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# A Comparison of the Similarities and Differences between Traditionally and Alternatively Prepared First Year Secondary Teachers in a Large Middle Georgia School District

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A COMPARISON OF THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN  
TRADITIONALLY AND ALTERNATIVELY PREPARED FIRST YEAR  
SECONDARY TEACHERS IN A LARGE MIDDLE GEORGIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

By

GAIL SCARBOROUGH NELSON

(Under the Direction of Charles A. Reavis)

ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study examined mentor teachers' perception of the extent to which first-year teachers exhibit the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers during the 2008-2009 school year in a large school system in central Georgia. The data, collected from an online survey of mentor teachers, were compared to the data gathered from responses of six teachers from that same system in open-ended interviews which were conducted during the beginning weeks of their second year of teaching. Comparisons were made based on route to certification of the first-year teacher. The highest rated skill in both certification groups was in building of relationships with colleagues and students. The lowest rated skills in both certification groups were in using student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction. Alternatively certified teachers had higher mean ratings on three of the twenty-three indicators: classroom organization, accurate communication of directions and procedures and seeking to grow professionally. Traditionally certified teachers were rated higher by their mentor teachers on all other indicators. Interview responses from teachers who had completed their first year of teaching confirmed the survey data. Implications include additional preparation

of both groups of teachers in data driven planning and differentiation of instruction and strong mentoring programs for all beginning teachers.

**INDEX WORDS:** Teacher preparation, traditionally certified teachers, alternatively certified teachers, TAAP, mentor teachers.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in  
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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my immediate and extended family who all believed in me. I dedicate this to my husband, Pat, who endured my late nights, my stacks of books and papers all over the house, and my no fun disposition, and to my children, Joy and Clay, who just endured and wanted to know when I would be finished.

More importantly, it is for those strong women who taught me from an early age that education was the key to independence. To Mama, Myrtice Locke, and my teachers, your examples of personal strength and faith in the power of education touched my life and opened doors that were closed to you. As I have evolved into this life-long learner, I hope that the lives I have touched along the way have benefited from my teaching and guidance, just as I did from yours.

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There have been many who contributed to my success over the years and I wish to thank the many students who have sat in my classroom along the way. You were my inspiration to be a better teacher, and my efforts to ensure your learning were a constant learning experience for me, also. To my colleagues, beginning and experienced teachers, who have inspired me and reminded me daily why I love my job, who have given me reality checks when I was just a little too much administrator, and who have allowed me to share in your career development, I am appreciative.

Much appreciation is due to Dr. Reavis, Dr. Marina, Dr. Chamblee and my colleagues in Cohort XI for keeping me focused on the destination, in spite of the detours along the way. I owe much gratitude to Dr. Jesse Davis and Dr. Lynett Woodruff, who helped me get the train rolling, and then snatched me on as it pulled out of the station. Without you, I would probably have lost the passion and the persistence. Even though you finished before me, it's refreshing to know that none of us became one of the statistics.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	7
LIST OF TABLES .....	12
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	13
Background of the Study .....	14
Controversy and Criticism of Teacher Education Programs .....	14
Alternative Certification .....	17
The Teacher Quality Challenge .....	19
Comparisons of Traditionally and Alternatively Certified Teachers .....	20
Statement of the Problem .....	22
Research Question .....	23
Significance of the Study .....	24
Procedures .....	25
Definition of Terms .....	29
Limitations of the Study .....	30
Delimitations of the Study .....	31
Summary .....	31
2 REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE .....	33
Historical Perspective of Teacher Preparation .....	33
Controversy, Criticism and Restructuring of Teacher Education .....	36
Alternative Certification .....	44

Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs .....	48
Characteristics of Alternative Teacher Certification Candidates .....	53
National Alternative Certification Initiatives .....	54
The Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) .....	55
Studies Comparing Alternatively and Traditionally Certified Teachers.....	56
School Context Factors .....	57
Principal Perspectives on Teacher Certification Routes and Classroom	
Effectiveness .....	58
Alternatively Certified Teachers’ Strengths and Weaknesses .....	58
Traditionally Certified Teachers’ Strengths and Weaknesses.....	59
First-year Teachers’ Perception of Efficacy and Concerns.....	60
Effects of First-Year Teachers on Student Achievement.....	62
Summary .....	63
3 METHODOLOGY .....	69
Introduction .....	69
Research Question.....	69
Procedures .....	70
Research Design.....	70
Instruments .....	71
Population.....	74
Data Collection.....	78
Data Analysis .....	81
Summary .....	81

4	REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS .....	83
	Introduction .....	83
	Research Question .....	83
	The Participants .....	84
	Survey Results .....	87
	Planning and Preparation.....	89
	Classroom Environment.....	94
	Instructional Practice.....	99
	Interview Results .....	105
	Summary .....	109
5	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.....	112
	Summary .....	112
	Analysis of the Research Findings .....	115
	Conclusions .....	120
	Implications .....	121
	Recommendations for Future Study.....	124
	Dissemination of the Study .....	124
	Concluding Thoughts .....	125
	REFERENCES .....	126
	APPENDICES .....	147
	A IRB Approval Letter .....	147
	B Permission to Conduct Research .....	148
	C Research Base for Survey Questions .....	149

D	Informed Consent Letter to Survey Participants.....	152
E	Survey .....	153
F	Interview Protocol and Interview Questions.....	156
G	Informed Consent Letter to Interview Participants.....	157
H	Survey Participant Response Data .....	158

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Studies Related to Teacher Route to Certification.....	65
Table 2 Demographic Data for Mentor Teachers .....	74
Table 3 Demographic Data for Interview Participants .....	76
Table 4 Mentor Teacher Survey Respondents .....	85
Table 5 Interview Participants .....	86
Table 6 Survey Participant Response Data: Planning and Preparation .....	92
Table 7 Survey Participant Response Data: Classroom Environment.....	97
Table 8 Survey Participant Response Data: Instructional Practice.....	102
Table 9 Teacher Interview Response Summary .....	108

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Imagine that one aspires to climb Mount Everest. One has the necessary equipment, new boots, tent, backpack and the enthusiasm that comes with a lifelong dream. However, one has never climbed above the tree line. Nobel-laureate physicist Kenneth Wilson made the following observation:

There are two ways to get into it. You can take a practice run with somebody who has lots of experience and the ability to share it. The other way is to be taken to the base of Everest, dropped off, and told to get to the top or quit. If you don't make it, your enthusiasm disappears, and you seek ways to avoid similar challenges in the future (NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1999).

This analogy describes the situation often experienced by beginning teachers when they find themselves alone at the beginning of a career in teaching (NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education).

In most instances, novice teachers carry a full teaching load while adjusting to the school facility and routines, becoming oriented to system policies and procedures, becoming familiar with curriculum and instructional strategies, and establishing classroom management structure and procedures (Mutchler, 2005). During the first year of teaching, traditionally certified novice teachers focus on putting their preparation into practice, while alternatively certified novice teachers must focus on preparation and practice simultaneously. The challenge can be overwhelming (Bartell, 2005), especially for the alternatively certified novice teacher whose preparation for the classroom is limited to a few short weeks in the summer. Because there are critical teacher shortages in urban, rural and high-risk schools, the least qualified teachers will continue to serve the

students who have the greatest learning needs (Bartell). “Whereas some children are gaining access to teachers who are more qualified and well prepared than in years past, a growing number of poor and minority children are being taught by teachers who are sorely unprepared for the task they face” (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 771). Therefore, it is imperative that novice teachers, “dropped at the base of Everest”, have the opportunity to take a practice run with someone with experience and the ability to share it (NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1999) as they continue to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become an accomplished teacher.

### Background of the Study

#### Controversy and Criticism of Teacher Education Programs

In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was much criticism and controversy over the quality and rigor of teacher education programs and licensure procedures. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education called for radical changes in teacher preparation. In the publication, *A Nation at Risk*, the Commission made seven recommendations regarding teaching, intending “to improve the preparation of teachers or make teaching a more rewarding, respected profession”. The recommendations included requirements for high educational standards for persons preparing to teach, demonstration of an aptitude for teaching, and demonstration of competence in an academic discipline. The recommendation was also made that the teacher education programs should be judged by how well their graduates meet those criteria.

Recommendations were also made for a competitive, market-sensitive, performance-based salary scale, tied to an effective evaluation system (U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

In the Report of the K-16 Teacher Education Task Force, the American Federation of Teachers identified the following problems that beset teacher recruitment and preparation.

1. Difficulty recruiting the ablest students.
2. Underinvestment in teacher education
3. Lack of coordination between colleges of teacher education and the arts and sciences faculty
4. Inadequate pre-service time for teacher candidates to acquire content knowledge, pedagogy and clinical experience necessary for successful entry into the profession (American Federation of Teachers, 2000).

The first mention of alternative routes to teacher certification to solve the immediate problems in critical shortage areas of mathematics and science was presented in the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The commission also recommended that substantial nonschool personnel resources including recent graduates with mathematics and science degrees, graduate students, and industrial and retired scientists, with appropriate preparation, could immediately begin teaching in these fields (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1998). In 1986, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession called for a teaching profession based on high standards, professional freedom to decide how to meet state and local goals, and a restructured work force with teacher leadership positions (Bradley, 2000). Linda Darling-Hammond, executive director of the National Center on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), advocated stronger teacher-preparation programs, higher standards for teachers, and more rigorous licensing (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers need to know how to teach and



preparation and certification are crucial in gaining and assessing pedagogical expertise (Tell, 2000). Also, David C. Berliner, former Dean of the College of Education at Arizona State University, made the case for more field-based experiences and mentoring for beginning teachers in order to strengthen teacher preparation programs (Scherer, 2001). Raw intelligence is insufficient for accomplished teaching. High-quality teacher education programs offer the novice teacher the findings, concepts, principles, technologies and theories from educational research that are relevant to teaching and learning (Berliner, 2000).

The United States Department of Education (2002) devoted a large portion of the first Title II report on teacher quality to severe criticism of traditional teacher education, and extolled alternative routes to certification as a means of recruiting high quality candidates to teaching. In *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge: The Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, a summary of research showing the link between teacher excellence and student achievement, the department concluded that student achievement was determined by teachers' verbal and cognitive abilities. The secretary also reported that subject matter background had a positive effect on student performance, while knowledge of pedagogy, having an education degree, and the amount of practice teaching had little effect on student performance (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). Studies also suggest that more hours in the field are not necessarily the answer to criticism of traditional teacher education programs. The novice needs to know what to observe and what to do in order to develop the ability to reflect on classroom events and experiences. Teacher development is ongoing and acceptance of this is

important in helping beginning teachers accept limitations and ask for help. Relationships with colleagues are important in developing these abilities (Gratch, 2000).

According to recent assessments of the teaching situation, teacher certification systems erect barriers that keep individuals with solid content knowledge and high cognitive ability out of teaching (U. S. Department of Education, 2004). Walsh and Jacobs (2007) reported that by the 1980's traditional teacher education programs were described as piffle, intellectually bankrupt and puerile, repetitious, dull and ambiguous and as the biggest running joke in higher education.

#### Alternative Certification

While the discourse continued as to the most effective methods of assuring quality teachers for our children, the alternative routes for certifying non-traditional teacher candidates multiplied rapidly. Alternate routes to certification allowed school districts to hire college graduates who did not study education in college and to pay them full salaries (Klagholz, 2001). New Jersey launched the nation's first statewide program for alternative teacher certification in 1983. In order to enter a contract, novice teachers agreed to attend after-hours training during the first 30 weeks of employment, and agreed to be mentored and evaluated by district staff (Klagholz; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). In 1996, the class-size reduction initiative in California paved the way for thousands of alternative route teachers with little or no prior professional preparation to enter the classroom (Naki & Turley, 2003). This program was designed to bring more talented people into the classroom by eliminating, or diluting professional coursework and providing extensive mentoring (Walsh & Jacobs). Idaho's answer to the teacher shortage in low-paying and hard-to-staff schools was Letters of Authorization and Consultant

Specialists Certificates (Ohrman, 2001). Georgia answered the shortage of teachers in critical fields and hard-to-staff schools with TAPP, the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). Traditional teacher education programs supplied only about 80% of the teachers needed in Georgia in 2001. Georgia TAPP not only met the needs of individuals interested in teaching who had not met teacher education requirements in undergraduate study, but also provided a long needed mechanism for recruiting, preparing and retaining highly motivated individuals to fill the classrooms (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2005).

By 2003, 46 states and the District of Columbia had some type of alternative teacher certification plans and the remaining four states were either considering, or had proposals for, alternative certification plans (Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). The emerging characteristics of all alternative certification plans have several common elements, including attainment of a bachelor's degree, demonstration of mastery of content, on-the-job training, completion of coursework or experiences, extensive mentoring, and meeting high performance standards. More than 200,000 teachers have been certified to teach by alternative means since 1985 (Feistritzer & Chester; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) analyzed seven alternative certification programs to determine the characteristics of effective programs. School context had the strongest effect on the initial success of alternatively certified teachers. Effective alternative certification programs placed teacher candidates in schools which had strong leadership, a collegial atmosphere, and adequate materials. Selection of candidates with strong subject-matter knowledge was important to the effectiveness of alternative certification programs and the required coursework was carefully constructed, timely and

based on the candidates' background. Effective programs provided mentors for the candidates who had adequate training, time for planning, sharing, and demonstrating lessons. Mentor feedback after frequent classroom observations was also determined to be important to the success of alternatively certified teachers.

### The Teacher Quality Challenge

The passage of *No Child Left Behind*, a bill in which Congress issued a mandate that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year every classroom will be staffed by a highly qualified teacher, was an attempt to address issues of teacher preparation, as well. Congress has defined highly qualified as teachers who not only possess a bachelor's degree and full state certification, but also have solid content knowledge in the area in which they teach (Department of Education, 2004). Because of the quantity challenge, there simply weren't enough teachers to go around and the emergency credentials issued by the states in the 1970's no longer met the quality challenge (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Organizations involved in the preparation and professional development of today's educators have developed parallel standards for quality, characteristics of accomplished teaching, principles and propositions that guide the development of teachers and of teaching as a profession regardless of the route the teacher takes to get into the profession. (Danielson, 1996; NBPTS, 1989; GPSC, 2005; BOR, 1998; NCATE, 2007; INTASC, 1992). Danielson (1996) identified four domains of professional practice with 22 components that provide a framework for professional practice for effective teachers. This framework provides a roadmap to guide novice teachers through the unknown territory (p. 3). The criteria for the classroom observations of TAAP teachers developed for the state of Georgia is based on the work of Danielson (Middle Georgia

RESA, 2007), and parallels the standards established by the organizations governing teacher preparation programs, national board certification, and state and nationally accepted standards for quality teaching.

#### Comparisons of Traditionally and Alternatively Certified Teachers

Comparisons of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers have provided mixed results of the perceived effectiveness and competency of both groups, based on the method of data collection. When the data is self-reported, there is generally no significant difference in alternatively and traditionally certified teacher perceptions. Suell and Piotrowski (2006) compared the confidence in instructional skills of traditionally and alternatively certified first year teachers. The survey instrument, based on the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, reflected the twelve areas of accomplished practice. The researchers found no significant difference in the two groups of first-year teachers based on the data gathered from the self-reporting survey. Fox (1989) compared the attitudes of first year traditionally and alternatively certified teachers after five months of teaching and after a year of teaching. Both groups had similar and significant changes in attitude between the two collection periods which were attributed to the trauma experienced by beginning teachers. First-year alternatively certified teachers showed a slight improvement in attitudes toward teaching and toward teaching as a career at the end of the first year (Anderson, 1995). In general, researchers have found no significant difference in self-reported teacher efficacy between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers (Tien, 1996; Moseley, 1998; Grooves, 1998; Hall, 1999; Lyons, 1999; Laraway, 2003; Hernandez, 2008).

When surveyed, students reported different degrees of friction based on the age of the teacher (Tien, 1996). Harper (1994) found mixed results in comparing alternatively and traditionally certified teachers after the first year. Contributing factors found in the study included age, previous experience, background and opportunity to develop interpersonal skills. Gender and age affected the self-reported efficacy of alternatively certified teachers and there was also found to be greater fluctuation in efficacy over time (Grooves, 1998). Attitudes toward classroom management and instructional management were affected by age and route to certification, with younger teachers and alternatively certified teachers being more interventionist (Sokal, Smith & Mowat, 2003). Career and technical education teachers who completed a traditional teacher education program felt they had a better preparation in the pedagogy necessary for successful teaching. Alternatively certified career and technical education teachers felt more prepared in subject matter, but felt they lacked pedagogical knowledge (Ruhland & Bremer, 2003). Zientek (2007) found that traditionally certified teachers felt better prepared than non-traditionally certified teachers on communicating and planning and using instructional strategies.

The role of the mentor is invaluable to the success of first-year teachers and the presence of the mentor may have minimized the differences in the feeling of efficacy of first year alternatively certified teachers (Zientek, 2007). Anderson (1996) calls for further research regarding the relationship between mentor teachers and first-year alternatively certified teachers. Cohen (2005) reported that regardless of the preparation program, traditional, or alternative, respondents consistently ranked first year experiences low indicating a lack of consistent support and communication which suggested that an

active partnership is essential between first year teachers, administrators and mentor teachers to ensure job satisfaction.

### Statement of the Problem

In 2002, Congress issued a mandate that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year every classroom would be staffed by a highly qualified teacher. The passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation was an attempt to address numerous recommendations made over the past decade proposing major changes in teacher licensure and certification. Congress defined highly qualified teachers as those who not only possess a bachelor's degree and full state certification, but also have a solid knowledge of content in the area they teach. This mandate is based on effective teaching research which has shown that teacher quality is the one factor that most positively impacts student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hayes-Jacobs, 2004).

The United States Department of Education has endorsed programs that encourage the transition from other arenas into teaching. These federal programs provide an alternative route to teacher certification. Georgia's version of the alternative route to teacher certification is known as the Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP). TAPP is supervised by various universities and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA). Teachers are placed in the classroom after a summer class in classroom management and basic pedagogy, with an agreement to complete other requirements in the next two year period.

TAPP teachers are offered extensive mentoring during this initial induction period. Teachers who pursue alternative routes to certification often have content

knowledge, but lack pedagogical knowledge. Conversely, teachers who matriculate through traditional teacher education programs to acquire certification are often considered to have knowledge of pedagogy, but lack the rigorous curriculum offerings that would give them a sound basis in content knowledge. Research does show that both alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers have a more positive induction experience into education when they are mentored (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Sasser, 2007). Because mentors work closely with both groups of beginning teachers, they are in a position to observe daily, the abilities of and challenges facing these new educators and identify similarities and differences between the teachers certified through traditional and alternative routes.

In order to better support all novice teachers, research needs to focus on the similarities and differences mentors perceive through their observations of these two groups. The degree of strength and weaknesses based on components of accomplished teaching can also be utilized to determine if there are noteworthy similarities and differences between beginning teachers certified through traditional means and alternative means. Therefore, the researcher's purpose was to determine what mentor teachers perceived as the major similarities and differences in traditionally certified novice teachers and alternatively certified novice teachers, and compare those data to the perceptions of teachers beginning their second year of teaching, reflecting back on their first year.

The overarching research question to be answered by this study was: How do mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified teachers during their first year of teaching?



