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Anne Monahan

December 2012

PRESEVICE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON  
ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION AND REGULAR CERTIFICATION

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

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Monahan, Anne. "Preservice teachers' perspectives on alternative certification and regular certification." Unpublished Doctor of Education Dissertation. University of Houston, December 2012.

### **Abstract**

Education has been under scrutiny and new mandates have been introduced over the last several decades (Cremin, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Yet the education system in the United States continues to be unsatisfactory when compared to other educational systems globally (National Council of Excellence in Education, 1985; No Child Left behind, 2002). The public believes that quality teachers are too few, and that teacher attrition is too high (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2004). Schools with the highest number of low socio-economic students and high numbers of English as a Second Language pupils continue to have poor results on standardized tests, which results in those schools losing funds, teachers and supplies. To combat the apparent shortage of teachers, high needs schools have resorted to hiring entry-level teachers with no education in the field of education (Herbert & Ramsey, 2004). These teachers have no credentialing, emergency credentialing or alternative certifications. While reflecting on how education has changed, I was reminded of the changes within the nursing profession: level of professionalism and education changes. This dissertation study focused on the similarities between the teaching profession and the nursing profession: changes in education, public perception, dumbing down and dropout statistics/characteristics. Participants included four individuals from two different states; two stemming from education programs housed within universities and two who chose alternative certification program routes. Utilizing narrative inquiry methods, this qualitative study centered on the following questions: Who chooses alternate certificate programs? Why is

attrition higher among teachers from alternative certification programs than teachers from university teacher-preparation programs? Through interview and an examination of the family backgrounds of the four individuals, the inquiry provides insights into the experiences of pre-service teachers. Based on the experiences of these four participants, the study found no patterns or possible predictors related to family background, education, and income.

*Keywords:* Certified Teachers, Alternative Certification, Attrition Rates, Socio-economic Schools, Non-credentialed Teachers

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Setting the Context**

Education is broadly defined as the process of being educated; the process of learning from an educational process (Merriam-Webster, 1983). Many immigrants have come to the United States for just that reason—to get an education. Conversely, those Americans who were expected to utilize the education conferred on them by citizenship have been unable to do so. For those Americans who are “baby boomers,” education would become the ultimate goal. Many of us were raised believing that with an education, you would be infinitely more successful. The criteria for that success would be measured by either a white-collar job or a high-paying blue-collar job.

These same “baby boomers” also had parents who were unable to get a higher education due to finances, family issues or location (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Moreover, there were several wars involving the United States, which took priority over any pursuits of higher education. This result left those parents with practically no higher education. The experiences our parents endured. Surviving in a world that was all the more harsh for their lack of education, prompted the need to impress upon the next generation to strive for a higher level of education. In the ensuing decades, education has been the topic of discussion and legislation on many levels; local, state and federal (i.e. *A Nation At Risk*, 1983). It is not for lack of educators writing, studying and attempting to guide this legislation, but rather a lack in those educators the governments failed to listen to what they were saying (Cremin, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

## **Introducing the Educational Landscape**

In the early to mid-1900s, John Dewey articulated a home-grown philosophy of what education was or was not. Dewey was both an educator and a philosopher and seemingly ahead of his time. Dewey correlated democracy and education (1916), experience and education (1938), experience and nature (1958) and finally the school with society (1902). He was one of the first to liken education to experience. In doing so, Dewey added a more human touch into an otherwise utilitarian vision of education. It would appear that this link was subverted in the following several decades.

During the 1950s, education was rarely talked about unless to report that the US was one of the leading countries amongst the international community. It was also at this time that the United States was in an intense rivalry with the Soviet inspired cold war race. Ultimately, this rivalry was geared toward indoctrinating the mindset of children and adults into being better, more patriotic citizens. Schools had stricter rules and policies with corporal punishment being used at will. Then, by the middle 1980s, focus on education turned and it was suddenly in the forefront of government (ANAR, 1983). In fact, education began to be a somewhat of a political ping-pong match. Craig (2007) summed it up well by stating that "in the USA, school reform is an ongoing local, regional and national preoccupation" (p. 620). In 1986, education was again in the news and in the forefront of federal sights. The focus was on the failure of the nation's schools leading to a dramatization of the need to improve teaching methods and teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

In the 1980s, Terence Bell (1988) asked to join the president's cabinet as the head of the education department. Bell accepted the appointment to discover that, eventually, he was to do away with that department altogether. It was then that Bell wrote his book

"The Thirteenth Man" in which he describes the condescending viewpoint business leaders had of teachers. Apparently business men (and that was who leaders were in that generation) considered teachers as poor managers, not very bright and people who lacked "intestinal fortitude" (p. 25). Ironically, it is as if no one heard Bell, yet he was asked for input.

### **Introducing the Research Context.**

Surprisingly, before Bell was asked to head the Department of Education, another new study conducted by the National Commission on Excellence in Education was published touting that the United States as *A Nation at Risk* (ANAR, 1983). The study presented statistics showing that over 27 million Americans were illiterate, 17% of 17--years-olds were illiterate and that Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores had declined dramatically over the previous 17 years. Additionally, the military had discovered that recruits were not able to read on a ninth grade; which was the level of reading required to understand safety instructions. The military was required to bring these levels up to par before training recruits to the necessary level of military knowledge. *A Nation at Risk* also found that not only did Americans not excel on international testing but Americans were coming in last. These results were released after decades of Americans had been led to believe that the United States was number one globally in just about every measure. The study also pointed out that such industries like steel mills, tools and automobiles were being surpassed in quality by those same products made in Japan, Germany or South Korea. The findings of *A Nation at Risk* stated that for generations, each ensuing generation has out done its parents in the pursuit of education but that in 1983, for the first time, the generation would not out do, equal or even near the level of education skills their parents had attained. In contrast to what had been the national standard of education,

success to most, by this time, meant only obtaining the least amount of knowledge required at that time, to do the least amount of work necessary to get by.

*ANAR* led those who read it to believe that if Americans were as illiterate as shown on the report, they could not enjoy life within the American society as it existed. The common view was that the United States was founded and built on the need and respect for education. Suddenly education was thrust into the spot light at the federal level which in turn cascaded down to the state level. Of course this snowball effect continued on to the local level where schools now scurried to meet the added onus of accountability guidelines that had suddenly appeared. Legislators and educators hurried to expand education, which in turn required more teachers. At this point, in reaction to *A Nation at Risk*, no mandates had been formed. Rather, the report sent out a plea to the American people to once again renew their thirst for education. The plea encompassed all people: individuals, businesses, parents and civic groups. However, *ANAR* birthed organized reform initiatives. One such reform that can trace its beginnings to *ANAR* is Teach for America.

Teach for America (TFA) was founded in 1990 and was aimed at providing teachers for rural areas and areas of low socio-economic suburban schools. Originally, TFA was created for the high needs areas of New York City, Houston and the rural areas of east North Carolina and the Mississippi Delta. The program was designed to take college graduates and put them through an intensive course to learn the fundamentals of teaching. This program consisted of a five- week course during the summer months wherein those that completed the entire course were immediately hired by schools to begin teaching (Darling-Hammond, L. Holtzman, D. Gatlin, S. and Heilig, J. 2005). The recruits were considered full faculty at their respective schools complete with benefits.

Additionally, recruits were placed in schools where there were other TFA corps members. What TFA recruits also received was a "modest education voucher" (no amount given on the web site) which would make their salaries not exactly on par with other teachers' salaries. The education voucher could be used to cover previous education loans and future education once the two- year commitment was fulfilled ([www.TFA.org](http://www.TFA.org)). This was in direct contrast to teachers already in the teaching field who had taken four to five years to complete their education and certification. TFA touts its own success at raising test scores and having a larger percentage of retained teachers after two years ([www.americanprogress.com](http://www.americanprogress.com)). However, these studies were conducted by TFA and only at schools where they had placed teachers and did not encompass the nation as a whole.

TFA has also come under criticism nationally (TFA, 1990). There were accusations that certified teachers were being laid off and recruits from TFA hired in their stead to fulfill contract obligations between participating schools and TFA. Additionally, reports conflicted about the success of raising scores and reading levels. Some reports maintained that TFA recruits had as much success as non-certified teachers while other reports disputed these facts. Since its inception, TFA has expanded across the nation with ever increasing number of applicants. Reports from the TFA web site include the number of applicants in the year 2000 being 4,048. By the 2010, the number of applicants had jumped to over 46,000.

Following, the self-proclaimed success of this program, many new initiatives with their own guidelines began propagating. In 1993, a report was published that outlined what was would be the *National Education Goals*. These goals were to be accomplished by the year 2000. The goals, six in number, were reputed to start an education renewal across the nation. The goals themselves were quite lofty and somewhat nebulous which in

turn lends itself to guaranteed failure. Goals were that 'all children will start school ready to learn' and that by 2000 American students will be first in the world in science and math. Neither of these has an attainable goal nor are there specific ways to accomplish them. A numeric value to strive for would be to have goals such as having the graduation rate from high school up to 90% by the year 2000. To state that every adult American will be literate and be able to compete on a global scale with all the necessary skills to survive again sets an almost impossible goal. However, stating that by grades four and eight, all students must have a specified reading level and math level is one that can be captured in league tables.

Despite these somewhat nebulous goals, the plan was for a nationwide standard of education to be established. Again guidelines for these standards were not clearly outlined or defined. Additionally, the effort used what was termed 'professionals', attempts to create a performance standard as a beginning. The panel chosen to discuss, lead, and advise on how to accomplish the goals repeatedly stated that Americans thrive on challenge. This statement becomes questionable at present because if Americans really thrived on challenges, why the country and the education system are in need of so much reform.

### **Situating the Researcher in Context**

When a relative of mine was in elementary school in a small northeast state, no grades were handed out. The thought behind no grades (whether numeric or alphabetic) was that the school did not want to lower any child's self-esteem. Of interest to note, this same relative is twenty-four and has never held a job that required full time attendance or lasted more than three to four weeks. While I am not trying to put the blame on the elementary school for his lack of drive, this story serves more to illustrate how schools



have lowered standards. How, then, can it be said Americans thrive on challenge? When students leave school either by graduation or dropping out, life does not provide them with opportunities that will not lower their self-esteem. It is always a joke to those of us who came up through the baby boomers' rank that real life offers no "do over's". The panel for *National Education Goals* set itself up to fail by using sweeping or vague terms (all students will start school willing to learn) and making gross generalizations again with no guidelines.

### **Need for the Inquiry**

These scurrilous guidelines apparently did not have the desired effect, as a new emphasis was born at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 2000, former President George W. Bush signed into effect the bipartisan *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* (*NCLB*, 2002). This legislation was based on a study of standardized testing in a large southwestern state where it was presumed, perhaps erroneously, that testing of this caliber would close the gap of educational success between children of various socio-economic status and children of different race or ethnic groups (*NCLB*, 2002). The actual wording of the Act does not read as insulting as the media and other critics choose to portray it. It was acknowledged within the Act that the federal government had a tendency to put money into new programs rather than more funding into already existing successful programs. The Act did make changes regarding schools that were 'failing' or had a majority of students below passing. The Act also allowed parents to move their children from a persistently failing school to a successful school at no cost or transportation burden to the parents (*NCLB*, 2002).

It appeared that the Act was putting the onus of improving schools and education back onto the states. Funds were allocated but with some latitude of where to spend these

funds once given to the state. The law clearly states that objectives to be learned by the students must be broken down into sub-populations based on poverty, race ethnicity, and disability and limited English speaking ability. This is very puzzling to me as during many conversations I have had with teachers, I distinctly remember them saying all children must take the standardized tests even if they were mentally or physically unable to do so (special education teacher). One individual in particular explained that a child in her class could only scribble across a paper. Another described a cerebral palsy child that had no physical movement at all and very questionable cognitive ability. Both these children's standardized test scores were included in the overall scores. How, then, was this "breaking down groups based on disability"?

When the Act was signed by the president, teachers were once again fundamentally insulted as the program was billed as "teacher proof" or immune to the effects of teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). This "teacher proof" mentality served to lower the public's already low opinion of teachers as professionals. Curricula were created by non-educators with no input from teachers or professors who taught curriculum studies. Standardized testing was adopted by many states that had previously not experienced any form of them. There was no formal education for teachers on how to cope with these new standards. When the public and political furors died down, results still showed a lack in progression at closing the gap between ethnic and minority groups (McNeil, 2000).

In 2006, *Time Magazine* published an article about the dropout rate in the United States schools. A high school in a small community in the central region of the United States was targeted but the problem is not, of course, only in small rural schools. The problem is proportionate to the size of the school. The cited statistics suggested was that

almost ten out of twelve students had dropped out in the small community compared to the one out of three students that would drop out nationwide. Some of these dropouts had completed their GED (general educational diplomas). The baby boomer generation came from the view that a GED was not a thing of pride but more a symbol of ignorance. It was not acceptable therefore to most employers at that time and certainly not a feat to be celebrated. Now it seems that getting a GED—no matter at what age or reason for not completing high school—is a time to celebrate. Moreover, as was brought out by *Time* magazine, even the most menial jobs require some knowledge of computer technology. One company in the targeted community had a 'no diploma, no need to apply' attitude. School dropout is felt to be a serious social problem (Rosenthal, 1998). The federal government is applying more pressures in the education arena to stem the large dropout rate (Barclay, 1966).

Why is the dropout rate so high? Sources say that the problem stems from inflated numbers from schools claiming graduates who really had dropped out but promised to get a GED. Also, larger schools districts have what is termed "leaver codes" (*Time Magazine*, 2006, p. 4) which can include excuses like military service or pregnancy. What is then never included in the schools' reporting is that these students never returned and never graduated. How can schools use military service as a reason for leaving when there is an age requirement for entering the military?

What *Time Magazine* uncovered through many researchers' input is that the dropout rate has not changed significantly since the 1970s (p. 4). When my oldest child started high school in a large school district in a large metropolitan area in the southwestern part of the United States, there were over nine hundred freshmen in the class just starting and in attendance. My child came home on day and reported that the

principal had told all nine hundred of the freshmen that even though there were so many starting high school that day, less than half would graduate. Why would an educator even voice such a statistic? It seems that the power of suggestion would entice anyone on the edge of leaving high school to take the leap. And true to the words, only about four hundred and fifty plus students graduated with my son. Of course there were two high schools in the district and students could attend either one, but I do not believe this would account for over four hundred students leaving my son's school. The principal was not far off in his off- the- cuff prediction. According to the National Center for Education statistics, one third of those entering ninth grade will graduate. In large cities and high poverty areas with high minority numbers, about 50% students leave high school.

Pregnancy was also listed by *Time* magazine as an excuse to leave high school and during the baby boomers' generation, usually that did happen. However the social stigma is not as prevalent as it was and students are now allowed to attend school while pregnant. My daughter had a fellow student in seventh grade turn up pregnant; but surprisingly enough, my daughter later saw this same female as a student at a large university. This proves that pregnancy does not in itself lead to dropping out.

So what is causing such a large dropout rate? It seems that large school districts cannot fault their size (larger schools having so many students that can lead to students feeling lost or unimportant) because the problem exists in very small school districts as well. Providing large sums of money to offset the problem has not resulted in a change in the dropout percentage rate. The question remains is it the schools themselves that are fostering dropouts or is it society? Or both? Schools can change, but how can change the American society? These are all important questions and vital pieces of the dropout puzzle.

## **Rationale for the Study**

Throughout an almost century of discussion about education, never once was the human aspect of teaching addressed. With the media currently intruding into every aspect of American lives, education is becoming more of a spectator sport than a serious need, a need that is not supported by a broad spectrum of the public. The media never hesitates to mention a single bad teacher as often as possible but reports good teachers only once a year at an annual outstanding teacher award gala amid an audience of family members and peers. It seems that the American society has adopted an attitude where consequences no longer matter and rarely are people forced to take responsibility for their actions. Teachers are now frequently regarded as glorified babysitters and given little respect by parents. When instances happen within the classroom that affects learning, particularly ones that are clearly the result of the child's home environment, it is still the teacher who is held responsible. It seems that no matter how many days are given by schools as vacation days; parents think nothing of planning vacations that involve their children missing school. The message being sent to the children is that education is not that important. The other message is that missing school, although against the law, is okay too.

I had the ironic pleasure of going to court with my youngest child as he had been issued a speeding ticket. We had to sit and listen to several other cases. One was that of a Hispanic woman with her two daughters. The daughters were of middle school or junior high age and the three of them were in court because of numerous and frequent absences from school. I was stunned to listen to the mother asking the judge if she was supposed to send her daughter to school with a headache. I cannot remember what the judge said exactly, but do remember the mother and her two daughters walking out with smirks on

their faces. I do know that in my state of residence if a child misses too many days of school, the parents can be fined up to \$532 per day of missed instruction. Maybe the mother was glad that the fine was not imposed upon her but I could only think that she should not obstruct and interrupt her daughters' education. This is what I perceive as one of society's problems and that this same society wishes to put the blame on teachers. How can students be expected to pass standardized tests if not attending school? How can teachers be held accountable for these failures, as they cannot teach an absent student?

### **Purpose of the Study**

Throughout all of this media hubris, teacher educators, administrators and bureaucracy still seem amazed at the high attrition rate of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003, Ingersoll, 2003). Once again the human aspect of teachers is glossed over. Dewey (1936) asserted that educators had experiences and knowledge; in other words they were subject to human foibles. Teachers come from different sorts of backgrounds and from different types of families. Teachers also decide on a teaching career for different reasons. Moreover, teachers leave the profession for different reasons. There seems to be no question that something in the education system is clearly 'not working'. We have not reached any of the goals put forth by Educational Goals 2000.

Is it the fault of society as a whole, the individual states and their educational systems, teachers as a profession or some teachers? Is it the education of all teachers or just some of them? Is it that schools who have low pass ratings have the greatest amount of attrition and therefore end up hiring marginally trained teachers (i.e. many through alternate certification)? Is it that those marginal teachers come from an environment where education was not stressed and that they, without being aware of it, transmit that same attitude? Is it that teachers who have little preparation 'teach' to simply gain a

paycheck? Apathy could be described as infectious; if the teacher really does not care, then why should the students care. If students see that they can be unruly, rude, and apathetic with no consequences, then they will be. Is there a particular family background that influences how teachers go about getting their education?

This dissertation study focuses on four teachers. Two of these teachers graduated from a professional development education curriculum. One teacher is from a large southwestern state and one is from a large north central state. The third teacher did not graduate from an educational program but has a teaching job after completing alternate certification program training. This third teacher is from the same southwestern state as the first two teachers, and graduated from college before the alternate certificate program existed. The fourth participating teacher is a student teacher completing the education process through a different alternate certificate program route. A summary of this is found in Table 1 below:

Table 1

*Summary of Teacher Participants*

Name	Number of siblings	Education program	Parents' education
Carol	1	Alternate certification	Mother: Master's degree x2, father: 2 years college
Jennifer	2	University certified	Mother: Masters' Father: GED
Robin	3	University certified	Mother: Master's Father: Doctorate
Wanda	0	Alternate Certification	Mother: Completed Junior High Father: Associates' degree

The intent in this study is to look at each teacher's family backgrounds and education levels, then look at the family education level in relation to the choice of alternate certification versus professional school education. This study will consider how the socio-economic and education of parents and grandparents affects whether a prospective teacher will take what appears to be the proverbial easy road or the harder road? To clarify, the harder road is defined as years of consistent attendance at classes in an education degree program, while the less difficult road is considered to be taking of a handful of courses with one hour a week of "student teaching."

