and examined for relationships and patterns. The design focused on fieldwork and intensive interviews. The fieldwork, concentrating on observation of and interviews with principals and teachers, generated more questions that helped guide but did not entirely limit the researcher. From the initial fieldwork, some standardized questions were developed for the principals, mentor teachers, and beginning teachers. Patton (2002) summarized four benefits of standardization in the interviews as follows.

1. The exact instrument used in the evaluation is available for inspection by those who will use the findings of the study.
2. Variation among interviewers can be minimized where a number of different interviewers must be used.
3. The interview is highly focused so that interviewee time is used efficiently.
4. Analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare. (p. 346)

In-Depth Interviews

According to Patton (2002), qualitative interviews are founded on the premise that the perspective of the interviewee is both knowable and able to be made explicit. Similarly, Kvale (1996, p. 105) asserted, "Interviews are particularly suited for studying people's understandings of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world."

Fifteen in-depth interviews were the primary source of data collection. The purpose of the interviews was to collect in-depth data about the experiences of the three teachers' experiences with support and professional development. Each of the three first year, alternatively certified teachers in the high-poverty, urban elementary schools participated in a total of five interviews. First, a group interview was held at each school with the first year teacher, the principal, and the mentor. Then, a series of three individual interviews were held with each of the first year teachers. Finally, another group interview was conducted with each teacher, his or her principal and his or her mentor (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

Three-Stage Interview Design

Stage	Round	School A	School B	School C
Stage 1	First-round interviews	Interview with the triad: Hannah, her principal, and her mentor	Interview with the triad: Marco, his principal, and his mentor	Interview with the triad: Christie, her principal, and her mentor
Stage 2	Second-round interviews	Individual interview with Hannah	Individual interview with Marco	Individual interview with Christie
	Third-round interviews	Individual interview with Hannah	Individual interview with Marco	Individual interview with Christie
	Fourth-round interviews	Individual interview with Hannah	Individual interview with Marco	Individual interview with Christie
Stage 3	Fifth-round interviews	Interview with the triad: Hannah, her principal, and her mentor	Interview with the triad: Marco, his principal, and his mentor	Interview with the triad: Christie, her principal, and her mentor

The interviews for this study were conducted using a three-stage design. These stages are described in Table 3.2 and the following text.

Stage 1

In Stage 1 each triad of one alternatively certified, first year teacher; principal; and mentor teacher was interviewed as a group. Principals and mentors were selected as participants because the review of the available literature indicated that they are primary sources of support for beginning teachers (Ax et al., 2001; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Marlow et al., 1997). Because the principals and mentors were highly involved in the experiences of the first year teachers, including them as a secondary source of data had a number of advantages.

The principals and mentors were able to contribute firsthand information and their personal perspectives of the first year teachers' support and professional growth needs. As Kvale (1996, p. 296) said, "The interview is a situation of knowledge production in which the knowledge is created between the views of the two partners in the conversation....The interview conversation is part of the social world studied."

As Patton (2002) suggested, interactions among the participants in a group interviews can improve data quality. Interviewing each triad (first year teacher, principal, and mentor) as a group provided opportunities to observe interactions, to compare the perspectives of the participants, and to confirm or disconfirm the researcher's developing understanding or interpretation.

The researcher developed an interview guide for the first interview (see Appendix A) with introductory statements and assurances and guiding, open-ended questions. Questions began with prompts about foundational information such as resources and initial interactions of the first year teacher with the principal and mentor. Because the purpose of the interview was to elicit spontaneous responses in the course of natural interaction of participants, the format was an “informal conversational interview” as described by Patton (2002, pp. 342–343).

The opening statement served to give participants the same initial experience. The questions were developed as a focused request for information, perceptions, perspectives, and descriptions of how beginning teachers were supported, how opportunities or experiences for professional development were provided, and how those experiences impacted them.

The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed and I began analyzing so that questions or assertions emerging from the first interviews could be explored in subsequent interviews. During and immediately following the interviews, observations of interactions between the participants were also noted.

Stage 2

In State 2 each alternatively certified, first year teacher was interviewed individually three times. Each individual interview was approximately 90 minutes and was tape recorded. The questions for the individual interviews were developed before the interview to clarify and expand on prior discussions and developed during the interviews to explore or clarify the participant’s assertions.

After each interview session, the interview was transcribed. I began analyzing the data so that questions or assertions emerging from the first interviews could be explored in subsequent interviews. Consistent with the concept of emerging design, questions for the subsequent interviews were developed based on a need for clarification or elaboration of the participants' responses in the previous interview(s). Categories, patterns, or themes emerging from the each interview guided the development of the questions for the subsequent interviews.

Stage 3

In Stage 3, each triad was interviewed again in a group of teacher, principal, and mentor. This round of interviews provided an opportunity for additional insights from the three participants at each campus and an opportunity to confirm, disconfirm, or further explore preliminary understandings. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed for analysis, and observations of interactions between the participants were noted.

Qualitative researchers have argued the merits of both structured and unstructured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Kvale, 1996). The in-depth interviews of the study participants combined an unstructured, informal, conversational strategy with a structured, interview guide approach. Combining the two approaches allowed the researcher to ask certain key questions while offering flexibility in probing and exploring unanticipated responses (Patton, 2002).

Intensive interviewing, according to Schutt (1999), relies on open-ended questions and is distinguished by consistency and thoroughness. The researcher engages actively in dialogue with the respondent to make meaning explicit. Then follow-up questions are altered to clarify the preceding discussion and probe for understanding (Schutt, 1999).

Gall et al. (1996) further recommended interview behaviors that are summarized as follows:

1. Build rapport, ensure absolute confidentiality, and explain the benefits of the study.
2. The respondent should talk more than the interviewer, which produces more information.
3. Use conversational style—clear and meaningful language.
4. Do not change topics too frequently. Ask simple questions and use open-ended probes to extend responses when appropriate.
5. Save complex, threatening, sensitive, or controversial questions for the latter part of the interview after rapport has been established.
6. Do not hint, verbally or nonverbally, at a preferred or expected response; do not lead, contradict, or challenge a response.

Additionally, Schutt (1999) noted the importance of allowing sufficient time such that the respondent is not rushed and for the respondent to reflect and elaborate on responses. Therefore, this researcher ensured each respondent had adequate time for reflection and elaboration.

Interview data are subjective and open to interpretation by both the researcher and the reader (Kvale, 1996). Patton (2002) argued that standardization of the questions facilitates analysis by limiting the range of information that participants provide. Hence, this study used a combination of both structured and unstructured interview strategies.

Observation

Additional data were obtained from observations of the interactions between the participants. Patton (2002) suggested that through observation the researcher can better understand the context of the interaction, often learning things or seeing things that participants may not reveal in an interview. Field notes will, for example, describe the social environment, informal interactions, and nonverbal communication.

The researcher kept detailed records of the observations in a fieldwork journal, as recommended by Merriam (1998). The field notes recorded descriptions, quotations, and the researcher's thoughts or comments. After each interview contact, a contact summary sheet as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) was developed to record initial reactions, salient points, and questions.

Data Analysis

According to Kvale (1996, p. 189), analysis begins “when the subjects describe their lived world during the interview.” Then, to some extent, the interviewer can confirm or clarify the meaning of the interviewee's responses

during the interview. Each of the interviews was transcribed and analyzed as it was completed, and observations were carefully recorded in field notes (Merriam, 1998) and using contact summary sheets (Miles & Huberman, 1994) before going on to the next interview.

The process of coding the transcripts began with selecting and highlighting or underlining meaningful chunks of text. The chunks of text were then condensed or summarized and labeled by writing descriptive code words in the margins of the transcripts, as described as first level or descriptive coding by Miles and Huberman (1994). Further interpretation of the interviews developed through an inductive (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002) process of listening to the tapes of the interviews, reading or rereading the transcripts, and coding or attaching descriptive labels to meaningful units of data from the participants' responses. Each interview was coded in this manner. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to be meaningful and useful, a chunk or unit of data must reveal information that is relevant to the study and must be able to stand alone.

Next, to organize the data, categories were developed using the "step-by-step process" (Merriam, 1998, p. 180) of grouping or funneling related items into patterns, sets, or clusters to which labels were attached. These categories were constructed by repeatedly looking through the transcripts with marginal notes and the field notes to find items that appeared to go together. As the interviews progressed and emerging topics were further explored, I continued to look for

new patterns in the coded data and checked earlier interpretations with subsequent responses and field notes to determine if the developing patterns were supported or needed to be modified (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The categories that were developed were used to organize and present the findings.

Merriam (1998) stated,

Data often seem to beg for continued analysis past the formation of categories. A key here is when the researcher knows that the category scheme does not tell the whole story—that there is more to be understood about the phenomenon. This often leads to trying to link the conceptual elements—the categories—together in some meaningful way. (p. 188)

Thus, the third level of analysis involved the researcher's interpretation of the relationships between the categories.

Credibility

Credibility corresponds to internal validity in seeking to find if the methodology and research design are believable and convincing. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that triangulation of sources supports credibility and consistency. Therefore, triangulation was accomplished (a) by comparing the perspectives of participants with different points of view, such as teachers' views and principals' views; (b) by checking for consistency among the responses of the three first year teachers; and (c) by comparing the observation notes with the interview data.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to different contexts or situations. In this study, transferability is enhanced by the potential that the findings can be tested using other methods and in other settings. This research study depends on rich description rather than external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, research focuses on a holistic description of the phenomenon or case. Therefore, as Yin (cited in Merriam, 1998) argued, it is not possible to separate the variables of the phenomenon from the context. This study was designed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the specific situation of the three first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in urban elementary schools; findings are not intended to be applied to other situations.

Nevertheless, the purposeful sampling used in this study design contributes to the transferability. Because this study focused on the participants' experiences in high-poverty, urban elementary schools, the findings are of interest to anyone who supervises or evaluates beginning teachers, particularly in an urban setting. The use of three triads of teachers and principals provided the opportunity for cross-case analysis, suggesting increased transferability of the themes and patterns that emerged (Gall et al., 1996).

Dependability

Dependability refers to the assumption that other researchers can replicate a study (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to

dependability as the consistency between the process and the product.

Dependability is enhanced by analyzing data from different sources, testing for consistency, and examining inconsistencies. This process helps to overcome suspicion of single perspective studies.

For this reason, data were reviewed repeatedly for emergent categories and patterns, and participants were given opportunities to further explore, confirm, challenge, or contradict emerging understandings in subsequent interviews. The findings of this study are supported by thick description of case reports, audio recordings, transcriptions, and cross-referencing of data from the nine participants (Gall et al., 1996; Patton, 2002).

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) wrote that confirmability ensures that a study's process and product are auditable by an outside party. Confirmability corresponds to the conventional research construct of objectivity requiring that events are public and observable such that there is agreement among researchers. The quality of data collection and analysis of this study is available for review, including, for example, the thick description of case reports, audio recordings, transcriptions, and cross-referencing of data from the different sources.

Summary

This study sought to acquire, organize, and analyze a large quantity of data from a major urban Texas elementary school district about how and from whom

beginning teachers in high-poverty, urban schools perceive support and receive professional development. This chapter described a qualitative research methodology employing a naturalistic perspective used in studying these phenomena. Later chapters examine the cases studied in more detail and present the analysis, findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This study explored the experiences of first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools in a major urban Texas school district. This study had three areas of focus:

1. This study sought to describe the perceived growth needs of the teachers, expressly the perceived needs for support and professional growth.
2. This study focused on the strategies and sources that best met these needs.
3. This study documented the experiences of alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools.

Based on the information gathered in the interviews, the researcher organized the findings presented in this chapter. This chapter begins with introductions to each of the three beginning teacher participants and their mentors and principals. The names of the participants have been changed to guaranty their anonymity. The second section of this chapter presents the findings relative to the first area of focus of the study. The third section presents the findings related to the second area of focus. The fourth section of this chapter presents findings that emerged from the data as the participants' experiences but were not explicitly related to the other two areas of focus. As much as possible, the results are

presented in the participants' own words, utilizing quotations from the transcripts of the interviews. Chapter 5 considers these findings in the context of the setting and with appreciation for the literature.

Participants

In-depth interviews provided the core data of this study. Three triads consisting of each of the three first year, alternatively certified teachers, his/her principal and his/her mentors were interviewed as a group two times. The three first year, alternatively certified teachers were interviewed three times individually and in greater depth.

Prior research has suggested that principals (Billingsley, 1993) and mentors (Glickman et al., 2001) serve as likely sources of support and professional development for beginning teachers. Therefore, the interviews with the three mentors and the three principals served to supplement, support, or challenge the emerging information.

The first of the beginning teachers was Hannah. Hannah was a single, White woman in her early thirties. She was raised in the Midwest and learned her Spanish mostly at the university. While studying for her bachelor's degree in Business Administration, she went to study abroad in Central America for a semester. She ended up living and working in Central America for more than a year. She was a business professional before deciding to become a teacher. Then, before joining the alternative certification program, Hannah worked for a school district as a paraprofessional teacher assistant for a year.

Hannah's principal, Irma, was Hispanic, in her early thirties, and a first year principal. Hannah's mentor, Kim, was in her early forties and the mother of active teenagers. Kim also was certified to teach through the alternative certification program and was the only person interviewed in this study who did not speak Spanish as well as English. Kim was in her fifth year of teaching fourth grade at the same campus where she had begun her teaching career.

The second beginning teacher was Christie. Christie was born in Mexico and moved to the United States during her middle school years. She was the first of her family to graduate from college. She held a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design. Christie was in her late twenties, also single, and completely bilingual and biliterate. Her native language was Spanish and her second language was English. She gave up a position as a graphic designer to enter the alternative certification program and begin teaching.

Christie's principal, Linda, was in her mid-30s and had been a principal in the district for five years. Linda relied heavily on her instructional coach, Anna, to work with Christie and asked that Anna also participate in the interviews. Christie's mentor was Hector. Hector was in his early 40s and had a wife and children. He had been a teacher for four years in the district and had experience as an educational administrator in Central America before coming to the United States.

The third beginning teacher was Marco. Marco was born in Brazil and was a native speaker of Portuguese but also spoke fluent Spanish and fluent English.

He had advanced degrees in Economics. In addition to teaching at a local community college, he ran a small business and worked as a substitute teacher before deciding to enter the alternative certification program to become a public school teacher. Marco had a wife and three small children. He was in his early forties.