### Significance of the Study

Literature was available regarding various alternative certification programs, traditional teacher preparation programs and induction programs for novice teachers which provide a mentoring component. Researchers have compared principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of teachers certified through traditional and alternative programs. Numerous studies that have used self-reporting surveys of the teachers' feeling of efficacy, and attitude inventories to compare traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. The mentors' perspectives of the similarities and differences in alternatively certified novice teachers and traditionally certified novice teachers have not been fully researched. These mentor teachers are the individuals who observe the degree to which professional knowledge, skills and dispositions are present, or absent in the novice teachers' daily work. Mentor teachers regularly observe and discuss with the novice their planning and preparation, they work with the novice from day one on creating a classroom environment conducive to learning, and observe, guide and reflect with novice teachers on instructional practice in the classroom.

The mentor teachers' perspective of the strengths and weaknesses will provide a basis to determine similarities and differences between traditionally and alternatively certified first-year teachers. These similarities and differences could be of interest to Directors of Professional Learning as they plan for building level and system level professional learning opportunities and induction programs and to building level administrators and principals as they make site-based professional learning decisions. System superintendents, ultimately responsible for hiring teachers and budget decisions, will benefit from enhanced knowledge of the similarities and differences in first year

teachers based on their route to certification. State department of education personnel responsible for teacher induction program requirements and professional learning budget guidelines could also gain professional insight into needed supports for first year teachers. The information could also be of benefit to mentor teachers as they seek to refine and improve their mentor-protégé experiences. The results of this study could also be useful to colleges of education and regional education service agencies as they evaluate, refine and revise their programs of study for the certification of prospective teachers in Georgia.

This researcher has been involved in working with personnel from Middle Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) in supervising the completion of requirements for TAPP teachers, and has been involved in the interviewing and selection of new personnel at the school level. It was important to this researcher to provide the most support possible for novice teachers regardless of their route to the classroom, and this research could provide needed data with which to develop a basis for identifying necessary components of such support.

## Procedures

### *Research Design*

A mixed-method approach utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized to provide richer depth of knowledge due to the limited population. This methodology was utilized in order to improve the accuracy of data and produce a more complete picture by combining information from complementary resources (Denscombe, 2008). The quantitative data informed the researcher of areas where additional in-depth conceptual understanding was needed. The qualitative component provided

complementary data and provided the opportunity to extend the breadth and range of inquiry (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). A self-reporting survey was designed by the researcher based on Danielson's (1997) *Framework for Teaching* and the *Georgia Framework for Teaching* (Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program, 2005) to assess mentor teacher perceptions of the similarities and differences between traditionally and alternatively certified novice teachers. Mentors completed a 3 point Likert type scale response as to what degree the novice teacher demonstrated the teaching competencies identified by Danielson and others. Comparisons were made between the two groups of first year teachers based on the data gathered. Demographic data were gathered on the route to certification, TSS endorsement of the mentor, and number of previous mentoring experiences for comparison analysis. Based on the noteworthy responses of the mentor teachers to the survey statements, seven open-ended interview questions were developed to further compare the perceptions of the mentor teachers to the reality of the teacher who was beginning the second year of teaching. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with six randomly selected teachers during the first six weeks of their second year, asking them to reflect on their first -year teaching experience.

### *Population*

The population for this study was the mentor teachers of secondary first-year teachers in a large Middle Georgia school district and randomly selected teachers who completed their first year of teaching in the spring of 2009 in that county. This area of the state was selected because it contains schools that meet the criteria for urban, rural and suburban. Some of the schools in this district have a plethora of applicants; others are considered hard-to-staff. A request was made to the local Board of Education Office to

obtain permission to contact mentor teachers who formally mentored first-year teachers during the 2008-2009 school year in middle and high schools and to contact randomly selected first year teachers. The researcher worked under the assumption that mentor teachers who were assigned first-year teachers to mentor were actively involved with mentoring that teacher in the first year of induction during the school year of 2008-2009. These mentor teachers were invited to complete the survey and the data gathered from the survey was cross referenced with the information obtained from the face-to-face interviews with teachers who had just completed their first year of teaching.

#### *Data Collection*

Proper permission was first obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University in order to conduct the research project (Appendix A). Permission for teachers to participate in the survey was obtained from the Director of School Operations (Appendix B) and the names and locations of mentors and protégés were obtained from the Office of Professional Learning in the target system.

The survey instrument was designed by the researcher based on the current research on effective teaching as described by Danielson (1997) and cross referenced to the Georgia Framework for Teaching (PSC, NBPTS, BOR, NCATE, INTASC). The survey items consist of 23 Likert-scale responses and one question regarding route to certification, Teacher Support Specialist Endorsement and one question regarding previous mentoring experience. A panel of experts, retired mentor teachers not currently involved with mentoring a first year teacher or from outside of the Middle Georgia RESA service area, determined content validity and reliability for the survey instrument (Huck, 2004; Nardi, 2003), in comparison with the research base of each statement (Appendix

C). Several similar items were combined and the category names of planning and preparation, classroom environment and instructional practice were eliminated to prevent perception of researcher bias.

All mentor teachers from the approving large central Georgia school system who mentored a first-year secondary teacher during the 2008-2009 school year were invited to complete the survey during a two week period during Spring, 2009. Prospective participants were contacted by e-mailed letter, explaining the purpose of the research project (Appendix D) and provided a link to the on-line survey. In order to insure confidentiality, the survey participants were unidentifiable. A follow-up e-mail was sent to all invited participants after the survey closed thanking those who may have already responded, and providing those who had not already completed the survey an extended window of time to do so (Nardi, 2003).

#### *Data Analysis*

Survey responses were downloaded to Excel and analyzed utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 12, to obtain descriptive statistics to determine mentor teachers perception of the similarities and differences of first year teachers certified through TAPP and first year teachers certified through the traditional college programs. Data from the survey were analyzed quantitatively (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and compared with data obtained from the interview of six, randomly selected, first year teachers in one county in middle Georgia which was analyzed qualitatively (Taylor-Powel & Renner, 2003).

### Definition of Terms

The following terms were used as defined below:

1. Mentor Teacher – a teacher with the mechanism to articulate and share the genius of teaching (NEA, 1999).
2. Novice Teacher - a teacher in the first three years of his/her teaching career. For the purpose of this study, novice teachers had completed their first year of teaching and were in the beginning weeks of their second year at the same school.
3. Protégé – a novice teacher assigned to a mentor teacher.
4. Secondary teachers – teachers who are teaching in grades six through twelve. For the purpose of this study, secondary teachers included middle school and high school teachers.
5. Pedagogy – The art and science of teaching (Marzano, 2007). The skills that enable teachers to structure and communicate materials to students. Includes knowledge of instructional methods, learning theories, measurement and testing, and classroom management (Boyd, Goldhaber, Hamilton & Wyckoff, 2007)
6. Traditional Certification – Teacher credentialing received through a traditional teacher education program in an accredited School of Education which included a component of practicum and student teaching experience.
7. Alternative Certification – Teacher credentialing received through a state approved program granted to persons with a college degree who have posted a passing score on a content knowledge examination and have been offered a teaching position. Alternative certification for the purpose of this study was the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP).

### Limitations of the Study

1. Since the survey will extract self-reported data, mentor teachers' answers may reflect their perception of researcher or administrative expectations, rather than a true reflection of their perception.
2. Since the survey is based on accepted standards of knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teaching, mentor teachers may respond based on their expectation of first year teachers rather than that of accomplished teachers.
3. The random selection of first-year teachers for the interview sampling may not accurately reflect the opinions and experiences of all first year teachers.
4. The population is limited to the mentor teachers who are actively involved in mentoring a first-year teacher during the 2008-2009 school year. This will eliminate from the population any mentor teacher who is not assigned a protégé during this school term.
5. The teachers randomly selected for interview may not accurately reflect the demographics of the entire population of teachers who began their teaching career during the 2008-2009 school term in the target county.
6. Mentor teachers may feel rushed or burdened to complete the survey because of the time of year.
7. Population size for both the survey and the interview may not yield adequate results that can be generalized to larger populations.
8. Teachers who are just beginning their second year of teaching may feel obligated to participate in the interview because permission was granted by their supervisor for participation (Glesne, 1999).

9. Mentor teachers may feel social or mental discomfort from rating a first year teacher based on the skills, knowledge and dispositions of accomplished teaching.
10. Interview data is especially dependent on the openness and honesty of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

#### Delimitations of the Study

1. The population is limited to one large school system in Middle Georgia however it is somewhat representative of the state population with urban, suburban and rural schools.
2. The population is limited to one school system in Middle Georgia however it is representative of a variety of socioeconomic indicators.

#### Summary

The last forty years have been filled with commentaries and reports detailing the inadequacies of the educational system in the United States, with the preparation of teachers as one of the major concerns. Recommendations have been made by public and private agencies that support alternative teacher certification routes as an answer to critical teacher shortages and improved quality of teacher candidates. Researchers have examined the effectiveness of various routes to teacher preparation and ways to provide a successful transition to the classroom.

Therefore, this research proposal was designed to provide a description of the similarities and differences mentor teachers perceive in novice teachers certified through traditional routes and those certified through the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, TAPP. The results of this study could be used by building principals,



instructional supervisors, and system level professional learning coordinators as they plan professional learning budgets and activities, and to mentor teachers as they work with novice teachers. A self-reporting survey, distributed to mentor teachers in the Middle Georgia area provided data that were analyzed for descriptive and comparison purposes. Results of the survey were compared to data obtained from the interview of six randomly selected teachers who had completed their first year of teaching at the end of the 2008-2009 school year.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

### Historical Perspective of Teacher Preparation

It is important to understand the history of the professional licensing of teachers so as to understand the factors that currently govern the selection and credentialing of teachers. In colonial America, communities often required approval from one or more of the local ministers as to “good moral character” without much attention being paid to whether or not the aspiring teacher held any substantial knowledge of the subject he was aspiring to teach (Angus & Mirel, 2001). Teacher preparation programs first appeared in the normal schools in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Prior to this time, few elementary teachers had any specific instruction for their work. These early normal schools provided a brief course of study to help prospective teachers master subjects and acquire techniques for managing instruction (Feiman-Nemser, 2007). Around this same time period, there became a serious divide between rural, one-room schools serving the children in farmer-controlled, small districts and the developing urban pattern of large, multi-classroom schools with graded instruction controlled by boards either elected or appointed by the community. Not only were there philosophical differences in the two patterns, there were differences in scheduling and controversies over how teachers should be trained and licensed (Angus & Mirel, 2001).

Until the mid 1800’s states did not exercise much control over who taught, but left licensure in the hands of the local authorities or certification agencies. The growth of the state education departments in the middle of the nineteenth century centralized standards for teaching. In 1857, William Russell proposed giving teachers control over entry into their profession. He proposed that the teachers’ organization be given a charter

to examine and pass upon applicants for membership. This control process mirrored that followed in professions such as law and medicine, but was never implemented (Bradley, 2000). By the mid 1800's academies and seminaries were giving way to the public high schools with more control in the hands of the state. Teacher training academies declined with the implementation of the "normal" department of the high schools, which trained teachers for the common schools. The first state supported and controlled normal school was established in Lexington, Massachusetts in 1839, and between 1860 and 1900 these teacher training institutions spread throughout New England and into the Midwest (Angus & Mirel, 2001). As early as 1858, Georgia school laws required certificates of all teachers in schools receiving state funds, although the certificates were still issued by the County Board of Examiners based on scores on locally developed examinations (Angus & Mirel; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2005).

Over the second half of the nineteenth century, a significant difference developed between the eastern normal schools which generally aimed at producing female teachers for elementary schools and the western normal schools which attracted more men preparing to enter the ranks of school administrators and young women preparing to get better and more secure teaching jobs in towns and cities. This collegiate orientation of the western normal schools led the transformation of normal schools into the teachers colleges of the early twentieth century. Chairs of Pedagogy were established in some Midwestern universities. These early beginnings of university-based schools of education, offered a course or two in the "science and art" of teaching to students who might wish to enter teaching. Until this time, the preparation of teachers in normal departments was considered high school (Angus & Mirel, 2001).

By 1894, the school superintendent in New York State had been given the power to prescribe the rules for teacher examinations by the counties, actually prepare the questions, set the questions, score the exams and establish cut scores. In 1899, New York became the first state to have a uniform system of teacher preparation when the superintendent was given authority over the teachers' institutes. This trend quickly spread throughout the states and by 1911, the authority of credentialing teachers moved from the county levels to the state level. Fifteen states issued teacher certificates and another 18 set regulations and generated questions for examinations although the certification was still issued at the local level (Angus & Meril, 2001). In Georgia, permanent state teaching license was authorized in 1887, but the State Division of Certification was not established until 1924 (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2005). By 1937, 41 states set rules, controlled the examination of teachers and issued all teaching certificates (Angus & Meril). Since 1946, all teachers in Georgia have been required to hold a teaching certificate issued by the state Department of Education. The teacher certification process was further refined when the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GPSC) was created by a legislative mandate in 1991. Since that time GPSC has been responsible for "establishing a certification/licensure process that is streamlined, understandable, and flexible in order to remove barriers and attract qualified individuals to the education profession" (GPSC, 2005).

Traditional route teacher preparation programs are defined as those in which teacher candidates pursue a bachelor's degree and are awarded a teaching certificate prior to becoming a teacher of record in a classroom. Traditional teacher education programs require student teaching placement as part of the program. The grade point average

required for admission into initial certification programs at the baccalaureate level is a minimum of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale (The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality). Georgia requires course work related to diversity and special needs students. Other requirements include course work in the teaching of reading and supervised field experiences in settings and grade levels for which candidates are seeking a license. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is the approving agency for teacher education programs and teacher education institutions must be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or another standards-based accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (Education Commission of the States, 2008). Georgia is the only state that guarantees that teachers who graduate from state institutions will be effective, or the state will provide remedial training for that teacher (Education Commission of the States, 2000).

### Controversy, Criticism and Restructuring of Teacher Education

Between 1940 and 1946, the most serious crisis in teacher supply and demand that the nation had ever experienced led to a roll-back in certification requirements and the issuance of emergency certificates. In 1946, the National Education Association (NEA) created the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS). This was an effort to create an independent voice for the classroom teacher and challenge the education trust in charge of teacher education and certification. TEPS leaders were critical of teacher training and the “approved program” approach to teacher education that was practiced at the time (Angus & Meril, 2001). In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was much criticism and controversy over the quality and rigor of

teacher education programs and licensure procedures. With the launch of Sputnik in 1957, education became infused with national security in addition to school quality and took on much more urgency (Angus & Mirel, 2001). In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education called for radical changes in teacher preparation. In the publication, *A Nation at Risk*, the Commission made seven recommendations regarding teaching, intending “to improve the preparation of teachers or make teaching a more rewarding, respected profession”. The recommendations included requirements for high educational standards for persons preparing to teach, demonstration of an aptitude for teaching, and demonstration of competence in an academic discipline. The recommendation was also made that the teacher education programs should be judged by how well their graduates meet those criteria (United States Department of Education, 1983).

In the Report of the K-16 Teacher Education Task Force, the American Federation of Teachers identified problems that beset teacher recruitment and preparation. Teacher preparation programs experience difficulty recruiting the ablest students. This was prompted by low pay, poor working conditions and lack of respect for the profession. Teacher education courses were often held in low esteem in universities which caused an underinvestment in teacher education programs. The task force also cited problems in the universities for lack of coordination between colleges of teacher education and the arts and sciences faculty. Also, in a baccalaureate teacher preparation program, there is inadequate pre-service time for teacher candidates to acquire rigorous content knowledge, pedagogy and clinical experience necessary for successful entry into the profession (American Federation of Teachers, 2000). Traditional teacher education programs were

criticized as being too theoretical, lacking rigor, irrelevant to a teachers' work in the classroom, and an unnecessary obstacle to certification (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2005).

In 1986, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession called for a teaching profession based on high standards, professional freedom to decide how to meet state and local goals, and a restructured work force with teacher leadership positions. Linda Darling-Hammond, executive director of the National Center on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), advocated stronger teacher-preparation programs, higher standards for teachers, and more rigorous licensing (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers need to know how to teach and preparation and certification are crucial in gaining and assessing pedagogical expertise (Tell, 2000). Also, David C. Berliner, former Dean of the College of Education at Arizona State University, made the case for more field-based experiences and mentoring for beginning teachers in order to strengthen teacher preparation programs (Scherer, 2001). Raw intelligence is insufficient for accomplished teaching. High-quality teacher education programs offer the novice teacher the findings, concepts, principles, technologies and theories from educational research that are relevant to teaching and learning (Berliner, 2000).

The first mention of alternative routes to teacher certification to solve the immediate problems in critical shortage areas of mathematics and science was presented in the recommendations of the National Commission on Excellence in Education when they recommended that substantial nonschool personnel resources including recent graduates with mathematics and science degrees, graduate students, and industrial and retired scientists, with appropriate preparation, could immediately begin teaching in these fields (U.S. Department of Education, 1983; Fordham Foundation, 1998). A large portion of the

first Title II report on teacher quality was devoted to severe criticism of traditional teacher education, and extolled alternative routes to certification as a means of recruiting high quality candidates to teaching. In *Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge: The Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, a summary of research showing the link between teacher excellence and student achievement, the department concluded that student achievement was determined by teachers' verbal and cognitive abilities. The secretary also reported that subject matter background had a positive effect on student performance, while knowledge of pedagogy, having an education degree, and the amount of practice teaching had little effect on student performance. According to this assessment of the teaching situation, teacher certification systems erect barriers that keep individuals with solid content knowledge and high cognitive ability out of teaching (U. S. Department of Education, 2002). However, the recommendations of the Department of Education are disputed because they are based solely on one Abel Foundation issued report. Darling-Hammond (2002) addressed five major issues with this report. Evidence about student learning was ignored, unfounded claims were made about the importance of verbal ability and teacher effectiveness, there was misrepresentation of research in support of teacher education, methodological issues were found, and illogical policy conclusions were made based on the misrepresentations.

The passage of *No Child Left Behind*, a bill in which Congress issued a mandate that by the end of the 2005-2006 school year every classroom would be staffed by a highly qualified teacher, was an attempt to address issues of teacher preparation, as well. Congress defined highly qualified teachers as those who not only possess a bachelor's



degree and full state certification, but who have solid content knowledge in the area in which they teach (Department of Education, 2004).

Ongoing efforts to improve teacher education programs across the nation have sprung from the criticism of traditional teacher preparation and certification programs. Efforts include revised, challenging standards for accreditation, the growth of professional development schools, emphasis on deeper knowledge base for prospective teachers, and demonstration of competence. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) called for various approaches to bring about standards-based reform for the teaching profession in 1995. The new rigorous standards included research based recommendations including, a coherent program of studies, a firm foundation in liberal arts and teaching disciplines, preparation for higher content standards set for students, preparation for classroom diversity and new technologies, and the use of performance-based standards to determine readiness to teach (Promising Practices; Goodlad, 1991, Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005).