### **Significance of the Study**

This dissertation examines four individuals, their families and some of their respective family's educational background. The study strives to highlight the subliminal messages perspective teachers receive from their upbringing without a conscious realization that it is occurring. Education has been under scrutiny for over a decade on all levels of government with little effect despite numerous mandates being formulated. This study illuminates a possible problem stemming from the education teachers are receiving. Are the alternative certification programs adding to the problems in our education system or are they helping? Did the push for more educators to fill positions start a trend toward less qualified teachers being hired? Moreover, does family history spill over into the alternate certificate teacher's mode of teaching?

In her book, *The Making of a Teacher*, Grossman (1990) discussed teacher education, focusing on students' journeys to become educators. Grossman's work also involved four students on their journey to become educators. This dissertation in no way reflects or attempts to imitate or replicate Grossman's work. Grossman studied a total of six teachers of high school English. What Grossman was looking at is the manner in



which these teachers actually taught. Three teachers had graduated from educational programs based at a college level. The other three had college degrees and knowledge of their subject but had no classes on how to teach. Grossman uses her results to offer suggestions for staff development and school improvement. This study will address key elements in perspective teachers' family backgrounds, an element Grossman did not address.

The names of the teachers presented are pseudonyms. Anonymity has been guaranteed in the letter sent to each participant. Care must be taken when working with human subjects as many do not want to be thought of as guinea pigs or lab rats (Heiferty, 2011). I chose not to use real names to avoid any one of them misunderstanding the purpose of my study. Permission to query these teachers was obtained through the University of Houston's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

What does the actual art of teaching entail; what is required of a beginning teacher? Once hired into a school system, who is there to assist the beginning teacher transition into his/her new role? Is there a way or procedure to help alleviate the feelings of isolation and disillusionment felt by many beginning teachers that will help stem the high attrition rates? This literature review will address these concerns.

#### **Recognizing high attrition in the teaching profession**

While the problems of education can be as varied as the myriad number of schools one could list, the one overarching problem that appears to stand out most is attrition. Attrition of beginning teachers is a worldwide problem. Johnston (2004) reports a 30% attrition rate the first three years and a 50% attrition rate within the first five years. Statistics show a 50% attrition rate within the first five years (DeWert, Babinski & Jones, 2003, Darling-Hammond, 2003, Ewing & Manuel, 2005, Ewing, & Smith, 2003 Herbert, & Ramsey, 2004, Skilbeck & Connell, 2003, Smithers & Robinson, 2001, 2003, Terry, 2009). There are many reasons for these high attrition rates. In fact these reasons have not changed in the last century. However, either the field of education or the teachers themselves are very different than a century ago. Increasingly there is the certainty that people enter the teaching field as an interim stopgap until something 'better' comes along (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). No longer do these individuals plan on teaching as life long careers. Darling-Hammond (2003) reiterates the high attrition rates but breaks down the rate by school types. She cites the statistic of one third of new teachers leaving the profession within the first five years. The attrition rate in high-poverty areas is fifty

percent (50%) higher than in schools with a lower number of poverty students. Since the early 1990s, more teachers are leaving the profession than the number of teachers entering the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Additionally, in the United States, there are more qualified, prepared and certified teachers than there are jobs for them (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Teachers state poor working conditions, lack of respect as a profession, stress and low pay as the main reasons for leaving the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2001). These would also include lack of incentives for teachers and highly noncompetitive salaries. Oddly enough, despite the high attrition rate and need for more teachers, only sixty to 70% of teachers find employment in education after they graduate (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000). Teachers graduate from a four or five year program with debts; debts from using loans to fund their education. When they are hired, their salaries are below nurses, dental hygienists, accountants, auditors and computer programmers; lower by \$6000- 27,000 annually (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Poor support from administration also contributes to teachers leaving the profession. It starts to become more and more obvious why the attrition rates are so high.

Bell (1988) believed the attrition problem resulted from a different cause. He felt that really good teachers left the profession while the marginal teachers remained until retirement. He (Bell) believed that the low status and low pay are why the better teachers leave and the less qualified teachers remain. I am reminded of a conversation I had with a freshman principal of a high school in a large school district in a large Southwestern metropolitan area. The principal was very frustrated with having to deal with legal matters related to an incident in his school. Apparently a substitute teacher had asked a 15-year-old male student to remain in the classroom after dismissal for disciplinary

problems. The student began physically hitting the teacher. The school district expelled the student permanently. The substitute teacher obtained an attorney, the school's attorney was called in and the parents also retained an attorney. The parents of the student denied any wrong doing on the student's part (despite twenty-four witnesses). The resulting legal action on behalf of the student by his parents have produced a 15-year-old male who is not required to obey rules or laws nor is he held accountable for his actions. The parents, by retaining an attorney to prevent the school district from expelling him, are condoning his behavior; it is okay to resort to physical violence to get your way. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) add to the reasons teachers leave by including low pay, low prestige, inadequate resources and isolated workplaces, subordinate status and limited career opportunities (Terry, 2009). Once again I am reminded of a story relayed to me from a student in junior high school (or middle school) talking about 'little Johnny' being expelled from the school district for using his key(s) as weapons against other students. The individual talking about the incident had in fact witnessed the behavior. Predictably, about two months later a plea appeared in a local newspaper asking for signatures to allow 'little Johnny' to return to the school district. Here is yet another example of a child or minor not being required to suffer consequences for his behavior while the parents are sending the message that he is not required to follow rules. Are we now seeing examples of the crumbling of the American society by the lack of parenting but with the blame of poor academics being blamed on quality of teaching?

### **Teacher Preparation**

Teacher preparation is another factor affecting attrition. Despite the fact that there are adequate numbers of qualified teachers educated each year in the United states,

schools still have shortages and rely on unqualified teachers to fill the void. Teachers with little or inadequate preparation leave after their first year (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The schools hiring these under prepared teachers most often are the schools with high poverty students. These schools have fewer textbooks, larger classes and often year round classes. To offset the shortage, several programs were created to expedite “educating” people to become teachers. As was stated in the introduction, one such program is Teach for America (TFA). Teachers from Teach for America are required to remain for two years. The retention rate after those two years averages less than 25% (Raymond, Fletcher & Luque, 2001). In the state of Texas, the attrition rate after two years for TFA is 80% (Darling-Hammond, 2003). TFA seeks graduates from high level universities, with high SAT scores (1310 or better combined scores) and high GPA’s; an average of 3.5 or better. However these graduates, who have leadership qualities, have no course work in education (Glazerman, Mayer & Decker, 2006). They are poorly equipped to deal with curriculum development, pedagogical content, student learning styles, classroom management or student motivation (Darling-Hammond, 1994, 1996). TFA, however, touts that its students spend about 70 hours per week for their five week “intensive training” in student teaching and coursework (Glazerman, Mayer & Decker, 2006). In the state of Massachusetts, a program established within the state, named Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers, and has at least 50% of their recruits leave within the three years (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The state of Missouri has both the alternate certificate track to fill teaching positions but also a program called Temporary Authorization certification (TAC). To teach under TAC, one needs only to possess a bachelor’s degree and have a position to teach offered to them. These TAC teachers must

complete a maximum of 24 credit hours and participate in a school based mentoring program (Scribner & Heinen, 2009).

### **Federal and State mandates: Help or Hindrance?**

Teachers are now under a greater scrutiny by local, state and federal governments because of mandates that have been established (*NCLB*, 2002). Additionally, teacher salaries are based on tax rates within a city or school district. If a bond or question of increasing the taxes arises, the public creates uproar. Meanwhile, these same voting constituents seem to forget that their taxes pay for their children's education. The concern over high teacher attrition and its impact on teacher quality has been factored into few state level policies (Smith, 2007, p. 273). High attrition rates are very costly to schools. If you take into account the cost of a four or five year education program and compare it to the cost of a high attrition rate, it is actually cheaper to prepare a larger number of qualified teachers than continue to replace those unqualified (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Schools must pay \$5000 per recruit from Teach for America. If all totaled after taking into account the high attrition rate of TFA teachers, it is estimated to be more than \$70,000 per recruit. This is definitely more than enough to educate several qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Glazerman, Mayer and Decker (2006) studied the impacts of alternate routes to teaching, especially TFA. Their findings were contrast to Darling-Hammonds' findings. Glazerman et al found that TFA teachers were 31% more male, over 50% went on to become certified and or obtain a masters' degree. They also found that TFA recruits had a greater impact on math scores of students they taught than students with traditionally trained teachers. Boyd, Goldbar Lankford and Wyckoff (2007) feel that with TFA having

over 100 fold the number of applicants to what is needed, the TFA can be much more selective in choosing their recruits. Hannaway and Taylor (2011) found that students in high school had a great achievement in math and science scores with TFA recruits but students had lower achievement in elementary schools with TFA recruits. Schools within poorer neighborhoods, that can least afford it, have some of the highest attrition rates. Judging by the figures shown by Darling-Hammond, schools in poorer neighborhoods can ill afford TFA recruits. However, TFA recruits are not put into the worst of the poor schools (Xu, Hannaway & Taylor, 2011.)

Schools with these high attrition rates are less likely to build a cohesive feeling among the teachers. They will not be able to build a cohesive education program either. High attrition rates are most often associated with lower levels of experience in the fields of math, science and special education. Factors contributing to inferior retention rates include low pay, poor working conditions, low professional status in the educational community as well as physical and emotional exhaustion (Smith, 2007; Sumsion, 2002). The questions then become how can we stem the tide and begin to decrease the attrition rates? How can teachers and educators overcome the negative image that continues to prevail both in the public eye and within the teaching profession itself? One suggestion that appears to make sense is why teachers ear “wages”? Blue collar workers are paid wages, often on an hourly rate. White collar workers are referred to as professionals and receive a salary. Why not have teachers called professional and salaried (Murnane & Steele, 2007). How can we cultivate teachers to have the ability to cope with less than ideal conditions (Sumsion, 2002), higher incidences of violence in the schools and higher uses of recreational drugs that alter behavior of students? Moreover, what can be done

with the poorer schools? It is these schools that have the highest attrition rate and therefore the highest number of beginning teachers.

### **Role of Teacher Educators in Attrition**

Does the attrition rate of beginning teachers reflect a lack of proper education? Of course a question like this may seem rhetorical and often has difficult or no answers. Rather, instead of looking for reasons why teachers are leaving, efforts were made to create more teachers by changing their own education processes. One such plan was an alternate teaching certificate program. At a large university in a large southwestern state, prospective teachers can attend classes, student teach and become "teachers" in a two year time frame. That two year time frame can be a flexible dichotomy and also despairingly inconsistent within itself. Some of their graduates have taken the required pedagogy courses and accomplished a full semester of student teaching complete with mentors and educators monitoring their progression email conversation with one of the four interviewed pre teachers); much like those at a full four year education process for teachers. Other graduates have taken courses in no orderly fashion, often adding or dropping courses, opting to "student teach" by observing a classroom for one hour a week for a semester. Not only is this prospective teacher not preparing lessons plans, interacting with students or other teachers but is merely observing. Observing connotes simply watching which often provides no knowledge of actual teaching. The problem begins to show itself when beginning teachers are expected to perform the same teaching tasks as those performed by more experienced teachers (Reynolds, 1995). This expectation is coming from teachers themselves, teacher educators and school administrators. What are these ubiquitous tasks expected of beginning teachers? What is



the knowledge required? Craig (1995) stated that beginning teachers do have intuitive knowledge and that knowledge can most often be from experience. How can a beginning teacher incorporate his/her own experiences into the task of teaching? Moreover, what if the experiences of the teacher turn out to be totally socially acceptable? For instance, an individual recovering from an addiction might not find it necessary to include all those experiences. Teacher education programs could not possibly cover all types of experiences especially if that program has been condensed. Educational programs traditionally provide theory and content but do not look at day to day procedures. If teacher educators were expected to incorporate both personal experiences and daily procedures, this would leave them with a seemingly impossible task (Imig & Imig, 2006; Ben-Peretz, 2011).

Every day routines at school can be overwhelming to the beginning teacher (Lindgren, 2005). Suddenly these teachers are expected to do the job they were hired to do while adjusting and adapting to a new culture and a whole new social climate. If these beginning teachers are hired into schools with a large number of low socioeconomic students, many English as a second language (ESL) students and a large number of high risk students, the new culture can be overwhelming. Added to the new culture of an actual classroom, each internal culture of the students has its own social conventions and 'unwritten rules'. No one individual could possibly know all the conventions and unwritten rules. If the beginning teacher has attended an alternate certificate education course, these feelings of being over whelmed have to be much greater. If the beginning teacher is one who has a fragmented alternate certificate education or the five week TFA orientation, why would they not be totally overwhelmed? A greater proportion of

beginning teachers are from middle class families and rarely from extreme poverty. It seems that schools with the least amount of capital in the largest low socio-economic communities hire beginning teachers most often. These same schools have the highest attrition rates. Bruner (1997) compares this to maintaining of a class system. Students in higher socio-economical 'classes' have no idea of those less fortunate lives. For example, these higher socio-economic students would have no idea what a grocer, a taxi cab driver or even a bookies' lives are like. Student population in today's society is far more diverse than in the last century (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Diversity, particularly in that there are more students who do not speak English or it is not their first language; students with physical handicaps being main-streamed into classroom rather than in a 'special education' classroom. Students with severe mental disabilities are also main-streamed into 'regular' classrooms. Those of us considered baby boomers now had no classmates of these calibers: severely physically or mentally handicapped and very few who spoke anything other than English both in the classroom or the home. If an education program sought to include all of these, the program would last twice as long. This in turn leaves teacher educators facing a near impossible task if required to include all types of cultural diversities in their curricula.

### **What Beginning Teachers Do Know**

Beginning teachers are expected to have command of pedagogical principles that in turn will enable them to perform the tasks of teaching. This expectation by teachers, teacher educators and school administrators has no regard for grade level or subject taught. The expectation is a wide blanket meant to encompass all beginning teachers (Reynolds, 1995). Here could very well be an area where beginning teachers coming

from an alternate certification program experience a greater struggle. The alternate certification programs are accelerated and often lacking in many different aspects (pedagogy classes, child development classes or education theory classes). Alternate certification teachers can consist of adults coming from other professions where professionalism and respect are the norm. Suddenly these adults are faced with students who are disrespectful (some possibly dangerous) and fellow teachers caught up in their 'own world' with no time to spare to help these new teachers. What a beginning teacher is not aware of is the level of poverty in the schools. If a child of poverty is pushed down or outcast, that child will lose hope at a very early age (Bruner, 1997).

Reports from "Inventory of Knowledge of Education in the Elementary School" (Reynolds, 1995, p. 210) reveal that new elementary teachers must have content knowledge in reading, language arts, literature, mathematics, social studies, science (the traditional academic studies) and now in health. With the onset of obesity in progressively younger and younger children, schools are mandated to take an active role in health education. State legislators once again act or interfere, as the case may be, in an attempt to decrease the number of obese children. One requirement states that all non-nutritious foods will be removed from vending machines in the schools and replaced with low fat, low sugar, healthy foods. During a class with health educators and elementary school teachers, one teacher remarked that the health concern can be viewed as two-fold. There may be more and more obese children but there are also children coming to school hungry. This teacher bought crackers and boxed drinks for those who had no food but expressed being torn with her choice of foods. She could not afford healthier foods but could not let children go hungry either. Bell (1988) clearly maintained that children

cannot learn when they are hungry, malnourished and half sick. Berliner (2008) addressed illness and poor results in school in his letter to the president. One in three children attending Houston's public schools, for example lives in poverty. Over 20 million school days are missed due to asthma alone. Asthma will be more common in poorer areas because children are more often exposed to noxious air, whether it is from heavy traffic or poor waste disposal (Berliner, 2008). Ear infections (otitis media) are a very treatable problem in small children but must be treated correctly and adequately. Most often in poverty situations, the funds are not available to pay for the treatment or no medical care is geographically near to the family. If left untreated, otitis media will lead to decreased hearing leading to lower language skills (Berliner, 2008). Low income children, consequently, begin school at a disadvantage. If a beginning teacher is overwhelmed with other burdens, a loss of hearing in a poverty stricken child may not occur to her/him. Beginning teachers can easily be overwhelmed with financial debts so may not be able to provide food for hungry children. Additionally, beginning teachers may not even be able to recognize that some children are hungry or sick.

### **Placement of Beginning Teachers**

The expectations heaped on beginning teachers seem to grow and multiply faster than an individual can adapt. These novices are expected to read, write, listen, speak and generally be able to communicate with people (Reynolds, 1995), as well as provide nourishment and parent the students. Moreover, these same newcomers are expected to have a basic understanding of generic knowledge and skills (Stotsky, 2006). What beginning teachers do know, in actuality, appears to be a far cry from the expectations. New teachers tend to focus on learning strategies that involve students. They seem to

grasp the importance of creating a lesson plan appropriate to the subject and the students' level. However, these rookie teachers have trouble seeing the 'bigger picture.'

Additionally, many new teachers are being hired at schools of low status with large numbers of high risk students. This in turn adds another requirement to their already overloaded systems; they must adapt to a completely different culture. Over 50,000 individuals enter the profession without training. Most of these are assigned to teach the most vulnerable students in the highest need schools (Darling-Hammond, 2005). New teachers are told what to do but not how. A good example of being told what to do but not how the issue is one of closing the gap between Whites and Blacks (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Once more a catch phrase is used and disseminated across the country: "close the gap" but no instructions are given. The broad 'hint' issued from *No Child Left Behind* was that the large gap between test scores of Whites and the test scores of minorities would be lessened. In fact, after many states adopted the standardized testing and applied to their curricula, repeat studies show that not only is the gap not decreasing but also it is actually widening (McNeil, 2000).

### **What Beginning Teachers Lack**

Beginning teachers also find themselves caught up in discipline issues, physical health and mental health issues of the students. These new teachers may not be ready to view things like the logical sequence of a textbook. The highly abstract and conceptual ideas behind the sequencing of a textbook can be allusive to a novice. The result being that the logic is lost in the onslaught of information over load. This could affect choosing textbooks if beginning teachers are expected to also choose their textbooks. Beginning teachers also have problems with student discipline (Reynolds, 1995), student retention

(De Wert, Babinski & Jones, 2003), and making sense of classroom life (Reynolds, 1995). As stated earlier, the 15-year-old male was allowed to remain in the classroom despite the threat or danger he presented to teachers and classmates. The outcome of the situation is now known to me but it does validate that violence and discipline are major events in classrooms today. New teachers have very few content-specific pedagogical understandings (Reynolds, 1995), often have no knowledge of the culture of the students and have received little guidance on how to deal with physical abuse by students or violence that may come into the schools. If these qualities are not included in a rigorous full education program then certainly they are not touched upon in an alternate certificate program. No education program should be required to address violence within the classroom. The problem appears to be that more of a societal problem than one of education.

### **Does Milieu Affect Teaching?**

In addition, teachers do not teach just a generic subject. They teach a particular subject to a set educational level. What is needed to be known, then, differs between subjects and educational or grade level to be taught (Stotsky, 2006, p. 256). Schwab (1983) coined four commonplace components of curriculum: subject, teacher, learner and milieu. With the variety of schools across the nation, the milieu is of greatest variability. The milieu can vary even within school districts. There are “good” schools where there are low numbers of low socioeconomic status students, low numbers of English as the second language students and low numbers of high risk students and the “poor” schools where all those are high numbers. If one of the commonplaces is not encompassed by the teacher, learning will be hindered. What is necessary knowledge for a teacher of second

grade math will surely not suffice at the high school level. Why then, do administrators believe that being certified or licensed in one subject will qualify the teacher to teach in other subject areas? (Stotsky, 2006, p. 261) .Poorer school districts that have trouble filling teaching positions would be more inclined to move their teachers across these levels. This practice will tend to lower test scores rather than raising them. Furthermore, despite all the mandates being produced at both federal and state levels, no attention is paid to this dichotomy at all. A case in point happened in 1998. When the American Education Research Association published its approved list of subjects to be advocated or addressed in teacher education programs, the list did not include competency in the subjects teachers were certified to teach. Not only did the association not address competency, but teacher educators also downplayed the significance of subject knowledge necessary for prospective teachers (Stotsky, 2006). Stotsky was working with the state of Massachusetts in their quest for improving education with a particular emphasis on science, math and history. The result of her research was to make the correct faculty accountable for ensuring that teachers of specific subjects were thoroughly competent in those subjects.