Marco's principal was Mary. Mary was a second year principal in her 40s. Mary was a product of an alternative certification program and had worked as a bilingual teacher in the district before becoming an administrator. Marco's mentor, James, was also certified through an alternative certification program and had been teaching at the school for five years.

Research Focus 1: Perceived Needs for Support and Professional Growth

First, this study describes the perceived growth needs of the teachers, expressly the perceived needs for support and professional growth. As suggested in the literature, the beginning teachers articulated needs that were both technical and emotional and that were mediated somewhat based on the individual teacher's background experiences and personality. Perceptions of support and professional growth needs reported herein emerged from the three in-depth interviews with the beginning teachers. Information gathered during the two interviews with each of the triads provided additional insights from the beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and principals.

All three of the beginning teachers expressed some commonly held needs. Most salient among those needs were (a) the need for recognition and

appreciation, (b) the need for self-confidence, (c) the need for professional autonomy, (d) the need for personal and collegial support, (e) the need for technical information about school operations or curriculum, (f) preparation and preservice professional development needs, (g) inservice professional development needs, and (h) the need to manage time and stress.

The Need for Recognition or Appreciation

The beginning teachers specifically indicated that they needed praise or explicit recognition. They found expressions of appreciation to be a necessary factor in endurance. Because student performance data are not readily available and beginning teachers typically work alone with very little interaction during teaching time with other adults, they typically rely on self-evaluation to determine how they are doing. The participants explained that they needed to feel like all of their hard work was noticed and appreciated.

Christie: Our students like to be recognized for doing a good job. We as adults, we also need that. Not every day, but every once in a while, you know. A “we appreciate what you’re doing with these kids.” Simple... words like that keeps us... make it worthwhile.

Hannah: Even though, you know, I think anybody who works really hard and takes pride in their work, I know they would do it anyway but I think that a big problem with, maybe, burnout, is, you know, teachers not feeling recognized or not feeling like all this hard work they’re doing is appreciated or seen. But I feel like what I’ve seen so far this year is that they’re doing a really good job of trying to avoid leaving people out, or they do a good job of making sure people feel like they’re valued.

The Need for Self-Confidence

The beginning teachers reported experiencing periods of self-doubt. They spoke of a lack of confidence in themselves, their knowledge of the curriculum or content, their pedagogical ability, and/or their classroom management. The participants stated that at times they questioned their effectiveness in terms of student performance, citing difficulties or uncertainty concerning, for example, transitioning students to English or preparing students for the state test that is given in the spring.

Christie: I've had teachers that are like, that come in and help me and are like, "Well, why don't you do this instead or give them this worksheet?" And, having people question your teaching methods obviously makes you doubt yourself...or at least me. It's like, well, maybe I'm not doing what I need to be doing, and the kids aren't getting it, so...

Hannah: And you think that would come up during the school year, but I think maybe even during the school year I was still trying to figure out exactly what my problem was. You know, uh, I knew I was having this huge road block, but I didn't have the perspective to, like, look at it and pinpoint it, kind of. Although, I mean, I know that, I guess I thought that the other fourth-grade teachers were handling it better than me [laughs] or knew, you know.

Marco added that sometimes the curriculum specialists or other teacher leaders came to his room to work with groups of students or model instructional practices; he perceived that the support was based on an assumption that the students did not know certain material that he had taught. This assumption that content had not been successfully taught contributed to his feelings of self-doubt.

Marco was not alone in perceiving the extra help as a blow to his feelings of self-efficacy. At times all of the beginning teachers also perceived extra help provided by other teachers as a blow to their self-esteem. When help came from

curriculum specialists or supplemental tutors, it sometimes caused them to question their own ability or the quality of their work.

Marco: That gets the self-esteem of the teacher down, because you start thinking, “Oh, my goodness. Am I doing that bad?” I mean, um, what do you expect?...Let me put it this way. It’s very uncomfortable. It makes you feel bad. Even though you are there and you are doing everything, suddenly, “Oh, we need to pull out [the students].”...So pull-outs really irritate me little bit, irritate me very much....You come in and you assume the kids will not know.

The Need for Professional Autonomy

In spite of occasionally questioning themselves, the beginning teachers reported a need for professional autonomy. Being able to handle the demands of the job independently was very important to the beginning teachers. For example, the beginning teachers reported the importance of being able to make effective decisions about what to teach and how to teach it.

Moreover, Christie reported that she believed that every teacher makes the decisions about what happens in their classrooms, indicating that this was a norm or an expectation. She said she felt that not being able to handle student discipline, for example, on her own was a sign of failure as a teacher.

Christie: Of course, I always, I do have people that say, “No, maybe you shouldn’t do that,” and I honestly think, “Yeah, I, I think it’ll work,” and I’ll do it, whether they tell me. And if it doesn’t work, then I’m like, “You should have listened.”...You know, I needed to do it, and that’s what I needed to do. So yeah, of course, I do count on them for a lot. But when it comes down to it, I make the decisions of what goes on in my classroom. There’s that part of me....I think it’s in every teacher, though. And you see it in the classrooms...

To do it on your own....And I think, well, I can’t handle it [student discipline], so I’m going to send you to someone else. So they can deal with you. And I don’t want to, I don’t want to. I guess just being a

beginning teacher, I don't want to deal with that. I wanted to be sure that I can do it on my own. And that was huge; that was a huge step for me. And I was like, okay, so then it's not all me. I can send 'em away and it doesn't mean that I failed it.

Hannah acknowledged the difference between her classroom and the others and reported a need for flexibility to address the needs of her bilingual students. Because she was the only fourth-grade bilingual teacher on her campus, she was not able to implement the same instructional plans or activities that the other fourth-grade teachers used.

Hannah: Also, because what I appreciate about how the team works together is this exact same thing, is that we all try to work together but all we all know that different things happen in different classrooms and that we will probably never be doing exactly the same thing at the exact same time, which I really appreciate because, especially with Spanish, I really need that kind of flexibility.

Further, after four years on the job, Hector, Christie's mentor, spoke passionately about how he felt when the principal left him alone. Being left alone made him feel trusted and more confident. Indeed, principals spoke of walking the building and checking lesson plans to identify the teachers who might need more support. Principal Irma clearly used her classroom walkthroughs to identify teachers who needed support and those whom she felt could be left more alone.

Hector believed that being left alone was a sign of trust from the school administration. But he also perceived that beginning teachers needed principals to take care of them more, more administrative supervision. Interestingly, when determining the level of support to provide, the principals depended more on their own observations than on the beginning teachers' lack of experience.

Irma: That comes from the water cooler talk, you know, that comes from chatting in front of the restrooms while you're waiting to go in. Those, from those conversations you learn so much about what teachers need....And, even our walkthroughs, a lot of times when we'll walk the building, it's more to identify who needs more support.

Hector: I prefer to be alone in my classroom, and the less I see the principal, the better for me. This is my feeling....Yeah, it's always true when you are a brand-new teacher, you need more support, and you need to be in touch with the principal. But...the good point is when you have a good relationship with your principal, and she trusts you, then the relationship, I mean, you feel free and you feel confident. But for the new teacher, that's true that the principal has to take care of you more often. Even though they are in touch with their mentor, with their grade, with all the other teachers in their grade, but it's true that the, the principal has to take care of them.

The Need for Personal and Collegial Support

Each of the beginning teachers spoke of the lack of consistent guiding and supportive relationships. The mentors' role in supporting the beginning teachers varied considerably. In some cases, the mentor was the primary source of information, resources, and support. In others, this was not at all the case. In all cases, in addition to the support and guidance provided by the mentor, the beginning teachers spoke about their need for conversation and interaction with others such as colleagues, peers, friends, and family.

Marco: If I did not see that support, and, um, I would go home frustrated. I would cry. Cry. I would cry; I'm a grown-up man...and cry. I remember...going into the corridors after an exam...[I] didn't know what in the world I was doing. No help. I would go and cry in the corridors. In the lunch, on the way to lunch, or pulling out of lunch, because of desperation. What direction do I go? What do I do here? I don't know!

Christie: The only thing actually that I was worried about was the kids liking me. Not like overly liking me, but just them liking me and being comfortable with me. I thought that was one of my main, main, um, worries. What if

they didn't like me, or what if they constantly kept comparing me to last year's teacher? And, you know, stuff like that. Oh, now it's totally different. I used to dream about school every night. Just things that would happen that day, I would dream about it at night. So the next day, I was like, "Oh, my God." Seems like I didn't even sleep.

Two of the three principals had been certified originally to teach through an alternative certification program. The principals spoke of more frequent walkthrough observations of the beginning teachers. Principals also reported that when it appeared things were going well for beginning teachers, those teachers were not visited as frequently. Principal Irma reflected on her own frustration with one new teacher (who was not one of the participants in this study) who did not appear to be doing well. Irma felt that she needed "to be elsewhere," but the new teacher had complained to her that she perceived a lack of administrative support.

Irma: Um, and so, you know, I guess we had so many first year teachers, new teachers....But...one of those classes...you'd walk through and everything was great, another incredibly successful first year, alternative certification teacher who I was just very impressed with. And so, it made it, it was very difficult to spend more time in that room, although I'm sure that I could have lent a lot of support, um, I just found myself needing to be elsewhere. So, I feel like even when you do try to lend as much support as possible and feel things are going smoothly, um, inevitably you find that some people...feel there's a deficit.

*The Need for Technical Information About School Operations,
Pedagogy, or Curriculum*

The beginning teachers expressed frustration regarding a need for specific information about curriculum or school operations. They all talked about frustration in situations when they did not know what to do or whom to ask,

particularly regarding bilingual issues. Principal Mary may have said it best, recalling her first days in the classroom and laughing: “My God, what do you do with these kids for seven hours?” Her comments resonated with Marco, who said, “What do you do with these kids for seven hours? That’s a good way to put it.”

The beginning teachers were particularly uncertain about what to do with classroom materials such as mathematics manipulatives and supplemental textbooks. Because Hannah was the only bilingual teacher in the fourth grade in her school, she expressed frustration that she had many resource materials but no one to tell her what to do with them: “Okay, well. Well, the resources, knowing how to use the resources that I have was always kind of stressful. How to use them.”

Christie was more specific in expressing a need to know which resources to use to meet the needs of her students who were transitioning to English and were at varying levels of competency in both English-language and content-area academic skills. The teachers referred to varying degrees of support with regard to curriculum management and finding the information necessary to meet the specific needs of their students.

Christie: Um, lately, one of my challenges has been that monolingual student that came in. And having to change my whole day because I wasn’t doing any monolingual Spanish before. Now that’s a challenge because being able to do both of ‘em [languages]... actually how to even have the time to sit and teach him ESL [English as a Second Language] from the beginning stages when I’m trying to teach my other kids ESL from where they’re already at. They’re already reading and understanding and writing and... trying to figure out how to be able to go off with him and work with him one on one and still have my kids on target or on what they need to be doing. I think that, that is something that I really need to find training on or find

some way to figure it out. Either having someone come in and help me out for that little piece of time or....

Preparation and Preservice Professional Development Needs

In spite of overall satisfaction with the alternative certification program, each of the beginning teachers addressed unfulfilled needs related to his or her preservice training. Christie and Hannah were most eloquent about wishing they had known more what the classroom was going to be like and the challenges they would face. Also, the participants recalled a lack of specific content or curriculum information. The most salient of the expressed needs related to preservice training was the desire for more field-based teaching experiences to better prepare them for the realities of the classroom.

Christie: I think, um, I was prepared pretty well. As far as the challenges go, I think it is a learn-as-you-go. You know, I really don't think they could have prepared me for everything. Or those major challenges. Like those kids that still don't get English not even this much....

The alternative certification program prepared me on that. Like how we need to do it but it's totally different being in the classroom and being able to pull it off.

The participants particularly wanted information or training that was more specific to their job or assignment but reported an understanding that the preparation offered by program might be delimited, for example by the varied needs or requirements of the many grade levels, schools, or school districts served. Hannah also said that the program may have addressed some of the issues but that she "just missed it," indicating that perhaps some of the training was not meaningful to her at the point in time when it was offered.

Christie: I think it was, we were like 28–29, maybe more, and there was like six from third-, fourth-grade teachers. Everybody else was below that. So the majority of the time was spent for the lower grades. And, yeah, they would support the higher grades, which, we were like, “Okay, well, how can we make that more available to us?” And, um, of course, when it came to science and, um, social studies, the lower grades felt that way. They were like, “Well, we’re not doing science. What is that helping us for?”

Also, Christie spoke of need for more preparation with specific course content knowledge. She felt uncertain about her skills in, for example, mathematics. Because the fourth-grade content was not reviewed in her preparation, she felt very unprepared and spent extra time planning for lessons.

Christie: I had, I had never been in a classroom, well, as a teacher. And everything, even simple math that they need to learn, I didn’t remember ‘cause we didn’t cover math. I mean they covered in the alternative certification program how to teach things, but it wasn’t like, “Okay, this is a fraction. Remember back in the day when you learned fractions? This is what you need to teach them.” So, coming to it again and having to remember I need to teach ‘em adjectives, and this is what an adjective is, and I didn’t, I didn’t remember ‘til that week that I planned that, I was like, “Oh, my God, I don’t know what this is I need to look at it.” So that’s why I always felt so unprepared.

The participants spoke of a need for more field work like the student-teaching experience during their preservice training. The brief student-teaching experience and very limited time spent observing other teachers in similar situations was perceived as an effective professional development experience, although the time allocated for these experiences was insufficient. The beginning teachers expressed a need to see how experienced teachers managed instruction, for example, learning centers and materials.

Hannah: I had all that stuff, but it was just like I was at a total loss as to what to do with any of it. Which is weird, because the only thing that probably comes from [the] alternative certification program being so fast is you don’t really have a whole lot time to be student teaching to really see how

these materials are implemented in the classroom. So, yeah, that definitely was the hardest part.

Christie: I think before and during, both. Before I only observed one teacher and then summer school, and then that was it. I was in. I hadn't stepped into a fourth-grade classroom, so it was like, "What am I supposed to be doing now?" And, and I still haven't seen somebody do centers, and I would love to see that.

Hannah: Like how, how an experienced teacher uses those things together...the alternative certification program gives you a lot more of the background and the base, the philosophy, a lot of management but really didn't do very much about resources because, I guess, it is so different for every school and every school district. That, that's what a student-teaching experience is supposed to provide...because the summer school, we did two weeks in summer school, but that is really a completely different experience than actually teaching during regular school year. The materials are different; the time is different. The student-teacher ratio is different. The planning period that a teacher is expected to spend in planning for a day is really different. So, it gives, I guess, the summer school is a good experience for classroom management and, really, being in the classroom in conducting all lessons and that's useful, but it's not comparable at all I guess to student teaching during actual school day.

