PRE-CONCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES AND DESIRED

PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES FOR NOVICE TEACHERS

A Dissertation Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Gulmira Ismayil

December 2012

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Ismayil Amat and Mrs. Salima Tumur from whom I learned the value of hard work and determination to see things through to the end. I am eternally grateful to them for teaching me the important lessons of life through their compassion, devotion and unselfish giving to others. I love them dearly and am proud to be their daughter.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my wonderful professors in my committee, Dr. Allen Warner (my advisor), Dr. Margaret Watson, Dr. Cheryl Craig and Dr. Melissa Pierson. Their knowledge, their humble character and their guidance have touched me deeply. I wish them the best and I am sincerely thankful for their help in finishing this important dissertation work.

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ABSTRACT

The call for educational reform that focuses on teachers' academic and instructional skills and content knowledge has been of great interest for many educational scholars (Danielson, 2008; Marzano, 2003). The concern for such reform is even more critical in the case of novice teachers.

High rates of teacher attrition and job dissatisfaction – particularly among those within their first and second years of teaching – have prompted studies aimed at identifying issues and recommendations for analyzing and improving teacher preparation programs. This study discussed two aspects of knowledge. First, it investigated whether novice teachers feel competent in being evaluated under the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) instrument, an appraisal system applied in most school districts in Texas. Utilizing the novice teachers' perceptions, this study explored which competencies they considered to be the most essential in each domain of the PDAS. Secondly, it also investigated the perceptions of novice teachers regarding the two types of teacher preparation programs (Alternative Certification Programs and University-based Programs) from which respondents graduated.

The study used a survey instrument to gather data. Likert scale and open-ended questions were included. The survey was mailed to first- and second-year teachers in two public school districts in a large metropolitan area through their district staff development offices.

Descriptive analysis computed mean scores and standard deviations for individual items in each domain of the survey to identify the extent to which respondents felt their program prepared them to fulfill each of the 50 competencies of PDAS. Group means were analyzed using an independent-groups t-test, which was used to compare the responses from University-based programs and ACP programs to see whether the response patterns of the new teachers varied relative to their perception of adequacy of their preparation. Lastly, frequencies were computed to identify the most important teacher competencies as perceived by the novice teachers.

The results from the quantitative analyses revealed that teachers from both types of programs perceived their preparation to be adequate and there was no statistically significant difference found between the teachers' views of the two programs. However, results from qualitative data showed that there were areas where teachers thought they were less competent in terms of their preparation. Participants suggested some areas of improvement needed for teacher preparation programs. Most importantly, they stressed the importance of field experience.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Like many other professions, success within the teaching profession requires a wide variety of skills, knowledge, and attitude perspectives. Teachers who are best described as "professionally competent" demonstrate valuable teaching experience in a concrete manner (The Framework of Professional Teaching Standards, 2004). And, in most cases, such teachers have successfully undertaken an induction program and have met the standards for professional competence. Additionally, they productively monitor, evaluate and plan for learning (Stronge, 2007). These individuals also possess the ability to modify their specific teaching methods to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the class. These types of teachers received comprehensive professional training, and they can work collegially with other individuals and/or in teams to enhance their professional practice (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Stronge, 2007). Furthermore, these individuals take responsibility for collaboration with others to identify and address their own learning needs. They are effective members of a school and able to interact effectively with the broader community.

Given the wide variety of unique and ideal teacher characteristics listed above, one central question must be presented: How do teacher preparation programs produce qualified and competent teachers? Could local schools work even more closely with teacher preparation programs and create unique university/public school partnerships to promote more productive alliances so this approach can help to improve teacher quality? One way to answer these questions is to look at the following elements: Novice teachers' preparation, their perceived teacher quality, as well as their feedback and suggestions as a

means to improve the programs from which they have graduated. Thus, new teacher inductees serve as systemic links and are, therefore, inter-connected from every angle. This study examined these insights by surveying teachers in order to obtain their perceptions regarding their level of preparation for classroom teaching. Kaldi (2009) has suggested that researchers and educators need to explore new teachers' perceptions of self-competence in teaching immediately following their school teaching practice component in their final-year studies (i.e., four-year university course), as well as their views, emotions and opinions regarding their teaching experience in order to determine how these elements contribute essential elements in terms of the evaluation and improvement of initial teacher education courses.

Furthermore, while teachers' competence contributes to students' academic success, teacher preparation programs are the critical route for producing qualified teachers whom students so deserve. Also, if great numbers of new teachers can have positive experiences, and feel as though their feedback is valued and appreciated early on, they are more likely to remain in the teaching field. Moreover, if such conditions are possible, these teachers are more likely to strive to improve their professional practices. This particular point is an important consideration for educational leaders because recruiting new teachers and preparing proves more costly than the ground work and culture in which new teachers can feel as though they have opportunities to grow and be qualified.

Background of the Study

Levine (2006) estimates that the United States is facing a nearly 200,000 teacher vacancy per year rate that results in a loss of $4.9 billion annually, which is directly

related to high attrition rates among new teachers and the retirement of baby boomer teachers. It is also related to increasing student enrollment due to immigration, population redistribution, and regional growth. His research also suggests (qualitatively) that we need to raise teacher skills and knowledge in order to increase student achievement to the levels needed for an information economy. Thus, increasing teacher quality obliges a reduction in quantity, and increasing quantity requires a changeover in quality. Teacher education programs are facing the formidable challenge of doing both at once (Levine, 2006). Urban schools, particularly in high poverty areas with high numbers of minority populations, for instance, are identified as having the greatest number of novice teachers, the smallest number of qualified teachers, the highest rate of teacher attrition, and the largest population of underperforming students (National Partnership for teaching At-Risk Schools, 2005).

High-quality teacher preparation programs, therefore, are the key factor necessary to prepare new teachers for the nation's future teaching demands. Those teachers who are better prepared remain in the teaching field at higher rates. (The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future and NCTAF State partners 2002). Those teachers who complete a well-designed five-year and four-year teacher education programs remain in the teaching field at much higher rates, especially in comparison to those hired through alternative certification programs, which offer only a few weeks of training before new hires are left to manage on their own in the classroom – sometimes in relative seclusion (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Performance assessments, which are closely coupled with teacher effectiveness, measure what teachers actually do in the classroom and are a much more powerful tool for evaluating teachers' competence and

readiness, as well as for supporting necessary changes in teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) created an instrument, titled the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), through which Texas school districts can evaluate teacher performance and successively measure teacher effectiveness. The evaluation measurement within this appraisal instrument should identify effective teachers and, ultimately, link their effectiveness to concrete, measured student achievement. Such information also allows school administrators to work with underperforming teachers, and providing these teachers with additional professional development that can lead to greater levels of classroom effectiveness that can, subsequently, translate into increased levels of student achievement. Since the PDAS is the instrument used to evaluate the teachers in the majority of Texas schools – particularly in terms of assessing their performance and their achievement in their teaching career – novice teachers should be prepared to function and perform at that level. Thus, aligning teacher preparation in Texas and the PDAS requirements is considered critically important, especially since such an action will help new teachers to meet (or even exceed) the relevant standards during a future appraisal (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

To further explain the present dilemma within the field of teaching, this study discussed two aspects of knowledge: (a) The extent to which novice teachers perceived the teacher preparation program as sufficient, and (b) which competencies are perceived

to be the most essential in each domain of the Professional Development Appraisal

System (PDAS).

The main concern here was how prepared the novice teachers were for their

teaching careers; how confident they were to conduct successful teaching; and, how

competent they felt in meeting their students' needs by carrying out successful lessons in

their classrooms and to help their students reach academic success.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study included:

1. From the perspectives of novice teachers, to what extent did their program

   prepared them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency

   criteria specified in the PDAS?

2. What were the differences among the novice teachers who came from

   University-based Programs versus Alternative Certification Programs in

   terms of their perceived adequacy of preparation?

3. What competencies were perceived to be the most important by novice

   teachers?

4. Which three domains were perceived to be the most important by novice

   teachers?

Significance of the Study

Research exists concerning the experiences of novice teachers and the effect of

the teacher preparation programs in which they enrolled. The potential advantages and

disadvantages of the various routes to teacher certification have been discussed in the

research, and the extent of training required by Alternative Certification Programs and

University-based programs is critical to issues of certification and teacher effectiveness (Constantine, Player, Silva, Hallgren, Grider & Deke, 2009). This research contributed to the depth of those studies by adding the features of how novice teachers (a) view the teacher quality they possess; (b) in which areas they believe they are competent; and, (c) those areas in which they think they need to improve, along with the experiences they encounter in their new field of teaching practice. From the result of this study, suggestions have been made regarding changes in the teacher preparation programs. The study used a survey research method that allowed participants to share answers to relevant questions and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching experience. This survey study provided specifics regarding their teaching certificate, grade level, and their views about their preparedness for teaching. Future researchers could use this information for the purpose of follow-up studies, such as individual case studies, or other types of qualitative research.

This research benefits three primary groups of people in the education field. First, future novice teachers can learn from the experiences of participants from this study. Secondly, teacher preparation program developers and teacher educators can benefit from this study by reviewing the results provided from the study participants, as well as by analyzing existing teacher preparation programs. Finally, school administrators and principals can benefit by understanding the novice teachers' strengths, weaknesses and needs.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One of this study states effective classroom teachers can successfully undertake their duties and directly influence student achievement. This chapter provides

further background information regarding research backing the claim that effective

classroom teaching can be measured by teacher evaluation PDAS. Four research

questions were used to guide the study and determine how new teachers evaluate the

teacher preparation programs in which they have enrolled, as well as the important

teacher characteristics they should possess in order to carry out successful teaching. This

chapter also identifies the purpose and significance of the study.

Chapter Two presents a literature review regarding four main parts of the study.

It defined the state-adopted teacher evaluation system (i.e., the Professional Development

and Appraisal System [PDAS]). It also reviewed three other areas that are both important

to the study and deeply relevant to the teacher evaluation. This particular chapter

presents information pertaining to the trend of teacher preparation programs, the

important attributes of the teacher quality and the various challenges and problems new

teachers face in their teaching environment.

Chapter Three presents the methodology utilized in the study including the

background of the research instrument, the research design, the method of data collection,

and the data analysis method.

Chapter Four presents the results and overall findings of the study. The findings

of the research questions were used to determine whether new teachers view their

preparation programs as sufficient and what the most important features are among the

competencies perceived in each domain of Professional Development Appraisal System

(PDAS).

Lastly, Chapter Five summarizes the findings of the study. This chapter also

provided additional recommendations for future research and current practices and

implications of the research. Finally, the chapter presents the overall limitations of the study.

Chapter II

Literature Review

One of the major means for improving schools is to increase teacher effectiveness. Creating such a shift would better ensure that national education goals could be met, and the learning success of all students would be ensured, as it is said that "[a] few years with effective teachers can result in putting even the most disadvantaged students on their path to college, and a few years with ineffective teachers can result in making students deal with an academic blow for which they would require many years to recover" (Jordan, et.al, 1997, p.1). Moreover, numerous studies seek to discover other important factors related to teacher effectiveness, as well as those have their impacts on the actual process of effective teaching. For example, Noddings (1997) believes that, the current reform movements also repeat the errors and flaws of past decades as they neglect to examine the manner in which the standard statements respond to the primary question of teachers that is how to help students learn all the things they are expected to know and learn. She further states that current educational reform aims to focus on the things students need to learn yet it ignores the struggle of teachers regarding how to help students learn it all. Moreover, the inadequacy of pedagogical guidance exists for both veteran (i.e., experienced) teachers *and* novice teachers.

Another study by Wright et al. (1997) indicates that "more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor" (p.63). Moreover, Rivkin et al. (2005) state, "high quality instruction throughout primary school could substantially offset disadvantages associated with low socioeconomic background" (p. 419). Thus, today's teachers need to be effective in terms

of their content depth and knowledge, and in possessing the necessary pedagogical and instructional skills. Effective teachers are those who have the ability to enhance and transfer their content knowledge into numerous forms of pedagogical skills and practices that are equally powerful and adaptive to the variety of student backgrounds and abilities.

The literature review will focus on four major areas: (a) teacher evaluation in Texas, (b) the trend of teacher preparation programs in United States, (c) teacher quality improvement, and (d) novice teacher experiences.

Teacher Evaluation

The current issues and challenges associated with developing and maintaining an effective teaching force is also directly connected to whether or not schools can retain highly qualified and experienced teachers. Otherwise, if experienced high-quality teachers are consistently leaving the teaching field, or if they are transitioning into administrative positions unrelated to authentic teaching practices, the profession as a whole will continue to deal with a constantly eroding base of effective teaching. Therefore, if schools and educational institutes are to retain their experienced and highly qualified teachers – rather than struggling to replace a constantly shifting teacher population – then it is of immense importance for them to have effective systems for evaluation of teachers.

One of the teacher evaluation reports provided by Weisberg et al. (2009) states that the national failure to act and acknowledge on differences in effectiveness of teachers has resulted because of certain design flaws in most of the teacher evaluation systems. Thus, the need for the employment of effective evaluation systems in order to provide help in growing teachers professionally with having effective teaching skills is

crucial for the success of effective teaching and learning (Danielson, 2007; Stronge, 2007). Moreover, systems for the assessment and evaluation for teachers should not be only used as a method for dismissing unprepared teachers; rather, these systems should be used as a means of providing help to teachers in improving themselves. Thus, when these systems are used appropriately, then they will result in effectively maintaining the highly-qualified teachers in districts. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs must keep pace concurrently with this new wave of education reforms for teachers so that a stronger emphasis can be provided with regard to quality assurance, which is as an integral component pertaining to the performance assessments of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In addition, Stansbury & Zimmerman (2000) also stated regarding beginning teacher support and beginning teacher evaluation, "In keeping support and evaluation separate, confidentiality is a critical issue" (p.14).

The fairness of evaluation and support systems are also another concern related to the development of truly effective teachers, and within the field of education as a whole. As identified by Danielson (2001), the motive of these systems is to meet the needs of every teacher to the extent that the identification of excellent teaching is organized through local systems of teacher evaluation. Thus, it is of utmost importance that such systems be healthy and fair. Teacher preparation programs, therefore, play a critical role in ensuring that such systems can take hold. Shepard and McLaughlin (1995) suggest that linking the performance standards with content standards will provide useful means for instructional guidance of teachers. Moreover, these teacher education programs must provide responsive training to the statewide appraisal standards in order to prepare novice

teachers for the wide variety of challenges they can expect in the demonstration of higher

performance levels during the process of appraisal.

Teacher Appraisal System in Texas

Teachers in Texas are regularly appraised by their individual district in order to

ensure that the performance of all the teachers is accurately and appropriately reviewed.

This also provides protection to the teachers themselves because they get to know their

rights as described under the teacher appraisal process. The feedback provided by

evaluators helps teachers to reap benefits in the form of improvement, especially since

teachers become familiar with their strengths and weak areas during the evaluation phase.

Stansbury & Zimmerman (2000) stress the fact that, especially for novice teachers, most

of the times when they have the need to improve, they must be reminded of their

strengths as well. Teacher evaluation system should be treated as a help system for

teachers to improve professionally.

Before 1980s, there was no consistent teacher evaluation model in Texas. In

response to the education report "A Nation at Risk published" in 1983, the

governor at the time encouraged the Texas legislature to permit development of a

teacher evaluation system. The State Board of Education developed and implemented the

Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) by the Fall of 1986 following the House Bill 72

passed in 1984 (Setliff, 1989). At the time, Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff

surveyed other states that were using statewide appraisal systems, and gathered

information regarding teacher evaluation systems in place throughout 156 Texas school

districts and conducted a review of literature on teaching effectiveness. Thirty thousand

teachers were surveyed regarding the teacher evaluation methods currently in use in their

districts. This information was used to develop a list of teaching behaviors that were later included in the instrument (Davis-Frost, 2000). Although TTAS was recognized as a useful evaluation system which improved overall teaching effectiveness statewide, it assessed teachers based on primarily teacher activities. Freiberg and Knight (1987) stated due to the nature of the TTAS, which stresses competition among the teachers of a school, district, and the state, such a system leads to isolation for teachers and lack of cooperation between and among teachers.

Thus, during the 1990s, after understanding the critical need for accurate evaluation, teacher evaluation programs in the United States began to place increased emphasis on a human development model. The aim of this particular model is to value the learning of students, the growth of teachers, and the achievements made by students. Nevertheless, despite the progress that these evaluation programs and models have achieved in past few years, many teachers and educators believe that appraisal systems should focus on the learning of students rather than placing increased attention on the assumption of their achievements (Iwanicki, 2001).

The Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). Therefore, in Texas, one of the most important areas for the state's educational system is to improve student learning and teacher efficacy. It should be noted that numerous efforts have been taken by the state to institute change and improvement with regard to these particular areas of interest. In 1995, for instance, Texas Senate Bill 1 passed, which requires the state Commissioner of Education to recommend and develop an updated and improved appraisal system for all teachers in the state under the advisory supervision of educational leaders and experts. Thus, the Professional Development and Appraisal System – or

PDAS – was developed as a response to the need for an improved evaluation system (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005). The purpose and benefit of this system are to examine whether the training provided by the teacher preparation programs is, in fact, useful in preparing new teachers for the methods and criterion in which they will be appraised under the PDAS system. Moreover, alignment of the pre-service curriculum with the standard based teacher appraisal system will provide assistance to teachers in making successful transitions into school systems, especially since graduates of teacher preparation programs are required to carry out regular performance appraisals under the PDAS system. On the basis of these evaluations, the supervisors will make important decisions regarding the implementation of intervention plans, as well as the termination of employment when needed.