### **Responsibilities of Teacher Educators**

Similarly, the right faculty needs to be accountable for teacher education. This same faculty would then be able to vouchsafe the competence (academic and pedagogical) of their graduates (Stotsky, 2006). Stotsky leans towards the academic faculty being held responsible for subject matter competency and knowledge, yet, Title II of the Higher Education Act places that responsibility directly on the pedagogy faculty (teacher educators). Adding to these diametrically opposing factors are inflated grades

and lack of control of courses taken before admission to the teachers' education program (Stotsky, 2006, p.261). The lack of experts teaching subject matters is another issue with which teacher educators are grappling. Why are prospective math teachers, especially at the secondary level, not taking classes with the "experts" in the university math department? The same would be true for biology, science and history being taught at the secondary level. Stotsky (2006) suggests that these discipline specific faculty should be attached to the educational department rather than have specific subject matter students go outside the educational department. This could potentially alleviate the weakness beginning teachers experience with subject matter and knowledge of the academic discipline. The certifying exam for subject specific teaching is based on an undemanding test; a test that state and federal governments condone.

### **Differences in Educational Programs**

Teacher educators are continuously striving to develop ways to measure the results of their teachings (Darling-Hammond, 2006). There is a concern for the alternate certification programs. The term alternative teacher certification programs (ATCP) is a term that encompasses a variety of programs designed to train and credential teachers on a fast track course. However, what it truly encompasses is a number of programs ranging from emergency certification to well-designed sophisticated programs that will address the professional preparation of individuals to meet the needs of the students. (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Alternate certification programs' goals are to lower the barriers to entry and try to encourage groups of people not used before to enter the teaching profession. This is especially in hard to fill areas of teaching (Glazerman, Mayer, & Decker, 2006). Additionally, it is thought that using alternate certificate programs, teacher



numbers and teacher quality will be increased US Department of education, 2002).

Unfortunately these ideas from the department of education are based on assumption: people with other professional experiences will be attracted to teaching, if you are a professional you will automatically be able to teach, more mature teachers lured into the profession will stay longer than, younger traditionally prepared teachers, more minority professionals will be attracted into teaching and there is no significant difference in student outcome between traditionally prepared teachers and alternate certified teachers (Scribner & Heinen, 2009).

These concerns include a lack of a common vision, inequity in the quality of clinical placements and supervision. Curriculum is often fragmented and with inconsistent faculty participation. Often practical concerns, classroom management, use of technology and literacy development are neglected in teacher education programs. Pedagogical strategies are not demonstrated effectively. There are little interrelations between courses required and clinical practice and even less connection between theory and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The impression TFA gives (on their web site) is that college graduates are sought if they have majors like mathematics or chemistry. It is then assumed that with only five weeks of training that these graduates can teach that subject either in elementary education or secondary education. Unfortunately that is not necessarily true.

While I was in graduate school as a nurse anesthetist student, we were required to take an organic chemistry course. The professor chosen to teach that required course was a doctoral trained chemist. The lectures were very hard to assimilate as the information given assumed a much higher level of chemistry knowledge than what we all had or what

the course required as a prerequisite. The professor really could not teach at a beginning or basic level. My assumption would be that those graduates chosen by TFA would experience this same difficulty.

When TFA was founded (1990), it was to allay the teaching shortage in rural areas and low socio-economic schools. TFA likes to tout that it recruits graduates of "the top universities" in the United States. Unfortunately, the term "top universities" has not been delineated. Are they referring to top universities like the Ivy League/Seven Sisters? Are they referring to large state universities, smaller teaching colleges, private colleges or universities or small liberal arts colleges? After these prospective teachers attend their mandatory five week course over the summer months, they are sent to a school to teach. Looking back at the long list of beginning teacher expectations and comparing a scant five week orientation to a four or five year education program leaves many questions. Normally when we think of the top universities in the country a vision of upper middle class to upper class students comes to mind. TFA's web site has spoken documentaries from members of their 'corps'. The majority of these spokes persons are not minority people. Darling-Hammond (2011) spoke of a TFA recruit who realized six months into his 'teaching career' that putting idealistic young people into a situation where they are completely unprepared is not way to run a business. This recruit went on to say that the \$5000 schools must pay for TFA recruits could easily cover a full semester of teaching training at a local or state university. To believe TFA's claim to fame of over two year retention period stretches what other researchers have found. When a person signs up for TFA, they sign on for a mandatory two year period. Additionally, they sign into a teaching corps which lends itself to a rigid military image, uniform style of dress and

behavior, and ultra-discipline. Again why would upper middle class individuals join a corps? Once these five week trained 'teachers' are assigned to a rural school or a low socio-economic school, how difficult is it to adapt to the culture. Again, the problems of discipline, altered minds from drugs, malnutrition, sickness, obesity and violence would have to totally overwhelm any new teacher but seemingly more so to teachers from the corps as they have had no exposure to a classroom due to lack of student teaching opportunities. Darling-Hammond (2011) reports that in one school district, six TFA recruits quit after two months of teaching. This left a large gap that the school could not fill. Many prospective teachers who could have easily filled those gaps were no longer available after having been passed over for the TFA recruits. The school district had been obligated to fulfill its contract to TFA. If the beginning teacher has never been exposed to violence in the classroom, how will he/she be able to teach if afraid every day? Moreover, parts of the United States have their own accents, dialects and idioms. Upon joining the military from the northeast part of the country followed by being sent to a rural southern town, my dialect and manner of speaking was ridiculed due to their (the southerners) inability to understand my words. Words I was using were not necessarily that complicated but instead did not make sense in their local idioms. The same would surely happen if a TFA recruit from the northern tier was sent to teach in a small rural southern community.

### **Use of Mentoring to Ease the Transition**

Over the last decade, teacher mentoring has emerged as a form of teacher induction. These inductions or mentoring programs range from one orientation meeting to a very structured program with frequent meetings over a two year period. Studies do

show a decrease in attrition rates with mentoring but the accountability of mentoring programs is weak (Smith, 2007). Problems with designing and implementation of policies involved in mentoring will come up and will need to be addressed. Further studies are needed both for accountability of mentoring and the effects of mentoring. Adequate documentation is also needed to validate these studies.

Twenty-five states have mandated mentoring programs. Unfortunately, only ten of these states have evaluation systems for their mentoring programs. There are states that provide funding to school districts for mentoring programs. In those states, the remuneration ranges from \$600 (Louisiana) per teacher to \$3526 (California). The states providing funds for mentoring are relying heavily on that incentive to slow or prevent attrition (Smith, 2007). Unfortunately, in some of the states with mandated mentoring programs, the requirement states that the mentor teach only a similar subject, be one who teaches the same grade or one who teaches at the same school. It would appear that this form of mentoring is not truly intended to assist a beginning teacher but rather to fulfill a mandate. By providing funding, some states have shown an increase in mentoring by teachers outside the beginning teacher's subject. Mentoring can often be less effective if the mentee is in another building or teaches a totally different subject. It is in middle schools and high schools where the mentor-mentee mismatch is most often seen. There are only two states that require mentoring in the same subject and only five states that require the mentor be in the same school (Smith, 2007). What, then, do mentors need to know and be able to do to help the beginning teachers (Athanases & Achinstein, 2003)?

Not only should mentoring be in the same school (building) or context, and require that mentor and mentee teach the same subject-area or same grade, but it should

include several other factors. Mentoring must be open and honest; the mentored teachers should have no fear of being judged (Lindgren, 2005). Humility in the mentored beginning teacher is most important. The mentored teacher also must be willing to ask for help (Imig & Imig, 2006). Beginning teachers often feel incompetent if they seek help (Brown, 2005). Mentors should advise but not problem solve.

Mentoring should include guiding, leading, advising and supporting. A true mentoring system should enable, coach, and educate to include organization and management (Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2006). Mentoring should entail counseling (Harrison et al., 2006). Mentors should have knowledge of student learning and know a range of instructional strategies. Drop in visits are not helpful to the beginning teacher (Athanasas et al., 2003) as they tend to make a person feel they are being watched or spied upon. It would be more beneficial if mentoring was spontaneous rather than structured; allow the mentoree to name the subject rather than the mentor having a set agenda. Beginning teachers often need to discuss what may have happened then or new problems that have arisen (Lindgren, 2005) and not a planned topic of the mentor's choice. The mentoring time can be spent helping the beginning teacher work through a crisis that has occurred in the classroom or a discipline problem.

Mentors can help new teachers learn to interact with parents. The school setting (urban versus rural) and grade level have an impact on mentoring. Some programs of mentorship will focus on those that are less prepared (alternate certification or emergency certification). Some programs of mentoring will not distribute mentors evenly between better prepared teachers and less prepared teachers (Smith, 2007). And bluntly, stated some teachers are simply not suitable for mentoring (Orland-Barack, 2010).

Administration should be aware of this before assigning mentoring to teachers at random (Lindgren, 2005). Tally (2008) also emphasized that mentors are not necessarily the mentee's friend. Tally describes mentoring as a behavior; and actually verbalizes that tensions may be encountered. Mentors-mentees need to realize that the relationship is fluid and will most likely change. Care should be taken that individuals are not mentoring for the financial gains only but have a genuine desire to help those just starting their teaching careers.

A unique form of mentoring was established using on-line mentoring (DeWert, Babinski, & Jones, 2003). The group consisted of beginning teachers, university faculty and experienced teachers. Because this was a study, all the participants were provided with computers. The beginning teachers found that having access to people, even via a computer, helped decrease the feeling of being alone. The beginning teachers were able to see that problems they encountered were the same as their peers. Some of their issues were dealing with problem students, dealing with parents, classroom management and retention of students. Learning to understand and cope with the politics of administration and the principal were other problems beginning teachers came across. The consensus of the participants was that there was a feeling of less isolation, more emotional support, more improved problem solving skills and more enthusiasm for work (DeWert et al., 2003). The participants expressed relief if they encountered problems and then found that several others had the same problems. If others had the problems, then it was not the failure of the teacher. On-line communities would seem to be beneficial in overcrowded schools. That way, if beginning teachers had a major problem; it could be communicated

fairly quickly on-line. Help for a resolution would be forth coming that much more quickly. With help coming faster, the feeling of isolation can be lessened.

Sweden adopted a mentoring program in 2001 as they began to see more and more attrition in their school (Lindgren, 2005). What they found as a result of their mentoring programs is that those who had been mentored felt they had both personal and professional support. Lindgren (2005) reports that new teachers feel that mentoring cannot have one or the other but is best if it contains both the professional and the personal support. It was stressed that the mentor cannot be the problem solver but should act only as a listener. That why the new teacher will talk, reflect and come to their own decisions. Mentoring has been shown to decrease attrition (Lindgren, 2005; Campbell & Brummett, 2007; Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2006; Athanases & Achinstein, 2003). In Sweden, prospective mentors were required to attend classes at a university to learn mentoring skills. A schedule was established between the mentor and new teacher as to when to meet. If a new teacher finds that the mentor did not fit them, it is possible to change mentors.

What was gleaned from the new teachers is that they felt safer, had an opportunity to change their perspective, had the capacity to ask for help, had increased flexibility and had an increase in the ability to identify teacher's duties (Lindgren, 2005, p.258). Once again, it was found that not all experienced teachers make good mentors. New teachers also were able to identify what they would like to see as part of the mentorship program: clearly defined aims for the participants, mentors that were whole-heartedly motivated, new teachers taking responsibility for productive mentorship and mentors discussions must address new teachers concerns. Athanases and Achinstein (2003) add to these ideas

with more “dos and don’ts” Mentors should not act as drop-in visitors. Rather mentors need to be able to direct new teachers towards individual student learning along with other foci. Mentors need to assist with assessment skills and possess the ability to offer diverse instructional practices.

Harrison, Dymoke and Pell (2006) listed more attributes mentors should possess: skills for guiding, leading advising and supporting. They must be able to coach, enable and educate, must have organizing and managing skills to pass onto their new teacher and be able to counsel and have good interpersonal skills. England, also noticing the high attrition rate, has a plan also. They term mentors, “subject induction tutors,” who have three mandatory meetings before they begin mentoring. Their purpose is to lead beginning teachers to have more reflection and self-evaluation (Harrison, Dymoke & Pell, 2006). Questioning the new teachers after the start of their program revealed both negative and positive responses. Some negative comments were being left alone too long; meetings not set up or structured mentors not friendly and appear only to be driven by work. Some positive comments were that mentors did not sugarcoat events and were often good with strategies.

Mentors were found to be, generally, approachable, supportive, knowledgeable and flexible. Campbell and Brummett (2007) had a different approach for mentoring. They suggested starting the mentoring in the pre-service time. By doing so, new teachers would be exposed to collaboration and transformation before they were in front of a class as a new teacher. They also advocated asking questions of new teachers rather than corrective feedback which would allow the new teacher to have self-analysis. Good



questions would lead to reflection, speculation and projection which could all lead to research.

### **Isolation and Transition**

New teachers feel isolated and overwhelmed. Isolation appears repeatedly throughout the literature. Isolation was mentioned during my conversation with a facilitator of a Houston A+ Challenge Critical Friends Group. The facilitator spoke of the school district being isolated due to the large number of low socio-economic students. She also spoke of the community being isolated probably due to the minority population and extreme poverty in it. The on-line mentoring appears to have helped decrease this isolated feeling. On-line communities will decrease distance and time for participants, as well as provide convenience and flexibility. It is the flexibility and convenience that can be considered on-line communities strong point (DeWert, Babinski & Jones 2003). Two teachers interviewed by Brown (2005) felt as if they were in a cell all day with no time to eat lunch or go to the restroom. If there is no mentoring at all, this feeling of isolation is intensified. Support from the school and the district is also necessary to decrease these feelings of isolation (Brown, 2005). Better administration and school support will often lessen the chance of beginning teachers leaving (Smith, 2007). Support groups and mentoring have been shown to decrease the stress beginning teachers feel. With less stress, beginning teachers will be able to move from focusing on self to focusing on teaching tasks and student education (DeWert et al, 2003).

Making the transition from being a student of teaching to a teacher of students is difficult (De Wert et al, 2003). School cycles can seem unexpected, intrusive, and imposing to the beginning teacher (Clandinin, 1989). Koetscher and Wubbles (1995)

labeled this “reality shock” (p. 333). The gap between student teaching and teaching is a large one that beginning teachers can easily fall through. Britzman (1986) calls it the “ritual bridge” (p. 442) when a student moves from the student role to the teacher role. Britzman also found that asking for help would be seen as a sigh of weakness by veteran teachers even though all teachers encounter the same types of problems. Teachers are given authority, isolated and expected to have autonomy; this in turn, seems to form a privacy society. The privacy supports not asking for help and leads teachers to feel that privacy equals autonomy.

Today, society is much more dangerous than it ever has been and school societies are no different. Students bring lethal weapons to school and/or take mind altering drugs that cause unpredictable behavior. Even the everyday routine is overwhelming to beginning teachers (Lindgen, 2005). Beginning teachers must adapt to a new culture, a new environment and a new school in addition to organizing, planning and executing their work (Lindgren, 2005). Beginning teachers must go from meaningless fragmented impositions to events that have personal relevance (Clandinin, 1989). Beginning teachers must learn to “fit in” and adapt to the schools’ culture (Johnston, 1993). Craig (1995) chronicled the first two years of a beginning teacher that illustrates this. Tim, the beginning teacher, saw early in his first year that the teachers were involved in too many activities. These activities left them exhausted all the time. When Tim tried to talk about overexertion, he was told quite succinctly that a “healthy school” required these activities. Because these were veteran teachers, Tim backed off on his talking. Tim joined in activities as he was expected but talked with a few teachers he felt most comfortable with in discussing the over activity. He had, by his second year, quite a few agreeing with

him and willing to back his idea, but when it came to a vote, Tim reversed this position and voted to continue with the over activity. Tim's rationale may have been that he wanted to become a principal in the future so felt he needed not to "buck the system." The example of Tim used by Craig (1995) demonstrated how easily a beginning teacher can fall prey to school culture. Some beginning teachers may actually be intimidated by veteran teachers and if too outspoken, possibly threatened with dismissal. It is not until later that new ideas and innovations will come.

### **Teacher Education and School Structure**

Learning to teach takes time (Reynolds, 1995). Educators or teachers that remain in their field over a long period grow more obsessed with teaching. Bell (1988) described it as a form of mental illness but he meant it not as negative, but something he, as an educator, was very proud of. Beginning teachers may have seen a very accomplished teacher during their pre-service time and do not realize the amount of time that the teacher has spent learning to teach. Learning to teach is complex work (Rust, 1999). Britzman (1986) describes this as her myth #3: teachers are self-made. Both Bell (1988) and Britzman emphasized that learning to teach takes time. Beginning teachers may well enter the profession convinced they have a good grasp of the fundamentals but are met with obstacles they never thought of. It seems to me that many new teachers enter their profession eager and full of enthusiasm. They have new or innovative ideas that they are excited to put to use but then they are frequently met with total negativity. It is much easier to go with the prevailing atmosphere in new schools even if a change is obvious and might be beneficial.

Britzman (1986) describes three distinct contradictions in school structures and teacher education. These contradictions are (1) the presentation of teaching as an individual act when in fact it is a social relationship; (2) assuming that knowledge is concrete which negates social and political problems of knowing and (3) internalizing the school structure into a personally determined practice of pedagogy (p. 454). This can only add to beginning teachers feeling of being overwhelmed. Beginning teachers are required to learn the politics of the school, how to work with colleagues, how to work with administration and how to be both flexible and resourceful (Duquette, 1976). Stories from beginning teachers can provide learning and reflection lessons (Clandinin et al, 2003).

If a beginning teacher has had a “good” year, they will refer to their classroom or their students. If a beginning teacher has had a “hard” year, they never refer to the classroom or the students as theirs (Rust, 1999). They find that there is little or no respect for teachers by the public or even the school district. They find a federal government trying to produce a ‘teacher proof’ curriculum, members of the business community calling them inept managers and gutless individuals. New teachers find that the pay scale has not increased by much over the last 30 years. What beginning teachers need is communication, a form of teachers banding together to discuss curriculum or share, collaborate and plan lessons (Brown, 2005).

Beginning and experienced teachers learn from storytelling and restorying their tellings (Craig, 1998, 2006). Beginning teachers would benefit from observing veteran teachers interacting with their stories or in knowledge communities (Craig, 1995, 2007).

They would see how these interactions enhance their own learning and would have assistance in the transition from student to learner.

### **Beginning Teachers Opinions of Their Education Process**

What do beginning teachers feel about their preparation programs? Beginning teachers felt they were not well prepared in assessment tasks or how to determine a student's grade. They felt they were not prepared to discipline students unobtrusively or to maintain control of the whole classroom while working with only a part. Beginning teachers felt least prepared to enforce classroom rules and work with students toward self-discipline (Housego, 1994). The level of discipline problems has escalated faster than education can adapt. With all the violence seen world-wide, increased amounts of illegal drugs available and the ease that young people have to access weapons, it would be hard for any program to address all three.