Through an initiative under the reauthorization and amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress funded partnerships among colleges of education, schools of arts and sciences and local school districts to support accountability for high-quality teacher preparation and improve teacher-preparation programs. Data collected on these partnerships supported the successful implementation of the goals of the partnerships. The partnerships encouraged and supported collaboration between institutions of higher education and local schools but efforts to provide induction support for new teachers were identified as an area of concern. Course reform and professional development on academic content were aligned with state teacher and content standards

and met some standards of high-quality professional development. However, much variation was noted in the participant selection process and in follow-up activities among the participating entities. Professional development schools offered field experience that provided early exposure to the realities of working in schools and invaluable practical experience essential in a smooth transition into teaching. Accountability concerns were addressed through the implementation of National Council for Accreditation Standards (NCATE), the Teacher Education Accreditation Council Standards, and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (INTASC), in addition to state content standards to guide the teacher education program reforms. Although there is little evidence-based research about the effectiveness of partnerships, the study of these partnerships does provide information about features that facilitate the organization of partnerships. The Title II partnerships could not remove powerful institutional barriers that interfered with sustained partnerships (United States Department of Education, 2006).

*A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986) was a response that explicitly addressed the issue of teacher quality by outlining a comprehensive plan for improving the teaching profession. The forum called for the creation of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), codification of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching, and creation of a more professional teaching environment (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, n.d.). The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards issued its first policy statement shortly after its creation. Five Core Propositions form the foundation and describe the vision for accomplished teaching.

In 1992, the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) published *Model Standards for Beginning Teacher Licensing, Assessment and Development: A Resource for State Dialogue*. This program of the Council of Chief State School Officers represented the teaching profession and 17 state education agencies. The proposed standards represented a common core of common teaching knowledge and skills that were necessary to help all students acquire 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills. These standards were developed to be compatible with the standards of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. This effort was another step toward uniform standards for educating and licensing teachers based on shared views. The INSTAC principles addressed the knowledge, dispositions and performances essential for all teachers (INTASC, 1992).

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia conducted a year-long study of the challenges facing today's public school teachers which resulted in the adoption of ten guiding principles which were to serve as the operational guidelines for the University System's accredited teacher preparation programs. This initiative began during 1998-1999 and the graduates of these revised programs have now entered Georgia schools. These principles hold great promise for improving the quality of teacher education in Georgia and the caliber of the students who will graduate from the University System's teacher education programs (University System of Georgia, 1998).

During the development of the Praxis III for Educational Testing Service, Danielson identified four domains of professional practice with 22 components that provide an observable framework for professional practice for effective teachers (Danielson, 1996). This framework provides a roadmap to guide novice teachers through

the unknown territory, helps experienced teachers improve their effectiveness, and provides an avenue for highly accomplished teachers to move toward advanced certification and become a resource for less-experienced colleagues (Danielson, p 3). The criteria for classroom observations of TAAP teachers developed by the state of Georgia are based on this framework (Middle Georgia RESA, May, 2007).

In 2005, the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, and the University of Georgia Board of Regents adopted the *Georgia Framework for Teaching* as the state definition of quality teaching. The Framework identifies knowledge, skills, dispositions, understandings and other attributes that define accomplished, quality teaching (Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program, 2005). The Georgia Framework for Teaching is aligned to state and national standards for accomplished teaching. The six domains of the Georgia Framework for teaching define quality teaching and provide a common language for stakeholders. Accomplished teachers demonstrate strong knowledge of content area(s) appropriate for their certification level; support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of students; create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation; understand and use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous development of all learners; design and create instructional experiences based on their knowledge of content and curriculum, students, learning environments, and assessment; and recognize, participate in, and contribute to teaching as a profession (GSTEP, 2005). The domains overlap, and carry attributes of the PSC standards, BOR principles, NCATE standards, INTASC principles, Danielson's Framework, and NBPTS propositions. Most

of the indicators of quality are found in all of the state and national standards while many of the indicators of quality teaching are found in multiple sets of standards (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2005).

Effective September 1, 2008, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GAPSC) adapted the Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education published by NCATE (2000) for use in the Georgia professional education unit and preparation program approval process. The Georgia Standards for the Approval of Professional Education Units and Educator Preparation Programs includes all six of the NCATE standards and two additional standards that address Georgia-specific requirements (GAPSC). The implications for the implementation of these standards in all state approved teacher preparation/certification programs makes a profound statement about the commitment to quality teaching in Georgia schools.

#### Alternative Certification

When *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), identified mediocrity in American schools and focused the nation's attention on the decline in quality of public education, the response was a call for an overhaul of our educational system and the preparation of our nation's teachers. In response to the shortage of teachers and the presumed shortcomings of the teacher education preparation programs, the first state-sponsored alternative certification programs appeared in the early 1980's and by 1999 more than 125,000 teachers were licensed through state and school district alternative certification programs (Schulte & Zeichner, 2001). In an analysis of peer reviewed literature on

alternative certification programs, Schulte and Zeichner (2001) found that the majority of the programs studied were a year in length, required a minimum grade-point average, a bachelor's degree, a passing score on a basic skills exam, and a major in the subject taught at the secondary level. Course work and preparation generally was focused on classroom management, curriculum and methods. Alternative certification programs are designed to allow individuals with significant subject area backgrounds to complete certification requirements while teaching full time (Wright, 2001). While the discourse continued as to the most effective methods of assuring quality teachers for our children through traditional teacher preparation routes, the alternative routes for certifying non-traditional teacher candidates multiplied rapidly. Alternate routes to certification allowed school districts to hire college graduates who did not study education in college and to pay them full salaries (Klagholz, 2001). New Jersey launched the nation's first statewide program for alternative teacher certification in 1984. In order to enter a contract, novice teachers agreed to attend after-hours training during the first 30 weeks of employment, and agreed to be mentored and evaluated by district staff (Klagholz, 2001). In 1996, the class-size reduction initiative in California paved the way for thousands of alternative route teachers with little or no prior professional preparation to enter the classroom (Naki & Turley, 2003). Idaho's answer to the teacher shortage in low-paying and hard-to-staff schools was Letters of Authorization and Consultant Specialists Certificates (Ohrtman, 2001).

Several national initiatives addressing the issue of alternative teacher certification are aimed at eliminating educational inequality by recruiting outstanding college graduates. Teach for America (TFA), participants are chosen through a selective

admissions process and are placed to teach for two years in low-income rural and urban communities across the United States (Glass, 2008). The New Teacher Project (NTP) works with school districts, higher education institutions, state education departments and other entities across the nation to recruit and train quality teachers. Project components include alternative routes to certification and specialized recruitment programs. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Teachers Project (MARTP) represents the five Mid-Atlantic States to promote data-driven policies related to teacher quality and supply and demand. One of the priorities of MARTP is common regional standards for alternative certification. The National Center for Alternative Certification seeks to be a comprehensive, independent resource on all aspects of alternative teacher certification. This web-based resource provides information, research and links to other sources of information on alternative certification and is funded by the United States Department of Education (Glass, 2008). Passport to Teaching Certification provides support and training to recent graduates, professionals looking to make a career change, or teachers working under provisional certification. Transition to Teaching is a federally funded alternative certification program that works with state agencies, institutions of higher education and other educational agencies to attract recent college graduates and mid-career changers into teaching through alternative certification (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, n.d.). Currently, alternate certification route programs prepare approximately one out of every five teachers nationally (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Georgia's answer to the shortage of teachers in critical fields and hard-to-staff schools was the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). Traditional teacher education programs supplied only

about 80% of the teachers needed in Georgia in 2001. By the end of the 2007 school year, 4,770 teachers had been prepared through TAPP programs and 2905 were still active in the teacher workforce (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2008). Georgia TAPP not only met the needs of individuals interested in teaching who had not met teacher education requirements in undergraduate study, but also provided a long needed mechanism for recruiting, preparing and retaining highly motivated individuals to fill the classrooms (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2001). Georgia TAPP certified teachers are expected to meet the same high standards of preparation as teachers certified through traditional teacher-education routes. What differs significantly from full-time college or university programs is the method of delivery.

Again, in 1998, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation declared that the nation was still at risk and called for educational renewal strategies. Once again, alternative certification of teachers was proposed as a way to eliminate barriers for men and women who are well-educated, but did not major in education (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1998). By 2003, 46 states and the District of Columbia had some type of alternative teacher certification plans and the remaining four states were either considering, or had proposals for, alternative certification plans (Feistritzer & Chester, 2003). The emerging characteristics of all alternative certification plans have several common elements, including attainment of a bachelor's degree, demonstration of mastery of content, on-the-job training, completion of coursework or experiences, extensive mentoring, and meeting high performance standards. More than 200,000 teachers have been certified to teach by alternative means since 1985 (Feistritzer & Chester). Nationally, the programs vary from state to state and within the states. In a national study of the characteristics of effective



alternative teacher certification programs, Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough (2008) found that effective programs select well-educated candidates, or work to strengthen subject-matter knowledge. Coursework is carefully constructed, but varies among and within the various programs. Many alternative certification programs are run by schools of education and require that candidates meet many of the same academic requirements and undergo much of the same training as typical education school graduates (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007) while others are run by school districts where participants are full-time teachers while completing their credential requirements. They argue that alternative certification programs, free from the confines of higher education, can focus on specific skills and knowledge that teachers need in classrooms. Alternative certification coursework varies in the emphasis placed on subject-matter content, pedagogy, classroom management, and child development. Scarborough (2008) found that first year teachers felt that the initial training they received through TAPP was inspirational and established a basis for building instructional knowledge, however the training was too broad in scope, lacked practical, realistic strategies and did not prepare teachers for diverse populations. These variations exist not only among different programs but within individual programs as well (Humphrey, Wechsler & Hough, 2008; Ruffin, 2003).

### Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs

Alternative teacher certification programs vary in their requirements for course work in pedagogy, classroom management and teaching methods. Walsh and Jacobs (2007) found that little effort is made to streamline this course work and focus on what alternatively certified teachers really need. Coursework is a key training component in

the majority of alternative certification programs. Coursework varies among and within programs with emphasis placed on subject-matter content, pedagogy, classroom management, educational theory and child development. Emphasis depends on who designs and delivers the course curricular. Participants spoke favorably about practical courses on specific issues or classroom management. Alternative certification candidates were eager for specific strategies that could be applied immediately (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2005) and “on the job training” influenced the supports they sought. Participants placed emphasis on short term, quick-fix approaches addressing classroom challenges (Costelloe, 2008). In a comparison of alternative certification programs in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Louisiana, researchers found that participants praised general pedagogy coursework when presented by knowledgeable and experienced instructors or provided novice teachers with concrete tools and resources. Alternative certification candidates’ perception of their previous career’s impact on their effectiveness included the ability to incorporate and relate specialized, real-world knowledge into their lessons, effective interpersonal skills, and organization and management skills (Salyer, 2003). Despite knowledge and experience in previous careers, candidates realized the need to develop additional skills in teaching their subjects and in classroom management (Johnson, Birkeland, & Peske, 2003; Wade, 2005; Costelloe, 2008).

In a comparison study of six effective alternative certification programs, including Georgia’s TAPP, the heart and soul of the effective program is on-the-job supervision and support at three levels. The program-provided supervisors, site-based mentors, and peer cohort support intertwine to form a safety net for new teachers. This three-fold

support provides honest answers based on trust. The support provider's core question at all three levels of support is, "How are you doing?" (United States Department of Education, 2004). Major themes that came to light in a study of GTAPP teachers in middle Georgia was that formal mentors were not always appropriately matched with TAPP teachers and that the most beneficial collegial support came from teachers located near the novice teacher (Scarborough, 2007). Although guided field experience is a recognized component of traditional teacher education programs, culminating with at least a semester of student teaching, some alternative certification programs included guided field experiences ranging from 16 weeks, to two or more years. Others did not require any guided field experiences (Darling-Hammond, Hudson & Kirby, 1989). The programs for alternative certification analyzed by Humphrey and Wechsler (2005) required clinical experience ranging from some in the summer, to as much as one year. Costelloe (2008) documented challenges and supports through quantitative data obtained from a cohort of Teach for America Teachers, their district assigned New Teacher Coaches and FTA program staff. Qualitative data offered detailed insight about perceptions of the challenges and supports. Individual characteristics shaped teacher attitudes toward supports while their perception of the support received was contingent on the frequency and quality of interaction with New Teacher Coaches.

Alternative certification programs typically offer shorter pre-service training than traditional programs. Over the evolution of the alternative certification programs, there has been a noted increase in "short-cut" or "fast-track" programs with intense initial training. The length of training in the seven programs studied ranged from nine course credits to 45 (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2005). Teach for America recruits are required to

attend a five week summer institute which includes teaching practice, classroom management, diversity, learning theory, literacy development and leadership. They are then required to teach four weeks of summer school, while meeting regularly with subject and grade-specific teams, and attend evening workshops (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004)

Non-credentialed teachers in California identified working as an instructional aide, substitute teaching and methods courses as their most important preparation experiences (Nakai & Turley, 2003). Induction teaching and professional course work are best done concurrently (Dill and Stafford, 1996; Keagholtz, 2000), to provide an opportunity for immediate application of learning and bring instructors closer to current classroom conditions through their students. On the other hand, novice teachers who experience induction teaching and professional course work concurrently were not exposed to a variety of classroom experiences, especially the modeling of good teaching practice. They did not have the safety net of a cooperating teacher and they sometimes pursued a narrow range of teaching strategies that only ensured classroom control (Nakai & Turley, 2003).

Cordeau (2003) recommended changes in scheduling and delivery of required coursework, content of required coursework and field experiences for alternative certification candidates. Even though alternatively certified science teachers enter the classroom with well-developed content knowledge (Baldwin, 2003), and a shared passion for their subject and a love of learning (Williamson, 2003) they used a transmissive, teacher-centered form of instruction because of the lack of pedagogical training (Baldwin, 2003; Williamson, 2003; Upson, 2003). These novice teachers utilized

strategies that enhanced recall of facts and details, but did little to enhance conceptual understanding. A critical incident, dissatisfaction with student achievement along with a desire to promote greater student-teacher interaction to check for understanding, was the factor that altered the approach (Baldwin, 2003).

Upson (2003) also found that alternative certification candidate interns teaching science entered the classroom with a view of instruction that was more teacher focused and relied heavily on presenting content knowledge. Hart (2003) studied alternatively certified teachers who entered their first year of teaching with beliefs about teaching and learning mathematics that were consistent with reform paradigm. Results of the study showed hesitancy of the teachers to confront existing culture or challenge the status quo. These first year teachers made instructional decisions based on pressure from the administration and colleagues to do well on standardized tests, students who balked at sharing their thinking, limited resources, and limitations in their own understanding of content. The first year teachers held on to their beliefs, but appeared not to have the confidence or experience to make the reform practices happen consistently. This is consistent with the findings of researchers in the New Teacher Project examining various alternative certification programs. The conclusion that it is not the particular program, rather who the candidates are, what training they have had, and what experience they bring greatly influence how instructive and useful the components of the program will be. And even more importantly in the new teacher candidate's perception of a successful first year, the school site can either enhance a new teacher's initial experience or thwart growth and early success. The individual, the program, and the school site all contributed to the teachers' sense of preparedness during their first year and, thus must be figured in

any assessment of the effectiveness of alternative certification programs (Johnson, Birkeland & Peske, 2005).

### *Characteristics of Alternative Certification Candidates*

The racial and ethnic diversity of teachers is also a component of the alternative teacher certification attraction. Those who believe that minority students benefit by seeing teachers in their school who look like them and who can serve as role models argue that alternative certification holds the promise of diversifying the teacher workforce. Alternative certification programs have a positive impact on the teacher shortage and provide more ethnic diversity (Houston, Marshall, & McDavid, 1993; Bowen, 2004). In a study of the characteristics of participants in alternative and traditional certification programs in the Houston school district researchers found that alternatively certified teachers represented much greater diversity than traditionally certified teachers. Specifically, alternatively certified teachers were more likely than traditionally certified teachers to be male; more likely to be African American; less likely to be Anglo; and more likely to be 30 to 40 years of age (Feistritzer, 2005).

One of the stated goals of Teach for America is to provide diversity. Each year, more than a thousand recent college graduates commit to teach two years in urban and rural public schools through Teach for America. Approximately a third of these are people of color (McBride, 2002). According to the 2008 Corps Profile, 29% of the 3,700 incoming Teach for America Corps members are non-Caucasian and 26% are Pell Grant recipients. Teach for America uses the receipt of Pell Grants as a measure of socioeconomic diversity (Teach for America, 2009).

### *National Alternative Certification Initiatives*

The New Teacher Project, like Teach for America, works to expand the pool of teachers attracting talented, diverse individuals from non-education backgrounds to the teaching profession. This organization works with districts, states and universities to establish alternate routes to teaching and certification (Feistritzer, 2005). Transition to Teaching provides five-year grants to state and local educational agencies to provide training and support to teacher candidates and place them in high-need schools and districts (Sasser, 2007). Troops to Teachers provide referral assistance and placement services to military personnel interested in a second career as a teacher in public education. Ninety percent of Troops to Teachers participants are male, and 30% are minority. The purpose of these entities is not to provide alternative certification programs, but to provide resources, information, recruiting and support to candidates who are interested in transitioning into teaching as a career (Mickulecky, Shkodriani, & Wilner, 2004; Feistritzer, 2005). The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) was created by the United States Department of Education in 2003. ABCTE has developed exams to provide nontraditional candidates a way to become certified as teachers (Mickulecky, Shkodriani & Wilner, 2004).

Because of the conflicting findings in the available research, Glass (2008), called for the monitoring of placement of uncertified and alternatively certified teachers in high-need schools in order to achieve more equitable distribution of the teaching talent. Further recommendations included the creation of a nationwide accrediting agency for alternative certification programs not covered by existing accreditation agencies.

*The Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAAP)*

In the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program provided through Middle Georgia Regional Education Service Association (MGRESA), TAPP teachers are required to complete the Phase I – Essentials Course which includes many of the pedagogical knowledge segments that are taught in college education courses. Candidates are introduced to topics related to curriculum, learning theory, differentiated instruction, assessment, classroom management and behavior management. Phase II includes two years of successful teaching, a passing score on the Georgia Assessment of Competency in Education (GACE), participation in a minimum of ten seminars on a variety of topics and five field experience observations. Candidates must also complete a portfolio documenting their journey into teaching with a minimum of twenty journal entries, documentation of field experience, mentoring logs, and reflections. Required courses for completion of clear renewable Georgia Certification include teaching the exceptional learner, and completion of the technology requirement. Special education candidates and middle grades candidates are also required to complete a course in the teaching of reading and writing, struggling readers, or other literacy course. Over the two year period, teacher candidates must also demonstrate twenty-four competencies in four domains in order to be recommended for full certification (Middle Georgia RESA, 2007). In 2009, the name of the program was changed to eliminate the term alternative because of the negative perception of the public. Although the acronym remains the same, the name of the program is now Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (Moore, 2009).

The candidate support team, comprised of the mentor, building administrator, and RESA representative monitors the professional growth of the candidate and prescribes



needed field experiences. Feedback from the candidate support team meetings, along with conferences and observations between meetings should encourage reflection and continuous improvement. Mentors are responsible for meeting with the candidate both formally and informally, observing in the candidate's classroom and completing at least ten observations with pre and post conferences during the first year. Four additional observations are required during the second year, with the mentor having responsibility for record keeping, arranging observations in other classrooms, being a role model for the candidate, and supporting the candidate and other support team members in making the field experience rich and successful (Middle Georgia RESA, 2007).

In the seven school systems served by Middle Georgia RESA there were 61 first-year TAPP teachers in secondary schools with the majority being in one large urban county. One small, rural county served by Middle Georgia RESA had no first-year TAPP teachers in secondary schools during the 2008-2009 school year (Middle Georgia RESA, 2008).