According to the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE), most of the school districts in Texas utilize PDAS in order to ensure accurate performance appraisal of teachers. Furthermore, the requirements of PDAS include a mandatory teacher orientation, specific qualifications for appraisals (such as 19 TAC), teacher training for appraisals, certification of teachers based on their performance and assignments, 45 minutes of observation, pre- and post-observation conferences, and teachers' self-report forms. All these methods are used in order to ensure the fairness of the appraisal system, and to ensure that all teachers are complying with the standards provided by the appraisal system (www.atpe.org).

In addition to the requirements of PDAS mentioned above, this system also includes fifty-one evaluation criteria that aim to improve Texas's teachers' professional practice. Moreover, this criterion is grouped functionally into eight further domains of

performance. PDAS also includes additional measures in order to cater to the areas of student discipline management and the campus-based performance of students with regard to the state's standardized testing. Furthermore, under the PDAS system, the districts should choose to appraise teachers no less than once every five years. In order to qualify for appraisal less than annually, however, teachers must have earned a proficiency rating of "Meets Expectations" in all eight PDAS performance domains. Appraisal on a less than annual basis must be rating by teacher consent. If a teacher desire to receive an annual appraisal, the district is obliged to maintain an annual appraisal schedule (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005).

Districts may choose to appraise teachers using a locally-developed instrument and protocol; nevertheless, such locally-developed systems must support certain framework requirements of the PDAS, and they must also be presented to the state education agency for approval. Teacher performance is appraised under PDAS within the context of at least one 45-minute observation per year and considered necessary, supplemented by additional walkthroughs and other observations. Additionally, unless otherwise waived by request of the teacher, a summative conference is required. Teachers who disagree with the content of their appraisal also have the right to request a second appraisal from another PDAS qualified administrator in the district (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005).

Goldrick (2002) states that "traditionally, the practices for teacher's evaluation were problematic as they were based on infrequent observations in classrooms and procedural reviews conducted by mostly untrained and overtaxed administrators of schools" (p.1). Moreover, typically, it was believed that the evaluation of teachers is

simply an annual ritual to be performed by the school principal, and it was considered "a tiresome chore that involves an enormous amount of time without delivering any fruitful outcomes" (Black, 1993, p.1). Thus, in order to prove that this perception is flawed, PDAS has considered numerous means for the improvement of appraisal and evaluation systems. Appraisers under PDAS are considered qualified when they complete a highly-standardize credit course of training offered by numerous principal certification programs in the use of systems. And, these programs are offered through administration certification agencies and universities. Appraisers under the framework of PDAS must also possess an administrative certification, such as "Superintendent", "Principal", or another similar certification issued by SBEC or the Texas State Board of Education Certification (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005).

The administration of PDAS also requires teachers to receive a comprehensive initial orientation to the system of PDAS. Once the teachers have attended this initial orientation, they will receive PDAS refresher training on a reoccurring, annual basis. This particular training aims to highlight all of the key components of the system, as well as the responsibilities and timelines of all parties involved in the PDAS process. Further, in such cases where a teacher's scores are below the acceptable PDAS levels, both the appraiser and teacher must meet and design a collaborative intervention plan with one another. The intention here is for such a plan to serve as a documented course of action that can provide details regarding how the teacher will improve each of his or her areas of deficiency – as identified by the appraiser. A yearly summative report, which is due within fifteen days prior to the last instruction day of the year, is also issued in relation to

performance evaluations based on classroom walkthroughs and 45-minute observations (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005).

Another aim of PDAS is to encourage all the teachers to become more engaged in relevant and meaningful professional development as an integral part of their teaching practice. In this regard, the system also provides opportunities for the purpose of encouraging teachers to consider their own practice individually. At the same time, they are also compelled to reflect on the performance of their campus as a whole. Teachers are also expected to consider the overall improvement of school, and the success of all students, through collegial teamwork. Thus, the overall performance of the campus in regard to the achievements of students is integrated into the evaluation and performance appraisals for teachers.

In addition to all of these efforts of PDAS, the National Commission on Excellence in Education also asserts that, "Tenure, salary, retention, and promotion decisions should be tied to an effective teacher's evaluation system that must include peer review so that those teachers who performed poorly can be either terminated or improved, those who performed average can be encouraged and the supervisor teachers can be rewarded to increase motivation levels" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, Recommendation D.2 Teaching). In a response to this decision, the most recent Commission for No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2007) and the National Governors Association have acknowledged their roles in order to promote effective teaching. Yet, questions regarding the viability of this reform strategy are still arising in the minds of concerned individuals (Goldrick, 2002).

Teacher Preparation Programs

The historical development of teacher education in the United States is no more restricted to private seminars and academics only; rather, it has been moved to normal schools, the professionalization of teacher education, and teacher institutes as well. Most of the colleges and universities of the whole country today contain the majority of preparation programs for teachers (Labaree, 2006). On October 22, 2009, Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education highlighted the need for effective teacher preparation programs during a speech at Teachers College. Specifically, he stated, "There is a strong need of a revolutionary change in the America's university based teaching preparation programs, and no evolutionary tinkering would be having any fruitful results in this regard" (National Council on Teacher Quality, www.nctq.org).

Furthermore, in a committee report under National Research Council, Ellen Condliffe, a senior scholar and professor at the Levy Economics Institute at Bard College, stated the following: "One should not treat teacher preparation programs as an afterthought in the discussions about how to improve the public educational system." She further added, "Most of the times in the debates of high-stakes policy, numerous discussions are mismanaged because of the limited information. So there is an equal need of more research and better collection of data in order to provide a firm foundation for the future policies and practices" (nationalacademies.org).

Studies also reveal that approximately 200,000 students in the United States complete teacher preparation programs each year. From these 200,000 students, approximately 70 to 80 percent are enrolled in traditional colleges and universities programs for bachelors or master's degree. As for the remainder, nearly 130 student are

enrolled in alternatives, such as 'Teach for America", or 'Teaching Fellows", which are

intended to recruit and train those teachers who do not have any traditional certifications

or degrees (Perry, 2011). Thus, given this comparison, a vigorous debate within the

education community is directly related to the issue of which of the two pathways cited

above (i.e., traditional education or alternative training) produce better qualified teachers.

However, the distinction between traditional and alternative pathways does not provide

any clear-cut or useful implementations. A broad overlap exists in practice and content

between these categories, and there is also a variation within both of the categories. A

program known to be a traditional pathway in one state may be considered as an

alternative in the other – hence, the overlap of practice (nationalacademies.org).

The trend of university-based teacher preparation program. As cited in

Morey (1997), another study by Clifford & Guthrie stated that the United States has a

long history of teacher education, which has its main origin in two concurrent

developments. The first development occurred during 1800s; when the training of

elementary teachers for the proliferating common schools was the primary role of normal

schools. Additionally, these normal schools were mainly the single purpose institutions

and combine the methodological studies with the actual classroom experiences. These

schools were not generally affiliated with colleges and universities during this period of

1800s. Some training was provided to teachers in these later institutions; yet, the focus of

such training was based primarily on the mastery of subject content and the preparation

of high school teachers. In addition, training in the areas of art, science, and practice of

pedagogy was often considered as irrelevant or unnecessary. However, some pedagogy

was incorporated into the curriculum of liberal arts. The notion of teacher education in

the context of special entity of academic training did not exist before this period (i.e., when there were the normal schools). In the early 1800s, tax supported, free elementary common schools were established, which led to an increase in the demand for more teachers possessing high-level qualifications (Labaree, 2006).

Furthermore, until the second quarter of the 19th century, there were very few elementary teachers who had any specific instructions for the work they performed. Therefore, one of the major challenges at that time was discover and understand which kinds of training needed to be offered. The normal schools of early periods provided a brief course of study in order to help students master the subjects they wanted to teach and acquire some skills and techniques for managing instructions. With the spread of secondary education, these normal schools began to require a high school diploma in order to get admission and to offer a two-year course of study. The curriculum included secondary academic subjects such as spelling, reading, arithmetic, philosophy, geometry, reviews of elementary subjects, and pedagogical subjects like psychology, history of education, observation and practice, and teaching methods (Feiman-Nemser, 1989).

During the period of the late 19th century, the normal schools' curriculum was increased to two years of collegiate work, which also included the preparation of high school teachers, in order to meet the increasingly growing needs of secondary schools. These normal schools were also facing high levels of competition from liberal arts colleges. Thus, in response to this fierce competition, normal schools expanded their curriculum so that more liberal arts subjects could be included. This integration of normal schools and liberal arts departments became the reason for the transformation of these institutions into colleges, which also resulted in changing their names to "Teacher

College". And, with the passage of time, these teacher colleges started offering

bachelor's degree in numerous fields, such as education, and were renamed again to

"state colleges". Most of these colleges became multipurpose universities afterward and

education became a separate academic unit within these universities. There was also a

dramatic increase in the attendance of colleges after World War II, which resulted in the

establishment of comprehensive research universities (Morey, Bezuk & Chiero, 1997).

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) has studied the benefits that

these preparation programs for teachers provide. NCTQ's National Review highlights

the following: "Almost 90% of the 240,000 new teachers have been prepared by the

higher education teacher preparation programs, and these highly prepared teachers are

hired each year. However, the negative side of these teacher preparation programs is that

these programs are held to weak standards and thus the ineffective and inefficient

programs receive national accreditation and approval by the states, which is not the case

in professional schools. Moreover, the result of state approval of ineffective programs is

that only few of the new teachers receive the skills and knowledge they need to be

successful in the classroom." (National Council on Teacher Quality, www.nctq.org).

The traditional definition of liberal arts education has been changed by the

"modern" research universities that emerged at the end of the 19th century. The modern

research university establishment also attacked the notion that only a few of the subjects

were "liberal". There are equal amount of developments in subject areas and new

disciplines like natural sciences, and most of the teachers and educational leaders believe

that these subjects should be taught. On the other hand, the classical curriculum has been

rejected increasingly – a result that gave rise to the inspiration of various ideas in general

education during some of the early decades of the 20th century. Further, a prescribed curriculum was incorporated during the first two years, which was designed to balance the growing specialization with the traditional liberal ideals or arts. This involvement of prescribed curriculum was intended to ensure that the understanding and exposure of the opportunities for electives that the students would be selecting in the last two years could respond to the specialized interests of students (Feiman-Nemser, 1989; Ravitch, 2003).

In the 20th century, while the traditional liberal arts represented a guard against early specialization (i.e., both professional and academic specialization), it became highly difficult to preserve such values in the liberal arts college and even in the university. During the 19th century, the certifications for teachers were also diverse and irregular. The education field does not have any single pattern to follow, and the education was not identified as a separate academic entity (Feiman-Nemser, 1989; Ravitch, 2003). This particular trend changed at the beginning of the twentieth century, and this turn evidenced a time in which relatively small departments of pedagogy expended in graduate and undergraduate schools of education. These institutions also developed numerous specializations, such as educational psychology, school administration, curriculum, and educational sociology. Professionals and educational leaders sought to create a profession of education that was expected to have its own technical language and its own preparation programs. The turn of the century welcomed the creation of university schools of education, which represented a part of a larger movement taking place in an effort to professionalize various occupations (Feiman-Nemser, 1989; Ravitch, 2003).

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hoping that this new thought would honor education as a strong and successful career; that it would result in the development of a specialized knowledge base; and, that it would, ultimately, support the preparation of professional educational leaders. In addition, the second decade of the 20th century placed more focus on the preparation of high school teachers of the university department of education's undergraduate level (Zeichner & Liston, 1990). Thus, when teacher education took its higher place in the modern university, the historical differences between the liberal arts traditions and normal schools did not disappear. Rather, these distinctions increased to increased levels as schools of education found them caught between pressures from the field and pressures from the university. Nonetheless, within the duration of their formative periods, major leading schools of education accommodated these professional and academic pressures by neglecting the need of initial teacher preparation, as well as by concentrating on graduate research and training instead (Feiman-Nemser, 1989). The National Council on Teacher Quality, however, provided numerous research studies that lent increased credence to the fact that improved teacher education was necessary. A review states that, "Motivated and talented people can be transformed into great teachers with the proper and right training. But the teacher preparation programs provided by different institutions must be up to the standards and up to the task. This is the reason why NCTQ (National Council on Teacher Quality) has provided a review of almost 1,400 higher education teacher preparation programs of the nation" (www.nctq.org).

Moreover, Committee on the Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States and National Research Council (2010) states that for the purpose of having a strong empirical basis for teacher preparation and related decisions of the teacher

educators and policymakers, the need for more research is crucial in order to establish and explore links between learning and teacher preparation. Their statement further indicates, "The quality of the nation's teachers has been the subject of sharp critiques, and so have many preparation programs. Yet, teacher preparation is often treated as an afterthought in discussions of improving the public education system. Federal and state policy makers need reliable, outcomes-based information to make sound decisions, and teacher educators need to know how best to contribute to the development of effective teachers. Clearer understanding of the content and character of effective teacher preparation is critical to improving it…" (p. 8).

Alternative certification programs. Alternative routes to teacher certification are state-defined routes through which an individual who already has at least a bachelor's degree can obtain certification to teach without necessarily having to go back to college and/or complete a college, campus-based teacher education programs. With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation, the demand for teachers increased in urban schools, which ultimately resulted in the growing development of alternative teacher certification programs. Since the 1980s, the number of alternately-prepared teachers has steadily increased (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). These programs differ widely in content and quality. The differences are expected due to the differing certification requirements from state to state. Accordingly, new teachers may enter the profession with varying levels of preparation and differing needs for further training. Advocates argue that alternative teaching preparation programs provide access for those who did not major in education in college but present skills needed for teachers into the profession (Birkeland & Peske, 2004).

Some studies suggest, however, that these ever-growing alternative certification programs are not truly adequate way to prepare teachers. For instance, a study by Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) found that teachers prepared through traditional routes feel better prepared for teaching than those peers prepared through alternate routes. These researchers also found a positive correlation between teachers' sense of preparedness, sense of self-efficacy, and teacher retention. They argue that alternative certification programs aimed at fast-tracking new entrants into the profession focus too heavily on subject matter knowledge, and not enough focus on learning to teach.

A study by Zietnek (2007) found mixed results related to the effectiveness of alternative certification programs. She surveyed beginning teachers in Texas from different certification programs about their pre-service preparation, prior classroom and career experiences, their perceptions of preparedness, their mentoring experiences, their commitment to teaching and self-efficacy. The study found that those teachers from traditional teacher preparation programs felt more prepared and had a higher self-efficacy than teachers from alternative certification programs. However, these differences were alleviated somewhat by non-traditionally certified teachers who reported having positive mentoring experiences and prior classroom experiences. These results support the notion that the quality of a teacher education program is more important than the type of program.

Furthermore, the alternative certification programs have also gained momentum and popularity in the last few decades (www.teach-now.org). The programs have focused greater emphasis on quality assurance in recent years. Through research and

conversations with individuals who want to switch their careers to teaching, of the many reasons why mid-career changers are drawn to teaching, one non-profit Recruiting New Teachers organization identified the following five reasons:

1. **To give back.** Successful mid-career professionals often want to "pay back" that great teacher or the educational community that helped them achieve academically and personally.

2. **To put experience to use.** Mid-career changers want to bring various experiences to the classroom, such expertise developed in another career, maturity, negotiating skills, or parenting experience.

3. **To change the meaning of "work."** Mid-career changers often go into teaching for the opportunity to mentor and interact with young people, to get closer to their community, and to awaken young minds.

4. **To follow one successful career with another.** Individuals with experience in the military, the Peace Corps, and other careers have the drive and commitment to be successful teachers.

5. **To share knowledge and passion.** Mid-career changers combine the enthusiasm and dedication of new teachers with deep understanding of subjects such as mathematics, science, literature, or technology (theteachercenter.org).

Figure 1 below, which has been provided by the survey results of the National Center for Alternative Certification, shows the increasing popularity of alternative certification programs during the last few decades (www.teach-now.org).

Number of Teachers Certified Through Alternate Routes, 1985-2009
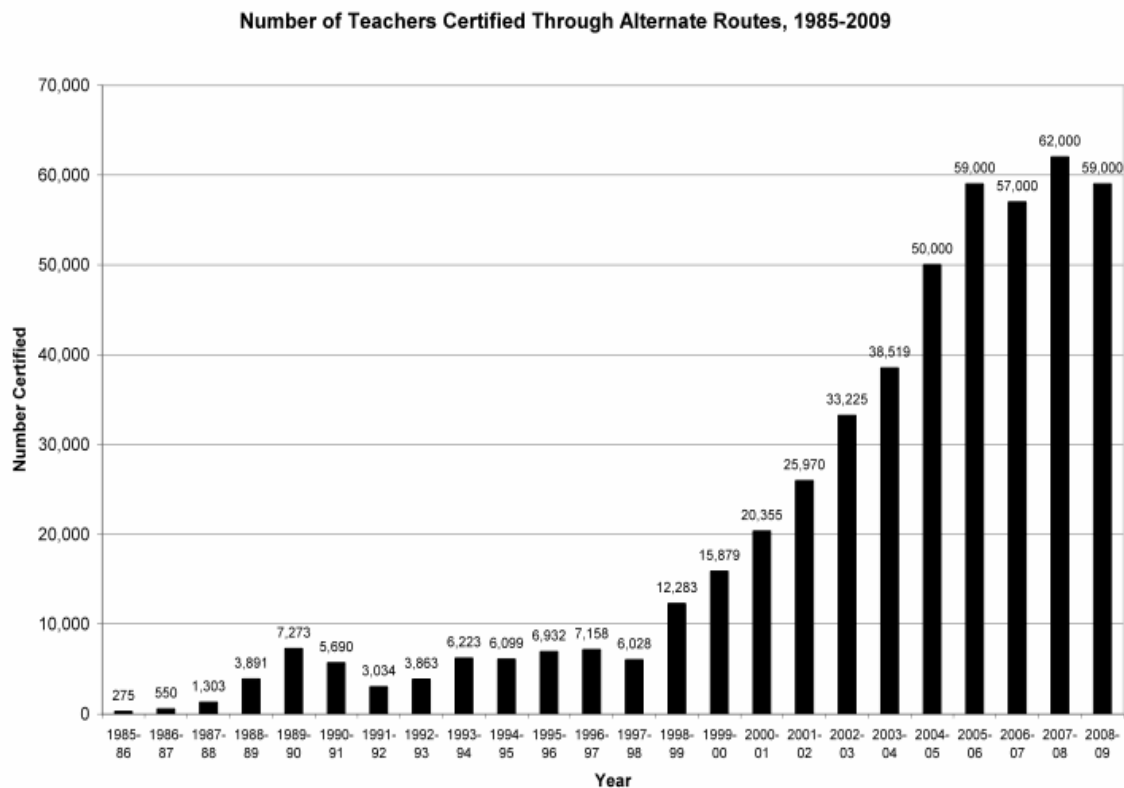
Figure 1. Number of teachers certified through alternate routes, 1985-2009. This graph

illustrates the growing rate of alternatively-certified teachers in the U.S. from 1985

through 2009.