Beginning teachers felt best prepared to integrate learning from two or more different subjects, to write lesson objectives and to use those objectives (Housego, 1994). Beginning teachers do not have a need to learn legal responsibilities, organization of the educational system and social issues relevant to education (Housego & Badali, 1996). However these same teachers can be met with issues requiring legal advice. The need for student discipline has increased substantially in the last decade. Education programs cannot begin to teach how to adapt or cope with these problems. What is found, however, is that links between universities and school districts are weak (DeWert, Babinski & Jones, 2003). It could well be that if there were closer ties between school districts and universities; some of the problems would be made known to the teacher educators. Teacher educators may not have been in the classrooms for years and may not see the

deterioration of society in the schools. Universities and schools that are linked show more professional developmental programs that increase teacher learning. One thought is that education programs should extend support through the first year of teaching. The thought is to have pre and post service classes at the cooperating school (Rust, 1999). What student teachers glean from their time in the classroom is more important than course work (Duquette, 1996).

As the student teacher observes an experienced teacher in the classroom, they can begin to see how to manage the entire class. Students will have the opportunity to see how experienced teachers deal with disruptive children, children with learning disabilities and even physical disabilities. The time spent student teaching is when the student should begin the process of transitioning from student to teacher. Student teachers in actuality have two roles: that of student and that of teacher (Johnston, 1993). Some courses are thought to be too theoretical and not connected to the school experience, or too irrelevant with no practical basis. It seems that faculty does not provide a clear relationship of theories to actual classrooms (Housego et al, 1996). When asked, beginning teachers often stated that coursework focused too much on theory and too little on practical strategies. These beginning teachers felt that teacher educators oversimplify the realities of teaching. The faculty tends to ignore the social and pedagogical variables student teachers face. What happens, then, is beginning teachers will fall into the culture of the school even if it goes against what they were taught at the university? (Kagan, 1992).

### **Education of Teachers at a Higher Level**

At the university level, a different aspect of teachers and teachers' education evolves. Learning to teach takes time at the university level as well. Teachers should

consider themselves as continual learners and be open to new practices. With present day time constraints, fewer financial resources and supply and demand being so unequal, it is impossible for faculty to produce fully competent beginning teachers (Reynolds, 1995). Added to this are new mandates that state universities will incorporate ethnic/racially diverse topics. These mandates only serve further to stretch the limited resources (Freeman, Brookhart & Loadman, 1999). The reality shock beginning teachers feel has been blamed on teacher educators not preparing them (Koetser & Wubbles, 1995) however unfair this blame might be. But in the teaching profession, a cycle of finger pointing or blaming is being created. Beginning teachers blame their education for their feelings of isolation and lack of preparedness while teacher educators try to present the broadest of experiences with limited time and resources. No resolutions are offered. A practical component of an educational program is to have it resemble reality as closely as possible (Koetser & Wubbles, 1995).

In the real world, classrooms are more complex and unpredictable than what is taught in teacher education programs (Schmidt & Knowles, 1995). I cannot help but wonder what happens during the student teaching phase. Are these pre-service teachers not actually teaching in the classroom? Rarely are student teachers sent to private or small school districts. They are often in large school districts in large cities with large numbers of diverse children. What is it that is missing in the student teaching phase that exists in actual teaching? Tally (2008) discusses reflection by students after they have graduated. The students' referred to are student nurse anesthetists but the idea is one that could be adapted to the teaching profession. Tally feels that nurse anesthetists should reflect how their education programs prepared them for solo practice. This reflection

should be after graduation, but more importantly several years after graduation. Written reflections concerning their preparation would help faculty with future students.

Levine (2006) brought forth some interesting observations regarding teacher education. Levine stated that nine out of ten teachers come from college or university programs. This seems to be in direct contrast to other figures concerning alternate certification teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2001). Levine describes teaching in two different manners: process which how much a teacher knows, her skills and knowledge, what her degree is in, certification test scores. Or outcomes: mastery of skills and knowledge of the students measured with common testing procedures. The US began education as an industrial nation which fit the times but since then the US has become an information economy. Levine feel that teacher education has not paralleled this change and warned of teacher education programs becoming obsolete if a change is not undertaken.

Levine also points out that the field of teaching needs to define itself as one of two things. Is teaching a profession like law and medicine or a craft like journalism. In 2002 the secretary of the Department of Education, chose to describe education as a craft. While I was attending nurse anesthesia school, we were asked a similar question: is administering anesthesia an art or a science? We were encouraged to look at both and have arguments for and against each one. However, I have come to believe that administering anesthesia is both an art and a science. You need the science to safely administer anesthesia but it is a real art to have the patient awake at the end of the procedure and be comfortable. Why, then, can teaching not be both a craft and a profession? The craft would be represented by reflection, discussions and knowledge



communities where teachers could refine their teaching techniques but a solid knowledge of child development, math English is the professional side of teaching.

### **Why Do Teachers Choose to Teach**

Students enter teacher education programs with preconceived ideas of what a teacher is. They also come with a variety of reasons why they want to become teachers. Some students may enter teaching as an interim 'job' until they decide what it is they would like to do. This teaching as an interim undermines the profession of teaching as those who are waiting for a "better" career will not add any professionalism in their everyday teaching. They will teach to 'get by'. If the prospective teacher is entering a shortened educational process, it could well be to wait for the 'better' career. This in turn adds to the lack of professionalism in the profession. The backgrounds of teachers can foreshadow their professional beliefs and practices. These backgrounds can heavily influence how they teach (Achinstein, Ogawa & Speiglmán, 2004).

Some of these reasons for becoming a teacher are to work with children, give back what was given to them, and job security and reaching people while they are young. Some want to contribute to teaching as they feel it is an important but troubled profession (Hart & Murphy, 1990). Student teachers are often optimistic about their future jobs. These beliefs do not change with their coursework (Kagan, 1992). The change or loss of beliefs appears to take place during the first year of teaching. Students often feel that teacher educators do not acknowledge that each one has a different idea of teaching. Faculty needs to be aware of student histories and perhaps help the students realize them. Faculty should not have a set recipe for teaching but should be flexible. That could possibly lead students to realize that they too, need to be flexible as there is not a recipe

for them. Communication between faculty, student teachers and coordinating teachers is a must (Johnston, 1993). This is most important if it is an accelerated, shortened or five-week course.

### **Evaluation of Teacher Education**

When teacher education faculties try to assess their programs, they need a way to assess whether students can apply what they have learned in a classroom. One aspect in the faculty's favor is that school districts hiring beginning teachers are not as critical of the programs as their graduates are (Darling-Hammond, 2006). As long as these same schools hire beginning teachers with the expectations required of more experienced teachers, faculty will face an impossible task. Added to that impossible task is the fact that teacher education programs at universities are often underfunded and have a very low status in the university hierarchy (Imig & Imig, 2006). Faculties of teacher education need to understand that students do not want a quick fix. What students are asking for is a more realistic knowledge of teaching. Teacher education programs should provide procedural knowledge and promote getting standardized routines that will help integrate management and instruction (Kagan, 1992). Many teacher educators tend to pay scant attention to the practice contexts of teaching. Unfortunately, any attempts to improve teacher education are motivated by political or idealistic pressures and not by the actual process of learning to teach (Knowles, 1999). Educational programs do include documents concerning state regulations (Grossman & Thompson, 2006).

### **More Criteria**

In 1992, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education imposed yet another mandate. Two criteria were added; content and issues relating to ethnical/racial

diversity. The expectation is that every student teacher will be exposed to the highly talked about “just” and “unjust” schools. Just schools are those with state of the art equipment, adequate supplies and plenty of parental involvement. Unjust schools are those that are poorly equipped in poverty areas where teaching is done in a military style solely to raise the scores on standardized tests. Faculties of teacher education often avoid dealing with just or unjust schools. Neither student teachers nor faculties want to teach in the unjust schools but they are, unfortunately, a reality. Student teachers need to have exposure to them before setting out on their first job. Also, rarely do you find a just school in this country. That leaves beginning teachers mostly starting in the unjust schools with low pay, poorly disciplined students, long hours and little administrative support (Imig & Imig, 2006). These factors lead to less job satisfaction and higher attrition rates. Teacher education programs that close the gap between theory and practice allow extensive experiences in schools and place student teachers into the school climate will potentially produce better prepared teachers who will be able to face the challenge of teaching (Latham & Vogt, 2007). Unfortunately alternate certification and TFA cannot possibly be able to close the gap between theory and practice as these programs do not have enough time allotted to them. An individual realistically cannot learn everything in a five- week period. Moreover, if a prospective teacher is experiencing a piecemeal alternate certificate program, chances are that theory will not be a strong suit. Beginning teachers must know children (must know child development and understand where children are in their skills development) and how to make the curriculum content understandable to those children (Imig & Imig, 2006). Again, how

can a person learn about children and their many stages of development in a five week course?

Coupled with just or unjust schools, teachers are expected to be proficient (required to pass a certifying exam) but then are handed a “verbatim” curriculum; a curriculum that spells out day by day what is to be reviewed. Politicians and others talk about “teacher proof” curriculums and then fail to understand high attrition rates. The government does not tell physicians or attorneys how to practice but think it perfectly acceptable to tell teachers what to do (Imig & Imig, 2006). In the long run it would be cheaper to prepare teachers well, pay them well and support them than to have a revolving door in the profession (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). Kagan (1992) verbalizes it eloquently when he states:

“But perhaps it is time to acknowledge that teaching is not a traditional occupation- not in the clean, technical sense of the term. Classroom teaching appears to be a peculiar form of self-expression in which the artist, the subject and the medium are one” (p. 164).

Foster (2001) adds a further somber note when quoting Sergiovanni, et al (1999):

“Teaching is a lonely profession...and teachers are involved in a political struggle within their school for valuable resources” (p. 191).

Not all teachers are prepared intellectually or physically for the struggles or the loneliness (Goddard et al, 2001).

If beginning teachers feel all these inadequacies, then what happens to those who followed an alternate certification program? Where is their support system or mentorship? Alternative teacher preparation programs were designed to "lower the

barriers to entry" and reach out to previously untapped resources (Glazerman, Mayer, & Decker, 2006, p.75). The ultimate goal is to fill those hard to fill positions. This is the premise of TFA. Those who initiated the program sought to recruit senior college students or recent graduates with no prior exposure to teaching. Candidates for TFA need to possess leadership capabilities but once again no guidelines as to what these capabilities are were offered on the web site. Once recruited, the candidates attend a five-week course for "intensive training". It is during this five or six week period perspective teachers must learn classroom management, forms of discipline, how to cope with a diversified group of individuals and produce education all at once. If those who come out of professional teaching programs feel overwhelmed, then surely those from the TFA are totally adrift.

### **Where Has Education Been?**

How has education fared over the last several decades? In the 1960s curriculum reform was the main emphasis in education. This reform came as Congress felt that the United States had fallen behind in technology. In the next decade (the 1970s) accountability was the focus. That focus had no specific guidelines no did it point to any one attribute on which to blame accountability. The 1980s came with yet another emphasis: the excellence movement. It was in 1983 that *A Nation at Risk* was developed. *A Nation at Risk* seemed to try and stir up patriotism by claiming that the United States was falling below its reputed number one position globally. When it became apparent that not one of these movements accomplished what it had been destined to accomplish, the federal government coined a new phrase *America 2000*. As it were, *America 2000* was to take all the previous movements and accomplish a better education. With a change in the

presidential administration came a name change to *Goals 2000*. Once again neither the plans were specific nor the goals attainable leaving *Goals 2000* meeting with no success. In 2004, *No Child Left Behind* was enacted. The name of the program had a nice ring: it was a metaphor with which no one could quibble. The goals were, albeit quite lofty, able to make the American public feel that education was progressing (Eisner, 1998). The guidelines offered by the federal government had no bearing to actual curricula taught in schools today. The idea of 'closing the gap' between races, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status has not come about. As it stands, American schools are not as good as they should be (Eisner, 1998).

### **Where Education Needs To Go**

If the national goals and standards are established and then methodically followed to achievement, then, and only then, will American schools become competitive globally. What frequently happens is that once research has been done, administrations at all levels of government expect that the knowledge portrayed in that research will change what teachers are doing. However, in practicality, change is not that simple (Eisner, 1998). Schools themselves cannot be changed; it is the individual teacher that must shift to the school milieu. Along the same lines, with research and how the governmental bureaucracies use them; these bureaucracies want to create an actual list of "so-called" research proven teaching behaviors. The reality is, of course, that this is not possible. These same bureaucracies assume that if there is the presence of discrete elements then the whole will be successful. Eisner compared this to counting the number of C#'s or F#'s in a symphony and then taking those exact numbers to create our own symphony. Chances are that our new symphony will sound as good as any written before are slim to

none (Eisner, 1998). So too, is the case with schools and education. Success will depend on how the elements are made and not on just having them present.

What, then, would be a better way to evaluate teachers, schooling and education? Responsible and effective teaching often results from professional and personal socialization. A good use of this concept is to use education inquiry; actually going into schools to see how schooling and education are played out. One of the best ways to learn from teachers is to watch them in action (Dewey, 1929). This in itself might not give the whole picture but is a viable start. Teachers often find themselves comparing their teaching style to a style of a childhood teacher. During the 1950s and 1960s, observations were done using stopwatches to time each activity the teachers used and following a prescribed schedule. Testing was the instruments of research and a measure of interest (Jackson, 1990). Along these same lines; every so often a movement will appear that tries to "modernize schools by aligning them to industry, government and applied sciences" (Jackson, 1990 p. 163). Unfortunately these efforts end up being very cyclic. They flourish for a while and then are replaced with another force (Jackson, 1990). And the cycle repeats with little to no improvement. Tyack and Cuban (1995) termed this home-grown American approach as "tinkering toward utopia".

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This study uses narrative inquiry methods to examine the influences on teacher candidate decisions to enter teaching through a traditional university-based certification route or through an alternative certification route. It is centered on experiences in their early years. Included in childhood stories will be the education level of their parents. The question of siblings, how many and what educational pathways, if any, they took. The inquiries center around the importance of education as it was expressed during their childhoods. The educational level of grandparents and other relatives will be woven in as it pertains to their childhood memories. Additionally, I inquire as to how, if at all, their upbringing contributed to the choice of teaching and the route chosen to become a teacher. This chapter describes the theoretical underpinnings of narrative inquiry, the participants and context, the procedures to be employed in gathering field texts, and the analytical and interpretive tools to be used in moving from field to field text and from field text to research text.

#### **Theoretical Framework of Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, 2000) can be described as being grounded in the work of Dewey, and specifically his notion of experience as situational, interactive, and temporal. Additionally, Connelly and Clandinin (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) describe narrative as the use of story to study human experience. The stories are built on personal experience and the professional milieu in which the teachers work. Narrative inquiry can also be defined as a method used to study lived experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While studying and narrating life's



experiences, changes can occur. People change, circumstances can change and the group of people interacting or telling of their stories can change. In that regard, Craig (2007) and Tripp (1997) equated narrative inquiry as a form of action-based field research to that of a spiral. The spiral occurs as one finds facts, acts upon those facts, continues to reflect and plan and then starts the process all over again. Rather than a spiral, I see the process as a coil springing the action off in a particular direction. The researcher has a thought and acts upon that thought but where it will head can be quite variable. What makes narrative inquiry so vibrant is that you can change your focus as stories change. One never knows where a story can lead (Olson, 2000; Craig, 2000).

As can be seen, experience involves the inward, outward backward and forward. There are directions and avenues for narrative inquiry. When you are retelling stories, often times you will end looking into your own past. You will find yourself in the past in the present and in the future. You end with inquiry into stories, your own stories and others' stories. Researchers with narrative inquiry cannot stay silent nor act as a non-participating self. For example, when I began this inquiry, I could not help but weave my experiences as a mother, student, nurse anesthetist, citizen and military officer into the discussion.

Schwab (1962) also had ideas and thoughts about inquiry. He felt that an inquiry could start one way but could go off into a different direction easily. This is what he termed 'fluid inquiry'. Heiferty (2011) describes privacy as elusive and malleable. There are no set theories to rely on when using narrative inquiry and one may also meet dead ends using this form of research. Narrative inquiry is more a constant reforming of questions and definitions (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). There is a need to obtain ethical

approval for research. Then one must decide whether to use pseudonyms or not. Do people want their given names used to get credit for the work? This adds the question of ownership of the work. Is it the researcher's voice or the voices of the participants? Relationships cannot be discontinued and a participant or the researcher can leave a study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000).

### **Rationale: Situating the Researcher in Narrative Inquiry**

There are many ways to conduct research. Because I have a strong medical/scientific background as a nurse and then a nurse anesthetist, the only type of research I was familiar with was that of testing the efficacy of a new drug. Also, known to me was the study of the human body using electron microscopes to measure the minute amounts of sodium, calcium or potassium as these elements pass through the cellular membrane. It was not until I began my academic studies that I was introduced to the concept of action research and inquiry-based research such as narrative inquiry.

It was through reading that I discovered that action research has been in play since the 1950s (Zeichner, 2007). There is not one particular way to describe exactly what action research entails as no two researchers use the same definitions or format for action research. Similarly, there are no uniform sets of techniques or procedures used within the action research community (van Manen, 1990). That is not to say that action researchers are not credible, organized or lack in substance. It only indicates that there is not a set of rules to be followed in action research. Nor does the lack of rules imply that action research lacks validity. On the contrary, it is readily accepted throughout the world. However, one common definition or classification that has been offered is that action research is done in the classroom by the teachers themselves (Bates & Pardo, 2010).

Action research undertaken within the classroom, with which narrative inquiry is frequently associated, has increased in popularity. More encouragement is being made by researchers to both encourage teachers to participate in action research and delineate types or genres of action research. Dicker (1990) feels that action research is a form of self-reflection. Further, Dicker feels that thinking in terms of self-reflection would encourage more actively teaching professionals to conduct research. Dicker lists four components of the action research cycle (p. 203): planning, acting, monitoring and reflecting. Meanwhile, Rearick and Feldman (1999) have developed a different approach to action research. They include a theoretical orientation, the purposes of action research and reflection. Rearick and Feldman further divide reflection into three levels; autobiographic, communal and collaborative. To add to a large pot of ideas concerning action research, McCutcheon and Jung (1990) define it as inquiry that teachers can use to understand and improve their practice. They sum up discussions of action research by stating that it is "characterized as a systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical" (p.148) and done by the people with the inquiry.

Forms of action- related research include self-study and inquiry (also enquiry). Self-study is another relative of action research. When first introduced to the term, my impressions were less than favorable. But once again, the more literature I read, the greater the concept became. Self-study is a reflection of one's own experiences. Self-study does involve narratives as a teacher can look at his/her teachings, talk with other teachers to voice concerns with everyday problems, get ideas on other approaches and get feedback. Sometimes during the telling, a teacher can see where a different approach may have been better and can then alter his/her teaching style. It is thought that if

teachers will continue to have this self-reflection and telling of stories to others, then professional development for teachers will proliferate (Mule, 2006). If teacher professional development continues to grow, there is a chance that there will be change within schools. The change would be for the better (Mule, 2006).

Construction of a narrative account of oneself or of someone else is both difficult and rewarding (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). What is difficult then, is that there are so many aspects of life that need to be considered, people are very complex and have many stories. The rewarding aspect is one of education. You can find meaning in the daily grind (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). One example is that a classroom is a home. It is a group of people interacting and cooperating together (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). John Dewy (1938) voiced his ideas by stating that thinking could be inquiry, that inquiry is life and therefore life is education (p.10). Living is thinking and that is what education is all about.