#### Studies Comparing Alternatively and Traditionally Certified Teachers

In a study comparing alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers in southeast Georgia, researchers found no significant difference in the two groups after three years in the classroom. This lack of difference was attributed to carefully constructed induction programs with extensive mentoring components, post graduation training, regular inservice classes and ongoing university supervision (Miller, McKenna, & McKenna, 1998). Aggressive mentoring was identified as a specific recommendation for a successful teaching career in a study of novice Texas teachers who

received certification by traditional and alternative routes (Justice, Greiner, Anderson, 2003), and in a study of Colorado teachers certified through Teachers in Residence (Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley & Wilson, 2003). Well thought-out induction support is even more critical for alternatively certified teachers than for traditionally certified teachers (Nakai & Turley, 2003; Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008).

### *School Context Factors*

Naka and Turley (2003) identified administrative how-to as one of the areas in which alternatively certified teachers felt they could have had greater preparation. Administrative how-to included a desire for clear expectations regarding teacher responsibilities and district and state policies. Another area of importance identified by principals and alternatively certified teachers in Texas was the aspect of support. Both principals and alternatively certified teachers agreed that emotional support and appraisal support were the most important factors in the administrator-teacher relationship (Cordeau, 2003). The element with the strongest effect is the school context. Effective alternative certification programs place candidates in schools with strong leadership, a collegial atmosphere and adequate materials. Mentors are trained and have adequate time and resources to plan lessons, share curricula with candidates, demonstrate effective lessons, and provide feedback after observations (Humphrey, Wechsler & Hough, 2008). Cordeau (2003) made recommendations for universities to provide principals with additional training in strategies for supporting alternatively certified teachers. District administrators who have the ability to establish the mechanisms for professional success must also make a commitment to mentor and to financially assist employees hired on

emergency certificates to become long-term members of the educational community (Ohrtman, 2001).

In a comprehensive research review for the Education Commission of the States, Buck and O'Brien (2005) found that there is moderate support in the research that teachers prepared through alternative certification programs do not differ from those prepared through traditional teacher education programs in academic qualifications. Their findings were inconclusive as to differences on measures of performance between alternatively certified and traditionally certified teachers based on divergent findings and different assessments of dependent variables in the research studies analyzed.

Principal Perspectives on Teacher Certification Routes and Classroom Effectiveness  
*Alternatively Certified Teachers' Strengths and Weaknesses*

Research offering the principal's perspective on different aspects of teacher preparation routes presents mixed results. Principals identified the strengths of alternatively certified teachers as subject matter knowledge and real world experiences, enthusiasm and willingness to learn, willingness to get involved in school life and openness to suggestions, maturity, work ethic, sense of team and knowledge of technology (Nagy & Wang, 2006). Alternative certification programs produce highly qualified teachers whose overall performance was rated by principals to be equal to or better than traditionally certified teachers (Torres, 2006). Sasser (2007) found that principals perceived that alternatively certified teachers' prior work experience had no impact on teacher quality. Principal perceptions of the weaknesses of alternatively certified teachers include classroom management, teaching strategies and methodology,

lack of experience with teenagers and knowledge of child development, the ability to differentiate instruction, lack of teaching experience and difficulty with lesson planning and pacing (Nagy & Wang, 2006). Principals surveyed expressed concern that the alternatively certified new teachers were prepared to deal with content, but not with classroom management, special needs students, and behavior issues (Anderson, 1995).

#### *Traditionally Certified Teachers' Strengths and Weaknesses*

Principals in California agreed that student teaching as provided through traditional certification routes is the most critical component of teacher preparation. In the opinion of principals, novice teachers who have been through student teaching have a better understanding of pedagogy, more special education procedural knowledge, better working relationships with parents, realistic time management skills, and are more comfortable collaborating with colleagues than novice teachers who have not participated in a student teaching experience (Wagmeister, 2006). Principals also rated traditionally certified teachers significantly higher than alternatively certified teachers in the areas of instruction, assessment and classroom management (Bowen, 2004). In analyzing data from three teacher certification programs in Texas, Shepherd and Brown (2003) reported that people who complete the traditional undergraduate programs are better qualified to teach than candidates completing nontraditional programs. They contend that the alternative certification programs for special education are denying the students who need qualified teachers with specialized knowledge and pedagogy (Shepherd & Brown, 2003).

### First-year Teachers' Perceptions of Efficacy and Concerns

Hernandez (2006) found that teacher confidence in skills was not related to whether the teacher was traditionally or alternatively certified. In a study conducted to compare the concerns of traditionally and alternatively certified marketing teachers, participants rated seven broad categories of concerns which included human relations, classroom management, instructional activities, personal concerns, work conditions, evaluation and professional growth. The most serious concern reported by both groups was demands on time under the broad category personal concerns. Alternatively certified teachers also expressed lower concern levels in the area of human relations. Turell (1999) and Coyle-Rogers and Rogers (2003) attribute these concerns to differences in age between the alternatively and traditionally certified teachers. In a study of career and technical education teachers hired between 1996 and 2000, researchers found significant differences aligned with the route to certification. In pedagogy, teachers with a baccalaureate degree in education felt the most prepared, and alternatively certified teachers felt the least prepared. However, alternatively certified teachers felt most prepared in knowledge of subject matter. No differences were reported between types of certification program in the areas of classroom management skills and working with special populations (Ruhland & Bremer, 2002), but Scarborough (2007) identified an area of concern from GTAPP teachers that their training lacked practical, realistic strategies and did not prepare them for teaching diverse populations. Novice teachers in the Career Switcher Program in Virginia perceive that they have adequate preparation, however some additional training is warranted in classroom management, evaluation, and meeting the needs of special needs students (Ruffin, 2003).

Sokal, Smith and Mowat (2003) found significant differences in alternatively certified teachers attitudes toward classroom management based on age. Alternatively certified teachers in their 20s developed much more interventionist attitudes than their older peers as the program progressed. The researchers explain this difference as either attributed to different interpretations of course materials by age, or to practicum experience interpretation by age, but contend the change in attitude is age related. In a study of first year teachers in Southeast Georgia, Anderson (2008) found that the issues of most concern to new teachers regardless of route to certification were classroom management, managing paperwork, designing performance based classrooms and motivation of students. Although Noble (2007) also found that first year teachers were concerned with classroom management it was determined that there were more similarities than differences in teachers compared with their route to certification. Compared with alternatively certified marketing teachers, traditionally certified teachers reported a higher concern level in the instructional activities and methods category for formulating instructional objectives, sequencing instruction, explaining subject matter, planning and preparing lesson plans, and handling controversial topics (Truell, 1999). Harvey (2005) found that mean scores on the Principles of Learning and Teaching exam showed a significant advantage for traditionally certified teachers over alternatively certified teachers in South Carolina, but in classroom performance evaluations (Assisting, Developing and Evaluation of Professional Teaching) there was no significant difference. First-year teachers in Colorado ranked their work-related concerns similarly, regardless of certification route. The greatest identified concerns of first year teachers came from the effective instruction and classroom management dimensions (Waymon, Foster, Mantle-

Bromley & Wilson, 2003; Wade, 2005; Noble, 2007). The results of studies comparing traditionally and alternatively certified teachers are summarized in Table 1.

*Effects of First-Year Teachers on Student Achievement*

Data on student achievement also provide mixed results for the impact of route to certification of the teacher. Brown (2005) compared raw scores on the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills to teacher certification route and found no statistically significant differences in scores of students who were taught by traditionally certified teachers and students who were taught by alternatively certified teachers. However, Sene (2004) found that students taught by Transition to Teaching teachers achieve as well or better than students taught by traditionally certified teachers and Richardson (2008) found a significant relationship between teacher qualifications and student math achievement. Middle school students tended to score higher on the Alabama Reading and Math Test if the teacher had a traditional secondary math certification rather than an alternative route certification (Richardson, 2008). Constantine, Player, Silva, Hallgren, Grider, Deke and Warner (2009) found no statistical difference in student performance comparing average differences in reading and mathematics. The authors of this study concluded that the route to certification is unlikely to provide information about the expected quality of the teacher in terms of student achievement (Constantine, et al., 2009)

The research regarding the effects of graduate degrees and specific coursework on a teacher's ability to improve student achievement is limited. To determine the extent to which teacher preparation and certification improve the quality of teaching researchers looked at four key factors: teacher preparation, certification exam scores, teacher supply

and hiring. No relationship has been found between the number of math courses that teachers had in their preparation programs and achievement gains in math at the fourth grade level. Students of teachers with more math courses have greater gains at the high school level, but the effects are generally small, and similar research on the number of science courses is inconclusive. Researchers have found however, that performance on certification exams, irrespective of their route to certification, is predictive of the teacher's ability to increase student achievement, especially in mathematics, but exam scores show less evidence of impacting achievement than experience (Boyd, Goldhaber, Hamilton & Wyckoff, 2007; Constantine, et al., 2009). There is evidence that a teacher's verbal ability as measured by SAT scores is positively related to student achievement. There is also evidence that when compared to other novice teachers, Teach for America mathematics teachers had a significant impact on students' math achievement, but no such relationship was found for reading achievement (Decker, Mayer & Glazerman, 2004).

### Summary

Since the 1983 publication of a *Nation at Risk* lamented America's educational system as mediocre and the teaching force as inadequately prepared, there has been much ado about preparing a teaching force for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By 1998, *A Nation "Still" at Risk: An Education Manifesto* (Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1998) recommended renewal strategies for the American educational system based on the implementation of standards, assessments and accountability. Many changes have taken place in teacher preparation, qualifications, and acceptable standards for quality teaching and qualification of teachers to provide for a diverse student population over the past



twenty-five years. National accreditation standards for teacher education programs, professional boards, and national teacher organizations, along with various state entities have defined the standards of accomplished teaching with the observable skills, knowledge and dispositions of effective teaching. Not only has the standards movement changed the classroom; it has changed the preparation and requirements of teacher education programs, increased alternative certification programs, and changed entry requirements and expectations for the teachers in America's classrooms.

Government involvement in the policies that drive educational programs and teacher preparation has increased, and the passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation with its requirements for and definition of highly-qualified teachers and the time-line for full implementation has become a driving force behind educational decisions from pre-schools, to graduate schools. This study is designed to investigate similarities and differences found between teachers who have completed their first-year of teaching, certified through traditional and alternative certification routes, by assessing the degree to which their mentor teachers observe their demonstration of the collective knowledge, skills and dispositions that have been identified as necessary for teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom.

Table 1

*Studies Related to Teacher Route to Certification*

STUDY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Miller, McKenna & McKenna (1998)	Comparing alternatively and traditionally certified teachers in SE GA.	Two groups of teachers with less than 3 years experience	No significant difference after three years due to: -carefully constructed induction program -extensive mentoring -postgraduation training -regular inservice classes -university supervision
Justice, Griner & Anderson (2003)	Comparing alternative and traditional certification route teachers in Texas	Novice Texas teachers	Recommendations for aggressive mentoring for a successful teaching career
Waymon, et al (2003)	Program Evaluation	Colorado teachers certified through Teachers in Residence	Recommendations for aggressive mentoring
Cordeau (2003)	Principal perception of alternative certification effectiveness	Principals and teachers	-Emotional support and appraisal support most important factor in the administrator-novice relationship -Additional training for principals

STUDY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Humphrey, et al (2008)	Identify effective alternative programs		Effective alternative programs -place teachers in schools with strong leadership -collegial atmosphere -adequate time and resources
Buck & O'Brien (2005)	Comprehensive research review		-No difference in academic qualifications -Inconclusive on performance
Anderson (1995)	Program Evaluation	Principal	Concern that alternatively certified teachers were prepared to deal with content but not classroom management, special needs students, or behavior issues.
Torres, (2006)	Performance rating	Principals	Performance of alternatively certified rated equal to or better than traditionally certified teachers.
Wagmeister, (2006)	Identify principal perception of certification route teachers	Principals	Student teaching is critical component -better understanding of pedagogy -spec education procedural knowledge -better relationships with parents -realistic time management skills -more comfortable collaborating

STUDY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Bowen, (2004)	Principal rating of teacher effectiveness	Principals	Principal rated traditionally certified teachers significantly higher in -instruction -assessment -classroom management
Nagy & Wang, (2006)	Identify principal's perception of alternatively prepared teachers	Principals	-Strengths of alternatively prepared *subject matter knowledge *real world experiences *enthusiasm *willingness to learn *involved in school life *openness to suggestion *maturity *work ethic *sense of team *knowledge of technology -Weakness of alternatively prepared *classroom management *teaching strategies and methodology *lack of experience with teenagers *ability to differentiate instruction *lack of teaching experience *difficulty with lesson planning and pacing

STUDY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	FINDINGS
Shepherd & Brown, (2003)	Data analysis of three teacher certification programs in Texas		-traditional undergraduate programs provide better teachers -alternative certification programs in special education are denying students who need qualified teachers with specialized knowledge and pedagogy
Hernandez, (2006)	Teacher confidence	Traditionally and alternatively certified teachers	Both group reported concerns with demands on time Lower concern in human relations for alternative
Scarborough, (2007)	Teacher confidence	GATAPP certified teachers	Training lacked practical, realistic strategies and did not prepare them for teaching diverse populations.
Noble, (2007)	Teacher Skills	First year teachers and principals	Skillet and characteristics of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers was similar. Both groups of teachers are knowledgeable in their subject area but had difficulty with classroom management. Both groups had a difficult time with differentiated instruction. Principal perceptions supported the findings of the researcher.

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

Teachers who pursue alternative routes to certification often have content knowledge, but lack pedagogical knowledge. Conversely, teachers who matriculate through traditional teacher education programs to acquire certification are often considered to have knowledge of pedagogy, but lack the rigorous curriculum offerings that would give them a sound basis in content knowledge (Education Commission of the States, 2000). In order for administrators to determine the needs of alternatively certified and traditionally certified novice teachers and better support all novice teachers, this research focused on the similarities and differences that mentor teachers perceived between these two groups to give additional insight into these needs. In addition, the similarities and differences the mentor teachers observed in both groups, when compared to the perceptions of the teachers who were just beginning their second year of teaching, provided insight into needed administrative support for the mentor teachers as they strive to help both groups of novice teachers as they transition to the classroom. Therefore, the researcher's purpose was to determine how mentor teachers perceive alternatively certified and traditionally certified secondary teachers as they reflect upon the first year of teaching.

#### Research Question

The overarching research question answered by this study was: How do mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching?

## Procedures

### *Research Design*

A mixed-method approach utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized to provide richer depth of knowledge due to the limited population, to improve the accuracy of data and to produce a more complete picture by combining information from complementary resources (Denscombe, 2008). The quantitative data informed the researcher of areas where additional in-depth conceptual understanding was needed. The qualitative component provided complementary data and provided the opportunity to extend the breadth and range of inquiry (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). According to Nardi (2003), the goal of descriptive research is to provide basic information describing the topic and respondents involved. The descriptive techniques applied to the survey responses summarized the data utilizing mean scores, standard deviations and response percentages. Variability was expressed in terms of the mean scores for each question and the distribution of mentor teacher ratings which was displayed in tabular format giving a holistic view and a disaggregated view of similarities and differences based on route to certification. (Barnett, 1991). Analysis of the data expressed as variability investigated similarities and differences between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers from the perception of the mentor (Barnett).

Responses to interview questions were analyzed qualitatively. Teachers beginning their second year of teaching were asked to reflect on their experiences as a first-year teacher. The prescribed interview protocol provided consistency in each of the six interviews and voice recording and transcription of the responses provided a basis for categorization and an avenue to further bring meaning, structure and order to the data.

Data gathered from the interview were presented in a table to present the consolidated picture that emerged from the process (Anfara, et al, 2002).

### *Instruments*

A self-reporting survey consisting of 23 observable descriptors of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of accomplished teachers (Danielson, 1996; NBPTS, 1989; GPSC, 2005; BOR, 1998; NCATE, 2007; INTASC, 1992) and demographic information was designed by the researcher to assess mentor teacher perceptions of the extent to which the novice teacher exhibited each behavior. Descriptors were based on a compilation of collective knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers that is found in the effective teaching framework developed by Danielson (1996), recognition of exemplary teaching (NBPTS, 1989) and from the standards adopted for teacher education programs (BOR, 1998; GPSC, 2005) and accreditation agencies (NCATE, 2007). A panel of experts, retired mentor teachers, no longer working in the district, recommended combining some indicators to reduce the number of questions to 23 and eliminated the three headings to reduce bias. The panel of experts also recommended adding the component of prior mentoring experience to establish the amount of experience for the mentors. Participants responded to the descriptors with three point Likert Scale responses based on their observation of the particular individual they were currently mentoring, as to what degree the novice teacher exhibited the particular behavior: not at all (1), minimally (2) and consistently (3). Demographic data were gathered as to the route of certification for the novice teacher, whether or not the mentor teacher had a Teacher Support Specialist endorsement, and range of mentoring experiences of the mentor teacher (Appendix E).



SurveyMonkey was the online survey service selected for creation of the survey and collection of the responses. This service supports a variety of question designs including multiple choice, rating scale and open-ended text. Over fifty survey templates support any language and custom themes at a reasonable price. Collecting responses is as simple as sending a link to the survey via e-mail where respondents simply click the link to go directly to the survey (SurveyMonkey, 2009). Responses can be tracked through e-mail addresses if so desired, but to preserve the anonymity of the respondents, this feature was not utilized. The self-reporting survey was administered through the online survey service, SurveyMonkey, to 45 secondary mentor teachers in a large central Georgia school district.

Face-to-face interview questions were derived from the areas of the survey considered noteworthy in the initial analysis of the data. The interview questions were open-ended and provided the interviewer the opportunity to probe for deeper discussion. Questions were designed to provide a context in which to analyze the quantitative data and provide additional conceptual understanding of the quantitative data (see Appendix F).

Q1 related to involvement with the mentor in order to establish that actual mentoring support was present. Q2 related to the most difficult aspect of the first year of teaching. The purpose of this question was to determine in which area(s), if any, the novice teachers needed additional support. Q3 related to the easiest aspect of the first year of teaching. The purpose of this question was to determine in which areas novice teachers felt the most comfort and strength. Q4 related to the process of lesson planning and differentiation of instruction. The purpose of this question was to probe this

particular area that was identified as noteworthy by the mentor teachers. Q5 related to the teacher's perception of his greatest strength and goals for the second year. Identification of self-realization and self-correction was the purpose of this question. Q6 involved the most important thing a first year teacher should know. This question was an effort to determine what concerns were expressed most often by teachers who had just experienced their first year of teaching as they reflected back on what they wished they had known. Q7 was a very open-ended question giving the teacher the opportunity to tell the researcher anything else they would like to share about their first year. This question provided the opportunity for the teachers to talk about anything else that had not already come up in the interview.

Six of the identified protégé teachers who had completed their first year of teaching during the 2008-2009 school year were randomly selected utilizing random numbers generated with an Excel spreadsheet. The six teachers were contacted by emailed letter and asked to participate in the interview component (Appendix G). Arrangements were made by phone conversation to conduct the interviews at the participant's school during a convenient time for the participant. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured for the selected participants as the purpose of the research was explained. The participants agreed to have their interview audio recorded with the assurance that the recordings would be destroyed after transcription.