Inservice Professional Development Needs

In addition to the spring and summer classes that the beginning teachers attended before the school year started, they continued to attend alternative certification classes during the work week and on Saturdays. Still, the beginning teachers were very clear about the need for additional training during the first year of service that was particularly specific to their job or assignment. In addition to the ongoing training provided by the alternative certification program, structured inservice professional development opportunities such as observations, training sessions, workshops, and conferences were provided to build capacity.

Participants mostly attended training sessions provided by the school district and their respective campuses.

Like the brief student-teaching experience (field-based work) during the preservice training, participants perceived the limited time spent observing other teachers in similar situations as an effective professional development experience, although the time allocated for these experiences was insufficient. Scheduled observations during the first year of teaching were perceived as helpful. The beginning teachers expressed an ongoing need to see how experienced teachers managed curriculum materials and employed instructional strategies such as learning centers.

Moreover, the beginning teachers spoke of a need to have more opportunities to select the inservice professional development that was specific to their classroom assignment. In addition to the ongoing training at the alternative certification program, most of the inservice professional development that the beginning teachers attended was training or meetings required by the campus or the school district. The beginning teachers had little or no opportunity to choose professional development experiences. Thus, all of the participants expressed a desire for more individual control in selecting professional development experiences and an associated need for more time to process, implement, and reflect on beginning learning.

The beginning teachers acknowledged that their inservice professional development needs were different from the needs of other beginning teachers at

their campuses because their preservice preparation was different. For example, Hannah attended weekly meetings for beginning teachers at her school. The principal and curriculum specialist planned the meetings to support a large number of beginning teachers from varying preparation programs. The meetings focused on a study of Harry Wong's book *The First Days of School* and classroom management. Hannah had already studied the book in her preparation program and was "annoyed" because she "felt like it was a waste of her time." Months after the training sessions were over, she still reacted strongly to the frustration she felt about the sessions.

Hannah: And it just wasn't, like I could think, like, "Oh, my gosh, like I have questions about transition, I have questions about reading groups, I have questions about how do I figure out the levels of my kids—how do I get them?" You know, like I had all of these other very specific, I felt like, more academically related questions. That all this time that maybe like I could have found somebody to really....I could have had the curriculum specialist sit down with me to do that or, you know, or I could have been reading a book about it or something. Like, I could have been using that time to really meet my needs. I mean, I kind of lost....Oh, well, apparently not....I'm still kind of mad about it, thinking about it, I thought, I'm glad it's over in December, I'm not annoyed about that anymore but (laughs) apparently I am. But you know, like, I, I understood, the whole time I understood why they were doing it 'cause they had so many new teachers. They were coming from, they were all coming from different programs. So many teachers were coming from UT [The University of Texas] and they had done student teaching, and other people were doing other alternative certification programs. So I could understand where it was coming from.

The teachers eloquently addressed their frustration with the overwhelming amount of time spent in meetings and training that were not immediately useful to them. Although the beginning teachers acknowledged their need for more training, they were frustrated by their inability to reconcile this need with other

demands on their time such as the pressing need to be working with their students and a need for time to reflect about or implement their training. Hector, Christie's mentor, commented that it was "scary" when curriculum specialists and administrators kept bringing new learning.

Christie: I think that, that [English as a Second Language] is something that I really need to find training on or find some way to figure it out. Either having someone come in and help me out for that little piece of time or...I think, in general, that would have made my year a lot easier would have been, um, more time observing teachers. I observed Hector and I've observed a couple of other teachers, but with them it's more of a... "Okay I have 15 minutes and I can sit here and watch you for that long and then go back to what I need to be doing." So, I think, which always goes to the same thing—more time. More time to talk to my mentor, more time to spend watching other classes and still not feel like I'm not doing enough for my students because I'm not there. Because I'm learning. And, in a way that's a double-edged sword because if I'm not getting what I need, they're not going to get it either. But if I'm not in the classroom, they're still not going to get it. So I think, just more time would be wonderful....

Right, I mean, there were some workshops that we were just sitting here saying, "Why are we here?" and it's a waste of time, really, when you could be in your class teaching and you are just sitting there for no reason. I mean, you know? A lot of times we didn't take anything out of it. We'd be like, "Okay, well."... Yeah, and then sometimes you don't want to try something new because you need to get done what you need to done. And you already know whatever's working for you now, so why throw something new in there? And waste time what if it doesn't work with your kids.

Marco: With the population that we have, with the class, you know, setting that we have, there's so many variables that sometimes when we have that professional development it does not help at all. In other words, the meetings were kind of useless sometimes.

Hannah: Right, right, right. Like I feel like a lot of our team meetings while helpful weren't often very centered in planning, lesson planning, um. So a lot of times I would kind of be at a loss on where to go next with something.... Before I hit that mark where I knew what I was doing, where I had more of a bigger picture, the team meetings were really frustrating for me. I mean, not on a personal level, personally there's always been a lot of support and it's been good. But, um, as far as being helpful to me planning, they weren't really because I had so many bilingual issues.

Marco reported his frustration that he was unable to pursue his personal goals for professional development because of the other commitments. He reported that the demands of the classroom, the time spent in meetings and/or other school- or district-driven staff development, and the continuing class time devoted to the alternative certification program kept him from pursuing professional development of his own choosing.

Marco: Being in the, the alternative certification program, it was a lot of work for us to do....It was a tremendous amount of work. So there were priorities that I couldn't pursue, like, for instance, work with departmentalization of teachers that I would like to do...or, um, what was the other thing? Cooperative learning, cooperative learning. I wish to be involved more with cooperative learning and as soon as I have free time from the alternative certification program I will be definitely moving towards cooperative learning. I want to experiment more with departmentalization. So those two things I really have in mind to free time for it. But...it has been difficult to allocate time.

While, the beginning teachers acknowledged a need for more training to refine their skills, they emphasized that they could not incorporate new strategies or practices addressed in professional development sessions without time to try the new practices and time to reflect about them. Two of the mentors, James and Hector, both experienced teachers, stated that they did not need more professional development. But they agreed that they needed time to support and assimilate new practices effectively into their teaching routines.

The Need to Manage Time and Stress

By far the most fervent responses from the teachers focused on the daily demands of their job and a need to manage time and stress. The teachers gave

examples of how they were overwhelmed with demands such as paperwork, meetings, student discipline, after-school tutoring, and curriculum management. Christie's mentor, Hector, suggested that the most difficult task for beginning teachers was prioritizing the demands because too much needed to be done.

Hector: But for a new teacher, the first year, when they come saying, "You have to do this and you have to do the other," and there's some moment where you say, "Okay, I have the [curriculum guides] and I have this to do and the other." You have to choose something. That's the difficult part to choose the right, the things you have to do. If you have 20 things to do, you can do only like five or six, and you have to choose these five or six ones.

Hannah also reported that the amount of work to be done was overwhelming and that she was very frustrated when meetings were not focused on the activities that were most prominent on her agenda. All of the beginning teachers addressed a need to find strategies to manage time and stress.

Hannah: Right, right, right. Like I feel like a lot of our team meetings, while helpful, weren't often very centered in planning, lesson planning. So a lot of times I would kind of be at a loss on where to go next with something....For me it was overwhelming. It was too, too much, to really figure out....And I never had that time or presence of mind.

Christie: Uh, they could—not that much paperwork. Paperwork, um. I just, I think, maybe, I don't know. I think maybe what would have helped me, I guess....And, more preparation with that and more dealing with stress management. I mean, how, how, how to leave school at school and go home and not think about it for the rest of the night. I think just having maybe even a workshop just helping you deal with that and helping you learn to deal with the stress of not only the test but feeling like you never have everything done. I mean, I leave here early sometimes, but I go home and I'm still thinking of "Okay, I need to do this and I need to do that." And just dealing with all of that I think would have helped.

Marco: After all, I was participating but overwhelmed, you know, I was overwhelmed at the time. And, uh, I think still...the meetings are kind of useless.

Christie: Right, or just simply curriculum...I'm sorry, no matter how much I try, I can't get through that whole [curriculum guide], nine weeks, to where they're going to understand everything. Um, that's one thing, I feel overwhelmed. Um, paperwork. Oh, my God. Totally overwhelming.

Marco was very passionate when speaking about extra duty time required for after-school tutoring. At one school the teachers said that after-school tutoring was optional or voluntary. At another school, teachers said tutoring after school was voluntary but strongly encouraged. At the third school, teachers were not given a choice but were required to tutor after school. Interestingly, Marco perceived that the students would benefit more if he did not tutor after school because he would be more refreshed for teaching the following day.

Marco: I was not interested, because you get to a point of the stress that it's not worth it to be, to continue there. You have to kind of get out a little bit even know you know that uh, there are lots of positive things for the kids to, you know, to help them in their growth or something like that. I felt like that that was that there was not for me enough because I had reached already a point of stress that I could not continue any more. So it was not beneficial for me to continue because of the stress inside. And it would be better to pull out so that I'll come back refreshed....I think I would be more stressed if I would try to help them....I'm going to go and be continuing with the kids so it would accumulate more stress. That was the point at the time. And I, I, I, I, I have to tell you that that's it. I just get stressed....Also, I have three kids at home. My private life is also very busy when I go home.

Research Focus 2: Strategies and Sources Identified to Meet the Needs

The second focus of this study centered on the strategies identified that best met the needs of the beginning teachers, including how and from whom the teachers perceive these needs to be best met. Commonly employed strategies provided support and helped the beginning teachers to satisfy their growth and

professional development needs. Some were externally imposed or exogenous in nature, whereas others were not. The following strategies emerged from the data: (a) employing personal background experiences, (b) applying inservice professional development learning, and (c) engaging in reflective practice. Many of the sources of support were school staff members. The beginning teachers received support from the following school staff members: (a) the teacher's mentor, (b) curriculum specialists, (c) the grade-level team, (d) other school staff, and (e) the principal. Sources of support outside of the school were (a) the alternative certification program cohort group and (b) family and friends.

Strategies That Met Needs of the Alternatively Certified Bilingual Teachers

The three first year teachers referred to three strategies that they experienced as need satisfying. First, the teachers drew from a variety of personal background experiences. Coming to teaching with diverse family and work history, each of the new teachers was employ relevant experiences. Second, the first year teachers used learning from professional development experiences to solve problems and improve their teaching practice. Third, the first year teachers learned and grew from reflecting about their performance when they tried different techniques and when they made mistakes.

Employing Personal Background Experiences

In addition to their preservice training, the beginning teachers brought with them a variety of relevant work experiences and personal background

experiences that they were able to employ strategically to meet the demands of the teaching position. While Christie clearly felt that “What do I do now?” feeling described earlier, Marco and Hannah both attributed their successful classroom management to previous work experiences. Marco had been a substitute teacher and Hannah had been a teacher assistant (TA) in a middle school. The beginning teachers referred to a variety of previous experiences that they used to solve problems or that contributed to their perceived effectiveness as teachers.

Marco: I taught in the junior college for about 10 years, I taught first year, second year college. And...I love teaching, teaching is so much fun...I am very good at behavior, I get them really straightened up from the really beginning. I establish a routine, and the routine, I don't move away from. So I keep a routine, right there. I limit my misbehavers. The misbehavers immediately move closer to me, in the beginning. That's what I learned from being a sub. Because a sub is a terrible job. A sub, you come to classes, you come this jungle, every day a different jungle in different parts of the world. (Laughs) Right?

Kim: Well, Hannah really is an exceptional first year student, not student, first year teacher. She doesn't feel like she's just first year. She really jumped in there, and has a really good handle on classroom management and certainly on how to teach and the curriculum. Looking back I don't know how she's done that so quickly.

Hannah: Um, well the alternative certification program is really good. So it really well prepared me. And I was a TA at a middle school, which at least helped with classroom management and observing a lot of different classes. It's obviously really different on a middle school level but certain things are the same. That helped a lot.

The middle school kids helped a lot because I can...I was already kind of in that mode, that authoritative mode a little bit that I think can be kind of hard. It is still a little bit hard to, like, think of myself as being like the authority to a bunch of other people. Even if they are little people...Yeah, [laugh] I have a hard enough time being the boss of me. But working with the middle school kids, at least, like, I remember that being hard. Like I introduced myself as “Hannah” the first day of middle school when I was working with a group. “Hi, my name's Hannah.” You know, and like little things at the beginning of the year when I was TAing at middle school, like, when I realized I did have to assume an authority

position and learned how to do that. Might have helped this year—I already knew that.

Hannah also reflected on the experience she had learning Spanish as a second language. Her experience helped her better understand the needs of her students who were making the transition from Spanish to English and became a teaching tool for her.

Hannah: I didn't learn the Spanish until I was in college. I started taking in college because part of my major needed to have two years of a foreign language. So, I hated it. It was awful. Probably my worst grades in school were from Spanish, because it seems just kind of ridiculous to be learning Spanish in the middle of Iowa.

Applying Inservice Professional Development Learning

The beginning teachers spoke of opportunities to apply information or practices acquired from inservice professional development experiences. The most useful meetings, workshops, or training sessions were those that were immediately and directly applicable to the classroom setting. The beginning teachers referred often to the learning and training that came from the alternative certification program. Typically, the beginning teachers appreciated the professional development experiences when they recognized or understood the manner in which their learning contributed to their students' learning.

Hannah: Yeah, about whenever, January maybe, I was having a hard time. My kids are all very fluent readers but their comprehension was very, very low. And I was having a hard time getting them to slow down and to, um, monitor themselves when they were reading. So I picked up something at the alternative certification program...which I use all the time now. So it helped a lot, getting them to slow down and think about it. You know, you know the strategy. Lots of little things like that have come up through the alternative certification program.

Hannah: Yeah. [Laughs] I did go to a, um, workshop in the fall about Spanish literacy that they did for fourth-grade teachers and that was pretty good. But it was just Spanish. So I'd really like to look at how other people handle that.

Marco: And my grading system has changed. I used to be mechanic about grading, mechanic, but now I'm more qualitative about grading....Seminars that I have been attending tell me that there is a balance to grade better...and I'm improving my grading system tremendously. Then I have a sense of where they are in their reading and in their writing, things like that....So that's definitely a plus on professional growth. And I sense that it's been tremendous.