Storytelling is a reflection of personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988); a teacher's practice is his/her personal practical knowledge in action (Craig, 2006). Charon (2005), Langellier (2009) and Lewis (2011) all used story telling and story retelling in their narrative medicine approach to patient care. Eisner adds that narrative is built on premise. Experience is the primary agency of education. But, human experience is slippery. You cannot regulate it. The focus should be on practical methods to improve education (Xu & Connelly, 2009). If the best method is desired then you cannot favor standardization. The best method presumably would lead to outcomes. The focus should be on what people do and not on what they propose to do. Narrative provides a fuller view of what teaching and curriculum mean (Connelly & Clandinin,

1988). To study narrative, one needs to ask questions about the past, the present and the future (temporality); personal and social relationships (sociality); and the context in which actions and interactions take place (context) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1938). All three commonplaces (Connelly & Clandinin, 2005) need to be included for an experience to be an experience (Dewey, 1938) and a study to be a narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2005). Narrative is an idea that permits us to think narratively of the whole (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000.) This means that certain parts of an experience cannot be privileged over other parts as is the case in other research methods.

Science uses technical names effectively. However theories of knowledge have no such dependable aids. Terms that are used today will have no use further along in time (Dewey & Bentley, 1949). It may be that one could take the signal words and rename them. For example inquiry would be a transactional name that equals knowing without mental association (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, p. 295). If one looks at experience, it can vary tremendously. Dewey felt experience could be changed into an inquiry term as experience is both social and personal (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) as noted above. One criterion of experience is that it must have continuity. That way experiences grows out of and leads to other experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). Narrative inquiry itself is a form of narrative experience (p.19)—that is an experience of experience. Therefore educational experience should be studied narratively as mentioned earlier. Figure 1 below outlines the intersection of terms from Dewey and Clandinin and Connelly.

Dewey	Clandinin & Connelly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction</li> <li>• Continuity</li> <li>• Situation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal &amp; social</li> <li>• Past, present, &amp; future</li> <li>• Place or context</li> </ul>

*Figure 1.* Correlation of terms from Dewey and Clandinin & Connelly

McCutcheon and Jung (2001) offer a slightly different explanation for action-oriented research studies. Instead of following a set paradigm, they propose using an alternate paradigm or “stepping outside the box”. They further divide research into two different groupings: interpretive or positive perspectives. Interpretive perspectives offer a great amount of flexibility. Flexibility is an asset as stories tend to flow and ebb in many directions. Positive perspective will lead more to looking for links or using hypotheses to state problems. This positive perspective offers little in the way of flexibility and has a tendency to begin leaving the realm of action research. The word hypotheses denotes more a trial and error type of research and is much less frequently associated with qualitative research than the quantitative research paradigm.

Narrative inquiry is not without its own drawbacks or problems. Narrative inquiry is not judged by reliability, validity or generalization (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.184). Therefore, it must be 'measured' or rated by different criteria such as lifelikeness and believability. Another challenge is that narrative inquiry can be ambiguous, uncertain, complex and difficult. Getting permission to conduct the inquiry can stifle the researchers' intent of the study. Also, participants who agreed on to be anonymous

originally may want to change their stance and receive credit as co-author. Human research boards at universities and colleges require it be guaranteed who owns what during the research. The questions that arise especially if field texts are used is should those field texts be shared (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). If the inquiry is conducted via the internet, there will be no face to face with the participants. The researcher will have little to no influence (Helferty, 2011).

### **Proposed Context**

My original thoughts for my research had to do with how could one teach after only five weeks of training or after little to no student teaching experience. How are those from alternative certification programs prepared to take on the role of a teacher? However, as I progressed through my own doctorate program, active research and narrative inquiry became known to me. I came from a pure science background where narrative inquiry has only recently become mandatory study (Harvard Medical School). Lewis (2011) has placed narrative medicine in the healthcare reform occurring now in the US. Lewis maintains that if a practitioner uses a narrative inquiry system with patients, it will only make for a better practitioner.

By this, Lewis described a person coming to visit a doctor with one complaint. Several tests were run which proved to be normal. How then, is the doctor supposed to help the person if there is no narrative? The tests may be negative but the person is not well. Without narrative, the doctor will know only half the story. Lewis traces the concept of narrative medicine back to the turn of the twentieth century. Charon (2005) was instrumental in bringing narrative medicine to the forefront of medical care. She felt

that medicine lost the narrative because physicians felt all they needed to know was about the body and its parts.

What was missing, according to Charon, is the inhabitant of all those body parts. Morris (2012) says it quite succinctly stated that “traditional medical landscapes where narrative was barely tolerated as a sign of high culture has changed forever (abstract). Langellier (2009) feels that if narrative medicine is incorporated into every physician patient encounter, then the “some body” will become “somebody” (p. 151). To that end, much of healthcare crisis, as I see it on a daily basis, is the cost. Insurance companies have negated any narrative medicine simply by requiring practitioners to “see” six (6) patients per hour. That means a ten- minute appointment. The result is often when a patient mentions one complaint, out comes the prescription pad and the practitioner says “I’ll give you a prescription for that”.

This is actually a story of my own interaction with a physician. When I declined the prescription, I was told to take it anyway “in case”. Of course I promptly went home and destroyed it; but many people feel that “the doctor knows best” and will do as they were told. Few people ever question a physician or even a pharmacist about their own healthcare. As I read stories from teachers, many of my own experiences came to mind. I could understand more fully Dewey’s (1938) idea of mis-educative experience. Mis-educative is a term coined by Dewey (1938) because he thought that if education does not take place, then it must be mis-educative. Alternately a prime educational experience would be educative. Grossman and Thompson (2006) used direct observation for their studies both during the student teaching phase and the first year of teaching. However, due to time restraints and the professional requirements of my job, I found a face to face



interaction with the four teachers in their state milieus hundreds of miles from mine impossible. Thus, I elected to communicate via email.

### **Procedures of Inquiry**

I chose to use narrative inquiry in my approach. Craig (2000) pointed out that narrative inquiry has become known as a personal experience research method. Elbaz-Luwisch (1997) spoke of narrative research as using a personal story or conversation. By employing these, the researcher is required to examine his/her context which often leads to reflection. Reflection plays a big role in teacher development (Poulson & Avramidis 2003). Fendler (2003) also reinforces reflection in teaching. There are researchers who feel there are no unreflective teachers. Other researchers feel reflection can be taught at the university level. It is during reflection that a teacher or researcher may begin to notice things never noticed before; things like constraints of the school system, their own values and commitments, collegial or peer relationships. Elbaz-Luwisch (1997) found that by using a more personal story, the research becomes more revealing and instructive. Charon (2005) began using a more personal approach to narrative by requiring her students to write what they had heard from a patient in their own words. Charon termed this a “parallel chart” meaning it was not part of the patient’s medical chart.

Once the parallel chart is written, the writer is required to read in a group of peers. I find this to be an extraordinary way to bring the human aspect back into medicine and is one I will use for this dissertation. I am neither an educator nor a teacher educator; therefore my method cannot be termed a self- study of a teacher educator (Craig, 2000). Additionally, because I am not an educator, using four individuals coming from four

very different backgrounds as the research subjects results in my having a better understanding of a “teachers life-world” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997, p.82).

### **Procedures of Inquiry**

In this section of the methodology, I describe the procedures used in this inquiry. More specifically, it will address the participants, context, field texts, with reflection and restorying. First, email addresses of participants were obtained. A questionnaire meant to draw out personal stories was sent to each participant with a cover letter explaining the use of pseudonyms and confidentiality. Responses were received by email. One hard copy was made for my personal use and the emails were then saved to a folder on my computer. The responses obtained are included in my discussion chapter and in the chapter introducing the four participants.

### **Participants**

My original plan was to question four people; two from a large southwestern state and two from a north central state there by creating a difference across the United States. My intent was to contrast the family background influences of the four perspective teachers; two from professional university education programs and two from alternative certification programs. However, after communicating with a superintendent from the north central state, I found that the school district did not hire or use alternative certification teachers. Right from the start of my research the path changed; what I was exploring had to take a different route. This change is so often the case with narrative inquiry and other kinds of fluid inquiry (Schwab, 1962).

I used a form of triangulation consisting of classes taken in the course of pursuing a doctoral degree, my advisor and the literature I reviewed as points of

reference. Positive feedback from classmates and encouragement helped me on my journey. Heiferty (2011) reveals that triangulation, especially in nursing narrative inquiry, adds rigor. Connelly, Clandinin and He (1997) used an interesting metaphor that added to my new role as narrative researcher. They compared teaching to gardening and said parenting was similar to gardening. Both watch children grow much as an avid gardener watches his/her garden grow. Connelly, Clandinin and He's apt expressions allowed me to methodologically enter my dissertation work with four beginning teachers on known turf. Gardening and motherhood were known to me; they are in my repertoire of experience. Through my ongoing email communications with the four newcomers to the profession, I would watch their differing cultivations unfurl; vicariously experience the dilemmas they encountered and witness their growth-or lack of growth-as teaching professionals.

### **Proposed Context**

The context of the study involves the educational backgrounds and preparation of the four participating teacher candidates. While doing this I often found myself reviewing memories of my own education; in essence I relived my personal experiences. As I delved more into their education and education of teachers, I unavoidably found myself burrowing into my own education in the nursing profession. I see parallels between where the education of a professional nurse began, where it progress to, where it is today and the education of professional teachers, not just the four participants. Craig (2008) provided the illuminating moment for me (the "aha" moment) with her self-study. Moreover, as I read more about action-oriented kinds research and restoried the nursing profession, I realized my focus was changing. I engaged looking forward and looking

backward; more of what I know of the nursing education process came to light. Nursing has gone from awarding diplomas to baccalaureate programs at the university level to awarding an associate's degree. After talking/listening with classmates, class instruction and reading, I began to see teacher education on the same path that I feel the nursing profession has taken. These paths are bell-shaped:

### **Ethical Considerations**

Names appearing in this dissertation are pseudonyms. Real names will not be disclosed. Care must be taken to avoid the inquiry becoming a narcissistic account. This is an especially easy occurrence with the researcher trying to meld several voices (Kim, 2008). Data will be collected via emails to each of the four early career teachers. Caution is suggested when communicating by email. The researcher can inadvertently highlight only the good or success stories thereby distorting the facts (Heiferty, 2011). Their responses will be viewed only by me. Answers are saved on my personal computer in a folder simply marked "saved folder." The responses were saved to help me avoid falling into distorting the facts.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Participants**

#### **Four Early career Teachers: Setting the Scenario**

I was given the names of a superintendent of a school district in a north central state in the United States. In my contact with the superintendent, I requested the names of two of teachers: one who had attended a full professional development education program and one who had attended an alternate certificate program. The reply I received was not what I had expected: this school district did not hire or utilize alternate certified teachers. The superintendent did not elaborate when he said they do not hire alternate certificate teachers. It was not until I read the responses from a teacher within that school district that I realized what he meant. When Robin graduated with her teaching certificate, there were “no jobs to be had” in her state. With that knowledge, I had to alter my original plan substituting the fourth interviewee from a large southwestern state. I have since learned that there are differences between alternate certificate programs even within the same university.

At one university, a prospective teacher can attend for a full two years, following a curriculum that includes a full semester of student teaching. The student teaching involves being in the class room for five days a week for the entire semester to coincide with the host schools’ schedules. The other program is also a two-year curriculum with sequential classes but no set pathway. A student can piece together their own schedule: if student teaching is inconvenient then that student can observe in a classroom for one hour a week (i.e. [www.uhcl.edu](http://www.uhcl.edu)). The impression one gets from the responses of two alternate certificate teachers is that the two paths are quite different and had no involvement with

each other. Jorrissen (2002) explains that alternate certificate programs vary in length of time for preparation. Some programs offer a few weeks orientation before placing the prospective teacher in a classroom while other programs have the prospective teacher completing one to two year of training before being placed into the classroom. Scribner and Heinen (2009) describe the term-alternated certification as a catch- all phrase that really means any programs from emergency certification to very well planned programs to certify new teachers.

### **Wondering**

My wonder is whether those who choose to follow a full four year teacher education course come from families that regarded education highly. Additionally, these same pre teachers possibly would have extended family members educated beyond a high school diploma. Conversely, those who attend alternate certificate programs are those individuals from families where education was not prized as highly, most of the extended family was not educated beyond high school (if that) and the lifestyle projected was one of taking the less rigorous road. After obtaining permission through the university's human research committee, I sent out questionnaires to the four individuals via email. My questions centered around their families: number of siblings and their education level(s), parents' levels of education, maternal and paternal grandparents' levels of education and then if there were other extended family member that were educators. The names of the four pre career or early career teachers are pseudonyms randomly chosen by me. The four individuals are presented in alphabetical order solely for my convenience.

**Participant One: Carol**

Carol comes from a family of two, herself and one brother. At the time the questionnaire was sent out, her brother had just finished high school and was planning on attending college. Carol started her college career as engineering major but switched to business. The timing of the switch in majors was not included in the questionnaire. She completed her college degree with a Bachelor's in Business Administration in international marketing with a minor in Spanish. Following graduation, Carol spent three months in Spain. Upon her return to the United States, it took her another six months to find gainful employment. Originally Carol had wanted to be a pharmaceutical representative but was not able to find employment in that field. Ultimately she found work in a medical placement company working at a desk. Her job consisted of taking telephone calls with staffing issues in hospitals around the city and then finding the appropriate doctors or nurses to fill those empty positions. This job was extremely boring to her and needless to say, Carol was very unhappily employed. Carol stated that, in talking with friends who were teachers that they seemed very happy with their jobs and the time off they were allotted.

Doing some research, Carol found she did not need a teaching degree but just needed a four year college degree to enter the profession. However, she did complete an alternate certificate program complete with a semester of student teaching and successfully completing the certification exam. The following semester, Carol was gainfully employed as a teacher. Carol's parents did have some higher education; her father completed two years of college while her mother holds two masters' degrees. Information regarding her father's occupation and the subject of her mother's degrees was not volunteered by

Carol. Carol's maternal grandparents had some higher education experiences; her grandmother finished high school and her grandfather had a college degree. On Carol's paternal side, her grandfather had a high school diploma and her grandmother had two years of college. Carol had only one uncle who was an educator and who had finished college. Carol's mother was a teacher but had continued her education to become a counselor. Carol states that growing up she never wanted to be a teacher and had at times heard her mother specifically say "NOT to enter the teaching profession". Carol feels that her mother's teaching experiences influenced her decision to avoid the teaching field. Although it was never clearly stated, Carol's mother appeared to be an immigrant from South America. Carol did admit, "I loved teaching."

Carol admits that things have not "worked out" as she had planned. She thoroughly enjoyed her college years as business major; enjoying the classes required for the major. Of course as with most young adults, Carol never imagined that getting a job following graduation would prove to be so difficult. She had never stopped to consider becoming a pharmaceutical representative would be near impossible. Apparently that profession is a fairly closed pathway to non-pharmacy or non-medical people. Apparently that profession is filled with nurses, respiratory therapists or other ancillary healthcare workers. It was not until Carol had finished her degree that she began noticing more and more advertisements for a Masters' Degree in Business Administration. It became obvious that more and more colleges were offering the degree on line, at different locations and during the evening. The sad realization Carol came to was that her undergraduate degree was simply not enough. Her minor in Spanish never came into play with Carol although she resides in a state with a Hispanic population of over 31%. Carol states when talking with friends



who were teachers, they seemed happy with their jobs and the time off appealed the most to her. It was then Carol looked into entering the teaching profession. I have reservations, without voicing them to her, about Carol's reasons for the career shift. She was at that time in a "boring" job, one seemingly well below her educational level with no room for any type of advancement. She began to realize the placement agency used to staff surrounding hospitals with doctors or nurses did not require a college degree. It did not begin to even resemble a career path for Carol. My wonder as a researcher about Carol's decision to teach is her reasoning which sounded more like she favored the concept time off but had no altruistic desires. In addition, her current job was 'mind numbing and boring'. Was Carol looking for an escape route and teaching became it?

However, Carol did proceed with finding a pathway into the teaching profession. She financed the alternate certificate program by waitressing in nearby restaurants. To Carol, waitressing was almost as mind numbing than her previous job. Carol stated that people were infinitely rudier and nastier to wait staff. Carol's pursuit of an alternate certification entailed classes on pedagogy, child development and a full semester of student teaching. Her education route was at a branch campus of a large state university with its own four year education program. Carol began her teaching mid school year, January, in a sixth grade class. Carol thoroughly enjoyed her role as a teacher and was hired to return the following school year. About midway through the year, Carol found that she was unexpectedly pregnant. She finished teaching most of the second term, leaving a few weeks early for the birth of her child. Carol planned to stay with her infant during the summer months and return to teaching the following August or September. Shortly after the start of the school year, Carol found herself with a second unplanned pregnancy. Sud-

denly Carol's life and career plans took on paths of their own. She felt that her life didn't just veer off to another path but took a major detour. Carol was faced with two children under the age of two. She and the father of her children planned and carried out a wedding. Carol's husband is gainfully employed at present and becoming more successful in his career. When Carol began to consider returning to teaching, the cost of childcare presented a real obstacle. At this time Carol and her husband opted for Carol to remain at home. Fortunately, for them, their financial situation was such that Carol could remain at home.

Carol went on to relate that during her tumultuous life changes, her parents divorced after almost three decades of marriage. As is quite typical of divorces, one party often sets out to be as nasty as possible. Carol did not add further details of the divorce but on more than one occasion did mention how stressed her mother was. Carol's brother, away at college, often called Carol with trouble rather than "stressing his mother out". Any thoughts Carol might have had about returning to the teaching field were far down on a list of priorities.

With encouragement to reflect, Carol does admit that perhaps her college major was not clearly thought out or the wisest of choices. Perhaps she could have used the counseling services of the university she attended to help in her career choices and career plan. Or perhaps she could have discussed career choices with fellow students or sorority sisters. Carol does not regret her college years but does wonder if guidance that is more parental would have helped her.

Also in retrospect, Carol wonders at the stressors her mother "brought home from" teaching. Were there other underlying problems not voiced by her mother but

blamed on teaching? Carol did not elaborate on where her mother had been educated nor did she ever explain or mention her mother's career switch. Carol now wonders if her mother's dissatisfaction with the teaching profession was due to school district or her school in the particular school district. Was it due to administration overall or just the administration within her school? Having been in the teaching profession even if for a short time, Carol has new insights into what goes on in a school. Carol is also of Hispanic descent but never felt it was an issue when she taught. However, she wonders if this was another factor somehow in her mother's dissatisfaction. Carol feels that because she liked teaching as much as she did, she now has less insight into her mother's issues. Coupled with her parents' divorce and after what Carol had considered a happy normal childhood, she wonders if teaching should have been her first career choice.

Despite the many twists and turns in Carol's career path, she would like to return to teaching. Carol just gave birth to her third child so she does realize it may be a longer time frame than she thought. She also recognizes that every year she is not actively teaching, she is missing out on new ideas, innovation and new styles of teaching. With those thoughts in mind, Carol realizes she may have to once again return to the classroom herself before she steps into one as a teacher. Because Carol willingly returned to the classroom to become a teacher, one can imagine she will have no difficulty returning once again to renew her teaching career and her teaching "story to live by" (Connelly & Claninin, 1999; Craig, in press).

Upon my own reflection of Carol and her tale of how she entered the teaching profession, I realized she never mentioned support from her parents. Not once was financial support or encouragement named. Instead, her support came from friends at college

and their sharing of their careers. Carol never really expressed any thoughts of wanting to help others or give back what she had been given as a reason for teaching. Instead she seemed to focus on the time off afforded teachers. Perhaps this is my own bias reigning over Carol's story but teaching because you want time off does not fit the mold of a professional teacher. Carol also said very little about her students, her classroom experiences or her fellow teachers. Maybe this is where my wondering crept in.