The interviews were conducted during a two week period shortly after the beginning of the 2009-2010 school term. The interviews were audio recorded utilizing a digital audio recorder, downloaded as a .wav file, and transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed data was analyzed in order to compare the quantitative data of the survey with

the qualitative data of the interviews to make objectivist assumptions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

### *Population*

#### The School District

Located in the center of Georgia, the targeted county is bordered on the north by a large urban area, and on the south, west and east by rural areas and small towns. Three city governments function in this county and the area is in the hub of several major highways. The suburban sprawl is nestled in the middle of farmland and rural areas. The diverse population is 69.4% Caucasian, 26.7% African American and Asian and Hispanic residents make up the other 3.9%. Approximately 125,000 citizens resided in the area supported by a large military base.

The school district is a largely suburban school district serving approximately 26,300 students on 37 campuses. There are four traditional high schools, eight middle schools, two alternative schools, and 24 elementary schools that serve the district. Three of the high schools and five of the middle schools and more than half of the elementary schools in the system qualify as economically disadvantaged and receive Title I assistance. Because this school system receives federal funds for education, teachers must meet the criteria necessary to be considered highly-qualified.

Before 2009, approximately 300 teachers, new to the system, were employed yearly. Approximately twenty-five percent of the new teachers in a given year were first-year teachers. A well-structured induction program, administered through the Office of Professional Learning, guides new employees through the required paperwork, and provides technology training and support for all teachers new to the system in a three-day

new teacher orientation. A mentoring program is in place to support teachers with less than three years of teaching experience, or to support more experienced teachers changing positions, or schools as needed.

The Middle Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) serves seven counties in central Georgia including the targeted district. This area of the state was selected because it contained schools that met the criteria for urban, rural and suburban, economically disadvantaged and relatively affluent. Just as some of the school systems in this RESA district had an excess of applicants, others were considered hard-to-staff. The TAPP program administered by Middle Georgia RESA does not include preparation for early childhood certification except in the areas covered by P-12 certification (MGRESA, 2007) therefore the population was narrowed to mentor teachers of secondary first-year teachers for the survey portion of the study and a random selection of middle and high school teachers who were beginning their second year of teaching in August of 2009. One large school district, was selected as illustrative of what is typical (Glesne, p. 29) of beginning alternatively and traditionally certified secondary teachers in the central Georgia area.

After proper approval was secured from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University (Appendix A), a request was made to the local Board of Education Director of Secondary Operations to obtain permission to complete the study (Appendix B). A list of the names and location of assigned mentor teachers and their protégés was obtained from the Office of Professional Learning in the target county. Middle and high school principals were then contacted to obtain permission to contact mentor teachers who were assigned mentoring responsibilities for first-year teachers

during the 2008-2009 school year. Working under the assumption that mentor teachers from this large school system in central Georgia who were assigned to mentor novice teachers were actively involved with mentoring a teacher in the first year of induction during the school year 2008-2009, forty-five mentor teachers were invited to complete the survey through an e-mailed request and link to the survey (See Appendix D).

Of the 45 assigned mentor teachers during the 2008-2009 school term, 36 were female and nine were male. Eleven were African-American, and 34 were Caucasian. No other ethnic groups were represented. The 24% minority population is representative of the minority population of the county. The population was divided relatively equally between middle and high school with 21 middle school mentor teachers and 24 high school mentor teachers. Because the actual respondents to the survey were unidentifiable it is not possible to relate the demographics of the mentor teachers who did or did not complete the survey. Table 2 is a display of the demographic data for the 45 invited mentor teachers.

Table 2

*Demographic Data for Mentor Teachers*

Ethnicity/Gender	Female	Male
African American	9	2
Caucasian	27	7

Additionally, six teachers who completed their first year of teaching at the end of the 2008-2009 school year were randomly selected from the list of protégés for face-to-face interviews completed during the first six-weeks of their second year of teaching. The list of protégés was separated into traditionally certified and TAPP teachers, arranged alphabetically and random numbers, generated in Excel, were assigned to the two groups. After permission was requested and obtained from the principals to conduct the interviews at the school site, the first three teachers from the traditional group and the first three teachers from the TAPP group were contacted by e-mail. The selected teachers were provided with a letter, detailing the purpose of the study, providing assurance of confidentiality and unidentifiable use of responses and offered the opportunity to accept or decline the interview request (Appendix G). After they confirmed willingness to participate, the selected teachers were then contacted by the researcher by phone or e-mail to set a convenient time and location for the interview. Demographic data were gathered by observation. The TAPP group consisted of one Caucasian male, one Caucasian female, and one African-American female. The traditionally certified group consisted of two Caucasian females and one Caucasian male. The 17% minority representation is not reflective of the county population because of the random selection of the interview participants. Although age was not a factor in selection, it is noteworthy that from the observations of the researcher, the TAPP teachers appeared to be ten or more years older than the traditionally certified teachers. Table 3 depicts the demographics of the traditionally and alternatively certified teachers, beginning their second year of teaching, who were selected for interview.

Table 3

*Demographic Data for Interview Participants*

Ethnicity/Gender	Female	Male
African American	1	0
Caucasian	3	2

*Data Collection*

Proper approval to conduct the proposed research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Georgia Southern University and all approving personnel in the targeted school system. An online survey utilizing SurveyMonkey to collect data was created and distributed to the mentor teachers through a link that was e-mailed along with the purpose of the study and copies of supervisor permissions. Analysis of research on web or internet based surveys has shown that respondents find electronic surveys appealing, and that salience has a stronger impact on response rates than advance notice, follow-up contacts, or incentives (Sheehan and McMillan, 1999; Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000). Fetterman (2002) found that sites such as SurveyMonkey, and others provided immediate benefits to this type of survey work. Reduced costs in mailing and data entry, immediate results and reduced response time were cited as advantages although to achieve a higher response rate, an e-mail reminder is necessary. The ease of accessing the data is an important benefit to on-line surveys (Fetterman; Converse, Wolfe, Huang & Oswald, 2008). SurveyMonkey is an internet survey service which

supports customized, flexible design of survey questions for multiple choice, rating scale or open-ended text responses. Over fifty survey templates supported any language and custom themes. Because soliciting responses was as simple as sending a link to the survey by e-mail, respondents simply clicked the link and went directly to the survey. Although responses could be tracked through e-mail addresses and reminders sent to nonrespondents, this option was not selected for the purpose of this study in order to preserve the anonymity of the respondents.

The Office of Professional Learning identified mentor teachers from the participating school system who were currently mentoring a first year teacher, in grades six through twelve, during the 2008-2009 school year. These 45 mentor teachers were invited to complete and submit the survey during a two-week period during spring, 2009. Prospective participants were contacted individually by e-mail to their school e-mail address, explaining the purpose of the research project, providing directions for participation and completion of the survey and a link to the survey. Participants were assured that the researcher valued their time and input and that the completion of the survey would only take a few minutes of their time. Participants were ensured anonymity and confidentiality in completion of the survey and that no tracking data were collected in the responses to the survey (Nardi, 2003).

Participants were asked to complete the survey within the ten-day time-frame. Participation was voluntary; therefore the researcher anticipated problems caused by no response (Agresi & Finlay, 1997). The survey was anonymous and non-respondents were not tracked. A follow-up e-mail was sent after seven days to thank those who had completed the survey and as a reminder to those who had not completed the survey



(Nardi, 2003). The survey window was also extended through post planning to ensure adequate opportunity for interested participants to complete it. Although a low response rate is characteristic of online surveys in instances where internet access is limited (Nardi), the population selected for this study has free access to the internet and a computer. Although the typical response rate for online surveys is 30% to 50% (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000; Archer, 2008) a relatively higher response rate was anticipated, because of the salience of the survey topic to selected participants (Sheehan & McMillan, 1999), and the number of personalized contacts (Cook, Heath & Thompson, 2000).

After the survey data were gathered and preliminary analysis was completed, the researcher contacted six randomly selected teachers who completed their first year of teaching during the 2008-2009 school year in the target system to request participation in one-on-one interviews (Huck, 2004). This reflective interview focused on the important aspects and issues of first-year teachers identified through analysis of survey data (Glesne, 1999). The interview questions were voice-recorded, downloaded as a .wav file, and transcribed according to consistent interview protocol for each of the six selected teachers who were beginning their second year of teaching. The interviews took place during a two-week window during the last week of September and first week of October, 2009. The researcher arranged to conduct the interview at the school site of each participant for their convenience and ease of participation. Although all of the participants were asked the same questions in the same manner, the amount of time consumed for the interviews ranged between 17 minutes for the shortest interview to 35

minutes for the longest. This fluctuation in time was due to variation in the responses and the amount of hesitation, or willingness to elaborate on the part of the participants.

### *Data Analysis*

The survey data collected through SurveyMonkey, were downloaded as an Excel file and transferred to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis. Data were analyzed quantitatively (Agresi & Findlay, 1997) to obtain descriptive statistics (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) including a total mean score for each question, mean score based on sub-population and standard deviation for each set of mean scores. Percent of responses in each category by route to certification were also derived and reported along with the number of responses from each sub group (Appendix H). The standard deviation is a useful descriptive tool that allows a variability analysis of data that can often be the key to what the data are communicating (Sprinthall, 2003).

The data obtained from the structured interview were initially coded for surface content analysis. Constant comparative analysis occurs as data are compared and categories emerge (Anfara, Brown & Mangoine, 2002). After the initial content analysis was completed, the responses were categorized into recurrent themes of relationships and realities (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). These recurrent themes were then compared and contrasted with the findings from the survey data.

### Summary

This mixed method study was designed to investigate similarities and differences in alternatively and traditionally certified teachers based on quantitative data obtained from an online survey of mentor teachers. Data obtained from face-to-face reflective interviews with randomly selected teachers who had just completed their first year of

teaching were analyzed qualitatively to improve the accuracy of data and produce a more complete picture. Data were gathered in a large suburban county in central Georgia. The findings from the analysis of the mentor teacher survey data was compared to the analysis of the categorization and coding of the recurrent themes of the first-year teacher interview data.

## CHAPTER IV

### REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine how mentor teachers perceive alternatively and traditionally certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching. A self-reporting survey, based on the accepted standards for knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers was administered to mentor teachers in a large middle Georgia school system. Data were gathered and analyzed based on certification route of the mentee teacher. In addition, six randomly selected teachers who were beginning their second year of teaching were interviewed in face-to-face interviews. Open ended questions based on the survey themes guided the interview and responses were recorded utilizing digital voice recording. The interview responses were transcribed and initially categorized. Further analysis led the researcher to recurring themes in the responses.

In this chapter the analysis of data from the survey of the mentor teachers will be reported and discussed. In addition, the teacher interview participants will be profiled and the recurring themes evident from the individual interviews will be reported and discussed in conjunction with the survey data.

#### Research Question

The overarching research question to be answered by this study was: How do mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching?

## The Participants

The researcher obtained a master list of mentor teachers and their protégés during the 2008-2009 school term from the Director of Professional Learning in the target system. After obtaining all of the proper permissions from the Institutional Review Board, the Director of Secondary Operations and the building principals, forty-five teachers mentoring first-year TAPP and traditionally certified secondary teachers were contacted by e-mail and asked to participate in the study. The mentor teachers were provided with a letter detailing the purpose of the study, ensuring confidentiality and assurances their principal and board of education had approved the study. Invited mentor teacher participants were provided a link to the survey which was posted on SurveyMonkey for their convenience. Thirty-two online surveys were completed; however two were eliminated because the respondents failed to complete the demographic data necessary to determine whether the protégée was certified through a traditional program, or through TAPP. Five questions received only 29 responses and one received 28 responses. The incomplete surveys were not eliminated from the data pool, however only the responses that were completed were included in the data since there was no way for the researcher to determine if the omissions were intentional or accidental. Thirty, usable surveys gave a response rate of 67%. Sixteen of the respondents had mentored traditionally certified teachers, while fourteen of the respondents had mentored TAPP teachers during the 2008-2009 school year. Twenty-three of the mentor teachers had obtained a Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) Endorsement. This intensive training in clinical supervision techniques is provided to selected mentor teachers recommended by school administrators in the county. In this data set, there were no

gender, or ethnicity data requested. For seven of the mentor teachers, this was their first mentoring experience. Seventy-seven percent of the mentor teachers had prior mentoring experience. Table 4 profiles the survey respondents.

Table 4

*Mentor Teacher Survey Respondents*

Protégé Route to Certification	N	TSS Endorsement	1 <sup>st</sup> Mentoring Experience
Traditional Teacher Education Program	16	10	4
Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP)	14	13	3

In addition to the mentor teachers, six teachers who had completed their first year of teaching and were in the beginning weeks of their second year in the system were randomly selected from the list of protégé TAPP and traditionally certified secondary teachers to complete the face-to-face interview providing them an opportunity to reflect on their first year of teaching and provide qualitative comparison data for the study. Three of the teachers selected to reflect on their first year of teaching were certified through TAPP and three were certified through a traditional teacher education program. Because the selection was random, only one of the teachers participating in the face-to-face interview was teaching in a high school while five were teaching in middle schools.

Each of the randomly selected teachers had completed their first year of teaching at a different school in the system and had received a contract for a second year at the same school. The selected teachers were contacted by e-mail and provided with a letter detailing the purpose of the study, explaining the procedures that would be followed, and ensuring confidentiality and masked identity in reporting of the data. They were also provided the option of declining the interview request. All of the teachers contacted agreed to participate in the interviews. Table 5 profiles the randomly selected interview participants.

Table 5

*Interview participants*

#	Designation	Setting	Demographics	Certification
1	CG	High school math	White male Former accountant	TAPP
2	SL	Middle school self-contained EBD	White female Former social worker/mother	TAPP
3	DW	Middle school gifted science/math	White female	B.S. Middle Grades Ed. GSW
4	WJ	Middle school chorus/general music	White male	B.S. Music Ed. CSU

#	Designation	Setting	Demographics	Certification
5	TR	Middle school social studies	Black female Former social worker/substitute teacher	TAPP
6	CL	Middle school family and consumer sciences	White female	B.S. Education UGA

### Survey Results

The overarching research question to be answered by this study is: How do mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching? The Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions of Accomplished Teachers Survey instrument was used to gather mentor teacher perceptions regarding to what extent they had observed the targeted behaviors in the first-year teachers they mentored during the 2008-2009 school year. Respondents used a 3-point Likert style scale (1 = Not demonstrated, 2 = Minimally demonstrated, 3 = Consistently demonstrated) on the first part of the survey to designate to what extent they had observed the practice during the protégé's first year of teaching. A higher score indicated that the mentor teacher held the perception that the indicator of accomplished teaching was demonstrated more consistently. A lower score indicated that the mentor teacher



perceived that the indicator of accomplished teaching was demonstrated to a minimal extent or not at all. The second part of the survey provided demographic data necessary for the analysis.

Appendix H provides a summary of all of the data for the responses of the thirty mentor teachers to each statement of knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers. Data included are the response averages and variance, expressed as standard deviation and difference in the means of each subgroup, for the responses to each question of the survey. Data is presented for the responses as a whole and disaggregated into the subgroups of traditionally certified teachers and TAPP teachers. The response frequency in each level of response is expressed as the number of responses and the percentage of responses for each subpopulation. Mean scores and standard deviations for each question on the survey provide a basis for comparison for the entire population and of the two subpopulations. The larger the value of the standard deviation, the more the scores are spread out around the mean; the smaller the value of the standard deviation, the less the scores are spread out around the mean (Sprinthall, 2003). The questions are categorized into three observable domains for the purpose of discussion: Planning and Preparation, Learning Environment, and Instructional Practice.

The mentor teachers' ratings of the first-year teachers with data clustered around the highest and lowest standard deviations determined the areas with the most or least variability. The researcher looked for a natural break in the values of the standard deviations with scores clustered toward the middle of the range not considered as noteworthy. Comparisons were also made based on the differences in the mean scores of each sub group for each question.

### *Planning and Preparation*

Questions one through seven on the survey addressed the domain of planning and preparation. On all statements addressing this domain, traditionally certified teachers had a higher mean score than the teachers receiving certification through TAPP meaning that the traditionally certified first-year teachers appeared to have a better grasp of the concepts required to plan and prepare appropriate lessons. The area of planning and preparation with the least variance was identified in statement 6: *The first year teacher assesses student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards*. The difference in the mean score for both groups was only .06 and over 50% of the mentor teachers of traditional and TAPP teachers rated the first-year teachers as “consistently demonstrates”. The data gathered from the interviews with teachers who had completed their first year of teaching at the beginning of their second year verified this finding. The most frequently utilized resource for lesson planning was the county’s website resources which provide easy access to the Georgia Performance Standards, pacing guides, lesson frameworks, and common assessments. All three of the TAPP teachers and one of the traditionally certified teachers turned to the prepared county resources first when they described the process of planning a lesson. This provides assurances that the teachers were utilizing the available materials, accepted criteria and state standards in planning for instruction and assessing student learning.

While two of the traditionally certified teachers were more goal oriented and student centered in their planning, neither of these teachers were assigned to a field where these resources are currently readily available. Both of these teachers taught in the

connections block and both areas are in the pilot stage for state standards. In response to the process of planning lessons, WJ, a music teacher, responded:

I just set a few attainable goals. In my class I have to be flexible because you never know just how far you are going to get in a week. Sometimes they get it right away, sometimes, not.

CL, a family and consumer sciences teacher was more concerned about student interests in planning lessons that were relevant to the students while meeting learning objectives and reflected this with this statement:

I find out what the kids are interested in, what makes them tick. Then I plan my lessons with those things in mind to spark that interest and make them want to learn. It makes the learning relevant.

Also, responses to statement 7: *The first year teacher uses student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction*; identified a weakness common to both traditionally certified and TAPP teachers. This indicator had the lowest mean score for both groups of teachers and had a very high variance which indicated a wide distribution of scores. Over 50% of the mentors of both traditionally and TAPP certified teachers rated the teachers “minimally demonstrated” on this indicator. Again, this was verified in the interview with teachers. Only one of the traditionally certified teachers, DW, mentioned comparing student achievement on assessments with another teacher in order to plan lessons and differentiate for the needs of the students. CG, a TAPP teacher, also mentioned informal discussions of general student success in planning instructional strategies with colleagues, but there was no indication of formal comparison of student data among teachers utilized to drive instruction. In response to what differentiation looked like in their lessons, the descriptions given by the teachers were sometimes general descriptions of differentiation and included responses such as variety of activities

and project based, but no specific examples based on student assessment results were discussed in any of the interviews.

The highest variance of responses in the category of Planning and Preparation was on statement 5: *The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure*. A standard deviation of .63 was the highest variance of responses in this category with a difference of .48 in the mean scores between traditionally and TAPP certified teachers. Mentor teachers' scores for traditionally certified teachers were 68.8% "demonstrated consistently", while the mentor teachers' scores for TAPP teachers were 35.7% "demonstrated consistently" meaning that traditionally certified teachers had a stronger knowledge base of appropriate lesson and unit structure than teachers certified through TAPP.

Based on the analysis of the differences in the mean scores, mentor teachers' ratings of their first year teacher had the least difference in the area of assessment based on instructional goals. The greatest difference in mean scores in the area of planning and preparation was in knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure. Survey response data for the Planning and Preparation domain is detailed in Table 6.