      Currently, 47 of the 50 states recognize alternative certification programs as

legitimate routes into the teaching profession (Feistritzer, Haar, Hobar, & Scullion,

2005). According to Bartell (2005), those teachers who graduated from alternative

certification programs have various levels of expertise and different levels of experience.

They enter the teaching field for a variety of reasons and motivations. In Texas, 55

percent of the 26,576 standard teacher certificates issued for 2006-2007 academic year

were issued through alternative programs (Keel, 2008). The State Board for Educator

Certification approved, Texas Alternative Certification Program, is an intensive one-year

educator preparation program designed to identify, select, train and certify top-quality

teacher candidates through a series of workshops, seminars, field activities, and an

internship. In Texas, examples of alternative certification programs include regional

educational service centers' teacher preparation programs, such as Region IV's

alternative certification teacher preparation programs, and some independent school

districts' alternative certification teacher preparation programs.

Improving Teacher Quality

As a matter of fact, the demand for highly qualified and effective teachers is

increasing with time. Therefore, there is a strong need to identify and present a definition

for a highly qualified teacher. The primary understandings and conceptions of teacher

quality differ greatly because of personal ideas of quality and individual experiences

within different communities over time. However, states and acts provide a variety of

definitions in the context of effective and highly qualified teachers. For example, the

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines teacher quality as "[a] complex

phenomenon with having a little concurrence about what the teacher quality is and how it

can be measured." In addition, another contrasting definition is provided by the No Child

Left Behind (2002) as the following: "A highly qualified teacher is the one who possess

full state certification, a bachelor's degree, and competency in the subject matter."

Additionally, a reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (or NCLB) in 2008 holds that

teacher quality must be remained under increased levels of scrutiny (Pangan, 2008).

During the 1980s, with regard to the context of improving teacher quality,

researchers from institutions of higher education have conducted numerous studies and

discovered the process of total quality management (TQM). The phenomenon of TQM

has quickly become widespread in numerous fields – including the education sector. There have also been a number of books written to show that TQM is able to serve as a paradigm in order to improve each aspect of collegiate functioning – ranging from classroom instruction to fiscal administration. Examples of such works include *TQM for Professors and Students* by Bateman and Roberts (1992), *Total Quality Management in Higher Education* by Sherr and Teeter (1991), and many more. Terms that were previously common in management areas, such as "employee empowerment", "customer focus", "Deming's 14 Principles", and "continuous assessment", also started appearing in educations journals, as well as in the language utilized within administrative departments at various campuses. Deming himself suggested the linkage between quality management principles and education, claiming that, "improvement of education and the management of education, require application of the same principles that must be used for the improvement of any process, manufacturing or service" (Deming, 1994).

During the mid and early 1980s, the professionals of higher education in the United States called for reform in order to improve the quality of teacher education programs. This movement's primary aim was to bring development in the field of high-quality professionals, and to simultaneously renew teacher education and public K-12 school programs. Furthermore, studies continually indicated that, in order to accomplish such comprehensive changes in the education sector, professional teacher education preparation programs have a critical need to march towards widespread field-based experiences with the help of public schools or university partnerships. Those stakeholders who have opportunities in the decision making process would be expected to play a critical role in such partnerships. Therefore, in this context, it is necessary for such

collaborative programs to produce teachers that are highly-qualified and competent in their relative subject areas and fields. Moreover, the requirement and need from national accreditation agencies for systematic assessment is to provide a documentation that shows the competence of public school and university partnerships, as well as the professional development school movement (Kirkpatrick et al., 2006).

The National Academy of Education also provided numerous recommendations in this regard. One of those recommendations states, "Federal and State government should continue to provide funding for the experiments that could be used to examine all the possibilities that are designed to increase teacher retention. Such experiments might include bringing improvements in school culture and working conditions, salary incentives for successful teachers, and professional or mentoring development" (cepa.stanford.edu).

Levine (2006) also indicated that most of the teacher candidates have limited field work or clinical experience today in most teacher education programs and it consists only of the short periods of time spent on student teaching. Moreover, this student teaching experience, which was characterized as "the most valuable aspect of the education program" by new teachers, lasts a term or less for 76 percent of teacher education alumni. In that sense, it is increasingly important for educators responsible for teacher preparation and accreditation to work with local school districts in order to create approaches that smoother and more supportive for teacher entry and induction, including beginning teacher internships in professional practice schools.   Hence, through these types of approaches, quality teaching standards can be insured for all students based upon

assisting incompetent teachers to improve and have chance to practice real classroom teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

However, in order to ensure the success of these types of reforms, the coherence of partnerships is a crucial element. One can consider the classroom teaching experience as one of the core elements of success for novice teachers. Yet, it is also profoundly shaped by what principals and parents do, and equally by what superintendents, legislatures, state board of education, and school boards decide. Furthermore, the key holders of all these activities are the local and state leaders. They can make use of policies in order to encourage highly-qualified people to enter into teaching careers, set high standards for certification and licensing, and assure quality in teacher preparation programs. The local and state leaders can serve as direct resources in the context of professional development, and they can also reward excellence in the field of teaching. Local schools also have the opportunity to create smooth transitions and institute collaboration with universities for the purpose of hiring of teachers, teacher preparation, and ongoing professional development. Such actions will also help to create partnerships with local colleges for the purpose of developing preparation programs for teachers that might include pathways into teaching for para-professionals, clinical training for a year's period in professional development schools, pathways for mid-career changers, and internships for providing support, especially for beginning teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Universities and colleges can also create extended programs for teacher education with year-long internships provided in schools of professional development and other high-quality pathways alternatively at the level of post-graduate. These colleges and

universities also have the opportunity to work with local school districts in order to create supported and smooth approaches in the areas of teacher induction and entry, including internships for novice teachers in all the schools that have deployed professional practice. Also, there are numerous accrediting bodies for teacher education at the national level that aim to provide support for the education of teachers. One such body includes the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), which has incorporated these sets of standards into its evaluation framework of teacher education programs. Thus, all the accredited programs must now demonstrate that they prepare teachers with the necessary depth of knowledge in both their content areas and subjects they teach; with a strong understanding of teaching, learning, assessment, and curriculum; and, with knowledge in the use of technology. These accredited programs must also ensure that teachers have a relevant field experience in order to assure that they can prepare themselves to become an effective and highly-qualified teacher in the long run (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Novice Teacher Experiences

  Issues and challenges facing novice teachers. A number of research studies have been conducted for the purpose of addressing the classroom practices and beliefs of novice teachers. Most of these studies define a novice teacher as "a teacher with having less than three years of experience in the field of teaching, and whose teaching practices tend to focus on survival with the establishment of basic routines of the classrooms" (Sherin & Drake, 2000). Numerous other studies in the education sector also resulted in recognizing the need for better preparation of novice teachers in order for them to deal with the challenges that they will inevitably face during the early years of their teaching

career. Most novice teachers reported that their undergraduate education program was inadequate in fully preparing them to face the demands of teaching in classrooms. It is projected that 3.9 million new teachers will be needed nationwide by the year 2014 due to retirement and teacher attrition (National Education Association, 2006). With regard to the latter figure, current research shows that almost 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first 5 years (National Education Association, 2006). In Texas alone, the retention rate of total 18909 first-year teachers, graduated from both University-based programs and ACP programs, who became employed for public schools in the 2006-2007 school year (for the same group of people) has dropped from 100% in 2007 to 91.6% in 2008, to 85.3 % in 2009, to 80.4% in 2010 and to 76.5% in 2011 respectively (Performance Analysis for Colleges of Education, 2011). However, another study conducted by Jeffery (2012) about the relationships among perceptions of job satisfaction and retention of Texas secondary teachers, she found the retention rate of 267 first and second year teachers (hired for middle and high schools for the school years of 2009-2010) graduated from both University-based and ACP programs which was actually not low. Twelve of them left from their current positions in their 2nd year teaching (2010-2011 school years) and from the remainder of 255 teachers, 29 of them left in their 3rd year teaching (2011-2012 school years). This finding contradicts the norm of the existing literature. This could be explained by the recent economic downturn and difficulty of finding jobs in all fields.

Furthermore, novice teachers typically have little concrete experience in dealing with the multifarious challenges that present themselves in today's classrooms – that is, teaching to those children who do not know English, who belong to inadequately

unsupported families, who are disabled, who are disillusioned with the progress of their schools, who are alienated from the dominant culture of school, and those who are unmotivated to learn anything (Vaughn, et.al, 1997). Therefore, these complex situations that require rapid decision-making processes often make beginning teachers frustrated and unmotivated. Ultimately, such effects could actually be mitigated then beginning teachers are provided with relevant and useful development in terms of the effectiveness and quality of their teaching. Thus, the need to develop teaching and preparation programs for novice teachers is critical – for both the success of their career as well as the success of schools and students on the whole (Vaughn et al., 1997).

Many research studies have also centered their focus on the socialization of novice teachers – particularly in this context of preparation and experiences of the early career years. Pugach (1992) identified and examined the starting years of beginning teachers and stated that most of the beginning teachers are often insecure and have low levels of confidence which make them vulnerable to some degree. Thus their initial years of teaching experience are often socialization to the way that things usually are.

Another study conducted by Hebert and Worthy (2001) also stated that one of the most concerning factors in this area is related to the conflict that could arise due to the individual expectations of novice teachers about students and teaching, and the real world setting of education. The result of this conflict between expectations and reality is also known as "reality shock". The common offshoot of which is that when novice teachers come to realize that they are not fully prepared or ill-prepared for the duties and responsibilities that they need to perform, their motivation levels automatically and exponentially fall. New teachers also lack the ability to demonstrate flexibility in terms

of lesson planning, as well as in the skill of utilizing appropriate resources available to them according to the abilities of their students (Hebert & Worthy, 2001).

Furthermore, since many novice teachers are not fully prepared for managing the behaviors of numerous different students, much of their energy and attention is wasted on handling the disciplinary issues. Novice teachers also face the situation of lowering their expectations unwillingly so that they can gain student compliance, because they feel unsure and overwhelmed about how to solve all these problems along with considering the little time that they have to respond and reflect. Thus, given that the primary learning tools that novice teachers have are derived through their own experiences and experiments, the errors that occur due to lack of consistent feedback on their teaching styles, and the limited opportunities that they get to interact with their colleagues. In addition to this, novice teachers not only face challenges in teaching and classrooms management, they also face the scheme of their school's political and social systems. Upon realizing the existence of such systems, beginning teachers often experience feelings of isolation and strong desires to attain approved from their administrators, principals, fellow teachers, parents, and above all, students (Hebert & Worthy, 2001).

The positive effect of student teaching. As student teaching is important to new teachers' beginning career, Kaldi (2009) discovered that student teachers rated their teaching competencies after the school teaching practice component of their undergraduate studies above moderate. These teachers expressed that their perceptions of self-performance in teaching was rather high. Their preparation for teaching associated with teaching competencies (i.e. teaching techniques) during the practicum were rated between medium and high levels. They also felt competent in teaching lessons, dealing

with the students in terms of student participation and creating positive classroom climate during the lessons. When supported by these positive ratings for preparation during their student teaching practicum component, student teachers' strong motivation to teach seems to have positively affected their self-competence in teaching itself. These findings also supported those in a study conducted by Gibbs & Montoya (1994), which who found that student teachers positively affect both the classroom teacher and students within the classroom.

As measured by their career goals, those who received consistent pre-service supervision planned to stay in the profession longer. Through their sample of special education teacher interns, Cegelka and Alvarado (2000) showed that special education teachers were more likely to remain in teaching if they had frequent training and support from a mentor. Explanations for the relationship between these two elements are that they have had a more structured and balanced introduction to the profession during student teaching that included more time and guidance, which exposed them to more service staff (school psychologists, counselors, librarians, etc.), administrators, and mentor teachers. Thus, student teaching experience provided them the opportunities to have more contacts and be aware of more resources within the school community. In addition, they have been given frequent chances to be introduced to opportunities in professional growth by working side-by-side with a cooperating teacher.

In order to understand whether teachers with pre-service teaching experience have different career goals or varying levels of sense of efficacy than those without the student teaching experience, Oh, Ankers, Llamas and Tomyoy (2005) conducted a unique study. This particular study also explored whether different levels of supervision of student

teaching may have had different effects on teachers' personal and professional aspects of their job, as well as in which particular areas the pre-service student teaching experience were helpful in their teaching. The researchers found that those with student teaching experience appeared to demonstrate higher levels of confidence in improving student learning, higher levels of satisfaction with regard to their teaching, and a higher sense of teacher efficacy. For novice teachers, there was a significantly higher level of job satisfaction than those who did not have student teaching. Another goal of this study was to test whether novice teachers were more likely to stay in the teaching profession than their counterparts who did not do student teaching prior to entering the classroom, particularly for teachers with five or less years of teaching experience. The study found that student teaching, and the amount of supervision they received during student teaching, were not factors in their decision to remain in the teaching field. This finding was also true for the two groups of teachers – that is, some with classroom teaching experience during student teaching, and those without the experience during student teaching.

Ferfolja (2008) suggested that such a pathway – namely, a teacher preparation program model – was needed as a solution to the problems facing novice teachers. Accordingly, she believed that this option should be carried out to ease the transition for beginning teachers. It should assist them in adjusting to the demands of full-time teaching; it should support them with building peer and collegial networks; and, it should help their understandings of school culture. It should also expose new teachers to the reality of teaching in actual classrooms within a supportive and familiar environment. This pathway also has benefits for teacher preparation programs to produce qualified and

competent teachers who can carry out their pursuits. Such a change that supports new teachers needs to be applied on all levels of educational system – from teacher preparation to school settings – with the approval of adequate government funding for the support of both pre-service and in-service teacher education. It should monitor the progress and continuation of plans between universities and schools, and the growth of school-based beginning teacher programs (Ferfolja, 2008).

Thus, one can fully understand the needs of teacher evaluation, preparation, and support in all stages of an individual's teaching career in order to ensure effective and quality teaching at all levels of education. A wide variety of research studies have proved that those teachers who receive pre-service supervision at the beginning stages of their career, as well as at all future levels, possess longer-term career goals and plan to stay in the profession for longer periods. Therefore, with the help of teacher's evaluation and preparation programs, the rate of retention of highly-qualified teachers can be maximized (Oh et al., 2005).

Chapter Three

Methodology

The study utilized a mixed-method research design. The first portion of the study

employed a quantitative research design that included the use of surveys to collect

statistical data (Creswell, 2003). The remainder of the chapter highlighted the need for

the research, the population and sampling procedure for the study, the research design,

along with the data collection procedures. The second part of the study employed the

qualitative analysis of responses to the open-ended survey questions. The subsequent

responses were examined, categorized, and interpreted in a manner similar to what

ethnographers and phenomenologists do as they seek the hermeneutic meaning beyond

the word and phrases used by those participants who completed the survey.

Background of the Study

Prior to the development of the current Texas teacher appraisal instrument – that

is, the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) – the Texas Education

Agency (TEA) participated in the research and evaluation of a collection of qualitative

and quantitative research demonstrated relationships between teacher behaviors and

desired student outcomes. According to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005), the most

effective schools have classrooms that are student-centered, active, experiential,

democratic, and collaborative; yet, they are equally rigorous and challenging. These

successful teaching practices within such classrooms have been the focus of extensive

research in educational publications, as educators attempt to define and describe them

and to link them to improved student achievement. Texas educational leaders attempted

to incorporate these practices into their assessment instrument in order to ensure

increased student achievement and improve effective teaching behaviors as teachers use these strategies in their classrooms. During the 1996-1997 school years, after intensive study, research, and collaborative meetings with constituent groups, Texas piloted a new teacher appraisal instrument aimed at improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The statewide implementation of the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) took place during 1997-1998, and the core elements of the system were based on these classroom practices as descriptors compose the evaluation instrument. The teacher proficiencies described in *Learner-Centered Schools for Texas: A Vision of Texas Educators*, approved by the State Board of Education on February 11, 1994, have been the foundation for the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). The teacher proficiencies contained therein were also used as a foundation for the PDAS. Over 90% of the districts in the state notified TEA that they intended to use the instrument during the 1997-1998 school years.

The five proficiencies advanced by *Learner-Centered Schools for Texas: A Vision of Texas Educators* (1994) focused specifically on students and their success – an approach unlike the earlier frameworks, which targeted teacher behaviors. The framework under PDAS focused primarily on what students actually were doing in the classroom, rather than what teachers were doing. The five proficiencies that form the framework for PDAS emphasize the role of the classroom teacher in relation to the students. These five proficiencies are: (1) Learner-Centered Knowledge; (2) Learner-Centered Instruction; (3) Equity in Excellence for All Learners; (4) Learner-Centered Communication; and (5) Learner-Centered Professional Development (Learner-Centered Schools for Texas: A Vision of Texas Educators, 1994).