Engaging in Reflective Practice

The beginning teachers, Hannah and Christie, reported that they learned when they engaged in self-evaluation or reflection about their performance as they tried different techniques or made mistakes. On-the-job training characterized by trial and error was used, for example, to manage curriculum; Hannah described employing different strategies, informally analyzing results, and then adjusting her practices. Christie and her principal, Linda, also spoke to the value of mistakes as learning experiences. After trying a strategy or teaching new material, the beginning teachers described how they would either formally or informally assess their own effectiveness and the effectiveness of the practice.

Christie: Yes, definitely. I think the whole year was trial and error. I mean, just the whole year was like, "Okay, am I doing this right?"

Hannah: I'm more like, "Whoa, I need to be more authoritative with this group of students or they're going to walk all over me." It was, like, trial and error and by watching other teachers....So when I look back on the year, it seems kind of unstructured. But, I mean, more I'm talking about the curriculum that I ended up teaching. And the things we ended up doing. It's not very organized. It's just hodge-podge, really. 'Cause I would try one thing, and then feel like that wasn't working, I'd try something else.

I'd start using, doing social studies as our literature, doing guided reading with the social studies book, and that wasn't working.

Christie: Of course, I always, I do have people that say, "No, maybe you shouldn't do that." And I honestly think, "Yeah, I, I think it'll work." And I'll do it, whether they tell me. And if it doesn't work then I'm like, "You should have listened."

Hannah: I do. I mean, it feels like especially knowing myself and the kind of learner that I am, a lot of it is, I can't imagine this year being... any different no matter how much support I got because I'm such an experiential learner. And I need to go through a lot of things, I need to go through a whole year and make some mistakes and figure out how I want to fix the mistakes so I know what I want to do better. Um, I could have used more help figuring out how the transition can help—figure out what level kids were on who should transition.

Principal Linda agreed with the first year teachers that mistakes could be valuable learning experiences. She further asserted that she had allowed Christie to make decisions and mistakes so that she could learn from them.

Linda: And she is going to make mistakes. And we sit back and go, "Oh, go in" [i.e., go in the classroom and help the new teacher]. But I think that as long as it doesn't negatively affect the kids, it's okay....So, I think allowing her to test the waters and to make the decisions—even though in my mind I might have chosen a different route for her or I want to suggest a different route, I, you know, I don't do that. So I think that has been very helpful in her own development.

Sources of Support

Many of the human sources of support that emerged from the data were school staff members. The teacher's mentor was the most frequently acknowledged source of support. Participants also received support from the principal and, in some cases, the assistant principal. Additionally, other teachers or professionals on the campus staff provided support, including the grade-level

team of which the beginning teacher was a member, secretaries, and even custodians.

Outside of the campus environment participants also found sources of support in friends and family members. Continuing relationships with members of the alternative certification cohort group also provided support.

School Staff Members as Sources of Support

The teacher's mentor as a source of support. Each beginning teacher was assigned a mentor teacher as a part of the induction process. The mentor teacher served in a supportive relationship with the beginning teacher. Thus, the role of the mentor was to provide support in the form of timely advice or information about the existent demands of the job such as procedures or curriculum. In each case, the beginning teachers voiced appreciation for the mentor's practical knowledge and acknowledged specific ways in which the mentors helped them.

However, each mentor–mentee relationship had varying levels of trust and rapport. Many new teachers report that they receive poor support or no support from their mentors (Breux & Wong, 2003). Acknowledging that the role of the mentor is not to provide the whole range of support that beginning teachers need, the three beginning teachers described three very different examples of the mentor–mentee relationship.

Hannah and her mentor, Kim. In the case of Hannah and Kim, the two teachers had a very close, friendly relationship making Kim's mentorship uniquely effective on many levels. Kim was able to provide both the operational

information and the emotional support that Hannah needed. These two teachers agreed that several factors contributed to the success of their relationship. Among these factors, they perceived that it was helpful that the classrooms were close together, that they were both fourth-grade teachers, that Kim was also a product of the alternative certification program, and that they were both female.

Hannah and Kim both reported that it would have been much more helpful to Hannah if Kim had also been a bilingual teacher. However, the bilingual technical assistance that Kim was unable to provide was only marginally important to Hannah, while the emotional support that Kim was able to provide was perceived as vital to her survival. Hannah was able to seek out and find the technical, operational information that she needed from other sources.

Interestingly, of the three mentors, Kim was the only one who also spoke of how her relationship with Hannah was also helpful for her. This reciprocity was unique among the participants. Hannah and Kim clearly respected each other and enjoyed working together. During the interviews when they were together, they frequently laughed together, complimented each other, and agreed with one another.

Kim: Well, I think a mentor, the word *mentor*, is really a good word to have selected. I see myself as a sort of resource person, a support person, keeping the dream alive. That's what Hannah and I have come to as our theme. Keeping the dream alive. We use that to rally ourselves sometimes when we might get discouraged. [They both laugh.] Uh, sort of, you know, I think a lot of support and reassuring her that, you know, the second year is a lot easier.

Hannah: Kim makes me feel like I don't have to be perfect, which is the biggest weight for the first year teacher. You go in with this expectation that you are going to start off as an excellent teacher and everything is going to be

great and all your dreams of being a teacher are going to be realized this first year. And I think I started off that year and Kim has helped me realize, like, you know, it's a process and you're just going to be doing the best you can. She's been really helpful in telling me that I am doing the best I can and, I just, sometimes I have to go home even if it's not all done.

Hannah: Yeah, yeah...and it helps that she is such a great teacher and she does such good job with her kids. And that, I mean, because I respect her teaching, and I respect, I know that she does a good job. That makes it okay for me to think, "Oh, it's okay. Kim says I don't have to be perfect all the time. This will work out all right." And I can believe that because she does do it well. Does that make sense?...Like if she were just, you know, a slacker who didn't really teach very well, then I wouldn't be able to just say, I wouldn't be able to take much comfort in that. But because she does do it well...

Marco and his mentor, James. The interaction between Marco and James was very different. While James was consistently helpful as he provided information, advice and answers to questions, the relationship between these two men was not as close as the relationship observed between Hannah and Kim.

As a product of the alternative certification program and as a fourth-grade, bilingual teacher, James understood the demands of the certification program and was able to provide technical support for Marco. In addition, they strongly agreed that they both needed more time to implement or integrate and reflect on the professional development that they had already received and less new training.

James saw Marco as unlike a typical first year teacher. Rather, James viewed Marco as "comfortable and confident" in the classroom because of Marco's experience as a substitute in the same grade the previous year when James had been his "informal mentor." James referred to the grade-level team meetings and the grade-level teachers sharing resources as a support to Marco.

James described his mentoring role as somewhat inconsequential or unimportant. He said that he helped Marco meet his alternative certification program requirements and that he “tried to make extra time” when Marco had questions or needed extra help.

Marco spoke of his appreciation for how James was quiet, patient, and calm, which served to balance Marco’s tendency to be more excitable. Marco described himself as an extrovert and James as more introverted. Marco acknowledged and appreciated that James allowed him “space” and freedom to make independent decisions while also providing him with materials and advice or food for thought. Although Marco viewed James’ behavior as professional and enjoyed the “space,” Marco also perceived this freedom that he was given as, to some extent, a cold or unfriendly behavior on James’ part. Overall, the two men were not particularly friendly when together and exhibited less rapport or connection than, for example, Hannah and Kim.

Marco: Um, I was, after the meetings, I remember very well, after we had the meetings and I was overwhelmed, overwhelmed and then, at the end of the meetings, I would go to my mentor...I told him, “James, I’m completely overwhelmed, help.” And he’d say, “Oh, okay.” So strategizing with him, my mentor, was much better than being in the meetings....

My mentor, as we talked about personalities, I’m the opposite. But, you know, me being a pragmatist, I go borrow from him and then I’m out. I’m going. I’m building my own synthesis and coming up with my own decisions. And when I flash it back to him he likes it. So he also gives my space because, you know, again, you know, I think we have our own space, and that could be the reason I’m enjoying this last year so much.

Marco added that proximity was a helpful factor when they were in adjacent rooms. After a move that resulted in the two teachers’ classrooms being farther apart, Marco perceived that it was less convenient to have impromptu

conversations or ask routine questions, limiting the effectiveness of the mentor–mentee relationship.

Marco: We were in the other building, the new building, what we call the new building, and I was in one room and he was in the room next door. I felt like I was closer to [another teacher], and I could have access to questions quicker.

Christie and her mentor, Hector. The third teacher–mentor pair had yet another experience. Christie found Hector’s expertise, practical knowledge, and experience most helpful in the area of curriculum management. However, their relationship was very limited by the demands of their jobs and Hector’s family life. Additionally, Christie and Hector both attributed their lack of rapport—a sense of separation or a disconnect—to their difference in gender. Christie and Hector agreed that a level of comfort was easier to reach with a person of the same gender.

Christie: I value his help a lot more because doing it his way does help me rather than doing it this other way.... You know, I just lost two or three days [doing it the other way] and them [the students were] still not getting it. So I think that’s why it’s so much more helpful coming from those teachers that already know what’s going on and how long it takes and what problems they have.

Hector: What I feel about this, we talk about this, we don’t have too much time to talk about things. To stay one day in the school is like, like to be one month. And it is so stressing, so many things that can happen in one single day that that some days I try to talk to Christie, I, I, I say, “Christie, I would like to explain you more things. I would like to keep in touch with you, but, I have to try to finish my, my things or my work.” So, sometimes I feel like...because we don’t have time to do, to plan. Not to plan but to try to solve some kind of things. Sometimes its like I’m not doing enough for her.

Both Christie and Hector acknowledged that Hector was not able to spend the time with Christie that she needed. Hector expressed feelings of frustration

and guilt because he was unable to spend what he felt was enough time with Christie due to the demands of his own teaching assignment and his personal life. Christie compensated for the limited time that Hector was available by seeking the advice and support of another bilingual teacher on her grade level. The other teacher became an informal mentor and regularly provided information and assistance to Christie.

Christie and Hector felt strongly that communication between them was more difficult because of both gender difference and social differences. Hector had a family and felt compelled to go home rather than participate in the social activities of the other, single teachers.

Christie: I think it [gender] makes a huge difference. Not that he's hard to talk to; he's not at all. But I think, in any situation, same sex, you understand each other better. You're more at ease with the person.... We talk a lot, actually, about Spain and Mexico and the U.S. Basically, we're about the same, no cultural differences or anything. I just think it was so much easier for me to connect with a female. Even students react different with a male teacher and a female teacher. So I think that is a big difference. And his method, his way of teaching totally different from mine. He's very structured and always sitting down and talking, and all these transparencies very clean, unlike my room. Those little differences, I think, kind of kept me away, and him being a male even more. But I think being a female it would have been more like a friend rather than just a mentor.... As far as help here, um, there is this other teacher other than my mentor that I talk to really well. I guess her being a female makes it more easy for me to talk to her rather than my mentor, since he's a male. Um, I don't know why that is. I'm just more comfortable with females. Um, so, she helps me a lot. Um, she was teaching here last year so she also has a couple of years; she knows the brothers of some of my students so she helps me out a lot and that's expected....

No, well, it's true. I mean, he has a family, and I realize that a lot of times that we would meet outside of school, Hector probably couldn't go because he has a family. He has someone that's waiting for him and he needs to be there for. When the rest of the fourth-grade team, we're all

single. So we would all just go together. So, yeah, I think that has a lot to do with how close you get to your mentor.

Hector: In my case, that, believe it or not, affected me. Because sometimes you, you know, you want to socialize. I think we talk about this, the other meeting. And you want to have a closer relationship, but, you know, when I finish, I need to take care of my son. And, I need to, to...It's, it's a different life. If you are married, you have a family. If you are single, you can have dinner in some restaurant or you can go to some other place. So in some ways, this year I felt like, not bad, but like, say, I'm not in the group. I'm not in the group but I would like to be more. And I would like to have a closer relationship with them. But I understand that was my life. So, no problem...[I] spend more time in the school than the home.

Support from curriculum specialists. Each of the beginning teachers received support from other teachers on their respective campuses whom they referred to as curriculum specialists or, alternatively, instructional specialists. These other teachers came into their classrooms to help. They provided support for the beginning teachers in the form of model or demonstration lessons; consultation or advice; or specialized, supplemental instruction for students. All of the beginning teachers at some time spoke about their appreciation for the other teachers' expertise or skill or for the extra help with students.

Christie: Um, a little bit of everybody, I think. The curriculum specialist coming in the room and saying, because she used to be a fourth-grade teacher, so, and she's a bilingual, she used to be a bilingual teacher, so, her coming in and saying, "This is what worked for my class, so why don't you give this a try?" That helped me...she knew what needed to be taught and sometimes when I didn't get it, she'd sit there and, "Okay, this is what we need to do."

It is very important, but then again maybe some kids don't get it the way I teach, so having that extra help maybe they'll get it with that person. And...just having that other person, I think, helps because maybe they can explain it a different way that you never thought.

Marco: Well, the reading expert would come and say, "What do you need?" And I would say, "I want to us to go on this particular thing here." And then she would come with whole lesson prepared. So we'd communicate

beautifully. So that particular one, the reading one, we coordinated very well.

Support from the grade-level team. Each beginning teacher referred to the other fourth-grade teachers at his or her school as the grade-level team and identified the relationship with this group as being the most helpful. The beginning teachers' relationship with the grade-level team was referred to as most important. The beginning teachers credited the collaboration and support from the grade-level team with helping them feel like everything would be all right and even with making a decision to continue at the same campus the following year.

Hannah: Like in my little niche in the fourth-grade team, things are good. And there's a good relationship with teamwork there. So that's really what's important to me.

Christie: Um, like I said, my team. Um, one of 'em has taught—oh, no, she didn't teach fourth [grade] last year but she, she, she knew what needed to be taught and sometimes when I didn't get it, she'd sit there and, "Okay, this is what we need to do." And she'd put it on paper and she'd give me examples and so she would, you know, show me what I need to do. Um, I guess just, just with my team. They help me on every question I have. I know I can go to them.

Right, right. Um, so, I think the support here that I've gotten is excellent. I do not want to leave this school. Because I've never, like I told you before, I've never felt alone, like completely, you know, every once in a while you're like, "Oh, my God." But completely alone, I've never felt. So...that's why I want to stay and teach here rather than just leaving. 'Cause I was just going to teach until the alternative certification program was over and go back home. But now I'm staying. So, that's because of my team. And the support I have here.