#	Question	Not at all 1	Minimal 2	Consistent 3	All Mean SD	Trad. Mean SD	TAPP Mean SD	Mean Difference
4	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety.	N=0 (Trad)	N=7 (Trad)	N=9 (Trad)	2.40	2.56	2.21	.35
		0%	43.8%	56.3%	.56	.51	.58	
		N=1 (TAPP)	N=9 (TAPP)	N=4 TAPP				
		7.1%	64.3%	28.6%				
5	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure.	N=0 (Trad)	N=5 (Trad)	N=11 (Trad)	2.41	2.69	2.21	.48
		0%	31.3%	68.8%				
		N=2 (TAPP)	N=7 (TAPP)	N=5 (TAPP)	<b>.63</b>	.48	<b>.70</b>	
		14.3%	50%	35.7%				
6	The first year teacher assesses student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards.	N=0 (Trad)	N=7 (Trad)	N=9 (Trad)	2.53	2.56	2.5	.06
		0%	43.8%	56.3%	.51	.51	.52	
		N=0 (TAPP)	N=7 (TAPP)	N=7 (TAPP)				
		0%	50%	50%				
7	The first year teacher uses student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction	N=0 (Trad)	N=9 (Trad)	N=7 (Trad)	2.33	2.44	2.21	.23
		0%	56.3%	43.8%	.61	.51	.70	
		N=2 (TAPP)		N=5 (TAPP)				
		14.3%		35.7%				

### *Classroom Environment*

Survey statements eight through twelve provided evidence of attention to the classroom environment. This domain included all aspects of classroom management and behavior management. Mentor teachers scored the majority of traditionally certified teachers “consistently demonstrated” on each indicator. Mentor teachers scored the majority (65%) of TAPP certified teachers minimally demonstrated or not demonstrated on indicator # 10: *The first year teacher appropriately manages instructional groups, classroom transitions, materials and performs non-instructional duties.* There was a difference of .31 in the mean scores of traditionally and TAPP certified teachers on this statement with the highest (.57) standard deviation. The consciousness of the importance of classroom management was present and a recurring category in the responses of the teachers as they reflected on their first year teaching experience.

The greatest variance in mean scores (.44) for traditionally certified and TAPP certified teachers was for statement #11: *The first year teacher sets appropriate expectations for, monitors, and responds appropriately to student behavior.* Seventy-five percent of traditionally certified teachers were scored “demonstrated consistently”, while only 25% of TAPP teachers were scored “demonstrated consistently” on this item. CL, a traditionally certified teacher actually expressed that the easiest aspect of teaching during her first year was classroom management. She said:

You hear most teachers tell you not to smile until Christmas, but I tried a different approach. On the first day of every nine weeks, I would shake everyone’s hand, look them in the eye, give them a big smile and introduce myself. I tell the class who I am, what I like, about my family. I want them to be comfortable in my classroom. I tell them my expectations of the class, then ask them what they expect to learn. I try to plan my lessons around what they are interested in, within the standards, of course.

This difference was reiterated in the interview responses to questions probing the most difficult area for a first year teacher, and the most important thing a first year teacher should know when they walk into a classroom. The majority of the teachers selected for interview echoed the sentiment that classroom management concerns were noteworthy and an aspect that teachers either recognized as a weakness or struggle, or considered as an area in which they could improve after their first year. CG, a teacher achieving certification through TAPP, in response to what aspect of teaching did you find most difficult, said:

To be perfectly honest about it, the hardest part for me was classroom management. Trying to strike the balance between being firm enough to keep them in line and being lax enough so they would feel comfortable and want to respond in my classroom. To be perfectly honest, some days I was a little tired and other days I was a little easier on them and that was a big learning experience over last year. I've come to a little better balance in my classroom.

WJ, in response to the aspect of teaching that was most difficult, also said:

This is going to absolutely shock you, I'm sure, but it was classroom management....specifically for me, it wasn't that the kids were disrespectful, or didn't do what I said, it was actually my issue. I tried to be too much like them....I began to sorta talk like them, really try to be the cool kid of the group instead of being the professional. Now, I've been able to really turn that around, and I'm really seeing a difference with them.

In response to, what is the most important thing you think a first teacher should know when they walk into the classroom, SL, a special education teacher responded:

Ummm, (pause) I think that behavior management is the one thing that a first year teacher absolutely has to walk in with a good knowledge of. It's hard to do that if you're a new teacher, obviously.



Only one of the interviewed teachers (TR) felt that her strength was in discipline. This teacher, certified through the TAPP program, didn't distinguish between discipline and classroom management in her responses but did express that she thought that her "discipline was why he hired me." It is interesting to note that this teacher had previous experience as a substitute teacher.

Both traditionally certified and TAPP teachers had mean scores that were noteworthy on statement #12: *The first year teacher organizes the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources*. The mentor teachers scored 92.9% of the TAPP teachers "consistently demonstrated" on this indicator and 81.3% of the traditionally certified teachers "consistently demonstrated" on this indicator. This was also the indicator with the highest mean score (2.87). It is also noteworthy that none of teachers selected for interview mentioned classroom organization for safety, accessibility to learning or use of physical resources under the classroom environment domain as an area of strength, or importance. Table 7 summarizes the response data to the Classroom Environment domain.

Table 7

*Survey Participant Response Data: Classroom Environment*

#	Question	Not			All	Trad	TAPP	Mean
		at all	Minimally	Consistently	Mean	Mean	Mean	Difference
		1	2	3	SD	SD	SD	
8	The first year teacher creates an environment of respect and rapport through appropriate teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction.	N=0	N=3	N=13				
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	18.8%	81.3%	2.7	2.81	2.57	.24
					.53	.40	.65	
9	The first year teacher establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work, and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	N=1	N=4	N=9				
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		7.1%	28.6%	64.3%				
9	The first year teacher establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work, and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	N=0	N=4	N=12				
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	25%	75%	2.73	2.75	2.71	.04
					.45	.45	.47	
9	The first year teacher establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work, and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	N=0	N=4	N=10				
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		0%	28.6%	71.4%				

#	Question	Not			All	Trad	TAPP	Mean
		at all	Minimally	Consistently	Mean	Mean	Mean	Difference
		1	2	3	SD	SD	SD	
10	The first year teacher appropriately manages instructional groups, classroom transitions, materials and performs non-instructional duties.	N=0 (Trad) 0%	N=6 (Trad) 37.5%	N=9 (Trad) 56.3%	2.45 .57	2.60 .51	2.29 .61	.31
		N=1 (TAPP) 7.1%	N=8 (TAPP) 57.1%	N=5 (TAPP) 35.7%				
11	The first year teacher sets appropriate expectations for, monitors, and responds appropriately to student behavior.	N=0 (Trad) 0%	N=4 (Trad) 25%	N=12 (Trad) 75%	2.55 .51	2.75 .45	2.31 .48	.44
		N=0 (TAPP) 0%	N=9 (TAPP) 64.3%	N=4 (TAPP) 28.6%				
12	The first year teacher organizes the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources.	N=0 (Trad) 0%	N=3 (Trad) 18.8%	N=13 (Trad) 81.3%	2.87 .35	2.81 .40	2.93 .27	.12
		N=1 (TAPP) 0%	N=13 (TAPP) 7.1%	N=14 (TAPP) 92.9%				

### *Instructional Practice*

Statements thirteen through twenty-three of the survey addressed the broad category of instructional practice. The lowest mean score (2.38) in this domain was on statement 16: *The first year teacher provides quality feedback to students that is accurate, constructive and timely*. There was also very little variance between traditionally and TAPP certified teachers. This was also verified in the teacher interview. DW, a traditionally certified teacher in an academic classroom, in response to an open-ended question asking if there was anything else she would like to share about her first year responded:

Stay ahead on your paperwork and don't get behind in getting grades in the computer. And grading papers, you don't want to wait right before progress reports and have to grade 30 sets of papers.

This is indication that feedback is often not timely or specific.

The statement receiving the highest mean score overall from the mentor teachers and receiving much attention from the teachers in the interview was statement 21: *The first year teacher seeks to build relationships with colleagues and participates in school activities*. 93.8% of the traditionally certified and 85.7% of the TAPP certified teachers received scores from their mentor teachers of "consistently demonstrated" on this statement. There was very low variance in the scores to this statement with a standard deviation of .31. Every teacher interviewed mentioned building relationships at some point in the interview, as being important. Intertwined in the interview responses, the teachers mentioned aspects of the mentor-mentee relationship, the collegial relationships necessary for collaborative planning, and the appropriate relationships with students and parents. CG talked about the importance of building positive relationships with students:

I want to tell you some of the things that helped me as a first year teacher. I didn't realize it at the time, but it certainly made a difference in my classrooms. When I started showing up to the kids extracurricular activities and going to where they were playing ball, or they were in the band contest, or cheerleading contest, just show up, be an attendee. They notice you in the stands and when you come back to class they look at you like, hey this guy actually gave up his time, he came and saw me, so maybe he's not such an ogre, maybe he does care about us. And it did make a difference in my first year, it was amazing the second semester as opposed to the first semester just because I was out and about, where they were, instead of them coming to where I was. And it helped, it really did.

DW also felt like the relationships with her students was her greatest strength. She said:

My greatest strength is that I relate well to the students (no hesitation at all with this answer). Because I relate well, I know where they struggle and where I can help them.

Building relationships with other colleagues also came to light when asked what she thought was the easiest part of her first year of teaching. To this question, DW responded:

The easiest part is working and collaborating with the other teachers on the hall. They are very open to giving me ideas and such, and sharing what they do in their classes, which makes it easier for me....

CL echoed the same sentiments when she answered the question, "What is the most important thing a first-year teacher should know when they walk in the classroom?" She said:

Get to know your colleagues. They are great resources, plus you need a good friend to talk to every now and then. Sometimes you just have to vent, or bounce an idea.

SL talked about the relationship and support received from administrators in her response to the last question of the interview, when asked, "is there anything else you would like to share with me about your first year of teaching?"

I would say find a school that has administrators that will back you up, who will support you, who will tell you, “tell me what you need, and I will get it for you”. Obviously, it’s great to have such a great administration.

The importance of relationships with colleagues was echoed by WJ:

Coming in new was tough, and it seemed that everybody knew what was going on but me. Just knowing who goes to lunch after whom was one of those things you have to pick up. My first year was wonderful, because I am surrounded by wonderful people. They are incredibly supportive. They are good humored...

The statement on which mentor teachers rated the TAPP teachers noticeably higher than traditionally certified teachers was on statement 22: *The first year teacher seeks to grow professionally through enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill*. Seventy-five percent of the traditionally certified teachers were rated by their mentor as “consistently demonstrated” in this trait, while 92% of the TAPP teachers were so rated by their mentors. The TAPP certified teachers mean score was .18 higher than the traditionally certified teachers on this question. The TAPP teachers interviewed were more open in their responses about learning content and pedagogical skills from their mentors and from other teachers in the same subject area.

The indicator with the greatest mean difference between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers in the Instructional Practice domain was on statement 18: *The first year teacher reflects on teaching practice to improve performance*. The difference of .30 between mentor teachers’ ratings of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers is noteworthy in this area. Although the entire domain was the least remarkable, this one area provided quite a difference in the two groups of teachers. Table 8 summarizes the survey data for the domain Instructional Practice.

Table 8

*Survey Participant Response Data: Instructional Practice*

#	Question	Not			All	Trad	TAPP	Mean Difference
		at all 1	Minimal 2	Consistent 3	Mean SD	Mean SD	Mean SD	
13	Directions, procedures, oral and written language are communicated accurately.	N=0 (Trad)	N=3 (Trad)	N=13 (Trad)	2.70 .47	2.69 .48	2.71 .47	.02
		0%	31.3%	68.8%				
		N=0 (TAPP)	N=4 (TAPP)	N=10 (TAPP)				
		0%	28.6%	71.4%				
14	The first year teacher uses a variety of questioning techniques, engages students in discussion and encourages student participation.	N=0 (Trad)	N=5 (Trad)	N=11 (Trad)	2.63 .49	2.69 .49	2.57 .51	.12
		0%	31.3%	68.8%				
		N=0 (TAPP)	N=6 (TAPP)	N=8 (TAPP)				
		0%	42.9%	57.1%				
15	The first year teacher engages students with variety of content, activities and assignments, grouping of students, instructional materials and pacing.	N=0 (Trad)	N=4 (Trad)	N=12 (Trad)	2.77 .43	2.75 .45	2.79 .43	.04
		0%	25%	75%				
		N=0 (TAPP)	N=3 (TAPP)	N=11 (TAPP)				
		0%	21.4%	78.6%				
16	The first year teacher provides quality feedback to students that is accurate, constructive and timely.	N=0 (Trad)	N=8 (Trad)	N=7 (Trad)	2.41 .50	2.47 .52	2.36 .50	.11
		0%	53.3%	46.7%				
		N=0 (TAPP)	N=9 (TAPP)	N=5 (TAPP)				
		0%	64.3%	35.7%				

#	Question	Not			All	Trad	TAPP	Mean Difference
		at all	Minimal	Consistent	Mean	Mean	Mean	
		1	2	3	SD	SD	SD	
17	The first year teacher demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness through lesson adjustment, responses to students and persistence.	N=0	N=6	N=10				
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	37.5%	62.5%	2.53	2.63	2.43	
					.51	.50	.51	.20
18	The first year teacher reflects on teaching practice to improve performance.	N=0	N=2	N=13				
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	13.3%	86.7%	2.72	2.87	2.57	
					.45	.35	.51	.30
19	The first year teacher maintains accurate records regarding instructional and non-instructional matters.	N=0	N=3	N=11				
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	21.4%	78.6%	2.68	2.79	2.57	
					.48	.43	.51	.22



#	Question	Not			All	Trad	TAPP	Mean Difference
		at all	Minimal	Consistent	Mean	Mean	Mean	
		1	2	3	SD	SD	SD	
20	The first year teacher communicates with families regarding instructional programs and student progress and seeks to engage families in the instructional process.	N=0	N=4	N=12				.06
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	25%	75%	2.72	2.75	2.69	
		N=0	N=9	N=13	.45	.45	.48	
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		0%	30.8%	69.2%				
21	The first year teacher seeks to build relationships with colleagues, and participates in school activities.	N=0	N=1	N=15				.08
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	6.3%	93.8%	2.90	2.94	2.86	
		N=0	N=2	N=12	.31	.25	.36	
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		0%	14.3%	85.7%				
22	The first year teacher seeks to grow professionally through enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	N=0	N=4	N=12				.18
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	25%	75%	2.83	2.75	2.93	
		N=0	N=1	N=13	.38	.45	.27	
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		0%	7.1%	92.9%				
23	The first year teacher shows professionalism in relation to students, parents, and decision making.	N=0	N=2	N=14				.09
		(Trad)	(Trad)	(Trad)				
		0%	12.5%	87.5%	2.83	2.88	2.79	
		N=0	N=3	N=11	.38	.34	.43	
		(TAPP)	(TAPP)	(TAPP)				
		0%	21.4%	78.6%				

## Interview Results

In the qualitative analysis of the open-ended interview questions, four general categories emerged. The teachers participating in the interview had all completed their first year of teaching and as they reflected on that first year and looked forward to the second year, they all expressed the importance of building relationships with colleagues. All of the teachers discussed the supportive, sharing relationship they had with their mentor, or the with other staff members in their subject area, or in their building. The teachers interviewed also expressed an appreciation for building relationships with the students. Through these teacher-student relationships they were able to manage student behavior and feel they had a positive impact on student success.

The second general category that emerged from the interviews involved planning. Reflecting on their first year teaching experience, teachers cited issues with planning for lesson and unit structure ranging from time management skills to location and acquisition of resources and materials. Four of the six teachers interviewed taught one or more of the academic subjects: mathematics, science, language arts, or social studies. All four of these teachers responded that their first resource for planning lessons was the county's web resources. The two teachers who taught in the connections area were more goal oriented and student centered as they planned for their lessons. Lesson plans and standards based classroom expectations were areas three of the teachers felt were difficult during their first year of teaching. Better planning for instruction was also cited as a goal for three of the teachers as they reflected on their first year experiences.

The third general category that emerged from the interviews with teachers beginning their second year of teaching dealt with classroom management. Three of the

six teachers mentioned classroom management as the most difficult aspect of their first year. Four of the six teachers also mentioned classroom management and discipline as the most important thing for a first year teacher to know when they walk into the classroom. Classroom management was seen as strength for some and as a weakness for others, but it was mentioned in every interview as noteworthy or important for the success of a beginning teacher.

Student success was the fourth major category that came from the interviews with the six teachers at the beginning their second year of teaching. This was expressed as a goal or target for improvement as teachers wanted to improve their instructional strategies, and set high expectations for their students. This category was intertwined with student relationships, empathy for the students, and teacher's positive attitudes and personalities. The interviewed teachers all expressed concern for student success, however it is noteworthy that only one of the teachers interviewed mentioned comparing student achievement data with another teacher in order to plan for instructional adjustments.

These categories were further refined into two major themes that came from the interviews with the teachers as they began their second year in the classroom. The themes that emerged throughout the analysis of the responses involved relationships, and realities.

Throughout the teacher interviews the importance of relationships emerged. There was lengthy discussion of the importance of the relationship with the mentor and other colleagues in the building. As the teachers reflected on their first year experience, these relationships enabled the teachers to work through various problems with lesson

planning, subject matter knowledge, finding resources, sharing ideas, and even venting their frustrations. Building appropriate student relationships was also discussed as an important aspect of the first year of teaching. As the teachers reflected back on their first year experience, they mentioned empathy for the students, being involved with the students' extracurricular activities, getting to know student interests and learning styles, reaching out to students and letting the students know the teacher as a person. The teachers all expressed the connection between building relationships with the students and the ability to manage student behavior and ensure student success.

The second major theme that emerged from the interview analysis was one of the reality of teaching. The teachers at the beginning of their second year expressed understanding of the importance of organization, and maintaining balance between your professional and personal self. The teachers' reflections on their first year experience centered on the reality that teaching is not just writing lesson plans and delivering lessons, but involved trying and doing different things to ensure student and teacher success. There was a reality that there was always something better, more to learn, or some improvement that the teacher could make for student success. The reality that managing student behavior was an important aspect of teaching success was firmly woven into all of the interview responses. This is one topic that every teacher interviewed touched at some point. A firm grasp on differentiation of instruction and data driven instruction did not surface in the teacher interview responses. These categories are summarized in Table 9.