### **Participant Two: Jennifer**

Jennifer is the second person whom I came to know as a researcher. Jennifer is one of three children, in the middle with two brothers. Neither of her brothers has completed college although both attended some college classes. Jennifer began college as a pre-med student with the hopes of becoming a neonatologist. Her major changed about her second semester of her sophomore year when she began losing interest in science courses. She then transferred in to the education program at the same university and continued on to graduation following the curriculum for elementary education. Jennifer's mother holds a master's degree and is a professional health care worker. Jennifer's father has a GED. Any further education for her father was through the military which may have resulted in an associate's degree in surgical technology. Jennifer's maternal grandfather held a master's degree and was a college professor following his retirement from the military. Jennifer's maternal grandmother was a college graduate (having graduated from high school at the age of 16) and had completed most of the course work toward a master's degree. Her maternal grandmother spent many years employed as a counselor. Jennifer's paternal grandmother did not complete high school (in fact, she had Jennifer's father at the age of 15) and her paternal grandfather probably did not complete high school

(information not offered on questionnaire). Jennifer has one uncle who is a teacher (also with a master's degree) an aunt and two uncles who are attorneys, and many other aunts and uncles who are all college graduates. Several of the relatives on her maternal family side have graduate degrees. One uncle on the paternal side completed college and several aunts have completed associate's degrees, other aunts and uncles finished high school. Jennifer maintains that no one in her extended family had any influence on her decision to become an educator. Education was emphasized in her upbringing but with no biases toward any career path. Jennifer did complete the entire education program with a full semester of student teaching. She was offered a job at the school where she student taught before she had completed the program.

So, Jennifer began her teaching career just three weeks after graduation. She states she was thrilled to have a job, "earning money at last," she said. Jennifer has a close friend (Noelle) who was student teaching at the same time, same school district but different school. Jennifer relates that during her whole student teaching, Noelle repeatedly said she did not want to teach. Noelle did not apply for a teaching job at her school or any school. After graduation and passing the certifying exam, Noelle continued working at her job of aerobic training. When she realized that her job and salary opportunities were severely lacking, she could not understand why she could not find employment as a teacher. It did not help Noelle's situation that Jennifer was happily employed and enjoying her teaching job. Jennifer's credentialing was Pre-K to Fourth grade and she preferred teaching kindergarten. However when the job was offered to her before she had graduated, teaching first grade, she readily accepted it. The amount of support Jennifer received during her first months as a teacher was outstanding. Jennifer came into a class that had

discipline problems, was behind in the curriculum and in need of help. Her assistant principal would come to her room and offer to stay with the class so Jennifer could observe another teacher teaching. She was given time to meet with other first grade teachers to plan ways to meet the standards of first grade. The school was exceedingly pleased with Jennifer as she successfully turned a chaotic borderline of failure class into a passing class.

Jennifer admits, somewhat sheepishly, that she was “never going to act like a teacher.” To Jennifer, acting like a teacher meant when in a group of teachers, they all would try to “one up” each other; who had the worst student, best class or hardest parents to deal with. Jennifer considered this a waste of time and certainly not “fun”. She came to dislike meetings as they often lapsed into the one upmanship sessions and were devoid of any knowledge exchange. However, this did not mean that Jennifer was averse to sharing a particular incident or cute story.

Jennifer’s first full year of teaching was also first grade. Again she really wanted to teach kindergarten but as there were no openings for her, she chose to stay with teaching first grade. At the school where Jennifer teaches, they teach in a form of partnerships; one teacher teaches English/language arts, the other teaches math and science. The students are the ones who changing classrooms. Jennifer’s explanation of how “they” convinced the principal to allow this was that “they” did the research and presented the facts. Jennifer also became very good friends with her partner/teacher; a friendship that lasts to this day. Her partner (Ann) has a handicapped child. The child has Angelman’s Syndrome or “Happy Baby Syndrome.” These babies rarely cry and only sigh if really distressed. While every parent might think that would be a blessing, in reality the syndrome

is not. Children with Angelman's Syndrome do not talk, do learn to walk and are very developmentally delayed. To this day, Jennifer continues to support her friend by participating in the annual Angelman's Syndrome walkathon which supports research of the syndrome. Ann has since had two children who are healthy and normal.

For Jennifer's second year of teaching, a position opened at the kindergarten level. Jennifer applied and was hired to teach a kindergarten class. Many times Jennifer would say she hated her job or hated teaching but then would have tales of antics she found "hilarious" that her students did. For example, when the school was having an armed intruder drill, Jennifer and her students were under her desk or their tables as instructed. Suddenly a small five year child whispered that "he was taking karate so could protect her." Often the teachers encouraged her to keep a log of all the antics when they shared stories. I am not certain if any of the teachers did keep journals of cute things students said but it would make for good reading.

Somewhere between year two and four of Jennifer's career, she began taking classes toward a masters' degree in counseling. This degree was at a university some one hundred miles north from Jennifer taught. She was able to pursue the degree as well as teach full time because classes were offered on line, in the evening at local community colleges or on Saturdays at the presiding university. Jennifer talked about a fellow teacher, a divorced mother of five, taking the classes with her. Both were successful in completing the degree in a two- year time period. During this, Jennifer continued teaching kindergarten. In the years of kindergarten teaching, Jennifer had a diabetic child in her class, received Hurricane Katrina evacuees/refugees from another state and taught integrated autistic children. Additionally, her teaching partner (at the age of 24) developed a

blood clot in her lung (with no underlying cause or disease) and was out for over a month. Over the course of two or three years, Jennifer's partner got married and had a child. The child died at the age of four months of Sudden Infant Death syndrome (SIDS). Jennifer could hardly talk about this without having tears well up into her eyes. The same year, a teacher lost her baby at six months into her pregnancy, another teacher delivered over two months early (although that child survived) and a third teacher finished her last surgeries from breast cancer. There were several times Jennifer reported there was no support from the principal. However, at the times all these tragedies were occurring, the principal seemed to keep the process of education flowing. The teacher whose baby passed away has a mother who also teaches at the same school. That left two classrooms without a teacher in the span of less than an hour. Many of the teachers requested substitutes to attend the baby's funeral and the principal accommodated them until she ran out of people to substitute. Several of the "team of kindergarten teachers" stayed with the mother as much as possible. Therefore, while the principal was supportive on some issues, Jennifer did not specify which issues in which she felt unsupported.

Jennifer wishes to eventually become a counselor at the high school level. During an evaluation and discussion with her principal, Jennifer expressed this desire. Her principal outlined for Jennifer why she was not hireable at this time for a high school position and suggested Jennifer move up to a higher grade. Jennifer's certification was only to grade four so she was required to pass the certification to teach through eighth grade. Jennifer was successful at the exam and is proudly certified to teach Pre-K to eighth grade. A position became available at her school on the fifth grade team which Jennifer was awarded. I believe Jennifer mentioned the kindergarten team having a "farewell"



gathering for her and expressed their sadness at Jennifer “leaving the kindergarten group.” Jennifer is now teaching for the second year at the fifth grade level.

Jennifer did start her teaching career thinking “she would not act like a teacher” which would lead one to think she would not fit into the school community. However, after listening to Jennifer relate stories from her time at the school, it is apparent that she is in fact an integral part of her school community. Jennifer talked about school meetings where most just sat around agreeing with what was said. She laughed when relating how stunned they all looked when she “went against the grain.” To her surprise, what Jennifer had said during those meetings was not dismissed. Neither was she. Jennifer talked about teams or groups of teachers getting to hold showers or parties for weddings, child birth or major life events. The teams also would have “monthly birthday cakes” rather than celebrate each teacher’s birthday separately. The teams often joined resources to purchase a gift for the celebrated teacher. As many as could attended the funeral of the baby but Jennifer said the “inner kindergarten team” was with the bereaved mother as much as possible. The team also collectively got a memorial plaque for the child. That teacher did return to teaching about a month after her baby passed away. Jennifer was happy to pass on the news that this same teacher has had another child (boy this time) but has opted not to return to her teaching job. This one attrition statistic is very understandable.

Jennifer is a good friend to several of the teachers at her school; friends that have similar interests outside the teaching job. It is my understanding that they all do things as families or as couples. However, friendship does not cloud Jennifer’s idea of what a good teacher is. She mentioned in passing once that her friend Ann was “mean” and “always yelling at her students”. Jennifer thought most of the time the students were well behaved

and were punished for nothing. Jennifer hastened to say “I would never say anything to Ann” but she was aware of her friend’s shortcomings. Jennifer seems to have the ability to instill manners and control in her classrooms with a minimal amount of raising her voice. She commented on how fellow teachers noticed that her students were most often lined up quietly and neatly; the cafeteria workers loved her students as they were taught to say “please” and “thank you.” Parents have also commented to Jennifer how their child is so much politer at home after having her as teacher. In fact, Jennifer mentioned that parents had asked her to move up a grade so their child could have her for the next grade. Jennifer admits she is “a freak” about cleanliness and leans heavily on hand washing with her students. In fact she says she instilled it so well that her students would not hurry to another task because “they didn’t have the hand sanitizer” and the children claimed “you always say to clean our hands.”

Jennifer may have entered her teaching career with the mindset that she “would not be like all the teachers” but she appears to be well ensconced into the school community. That is not to say that Jennifer has lost herself, given up on her own style of teaching but she is an integral part of her team and her school. She seems comfortable talking with her principal, is not afraid to voice her career plans and not adverse to suggestions from the principal. It seems that her principal in fact gave her very solid direction in her quest of becoming a high school counselor. Jennifer has learned much more than behaviors, class management and different learning styles; she has had to learn about diabetes in children, learning disabilities, autism and helping children deal with tragedies (apparently the school had a bus driver murdered and the death of another teacher’s child). When asked if she would change anything, Jennifer thought she probably would not. Although

Jennifer often said she hated teaching, her school was “ghetto” and the children were “awful”, she would not change an iota of her situation. Rust (1999) pointed out that if a teacher had a good year, they referred to the students as “my students” or “my class” or “my school”. If a teacher had a hard year, they simply referred to “the classroom,” “the students” or “the school.” Jennifer always talked about or referred to her teaching experiences using the word my: my kids, my team, my school. When talking about fellow teachers, she would use “we: we planned, we decided or we discussed. I believe Jennifer’s decision to become a teacher has and will benefit students (past and future), fellow teachers and perhaps the field of education.

### **Participant Three: Robin**

Robin is the third individual in my random order. Robin is one of four children, all girls. Robin stated that during her high school years, she taught Sunday School and discovered she loved teaching. Robin completed a four- year education program at a private college in a north central state. She is certified to teach in two states. During her education, Robin completed a full semester of student teaching. This semester was during her senior year but Robin noted that she fulfilled her student teaching requirements during her junior year at this college. Robin reported that upon graduation and successfully completing her certification exams, there were no teaching jobs available in the state where she had been educated. She traveled for a year and then began securing jobs as a waitress and a substitute teacher. She and her husband moved to a state on the eastern seaboard where she taught for a year, moved to central United States where she taught for two years before finally securing a job back in her home state. Robin is now on her third year of teaching in her home state. Robin has one sister with a doctorate of pharmacy,

one sister who has a medical degree and her youngest sister has a Bachelor of Arts degree. Robin's father has a Doctorate in Theology and her mother has a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy. Robin's maternal grandparents both finished high school and both attended college but neither finished with a degree. Neither of her maternal grandparents were educators. On Robin's paternal grandparent's side, both grandparents graduated from college and her paternal grandfather continued on for a Doctorate in Theology. Again neither of the paternal grandparents were educators. When asked if education was important to her family, Robin replied yes. She and her sisters were raised with the understanding that higher education would be paid for by their parents but other "luxuries" would have to be paid for by themselves; luxuries such as cars, entertainment and the latest fashions. She stated that education including a college degree was stressed as "the most important thing they could do with their lives." Her parents thought of education as a "NEED of life," as Robin emphasized. Robin admits that she and her sisters were home- schooled during some of their elementary years but otherwise she did not know any educators until she entered the field. She did say, however, that her mother inspired her by telling her she was a person that could inspire and teach. Robin does have relatives that teach English to people in Japan but no other educators are in her family.

Robin comes from a family where religion plays an important role as well. That is not to say religion was the dominant facet of their lives but highly important. As she said, education was the most important factor as seems evident by the education levels of Robin's family and extended family. Robin was one of four girls but she stressed that each one was treated as special in their own right. No matter what career path each wanted to follow, their parents were supportive. Never once, Robin relates, was one sister compared

to another as in “why can’t you be like your sister.” Robin was emphatic that education was considered a need which would lead me to believe she and her sisters were raised that college was a natural following from high school. Admittedly this may be a reflection of my own childhood where we were told that after high school you went to college and then thought of marriage and having a family. Family was very important to Robin which would explain her reasons for wanting to teach within the same community. Unfortunately, as Robin said “there were no jobs to be had in the state of MN.”

Robin says her original plan with a career in teaching was to teach overseas. However that did not come to pass. After finishing her college degree, Robin says she traveled for a year. It was her intent to take a year before starting to teach. She feels her travel to many states has satisfied her desire to teach overseas. After the year, Robin could not find a full time teaching job in her home state so did waitressing and substitute teaching. She and her husband (Robin did not offer a specific time line here nor did she include details of her husband’s career). Robin also experienced the condescending attitude while waitressing but did not take it personally. Her strong family and religious upbringing plus the knowledge that she was working helped. She chose to offer more kindness to rude people rather than stooping to their level. With her sporadic substitute teaching, Robin was able to retain her teaching skills and build on her techniques. Robin had said she had two student teaching opportunities while in her degree program so may have started with a firmer battery of teachings skills than other beginning teachers.

Robin and her husband moved the eastern coast where she found a full time teaching job. They remained there for one year and then moved to a central plains state. Robin taught there for two years before finally obtaining a job in her home state. Robin enjoyed

being able to teach in different areas but does realize some drawbacks. She was never really able to feel like she was a part of the school community nor did she develop close with any teachers. What Robin did discover is the difference in education in the different states. She felt that the schools in the eastern state had much higher standards than did those in the central plains state. She also felt there were different levels of education for teachers between the states. Because Robin came from an area where the need for alternate certified or emergency certified teachers did not exist, she was a little surprised at the numbers of them in other states.

Robin is aware that large metropolitan areas have schools and school districts much larger than her hometown. She also recognizes that these huge schools will have a highly diversified student body. Along with the diversification, Robin also recognizes that violence has entered the education arena; and the arena is widening to lower grade levels and out of inner cities. But Robin's teacher education was at a small private university with ties to a religious sect. Her education seems to flow along with her upbringing so that Robin would prefer not to teach in large cities. While she has sympathy and empathy for poor children, schools and communities, she would prefer not to teach there.

It was at this point that communication with Robin stopped. I do not know the reason but had only her school email address to use for communication. It saddens me a little that I do not have more detail about Robin's life both as a child and as an adult that I could continue to reflect, compare and story. It is possible that Robin's teaching "story to live by" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) morphed into a "story to leave by" (Clandinin, Downey & Huber, 2009). The fact that the school email address no longer works certainly leads one to that conclusion.

**Participant Four: Wanda**

Wanda is the fourth person. She is one who did not follow a four- year degree education program. Wanda is an only child of parents that did not stay married longer than three years. She was raised mainly by her mother but did live with her paternal grandmother during her high school years. Wanda became an education major after obtaining an associates' degree in childhood development at a local junior college. She then began attending a state university that is geared only to provide the last two years of a four year degree. Wanda's father did have an associates' degree as did one of his siblings. Wanda's mother finished junior high school (eighth grade). Wanda's paternal grandfather is a college graduate as was her paternal grandmother. Wanda's paternal grandfather died at a fairly early age and was not known by Wanda). Wanda's maternal grandmother also died at an early age, her education level unknown, and her maternal grandfather is not really known. Wanda has two maternal uncles currently residing in a state prison. Wanda states that her mother thought education was paramount; always allowing her to study while she (the mother) did all the household chores and cooking. Wanda was only expected to get 'good grades' during her high school years. Wanda has no relatives that are educators so had no influence bestowed upon her to become an educator.

Wanda's original conviction to becoming a teacher has been fraught with unrealized unplanned snags. Wanda completed her associates' degree in a timely manner (two years). She then began the final two years toward her education degree at a branch campus or a major state university. Wanda, of course, planned to proceed straight through the last two years much as she had proceeded effortlessly through the first two years. Wanda, too, experienced life events that would derail her education train. Wanda also experienced an

unplanned pregnancy. Her child was born during the summer months, a typical time off for college students. She opted to take the fall semester off and continues to care for her child but had full intentions to resume classes for the spring semester.

Previously, Wanda had considered herself an independent individual. She had purchased her own condominium (although due to her age, her father was required to co-sign) and was able to support herself. She describes her mother as inordinately proud of her for owning her own home, finishing the associates' degree and owning her two cars. Apparently Wanda's mother has been a home owner. At this time in Wanda's life her mother was not employed due to a diagnosis of lung cancer the year before. That left Wanda with unlimited child care, meal preparation and time for classes and studying. When Wanda would talk about her mother's disease and treatment course, it was hard for to follow along. Either Wanda or her mother had scant knowledge or experience with illnesses leaving them with partial understanding. This in turn made it hard for me to fully understand. Wanda would talk about chemotherapy for her mother in such an off handed manner I sometimes could not tell what she meant. Wanda's mother, on disability, was living with a significant other at this time who would most often be the one taking her to her medical appointments. Wanda was never asked to help with getting her mother to appointments. Despite her illness, Wanda's mother was able to care for the child and cook for Wanda.

Wanda's father was also gainfully employed but Wanda did not seem as close to him as she was to her mother. More than once, Wanda slid in comments about her father's sobriety especially on week-ends but she did respect him as her father. I believe Wanda said her father helped her financially, especially with her mortgage payments.



When Wanda's vehicle became unreliable, it was her father who helped her search for a new car and also co-signed the papers. Through all of these happenings, Wanda continued with classes in her pursuit of an education degree. She worked two or three part-time jobs to finance her education and to support herself. She would alter the job schedules to fit into her education schedules rather than the other way around.

About three years into Wanda's education, her father became very ill. He apparently had a spot on his arm that concerned him but he did nothing about it. When he finally sought medical attention, he was diagnosed with melanoma cancer, which had spread. He was referred to a well known cancer hospital in the metropolitan area near his residence. Wanda's paternal grandmother was the person taking on the responsibility for her father's care including transportation to and from the hospital; the trip often taking an hour one way. Wanda would often report that her father "looked bad" but he then "would get better." She could not visit him with her child as the child was "too noisy" for her father and "she bothered him." Apparently Wanda's grandmother was taking an unrealistic approach to the seriousness of his illness refusing to alert his siblings of his condition. Wanda was a little frustrated as she was starting to have too much on her plate with school and her parents. Unfortunately Wanda's father went from full-time employment in November to succumbing to melanoma by April; a mere five months later and on Easter Sunday. Wanda now had to deal with his demise but then slowly realized as well, that his financial support would cease. Wanda continued taking classes although fewer numbers and with more courses being dropped. She also applied for and began receiving financial aid for her schooling.

To add to Wanda's woes, her mother was beginning to have more and more symptoms of her form of cancer. Interestingly enough, Wanda's mother was able to visit her ex-husband in the hospital and attend his funeral but with great difficulty. Her mother's significant other was laid off due to the economy changes. It took several months for him to find employment again, a fact that came near to the loss of his house. His employment was often out of town or out of state. Wanda's mother was beginning to decline physically; chemotherapy was no longer an option and she was at home alone. She lost the use of one of her hands and had weakening legs rendering her unable to care or feed herself. Wanda admits that providing physical care for her mother was beyond her capabilities. She was not able to cope with her and even admitted that some of the care sickened her.