Accordingly, PDAS includes 51 criteria within eight domains reflecting the Proficiencies for Learner-Centered Instruction adopted in 1997 by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). The domains are:

1. Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process;

2. Learner-centered Instruction;

3. Evaluation and feedback on Student Progress;

4. Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time/Materials;

5. Professional Communication;

6. Professional Development;

7. Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements; and

8. Improvement of All Students' Academic Performance.

The PDAS elements support the instructional practices outlined by the National Standards and reflect the requirement of the U.S. senate for a higher standard of performance. In order for a teacher to be ranked as "proficient" or "exceed expectations", the quality of instruction should be learner-centered and it must demonstrate students' active engagement into the lesson. Criteria not typically found in former teacher evaluation instruments, such as personal goal setting, participation in staff development, student achievement, professional communication, and compliance with policies, operation procedures, and requirements, are included as part of Texas teachers' appraisals. The goal of the instrument is to influence classroom and professional practices and to be more responsive to the needs of teachers and administrators, while promoting continuous professional development and improvement (TEA, Division of Educator Appraisal, 2005). The study of teacher perceptions, therefore, became critical in understanding how

teachers view their level of preparedness and their own effectiveness based on PDAS evaluation system. Another important objective of this study was to expose new teachers' views on their teacher preparation programs, as well as their beliefs regarding what makes someone a qualified teacher.

Research Questions

The findings related to the research questions will be discussed in Chapter Four. In this particular chapter, the following four research questions guided this study:

1. From the perspectives of novice teachers, to what extent did their program prepared them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency criteria specified in the PDAS?

2. What were the differences among the novice teachers who came from University-based Programs versus Alternative Certification Programs in terms of their perceived adequacy of preparation?

3. What competencies were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

4. Which three domains were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

Research Design

This study used a survey instrument to collect the intended data. The survey instrument developed for this study was adapted from the PDAS (Professional Development Appraisal System), which was initially created as an official appraisal tool for public school teachers in Texas. However, only the first 50 competency-based statements (clustered under eight domains) in the PDAS were incorporated. The last item

was excluded because it only required indication of the campus performance rating, which is not strongly relevant to individual teachers' competency. To ensure that the adapted survey closely related to the PDAS, only minimal syntactic changes were made.

The survey included three major parts. Part A of the questionnaire collected descriptive data from the surveyed population. Part B of the survey consisted of items constructed based on the PDAS. It presented two tasks that participants had to complete. The first one was a common rating task. On a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), participants were requested to indicate the extent to which the program prepared them to fulfill each of the 50 PDAS standards. Then, in the second task, participants were asked to choose three survey items (from each domain) representative of the most important competency a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order. The selected competencies were believed to represent a set of knowledge and skills that defined an effective teacher from the respondents' perspective. In the third task, the respondents were asked to answer five open-ended questions about their suggestions to improve the programs they attended and their views on the important qualities of qualified teachers.

The survey asked new teachers to select as well as rank their preferences from a list of 50 teacher qualities under eight domains. Respondents were asked to rate their level of preparedness for each characteristic on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"). Since the survey was based on the domain objectives stated in the PDAS instrument, a "not sure" response was not allowed. It was believed that allowing a neutral response would reduce the precision of the PDAS in terms of evaluating the performance of a teacher using each competency in the domain.

Hence, teachers only had the choice of selecting "agree" or "disagree" to show if they were prepared to demonstrate these skills.

Participants and Data Collection

This study used convenient sampling. The mail survey was sent to first- and second-year teachers in two public school districts in a large metropolitan area in Houston through their staff development offices. Due to the recent budget cuts, there were not many new teachers hired throughout the school districts in Houston in the most recent two years. Hence, two school districts were invited to participate. Teachers participating in this study were the novice teachers hired for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. The staff development directors in these two districts mailed the surveys to the new teachers. The researcher worked with the staff development offices in order to collect the surveys. At the time of data collection, of the 158 novice teachers who were invited to participate, 38 (56%) out of the 68 teachers from Galena Park ISD and 18 (20%) out of the 90 teachers from Spring Branch ISD opted to participate in this study.

Completion of the survey was estimated to take about 20-25 minutes. Some of the respondents to the mail survey were teachers who took part in an internship program and had classroom teaching experience toward their graduation from the university-based teacher preparation program. Others were teachers who came from Alternative Certification Programs (ACP).

Data Analysis

Research question one focused on the perceptions of the novice teachers related to preparation adequacy. The respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with the 50 statements pertaining to the adequacy of their preparation. Quantitative

analysis using SPSS software was utilized. Descriptive statistics computed mean scores and standard deviation scores for individual items in each domain of the survey. Subsequently, these scores were used to answer research question one.

The second research question examined whether the response patterns of the new teachers varied relative to their perception of adequacy of their preparation. Group means were analyzed using an independent-groups t-test, which was used to compare the teachers' responses from university-based programs and ACP programs.

Identification of the most important teacher competencies as perceived by the new teachers in the program was another goal of this study. In order to answer research question three, frequency was computed to identify and understand which item had the highest frequency from each domain.

Identification of the most important domain as perceived by the new teachers in the program was an additional goal of this study. In order to answer research question four, frequencies were computed to see which domain had the highest frequency from all eight domains.

Lastly, responses to the open-ended survey questions were examined, categorized, and interpreted in a manner similar to what ethnographers and phenomenologists do as they seek the hermeneutic meaning beyond the words and phrases used by those participants who completed the survey. The categorized data were analyzed by concentrating on individuals' thoughts, feelings, and perception of specified phenomena and to extract pertinent themes from written responses.

Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this study was to identify the following two main aspects of teacher knowledge: (a) the extent to which novice teachers perceived the teacher preparation program as sufficient, and (b) the competencies that were perceived to be the most essential in each domain of the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) which is an evaluation tool for teachers in Texas. The study answered the following research questions:

1. From the perspectives of novice teachers, to what extent did their program prepare them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency criteria specified in the PDAS?

2. What were the differences among the novice teachers who came from University-based Programs versus Alternative Certification Programs in terms of their perceived adequacy of preparation?

3. What competencies were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

4. Which three domains were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

Data Analysis

A mixed-method research design was employed in this study. A survey instrument was used involving both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The survey was comprised of three main parts – Part A, Part B and Part C (see appendix C). Part A collected descriptive data for the respondents in order to gather demographic

information. Part B had two sections that participants completed. The first section involved the completion of a common rating task in which the participants were requested to indicate the extent to which their program prepared them to fulfill each of the 50 competencies of PDAS (by using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 [strongly disagree to strongly agree]). There were a total of 50 Likert scale questions. In the second section of Part B, participants were asked to choose three competencies from each domain that would represent the most important competencies a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order. Part C also had two further sections. In section one, based on eight possible domains, the survey respondents selected the three most important domains and ranked them as top ranking, 2nd ranking, and 3rd ranking.

The second section of Part C was based on the collection of qualitative data, and there were five open-ended question answers that were collected and analyzed. The following questions have been asked of the participants: 1.What are the most important qualities, skills, beliefs that you think a classroom teacher should have (you can also include those not covered in the eight domains above)? 2. What kinds of training or skills (e.g. lesson plan writing, content area, communication with parents, etc) do you think the teacher preparation program could emphasize even more? 3. Which particular aspects do you think have been emphasized more than needed? Please explain your answers. 4. Overall, do you think the teacher preparation program you have enrolled can adequately prepare you for the challenges of the profession? Why or why not? 5. What suggestions would you give to improve the program in which you were enrolled so that novice teachers can gain a competitive advantage in the teacher labor market?

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate mean and standard deviation scores to identify if the teacher preparation program has adequately prepared the novice teachers to fulfill each of the 50 standards of PDAS (Research Question 1). Research question one focused on the perceptions of the novice teachers related to preparation adequacy. An independent sample *t* test was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences among the novice teachers' views about their programs (Research Question 2). The second research question examined whether the response patterns of the novice teachers from two types of the programs varied relative to their perception of adequacy of their preparation. The first section of Part B (of the survey) answered the first and second research question of this study. Frequency measures were conducted to determine the identification of the most important teacher competencies as perceived by the novice teachers (Research Question 3). The second section of Part B (of the survey) answered research question three of the study.

Once again, frequencies were conducted to observe which particular domains were perceived as most important by novice teachers (Research Question 4). The first section of Part C (of the survey) answered the fourth research question, which entailed the identification of the three most important domains out of all eight domains. The second section of Part C provided qualitative data and content analysis was used in order to analyze open-ended question answers. The open-ended questions were developed as a way to gather data pertaining to the perceptions of novice teachers about essential teacher skills and qualities they need to have, as well as their views on the adequacy of their teacher preparation programs.

In addition, reliability scores were calculated for this survey. This analysis yielded alpha coefficients of 0.968, which indicated that the survey instrument employed was highly reliable and the conclusions drawn on the basis of this instrument would reflect accuracy.

Description of Sample

The novice teachers hired for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years were invited to participate in this study from two public schools districts in the Houston region. The survey instrument was sent via mail to novice teachers through their respective staff development offices. Moreover, the completion time for this survey was approximately 20-25 minutes, and the participants each had various types of certification – from EC-12th grade. Additionally, the teachers who participated in this study reflected two different types of teacher preparation programs. Some of them had completed university-based teacher preparation programs, and some of them had completed Alternative Certification Programs (ACP).

Demographic Information of Surveyed Population

All participants were asked to provide demographic information in Part A of the survey. This portion aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the descriptive data of the surveyed population. Table 4.1 summarizes the demographic information of the sample population. The table provides each of the descriptive categories, such as gender, age, ethnicity, enrollment status, classification, and certification level of the surveyed novice teachers. Further, the table also provides the data by breaking it into two major categories in which these novice teachers were enrolled (i.e., university-based programs and alternative certification programs). The purpose of this analysis was to identify the

ratio of males and females, different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, part-time and full-

time enrollment of teacher preparation programs, classification on the basis of graduates,

undergraduates, and post-baccalaureate levels, and certifications like EC-6, EC-12 and

the like. This will help in finding out the major descriptive characteristics that most of

the novice teachers possess.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Data of Surveyed Population

Category	University-based N (%)	Alternative Certification N (%)	Total
Male	4 (7.1)	5 (8.9)	9 (16.1)
Female	28 (50.0)	19 (33.9)	47 (83.9)
Total	32 (57.1)	24 (42.9)	56 (100)
Age			
19-25	11 (19.6)	3 (5.4)	14 (25.0)
26-32	15 (26.8)	13 (23.2)	28 (50.0)
33-39	2 (3.6)	2 (3.6)	4 (7.1)
40-46	1 (1.8)	5 (8.9)	6 (10.7)
47-53	1 (1.8)	1 (1.8)	2 (3.6)
Over 53	2 (3.6)	0 (.0)	2 (3.6)
Total	32 (57.1)	24 (42.9)	56 (100.0)
Ethnicity			
White/Caucasian	19 (33.9)	10 (17.9)	29 (51.8)
Black	1 (1.8)	3 (5.4)	4 (7.1)
Hispanic	10 (17.9)	11 (19.6)	21 (37.5)
Asian/Pacific Island	2 (3.6)	0 (0)	2 (3.6)
Total	32 (57.1)	0 (0)	2 (3.6)
Enrollment Status			
Full-time	32 (60.4)	18 (34.0)	50 (94.3)
Part-time	0 (0.0)	3 (5.7)	3 (5.7)
Total	32 (60.4)	21 (39.6)	53 (100.0)
Classification			
Undergraduate	13 (23.6)	5 (9.1)	18 (32.7)
Post-	4 (7.3)	5 (9.1)	9 (16.4)

Baccalaureate			
Graduate	14 (25.5)	9 (16.4)	23 (41.8)
Total	31 (62)	19 (38)	50 (100.0)
Certification Level			
EC-6	20 (36.4)	11 (20.0)	31 (56.4)
4-8	6 (10.9)	5 (9.1)	11 (20.0)
8-12	3 (5.5)	5 (9.1)	8 (14.5)
EC-12	2 (3.6)	2 (3.6)	4 (7.3)
EC-4	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	1 (1.8)
Total	31 (56.4)	24 (43.6)	55 (100.0)

Note: N=56.

Research Question 1: From the perspectives of novice teachers, to what extent did their program prepare them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency criteria specified in the PDAS?

To answer Research Question 1, respondents were asked to what degree the teacher preparation program has adequately prepared them to demonstrate each of the 50 standards of PDAS. Table 4.2 illustrates the degree of novice teachers' perceived program preparation for each PDAS competency. Descriptive statistics were used to compute mean scores and standard deviation scores. The result showed the training provided by the program was perceived to be mostly adequate by novice teachers. In other words, they felt they were mostly well trained in all areas of the PDAS. All survey items were rated above the median of 3.5. Of the 50 items, 26 were rated at a score of 4 or above and almost two-thirds of these 26 items came from Domain I (active, successful student participation in the learning process), Domain II (learner-centered instruction), Domain IV (Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time / Materials) and Domain VII (Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements).

These results suggest that the respondents were particularly satisfied with their training in these four PDAS competency areas, in terms of being quality classroom teachers, more so than other areas.

Table 4.2

Degree of Perceived Program Preparation for Each PDAS Competency

Item		M	SD
Domain I: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process			
Item 1:	Make sure students are actively engaged in learning	4.14	0.796
Item 2:	Ensure students are being successful in learning	4.16	0.781
Item 3:	Promote students' learning at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)	4.21	0.756
Item 4:	Help students become a self-directed/self-initiated learner, as appropriate to the lesson objectives	3.98	0.726
Item 5:	Help students connect learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with with other disciplines	4.02	0.82
Domain II: Learner-centered Instruction			
Item 6:	Ensure that the instructional content is based on appropriate goals and objectives	4.23	0.713
Item 7:	Ensure that instructional content is learner centered (e.g., relates to the interests and varied characteristics of students)	4.16	0.781
Item 8:	Use appropriate instructional strategies to promote critical thinking and problem solving	3.95	0.818
Item 9:	Ensure that instructional strategies include motivational	3.96	0.785

	motivational techniques to successfully and actively engage students in the learning process		
Item 10:	Ensure instructional strategies are aligned with the objectives, activities, student characteristics, prior learning, and work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines	4.02	0.884
Item 11:	Use varied activities appropriately and maintain appropriate pacing and sequencing	4.02	0.7
Item 12:	Emphasize the value and importance of the activity/content	4	0.714
Item 13:	Use appropriate questioning and inquiry techniques to challenge students	4.02	0.842
Item 14:	Make appropriate and effective use of available technology as a part of the instructional process	3.93	1.076

Domain III: Evaluation and Feedback of Student Progress

Item 15:	Monitor and assess students' academic progress	3.93	0.85
Item 16:	Align assessment and feedback with goals and objectives and instructional strategies	3.93	0.931
Item 17:	Use appropriate assessment strategies to the varied characteristics of students	3.95	0.862
Item 18:	Reinforce student learning	4.21	0.624
Item 19:	Give students specific constructive feedback	4.09	0.695
Item 20:	Provide opportunities for all students for relearning and re-evaluation of material	3.86	0.999

Domain IV: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time/Material

Item 21:	Effectively implement the discipline-management procedures approved by the campus	3.8	0.961

Item 22:	Establish a classroom environment which promotes and encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning as appropriate	4.07	0.806
Item 23:	Interact with students in an equitable manner, including the fair application of rules	4.29	0.756
Item 24:	Specify expectations for desired behavior	4.2	0.749
Item 25:	Intervene and re-direct off-task, inappropriate or disruptive behavior as needed	4.14	0.773
Item 26:	Reinforce desired behavior when appropriate	4.18	0.716
Item 27:	Select the instructional materials that are equitable and acknowledge the varied characteristics of all students	3.98	0.774
Item 28:	Effectively and efficiently manage time and materials	3.91	0.9

Domain V: Professional Communication

Item 29:	Use appropriate and accurate written communication with students	3.95	0.818
Item 30:	Use appropriate and accurate verbal and non-verbal communication with students	4.23	0.786
Item 31:	Encourage and support students who are reluctant or having difficulty	4.14	0.841
Item 32:	Use appropriate and accurate written communication with parents, staff, community members, and other professionals	3.98	0.863
Item 33:	Use appropriate and accurate verbal and non-verbal communication with parents, staff, community members, and other professionals	3.91	0.859
Item 34:	Ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous,	4.25	0.769

and respectful with students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals

Domain VI: Professional Development

Item 35:	Successfully seek out and engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with goals of the campus and district	3.84	0.91
Item 36:	Successfully correlate professional development activities with assigned subject content and the varied needs of students	3.82	0.741
Item 37:	Successfully engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with the prior performance appraisal	3.79	0.929
Item 38:	Work collaboratively and constructively with colleagues and other professionals toward the overall improvement of student performance	4.18	0.789

Domain VII: Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements

Item 39:	Comply with all policies, operating procedures, and legal requirements (national, rate, district, and campus)	4.2	0.961
Item 40:	Comply with all verbal and written directives, participate in the development of operating procedures, and offer suggestions for improvement	4.21	0.731
Item 41:	Consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities	4.27	0.751

Domain VIII: Improvement of All Students' Academic Performance

Item 42:	Align instruction to include appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives to support student achievement data relevant to all students in assigned classes prior to beginning instruction	4.30	0.807

Item 43:	Work with colleagues to analyze TAKS performance data relevant to all students in assigned classes prior to beginning instruction.	3.82	1.064
Item 44:	Adjust the sequencing of classroom instruction to appropriately incorporate TEKS/TAKS objectives	3.89	1.021
Item 45:	Collaborate with other within and outside the teacher's discipline to select/adapt instructional materials and activities which are correlated with appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives	3.96	0.934
Item 46:	Provide feedback to all students regarding their learning progress on appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives	3.96	1.008
Item 47:	Monitor attendance of all students in assigned classes and contact parents, counselors, or other school officials regarding an intervention plan for students with serious attendance problems	3.89	1.003
Item 48:	Identify and assess the needs of assigned students in at-risk situations	3.69	1.1153
Item 49:	Meet with parents and/or other teachers of students who are failing or in danger of failing to develop an appropriate plan for intervention	3.73	1.036
Item 50:	Modify and adapt classroom materials and/or instruction for students in at-risk situations	4.82	1.146

Note: N=56.