I, I feel very supported here. Especially my fourth-grade team as a whole. Any questions I have, or any doubts or whatever it may be, I am comfortable with them, you know, to go to them. And that was formed by the way...it wasn't like, "Okay, half a semester, hey, half a semester, I'm barely getting along with them." It was an instant bond with my team. 'Cause we met so often, so long that I feel very supported here. And, um, I was going to leave this year, go back home, but since I adore my team I'm going to stay. [Laughter] So, um, no, but, just having that support. Not just of one person or the curriculum but the team as a whole that I can speak to

not only about school but what's going on in my life. Which obviously has to do with school 'cause if the stress is here it's going to be in the rest, personal, whatever it may be that's going on.

Marco: I guess a good deal of information we gather does come from being talking and informal gathering, and before the meetings we just talk informally. I wonder why I didn't bring that up. Sure, the sense that, with my group, the fourth-grade group...that it's gonna be all right, don't worry about it.

Support from other school staff. On occasion, the beginning teachers reported that they would reconcile themselves to situations or accept difficult circumstances as expected or reasonable. Yet, all of the beginning teachers described situations when they were assertive and took the initiative to seek out information, solicit needed support, or ask for help. This initiative that was characteristic of these three teachers, distinguished them as more than just passive recipients of support. When asked, "So whom do you go to—to ask? How do you find out?" Kim said, "She asks everybody!" Hannah agreed: "Yeah!"

Each participant identified a person or persons from whom they had requested and received resources or operational information. Among the people that the beginning teachers sought out for help were campus secretaries, other teachers, and even building custodians. For help in resolving daily, routine operational, curricular, or instructional issues, the beginning teachers most often sought help from peers. Questions or problems that were specific to the bilingual program were the most difficult to address and frequently were addressed to others who were experienced or experiencing the same circumstances.

Christie: I can call [another alternative certification intern from her cohort group] and say, "Where are you getting this information?" Or, um, I can ask [another teacher in the school] or, um, this other guy I talk to really well.

He's also a fourth-grade teacher and I'll call him 'cause he's really good at getting math materials that kids understand, so, I know I can count on him for, for math. So those separate people have certain things that I can ask 'em for.

In addition to the help and support received from principals and mentors, the beginning teachers found support in even casual interaction with other school staff. Casual interactions with other school staff were helpful in preventing feelings of isolation. In addition, Hannah referred to her school's faculty as a "community of teachers"—describing a stronger connection or feeling of belonging that was helpful to her.

Christie: I could easily go to somebody. And feel good about it. And not worry, am I bothering them or taking their time away. I think I feel, I don't feel like I've every really been alone this year. There have been times where I felt overwhelmed but not isolated or alone or completely out on my own....No, um, with other teachers especially after school, when we go get our tutoring kids. There's a ton of teachers there and we start discussing, "Well how are your kids doing?"...And that's when I know I'm not on my own. Because sometimes I'm like, "My kids are just crazy. My kids are out of it." And, you know, they'll hear me say that and they're like, "Oh, no, no, no. Mine are, too." And that's when we start, "Okay, well, what are you doing?" or, "How is it working out for you doing that, you know, read for 50 minutes in the afternoon rather than the morning?"...It really helps to, you know, talk about other things. It really helps. Small conversations.

Hector: Even the custodian that we were talking about that. She knows everything about the school

Hannah: I feel like I've gotten a lot of support this year from everybody. That everybody has been, even when I know, that I, I know myself that like, "Oh, gosh, I should have done this differently. Oh, oh, shoot. I should have been using this reading text instead of this reading text." You know even with all those mistakes I still feel like everybody's like, "Oh, but it's okay, Hannah, you're doing a great job, it's your first year." You know they're like, you know, really emphasizing the positive. They make me feel like, you know, it's okay, even though I made this mistake I can keep going. It's not the end of the world....So I think the community of teachers whether its in formal meetings like it's a formal time to share

ideas, formal time to plan together. But I think there's also lots of informal passing of ideas, informal, like "Oh, I'm making a copy of this do you want it?"... You know just in the copy room like this is a good idea that we both need. I think that other teachers are probably the best resource.

James: This is my fifth year teaching and it's my fifth year at [School B]. So, I haven't seen anything else but just from what I've heard, [School B] is a very supportive environment. The teachers here really help each other. And I just assume that's how it must be everywhere, so I've always been surprised when people have told me that that's not the case. Um, I mean, that's the number-one thing about [School B]. You, you can ask anybody for help and they'll try to make the time to do it. I mean, obviously, we all have so little time that it's difficult but everybody is willing to offer some sort of materials that they have to help you out, advice, etc. Um, you know, I've, I've never come across any teacher here at [School B] who wasn't willing to try to help out a new teacher or another teacher in any regard, you know.

Support from the principal. According to the respondents, principals supported the beginning teachers in different ways. Perhaps the most basic support strategy cited was providing resources. For example, the beginning teachers depended on their principals to provide needed resources like curriculum manuals in a timely manner so that they would know what to teach and when.

Marco: There are certain things that, you know, we talked about, but, uh, I feel like I received the, the support. Again I told you, when I first came it was so impressive Mary would drop everything and bring me the manual 15 or 20 minutes later... That was so special. Things like that just mark you... I feel like I am supported... any material, anything that I need, you know, it was right there in a matter of hours, in a couple of days, I would get it. So that was very, very, very impressive to me. I really, you know, appreciated, you know, the way I was treated at the time. So, those things really made a difference, actually.

Accessibility to the principal was key for the beginning teachers. It was important that the beginning teachers be able to ask questions or ask for advice. Interestingly, while the beginning teachers valued the principal's accessibility and would have appreciated more contact, they did not perceive infrequent contact

negatively. Beginning teachers and mentors spoke of the principals as open and helpful. But, as Hannah said, the principals were “somewhat hands-off.” The beginning teachers expressed a desire for more interaction with the principals, although they did not perceive the infrequent contact as a lack of support. Quite the opposite, the infrequent contact met the beginning teachers’ expectations and was, in fact, often described as a sign of trust or support.

The beginning teachers offered reasons for the limited contact and unflinchingly accepted that it was incumbent on them to seek other avenues for support when the principal was unavailable. They said that the principal was “incredibly busy,” that the principal was “respectful,” and that the principal trusted that they “knew what to do and how to do it.” Thus, even the limited contact was perceived at times as supportive.

Christie: So, that, I think, tells me that I’m an effective teacher and her, um, we have two...other first year... teachers, one in fourth [grade] and one in third, and they always have help in their class because they need help and I don’t. So that tells me, “Okay she thinks I’m, I don’t need that much help.” I do get some every day, thank God, now, um, help to come in a pull some of my kids. But before that I didn’t get any help. Before. And I asked her before. I could use some. And she told me, “You’re doing fine, I’ve seen you, your, your class is where it should be, so when we have extra help then we’ll go ahead but right now you don’t need it.” So that, that tells me hopefully that I’m doing.

Hannah: I guess the way I, I was just saying to myself, well, no, you can’t expect, you know, Irma to come in here and spend half the day with you. You know, which is what would’ve, in a perfect world, I guess, as you’re saying that would’ve been great, you know...but I can also recognize myself as one teacher in the whole school. You know and my class is one class in the whole school. As far as accessibility, whenever she’s here, she’s here. I can go by during my planning period and almost always get in and talk to her, if I need to talk to her about something. I wish she didn’t, and I think she probably wishes, too, that she didn’t have to be gone as much as she is....There have been a couple of times that I just

need quick things and I could go right by her office and ask her. And it's been great and she's been very open. Um, if I needed something big, I'm sure I could e-mail her and schedule a time to come and talk to her about it. But I guess I've just felt throughout the year that she's so busy with everything else that I've looked for other avenues.

In addition to being accessible, the teachers perceived their principals to be approachable and open. They were comfortable talking with principals about needs, concerns, or even mistakes.

Hannah: I feel like that if I make a mistake, I can go to her and I can say, "Oh, I dropped the ball on this, what should I do?" And it's okay, I feel comfortable with it. Which is really important for me thing, because I don't really readily admit to making big mistakes. Because I'll be worried that like, oh, this person I respect will think bad of me, you know, I, I, um, feel comfortable with that.

Appreciation and recognition from the principal were significant sources of support. Overt praise and acknowledgement of their efforts were supportive. The expressions of appreciation or recognition clarified for the beginning teachers the principals' opinions or expectations.

Hannah: I hope I don't change my mind about this later. (Laughter) But I feel like that she's been so supportive all year and has let me know that. Like some people can be supportive of you, but they don't really express that to you so you don't really know. But she's expressed it and has been very supportive throughout the year. Irma nominating me for the New Teacher Award, was, I don't know...I probably don't even realize how much that helped throughout the year. Just knowing that she thought I was doing a good job, enough to...nominate [me], because it was a really big honor. That really, whenever I felt like things were really bad, or I didn't know what I was doing, at least knowing that Irma had that opinion and expectation for me, made me kind of keep going, like, okay, well, I'll figure out some way I can get through this. At least figure out some sort of solution to whatever problem I was having. It's really good to feel appreciated, and at least to know that other people know how hard you are working.

It was important for the beginning teachers to feel that the principal believed they were doing a good job. This confidence or trust in their effectiveness was a significant source of support that was demonstrated in a number of ways. Christie understood that the principal thought she was an effective teacher because the principal sent observers to her class.

Christie: She's had three soon-to-be bilingual teachers come to observe my class. That tells me, "Okay, maybe I'm doing right for her to send other people to observe me."...So, that, I think, tells me that I'm an effective teacher....She thinks I'm an effective teacher.

The first year teachers valued the principals' knowledge and experience as bilingual educators. As first year bilingual teachers, it was particularly important to the beginning teachers that the principal was knowledgeable about bilingual teaching and supportive of bilingual education. Hannah said, "The principal and the curriculum specialist are both helpful because they have both been bilingual teachers...and really, really supportive of bilingual education and all those bilingual questions that have come up."

The three principals also referred to a variety of strategies that they deemed supportive such as (a) writing positive notes to teachers, (b) providing clear procedural information in a handbook, (c) making more frequent walkthrough observations for beginning teachers, (d) scheduling team planning meetings, (e) meeting with individual teachers to discuss problems or student performance, (f) sending curriculum specialists to the classroom, and (g) being available to talk to teachers or answer questions.

However, knowing whom to ask, what to ask about, or when to ask was not always as clear to the beginning teachers. Principal Mary described herself as receptive to such questions and wondered why the beginning teachers did not ask more frequently. Principal Linda commented that Christie was doing well and, as a result, she had to try hard to remember to visit her room and give her feedback.

Mary: I like it when new teachers, or any teacher, has enough confidence to say, "That's not enough. I need more." Because what I've found happening, what my perception is, that we are offering the help, it's here, if they want it. Why didn't you ask? We didn't know. And their perception is, that's all I can expect. That's what's reasonable.

Support From Family and Friends Outside of the School System

In addition to the support and professional development provided by the school or school system, the beginning teachers all regarded the emotional support that they received from their peers in the training program and from their families and friends as vital to their survival. All three of the beginning teachers mentioned the ongoing communication with the members of their alternative certification program cohort as a source of support. Additionally, all of the beginning teachers spoke eloquently to the support found outside of the profession in relationships with families or friends.

The cohort group. During the summer training, the beginning teachers each made friends with other interns from their cohort group in the alternative certification program. They continued to attend classes throughout the first year of teaching and developed networks of colleagues on whom they would call for help, emotional support, or suggestions. They maintained and relied on a Web message board and e-mail system for help throughout the first teaching year. The teachers

also formed study groups to help them through exams. The beginning teachers also referred to an electronic bulletin board through which they kept in contact with other members of the alternative certification program cohort. They frequently asked questions of other members of the cohort.

The first year teachers said that the other members of the cohort group were helpful to them for various reasons. For example, they reported that it was helpful to have someone to call who did not work at the same school and thus could offer a different perspective. Also, it seemed important that among members of the cohort group, they found “kindred spirits”; the other first year teachers were philosophically aligned with the participants.

Christie: Seeing them on a Wednesday or a Saturday and talking to teachers from other schools and knowing they’re going through the same thing over there....And we will still keep up with our Web message board even though our classes are over. Actually, recently, I just sent a question out. I was like, “Somebody help.” I have a couple of people from there [alternative certification program cohort] that I talk to still... So I have that support from them as well.

I think I feel supported because of course, we don’t agree on everything, my team and I or my principal and I, or curriculum specialist or whatever it may be. And I feel more comfortable talking to my cohort because they’re not in this school. And they know it’s not only what I say is what’s going on, but they still have that support: “Okay, well, okay, maybe you should try doing this or maybe you should try doing that,” and them just being apart or away from this and not knowing exactly what’s going on gives me a different point of view. So I think having them helps me a lot. Um, especially also with knowing how they’re teaching other things that I might not get to yet, and they already did it and my team’s not doing it because they’re not there yet. So having them and they’re already going through it or whatever it may be, um, that helps.

Hannah: We still have our message board up on our Web site and I check that pretty regularly and I just posted an article on it. Is good because it’s such a good group of bilingual educators, that here at this school, we have some bilingual teachers but it’s not a group of bilingual, like really pro bilingual, like also as a political statement, you know. But we need support and we

should be actively involved in these issues... concerned about bilingual education [and] concerned with the whole political issue of justice and rights... Like, having those connections and being able to call people to talk about those issues, too. Does that make sense?

Marco: The idea was to create a little group of people and in which we could continue meeting... So the very end we formed this wonderful group... and we talked about continue, you know, in the next few months. Getting together and talking and doing things, you know, that would be in enriching, things like that.

Friends and families. All of the first year teachers shared the importance of the support and contributions from their families and personal friends in sustaining them during their first year of teaching. Spouses, children, and good friends listened to problems and worries and offered valuable perspective to the beginning teachers.

Marco: The wife, I talk a lot with the wife about every day about my kids. My 12-year-old son... because he is a little bit close to understand my kids, I talk a lot him about that. So I want to form a little group, um. See, I don't have that many alternatives other than talking informally. And yet especially my wife, she is there as we talk to one for an hour every day, work things.