Wanda began to rely on her child's paternal grandmother for help and the child's great-grandmother. Her mother's significant other would provide twenty-four hour care when he was at home. Wanda often wished he would be laid off so he would be home all the time. By this time, Wanda's education had dwindled to perhaps three credit hours and she would often have to ask for extensions on required work. Wanda worked with the significant other to finally provide Hospice care to her mother. Wanda relates that all this time her mother remained very stubborn about her care; she would refuse care or send visiting nurses off saying she was fine. She refused to have anyone come in to help with housework or meals although she was unable to do it herself. After a fall, Wanda's mother did realize she needed help and accepted care from Hospice. Wanda's mother died of lung cancer in December (after Christmas) just a mere eight months after the death of her father.

Wanda admits that reality came a little too hard and too fast for her. She had considered herself very independent but soon realized how dependent she had been on her parents. Despite her personal sorrows, Wanda did continue with classes but it was beginning to be totally haphazard. In talking with Wanda, I found she really is no longer interested in teaching. She says she “is petrified to stand up in front of a class” and would prefer working more on a one- to- one with children. She enjoys tutoring especially with one child but needs to find tutoring on a full- time basis. Wanda has discovered that to advertise as a “professional tutor” one must have a bachelor’s degree. Wanda is not attending classes at the time but has not abandoned her pursuit of the college degree. She has shown some maturity since the loss of her parents in that she used her mother’s life insurance to pay off her mortgage and car loan. Wanda still feels like a fish out of water and sees that perhaps she is floundering some but has not lost the importance of education. She found and enrolled her child in a PreK-3 class and the PreK-4 class the following year. Her child is entering kindergarten ahead of her peers in some skills. Wanda says her mother stressed getting an education and allowed her to study all during high school but in a way, her mother did her a real disservice. Wanda, in some ways, is left lacking major life skills, skills Wanda will need to pursue her life alone.

Wanda and her experiences do not fit into the examples of alternate certification candidates seen in much of the literature (Jorissen, 2002; Schmidt and Knowles, 1995; Olson & Craig, 2009; Scherff, 2008.) She has been attending classes for over five years and is not finished. Wanda states her inability to pass a “math exam” is preventing her from completion. She has asked for tutoring from friends and boyfriends but never continued with it for any length of time. Wanda feels that her life now consists of “scram-

bling to find a job” to provide money for living. She also tries to fit any employment into her child’s school schedule thereby limiting her possibilities further. Wanda appears at “loose ends” but does not know how to ask for advice or even aware that she needs help.

### Synopsis

In review, Table 2 shows what my dissertation research revealed about my four research participants: Carol, Jennifer, Robin and Wanda.

Table 2

#### *The Four Research Participants*

Name	Number of siblings and education levels	Parents education level	Maternal grandparents education level	Paternal grandparents education level	Type of education of participant
Carol	1 (starting college)	Mother: 2 Masters degrees Father: 2 years college	GM: High school GF: College degree	GM: 2 years of college GF: High school diploma	Alternate certification
Jennifer	2 Both high school graduates	Mother: Masters’ degree Father: GED	GM: College degree with work on masters GF: Masters’ degree	GM: did not complete high school GF: high school diploma	4 year education program
Robin	3, One MD, one Pharm D, one BA	Mother: Masters’ OT Father; Doctorate of Theology	Both finished high school and attended college.	Both college graduates. GF: Doctorate of Theology	4 year education program
Wanda	0	Mother: Finished 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Father: associates’ degree	Both college graduates	Neither finished high school	Alternate Certificate program

Key: GM= grandmother GF= grandfather

What are characteristics of those who choose teaching as a career? Brookhart and Freeman (1992) conducted several studies looking at characteristics of students entering the teachers' curriculum. Basing their studies on Vygotsky's (1978) theory of personal understanding and misconceptions (or preconceived ideas), Brookhart & Freeman looked at what beginning teachers bring into their educational programs. Some of the results are quite unexpected. Students who enter the field of education came from lower socio-economic statuses than other college students. Within this set of students, about 69% had fathers with no college degrees. Other studies showed over two thirds of families had no college degrees and still others showed over 57% of fathers did have a college degree. Looking at the background of the four participants I interviewed, it is not as apparent as Brookhart and Freeman (1992) would lead you to believe. My wonderings led me to look at the educational backgrounds of the participants but what I found has no apparent pattern. The parents and grandparents had all levels of education from junior high dropouts to doctorates. Having no male head of household was not a pertinent issue with my participants. A large portion of these students were white: about 80% white, 60% female (Brookhart & Freeman 1992). It is pure coincidence that the four women I chose were in fact white. I never included their race in my discussions as it was not relevant to my study. At this point, I am beginning to wonder about the relevance race was in the study by Brookhart and Freeman (1992).

Fuller (1969) looked at what beginning teachers expected of themselves. Often these individuals were concerned with being adequate as a teacher, being able to maintain discipline within the classroom and being liked by the students they taught. However, never did any of these questions or thoughts come up with conversations I had. Charac-

teristics of those entering the teaching profession include a high opinion of their teaching ability, they are more anxious about subject matter than they are with interacting with students. Most of those candidates entering the teaching profession felt nurturing and interpersonal aspects of teaching were more important than the academic aspects (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). Once again, not one of the participants I spoke with ever approached the subject of being liked by the students; not a word about nurturing and not anything about their abilities to teach. Hobson (2009) found that those in alternate certification programs were less likely to withdraw from their education programs than those in the four- year education programs. There is a higher dropout rate in perspective teachers in shortage subjects with males being more likely to withdraw. Those pre-teachers over the age of 35 were also more likely to leave the programs before completion. And finally, those who entered alternate certificate programs for financial reasons were more likely to quit before finishing. Hobson's research took place in England which may explain the vast difference I found with my participants and what was found in Hobson's results.

## Chapter V

### Discussion

Attrition from the teaching field was noted as a large problem and a worldwide problem (Fuller, 1969). Now, 40 years later, attrition remains a large problem (DeWert, Babinski & Jones, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Ewing & Smith, 2003; Herbert, & Ramsey, 2004; Skilbeck, & Connell, 2003; Smithers, & Robinson, 2001, 2003; Terry, 2009). The cost of attrition is staggering, as seen in Table 3 below:

Table 3

#### *Teacher Attrition Costs*

State	Cost of Attrition (in dollars)	State	Cost of Attrition (in dollars)
Alabama	28,969,359	Alaska	7,920,331
Arizona	44,026,392	Arkansas	14,361,155
California	206,213,616	Connecticut	31,359,651
Delaware	4,841,971	D.C	6,017,796
Florida	78,790,723	Georgia	81,736,892
Hawaii	15,607,820	Idaho	8,530,747
Illinois	78,961,817	Indiana	26,843,846
Iowa	20,144,334	Kansas	22,649,585
Kentucky	18,010,556	Louisiana	30,776,968
Maine	10,606,424	Maryland	44,644,190
Massachusetts	56,049,714	Michigan	67,056,880
Minnesota	39,579,507	Mississippi	18,492,272
Missouri	43,169,611	Montana	5,525,286
Nebraska	11,166,635	Nevada	12,830,603
New Hampshire	7,299,916	New Jersey	72,633,486
New Mexico	12,254,139	New York	210,614,387
North Carolina	84,497,347	North Dakota	3,563,447
Ohio	110,627,905	Oklahoma	23,047,221
Oregon	19,354,114	Pennsylvania	88,432,504
Rhode Island	5,592,175	South Carolina	30,551,316
South Dakota	5,328,932	Tennessee	32,378,057
Texas	214,509,448	Utah	18,203,284
Vermont	6,715,307	Virginia	62,031,275
Washington	38,120,738	West Virginia	6,677,984
Wisconsin	25,093,968	Wyoming	4,026,798

(U.S. Department of Education Statistics, 2010)

The total amount teacher attrition is \$2,158, 074,356 annually. This amount is mind-boggling. In fact it is so staggering; I feel it should be made much more public so perhaps the American public could see what is driving the cost of education up with so little results on the achievement of children. What is also very surprising is Texas has the highest cost of teacher attrition yet when NCLB was enacted (2002), it was based on the standardized testing in Texas. The Department of Education found the reasons so many teachers leave is not due to retirement but is due to heavy workloads, lack of planning time and lack of influence over school policies.

How attrition is affecting education and the nation's quest for "No Child Left Behind" is multilayered. In 2001, Darling-Hammond stated that in the state of California, there are more certified teachers than there are jobs for them. In numbers, this translates to 1.3 million certified teachers for 280,000 jobs. Nationally this is 200,000 being hired yearly but no more than 150,000 of them are new graduates. In California, despite having an excess of certified teachers, over 40,000 are hired each year that have emergency credentialing or waivers for credentialing. This number has been increasing nationwide for the last 10 years. Why are there so many teachers who are educated for the profession and licensed to teach but not in the field? Stress within the work place is one large factor. Teachers in large schools in low socio-economic areas are faced with large classes, old, torn and out of date textbooks and often little to no support from their administrators. Salaries are another reason for the high attrition rate. Teachers have been paid far less than their worth for over a century. In the 1800s, Horace Mann began the movement toward better education, i.e. that teachers would have more education than the highest level they were actually teaching. The idea was that women could take over the role



of teacher but at one- third the cost of a male teacher. Unfortunately, the salary of teachers has not improved much beyond that. A look at comparative salaries from different professions is seen in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4

*General Salaries of Nurses and Teachers*

Registered Nurses	\$64,690 annually
Licensed Vocational Nurses	\$40, 380 annually
Elementary School Teachers	\$51,660 annually
Post-Secondary School Teachers	\$45,690 Annually

(U.S Bureau of Labor mean wages 2012)

Table 5

*Comparison of General Salaries of Other Professions*

Average Teacher Salary	\$44,040
Registered Nurses	\$48,240
Accountants/Auditors	\$50,700
Dental Hygienists	\$56,770
Computer Programmers	\$71,130

(National Commission on Teaching America's Future [NCTAF], 2005)

One thing people need to realize when looking at these statistics is that to become a Licensed Vocational (Practical) nurse requires only one year of school but teachers require four to five years and make very little more. Registered nurses can take two years or four years with little to no difference in salary but are still paid more than teachers. Salaries of teachers come from the tax base of communities. If there is a threat of an increase of a tax hike on a ballot, voters often do not read what the increase is for and just vote no. Why would they want to pay higher taxes? The correlation most of the public does not make is that teacher salaries are part of that increase. These same voters will be the ones who are complaining of poor equipment, supplies and tattered books within the schools. It is my own opinion that these voters against a tax hike for better schools are the

same ones who write to local newspapers when their child is expelled from the school district. These same voters are the ones who signed the booklet sent home from the school delineating rules, regulations and consequences of not abiding by said rules.

In large cities, danger in the form of physical violence within the students themselves or toward adult figures is a real threat and a detriment to teachers. Large schools have been forced to have metal detectors placed at all school entries to prevent the bringing of weapons into the facility. Schools have gone to issuing name badges to all students (even to the kindergarten level) and if a student loses or forgets this badge, they are not allowed to attend classes (CCISD, 2000 handbook). Scherff (2008) describes an incident within a school district where a student took two hands and shoved a teacher. The teacher in question was a young healthy male. After being shoved, the teacher got the student “to the floor” and held him until help arrived. The person punished after it was all said and done was the teacher. He was suspended and then resigned his position. Incidentally he went on to become a police officer (Scherff, 2008). But the school district lost a master’s degree educated teacher. Rust (1999) describes a teacher in a northern inner city school district in one of the biggest cities in the United States trying to stop a fight between two students. The teacher (female) ended up with a broken arm. The union of teachers was very unsupportive maintaining her contract had specifically stated teachers were not to interfere with student fights. Needless to say this teacher also quit. As I talked about in my introduction, a high school principal related the story of problems with a 15- year-old student. Apparently the 15year-old began beating a substitute teacher after being requested to stay after class. On two of these occasions, the parents interfered and the teachers were ultimately punished. It should come as no surprise to administration or even gov-

ernmental offices that attrition is so high with incidents like these. Scherff (2008), in her discussion of two masters' educated teachers, reported that both felt like it was the parents and students who ruled the school; the students well aware that they held control. Jennifer related a similar story. She was teaching kindergarten and had a child transferred into her class. First, it made the number of students in class over the number allowed by the state and this child was on his fifth transfer. His behavior was the reason he had to be transferred, behavior including stabbing at (with scissors) a pregnant teacher. Apparently one day this child chose not to do as asked by Jennifer. Instead he took his arms out of his sleeves and stood flailing his sleeves so as to hit other students and Jennifer. After the third request, Jennifer escorted him to the principal's office. On the way, he continued to flail and ended up tripping and falling down. They proceeded to the principal's office and Jennifer thought the matter closed. Midafternoon, Jennifer was summoned to the principal's office where the child, his mother and a sheriff's deputy all stood. The child had told his mother Jennifer had pushed him down. Needless to say, Jennifer was furious as she never touches children in any manner. Also she has never been in in any legal trouble. She asked the assistant principal why she was questioned, why she was doubted at all and proceeded to call the Teacher's Federation Union. Fortunately for Jennifer, there were cameras in the hallway recording the entire episode which clearly showed the child falling while Jennifer was not close. The deputy said there was nothing more he could do and left (no charges were made). The principal did give Jennifer the option of having the child transferred out of her class but she opted not to have him leave. The problem again is the parent acting as if the child had done nothing wrong and allowing the child full control over her (his mother). It was also at this time Jennifer had an insulin dependent

diabetic child whose parents were not together. Unfortunately this child's disease was used by her parents as weapons against each other leaving Jennifer with a child whose blood sugar would fall precipitately low, leaving the child unable to walk, stand up or function. No mandate whether at the federal level or the state level can alter what is more and more obvious: parenting and parental control.

Jennifer also relates another story from her school district. Even though she was a kindergarten teacher, she volunteered to mentor a young male in the fifth grade. Apparently the mentored students were chosen as risks of failing. Jennifer tells me that both his parents were in jail so he lived with grandparents. The purpose of the mentoring is to help if the student is behind. During her semester as a mentor, Jennifer found out that this child's parents were soon to be released from jail, causing him to not study and do badly on an assignment. Jennifer says he got tears in his eyes when she pointed out he had choices: one to follow his parents' footsteps or two to continue on with his good work. The child did pass fifth grade and as a reward both Jennifer and his homeroom teacher took him to dinner, his choice of restaurant. This is but one success story of a child at risk of "being left behind". How many more children are there in desperate need of mentoring like this? The school district should commended loudly, publically and often for this type of intervention! But attrition should be of no surprise to anyone. Or are these incidents not publicized? Is the public not aware or too apathetic to realize teaching was never intended to be physical contact sport? When looking at Robin's family background, it shows theology as important, which leads me to believe her upbringing held strong religious beliefs. It would seem that the incidents I have described would be totally out of Robin's personal make-up and possibly hard to assimilate. However Robin did attend the

four- year university based teacher's education so perhaps she could use her child development education to understand the behaviors.

*No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) being signed into law in 2002 sent out mandates or directives but seem to have added to the education woes. The act clearly states that all children will have highly qualified teachers. What is generally meant by highly qualified is a teacher must be licensed in the field or subject they teach or enrolled in an alternate certification program toward licensing. Karelitz, Fields, Levy, Martinez-Gudapakkam and Jablonski (2011) found that teachers themselves feel that even if an individual is licensed and can pass any certifying exam, it does not make them a good teacher. Additionally, what happens in many school districts is teachers begin by teaching that which they are licensed to teach but are then asked to pick up or teach other classes not in their field. Snow-Gerono and Franklin (2006) found that since the enactment of NCLB, what is being taught at universities is critical thinking and active learning. However, what is being encouraged by mentors in the schools is test preparation skills and drills for standardized tests. These new teachers are told to teach to the standardized test which in turn causes the curriculum to shrink. Essentially what is happening with so much emphasis being placed on the tests is they are taking the joy out of education. Using the standardized test as the indicator, students may become good readers and be able to read up to their levels but they will hate reading. If all the students have to read is the nonfiction short passage that appear on the tests, then that is all they will be able to read. Statistics show that 93% of classroom emphasis is on the test which only leads to high stress both for teachers and students. Teachers within classrooms now have 50% less student curricular decisions (Snow-Gerono & Franklin, 2006). Zancanella (2008) finds that testing

is taking over the classrooms. Teachers no longer have choices on how or what to teach. Often this leads to a fragmented curriculum. Also, more and more out- of- school programs have cropped up with promises to help students get high test scores. But these programs are like snake oils of the past, there are no guarantees or proof that they are successful. It seems to me, so far, the NCLB has not helped students improve but has created more handicaps. On the tests, often the reading is as dry as reading an encyclopedia and has little or nothing to do with everyday life. When the tests questions were actually studied by Zancanella and others, they discovered that half of the standards issued by NCLB were not being tested. Shope (2006) purports that with so many ads saying the product (any product) is scientifically tested or medical doctor approved, the words lose their meaning, especially when most ads say it but it is not really true. The same can be said about the standards of NCLB. The standards basically tell teachers how to teach. With so many teachers dismayed with how NCLB is being interpreted, it is no wonder that hiring or retaining good teachers is so difficult. It is not that teachers do not agree with accountability, they do. The complaint teachers have is that they need resources and support along with accountability. They also need other players in children's' lives (parents, community members, other institutions) to assume their responsibilities and to be accountable for their actions/non-actions.

Looking at the end result of NCLB from a different angle, in many schools classes like art or music have been eliminated. One school district went so far as to have students take double English and removed any space for electives (Nichols & Berliner, 2008.) By the time a student is in high school, failing a test like the standardized test can be very demeaning. The question of dropping out of school has also been raised within

governmental circles but the correlation between failure of one test and dropping out has never occurred to those in government. Teachers also feel the demeaning effects of failure and schools have gone to cheating or fudging test scores. Schools have encouraged those students they know will do poorly to stay at home “sick” the day of the tests or they will drop those who will not pass the test from the school rolls. Students can easily and quickly pick up when they are classified as winners or losers in their classrooms. Schools have taken to having socials, pep rallies and songfests to shallowly promote passing the tests. Schools force teachers to wear school-designed t-shirts and post banners throughout the school emphasizing the idea that passing is paramount. Nichols and Berliner (2008) titled their paper “Testing the joy out of learning” which says it all. They feel that there is no evidence that student learning has increased in any way since NCLB. It saddens me to listen to a co-worker talking about how her seventh grade child does not want to go to school. He finds it boring as they only do drills for the standardized tests. The co-worker felt as a loss because she know only too well that in fact her child was bored but of course, she is powerless to change what is happening in school. As she was talking, I could well imagine her son as a dropout in the high school years although I declined to voice my opinion.

Friel (2004) has a slightly different take on the impetus behind NCLB. He says that children who are not getting a quality education are those in urban and rural schools. Suburban schools have little difficulty in attracting and retaining quality teachers. Are the rural and urban schools really so different? It is these schools that have a large number of uncertified, alternate certified and emergency certified teachers. It is also these schools who seem to have a revolving door with teachers as their retention rate is low. It is the

poorer schools that have lower salaries and less supplies to work with in addition to lesser qualified teachers. The combination is not one to enhance learning or close the gap cited by NCLB. Substantial research evidence suggests that well-prepared, capable teachers have the greatest impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p 7).