Research Question 2: What were the differences among the novice teachers who came from University-based Programs versus Alternative Certification Programs in terms of their perceived adequacy of preparation?

To answer Research Question 2, novice teachers' views about their programs were compared. Appendix A presents differences in perceptions toward the two types of programs. An independent sample t- test was conducted to compare whether the

response patterns of the novice teachers from two types of the programs varied relative to their perception of adequacy of their preparation. The t-test was computed for all 50 items. The t-test results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference found on the teachers' view of the programs. In other words, the respondents' perceived adequacy of preparation did not significantly vary between these two preparation programs. The limited variability in group responses was exhibited in the overall high ratings across items.

Research Question 3: What competencies were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

To answer Research Question 3, the respondents were asked to choose the most important competencies a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order. Table 4.3 illustrates the most important competencies selected by the respondents. The frequency was computed to find which competencies are perceived as the most important by the surveyed population. Based on the findings, there are eight competencies that were found to have been selected more than other competencies on the basis of their top, second and third ranking by the participants. Following are the most important competencies: Competency 39: comply with all policies, operating procedures, and legal requirements (100%); Competency 40: comply with all verbal and written directives, participate in the development of operating procedures, and offer suggestions for improvement (100%); Competency 41: consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities (100%); Competency 36: successfully correlate professional development activities with assigned subject content and the varied

needs of students (87.5%); Competency 22: establish a classroom environment which

promotes and encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning as appropriate

(80.4%); Competency 35: successfully seek out and engage in professional development

activities that positively correlate with the goals of the campus and district (80.4%);

Competency 38: work collaboratively and constructively with colleagues and other

professionals toward the overall improvement of student performance (78.6%);

Competency 34: ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with

students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals (75%).

Table 4.3
The Most Important Competencies Perceived by Novice Teachers

Domain	Competencies	Ranking	Frequency & percentages
Domain 7: Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements	**39:** comply with all policies, operating procedures, and legal requirements	Top Second Third Total	27 (48.2%) 18 (32.1%) 11 (19.6%) 56 (100%)
	40: comply with all verbal and written directives, participate in the development of operating procedures, and offer suggestions for improvement	Top Second Third Total	3 (5.4%) 22 (39.3%) 31 (55.4%) 56 (100%)
	41: consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and	Top Second Third	26 (46.4%) 15 (26.8%) 14 (25%)

	contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities	Total	56 (100%)
Domain 6: Professional Development	**36**: successfully correlate professional development activities with assigned subject content and the varied needs of students	Top Second Third Total	13 (23.2%) 21 (37.5%) 15 (26.8%) 49 (87.5%)
	35: successfully seek out and engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with the goals of the campus and district	Top Second Third Total	10 (17.9%) 19 (33.9%) 16 (28.6%) 45 (80.4%)
Domain 4: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials	**22**: establish a classroom environment which promotes and encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning as appropriate	Top Second Third Total	29 (51.8%) 9 (16.1%) 7 (12.5%) 45 (80.4%)
Domain 6: Professional Development	**38:** work collaboratively and constructively with colleagues and other professionals toward the	Top Second Third Total	29 (51.8%) 6 (10.7%) 9 (16.1%) 44 (78.6%)

	overall improvement of student performance		
Domain 5: Professional Communication	**34:** ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals	Top Second Third Total	16 (28.6%) 6 (10.7%) 20 (35.7%) 42 (75%)

Note: N=56

Research Question 4: Which three domains were perceived to be the most important by novice teachers?

In order to answer Research Question 4, respondents were asked to select the three most important domains from all eight domains. Table 4.4 provides the frequency and percentage of how many people selected those three most important domains as top, second and third ranking and as well as the computations of frequency and percentage of all eight domains. Each of the eight domains' frequency and percentages were analyzed. Based on the findings, the following were the three most important domains selected: First was Domain I*: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process* (87.5%); second was Domain II: *Learner-Centered Instruction* (66.1%); and, third was Domain IV*: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials* (58.9%). Therefore, according to these findings, the researcher can conclude that the novice teachers taking part in this study felt strongly that a teacher should be

prepared to engage students in active learning; the instruction in the class should be

learner-centered; and good classroom management and discipline should be the vital part

of the classroom instruction. Among the selection of those three top domains, 29 people

selected Domain I as a top ranking, 17 people selected Domain II as top ranking, and 7

people selected Domain IV as top ranking.

Table 4.4

Three Most Important Domains Perceived by Novice Teachers

Domain	Ranking	Frequency & Percentage
Domain 1: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process	**Top**	**24 (42.9%)**
	Second	**16 (28.6%)**
	Third	**9 (16.1%)**
	Total	**49 (87.5%)**
Domain 2: Learner-Centered Instruction	**Top**	**17 (30.4%)**
	Second	**12 (21.4%)**
	Third	**8 (14.3%)**
	Total	**37 (66.1%)**
Domain 3: Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress	Top	0 (0%)
	Second	3 (5.4%)
	Third	13 (23.2%)
	Total	16 (28.6%)
Domain 4: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials	**Top**	**7 (12.5%)**
	Second	**16 (28.6%)**
	Third	**10 (17.9%)**
	Total	**33 (58.9%)**
Domain 5: Professional Communication	Top	0 (0%)
	Second	1 (1.8%)

	Third	2 (3.6%)
	Total	3 (5.4%)
Domain 6: Professional	Top	0 (0%)
Development	Second	1 (1.8%)
	Third	4 (7.1%)
	Total	5 (8.9%)
Domain 7: Compliance with	Top	2 (3.6%)
Policies, Operating Procedures and	Second	1 (1.8%)
Requirements	Third	6 (10.7%)
	Total	9 (16.1%)
Domain 8: Improvement of	Top	5 (8.9%)
Academic Performance of All	Second	8 (14.3%)
Students on the Campus	Third	3 (5.4%)
	Total	16 (28.6%)

Note: N=56

Open-Ended Question Responses

     Data Analysis. This section of the research organized and summarized responses offered by the surveyed population with regard to the open-ended questions of this study. The open-ended questions were developed as a way to gather data pertaining to the perceptions of novice teachers about essential teacher skills and qualities they need to have, as well as their views on the adequacy of their teacher preparation programs. This qualitative analysis was conducted by examining, categorizing and interpreting the responses to these questions in a manner similar to that of ethnographers and phenomenologists – that is, they seek the hermeneutic meaning beyond the words and phrases used by those participants who completed the given survey.

Sandelowski (1998) stated that there is more than one style for reporting the findings of qualitative research. Nonetheless, since the data were suitable for this type of analysis, content analysis was used in order to analyze open-ended items in this study (Stemler, 2001). Firstly, common points in the responses were found and interesting points that needed further investigation were determined. The open-ended survey questions were very useful in that they provided in-depth information related to novice teachers' views about teacher effectiveness and the teacher preparation programs. In addition, quotations from the novice teachers' comments were selected to present some interesting views. Concisely, in presenting the data in this study not all the student teachers' perceptions were mentioned, only the most significant views that highlighted the researchers' awareness of novice teacher perceptions were presented.

Findings. The first question asked of the novice teachers was, **"What are the most important qualities, skills, beliefs that you think a classroom teacher should have (you can also include those not covered in the 8 domains of PDAS)?"**

After reading all the responses to question one, the researcher identified and categorized the responses into three main common themes. Additionally, the researcher presented the remainder of the responses that did not belong to these three themes in a table format to show what novice teachers thought about other important teacher skills.

Classroom management skills. Although the responses to the first question varied significantly among teachers, 15 out of the 56 teachers agreed that classroom management is one of the most important skills. This finding suggests that these teachers perceive that having good management plan in the classroom is vital for effective and productive learning environment. It also boosts positive atmosphere in the classrooms.

One novice teacher said, "I feel that every teacher should have a good management plan in order to have control over his/her classroom to be able to teach." Another teacher stated, "Having effective management plan set in the classroom from the beginning of the school year would be most important for me. This allows a smooth-running classroom with less discipline problems and interruptions." These teachers believe classroom management is by far, the most important skill teachers must master.

These findings appear to be consistent with those in literature (Veenman, 1984; Hebert & Worthy, 2001) – namely, that novice teachers will face greater difficulty with discipline issues if they lack knowledge of how to apply effective classroom management skills. Thus, teaching in a smooth-running classroom with an excellent management plan makes a huge difference on overall student achievement.

Patience, fairness and positive attitude. Most of the teachers stated that being patient and fair to students will make a positive impact on their achievement. It is important to note that patience and fairness were mentioned 20 times in the teachers' responses. These respondents strongly believe being a teacher requires a great deal of patience. Teachers need to handle everyday situations in the class with positive attitude and great endurance. One teacher stated, "Teachers should passionately believe she delivers an essential skill and her students are absolutely essential to the future. Every child can learn as long as the teacher is being patient in terms of their needs." In reference to the notion of having a positive attitude, another stated, "A positive attitude and showing it every day. At any job, store, career, or place of business, you will only do business with people who show passion for their life."

Individualization of instructions. 10 out of the 56 teachers emphasized the importance of teaching on the basis of each student's needs. The teachers believe that each child learns at their own pace, and that it is important to create a student-based curriculum tailored to their specific needs. One strong concern teachers stated is that teaching, overall, should be directed by the needs of their students. As mentioned earlier, the literature review conducted in this study also indicated that novice teachers have greater difficulty in pacing their lessons to adjust to the students with diverse learning needs (Hebert & Worthy, 2001). In that regard, one novice teacher said, "At times it is hard, but a teacher should have strategies to be able to modify/adjust the instruction for each student and be aware that all students are very different."

The rest of the 11 respondents listed all types of skills and qualities they think teachers should have, and the response pattern varied mostly by each teacher. These responses did not fit into the three themes discussed earlier. Table 4.5 summarizes some other descriptors teachers used to define teacher qualities and skills. Some of these descriptors deal with technical aspects of teaching (i.e., organization), others have to do with characteristics of teachers (caring, compassionate), while still others involved value on moral stances (i.e., ethical).

Table 4.5

Important Qualities Listed by Novice Teachers

Topic	Responses Provided	
Most Important Qualities of a Teacher	- Flexibility	- Organization
	- Firmness	- Sensibility
	- Compassion	- Professional
	- Respectful	- Nurturing
	- Understanding	- Adaptability
	- Caring	- Ethical
	- Consistent	

The second question in the study was: "**What kinds of training or skills (e.g. lesson plan writing, content area, communication with parents, etc.) do you think the teacher preparation program could emphasize even more?"**

According to the responses to question two, the researcher again identified the responses and categorized them into two main common themes. Additionally, the rest of the responses that did not belong to these two themes were presented in a table format to show what novice teachers thought about other areas that could have been emphasized more.

Lesson plan writing. Twenty out of the 56 teachers stated that the programs they graduated from could have placed more emphasis on a technical aspect of teaching, lesson plan writing. From the 20 teachers, 15 were teachers who came from Alternative Certification Programs and five of them were from University-based programs.

However, the teachers from University-based programs did not provide explicit answers within this section; rather, they simply referred to "lesson plan writing". It was difficult for the researcher to gain additional insights from the answers they provided. In this instance, the teachers who had graduated from ACP provided more written answers.

The following three comments represent the thinking of the ACP teachers:

- "They need more specific lesson plan trainings…not a general one where it doesn't apply to everyone."

- "Help us to learn how to develop an effective and workable lesson plan that hits all targets for the students."

- "I was definitely not fully prepared for the lesson plan preparation. Although I was briefly taught, it could have been focused on more."

Whereas too much technical preparation is frequently lamented by university educated teachers, those who graduate from ACP programs sometimes regret their lack or absence of technical training. As seen from the comments of some of the novice teachers, they feel they are not fully trained in lesson planning and writing. Effective lesson plans are critical to the instructional day. Moreover, the teacher will feel unprepared without one, and will not be confident to carry out successful lessons. This notion is also pointed out by Freiberg (2002) who asserts that complete lesson planning comprises four components as initial, active, in-flight and follow-up planning. Each of these components requires knowledge and experience for both planning and carrying out successful instruction. Thus, without proper training, it will be difficult for novice teachers to plan and deliver the lesson accordingly.

Communication with parents. Fifteen out of the other 36 teachers indicated that communicating with parents was their challenge, and that teacher preparation programs could have emphasized and taught more practical knowledge in this particular area. It is also important to highlight the fact that novice teachers have limited teaching experiences – or none at all – just prior to their actual teaching. Additionally, acquiring and utilizing methods for successful communication with parents are challenging and difficult at times. Teachers will always experience difficulties and challenges when engaging with certain parents. One teacher stated, "We should have practiced communicating to parents, so we know how to deal with all different parents." Although experienced teachers may easily cope with parents with different expectations, this practice is typically difficult for newly-qualified teachers. Streich (2009) pointed out new teachers frequently view parent communication as a threat. In addition, new teachers are instinctively vulnerable and prone to become defensive in the face of simple inquiries.

The rest of the 21 respondents' answers varied greatly and the researcher was unable to organize the responses in the common theme categories. From the views expressed by novice teachers, teachers from both programs agreed on some main points. They think classroom management is another area that needs to be addressed more in the program. They also think training on data and testing is important and it needs to be taught in the program so they know what to expect in an actual situation. Several ACP teachers again mentioned in-field training needs to be incorporated more in teacher preparation. Furthermore, university-based teachers think the program could have placed more emphasis on some practical aspects of teaching such as how to motivate the students, how to work with struggling students and how to use more useful resources etc. Whereas, ACP

teachers also recommended the programs could have placed the emphasis on some other technical aspects such as how to work with special education needs of individual students, how to use alternative discipline techniques, and how to effectively use the technology. Table 4.6 shows the main points which novice teachers pointed out (i.e., the areas they wanted the teacher preparation programs to place more emphasis upon). It illustrates novice teachers' views.

Table 4.6

New Teacher Response to Areas of Increased Focus for Preparation Programs

Novice Teacher Responses

Topic	University-based	ACP
The teacher preparation programs could have emphasized more	Training on data and testing	Align content to TEKS
	More in-field training	Training on data and testing
	Training to work with LEP students	More in-field training
	Actual teaching of a lesson and how to adapt lesson	Use of technology
	How to motivate the students	Classroom management
	Classroom management	Discipline alternatives
	Hands-on activities can do with students	Special education needs of mainstream resource students
	Time management	

How to work with struggling
students

How to align tasks to
individualized education
plans (IEPs)

How to modify for students
w/ mild to significant
disabilities within general
education setting

The third question in the study was: **"Which particular aspects do you think have been emphasized more than needed? Please explain your answers."**

Sixteen out of the 56 teachers did not answer this question but the rest of the teachers supplied a wide range of answers. Of the 40 teachers who replied, 15 teachers argued that lesson plan writing was too lengthy and not practical. Each of these 15 teachers came from University-based programs. They indicated the lesson plan writing required a great deal of time; that it was also too detail oriented; and that it did not give them any room to be flexible. The following three comments represent the thinking of the University-based program teachers:

- "The program emphasizes a lot on lesson plan writing. It requires lengthy plans which in "real" situations cannot get through it all in a day."

- "The extent of lesson plans. I know that writing those very detailed lesson plans makes you think and look at every aspect of the lesson but I think maybe only make the student do those lesson plans prior to and in week into full internship."

- "The lesson plans are too lengthy. I didn't use those lesson plans that I learned how to write. The lesson plan writing is different in school settings and learning to how to execute them is more beneficial."

The remainder of the teachers each had different views on the aspects that have been emphasized more; however, they did not provide detailed answers and limited their answers to two or three word phrases. Ten teachers (mostly from ACP program) indicated that rules and policies were overdone; yet, when it came to day-to-day tasks, they experienced a lack of practical knowledge - that is, knowledge useful in everyday situations. A few teachers indicated that all aspects have been emphasized equally and that they could not think of any particular aspect. Five ACP teachers stated that there is too much emphasis on the need to pass certain tests, rather than the content areas you will be required to teach. The rest of the five teachers stated that much time had been invested in testing preparation. Although teachers had a variety of opinions and answers to this question, the researcher saw the trend of the University-based program teachers, overall, thought that the lesson plan developing and writing is not practical and useful. Thus, ACP teachers thought that rules and testing preparation was reinforced more than how to teach actual content.

The fourth question in the study was: **"Overall, do you think the teacher preparation program you have enrolled can adequately prepare you for the challenges of the profession? Why or why not?"**

Concerning the topic of overall preparation and experience in their program, 25 out of the 32 University-based program teachers indicated that the program had sufficiently prepared them for most parts of the profession. However, they also cited that

none of the programs can fully prepare someone for real-life teaching and they learn as they go every day. The remainder of the seven teachers of the total 32, on the other hand, said that the program focused too much on ideal situations that did not reflect reality. In that sense, one teacher said, "No, the program is designed on what a classroom should look like, but overlooks the reality of student performance and progress; not to mention the disciplinary aspects of a classroom." Another teacher stated, "The program was about handling the perfect classroom and the perfect students, not the real world situations."