Hannah: Yeah, I don't know. I was so overwhelmed most, I thought that, well, like a lot of my friends, you know, come from similar backgrounds that I do, you know, when I'd be talking about how upset or nervous I was, they'd be like "Well, that's okay, Hannah, I mean fourth grade, I don't even remember." You know? And they'd very much have this feeling of like, it's okay.

Research Focus 3: The Experiences of the Participants

The third area of focus for this study was the first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers' experiences in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. Two salient themes emerged from the data as experiences of the beginning teachers: (a) They felt a strong personal sense of calling to be a teacher

and dedication to students, and (b) the home and family lives of the students served as both a source of challenge and a source of reward.

The Sense of Calling

First, all of the beginning teachers expressed a strong personal sense of calling to be a teacher and dedication to their students. Each of the beginning teachers repeatedly referred to a deep sense of empathy for the students and spoke of being energized and sustained by his or her students' success or progress. The beginning teachers were passionate about caring, their ability to help their students, and being a role model for their students.

Teaching was not the first career for any of the three beginning teachers. They all came to teaching from other careers where they were successful but lacked a sense of fulfillment. Thus, they shared an opinion that teaching was important and rewarding. Each spoke powerfully of a compelling sense of mission or calling to serve the students. Further, each of the beginning teachers was emphatic about fulfillment—feeling sustained or energized by the students' progress.

All three of the beginning teachers unhesitatingly stated that it was the students that kept them going when the work was most challenging. Hannah dynamically articulated her commitment to the profession and the children.

Hannah: Definitely, I want to do it right. Definitely, that's why I want to become a teacher. 'Cause I feel it's something very powerful. I think it's something that—I believe a lot in equality, you know, especially for Spanish-speaking kids. I believe a lot in how it's important to be bilingual and how being bilingual can be such an asset to these children. Yeah, I feel like

being a teacher is a very powerful position, but I feel like the frustrating part of that is that it's just really hard. (Laughs)...I got into teaching for a lot of idealistic reasons. And it's hard to not quite do it right all the time.

Marco often spoke about the importance of teaching in global terms.

Marco was passionate about his ability to serve as an appropriate role model for his students. Because he was raised in poor circumstances but became an educated person, he had great empathy and tremendous drive to communicate to his students the value of education. He believed that he was able to provide not only the opportunity for education but also the model of an educated person.

Marco: The word is replenishing. Because I'm able to really, you know, you know, wow, I'm making a positive. I like the word *replenishing*. Some German environmentalists use it a lot....I have a collection called the *Dictionary of Development*, in which they go all over the world in which they go all over the world and look at the, we have passed a point of so much deterioration in the world, that we can't go to a replenishing point of replenishing in a positive sense. So the word replenishing is good. And teaching is replenishing for me. Because I pick up all my background and I'm able to synthesize in something productive.

Similarly, Christie recounted her story of immigrating to the United States and being immersed in an education system that did not value her native language. She spoke passionately about her desire to help her students make the transition to English based on her unpleasant transition experiences in school.

Christie: And I talk to them about my parents and how they crossed over the river illegally. Because they have family, maybe their parents, some of their parents. And, at first they were like, "We can't talk about that." But after I told them, you know, that's where I'm from, so we can talk about it. If you feel bad because they sent your uncle back to Mexico, you can come talk to me, I won't tell anyone. I think that's good, I made a connection with them regarding that. It puts them at ease, I think.

Sure. Um, My parents took us to Mexico when I was about four, and we didn't come back to the U.S. until I was starting second grade. So, I didn't really learn any English. I knew a couple of words because of my older sister, but it wasn't, it was never spoken at home. So when we came

to the U.S., in El Paso, mind you, border town, um, my mom signed me up for a bilingual class and it was more of a sink-or-swim situation. And I would always stay after school, and I failed, and I was terrified. I wouldn't speak. You know. It was just horrible for me. And I hated school. I hated school until I got to the seventh grade. When I could finally, you know, talk to the kids. Of course, I learned the English, because I couldn't survive if I didn't, but that's why I got into bilingual education, because I don't want these kids to go through that. To have no one to turn to and say, "I don't understand, tell me in another language." And I had to go through that. So, that's why I want these kids to be ready for middle school and no bilingual classes.

Yes. Me and my little sister are the first generation in the U.S. to get college degrees. Yes. My mom was unbelievably proud. And it's great. I mean, telling these kids, telling them, if I did, it took me 10 years to graduate from college, but I did it and you guys can. And they see that now....But I don't know, when I came here and started working at graphic design, it wasn't at all what I expected. And I always had teaching in the back of my mind.

Unlike Marco and Christie, Hannah was raised in the United States. She did not learn to speak Spanish until she was in college, but she learned to love the language while studying in Central America. Moreover, Hannah learned to feel comfortable speaking Spanish. Overcoming her discomfort with the Spanish language became, for Hannah, a foundation for her strong sense of empathy with the students.

Hannah: My family has a White, middle-class, academic background, kind of, education was always really valued. My dad's a teacher, or ended up teaching. Um, but never like with the Spanish, I didn't learn the Spanish until I was in college. I started taking in college because part of my major needed to have two years of a foreign language. So, I hated it. It was awful. Probably my worst grades in school were from Spanish, because it seems just kind of ridiculous to be learning Spanish in the middle of Iowa.

I really started liking the language a lot more, because I was able to use it more with the families. And I really loved the Costa Ricans that I met, and the family that I lived with. That sort of gave me a lot better feelings about it. I started liking myself in Spanish, which I think is a pretty big moment when you can go, "Oh, this is part of my self, I can express myself in Spanish."

I get worried a lot about, like, not, I would definitely never feel comfortable teaching a primary grade in Spanish because of modeling and fluency, which I think is really important especially for Spanish speakers when they are around so much English. So with these kids I've gone and forth, 'cause it's like, I'll mess up a word totally or I'll say something totally wrong. Or, like, some days I'll just know my accent is just horrible. You know, I have those back-and-forth days in Spanish, and I think I always will. And so, I feel bad sometimes, I feel kind of like cuckoo because I am like, "Oh, I should really, I wish my Spanish were better for these kids, so I could really totally model what it's like to be bilingual." But then the other side of that is that I think it is good for them to be able to see that it's okay that you have an accent and its okay if you make a mistake. And you know, your personality comes a lot through your language, too, even if you're not expressing yourself completely well in the other language, as long as you...are trying...you know, and I think that's been good for them, though I've gone back and forth on those two.

Challenges Related to the Students' Home Lives and Families

Participants cited the home and family lives of the students, given the particular circumstance of poverty and a home language other than English, both as a source of challenge and as a source of reward. Indeed, many of the challenges experienced or needs related by the beginning teachers were specific to the bilingual curriculum and pedagogical skills required to instruct native speakers of a language other than English. Participants regularly referred to the high-stakes testing environment as a source of stress. However, they most often referred to learning the bilingual curriculum and specifically the pedagogical skills necessary for transitioning the students to English as causing distress or confusion for the beginning teachers.

The beginning teachers and their mentors spoke poignantly about the home lives of their students. According to these beginning teachers, working in an

area of poverty and observing the disconnect between the lives of their students and their own everyday reality was challenging. When speaking of these difficulties, the teachers did not fail to attach their expressions of the rewards they received from working with their students. Christie and Hector gave examples of their experiences with the families of the student population.

Hector: That's what always happens in here. This is one of the poorest areas in [Texas]. Not only that, there's domestic violence and a lack of stability with the parents....Stepfather and mother.

Christie: Orphans. Men in and out.

Hector: These are pros and there are cons to that. You see that they are improving, you say, "This is good. This is great." But the year is too long. There's moments that you say, when I say, "I'm sick of teaching this area." I say it because there are some times when you are frustrated because you would like to talk to a parent and when they come here and you talk to them you say, "How am I going to say this to this mom or this dad?" They are drinking beer when I'm talking to them. They don't know how to read.

Christie: But, I think, they feel safe and secure here at school, so I think they, they, they try hard to please at least somebody, and I think if they get what recognition, I think, it helps them a lot. So, yeah, it makes it a little harder, but I think that they try a little more to, to please us. Because they do get praise here at school, or they are important here at school.

Marco: One of the very, the most important challenges I, I've come across in the population that we teach is the fact that the kids don't really read that much at home. I've already noticed that so you have to go to the extra mile to get them to read whatever you send home. make sure that you double check in the morning to make sure that they are reading. I have newspapers distributed to all my leaders of the class. I have leaders of the class in which they take the newspapers home and I go and encourage, "Go and read with your parents" and things like that. So that has been a great challenge for me to make sure that this process goes on and they read more and more, you know, for understanding.

Kim: I know. I have to work very hard on, you know, my middle-class values sometimes. I don't want to go down to the level, but sometimes I have to realize that these children's goals are not within my scope of what I see goals as being. And you have to be very careful, you don't want to say

“You don’t want to grow up and work in McDonalds,” you don’t want to say that—their parents are happy to have a job at McDonalds. And that’s okay, it’s good hard work, but had they been better educated, maybe they could be managing McDonalds. So. It is hard, because if you get that kind of limited view from your parents, most of them aren’t going see...

Hannah: Um, I was expecting kind of similar backgrounds, but these kids, I was surprised that a lot of them are born in the United States. I was surprised that a lot of them, um, I was really surprised at the amount of, actually, English, oral English, that many of them had. I was expecting, um, because I knew that their third-grade teacher did most of the instruction in Spanish, so I was expecting their oral English not to be that, not to be very high. But even from the first day I was surprised, I was like, “Oh, a lot of these kids are very fluent in English.” I guess just from coming up through school system. I mean, it’s a bilingual education program; they had been having ESL since pre-K. Their families are really great. I think I kind of was expecting that knowing about Hispanic culture and knowing, you know, that education is a big value. Moms working like until 11:00 at night, but they're really try to make an effort with their kids and getting homework done and stuff.

Marco came from a poor, migrant family in South America. He was one of four children raised by a single mother. Marco was passionate about his ability to serve as an educated, male, Hispanic role model for his students. He believed he represented the opportunities that education provided for his students. Marco, a devoted father himself, was struck by the family situations in which his students lived. He reported that many of his students were from single-parent homes or had fathers who had been married more than once. Many of his students lived with stepsiblings and multiple stepparents.

Marco: But the point is that no male role models, because of the population we have. Unfortunately the Hispano man...is not a good role model. Okay? It's not a good role model. You have a multiplicity of wives system, if I may. I know that from my own cultural background. Things that I have come across, like my mother was a single mother of four. These kids need role models. They need some sort of intellectual stimulus....Because I’m dedicating, putting my heart into what I’m doing. This is very important for me for many reasons. This is part of my history, being, you know, son

of a migrant family....I was son of a migrant family of four....I'm putting my heart in everything I do.

The Hispano family structure is based on the man first. The man is the center core of it. So, for instance, my wife and I are St. Vincent DePaul volunteers, and we visit the families, every single time we visit the families, the man is never there. Because of the shame...the man has...of asking for help. The woman has to be the one to ask for the help. Things like that. The cultural placement of Latin family that is very important to observe and, you know, see and things like that.

Finally, in addition to the challenges presented by the conditions of poverty, many of the students' parents were unable to help the students with homework or support their academic efforts because they themselves were illiterate. Hannah expressed a sense of the awesome responsibility that she, as a teacher, experienced upon realizing that the families were unable to provide either the material support or the academic support that the students need.

Hannah: But, you know, like, these kids, they can't do that because they never get it at home, like, or they don't get the extra. I mean some of them do. That's a blanket statement that's not true. You know, whatever, maybe half of my class, you know, their moms can't write or can't read. You know, they're just not going to get a lot of the stuff that I can do for them here at school. So, it's like, kind of like (gasps), it's all me! I have to do it here at school! And I have all these great things that I can do. And I have closets full of stuff. But somehow I have to pull all that together. And I can't mess it up because really does matter. But I don't know how know to get past that feeling.

Summary

This chapter introduced the participants and described the findings of the study related to the three areas of focus. In the first area of focus, the needs that emerged from the interviews were discussed. Most salient among those needs were (a) the need for recognition and appreciation, (b) the need for self-confidence, (c) the need for professional autonomy, (d) the need for personal and

collegial support, (e) the need for technical information about school operations or curriculum, (f) preparation and preservice professional development needs, (g) inservice professional development needs, and (h) the need to manage time and stress.

The second focus of this study centered on the strategies identified that best meet the needs of the beginning teachers, including how and from whom the teachers perceive these needs to be best met. Commonly employed strategies provided support and helped the beginning teachers to satisfy their needs (a) employing personal background experience, (b) applying inservice professional development, and (c) engaging in reflective practice. Human sources of support emerged from the data: (a) the teacher's mentor, (b) other teachers at the school, (c) other school staff, (d) principal and administrators, and (e) family and friends outside of the school system.

In the third area of focus, two other issues emerged as the experiences of the participants. The teachers' personal sense of calling to be a teacher including their dedication to the students, and the challenges of working with English language learner students from poverty were discussed,

The next chapter presents a summary of the research. Then, a summary of the findings and the conclusions are presented. Finally, recommendations for practice, recommendations for further research, and final thoughts are offered.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 of this study is divided into three main parts. The first section provides an overview of the research study and the three areas of focus that it explored. The second section presents a summary of the findings of the study. The third section includes the conclusions of the study, the implications, and the recommendations for practice and for future research.

Summary of the Research and Emergent Themes

This study explored the experiences of three, first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. This study had three areas of focus:

1. This study described the perceived growth needs of the beginning teachers, expressly the perceived needs for support and professional growth.
2. This study focused on the identified strategies and the sources that best met those needs.
3. This study documented the experiences of the three, first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools.

The Context of the Study

Alternatively certified bilingual teachers are most likely to begin their careers in urban elementary schools with large numbers of economically disadvantaged students who are English language learners. Texas school systems have large numbers of Spanish-speaking students who are English language learners. As a result, Texas, like several other states, has a critical shortage of certified bilingual teachers. Increasing student populations coupled with class size reduction initiatives in a number of states—including Texas—require school districts to employ even more teachers. Low pay, lack of respect, and high-stakes testing and accountability systems are further disincentives for teachers.

The teacher shortage and subsequent teacher turnover situation is worsened in high-poverty, urban areas. Because teachers in urban areas are substantially less likely to stay in their positions, urban schools with more than 50% of the student body economically disadvantaged have the highest teacher turnover rate (Ingersoll, 2001). Thus, the teacher shortage and high rate of turnover has a devastating effect on high-poverty, urban schools and on students who most need quality teachers (Jones & Sandidge, 1997). Thus, teacher shortages in urban, impoverished, minority, or low-achieving schools widen the academic divide. Students of color are the most likely to be placed in classrooms with the least experienced, least qualified teachers, even though it is well proven that effective teachers can make a difference for these children and thus reduce the academic achievement gap (Berry, 2001).