Table 8

*Teacher interview response summary*

Question	Interview # 1	Interview #2	Interview #3	Interview #4	Interview #5	Interview #6
Q 1. Please tell me about your involvement with your mentor during your first year of teaching.	Helpful Availability Detail oriented Knowledge of subject	Support Advice Sharing of ideas Help	Help Collaboration Sharing of ideas ideas	Help Sharing of ideas Sharing of ideas	Support Sharing of ideas Help Availability	Support Sharing of ideas Availability Help
Q 2. What aspect of teaching did you find to be the most difficult during your first year? Why do you think this is so?	Classroom mgt. Maintaining balance	Classroom mgt. Standards based classroom expectations	Materials Lesson Plans	Classroom mgt Maintaining balance between self/ professional	Role of the teacher Being on my own	Lesson Plans Maintaining balance
Q 3. What aspect of teaching did you find to be the easiest for you during your first year? Why do you think this was so?	Organization	Student relationships	Staff relationships	Student relationships	Discipline Prior experience	Relationships with students
Q 4. Please tell me about the processes of planning for lessons? What does the term differentiation mean to you in the scheme of planning and carrying out a lesson?	County resources Other teachers Informal discussions	County resources Individual Variety of activities	County resources Other teachers Sharing ideas that work	Flexibility Goal oriented	County resources Grade Level Project based	Connected to the real world Student centered

Question	Interview # 1	Interview #2	Interview #3	Interview #4	Interview #5	Interview #6
Q 5. What is your greatest strength as a teacher? Why do you see that as a strength? What is your goal or target for your second year? Why is that important to you?	Relationships with students  Improve instructional methods for student success	Empathy with students  Improve for student success	Relationships with students  Better planning for instruction	People oriented personality  Better planning for instruction  Student success	Classroom management  Have high expectations for student success on CRCT	Positive attitude  Student success
Q 6. What is the most important thing you think a first year teacher should know when they walk in the classroom? Why?	Firm, but fair  Build relationship with students so you can reach them	Behavior management  So kids can be successful	Classroom Management  So kids can learn	Be a professional  Don't put yourself on the kids level  Keep them busy	Resources  So you don't reinvent things	Colleagues  Build relationships for success
Q 7. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your first year as a teacher?	Really get to know the kids	It's normal to have a bad day sometimes	Stay on top of the paper work	Lightheartedness and sense of humor	It is a learning experience  Discipline	Love the job

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine how mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching. Based on the data obtained from the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions of

First Year Teachers Survey, completed by teachers who had mentored a first year teacher during the 2008-2009 school year, compared with the responses of six teachers who had just begun their second year of teaching in the same school to open-ended interview questions, the similarities between traditionally certified and TAPP certified teachers in a large central Georgia county include recognition of the importance of appropriate interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students, and attention to the learning environment. Both groups of teachers had high mean scores and a high percentage of mentor teachers rating “consistently demonstrated” to these indicators.

In the area of Planning and Preparation, the greatest differences exist in the ratings of the mentor teachers on first year teachers’ consistent ability to demonstrate appropriate lesson and unit structure (.48), and knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety (.35). In the area of Classroom Environment the greatest difference in ratings was in the ability to consistently manage student behavior (.44). The interview responses also revealed a high level of concern in this area. In the domain of Instructional Practice, the greatest difference between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers was in reflecting on instructional practice (.30).

The least differences between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers were found in assessment of learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards (.06); establishing a culture for learning and setting high expectations (.04); and effective oral and written communication (.02). These are the areas where the traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers were rated most similar by their mentor teachers.

Traditionally certified teachers obtained a higher mean score in all but three of the statements of knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teaching. Areas in which TAPP teachers had a higher mean score were classroom organization, communication, and seeking to grow professionally. The highest mean score (2.90) on all indicators was in the area of Instructional Practice: The first year teacher seeks to build relationships with colleagues and participates in school activities. The importance of interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students was reiterated time and again by the teachers in the face-to-face interview responses.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the study, conclusions that have been drawn from the data, and implications for further study. The first section presents a summary of the study, including procedures and the researchers findings based on the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The second section presents the conclusions and implications derived from the study and the review of relevant literature. The third section includes recommendations for further study.

#### Summary

In the educational arena, quite often what one sees is an evolving of the full circle. When one goes back to the roots of the American educational system and investigates the historical context of teacher certification, one finds that entry into the teaching profession has gone from loose local control, through the stages of normal schools, colleges of teacher education and tightly restricted entry requirements, back to flexibility and a variety of entry avenues. The concept for this project began in 2004, at a time when No Child Left Behind legislation was calling for a highly qualified teacher in every classroom and administrators were maneuvering to meet that mandate by 2006. The law even went so far as to define highly qualified and the United States Department of Education reported that the current system of certification erected barriers that prevented some of the most able candidates from entering the classrooms. Many of these barriers have been lifted, and many school systems have met the mandate of the law through continued hiring of first-year teachers who under the law are considered highly qualified.

However, the comparisons, the concerns, and the debates about first-year teacher qualifications and quality based on their route to certification have continued.

The overarching research question to be answered by this study was: How do mentor teachers perceive traditionally and alternatively certified secondary teachers during their first year of teaching? Numerous studies have explored the similarities and differences in first year teachers based on route to certification, but not from the perspective of the mentor teacher who is in the best position to observe the first-year teacher on a regular basis. This mixed method study conducted in one large suburban county in central Georgia included quantitative data from a survey based on the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers administered online to mentor teachers and qualitative data from face-to-face interviews conducted with six teachers who had completed their first year of teaching and had begun their second year of teaching in the fall of 2009.

Anderson (1995) evaluated a program of alternative teacher certification and found that principals are concerned that alternatively certified teachers were prepared to deal with content, but not classroom management, special needs students, or behavior issues. Both mentor teachers and the teachers reflecting on their first year of teaching expressed concerns about classroom management and managing student behavior. Other researchers, comparing traditionally and alternatively certified teachers, expressed concerns about the classroom management skills of alternatively certified teachers (Bowen, 2004; Nagy & Wang, 2006; Scarborough, 2007; Noble, 2007).

Bowen (2004) found that principals rated traditionally certified teachers higher in instruction and assessment. Mentor teachers and teachers reflecting on their first year of

teaching felt that traditionally certified teachers better demonstrated knowledge of content and pedagogy necessary for the effective planning and preparation of instruction than teachers certified through an alternative program. In the data collected for this study, mentor teachers rated both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers lower in the area of using student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction than in other areas. This is consistent with the findings of studies of principal perceptions comparing traditional and alternative certification programs (Anderson, 1995; Noble; 2007)

Strengths of first-year alternatively certified teachers identified by principals in prior research include enthusiasm, real world experiences, sense of team, maturity, involvement in school life and subject matter knowledge (Nagy & Wang, 2006; Anderson, 1995). The face-to-face interview data confirmed that the alternatively certified novice teachers identified their knowledge of subject matter and interpersonal relationships with students and other staff members as important components of a successful first year. Mentor teachers rated the majority of both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers consistently in their willingness to build relationships with colleagues and students through participation in school activities.

In comparisons of alternative certification and traditional certification novice teachers in Texas and Colorado, researchers recommended aggressive mentoring (Waymon, et al, 2003; Justice, Griner & Anderson, 2003). Gratch (2000) found that teacher development is ongoing and acceptance of this is important in helping beginning teachers accept limitations and ask for help. This is confirmed in the teacher interview responses that detail the importance of the mentor-protégé relationship to the success of the teacher during their first year of teaching.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine mentor teachers' perception of teachers certified through a traditional college program, and teachers certified through the TAPP program during their first year of teaching. A survey based on descriptors of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teaching was administered to mentor teachers in a large Middle Georgia school system to determine to what degree they had observed the behaviors in their first-year protégé. The survey data were analyzed quantitatively to identify noteworthy areas of similarity and difference between traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers. To provide qualitative data for cross reference, improve the accuracy of the data and produce a more complete picture, six randomly selected teachers, who had completed their first year of teaching and had begun their second year in the same school, were interviewed in face-to-face interviews. Seven, broad interview questions were constructed based on the analysis of the quantitative survey data that explored noteworthy indicators in order to build on the initial findings. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher for data analysis. The identity of the selected teachers was masked in order to ensure confidentiality and the audio recordings were erased after they were transcribed by the researcher.

#### Analysis of the Research Findings

Several noteworthy findings emerged from the survey data:

**Planning and Preparation:** This area had the highest variability in the mean scores between the traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers.

- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers more consistently demonstrated knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure than alternatively certified teachers.
- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers more consistently demonstrated knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety.
- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers similarly in their ability to assess student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards.
- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers similarly in their ability to select instructional goals based on value, clarity, suitability for diverse students and balance.

Mentor teachers' ratings of traditionally certified teachers were higher than alternatively certified teachers in the area of utilizing student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction.

#### Classroom Environment

- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers more often consistently demonstrated in setting appropriate expectations for, monitoring and responding appropriately to student behavior.
- Mentor teachers rated traditionally certified teachers lower than alternatively certified teachers in organization of the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources.

- Mentor teacher ratings of traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers were similar in their ability to establish a culture for learning, encouraging student pride in their work, and setting high expectations.

Instructional Practice: This area had the least variability in the mean scores of the traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers.

- Mentor teacher ratings of traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers were consistent in their ability to communicate directions, procedures, oral and written language accurately. The mentor teachers rated the alternatively certified teachers only slightly higher in this area.
- Mentor teacher ratings of traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers were consistent in their ability to engage students with variety of content, activities and assignments, grouping, instructional materials and pacing.

The greatest difference between mentor teachers' ratings of traditionally certified and alternatively certified teachers in this domain was in their reflecting on teaching practice to improve performance. Similar findings were identified in the analysis of the data obtained from the face-to-face interviews with the teachers who had completed their first year of teaching. The responses to the interview questions were categorized and two distinct themes became apparent from the data. Those themes revolve around relationships and realities.

### *Relationships*

Relationships are an important aspect of teaching and were a recurring theme in the interviews of the teachers who had just completed their first year of teaching. All of

the teachers were asked about the relationship and involvement with their mentor, and all of the responses related the positive, helpful, supportive relationship that the mentor teacher fostered. The words help, support, sharing of ideas, availability were common descriptors of the involvement with the mentor during the first year of teaching.

Relationships were also echoed again when the teachers described the easiest aspect of teaching during their first year. They described the relationships with other teachers and student relationships as the easiest part of their first year. They talked about the relationships with other teachers when they discussed the process of planning for lessons with the sharing of ideas with other teachers from their grade level, or team, or subject area. Teachers who had completed their first year stressed the importance of relationships with students and other teachers as the most important thing a first year teacher should know and were intertwined with discipline, student success and teacher strength. All of these descriptions were categorized as relationships in teaching.

### *Reality*

Classroom management, lesson planning, and balance were aspects that many of the teachers considered most difficult as they reflected back on their first year of teaching. Demonstration of knowledge of appropriate lesson structure ( $SD = .63$ ) and utilization of student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction ( $SD = .61$ ) were the areas with the largest variance in mean scores from the mentor teacher survey data and the teachers' responses also reflected these concerns. Scarborough (2007) identified lack of practical, realistic teaching strategies in a study of teacher confidence. Researchers concur that the ability to differentiate instruction has been found to be a weakness of alternatively certified teachers and traditionally certified teachers (Nagy &

Wang, 2006; Noble, 2007; Wagneister, 2006). The difference in the mean scores of the two groups was highest in the area of utilizing student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction meaning that this was the area with the greatest difference in the mentors' rating of the two groups of teachers. When asked about their target or goal for the second year, the teachers' responses included: improving instructional methods, better planning, achieving student success. This further verifies that the teachers recognized that there is needed improvement in the utilization of student assessment results to improve instruction as they reflected on their first year teaching experience. Other areas in which the interviewed teachers expressed concerns were with balance between professional and personal issues, paperwork, using the available resources effectively and maintaining your sense of humor. Classroom management was either seen as strength or as a weakness for every teacher interviewed.

As Marzano (2007) summarized, a good part of effective teaching is an art and a science. It includes use of effective instructional strategies, use of effective classroom management strategies and effective classroom curriculum design. Danielson's (1996) framework for teaching includes these areas of professional practice as the basis for effective teaching. Reality is defined as the quality or state of being real; a real event, entity, or state of affairs. Since these areas of professional practice identified by teachers entering their second year of teaching are expressions of the current state of affairs or desired state of affairs in their teaching, these areas were categorized as reality.



## Conclusions

Conclusions that can be drawn from this study confirm that mentor teachers do perceive similarities and differences in first-year teachers who gained certification through a traditional teacher education program or an alternative certification program like TAPP. There were traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers who were rated by their mentor teachers to consistently exhibit the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers. There were also traditionally certified teachers and alternatively certified teachers who were rated minimally demonstrated on various indicators. Only alternatively certified teachers received ratings from their mentors of “not at all” demonstrated on any indicators.

The data gathered from the survey of mentor teachers identified differences in traditionally certified and TAPP certified first-year teachers. Traditionally certified teachers were rated higher, meaning that they more consistently demonstrated the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers in the Domain of Planning and Preparation. Demonstration of knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure was the area with the greatest difference in mean scores between teachers certified through traditional teacher-education programs and TAPP.

Similarities between teachers certified through TAPP and a traditional program identified from the data gathered from the survey of mentor teachers were in the area of classroom environment. In this domain, mentor teachers rated both traditionally and alternatively teachers low, meaning they less consistently demonstrated knowledge of setting appropriate expectations for, monitors and responds appropriately to student behavior. The mentors rated 64% of the alternatively certified teachers at the minimal

level on this indicator. Classroom and student behavior management were also identified in the interview responses as areas of importance for every participant. The greatest consistency between traditionally certified and TAPP teachers was organization of the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources with TAPP teachers having a higher mean score and a higher percentage of “consistently demonstrated” ratings by the mentor teachers. This was not mentioned by any of the interviewed teachers as an area of strength, or something that the teachers who had begun their second year of teaching held in high importance.

A striking similarity for traditionally and alternatively certified teachers was in the area of Instructional Practice. Relationships with colleagues and students were considered areas of strength by mentor teachers and by the teachers as they reflected on their first year. This indicator received the highest mean rating and was mentioned and discussed at length as an area of importance in every interview.

### Implications

Because the relationships that the mentor teachers built with their first-year teachers were based on trust and the collaborative support needed to make the first-year teacher successful, support for mentoring programs for first-year teachers regardless of the type of entry program is a substantial implication from this study. Administrative support for additional training for mentors, release time for mentors and first-year teachers, and creative scheduling to allow common planning time are crucial to provide the quality mentoring relationships necessary for the success of first-year teachers (Miller, McKenna & McKenna, 1998; Justice, Griner & Anderson, 2003; Waymon, et al,

2003). The interviewed teachers who shared planning time and/or common subject areas with their mentors communicated a more positive experience during their first year of teaching. When even one of these factors was present, the first year teacher seemed to realize a more positive first year experience than one in which the first year teacher was struggling to find even a minute of common time with the mentor and at the same time find someone who had the knowledge of the content with whom to collaborate on planning lessons. Common planning time and common subject area are both important in the pairing of mentor teachers with first-year teachers. Policy makers and school administrators may be interested in these findings as they plan for new teachers entering the profession.

Based on the findings of this study and the emerging theme of the realities of teaching, it is recommended that teacher induction activities address strengthening the areas of lesson and unit design, and classroom management. These areas could be addressed through system level professional learning activities or seminars for novice teachers and their mentors. The indicator with the lowest mean score for both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers was utilizing student assessment data for planning and differentiating instruction. Training and enhancement opportunities in the area of using student assessment data for planning and differentiating instruction would benefit novice teachers during their induction to teaching. This is an area that could be addressed through site based or system level professional learning activities or through appropriate feedback from mentor teachers.

### Recommendations for Future Study

As stated in the limitations of the study, population size prohibits the researcher from being able to generalize the findings to a larger population. Replication of the study on a much larger scale would provide data that could be generalized to a larger population of first year teachers. Replication of the study including only elementary teachers and mentors could provide additional data that could be cross referenced to the findings from the study of secondary teachers and mentors. Quantitative analysis on limited data does not provide adequate information to draw conclusions. A quantitative study, utilizing the same or similar survey instrument with first-year teachers and their mentor teachers in matched pairs nationally, statewide or regionally may provide more definitive data with the potential for in-depth, quantitative statistical analysis and provide the basis for further research on this topic.

Qualitative data, obtained from interviews with teachers in the spring of their first year of teaching rather than after the passage of summer and the beginning of a new year may provide richer, more relevant data, and paint a more realistic picture of the correlation between the mentor data and the teacher interview data in the replication of this study.

### Dissemination of the Study

The researcher is a member of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) which publishes *Educational Leadership*. A summary of the research findings will be submitted as a manuscript for publication in this journal. The results and recommendations will be shared with the Director of Professional Learning and system level personnel in the county in which this study was conducted to strengthen

the induction program for new teachers in the areas of lesson and unit design, utilization of student data for lesson planning and differentiation of instruction, and classroom management. The entire research study will be published electronically in the Zach Henderson Library of Georgia Southern University with the survey instrument available for future studies.

### Concluding Thoughts

Many aspects of teacher certification, teacher education programs, and the art and science of teaching have changed in the past thirty years. When I entered the teaching profession in 1973, there were only informal mentors who took novice teachers “under their wing” and helped them survive the first year of teaching. They gave advice, they shared their materials, and they even listened to you cry and encouraged you to come back the next day. Those mentors are no longer in the classrooms, but have left behind a legacy of helping, listening, collaboration and collegiality that is self-perpetuating. In today’s educational arena, first-year teachers are routinely assigned a mentor (Humphrey, et al, 2008). Today, the mentoring is more deliberate, more direct, more organized. Many of the mentor teachers have been through extensive training. Many are simply that experienced teacher who will accept a novice and help him survive that first year. These first year teachers do survive and do thrive. The purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and differences in first year traditionally and alternatively certified teachers from the perception of the mentor teacher. There are many similarities and there are some noteworthy differences that can actually deny students who need qualified teachers with specialized knowledge and pedagogy. But, molding these similarities and differences into the patterns of knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished

teachers that positively impact student achievement is the key to quality teachers. It is imperative that, regardless of the route to the classroom, quality teachers must be developed. Our students deserve teachers with the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teaching, whether that teacher is in their first year of teaching, or their thirty-first year of teaching.

The data gathered from the interviews of the teachers who were beginning their second year of teaching was varied, but the same themes emerged in almost every interview. The one theme that stood out as most noteworthy to this researcher was the importance of the relationships that teachers forge with their colleagues and with their students during their first year of teaching. These relationships with colleagues will build the future of the profession through the sharing of ideas, resources and the spirit of collaboration. The relationships built with students, both positive and negative, will impact the future through the influence of that one teacher who may make the difference for that one child.

The researcher believes that the information obtained from this study may enlighten policymakers, school administrators, mentor teachers, and novice teachers of areas of similarity and difference in the domains of Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Instructional Practice of first year teachers based on their route to certification. This knowledge will then be useful in planning for meaningful induction programs and activities, and to provide a basis for specific professional learning requirements for beginning teachers based on their route to certification.

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## Appendix A IRB Approval Letter

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs <b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>		
Phone: 912-478-0843		Veazey Hall 2021
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-478-0719	IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

**To:** Gail S. Nelson  
1396 Unadilla Hwy  
Hawkinsville, GA 31036

**CC:** Charles E. Patterson  
Associate Vice President for Research

**From:** Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs  
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees  
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

**Date:** September 28, 2009

**Subject:** Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

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After a review of your proposed research project numbered H10066 and titled "A Case Study of the Perception of the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions of Alternatively and Traditionally Certified First-Year Teachers in Sunny County", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.*

**This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter.** If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes  
Compliance Officer

Appendix B  
Permission to Conduct Research



DAVID CARPENTER, SUPERINTENDENT

BOARD MEMBERS

DR. CHARLES M. (TOBY) HILL, VICE CHAIRMAN  
SKIP DAWKINS  
DR. MARIANNE MELNICK

TOM WALMER, CHAIRMAN

W. G. CLEMENTS  
HELEN HUGHES  
FRED WILSON

**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: September 23, 2009

TO: Gail S. Nelson  
Perry Middle School

FROM: James H. Kinchen  
Executive Director for School Operations

SUBJECT: **RESEARCH APPROVAL REQUEST**

Your request to conduct research for your doctorate from Georgia Southern University by surveying personnel in the Houston County School System that are currently mentoring first year teachers in a middle or high school level and conducting an additional six interviews with a random sampling of first year secondary teachers from the 08-09 school year is approved. I will need a copy of the principal's approval letter from the schools that qualify for your research.