As for ACP teachers, they responded somewhat differently. Each of the 24 teacher respondents agreed that the program should include field experiences, and observations are not enough to acquire and hone real-life teaching practices. They also argued that the program covered most aspects; yet, experience in the field was the way to truly learn. One of them stated, "I think they need to include internships to allow us to experience what is being taught to us." As mentioned earlier, related literature in this study also indicated that teacher preparation programs should expose new teachers to the reality of teaching in actual classrooms within a supportive and familiar environment (Ferfolja, 2008). In their reviews, Kaldi (2009) and Cegelka and Alvarado (2000) also stated student teaching that included more time and guidance, exposed novice teachers to more service staff, administrators, and mentor teachers. Thus, student teaching experience provided novice teachers the opportunities to have more contacts and be aware of more resources within the school community. And, following their pre-service teaching, novice teachers' strong motivation to teach seems to have positively affected their self-competence in teaching itself. Some of the ACP teachers also felt they need

more training in content knowledge. In that regard, one teacher stated, "The program put too much focus on technology and ethnic issues and limited emphasis in content."

The fifth question in the study was: **"What suggestions would you give to improve the program you have enrolled so that novice teachers can gain a competitive advantage in the teacher labor market?"**

Novice teachers' responses to this question also varied significantly. Thirteen out of the 56 teachers equally (from both programs) suggested that the programs should continue to launch in-field training or student teaching. Once again, only the student teaching and practicum gave these candidates valuable lessons. The literature review conducted in this study also indicated that this view is shared by several researchers in the area. Oh, Ankers, Llamas and Tomyoy (2005) for example, stated that novice teachers with student teaching experience appeared to demonstrate higher levels of confidence in improving student learning and higher levels of satisfaction with regard to their teaching.

The following comments illustrate these teachers' views:

- "Provide more real life situations because you never know what is going to happen once your students walk through the door."

- "I think the program will be more helpful if it required teachers to do some sort of student teaching. We modeled among our peers, but never interacted with children." (ACP teacher)

- "More practical training in the field with small groups is helpful."

Ten teachers, a mixture from both programs, suggested that while progressing through their respective programs, teachers needed opportunities to access additional

certifications in order to gain competitive advantage. Another 10 teachers, again a combination of both programs, suggested that teachers need to be trained appropriately so they can have more knowledge about managing disciplinary aspects in their classes. Handling discipline and motivating reluctant students are the challenges that novice teachers face. Seven teachers suggested that programs need to teach how to work collaboratively with others in the system. Also, they need to teach how to document the interactions with all other parties in the school system and its importance for the career. The other three teachers provided some useful tips to future new teachers instead of giving suggestions to the programs, such as completing assignments early on, expecting to jump in as experienced teachers on their own, and connecting with the parents from the beginning. Finally, 13 teachers did not provide answers to this question.

In summary, the qualitative data gave the researcher more in-depth insights about teachers' perceptions of their preparation programs. Based on the findings, a majority of university-based program teachers expressed overall satisfaction. However, they pointed out several areas that could be improved in the program such as addressing real world situations within the curriculum, planning practical lesson plans, and having the opportunity to work with a variety of levels of students in their student teaching so they would be able to identify and assess the students' needs. On the other hand, ACP teachers stressed the importance of in-filed practicum teaching and recommended it should be incorporated in the program so the novice teachers can have the practical knowledge about teaching before they start to teach in schools. They also suggested the program needs to address technical aspects of teaching strongly such as lesson planning and delivery, teaching actual content and aligning contents to the required curriculum.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter provides a summary of the research that has been conducted in order to identify novice teachers' perceptions regarding their level of preparedness with relation to Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) and in regard to the kind of preparation programs in which they have enrolled. In addition, the main purpose of this chapter is to further discuss all of the findings presented in the preceding chapter. Lastly, this chapter discusses all the implications, interpretations, and limitations of this study, and also provides recommendations for future research endeavors.

Summary of the Research

Research has suggested that effective teachers play a major role in improving education (Tucker & Stronge, 2005). More specifically, teacher effectiveness is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement (Rice, 2003). If teachers have little formal knowledge of education systems, student learning, discipline alternatives, management techniques, and how these items/areas are connected to each-other, they will not be able to generate immediate solutions for meeting the needs of all students. Teacher preparation should focus on ways of thinking that allow for the continued development of skills, understandings, and beliefs about teaching, learning, and subject matter. These qualities help beginning teachers to become effective teachers who are both competent and centered in their work. In fact, studies have found that pre-service teachers bring pre-conceived understandings and beliefs about teaching and learning with them into their programs. The findings of such studies suggest that teachers without strong preparation programs that include training to help students

question and alter their beliefs will have a remarkably difficult time in the classroom, and may not stay in the profession and/or at their schools very long (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

This research's main purpose was to explore new teachers' perceptions regarding their level of preparedness, their views, and their evaluation of the teacher preparation programs from which they have graduated. This research was also interested in discovering new teachers' perspectives concerning changes necessary to improve the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. The main concern was how prepared novice teachers feel they are for their teaching career, how competent they believe they are to meet their students' needs to carry out successful lessons in their classrooms, and how confident they are to reach academic success for their students. Information and results gained from the survey were used to draw some useful suggestions for the improvements necessary to align schools more closely with the teacher preparation programs.

This study used a survey instrument in order to gather data. Likert scale questions and open-ended question responses were included in the comprehensive study instrument. The survey instrument developed for this study was adapted from the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS), which was initially created as an official appraisal tool for public school teachers in Texas. The survey was sent by mail to first- and second-year teachers in two public school districts in a large metropolitan area in the Southwest through their staff development offices. The teacher participants either graduated from University-based teacher preparation or Alternative Certification Programs.

Research Questions

1. From the perspectives of new teachers, to what extent did their program
   prepare them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency
   criteria specified in the PDAS?

2. What were the differences among the new teachers who came from
   University-based Program versus Alternative Certification Programs in terms
   of their perceived adequacy of preparation?

3. What competencies were perceived to be the most important by new teachers?

4. Which three domains were perceived to be the most important by novice
   teachers?

Discussion of Results

   Research Question One Discussion. Based on the survey response results, the
teachers from both preparation programs considered their programs to be quite effective
in terms of preparing them to fulfill each of the 50 standards of PDAS evaluation. As
discussed in Chapter Four, overall data analysis reveals the mean scores of all 50 Likert
scale questions are higher than 3.65 on the teachers' perceived adequacy of their
preparation programs. The mean and standard deviation scores obtained reflect that
almost all the defined competencies by PDAS have shown slightly varying results. The
mean scores yielded from the lowest 3.69 to the highest 4.82. Taken together, one could
reasonably conclude that the training provided by the program is perceived to be
adequate by the survey respondents across the eight PDAS domains. More specifically,
most items in Domain I, Domain II, Domain IV, and Domain VII reached an average rate
of four or above. This finding provided supportive evidence that the programs have

effectively helped the teachers develop skills in encouraging active student participation (Domain I), promoting learner-centered learning (Domain II), managing the classroom effectively (Domain IV) and complying with policies, operating procedures and requirements (Domain VII). The response to these four domains shows that the programs and the training they provide are highly responsive to these four areas of demanding PDAS requirements. Especially, promoting student-centered learning environment and managing the classrooms effectively are considered important skills for teachers in several studies. In his research, Weimer (2002) stressed the significance of student-centered classrooms which encourage learners to do more discovery learning, focus on constructing authentic, real-life tasks and motivating learner involvement and participation. Moreover, Hue and Li (2008) stated effective classroom management is an inseparable part of the process of teaching and learning which helps both teachers and students to feel good about themselves.

Furthermore, after analyzing qualitative data, the researcher found there are teachers who have different views regarding the adequacy of their preparation in some competency areas in PDAS. As discussed in the qualitative data analysis found in Chapter Four, when teachers answered the open-ended questions, some pointed out they need more training and guidance in classroom management skills (Domain IV). Discipline management and time management were the obstacles for these particular teachers. They experienced a difficult time managing the classroom procedures. When answering the open-ended question two, 20 teachers (15 of whom came from ACP programs) also stated that they needed more training in lesson plan writing and developing. On the contrary, 15 other teachers from the University-based programs

stated that the lesson plan developing and writing was too lengthy and did not have practical use. There were also plenty of teachers – from both types of program – who stated that parent communication was the greatest challenge for them. These aspects, therefore, were not adequately addressed in their teacher preparation programs. These findings also support research that suggests novice teachers face tremendous difficulties in all aspects of teaching and classroom practices in their first and second years of teaching (Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Levine, 2006; Pugach, 1992; Sherin & Drake, 2000; Vaughn et al., 1997).

In addition, among the 50 evaluation criteria, individuals from both types of program rated item 50 the highest (M=4.82, SD=1.146) (i.e., preparing new teachers to "modify and adapt classroom materials and/or instruction for students in at-risk situations"), which was derived from Domain VIII. By the response, teachers indicated they are prepared to do such a task (item 50). From the same domain, item 48 (i.e., "identify and assess the needs of assigned students in at-risk situations") had the lowest mean score (M= 3.69, SD=1.153) of all 50 items. One reason for this phenomenon could be that the teacher preparation curriculum focused primarily on building the foundation, such as content knowledge and lesson planning. When the teachers completed their student teaching within a University-based program, they appeared to lack opportunities to evaluate students' progress; thus, they felt less than able of being fully responsible to work with different academic level students. In most cases, teachers in these programs were simply there to support classroom teachers, or deliver whole class lesson. Planning lessons and instructions, while also evaluating children at different academic levels, require thorough planning and experience. Teachers from ACP programs also

experienced fewer opportunities to complete practicum training as a way to experience

the many diverse challenges in the classroom setting. In this case, identifying and

assessing the needs of at-risk students could pose more challenges than adapting

classroom materials and instructions for students in at-risk situations. In other words,

teachers can prepare the lesson in general in order to meet the need of the "at- risk"

students defined; yet, actually assessing these students' needs could be difficult in itself.

Moreover, there are some views provided by particular teachers when they answered

open-ended questions regarding working with at-risk as well as other students. These

teachers stated that they needed help in working with struggling students *and* those

students with different learning needs. Namely, they cited a need for help with planning

instructions and identifying and assessing their needs.

Below there are eight competencies from each domain were selected to show the

areas that have highest mean scores which means the respondents identified that they are

confident to demonstrate these skills. Table 5.1 presents, on the basis of mean and

standard deviation scores of the survey, that the areas in which the extent of teachers'

preparation has prepared the novice teachers to fulfill these standards of the PDAS

domains competently.

Table 5.1

Competencies with Highest Mean Scores

Competency	M	SD
Item 6: Ensure that the instructional content is based on appropriate goals and objectives	4.23	0.713
Item 23: Interact with student in an equitable manner, including the fair application of rules	4.29	0.624
Item 30: Use appropriate and accurate verbal and non-verbal communication with students	4.23	0.786
Item 34: Ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with students, parents, community members, and other professionals	4.25	0.769
Item 41: Consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities	4.27	0.751
Item 42: Align instruction to include appropriate TEKS/ TAKS objectives to support student achievement in all assigned classes	4.3	0.807
Item 50: Modify and adapt classroom material and/or instruction for students in at-risk situations	4.82	1.146

Note: $M > 4.20$

Research Question Two Discussion. As noted in Chapter 4, no significant differences could be identified among the respondents from these two programs regarding their perceived adequacy of preparation. Since the sample size (N=56) is small, a generalization cannot be made based on the result of the responses indicating that the teachers from either program perceived both types of programs as equally compatible. The researcher intends to conduct further investigations sampling larger populations.

Still however, the qualitative data results show that there are teachers who showed

concerns with the adequacy of their preparation.

When the novice teachers provided answers to the open-ended questions

regarding whether they thought their program adequately prepared them for the

profession, the teachers had different opinions to share. For instance, the University-

based program teachers typically indicated overall satisfaction; nevertheless, they pointed

out several fine-grained areas about their programs that could have been improved. They

suggested that the programs should not focus on ideal classrooms; rather, they should

center on a real-life classroom and prepare teachers with classroom management

techniques that work with a wide-variety of students. On the other hand, the majority of

ACP teachers indicated that they needed in-field teaching experiences and more

exposures to school settings. They lacked field-based experience within teaching prior to

entering in the classroom. When the teachers lacked the opportunity to teach before they

start their career, they also lacked many aspects of instructional and pedagogical skills,

including classroom management skills, how to meet the individual learning needs of

each student and how to carry out learner centered instruction, etc. Another big concern

for ACP teachers was that they did not have enough time to spend on lesson development

and delivery. As repeatedly stated, lesson planning and delivery is the heart of the

teaching act. These particular teachers felt they lacked the proper lesson planning skills,

and believed that they would not feel competent in their teaching practices.

Darling-Hammond (2000) stated that those who complete well-designed, five-

year and four-year teacher education programs stay in teaching at much higher rates than

teachers hired through alternative certification programs, which offer only a few weeks of

training before new hires are left on their own in the classroom. Mostly, it is thought that candidates graduated from University-based programs will have more comprehensive training and student teaching experiences. A common assumption is that the more professional training teacher candidates receive, the better they will feel in terms of adequacy of preparation and level of preparedness.

Research Question Three Discussion. Identification of the most important teacher competencies as perceived by new teachers was another goal of this study. According to the data results, eight of the 50 competencies were most often selected as top, second and third ranking. Among the eight most important competencies, there were two competencies which also have one of the highest mean scores. One of these items was Competency 41, which was selected by 56 people as either the first, second or third ranking, and had a high mean score of 4.27. These teachers perceived "consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities" as important for them, and also felt they were adequately trained in this area of the PDAS. Another frequently selected item was Competency 34, which had a mean score of 4.25, and was selected by 42 people as first, second or third ranking. One can reasonably argue that novice teachers from this study feel that they are prepared to ensure "that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals", and also think these are important skills for them to demonstrate.

Furthermore, as stated in the aforementioned paragraph, Competency 41 (from Domain VII) had the highest frequency of being picked as first, second or third by the respondents as the most important competency. However, Competency 50 (from Domain

VIII) had the highest mean score among all 50 competencies. The result showed that although teachers felt they were prepared "to modify and adapt classroom materials and/or instruction for students in at-risk situations" (Competency 50), they did not pick this competency as the most important competency in the domain. This could be further explained that the preparation programs could have emphasized the importance of "consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities" more than "adapting materials for the students in at-risk situations."

Moreover, based on the qualitative data result (i.e., open-ended question one), teachers indicated the lesson planning techniques, classroom management skills, individualizing the instructions for each student, assessing and evaluating the needs of at-risk students, organizing the classroom and being adaptive of the classroom procedures are crucial competencies to accomplish successful teaching. They also pointed out that being caring, ethical, knowledgeable, firm and consistent are all important characteristics a teacher should possess. Likewise, teachers stated that being patient and fair to the students were very important skills, and that these teacher traits would make a positive impact on students' academic achievement. Patience and fairness were mentioned 20 times throughout the responses. At the same time, Competency 23 revealed higher mean score of 4.29 and teachers believe they were prepared to "interact with students in an equitable manner, including the fair application of rules" as well.

Additionally, the most important teacher competency selected from each domain according to the highest total number of selections was identified. From these competencies, Competency 39 (from Domain VII) has even reached 100% frequency of

selection from the participants. Table 5.2 summarizes the frequency of the highest

valued competency from each domain on the basis of their top, second and third ranking

as given by most of the respondents of the survey. This table also provides the

percentages of each competency that are being selected by most of the respondents.

Table 5.2

The Most Valued Competencies from Each Domain

Domain	Competency	Ranking	Frequency & Percentage
Domain 1: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process	1: Make sure students are actively engaged in learning	Top	19 (33.9%)
		Second	10 (17.9%)
		Third	10 (17.9%)
		Total	39 (69.6%)
Domain 2: Learner-Centered Instruction	7: Ensure that instructional content is learner centered (e.g., relates to the interests and varied characteristics of students)	Top	14 (25.0%)
		Second	10 (17.9%)
		Third	10 (17.9%)
		Total	34 (60.7%)
Domain 3: Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress	15: Monitor and assess students' academic progress	Top	20 (35.7%)
		Second	8 (14.3%)
		Third	6 (10.7%)
		Total	34 (60.7%)
Domain 4: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials	22: Establish a classroom environment which promotes and encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning as appropriate	Top	29 (51.8%)
		Second	9 (16.1%)
		Third	7 (12.5%)
		Total	45 (80.4%)

Domain 5: Professional Communication	34: Ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals	Top Second Third Total	16 (28.6%) 6 (10.7%) 20 (35.7%) 42 (75%)
Domain 6: Professional Development	36: Successfully seek out and engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with the goals of the campus and district	Top Second Third Total	13 (23.2%) 21 (37.5%) 15 (26.8%) 49 (87.5%)
Domain 7: Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements	39: Comply with all policies, operating procedures, and legal requirements (national, rate, district, and campus)	Top Second Third Total	27 (48.2%) 18 (32.1%) 11 (19.6%) 56 (100%)
Domain 8: Improvement of Academic Performance of All Students on the Campus	42: Align instruction to include appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives to support student achievement in all assigned classes	Top Second Third Total	27 (48.2%) 4 (7.1%) 3 (5.4%) 34 (60.7%)

Note: N=56.

Research Question Four Discussion. On the basis of highest frequencies and percentages, the following are the most important three domains as highlighted by the surveyed sample of the novice teachers:

- Domain I: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process

- Domain II: Learner-Centered Instruction

- Domain IV: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials

Teachers in this study viewed learner-centered instruction, which promotes successful student participation in the learning process, as the most important for quality classroom teaching. This finding is in agreement with studies (Norman & Spohrer, 1996; Hansen & Stephens, 2000) that highlighted the importance of student engagement and learner centered instruction. These teachers also viewed classroom management as one of the important skills that teachers have to demonstrate. This finding is in alignment with other studies as well (Freiberg, 2002; Emmer, Evertson & Anderson, 1980). Such studies typically highlight the importance of classroom management. Without an effective classroom management plan, students will not be afforded the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning experiences. Moreover, it is important that teachers establish their classroom management plan at the very beginning of a school year. Regarding Domain IV (classroom management techniques), the qualitative data also showed that a high number of teachers thought classroom management skills, as well as management of instructional strategies, time and materials are very important competencies, but they feel they are not adequately prepared to demonstrate these skills fully.