This high turnover rate in a time of a shortage of qualified bilingual teachers willing to work in high-poverty, urban areas is even further complicated by the No Child Left Behind legislation requiring that teachers of core academic subjects be “highly qualified” in schools receiving Title I funds because they are in high-poverty areas. Teachers from such alternative certification programs are considered “highly qualified” and meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (USDE, 2002). Because the shortage of teachers is greatest in urban, impoverished, minority schools, those schools have a higher percentage of alternatively certified teachers (Feistritz & Chester, 2001). The schools selected for this study had high numbers of economically disadvantaged, Hispanic students who were native speakers of Spanish and learning English as a second language.

The teachers participating in this study were from an alternative certification program. The beginning teachers had completed some preliminary training including two weeks of fieldwork and began teaching in August. During this first year of teaching, also called an internship, each teacher was fully responsible for a fourth-grade bilingual class. The coursework continued during the year, in the evenings, and on Saturdays. Each teacher also was assigned a mentor teacher who taught the same grade level.

Because the alternative certification programs are faster, usually completed within a year, and the coursework is necessarily expedited, increased support is likely required during the training year on the job. Additionally, recent research indicates that principals perceive alternatively certified teachers to have

different levels of capacity than traditionally certified teachers. Consequently, the research suggests that alternatively certified teachers require more guidance in instruction and that principals give more formalized feedback to alternatively certified teachers (Ovando & Trube, 2000). This support is extremely important in the success of the new teachers, and, consequently, of the students and the schools.

While many urban schools are compelled to hire alternatively certified teachers who meet the criteria of “highly qualified,” emerging research substantiates the impact of quality teachers on student achievement. A growing body of research asserts that teacher quality is the most important factor in student achievement and challenges long-held notions that teacher preparation programs or student demographics drive student performance (Schmoker, 2002).

The effectiveness of the teacher in the high-poverty urban setting is critical.

For children and youth in poverty from diverse cultural backgrounds who attend urban schools, having effective teachers is a matter of life and death. These children have no life options for achieving decent lives other than by experiencing success in school. (Haberman, 1995, p. 2)

However, the success or failure of the new, alternatively certified teachers depends substantially on what happens at school, particularly during the first induction year. According to Allington and Cunningham (1996, p. 240), “When new teachers, especially inexperienced teachers, arrive at a school, they adopt the prevailing belief system and join the dominant culture.” Moreover, according to Carver, Feiman, Schwille, and Yusko (1999, cited in Scherer, 2003), new teachers

are expected to rely on their personal backgrounds and resources during their first year and are expected to be effective from the first day.

While some research has identified the support and professional growth needs of teachers, limited research has focused specifically on the needs of alternatively certified teachers who have not been through a traditional preparation program. This study sought to illuminate the support needs of the first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. This study was a case study of the interactions of nine participants: three triads of first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers; their principals; and their mentor teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. The methodology consisted of group interviews with each triad; in-depth, individual interviews of the new teachers; and observations.

Summary of the Findings

In order to create successful induction programs in urban schools that ensure conditions in which the new alternatively certified teachers can thrive and produce high-quality instructional programs, it is important to understand the needs of new, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers. In general, it was very difficult to separate the beginning teachers' needs from the identified strategies, as the two are interwoven very tightly. Moreover, the participants in this study did not directly or clearly articulate their needs with great frequency. Interestingly, the needs more often surfaced in the conversations about what behaviors or

activities the beginning teachers deemed satisfying or useful and what activities were deemed frustrating, useless, or a waste of time.

Many of the needs articulated by the new teachers in this study called to mind the literature since the 1970s addressing the needs of all new teachers. The unique needs and challenges of these participants from the alternative certification program, as distinguished from the needs of new teachers from a traditional certification program, were identifiable in the interviews. Interestingly, however, those unique needs and challenges, due to the difference in the preparation program, were not the most striking. On the contrary, the needs and challenges stemming from the high-stakes testing and high-poverty, bilingual setting were prominent in all of the interviews with the nine teachers, mentors, and principals.

Support and Professional Growth Needs of New Teachers

This study described the perceived support and professional growth needs of the three beginning teachers. The beginning teachers articulated needs that were both technical and emotional and that were mediated somewhat based on the individual teacher's background experiences and personality. Participants expressed some commonly held professional growth needs. Most salient among those needs follow.

1. Each beginning teacher expressed a need for recognition, appreciation, or to feel valued. Recognition was perceived as encouraging, even when it was directed at other staff members.

2. All three of the beginning teachers spoke to periods of self-doubt or lack of confidence and a consequent need for affirmation and support.
3. In spite of occasionally questioning themselves, the beginning teachers reported a need for autonomy. Professional autonomy and being able to handle the demands of the job alone was very important and was considered to be a professional norm.
4. Personal and collegial support in the form of guiding and supportive relationships was essential.
5. Technical information about school operations or curriculum was needed. Bilingual curricula and materials were especially problematic for the beginning teachers.
6. Preparation and preservice professional development was mostly adequate, but they needed more field experiences before having their own classrooms and more explicit instruction relevant to their grade level and subject.
7. Inservice professional development that was immediately applicable their teaching assignments was needed.
8. The need to manage time and stress was evidenced by feeling unprepared and by being tired, overwhelmed, drained, frustrated, and stressed.

Strategies and Sources Identified to Meet the Needs

The second focus of this study centered on the strategies identified that best met the needs of the beginning teachers, including how and from whom the teachers perceived these needs to be best met. Commonly employed strategies provided support and helped the beginning teachers to satisfy their growth and professional development needs. The following strategies and sources of support emerged from the data.

1. Personal background experiences were employed to meet the demands of the teaching position.
2. Inservice professional development learning that was directly and immediately applicable to the classroom was useful.
3. Engaging in reflective practice promoted professional growth.
4. School staff members were found to be sources of support, such as the mentor, the principal, curriculum specialists, grade-level teams, other teachers, secretaries, and custodians.
5. Sources of support also were found outside of the school system, such as the Alternative Certification Program cohort group and families and friends.

The Experiences of the Participants

The third area of focus for this study was the experiences of the new, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools. Two themes emerged from the data.

First, the beginning teachers expressed a strong personal sense of calling to be a teacher and dedication to their students. The beginning teachers were passionate about caring, their ability to help their students, and being a role model for their students. Each of the beginning teachers repeatedly referred to a deep sense of caring and empathy for the students and spoke to being energized and sustained by their students' success or progress.

Second, the home or family lives of the students served, given the particular circumstance of poverty and a home language other than English, were cited both as a source of challenge and as a source of reward. Participants most often referred to learning the bilingual curriculum and the pedagogical skills necessary for transitioning the students to English as causing distress or confusion for the new teachers. Correspondingly, the high-stakes testing environment was also a closely related and often-cited source of stress.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from these data. Overall, these data suggest that the first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools experience several support and growth needs and multiple sources of support. In addition, they were found to have a strong sense of calling and to be both challenged and rewarded by the home lives of the students.

The high rate of teacher turnover and the inability of traditional, university-based teacher preparation programs to produce sufficient numbers of bilingual teachers to fill vacancies in high-poverty, urban schools have produced many varied teacher preparation programs. As principals struggle to find highly qualified teachers for bilingual classrooms, more new teachers enter the profession from alternative certification programs with widely varying preservice preparation. Further, the effectiveness of the support provided depends on the interplay of a number of factors.

Support and Professional Growth Needs

The support and professional growth needs of first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers parallel the needs of other new teachers described by prior research. For example, prior research has documented similar needs of new teachers in other situations:

1. Praise, recognition, or appreciation (Blase & Kirby, 2000);
2. Self-confidence and psychological support (Gold, 1999);
3. Autonomy (Kauffman et al., 2002; Schmoker, 2002);
4. Personal and collegial support (Gold, 1999; Odell, 1986; Odell & Ferraro, 1992);
5. Technical information about curriculum and resources (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Dollase, 1992; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Kauffman et al., 2002; Odell, 1986; Ryan, 1970);
6. Preservice training (Blair, 2003);

7. Inservice professional development (DeBolt, 1992; Sparks, 2000); and
8. Time and stress management (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Freiberg, 2002; Johnson & Montemayor, 1991).

Limited preservice training and, especially, limited field experiences may intensify the support and professional growth needs of new alternatively certified bilingual teachers. While the needs of the participants were similar to those found in the literature, the unique situation of the participants brought into play some factors that altered the participants' support and professional growth needs. For example, limited preservice training did not adequately prepare them to present the fourth-grade curricula, to manage issues specific to bilingual education such as transitioning students to English, or to prepare linguistically diverse students for high-stakes testing. This limited preservice training and, specifically, the limited field experiences with bilingual curriculum and materials specific to their grade-level assignment regularly caused teachers great stress; cost them extra time planning, translating and previewing lessons; and weakened their self confidence.

Alternatively certified teachers may need more or different inservice training and support that is focused on their assignment and the context in which they are teaching. Teachers in high-poverty, urban schools have different challenges than those in suburban, high-performing schools. Moreover, bilingual teachers have the added challenge of instruction in two languages. Logically, preservice and inservice professional development needs also may be different. Curricula and resource management may be different. Interestingly, the

participants called for the most help with bilingual pedagogy, instructional issues, and resources.

Teachers in fast-moving alternative certification programs may benefit from additional support in the form of reduced responsibilities at work or extended time to complete assignments in order to make the most of inservice training. They need to understand how the information presented is immediately useful to them. Also, they need time to try new techniques and time to reflect about information presented before they can process any new information. In addition to their regular teaching duties, the teachers typically attend classes during the school year and also may be required to tutor outside of the regular school day.

Additionally, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty elementary schools may linger in the survival period for a substantially longer period of time than generally anticipated. The enhanced professional growth and support needs—such as the need for personal and collegial support, the need for technical information, and the need to manage time and stress—reflect the survival stage of teacher development and are characterized by high stress and self-doubt (Katz, 1972; Moir, 1990). True to the notion of survival, teachers in challenging situations may respond to the overwhelming stress and workload by focusing on daily needs and requirements.

Strategies and Sources of Support

The struggles of the participants are indicative of the overwhelming fatigue, stress, and financial worries that cause many new teachers in high-poverty, urban schools to struggle to survive or to leave the profession. Therefore, to optimize teacher effectiveness and retention, both preservice training and induction year support may have to be somewhat customized to the individual and the circumstance of the teaching assignment.

Strategies such as employing personal background experiences, applying professional development learning, and engaging in reflective practice are effective for alternatively certified teachers. Alternative certification programs are known for capitalizing on candidates' background experiences. For example, where teacher shortages are severe, nontraditional certification programs are developed to fill a specific need. Such is the case when beginning teachers are accepted in an alternative certification program specifically because of their bilingualism, maturity, and accumulated work experience (Stoddart & Floden, 1995).

And, to some extent, the personal and professional background experiences that teachers employ also determine the usefulness/effectiveness of their professional development experiences. Thus, professional development designed with consideration for applicable personal background experiences, academic training, and work experiences may be more beneficial for beginning teachers from alternative certification programs.

Mentors are a significant source of support for first year, alternatively certified teachers. Some criteria that contribute to a mentor's effectiveness such as proximity, similarity of grade/assignment, and teaching experience (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999) have been identified. However, the effectiveness of the mentor support is also somewhat dependent on the mentor-mentee relationship. Therefore, it may be necessary to consider carefully selection of the mentor, facilitate the mentor-mentee relationship, and ensure the mentor's availability.

Beginning teachers from alternative certification programs may require more support than that which is currently available from principals in challenging high-poverty, urban schools. Several principal behaviors are perceived as supportive such as visibility, praise, and feedback (Blase & Blase, 1998; Ovando & Trube, 2000).

First year, alternatively certified bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools may benefit from a school infrastructure designed to provide sustained collaboration and collegial interaction. Even though the principal and the teacher's mentor are important sources of support, support for alternatively certified teachers may come from the entire school community rather than from single identified mentors. Like the principal and the teacher's mentor, the curriculum coach, other teachers, and other school staff members are in a position to offer support.

As indicated in the literature, support for new teachers is better designed to come from the entire school community rather than from single identified

mentors. Multiple mentors or collaborative support systems can reduce the negative effects of strong needs of new teachers for emotional support and teacher isolation; improve teacher performance; and increase teacher satisfaction and retention (Ax et al., 2001; Billingsley, 1993; Boyer & Gillespie, 2000; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Hope, 1999). Moreover, this supports earlier research that indicates the collaborative culture meets the needs of teachers in matters of curriculum and instruction and leads to greater alignment between standards and goals for improved teaching and learning and consequent higher student achievement (Schmoker, 2002; Smith & Scott, 1990).

Experiences in High-Poverty, Urban Schools

A sense of calling may be a driving force of alternatively certified teachers to enter the profession. Alternatively certified teachers who enter teaching after experiencing a lack of fulfillment in another career may feel a strong sense of reward, commitment to the students, and/or dedication to the profession.

Given the increased stress and workload associated with the student demographics, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty schools may require a great deal of additional support than is currently offered. A number of social factors associated with poverty and cultural and linguistic differences of the student population make the bilingual classrooms even more challenging than most. Poverty is, for example, associated with less access to formal learning, fewer resources, greater health problems, and greater incidence of developmental delays (Garcia, 2001).

Implications

Alternatively certified bilingual teachers are most likely to begin their careers in high-poverty, urban schools with large numbers of English language learners. Although alternative certification programs consider the first year of teaching an internship, first year teachers are responsible and expected to be effective from the first day. Providing adequate support and meaningful training can ameliorate the intense needs of the new teachers and ensure effective teaching and successful implementation of the instructional program in the school.

Despite their strong sense of calling and the support structures in place, the first year teachers in this study felt high stress and lingered in survival mode—strong needs persisted in spite of support they experienced. Many factors—personal, situational, organizational, and social—contributed to the complex problem of providing sufficient support for these new, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty schools. Alternatively certified bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools may require more or different kinds of support than is traditionally offered.

In order to optimize teacher effectiveness and retention, both preservice training and induction year support may have to be somewhat customized to the individual and the circumstance of the teaching assignment. Thus, to design meaningful professional development for beginning teachers from alternative certification programs, consideration might be given to the individual's applicable

personal background experiences, academic training, and work experiences as well as to the setting in which the teacher is working.