Please keep in mind that the Central Office Department of Testing and Information Technology is unable to compile data for your research.

My best as you work toward your Doctorate degree. Please let me know if I may be of any assistance to you again in the future.

JHK:jm

c: Dr. Robin Hines  
Mr. Ed Dyson  
Mr. Thomas Moore

P.O. Box 1850 • PERRY, GEORGIA 31069  
(478) 988-6200 • FAX (478) 988-6259

[WWW.HCBE.NET](http://WWW.HCBE.NET)

Appendix C  
Research Base for Survey Questions

	Framework component	Research Base
	<b><i>The first-year teacher:</i></b>	
1	Demonstrates knowledge of the content, of connections and prerequisite relationships, or content related pedagogy and of connections with technology.	PSC Standard 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8; BOR Principle IC IIA(3), IIA(4), IIB (7); NCATE Standard 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 4.1; INTASC Principle 1; Danielson 1a, NBPTS Proposition 2.
2	Demonstrates knowledge of age group characteristics, students' different approaches to learning, students' skills and knowledge levels and of students' interests and cultural heritage.	PSC Standard 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 7.3, 8; BOR Principle IIA(2), IIA(3), IIA(4); NCATE Standard 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 4.1; INTASC Principle 1, 2, 3, 10; Danielson 1a, 1b, NBPTS Proposition 1, 2
3	Selects instructional goals based on value, clarity, suitability for diverse students and balance.	PSC Standard 1.4, 1.7, 4.1; BOR Principle 1-B; NCATE Standard 1.4, 1.7, 4.1; INTASC Principle 3 3-4, 3-5, Principle 10 10-2; Danielson 1b; NBPTS Proposition 1
4	Demonstrates knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety.	PSC Standard 1.4, 1.7, 4.1; BOR Principle IB, II B(9); NCATE Standard 1.4, 1.7, 4.1; INTASC Principle 3, 6, 10; Danielson 1d, 1b; NBPTS Proposition 1, 5
5	Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IA(2), II A(7), B(9); NCATE Standard 1.4, INTASC Principle 3, 5, 10; Danielson 1d, 2a, 2b, 2c; NBPTS Proposition 3
6	Assesses student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards.	PSC Standard 1.7; BOR Principle IIA(4); IIA(5); NCATE Standard 1.7; INTASC Principle 8; Danielson 1f; NBPTS Proposition 3
7	Uses student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction.	PSC Standard 1.7; BOR Principle IIA(5); NCATE Standard 1.7; INTASC Principle 2; Danielson 1f; NBPTS Proposition 3
8	Creates an environment of respect and rapport through appropriate teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction.	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IIA (7); NCATE Standard 1.4; INTASC Principle 5; Danielson 2a, 2c.

	<b>Framework component</b>	<b>Research Base</b>
9	Establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IIA (7); NCATE Standard 1.4; INTASC Principle 5; Danielson 2a, 2c.
10	Appropriately manages instructional groups, classroom transitions, materials and performs non-instructional duties.	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IIA (7); NCATE Standard 1.4; INTASC Principle 5, 8; Danielson 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 4b, 4d, 4e; NBPTS Proposition 3.
11	Sets appropriate expectations for, monitors and responds appropriately to student behavior.	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IIA (7); NCATE Standard 1.4; INTASC Principle 5; Danielson 2a, 2b, 2c NBPTS Proposition 3
12	Organizes the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources.	PSC Standard 1.4; BOR Principle IIA (7); NCATE Standard 1.4; INTASC Principle 3,5; Danielson, 2c, 2e; NBPTS Proposition 3
13	Directions, procedures, oral and written language are communicated accurately.	INTASC Principle 6; Danielson 2a, 3a, 3b, 3c
14	Uses a variety of questioning techniques, engages students in discussion and encourages student participation.	PSC Standards 1.4, 1.7, 4.1, 7.4; BOR Principle IA, IIA (2), IIA (5); NCATE Standard 1.4, 1.7; INTASC Principle 3, 7; Danielson 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f; NBPTS Proposition 3.
15	Engages students with variety of content, activities and assignments, grouping of students, instructional materials and pacing.	PSC Standards 1.4, 1.7, 4.1, 7.4; BOR Principle IA, IIA (2), IIA (5); NCATE Standard 1.4, 1.7; INTASC Principle 3, 7; Danielson 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f; NBPTS Proposition 3.
16	Provides quality feedback to students that is accurate, constructive and timely.	PSC Standard 1.7; NCATE Standard 1.7; INTASC Principle 2, 4, 5, 7; Danielson 3e, NBPTS Proposition 3
17	Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness through lesson adjustment, responses to students and persistence.	PSC Standard 4.1; BOR Principle IIA (3); NCATE Standard 4.1; INTASC Principle 2, 4, 5, 7; Danielson 3e, NBPTS Proposition 3
18	Reflects on teaching practice to improve performance.	PSC Standard 1.4, 1.6; NCATE Standard 1.4, 1.6; INTASC Principle 4, 8, 9; Danielson 4a, NBPTS Proposition 4

	<b>Framework Component</b>	<b>Research Base</b>
19	Maintains accurate records regarding instructional and non-instructional matters.	BOR Principle IIA (5); INTASC Principle 8; Danielson 4b; NBPTS Proposition 3
20	Communicates with families regarding instructional programs and student progress and seeks to engage families in the instructional process.	PSC Standard 1.6; NCATE Standard 1.6; INTASC Principle 10; Danielson 4c; NBPTS Proposition 1
21	Seeks to build relationships with colleagues, and participates in school activities.	PSC Standard 1.6; NCATE Standard 1.6; INTASC Principle 9; Danielson 4d, 4e, 4f; NBPTS Proposition 1, 5
22	Seeks to grow professionally through enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	PSC Standard 1.6; NCATE Standard 1.6; INTASC Principle 9; Danielson 4d, 4e, 4f; NBPTS Proposition 1, 5
23	Shows professionalism in service to students and decision making.	PSC Standard 1.4; NCATE Standard 1.4, INTASC Principle 10;
24	By what route did your mentee become a teacher?	Nardi, 2003
25	Does your certificate contain a TSS endorsement?	Nardi, 2003
26	Including this year, approximately how many first year teachers have you formally mentored?	Nardi, 2003



Appendix D  
Informed Consent Letter to Survey Participants



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
April, 2009

Dear Mentor Teacher:

My name is Gail S. Nelson. I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study to identify similarities and differences in teacher knowledge, skills and dispositions between traditionally and alternatively certified first year teachers in Middle Georgia. Because mentor teachers are in a position to make firsthand observations of first year teachers, this data will be gathered by conducting a survey of mentor teachers in the Middle Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA).

You were recommended by your principal as a possible participant in this study because you are currently mentoring a first year teacher. Participation in this survey is strictly voluntary; however your assistance with this study would be greatly appreciated. By completing the survey, you will help to provide valuable information about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of beginning teachers in the middle Georgia area from alternative and traditional certification programs. If you choose to participate in this study, your responses to the questions will be confidential. Completion and submission of the survey implies that you agree to participate and your data may be used in this research.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me at (478) 972-1758. You may also contact me via e-mail at [gail.nelson@hcbe.net](mailto:gail.nelson@hcbe.net). Additionally, you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Charles A. Reavis, at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia 30460 or via e-mail at [careavis@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:careavis@georgiasouthern.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may also contact the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465. A copy of the results of this study will be available upon request and will be published as a dissertation through the Zack Henderson Library of Georgia Southern University.

Thank you for your assistance in this study to identify similarities and differences in the knowledge, skills and dispositions of beginning teachers in the state of Georgia. The contribution of your time and expertise is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Gail S. Nelson

Appendix E  
Survey

Directions for Participants

Please read the statements of demonstration of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of accomplished teachers and rate your first year mentee teacher based on your professional observations on the following scale for each statement:

**Not at all**.....1  
**Minimally**.....2  
**Consistently** .....3

The last three questions are demographic information necessary for data analysis.

Please mark one answer. In order to maintain confidentiality, please submit the survey in the manner directed on the website. Thank you for taking your valuable time to assist with this endeavor.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions of Accomplished Teachers

<b>The first-year teacher:</b>		<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Minimally</b>	<b>Consistently</b>
1	Demonstrates knowledge of the content, of connections and prerequisite relationships, of content related pedagogy and of connections with technology.	1	2	3
2	Demonstrates knowledge of age group characteristics, students' different approaches to learning, students' skills and knowledge levels and of students' interests and cultural heritage.	1	2	3
3	Selects instructional goals based on value, clarity, suitability for diverse students and balance.	1	2	3
4	Demonstrates knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety.	1	2	3
5	Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure.	1	2	3
6	Assesses student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards.	1	2	3
7	Uses student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction.	1	2	3
8	Creates an environment of respect and rapport through appropriate teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction.	1	2	3
9	Establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work, and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	1	2	3
10	Appropriately manages instructional groups, classroom transitions, materials and performs non-instructional duties.	1	2	3
11	Sets appropriate expectations for, monitors, and responds appropriately to student behavior.	1	2	3
12	Organizes the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources.	1	2	3
13	Directions, procedures, oral and written language are communicated accurately	1	2	3

	<b>The first year teacher:</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Minimally</b>	<b>Consistently</b>
14	Uses a variety of questioning techniques, engages students in discussion and encourages student participation.	1	2	3
15	Engages students with variety of content, activities and assignments, grouping of students, instructional materials and pacing.	1	2	3
16	Provides quality feedback to students that is accurate, constructive and timely.	1	2	3
17	Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness through lesson adjustment, responses to students and persistence.	1	2	3
18	Reflects on teaching practice to improve performance.	1	2	3
19	Maintains accurate records regarding instructional and non-instructional matters.	1	2	3
20	Communicates with families regarding instructional programs and student progress and seeks to engage families in the instructional process.	1	2	3
21	Seeks to build relationships with colleagues, and participates in school activities.	1	2	3
22	Seeks to grow professionally through enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	1	2	3
23	Shows professionalism in relation to students, parents, and decision making.	1	2	3
	<b>General Information</b>			
24	By what route did your mentee become a teacher?	1	Traditional	
		2	TAPP	
25	Does your certificate contain a TSS endorsement?	1	Yes	
		2	No	
26	Including this year, approximately how many first year teachers have you formally mentored?			

## Appendix F Interview Protocol and Interview Questions

### Interview Protocol

Introduction: I am Gail Nelson, Assistant Principal for Instruction at Perry Middle School. I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern and for my dissertation I am conducting a study comparing your perception of knowledge, skills and dispositions of first-year teachers' at the end of their first year with the perception of mentor teachers. I will ask you seven questions, and would like for you to reflect on your first year of teaching as you answer. Please know that nothing you say will be identifiable in the final paper. As I explained in the request to interview you, if I use quotes, or phrases from your answers, you will be only identified by a fictitious name or teacher number one, two, etc. I will take some notes while you answer, and use an audio recording of your answers just to ensure accuracy. After the responses have been transcribed, I will destroy the recording. Is this agreeable with you?

### Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your involvement with your mentor during your first year of teaching. (try to probe for actual examples of experience, observations, pre/post observation conferences, debriefing, support, collaborative planning, assistance, advice, etc.)
2. What aspect of teaching did you find to be the most difficult during your first year? Why do you think this is so?
3. What aspect of teaching did you find to be the easiest for you during your first year? Why do you think this is so?
4. Please tell me about the processes of planning for lessons? What does the term differentiation mean to you in the scheme of planning and carrying out a lesson?
5. What is your greatest strength as a teacher? Why do you see that as a strength? What is your goal or target for your second year? Why is that important to you?
6. What is the most important thing you think a first year teacher should know when they walk in the classroom? Why?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your first year as a teacher?

Appendix G  
Informed Consent Letter to Interview Participants



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

September 23, 2009

Dear Teacher:

My name is Gail S. Nelson. I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study to compare perceptions of first-year teacher knowledge, skills and dispositions among beginning teachers through a brief interview. You were randomly selected from the pool of middle and secondary teachers who completed their first year of teaching in FY09. Participation in this interview is strictly voluntary; however your assistance with this study would be greatly appreciated. You will help to provide valuable information about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of first-year teachers from alternative and traditional certification programs. If you choose to participate in this study, your responses to the interview questions will remain anonymous and confidential. Realizing that your time is valuable, I will only ask a total of seven questions which will be recorded and later transcribed.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me at (478) 972-1758. Additionally, you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Charles A. Reavis, at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia 30460 or via e-mail at [careavis@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:careavis@georgiasouthern.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, you may also contact the IRB Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 478-0843. A copy of the results of this study will be available upon request and will be published as a dissertation through the Zack Henderson Library of Georgia Southern University.

Thank you for your assistance in this study of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of beginning teachers. The contribution of your time and expertise is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gail S. Nelson

\_\_\_\_\_ is willing to participate in a brief interview concentrating on my perception of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of first year teachers.

\_\_\_\_\_ does not wish to participate in a brief interview concentrating on my perception of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of first year teachers.

Appendix H  
Survey Participant Response Data

#	Question	1	2	3	All Mean SD	Traditional Mean SD	TAPP Mean SD
	<b>Planning and Preparation</b>						
1	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of the content, of connections and prerequisite relationships, of content related pedagogy and of connections with technology.	1 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 7.1%	9 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 35.7%	20 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 57.1%	2.63 .56	2.75 .45	2.5 .65
2	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of age group characteristics, students' different approaches to learning, students' skills and knowledge levels and of students' interests and cultural heritage.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	15 (Trad) 37.5%  (TAPP) 64.3%	15 (Trad) 62.5%  (TAPP) 35.7%	2.50 .51	2.63 .50	2.36 .50
3	The first year teacher selects instructional goals based on value, clarity, suitability for diverse students and balance.	1 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 7.1%	13 (Trad) 43.8%  (TAPP) 42.9%	16 (Trad) 56.3%  (TAPP) 50%	2.50 .57	2.56 .51	2.43 .65
4	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of resources for teachers and students in lesson design and variety.	1 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 7.1%	16 (Trad) 43.8%  (TAPP) 64.3%	13 (Trad) 56.3%  (TAPP) 28.6%	2.40 .56	2.56 .51	2.21 .58
5	The first year teacher demonstrates knowledge of appropriate lesson and unit structure.	2 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 14.3%	12 (Trad) 31.3%  (TAPP) 50%	16 (Trad) 68.8%  (TAPP) 35.7%	2.41 .63	2.69 .48	2.21 .70
6	The first year teacher assesses student learning based on congruence with instructional goals based on criteria and standards.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	14 (Trad) 43.8%  (TAPP) 50%	16 (Trad) 56.3%  (TAPP) 50%	2.53 .51	2.56 .51	2.5 .52
7	The first year teacher uses student assessment for planning and differentiating instruction.	2 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 14.3%	16 (Trad) 56.3%  (TAPP) 50%	12 (Trad) 43.8%  (TAPP) 35.7%	2.33 .61	2.44 .51	2.21 .70
	<b>Classroom Environment</b>						
8	The first year teacher creates an environment of respect and rapport through appropriate teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction.	1 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 7.1%	7 (Trad) 18.8%  (TAPP) 28.6%	22 (Trad) 81.3%  (TAPP) 64.3%	2.7 .53	2.81 .40	2.57 .65

#	Question	1	2	3	All Mean SD	Traditional Mean SD	TAPP Mean SD
9	The first year teacher establishes a culture for learning through establishing the importance of the content, encouraging student pride in work, and setting high expectations for learning and achievement.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	8 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 28.6%	22 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 71.4%	2.73 .45	2.75 .45	2.71 .47
10	The first year teacher appropriately manages instructional groups, classroom transitions, materials and performs non-instructional duties.	1 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 7.1%	14 (Trad) 37.5%  (TAPP) 57.1%	14 (Trad) 56.3%  (TAPP) 35.7%	2.45 .57	2.60 .51	2.29 .61
11	The first year teacher sets appropriate expectations for, monitors, and responds appropriately to student behavior.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	13 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 64.3%	16 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 28.6%	2.55 .51	2.75 .45	2.31 .48
12	The first year teacher organizes the classroom for safety, accessibility to learning and use of physical resources.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	4 (Trad) 18.8%  (TAPP) 7.1%	26 (Trad) 81.3%  (TAPP) 92.9%	2.87 .35	2.81 .40	2.93 .27
	<b>Instructional Practice</b>						
13	Directions, procedures, oral and written language are communicated accurately.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	9 (Trad) 31.3%  (TAPP) 28.6%	21 (Trad) 68.8%  (TAPP) 71.4%	2.70 .47	2.69 .48	2.71 .47
14	The first year teacher uses a variety of questioning techniques, engages students in discussion and encourages student participation.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	11 (Trad) 31.3%  (TAPP) 42.9%	19 (Trad) 68.8%  (TAPP) 57.1%	2.63 .49	2.69 .49	2.57 .51
15	The first year teacher engages students with variety of content, activities and assignments, grouping of students, instructional materials and pacing.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	7 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 21.4%	23 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 78.6%	2.77 .43	2.79 .45	2.79 .43
16	The first year teacher provides quality feedback to students that is accurate, constructive and timely.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	17 (Trad) 50%  (TAPP) 64.3%	12 (Trad) 43.8%  (TAPP) 35.7%	2.41 .50	2.47 .52	2.36 .50



#	Question	1	2	3	All Mean SD	Traditional Mean SD	TAPP Mean SD
17	The first year teacher demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness through lesson adjustment, responses to students and persistence.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	14 (Trad) 37.5%  (TAPP) 57.1%	16 (Trad) 62.5%  (TAPP) 42.9%	2.53 .51	2.63 .50	2.43 .51
18	The first year teacher reflects on teaching practice to improve performance.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	8 (Trad) 12.5%  (TAPP) 42.9%	21 (Trad) 81.3%  (TAPP) 57.1%	2.72 .45	2.87 .35	2.57 .51
19	The first year teacher maintains accurate records regarding instructional and non-instructional matters.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	9 (Trad) 18.8%  (TAPP) 42.9%	19 (Trad) 68.8%  (TAPP) 57.1%	2.68 .48	2.79 .43	2.57 .51
20	The first year teacher communicates with families regarding instructional programs and student progress and seeks to engage families in the instructional process.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	8 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 28.6%	21 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 64.2%	2.72 .45	2.75 .45	2.69 .48
21	The first year teacher seeks to build relationships with colleagues, and participates in school activities.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	3 (Trad) 6.3%  (TAPP) 14.3%	27 (Trad) 93.8%  (TAPP) 85.7%	2.90 .31	2.94 .25	2.86 .36
22	The first year teacher seeks to grow professionally through enhancement of content knowledge and pedagogical skill.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	5 (Trad) 25%  (TAPP) 7.1%	25 (Trad) 75%  (TAPP) 92.9%	2.83 .38	2.75 .45	2.93 .27
23	The first year teacher shows professionalism in relation to students, parents, and decision making.	0 (Trad) 0%  (TAPP) 0%	5 (Trad) 12.5%  (TAPP) 21.4%	25 (Trad) 87.5%  (TAPP) 78.6%	2.83 .38	2.88 .34	2.79 .43