NCLB continues to bring out more and more proof that it is not working as planned. Berliner (2010) wrote in his letter to the president that there are too many outside factors affecting the poor and minorities. These outside factors include toxic neighborhoods, poor or no pre-natal care for the mothers, smoking and drinking of the mothers while pregnant. It has been clearly shown that these factors lead to low birth weight which leads to low cognitive skills (low IQ). Poor nutrition adds to the poor achievement. There are over 13 million families that have trouble providing food for them. This is why Berliner considers the NCLB fatally flawed. Teachers are expected to close the achievement gap but these out-side factors are certainly not within the realm of education. Berliner's contention is that until the out-side factors are addressed, the gap will not close. The required standardized tests are demeaning (Ohanian, 2002.) Kids hate to go to school because it is just drills and practice tests. It appears that those signing NCLB into law have no idea; for example all they see is a decrease in government spending by eliminating welfare amounts but fail to see how those cuts are adding to the out-side factors of the poor. Now add an alternate certified teacher, who has little to no child development classes, and you have compounded the problem. Legislators and school officials are worried about the declining quality of teachers (Angrist & Garyan, 2004.) and yet the number of uncertified or emergency certified teachers being hired continues and increases.



In the 1990s, a phrase became the newest fad or buzz word: dumbing down (Wikipedia.org). The original intent was to describe how schools were “too limiting” and needed to be reformed. However, the term came to mean speaking or writing in simpler terms so those of less intelligence or education would understand. Dumbing down has become such a faddish word that even musicians incorporate it into their songs. Unfortunately much of American society has indeed dumbled down. As was stated earlier, the military writes safety manuals on a ninth grade reading level but was finding out remedial reading was required of recruits to bring these recruits up to the ninth grade reading level. The University of California at Davis has devised guidelines for determining reading levels. The first step is to count the number of three syllable words per sentence. To be classified as a fourth grade reading level, a group of ten sentences can have no more than three three-syllabled words. The range at UC Davis was fourth through ninth grades. Well, Ruscavage, Parker and McArthur (1994) found that females are more likely to read at a ninth grade level with the mean level of all teens reading at an eighth grade level; however the actual level of most people is way below that grade. Health Educators in Harris County (Texas) have been instructed to write brochures for patients at a sixth grade level. The Mental Health America (MHA) of Greater Houston (Texas) published a ‘simplified version of brochures (MHA web site, 2005.) The simplified version is at a fourth grade reading level; the target audience, post-partum women. The University of Florida medical school has a course specifically on “Writing for Professionals” (University of Florida web site). Students are taught to write on a sixth grade level for patient centered writing. While society may continue thinking dumbing down is just a word one researcher thought up, it is more and more apparent that in fact, society is dumbing down.

One cause of the concept of dumbing down is what educators' critics' term inflated grades or Mickey Mouse degrees. In England, comparisons of examination tests reveal a progressive decline in questions relating to a specific topic. Criticism of the certifying tests in the US has also emerged. Following the nation-wide mandatory testing one sees the decline or elimination of music, art and physical education classes under the guise of saving money. In fact, the time is being spent on drills for the standardized test.

Dropping out is another problem spoken of by legislators. President Obama issued the statement that "dropping out is not an option" (Bridgeland, Diliulo & Balfanz, 2009.) It may be well and good to think such a proclamation will have any effect but what are the factors behind kids dropping out of school? Once again, non-school factors (Rosenthal, 1997) have the greatest impact. Low socioeconomic status, minorities and males (to a slight degree) are more likely to drop out.

Dropouts are more common in urban schools than in suburban or rural school. Statistically, families with no male as head of household often have more dropouts and having to take on a job to contribute to supporting the family leads to more dropouts. Students have five reasons they leave school: boredom, missed too many days and cannot make it up, spent too much time with peers not interested in school, not enough rules and too much freedom and failing (Azzam, 2009.) Even if teachers recognize that a student is at risk of dropping out, what could perhaps help to keep them in school? Principals, when questioned, think the problem of dropping out is smaller than what is reported. Teachers tend to feel the problem belongs more to the parents (Bridgeland, Diliulo & Balfanz, 2009). Most educators do not think eliminating the requirement to pass the standardized test to graduate would decrease the number of dropouts. There are some suggestions for

schools to enact to try and decrease the number dropping out. Schools should equate school and work, have smaller classes, better teachers, more tutoring or one on one teaching and more discipline in schools (Azzam, 2007.) another set of suggestions to decrease dropout rates is smaller classes, better qualified teachers, giving students personal attention, and involve parents with the school (Aflalo & Gabay, 2012.) Unfortunately when one looks at predictors of who will dropout, failure of parents to be involved is one of the biggest (Jamerson, Egeland, Sroufe & Carson, 2008.) Add poor infant and toddler care leading into behavioral problems and inability to get along with peers and you have the picture of a dropout.

Consider Wanda, who has parents and family members who are dropouts. Would she, with the alternate certificate program education, even be able to recognize a student at risk of dropping out? Maybe, maybe not. Or because she has dropping out as more of the norm in her extended family, would she consider it part of the whole scheme of the school environment? Perhaps so; perhaps not. Robin's strong family emphasis on education would seem to make her more aware of students in danger of dropping out but this is not necessarily the case either. The solution thought of by most educators is better teachers. Eliminating out- of-field teachers, having more programs for beginning teachers and having an alternate learning environment are suggestions to avoid dropouts. The fact that better more qualified teachers are needed is a recurring statement throughout research, yet the numbers of non-qualified teachers does not decrease. The poorer schools who have more students with factors leading to dropping out continue to have revolving doors in regards to new teachers yearly. Out of four teachers that I talked with, two of them have/will have minimal qualifications. That is one half or 50% of the teachers. If it

should happen that others randomly polled teachers for their level of education, would the same 50% be unqualified?

## **Chapter VI**

### **Conclusion**

Throughout my journey in education, I repeatedly noticed the similarity between the nursing profession (of which I have been a part for several decades) and the teaching profession. Both career paths were predominantly female. Males entering either field often assumed it was their right to rise quickly through the “ranks” and into managerial positions. For example, while sitting in a class for doctoral students I overheard one student state he would be a principal. Not “he wanted to become a principal” or that he was taking steps to become a principal but simply he would be a principal. As a non-educator in the class I did not feel the need to challenge him but I also noticed no one else in the class challenged him. Perhaps I am too jaded from the long nursing career I have had both in military and civilian capacities, but I have seen and watched males do that; riding simply on their ability to assert what they want. Qualifications meant nothing.

One major difference between nursing and teaching is that males in nursing can be blocked from specialties like obstetrics or could opt out of any training in that field. During the last two decades, during which time I became a nurse anesthetist, I have watched men applying more and more to schools of nursing simply to become a nurse anesthetist. The impetus to enter the nurse anesthesia field is mostly because salaries can be found on the internet and that is the reason for becoming a nurse: money. Nurse anesthesia was founded by females much as the nursing profession was. As both professions progressed, females fostered adopting more professionalism, setting up a national qualifying exam and establishing credentialing standards.

Both nursing and teaching began as less than desirable professions. Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of nursing, expressed the desire to formally educate women as nurses because otherwise they “were lower than prostitutes” (Britannica Encyclopedia, Inc.) Nightingale opened the first school of nursing in England in 1860. The irony of Nightingale and her life is that while she was instrumental in bringing sanitation, common sense and statistics to the profession, she died of brucellosis. Brucellosis is an airborne bacterium that can be transmitted from animals to people. Milk is often the offending culprit as milk was unpasteurized then. Nightingale also suffered from spondylitis (and not syphilis as the rumor throughout my career has been) which is a chronic inflammation of the vertebrae and other joints. Despite these illnesses, Nightingale lived to be 90-years-old. Looking back at Nightingale’s life, she is considered a woman before her time as she kept notes about mortalities, hand washing, and cleanliness all the while serving to decrease mortalities during the Crimean War (Young, 1995.) During this same time, in the United States, Clara Barton was considered an equal of Nightingales. Barton was a nurse already but her focus was also on the battle field. Her efforts of helping those affected by the war led to the start of the American Red cross. The first nurse to graduate from a formal school of nursing was in 1873. The American Nurses Association was founded in 1897 as the organization setting up standards, credentials and guiding state board exams.

Teachers, on the other hand, started out with a slightly different twist. In the 1700s, teachers could be local farmers, inn keepers or a male who was able to spare a few months to pass on what little knowledge he had learned. More educated males often took

teaching positions as a stepping stone to a career in law or as a clergy. The teaching job was simply a way to get in good with influential people of the town.

In the 1800s, Mann, Carter, Barnard and Beecher began the movement toward having more teachers and more importantly, better teachers. They envisioned having teachers educated beyond the level they reached at the very school they were teaching. Because so many of the male teachers were moving on to become doctors, lawyers and ministers, Mann et al looked to bringing women in as teachers. Unfortunately, the idea was to pay these teaches one- third the salary of the males they would replace. It was the female teacher who organized and educated slaves, set up schools and educated the American Indians.

By the early 1900s, 75% of all teachers In the United States were female. It was during this time that teachers began to realize those in higher positions, those with authority over them were all male. It was these same people in authority who were demanding a reformation in education. They wanted to base education on a business model since it was business men establishing the rules. These same business men had no idea of teaching, how to teach or even teaching methods. Here in the 21 century, these same words seem to be echoing down the governmental line: federal to state to local. The business model is trying to worm its way into the medical profession as well. It has never been shown to be advantageous to either helping profession yet it continues to crop up. Working with production and commodities is inherently and irrefutably different than working with human beings.

In the late 1880s and early 1900s unions were created. The National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation for teachers (AFT) were instrumental in

asking for higher pay, better benefits, improved working conditions and job security.

These conditions were met to the satisfaction of those demanding but any semblance of authority for teachers (still predominantly female) was not to be. Authority remained at the administration level.

In the 1900s, John Dewey began with his progressive ideation of education. He advocated allowing teachers and their students more freedom. This is essentially bringing democracy into the class room. The idea of progressive education is still in place a century later despite the uneven way it has been implemented. Jumping ahead a few decades, the 1950s saw desegregation being mandated. The edict was from the federal government but of course it was not an overnight affair. It took almost 10 years for desegregation to come about and was not done according to the law. School and states figured ways to re-zone districts to prevent a true desegregation. It took many law suits to finally have equal and desegregated schools. The 1980s saw *A Nation at Risk* which brought new changes or mandates with it. *A Nation at Risk* revealed that teachers were underpaid, under qualified and working in poor conditions all of which result in poor results for education children. Following this, a national board was established in the hopes of providing qualification standards for the teachers.

The 2000s began what was termed a “standards movement.” Teaching was based on a standard knowledge base: teachers were educated with standards and students were to pass a standardized test. One problem emerged with all the ‘standards’: educators could not agree on exactly what knowledge is to be acquired nor could they agree on how to assess teachers. To date, many educators feel that the National Board for Professional



Teaching Standards will cover just a broad assessment of teachers. The process is lengthy and rigorous. Yet, it would appear to most teachers' teaching abilities.

During the century of educational changes, the nursing profession was also undergoing changes. Nightingale was in England changing the act of nursing and establishing nursing as a profession. In the United States, the profession of nursing was also becoming a profession with great influence coming from Nightingale. The first nurse to graduate from a recognized school was in 1873, the American Nurses Association was established in 1897. During this era, most hospitals that existed were basically almshouses for those too poor or too sick to care for themselves. Hospitals were viewed as places a person went to die, not to be cured. Changes to hospitals, nursing and medical care grew out of the Civil War in the US much as the Crimean War brought changes within England.

Nurses, for years, were educated in schools usually in conjunction with large hospitals. The length of school was three years with little time off, students were required to live in housing provided and subjected to strict rules. In the end, a diploma was awarded and the nurses were eligible to take state board exams to become registered nurses. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, nurses sought a way to elevate their professionalism, increase their education and alter the public opinion of the nurses. Nurses were most often regarded as "angels of mercy" but not considered to have education enough to actually think. It was then that a Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) was introduced at the college/university level. During the next two decades, diploma schools were phased out both to increase college level trained nurses and to save hospitals money. In the 1980s, a nursing shortage existed so two paths were followed to alleviate the shortage. Nurses

were recruited from Canada and the Philippines. Nurses from Canada could fit into the American medical community but the nurses from the Philippines were not as close of a cultural match. Also in some states, an associates' degree in nursing was established in many junior or community colleges. A person could become a registered nurse after completing two years of college and passing the state nursing exam. Two thoughts come to mind about this. When I was in my nursing program, people from the Navy coming back from Vietnam who were trained as medics asked the state of California if they could challenge the state board exam (in nursing) and if they passed, would then be registered nurses; with only their military/war time experience as their education. The state of California said an unequivocal NO. The board cited lack of professionalism, lack of formal classes in anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathophysiology and the specialties of nursing. However, along with changing times, the state board exams went to computerized testing. The idea, of course is very rational, but the way the exam is set up is not. The test automatically stops when the minimum numbers of questions required are answered. This says to me, nurses now have the minimum level of education and ability. Angrist and Guryan (2004) stated that the certifying tests for teachers "favored" those who had a four year education in teaching (p.242). One has to read that statement several times to believe it. Of course the tests would favor those with a degree in education, why would it not?

When I began exploring the idea of alternate certification within the teachers' profession, I see a cascading downward as I feel nursing has done. This past September (2012), the paper from the board of nurse examiners in my state reported that in this state, 61% of nursing school accredited by the state were two year schools. They also reported

that over 50% of all nurses in the state held an associates' degree only. The associates' degree nurses are predominant in rural communities and make up most of minority nurses. The nursing has spent over 50 years debating the associates' degree versus the baccalaureate degree with no resolution. There are states where associate degrees are not offered nor hired. The American Association of Community Colleges (2011) reported that the pay difference between the two degree holders is little to none. Presently the only groups to recognize a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) is are the military services. The Army, Air Force and Marines (considered Navy officers) all require a BSN to be on active duty. The Army and Navy Reserves will accept associate degreed nurses as officers. The Air Force will not. Where have the professionalism and strides made during the 1960s and 70s gone? Is the two year part of our society's hurry and get everything quickly even at the expense of quality. About a decade ago, The American Association for Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) lowered the standard for admission into Nurse Anesthesia programs to alleviate the standard. Now there is talk of upping the standard to back where it was over a decade ago. What do you do with all the graduates from the lowered standard generation? A case in point would be what happened at the facility where I am employed. While I was on a seven day vacation, a Nurse Anesthetist was hired and let go. This was all in the span of just over a week. The reaction of everyone who came in contact with her was negative. The big question is then, what are the years she attended nurse anesthesia school? The same time as the standard had been lowered? I wondered. Along the same line/question, if education continues to glorify the alternate certificate programs, how will education improve? How can the field of education and the profession of teaching hope to improve? An example of this is found in Table 6 which follows:

Table 6

*Education Versus Nursing*

Education	Nursing
1700s Males teaching Interim step to another profession	1800s Formal nursing education in England and the US
1800s Hire females at one third the pay	Hospitals really alms for the poor and sick
1900s Reformation- business model NEA and AFT active in getting better pay, benefits, job security	1900s Nursing education on diploma level associated with hospitals
1990s TFA less qualified teachers	1948 Suggested moving to universities 1960s-1970s Bachelor of Nursing programs grow
2000s NCLB, mandates, attrition addressed, accountability stressed	1980s Nursing shortage. Outside recruitment. Associates' degrees started
2012 Closing the gap still not attained. Alternate certificate programs expand	2012 61% Texas schools of nursing two years only. 50% nurses educated to associates' degree

If legislation and legislators would just read the titles of articles being written by educators regarding the standardized testing and using uncertified teachers, they might begin to see where changes need to be made. Titles such as *Nailing Jell-O to the Wall* (Wright, 2000), *No Teacher Left Behind* (Friel, 2004), *Testing the Joy Out of Learning* (Nichols & Berliner, 2008), *What Happened to Recess* and *Why are our children struggling with Kindergarten?* (Ohanian, 2002) including the chapter Standardized testing: Separating the wheat children from chaff children. What I see when reading these is somehow, those who write the mandates, are not paying attention to what experts are saying. Berliner's (1996) *Nowadays, Even the Illiterates Read and Write*, and Craig's (2004) *The Dragon in the School Backyards* are two more I feel that say a lot about schools just within the title. All these should send a signal to someone in administration, state legislators or even up to the Federal level a message. The titles are eye catching and somewhat amusing; the content is not. Berliner (2008) wrote "A Letter to The President"

in which he clearly outlined why some children are not successful in school. I do wonder if he actually sent it to the President because it so succinctly says that poverty, hunger, low birth weights are outside factors from education and must be addressed.

Clearly literature and research have proven or shown that unqualified teachers stay shorter times in the career and do not raise the scores of children on standardized testing. Students with the under qualified teachers do not have greater achievements. Schools that are poorer have lower test scores and larger numbers of unqualified teachers. These issues are what is needed, and to be addressed especially at the state level. *Teach For America* may have good intentions but those who have worked closely with the program have good ideas for change. One such suggestion is to take the money spent on recruitment and expansion and align the program to a university. Additionally, TFA recruits should have a yearlong ‘residency’ with a veteran teacher before being submitted to a classroom alone (Hopkins, 2008.)

Looking at the four pre-teacher or early career teachers Carol, Jennifer, Robin and Wanda, I find some of the problems leading to attrition surfacing in their personal and professional lives. Carol did finish her alternate certification program and successfully completed the state exam. She taught for about a year and a half and has remained at home with children. Despite her statement about “loving” teaching, she did not last long in the profession. Robin was in her fifth or sixth year of teaching when I started the initial contact. She is certified in two states and has taught in three different states. Unfortunately I have not been able to contact Robin any further, which suggests she may have already left the profession. Jennifer is in her seventh year of teaching. During her teaching career, Jennifer has married. She has also had a child, taking three months of family med-

ical leave to care for the child before returning to the classroom. As for Wanda, she has not finished the alternate certificate program in which she is enrolled. The program is a two-year program and Wanda is now in her fifth year of attempting to finish. Her lack of the ability to pass a math test is what she claims is holding her back. Wanda is the one who stated her mother advocated education by allowing her to do school work while the mother did all the life skills work, which may have disadvantaged her in other related ways.

Looking through the literature, there are many different reasons students choose to enter the teaching arena. Some reasons appear to sustain the student throughout their education while others do not. Schmidt and Knowles (1995) explored four beginning teachers who “failed”. One wanted to teach to overcome what she termed a “wimpy” personality (p.431). One beginning teacher tried so hard to please her mentor, she ended up annoying the mentor instead. When the backgrounds of the four were reviewed, none had been outstanding academically in either junior high school or high school. Not one wanted to teach to give back what she had been given. It is very similar to me when I interview prospective nurse anesthesia students and their main concern is salary. I really like to hear people choose nursing to help people or because they liked working with people. Without passing judgment, Wanda and Carol fit the statistics found in the literature except Wanda has not even begun to teach yet. In some ways, Wanda and Carol are on the way to becoming statistics. What I did find with this study is there are no predictors or patterns in family backgrounds for who would opt for an alternate certification program. It would appear that the decision is very individual and milieu has a shaping effect on that

decision. Also, my study is based on four participants and cannot be generalized to a larger population.

My ‘take home’ message to legislators is to look at how the nursing profession had a bell-shaped history, ending with education predominantly in two- year programs. Alternate certification programs should have common features so that citizens, educators and applicants know what the programs are all about. Progress should be aimed at reliving the causes of high attrition rates of qualified teachers which in turn should reduce the need for alternate certified teachers. Many of the reasons for attrition have been stated for a century in literature and yet they still remain rampant; reasons such as low pay, low professional esteem by the public, poor conditions, overcrowded schools and classrooms to name a few. Education needs to not follow in the footsteps of the nursing profession.

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