First year, alternatively certified bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools may benefit from more focused support from the principal, a quality mentor, and a school infrastructure designed to provide sustained collaboration and collegial interaction. Given the increased stress and workload associated with the student demographics, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty schools may require a great deal of additional support to produce required student achievement gains.

In many ways, the strong needs of first year, alternatively certified teachers and the support that they experience act as opposing forces. The overwhelming needs inhibit growth, while the support boosts the teacher's successful entry into the profession. Just as the Space Shuttle's propulsion system has to have enough power to lift its 4.5-million-pound structure off the ground, the propulsion system of support strategies and sources has to provide enough power to propel the classroom teacher past the many obstacles to effectiveness. Complex support and professional growth needs complicated by the social and environmental factors of poverty and languages of instruction can weigh down the teachers and create problems with the teaching assignment. A multiplicity of support strategies and sources can provide sufficient power for lift-off.

Recommendations for Practice

More teachers are increasingly entering the profession from alternative certification programs with widely varying preparation. This study indicates that alternatively certified teachers may have complex support and professional growth needs and may require more or different support during their first year. Practitioners and policymakers are charged with finding, developing, and retaining effective teachers. The future for English language learners in high-poverty, urban schools depends on the decisions that are made to ensure the teachers' effectiveness.

Recommendations for Principals

This study suggests that urban school districts should take steps to better understand and better address the support needs of first year, bilingual teachers from alternative certification programs. The experiences of the first year, alternatively certified teachers in this study indicate that the schools and the beginning teachers were under a lot of pressure to meet students' needs and deliver test scores. In developing induction support programs that sustain teachers and improve their effectiveness with economically disadvantaged English language learners, then, practitioners must take into consideration the interaction of the complex personal, social, cultural, and environmental factors at play.

Principals should consider both the school situation and the teacher characteristics that are predictors of effective performance when making hiring decisions. Too often, beginning bilingual teachers with varying degrees of

preparation are placed in challenging situations where the greatest need exists (high-poverty, urban elementary schools) and, without effective support systems, the teachers fail or leave, creating constant turnover.

Principals can anticipate some of the beginning teachers' needs and can create structures to provide support and collegial interaction. For example, the school can be organized to provide orientation meetings, access to resources, praise, encouragement, constructive feedback, advice, and curriculum guidance to all new teachers. Moreover, the school leadership can be organized to be responsive to the individual needs of new teachers by purposefully engaging teachers in a culture that invites them to ask questions, makes them feel welcomed, and provides emotional support. The alternatively certified teachers may need to be reassured on a fairly regular basis that everything will be all right.

Developing the capacity of alternatively certified teachers who effectively can serve the needs of the students, teachers, schools, and community may require ongoing encouragement and support from mentorship, leadership, and a collaborative professional culture. For example, alternatively certified teachers need ready access to campus-level support to fill gaps in their knowledge of curricula and pedagogical skills for instruction and assessment. The teachers of English language learners need clear understanding of pedagogy for linguistic differences (including when and how to transition students to English). They also need culturally responsive pedagogy to enhance their skills in working with

students who bring both rich cultural heritage and challenges of the adversity faced at home.

Recommendations for Alternative Certification Programs

Alternative certification programs are in a position to provide structures and support to ameliorate some of the problems confronting the teachers they prepare. Thus, a successful preparation program should begin with careful selection of candidates who demonstrate the sense of calling and aspire to serve the needs of the students and the community. The sense of calling and caring for the children and their families sustains the teachers when working with students from diverse backgrounds.

Preservice training should include more field experiences that have the potential to provide beginning teachers with models of good instruction, exposure to the community they will be working with, and a realistic picture of what they are preparing to do. Information about specific curricula, materials, and students' needs would facilitate planning and delivering lessons.

Principals also should be informed about appropriate support or assistance for the new teachers in the different stages of teacher development, especially the survival stage. Alternative certification entities should collaborate with principals and districts to best prepare the teachers for the setting they will enter. For example, the alternative certification programs should collaborate with principals to facilitate the selection and training of the teacher's mentor and, perhaps, offer incentives to experienced teachers who would be good models. Also, informing

principals about the training the teachers receive through the alternative certification program would assist them in developing meaningful campus-based professional development for the new teachers. Preservice training should include understanding of local requirements, state curriculum mandates, and high-stakes testing requirements.

Recommendations for Districts and Policymakers

Given an existing need to increase teacher retention and, at the same time, to improve teacher effectiveness and student performance in high-poverty, urban elementary schools, it is incumbent on school districts and policymakers to ensure that beginning teachers have access to both quality preparation and high-quality, sustained professional growth that is tailored to meet the needs of the students, schools, and communities that they will serve. Therefore, guidelines and procedures should be developed for preparation and induction programs that provide alternatively certified teachers with the tools to be successful in diverse settings.

The findings of this study suggest that first year, alternatively certified, bilingual teachers in high-poverty, urban elementary schools need substantial support. Moreover, they receive most of their support during the induction year from campus sources. Therefore, as districts continue to hire new bilingual teachers from alternative certification programs, accommodations should be made to provide additional support at the campus level. Further, districts should establish collaborative arrangements for induction support and ongoing staff

development with universities, colleges, and other nontraditional teacher preparation programs.

Recommendations for Further Research

Although this study illuminated some of the growth needs of first year teachers from alternative certification programs, there is a need for further research to articulate the factors that relate specifically to the support needs of first year, bilingual teachers who have been prepared in a variety of nontraditional or alternative programs and who teach in challenging, high-poverty, urban classrooms.

Just as is the case with bilingual teachers, large numbers of alternatively certified mathematics, science, and special education teachers are entering the profession through diverse, nontraditional preparation programs. Because alternative routes to teacher certification are so diverse, further research is desirable to better enhance our understanding of first year teachers' needs.

Final Thoughts

Although the notion that a particular preparation program is essential to teacher effectiveness is seductive, it is unproven. High numbers of poor, Spanish-speaking students in urban schools urgently need teachers, and their teachers are likely to come from alternative certification programs. The teachers of these particular students must be effective with culturally and linguistically different students. Fourth-grade bilingual teachers in Texas are under a lot of pressure to

ensure that their students master a rigorous curriculum in Spanish while transitioning to English literacy.

The challenge of meeting the academic needs of students in two languages, teaching them pro-social behaviors, and getting them to pass the state-mandated tests is compounded by the adversity of poverty, linguistic differences, and cultural differences that are not always honored in the school system. The circumstances of the students' lives sometimes make the teachers' work difficult and emotionally draining. Moreover, these first year teachers continued to attend certification classes during their whole first year of teaching. Additionally, the aggregated stresses impacted their personal lives as well as their professional lives, enhancing the need for emotional support.

Yet, they were always hopeful and cared deeply about their students and, moreover, about their students' success. One of the teachers and her mentor said that they were "keeping the dream alive." They fortified themselves partly with camaraderie and empathy from colleagues. But it was the children and the relationships with the children—seeing the children learning and knowing that they had a hand in that progress—that really sustained them.

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

All of the interviews were informal, conversational interviews with the questions emerging from the observations and conversations.

- I. First Interview with each triad
 - A. Introduction
 - 1. About the study
 - 2. Confidentiality
 - 3. Brief introductions
 - B. Could you tell me about your school?
 - 1. a little about teachers' responsibilities, meetings, duties, etc.?
 - C. Can you tell me about campus level support is provided for teachers?
 - 1. Professional development?
 - 2. Can you tell me about any barriers/obstacles?
 - D. How do you see your role in working with the new teachers from ACP?
 - E. How would you describe relationships between staff members?
 - 1. When do teachers work together?
 - F. If you had the power to change things, what else might you do to make sure that teachers had a really good first year experience... and what would that look like?

Prompts:

- 1. What district, campus or other professional development activities (like workshops or conferences) have you participated in with _____ and do you think those activities enhanced her performance?
- 2. Do you serve on any committees/ other organizations? Do you find these activities important, satisfying, and/or rewarding?
- 3. How would you describe the relationships among staff members here? How well do you know other staff members? I'm interested in the contact you regularly have with the other teachers—both things like scheduled meetings and the casual interactions. Can you tell me

about how you get together with the other teachers and what kinds of things you do and talk about?

4. When do you work together? How often?
5. What kinds of things do you talk about when you are together? (examples if needed: classroom management, teaching methods, school policies, professional development, curriculum, assessment, or TAKS preparation)
6. Campus-level support seems so important, what kinds of barriers are there?

G. If you had the power to change things, what would you do to make sure _____'s first year experience was good and what would that look like?

H. You've been very helpful and I am looking forward to talking to you individually. I'm most interested in learning about how you are experiencing your part in *(name of first year teacher)* first year of teaching. I am focusing on what first year teachers need to grow professionally and how and from whom those needs are met. Given that, are there any other thoughts or feelings that you would like to share with me about your experiences so far this year to help me understand?

II. First Individual Interview with New Teachers

1. I'd like to begin with a simple question—I know that working in an urban school can be very challenging. But I'd like to know what challenges you face. Can you describe for me some of the challenges you have encountered and how you knew what to do—who do you ask or did the alternative certification program prepare you to handle the challenges?

Prompt: What additional duties are assigned? Do you serve on any committees/ other organizations? Do you find these activities important, satisfying, and/or rewarding?

(Consider responses from triads before asking again.)

Can you give me some examples of how teachers get support or recognition at your school? Tell me about campus level support. What kind of support for your professional development?

If barriers—what do you think are the obstacles to campus-level support?

2. How would you describe the relationships among staff members here? When do you work together? How often?

What kinds of things do you talk about when you are together? (examples if needed: classroom management, teaching methods, school policies, professional development, curriculum, assessment, or TAKS preparation) How well do you know other staff members? I'm interested in the contact you regularly have with the other teachers—both things like scheduled meetings and the casual interactions. Can you tell me about how you get together with the other teachers and what kinds of things you do and talk about?

3. I'm interested in how and from whom you get training and support. Can you give me some examples of times you felt like you were supported—you needed help and you got it?

Prompt if needed: Do you have a certain curriculum that you teach? Did you feel prepared to teach the curriculum? Can you think of any times you needed help or clarification? How do you get help when you need it?

During your first few months of teaching, who was most effective helping you understand organizational things? (Examples, if necessary: unwritten rules of campus, parent communication, how to obtain supplies or materials, record keeping, grading)

4. Can you give me some examples of times when you experienced positive professional growth?

Prompt: What district, campus or other professional development activities (like workshops or conferences) have you participated in and do you think those activities enhanced your performance? met your needs?

5. Who gives you direct support and guidance? Can you give me some examples?

Prompt if needed: How often are you meeting with your mentor? What kind of help do you get from your mentor?

Who has been most effective helping you with instructional issues? (Examples, if necessary: lesson planning, discipline, management, assessment)

6. Sometimes as the year goes on, we realize that there are some issues or situations that would have been easier if we had received more help, like, for example, the special education referral process or classroom

management. What direct support did you receive when you encountered these kinds of issues? Do you think that you might have benefited from more help in some areas? Would you elaborate?

7. Based on your experience, do you think you receive adequate support to meet your needs?

III. Second Interview with New Teachers—to include questions generated from earlier interviews.

1. What were your main concerns about teaching when you started? How do you feel about those things now?
2. How do you think your training compares to what you would get in a University preparation program? How comparable do you feel like your preparation was?
3. Can you talk to me about how the principal supports you? Do you think she thinks you are an effective teacher? What kind of things does she do to that let you know how she thinks of you? How do you think the principal finds out who needs more support?
4. Things like the after school tutoring, other parts of your work—what do you find personally satisfying or rewarding?
5. Is teaching the way you imagined it to be? ...meet your expectations?
6. What do you think you'll do for your own professional development when the alternative certification program classes are over?
7. Do you think your needs for support and professional development were adequately met this year?
8. How important was the support you received in your ability to be an effective teacher? Can you elaborate?
9. Will you teach again next year?
10. How important was the support you received in your decision to continue teaching?
11. How satisfied are you with the teaching profession?

12. What could the preparation program or the school or district done to better prepare you as a teacher?

IV. Third Interview with the Individual Teacher—include probing questions about information from the other interviews.

1. Will you talk to me a little bit about the stresses and sources of frustration that you face?
2. You said it was really hard at the beginning of the year and you were in survival mode. How do you feel now about your effectiveness as a teacher?
3. Are there some things about teaching that you would like to know more about/ that you want more training with?
4. You've said you are tired, overwhelmed, stressed... What keeps you going?
5. Assuming you are coming back here next year, why? What is it here that you might not find somewhere else? What do you imagine might be different elsewhere?

V. Final Interview with the Triad—Summarizing information or lack of it from the prior target questions, clarifying questions, remaining questions

experiences impacted them. The interviews will take between 45 minutes and two hours and will be tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Interviews and other data will provide rich description of the teachers' experiences and be analyzed for common themes.

What are the possible discomforts and risks?

To protect the participants' confidentiality, the tapes will only be heard for research purposes by this investigator and my associates/professors. The tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet while retained for future analysis and destroyed when the project is completed. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

What are the possible benefits to you or to others?

There may not be any benefits to participation.

If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?

There is no cost to participants.

Will you receive compensation for your participation in this study?

No monetary compensation provided. Light refreshments may be provided.

What if you are injured because of the study?

Since there is no physical intervention, there is little likelihood of physical injury. This study is designed to present no physical or psychological risk or discomfort. If at any time a participant should feel uncomfortable, they need only say so and we will discontinue the interview.

If you do not want to take part in this study, what other options are available to you?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to be in the study, and your refusal will not influence current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin and or participating sites such as the School District or any other organization.

How can you withdraw from this research study and who should I call if I have questions?

If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact the principal investigator at the phone number above. You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 512/232-4383.

How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. If the research project is sponsored then the sponsors also have the legal right to review your research records. Otherwise, your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. If the results of this research are published or presented at scientific meetings, your identity will not be disclosed.

Interviews or sessions will be audio taped. The cassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them; they will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's office; they will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator and his or her associates; and they will be retained for possible future analysis.

Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?

The researcher will not benefit from your participation in the study beyond publishing or presenting the results.

Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Patricia J. Casey

Signature and printed name of person obtaining consent Date

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject **Date**

Signature of Subject **Date**

Signature of Principal Investigator **Date**

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