Interpretations and Implications

Based on the results of this study, interpretations and implications can be made about the target population. The findings of this study are beneficial in terms of adding to the growing literature of the novice teachers' perception about their level of

preparedness and their views about the teacher preparation programs from which they have graduated. This study highlights the most important competencies in the PDAS evaluation system perceived by novice teachers and also whether they think they are prepared for being evaluated under PDAS. In other words, this study intends to discover if teachers have the essential skills to perform their day-to-day teaching practices or not. Successful daily practices include lesson planning and delivery to effective classroom management, time management and engaging students in learning as well as many other responsibilities for the work day.

This study presents meaningful views and suggestions provided by novice teachers, which can be helpful in examining and improving the two types of teacher preparation programs presented herein. The findings of this study can also provide helpful insights related to possible changes in how teacher candidates are trained and prepared within teacher preparation programs. The literature supports better-trained teachers who are well-prepared and confident for their teaching careers. Teacher preparation programs are the most important elements in the whole teacher preparation sectors. Therefore, it is vital to understand how novice teachers feel about their level of preparation and about their programs in order to improve overall teacher effectiveness.

The importance of focused, appropriate, and effective pre-service teacher preparation cannot be overstated. Effective teacher preparation classes combine subject matter knowledge with pedagogical considerations (Wilson & Floden, 2003). This teaching combines a deep respect for and a focus on subject matter with a commitment to providing pre-service teachers with ways of thinking about and experiences with teaching and learning. Based on the findings of this study, education program leaders and teacher

educators may want to evaluate the existing programs and the methods to prepare future

teachers. The researcher gained some important suggestions and views from this study

that were provided by novice teachers. In particular, the teachers stressed clinical

training as the key to learning more effective teaching strategies. More specifically, these

teachers cited that more attention should be given to in-field training for the teachers to

learn in authentic and real classroom environments. Thus, through hands-on practice and

implementation, teachers will be exposed to the day-to-day teaching process in

classrooms and school settings. Feiman-Nemser (2001) wrote that, among their central

tasks during pre-service teacher education, teacher candidates should "(1) examine their

own beliefs critically in relation to visions of good teaching; (2) develop subject matter

knowledge for teaching; (3) develop an understanding of learners, learning, and issues of

diversity; (4) develop a beginning repertoire of teaching strategies; and, (5) develop the

tools and dispositions to study teaching, including their own" (p.1050). These notions

further suggest that field experience should be extensive, focused, and well-structured;

and, cooperating teachers, who exert great influence on the student teachers, should be

well-prepared for their role, as should the receiving school content (Wilson et al. 2001;

Darling-Hammond, 2006).

The qualitative data findings from this study suggest that ACP teachers felt they

lacked comprehensive clinical training in their preparation programs and that resulted in

their lack of confidence in their teaching practices. Classroom teaching experience would

be a great benefit to these teachers to gain valuable knowledge. Again, from the findings

of the study, University-based program teachers stated they were well prepared for lesson

plan development but the ACP teachers stated they lack the knowledge of planning a

lesson to target all areas of instructions and they were not fully trained on this area in the

programs. The ACP program developers and educators could look into the program

trainings and lessons so they can improve these areas of preparation. The findings of the

study also indicated, although teachers stated they are able to modify instructions and

prepare materials for at-risk students, but they have difficulty identifying students with

special needs. This would be potential problems for novice teachers when they start

teaching. This is the important area of classroom instructions and identifying the learning

levels and needs of students should come before adapting the instructions for them. Both

program leaders and educators may want evaluate the cause of this scenario and could

focus these areas of concentration.

Smagorinsky et al. (2003) suggest that the importance in teacher preparation

programs is the nature of the attempts at conceptual coherence, both within the academic

elements of the program itself and between the academic elements and the field

experiences. Furthermore, summaries of the literature suggest that local policy makers

and programs for preparing student teachers for urban settings should explicitly and

deliberately address the characteristics of such settings and should include professional

development for novice teachers, mentor teachers and administrators, and they must be

more responsive to the labor market needs of the school districts they serve and begin to

prepare teachers so they are ready to teach effectively (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002;

Montgomery, Berry & Snyder, 2008;; Sandholtz & Wasserman, 2001).

Based on the findings of this study, educational program leaders and school

administrators may want to review the teacher evaluation methods criteria currently being

utilized to assess and attain quality teachers. More importantly, attention should be given

to meeting novice teachers' needs, as well as helping them to overcome difficulties in their daily teaching practices. The findings from this study suggest that novice teachers feel unprepared and overwhelmed on some aspects of the teaching process and need to be given enough time to reflect and re-evaluate. Sometimes they lack the appropriate – and absolutely necessary – support in school settings. The researcher is not implying this is the fact for every teacher; however, the school system should consider the challenges novice teachers face in their firs-t and second-years of teaching, and they should provide adequate guidance so that these teachers can have comfortable spaces for growth. The PDAS evaluation method should be used as helpful guidelines for new teachers but not as a means of dismissing them too quickly. There should always be room for improvement. The goal of teacher evaluations should be to support teachers at all levels, helping every teacher improve. Without effective evaluations, struggling teachers do not receive the support they need and the successful teachers are not recognized as they deserved. Teachers, like rest of the community, who are learning continuously every day, and who deserve opportunities to improve. Teachers at all levels need to be provided regular feedback to inform their instruction.

This study may also help future novice teachers to view the insights provided by the study participants and, subsequently, improve teacher efficacy. The knowledge gained from this study will be useful for future teachers to identify important teacher skills they need to able to demonstrate when they encounter their teaching years. It could also help future teachers to question and examine the teacher preparation programs in which they intend to enroll.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations pertaining to this study. First, given that a convenience sampling was utilized, the study possesses inherent limitations. The participants of this study may not necessarily represent the entire population; one limitation involves the lack of generalizability of the delivery of perceptions or experiences from the groups. Even though this study intended to describe a specific group (1st and 2nd year novice teachers from public schools) by using convenient sampling, it is not ensured that the group completing the survey is highly representative of all novice teachers working at urban school settings. Also, the study sample was small (n=56); therefore, it may reveal exclusive characteristics about this specific sample, but it limits the generalizability to larger populations. Data analyses on small sample size also created a greater chance for Type II error for this study. Second, the use of the survey method posed a limitation in itself. The disadvantages of survey studies include the possibility of catering to a small sample size, the possibility of inaccuracies in self-reporting, issues regarding the validity of questions used in surveys, and poor rates of response that most times characterize studies of individual level programs. There are also potential inaccuracies in evaluating specific wording and cognitive issues associated with the questions and answers. The potential for results, conclusions and perceptions and the information gathered from the discussions can be unreliable and hardly measurable (Groves, Fowler, et al., 2004). Third, the assumption must be made that all responses were made honestly and responsibly, but the responses could be socially desirable. Since the survey was developed on the basis of PDAS, the teachers may have responded based on what they perceived as desirable. The same is true for the open-ended response

opportunities. Analysis and interpretation of these items may not have been consistent;

hence, this action may have limited the accuracy of open-ended response data collection.

Further, some open-ended responses by individuals contradict comparable Likert scale

items responses on the questionnaires. Based on the quantitative data analysis for Likert

scale question answers, it seems that teachers are in favor of the programs but in their

open-ended responses they stated the areas of their preparation they lack from the

programs. Hence, this conflict potentially limited conclusion accuracy and

generalizability.

Finally, only two types of teacher preparation programs are included in this study.

Consistency among the programs themselves, in terms of program completion

requirements and expectations, presents great variety. Likewise, as teacher preparation

programs in Texas are designed based on state standards for teachers and state mandates

in content areas, results may not be generalizable to other states due to varying

expectations and requirements. The programs must also be evaluated on individual bases

to determine recommended changes and reinforcement of curriculum. Further to this,

novice teachers are individual human beings with their own preferences and biases.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations can be made based on these results. Future researchers

could use other research designs to collect data on teacher perceptions about their level of

preparedness and their views on their teacher preparation programs. The most essential

component to these studies in the future would be interview strategies. Future

researchers could interview novice teachers and derive more insights from their answers.

The researchers could add questions like: a) In your opinion, how effective are teacher

preparation programs? b) How did your program prepare you to teach students with multiple learning styles and varying achievement levels? c) Has the program prepared you to manage classroom discipline under various challenges? d) Did you have a field experience before you began teaching? Describe how it helped prepare you to teach in the classroom? Answers to these questions would get deeper insights from teachers on these areas of teaching and teacher preparation.

Future researchers could also consider including a larger sample size when using a survey design. The survey questions can be designed more specifically to ask about effective classroom strategies and several questions can be developed to ask respondents about these one or two components of teacher skills and qualities such as classroom management, lesson delivery and learner-centered instruction etc. This methodology could provide more inclusive responses on those components and answers could be more specific.

Future researchers could replicate this study with a consideration to do follow-up focus groups over the period of one- or two-school years with the same population of novice teachers. It will be interesting and more valuable to observe how these teachers' school performances and classroom teaching experiences change overtime. The results of such studies would provide information on whether novice teachers become better acquainted with the profession with time and experience.

Additionally, studies could focus on teacher candidates' last year of teacher preparation programs, rather than waiting until they have started their teaching jobs in schools. Through such studies the teachers' perception about their teacher preparation programs could be compared when they were still in training and after they graduated

from the program to see how their views about their programs changed when they start their actual teaching in schools. Researchers could also compare the perceptions of novice teachers who are still in their practicum; or evaluate those who taught for one year versus those who taught for two years; and following teachers starting from their practicum years to actual teaching years, which would be a great benefit to teacher preparation programs. The teachers who have high regards for their programs and feel competent about their teaching method could be compared to teachers who think they have more difficulty and have low regards to their teacher preparation programs. The studies could also compare and contrast different ACP programs and university-based programs. Long-term studies are helpful to examine the on-going effects of novice teachers' views of the education profession as they progress further into the career.

Future researchers could also consider adding different sample population to their studies, such as school principals and teacher educators. Researchers can conduct studies on the participants' views of most important teacher skills and qualities, and also their opinions about novice teachers' performance and the strengths and weaknesses they present. In addition, researchers can include school principals' and teacher educators' views regarding the PDAS evaluation system itself. The result of such studies can provide further analysis and confirmation of the PDAS instrument; moreover, it will be helpful for future research to compare if there are perception differences among new teachers and school administrators about which competency is considered to be the most important to assess teacher effectiveness. Furthermore, the information gathered from different sample populations will provide great insights about teacher preparation, teacher evaluation and novice teachers' effectiveness.

Finally, future researchers could also include other variables (e.g. school environment, students, mentor teachers, etc.) to get a fuller, more robust pictures of novice teachers work conditions and their level of satisfaction. In that sense, such research studies would be helpful in evaluating how successful the teachers are transitioning to the school environment and how confident they feel about teaching. Future studies should be conducted to evaluate whether the teacher preparation programs are supportive and whether the school systems are meeting the needs of the novice teachers. Furthermore, teacher education is only half of the loaf of bread; the nature of the teacher content and continuous teacher development are both part of the other half of the loaf of bread. It is shortsighted not to address the complexity of the novice teachers' unique needs.

Conclusions

Skills, knowledge, and competencies in transition planning are some of the most essential components of the preparation programs that aim for general and special educators. Thus, this study has investigated novice teachers' perception in order to find out to what extent their programs have prepared them to be quality classroom teachers based on the competency criteria specified in PDAS. Wide number of other survey research that have also investigated the extent to which numerous programs can prepare novice teachers for the classroom experiences. These surveys examined the outcomes that these preparation and teacher education programs provided to the beginning teachers.

A large number of questions and concerns have necessitated the need for examining the influence of University-based learning programs and alternative routes to certification programs in order to identify and understand the attributes that lead to higher

achievements in teaching students. The alternative routes have been proliferating over the past few years, and they are currently supplying a great number of new hires on the national level. Nonetheless, there are still a large number of people who perceive that those teachers who have prepared through traditional University-based preparation programs are much more skilled, expert, and high-quality educators in their fields, as compared to those who have attended the alternative certification preparation programs. Most importantly, such study can also lead to an understanding of which types of teacher training will be more beneficial to prepare teachers to perform their duties in their teaching positions.

This study included the novice teachers' perceptions on two types of programs. Each of the program area participants has their own perceptions about the adequacy of preparation provided to the novice teachers. This study indicated that there were areas of teacher preparation programs that were perceived to be strong and effective. For example, some of the most important areas of focus such as learner centered instruction, professional communication and development, and data-driven instruction are heavily emphasized in their teacher preparation programs. Increasing focus on understanding goals and objectives as the basis for instruction is shown to increase novice teacher effectiveness as well as student achievement. This study also indicated perceived areas of weaknesses in the two types of teacher preparation programs that resulted in some new teachers experiencing feelings that they may not be adequately prepared for the classroom.

A Harvard University Professor of education, Richard Murnane, and his colleagues, wrote a book titled *Who Will Teach?* In this book, these scholars wrote that

"[c]ollege graduates who have high test scores are less likely to enter into teaching jobs, those who get employed as teachers with having high test scores are less likely to stay in the field, and those who are former teachers with having high test scores are less likely return into the field." (Murnane et al, p.10). The quality of teachers is one of the most critical factors in the success of all education reform efforts. This is one of the major reasons for which the educational leaders are highly-focused on the reformation of teacher certification standards in order to boost the overall quality of teaching.

Based on participant responses in this study, field teaching experiences were noted as one of the most important components of teacher education programs. The literature reviewed and participants' responses indicated this aspect as a vital part of teacher training. As gained from participants' responses, teacher education programs can be more effective by allowing teachers to be immersed in a practical approach to teacher training. At the same time, teacher preparation could focus on modeling of research-based teaching strategies of the most effective instructional practices. This notion reaches to embrace strategies that address differentiated instruction, re-teaching strategies, special education, and teaching learners with diverse needs. The participants in this study noted that teacher education programs could benefit from examining the level of effective and practical application within the programs. This leads to the recommendation that teacher education courses provide a direct link from classroom instruction and theory to application and practice.

Moreover, this research has provided in-depth insights regarding major areas of study, such as novice teachers' preparation, their perceived teacher quality, as well as their feedback and suggestions concerning how to improve the programs from which they

have graduated. This study supports the idea that the development of teacher competency

is most important for effective teaching. Teachers' competencies have major effects on

their behaviors, values, aims, practices, and communication strategies in school (Selvi,

2010). Thus, teachers are the most important factors for a successfully operating

educational system, and their strong and efficient professional competencies will impact

effective education and the whole spectrum of student learning. This study also suggests

that there is a critical need for novice teachers to improve their skills and knowledge, and

to enhance their competencies in the related field, as well as to explore and improve their

teaching practices. Moreover, Selvi (2010) states that the competencies of teachers also

need to be reviewed so they can be adequately and appropriately redefined depending on

the development of the whole system of education, as well as the whole life of humans.

Finally, this study also emphasizes that the novice teachers should not only be taught

about the teaching strategies, but they should also be acquainted with putting them into

practice and utilizing different strategies to reach every student. The findings of this study

indicate the need for evaluating the novice teachers' perceptions toward quality teaching

and their level of preparedness for the profession and how the effectiveness of their

training programs is important for the future success of the educational system on a

greater level.

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Appendix A

Table I

Table I

Differences in Perceptions toward the Two Types of Programs

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
1	Equal variances assumed	3.183	.080	1.520	54	.134	.323	.212	-.103	.749
	Equal variances not assumed			1.414	34.504	.166	.323	.228	-.141	.787
2	Equal variances assumed	6.878	.011	2.086	54	.042	.427	.205	.017	.838
	Equal variances not assumed			1.932	33.697	.062	.427	.221	-.022	.876
3	Equal variances assumed	.733	.396	1.496	54	.140	.302	.202	-.103	.707
	Equal variances not assumed			1.414	37.615	.166	.302	.214	-.131	.735
4	Equal variances assumed	.005	.944	-.528	54	.600	-.104	.197	-.500	.291
	Equal variances not assumed			-.514	44.145	.610	-.104	.203	-.513	.304

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
5	Equal variances assumed	2.689	.107	.797	54	.429	.177	.222	-.268	.622
	Equal variances not assumed			.759	39.381	.452	.177	.233	-.294	.649
6	Equal variances assumed	.018	.893	.591	54	.557	.115	.194	-.274	.503
	Equal variances not assumed			.582	46.566	.563	.115	.197	-.281	.511
7	Equal variances assumed	.472	.495	.294	54	.770	.063	.213	-.364	.489
	Equal variances not assumed			.298	52.082	.767	.063	.210	-.358	.483
8	Equal variances assumed	10.418	.002	1.231	54	.224	.271	.220	-.170	.712
	Equal variances not assumed			1.151	35.437	.257	.271	.235	-.207	.748
9	Equal variances assumed	2.840	.098	1.082	54	.284	.229	.212	-.195	.654
	Equal variances not assumed			1.035	40.273	.307	.229	.221	-.218	.677
10	Equal variances assumed	2.379	.129	.130	54	.897	.031	.241	-.452	.514

	Equal variances not assumed			.125	41.696	.901	.031	.250	-.474	.536
11	Equal variances assumed	.084	.773	-.218	54	.828	-.042	.191	-.424	.341
	Equal variances not assumed			-.220	50.717	.827	-.042	.190	-.423	.339
12	Equal variances assumed	1.751	.191	-.375	54	.709	-.073	.194	-.462	.316
	Equal variances not assumed			-.357	38.806	.723	-.073	.204	-.486	.341
13	Equal variances assumed	10.668	.002	.776	54	.441	.177	.228	-.280	.635
	Equal variances not assumed			.716	32.796	.479	.177	.247	-.326	.681
14	Equal variances assumed	.621	.434	.822	54	.415	.240	.291	-.345	.824
	Equal variances not assumed			.803	44.822	.426	.240	.299	-.362	.841
15	Equal variances assumed	3.342	.073	1.709	54	.093	.385	.226	-.067	.838
	Equal variances not assumed			1.622	38.685	.113	.385	.238	-.095	.866

				t	df	Sig.				
16	Equal variances assumed	.542	.465	.659	54	.513	.167	.253	-.340	.674
	Equal variances not assumed			.646	45.745	.521	.167	.258	-.352	.686
17	Equal variances assumed	.091	.764	.848	54	.400	.198	.233	-.270	.666
	Equal variances not assumed			.847	49.469	.401	.198	.234	-.271	.667
18	Equal variances assumed	9.421	.003	1.370	54	.176	.229	.167	-.106	.564
	Equal variances not assumed			1.433	53.965	.158	.229	.160	-.091	.550
19	Equal variances assumed	.690	.410	.830	54	.410	.156	.188	-.221	.533
	Equal variances not assumed			.823	47.884	.415	.156	.190	-.226	.538
20	Equal variances assumed	.015	.903	.153	54	.879	.042	.272	-.504	.587
	Equal variances not assumed			.152	47.627	.880	.042	.275	-.511	.595
21	Equal variances assumed	.684	.412	-1.044	54	.301	-.271	.259	-.791	.249

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.046	49.986	.301	-.271	.259	-.791	.249
22	Equal variances assumed	.089	.767	-1.103	54	.275	-.240	.217	-.675	.196
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.112	51.055	.271	-.240	.215	-.672	.193
23	Equal variances assumed	1.177	.283	-1.125	54	.265	-.229	.204	-.637	.179
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.187	53.557	.240	-.229	.193	-.616	.158
24	Equal variances assumed	.964	.331	-1.189	54	.240	-.240	.201	-.643	.164
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.259	53.247	.213	-.240	.190	-.621	.142
25	Equal variances assumed	.227	.636	.148	54	.883	.031	.211	-.391	.453
	Equal variances not assumed			.148	48.609	.883	.031	.212	-.394	.457
26	Equal variances assumed	1.268	.265	.860	54	.394	.167	.194	-.222	.555
	Equal variances not assumed			.810	36.925	.423	.167	.206	-.251	.584

27	Equal variances assumed	7.531	.008	.198	54	.844	.042	.211	-.381	.465
	Equal variances not assumed			.183	34.018	.856	.042	.227	-.420	.504
28	Equal variances assumed	2.350	.131	-.042	54	.966	-.010	.245	-.502	.481
	Equal variances not assumed			-.041	43.143	.967	-.010	.253	-.521	.500
29	Equal variances assumed	.023	.879	-.093	54	.926	-.021	.223	-.468	.426
	Equal variances not assumed			-.092	47.722	.927	-.021	.225	-.474	.432
30	Equal variances assumed	.161	.689	.195	54	.846	.042	.214	-.388	.471
	Equal variances not assumed			.189	43.522	.851	.042	.221	-.403	.486
31	Equal variances assumed	.719	.400	.777	54	.440	.177	.228	-.280	.634
	Equal variances not assumed			.774	48.837	.443	.177	.229	-.283	.637
32	Equal variances assumed	3.518	.066	.802	54	.426	.188	.234	-.281	.656

	Equal variances not assumed			.762	38.761	.451	.188	.246	-.311	.686
33	Equal variances assumed	2.026	.160	.897	54	.374	.208	.232	-.257	.674
	Equal variances not assumed			.866	42.246	.392	.208	.241	-.277	.694
34	Equal variances assumed	1.049	.310	.000	54	1.000	.000	.209	-.420	.420
	Equal variances not assumed			.000	44.833	1.000	.000	.215	-.432	.432
35	Equal variances assumed	8.026	.006	.336	54	.738	.083	.248	-.413	.580
	Equal variances not assumed			.315	35.940	.754	.083	.264	-.453	.620
36	Equal variances assumed	.480	.492	-.830	54	.410	-.167	.201	-.569	.236
	Equal variances not assumed			-.806	43.405	.425	-.167	.207	-.584	.250
37	Equal variances assumed	.100	.753	-.330	54	.743	-.083	.253	-.590	.424
	Equal variances not assumed			-.327	48.295	.745	-.083	.255	-.595	.429

38	Equal variances assumed	.287	.595	.437	54	.664	.094	.215	-.336	.524
	Equal variances not assumed			.429	46.073	.670	.094	.218	-.346	.533
39	Equal variances assumed	.410	.525	-.358	54	.722	-.094	.262	-.618	.431
	Equal variances not assumed			-.361	50.832	.720	-.094	.260	-.616	.428
40	Equal variances assumed	.164	.687	-.314	54	.755	-.063	.199	-.462	.337
	Equal variances not assumed			-.320	52.817	.750	-.063	.195	-.454	.329
41	Equal variances assumed	2.535	.117	-.562	54	.577	-.115	.204	-.523	.294
	Equal variances not assumed			-.596	53.046	.554	-.115	.192	-.500	.271
42	Equal variances assumed	1.037	.313	1.101	54	.276	.240	.218	-.197	.676
	Equal variances not assumed			1.030	35.590	.310	.240	.233	-.232	.711
43	Equal variances assumed	.211	.648	-.324	54	.747	-.094	.290	-.674	.487

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			-.323	49.540	.748	-.094	.290	-.676	.488
44	Equal variances assumed	.285	.596	.375	54	.709	.104	.278	-.453	.661
	Equal variances not assumed			.373	48.751	.711	.104	.279	-.457	.666
45	Equal variances assumed	1.764	.190	.616	54	.540	.156	.254	-.352	.665
	Equal variances not assumed			.593	41.643	.556	.156	.263	-.375	.688
46	Equal variances assumed	.006	.938	-.762	54	.449	-.208	.273	-.756	.340
	Equal variances not assumed			-.761	49.433	.450	-.208	.274	-.758	.342
47	Equal variances assumed	2.511	.119	-2.100	54	.040	-.552	.263	-1.079	-.025
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.175	53.884	.034	-.552	.254	-1.061	-.043
48	Equal variances assumed	.669	.417	-.497	53	.621	-.158	.317	-.794	.479
	Equal variances not assumed			-.501	48.934	.619	-.158	.315	-.790	.475

49	Equal variances assumed	.001	.980	-1.158	54	.252	-.323	.279	-.882	.236
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.151	48.402	.256	-.323	.281	-.887	.241
50	Equal variances assumed	.056	.814	-.067	54	.947	-.021	.312	-.647	.605
	Equal variances not assumed			-.067	49.255	.947	-.021	.313	-.650	.608

Appendix B

Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE: **Pre-Conceptions of Effective Teaching Practices and Desired Professional Qualities for Novice Teachers**

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by doctoral student-Ms.Gulmira Ismayil from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education at the University of Houston. This is a research study for my dissertation project and it is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lilia Ruban and she is an associate professor of Education Department at University of Houston.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any question.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Purpose of this study is to explore the new teachers' perceptions about their level of preparedness and their view and evaluation of the teacher preparation programs they have graduated. The research is also interested in finding out from new teachers' perspectives if there are any changes needed to improve effectiveness of the teacher preparation program. The main concern is how prepared novice teachers feel they are for their teaching career, how confident they are in the practice of successful teaching and how competent they feel to meet their students' needs to carry out successful lessons in their classrooms and to reach academic success for their students.

PROCEDURES

The research sample will include those teachers who were first and second year teachers (2010-11 and 2011-12 academic years) in Galena Park ISD and Spring Branch ISD. You will be one of approximately **one hundred forty** participants asked to complete the survey study. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey. The surveys should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and it is one time only survey. At this time, there is no follow up interactions required.

In the survey**, t**here will be Likert scale questions which will ask the participants to rank each characteristic of a PDAS domain on a scale of 1-5. The survey also includes three additional tasks. Task one will ask the participants to choose the 3 most important

competencies that they think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order. Task two will ask the participants to choose the top three most important domains out of the eight domains and rank them in order. In Task three, there will be five open-ended questions that the participants need to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your participation in this project is anonymous. Please do not write your name on any of the research materials to be returned to the principal investigator.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

There will be no potential risk for each participant. The participation is voluntary and will help the outcome of the study. The participants' names or any other important identifiers will not be included in the research paper.

BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand the new teachers' perceptions about their level of preparedness and their view and evaluation of the teacher preparation programs they have graduated. This research study will also help to improve or make changes to align the teacher preparation programs with the schools more closely in order to improve the teacher preparation and teacher quality.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in professional and/or scientific journals. It may also be used for educational purposes or for professional presentations. However, no individual participant will be identified.

If you have any questions, you may contact Gulmira Ismayil at 832-860-0685. You may also contact Dr. Lilia Ruban, a faculty sponsor at University of Houston, at 713-743-3311.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (713-743-9204).

Principal Investigator's Name: Gulmira Ismayil

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Appendix C

The Novice Teacher Survey

Novice Teacher Survey

This survey aims to examine whether novice teachers at Galena Park ISD think that the teacher preparation program they have graduated has adequately prepared them to be qualified classroom teachers. Another objective is to solicit information regarding the needs of novice teachers. When doing the survey, please take into account your whole preparation experiences throughout the program, as opposed to a particular semester. Your feedback is completely anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and it is critical to the success of this study.

Part A: Background Information

1. Age in years: ❏ 18 and under ❏ 19-25 ❏ 26-32 ❏ 33-39 ❏ 40-46 ❏ 47-53 ❏ over 53
2. Gender: ❏ Female ❏ Male
3. Ethnicity: ❏ White/Caucasian ❏ Black ❏ Hispanic ❏ Asian/Pacific Islander ❏ American Indian ❏ Other
4. Phase of program: ❏ University Program ❏ Alternative Certification Program
5. Enrollment status: ❏ Full-time ❏ Part-time
6. Classification: ❏ Undergraduate ❏ Post-Baccalaureate ❏ Graduate ❏ ACP
7. Certification level: ❏ EC-6 ❏ 4-8 ❏ 8-12 ❏ EC-12 ❏ Minor-non-certified
8. Teaching field:

   EC-6 --- ❏ Generalist ❏ Bilingual Generalist ❏ Generalist / Special Education
    4-8 --- ❏ English / Language Arts ❏ Math ❏ Science ❏ Social Studies
     8-12 --- ❏ English / Language Arts ❏ French ❏ Germany ❏ History ❏ Latin
           ❏ Life Science ❏ Mathematics ❏ Physical Science ❏ Science Composite
           ❏ Social Studies Composite ❏ Spanish ❏ Other (please specify_____)
   EC-12 --- ❏ Art ❏ Music ❏ Physical Education ❏ Special Education

10. Accumulated GPA: _____

Part B. Development of Teacher Competencies
- ❖ Check the box that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements about the teacher preparation program you have finished.
- ❖ In addition, for **EACH** domain, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.

Domain I: Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process

	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.
		1 Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
1	make sure students are actively engaged in learning						
2	ensure students are being successful in learning						
3	promote students' learning at a high cognitive level (e.g., critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, etc.)						
4	help students become a self-directed/self-initiated learner, as appropriate to the lesson objectives						
5	help students connect learning to work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines						

✦ **Remember, among statements 1 - 5 in Domain I above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain II: Learner-Centered Instruction

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
6	ensure that the instructional content is based on appropriate goals and objectives						
7	ensure that instructional content is learner centered (e.g., relates to the interests and varied characteristics of students)						
8	use appropriate instructional strategies to promote critical thinking and problem solving						
9	ensure that instructional strategies include motivational techniques to successfully and actively engage students in the learning process						
10	ensure instructional strategies are aligned with the objectives, activities, student characteristics, prior learning, and work and life applications, both within the discipline and with other disciplines						
11	use varied activities appropriately and maintain appropriate pacing and sequencing						
12	emphasize the value and importance of the activity/content						
13	use appropriate questioning and inquiry techniques to challenge students						
14	make appropriate and effective use of available technology as a part of the instructional process						

✦ **Remember, among statements 6 - 14 in Domain II above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain III: Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the **3** most important qualities that <u>YOU</u> think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	**1 = top ranking** **2 = 2nd ranking** **3 = 3rd ranking**
15	monitor and assess students' academic progress						
16	align assessment and feedback with goals and objectives and instructional strategies						
17	use appropriate assessment strategies to the varied characteristics of students						
18	reinforce student learning						
19	give students specific constructive feedback						
20	provide opportunities for all students for relearning and re-evaluation of material						

✦ **Remember, among statements 15 – 20 in Domain III above, please choose the <u>3</u> most important qualities that <u>YOU</u> think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain IV: Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
21	effectively implement the discipline-management procedures approved by the campus						
22	establish a classroom environment which promotes and encourages self-discipline and self-directed learning as appropriate						
23	interact with students in an equitable manner, including the fair application of rules						
24	specify expectations for desired behavior						
25	intervene and re-direct off-task, inappropriate or disruptive behavior as needed						
26	reinforce desired behavior when appropriate						
27	select the instructional materials that are equitable and acknowledge the varied characteristics of all students						
28	effectively and efficiently manage time and materials						

✦ **Remember, among statements 21 – 28 in Domain IV above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain V: Professional Communication

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
29	use appropriate and accurate written communication with students						
30	use appropriate and accurate verbal and non-verbal communication with students						
31	encourage and support students who are reluctant or having difficulty						
32	use appropriate and accurate written communication with parents, staff, community members, and other professionals						
33	use appropriate and accurate verbal and non-verbal communication with parents, staff, community members, and other professionals						
34	ensure that interactions are supportive, courteous, and respectful with students, parents, staff, community members, and other professionals						

✦ **Remember, among statements 29 – 34 in Domain V above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain VI: Professional Development

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the **3** most important qualities that **YOU** think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
35	successfully seek out and engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with the goals of the campus and district						
36	successfully correlate professional development activities with assigned subject content and the varied needs of students						
37	successfully engage in professional development activities that positively correlate with the prior performance appraisal						
38	work collaboratively and constructively with colleagues and other professionals toward the overall improvement of student performance						

✦ **Remember, among statements 35 – 38 in Domain VI above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain VII: Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the **3** most important qualities that **YOU** think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	**1 = top ranking** **2 = 2nd ranking** **3 = 3rd ranking**
39	comply with all policies, operating procedures, and legal requirements (national, rate, district, and campus)						
40	comply with all verbal and written directives, participate in the development of operating procedures, and offer suggestions for improvement						
41	consistently contribute to making the whole school safe and orderly, and contribute to a stimulating learning environment for all students, apart from classroom responsibilities						

✦ **Remember, among statements 39 – 41 in Domain VII above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Domain VIII: Improvement of Academic Performance of All Students on the Campus

		On a scale of 1-5, to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the statements about the teacher preparation program you have graduated?					For this domain, rank the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should have.
	The teacher preparation program has adequately prepared me to:	**1** Strongly Disagree	**2** Disagree	**3** Neutral	**4** Agree	**5** Strongly Agree	**1 = top ranking** **2 = 2nd ranking** **3 = 3rd ranking**
42	align instruction to include appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives to support student achievement in all assigned classes						
43	work with colleagues to analyze TAKS performance data relevant to all students in assigned classes prior to beginning instruction						
44	adjust the sequencing of classroom instruction to appropriately incorporate TEKS/TAKS objectives						
45	collaborate with others within and outside the teacher's discipline to select/adapt instructional materials and activities which are correlated with appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives						
46	provide feedback to all students regarding their learning progress on appropriate TEKS/TAKS objectives						
47	monitor attendance of all students in assigned classes and contacts parents, counselors, or other school officials regarding an intervention plan for students with serious attendance problems						
48	identify and assess the needs of assigned students in at-risk situations						
49	meet with parents and/or other teachers of students who are failing or in danger of failing to develop an appropriate plan for intervention						
50	modify and adapt classroom materials and/or instruction for students in at-risk situations						

✦ **Remember, among statements 42 - 50 in Domain VIII above, choose the 3 most important qualities that YOU think a classroom teacher should demonstrate and rank them in order.**

Part C. The Needs of Novice Teachers

1. Which 3 domains do you perceive to be the most important to a classroom teacher?

		Out of the 8 domains, please choose the top 3 that you think are the most important to a classroom teacher and rank them in order: 1 = top ranking 2 = 2nd ranking 3 = 3rd ranking
Domain I	Active, Successful Student Participation in the Learning Process	
Domain II	Learner-Centered Instruction	
Domain III	Evaluation and Feedback on Student Progress	
Domain IV	Management of Student Discipline, Instructional Strategies, Time, and Materials	
Domain V	Professional Communication	
Domain VI	Professional Development	
Domain VII	Compliance with Policies, Operating Procedures and Requirements	
Domain VIII	Improvement of Academic Performance of All Students on the Campus	

2. What are <u>the most important</u> qualities, skills, beliefs that you think a classroom teacher should have (you can also include those not covered in the 8 domains above)?

3. What kinds of training or skills (e.g. lesson plan writing, content area, communication with parents, etc) do you think the teacher preparation program could emphasize even more?

4. Which particular aspects do you think have been emphasized more than needed? Please explain your answers.

5. Overall, do you think the teacher preparation program you have enrolled can adequately prepare you for the challenges of the profession? Why or why not?

6. What suggestions would you give to improve the program you have enrolled so that novice teachers can gain a competitive advantage in the teacher labor market?

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY!

Appendix D

Human Subjects Approval

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

December 9, 2011

Ms. Gulmira Ismayil
c/o Dr. Melissa Pierson
Curriculum and Instruction

Dear Ms. Gulmira Ismayil,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "Pre-Conception of Effective Teaching Practices and Desired Professional Qualities for Novice Teachers" was conducted on December 7, 2011.

In accordance with institutional guidelines, your project is exempt under **Category 1B.**

As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review.* Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and approval by the Committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743-9215.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Scott B. Stevenson
Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **November 1, 2016.** If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 12186-EX