Traditional and Alternative Certification Programs and Their Effect on Elementary School Teachers’ Efficacy Beliefs in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

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This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate’s committee, has been accepted by the College of Graduate and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Date 06/03/2021

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Traditional and Alternative Certification Programs and Their Effect on Elementary School Teachers’ Efficacy Beliefs in Title I and Non-Title I Schools

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by
Rita Gale Sullivan
June 2021
Dedication

“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them.”

– Walt Disney.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Cody, and my two daughters, Emily and Claire. I am thankful for your support and encouragement given to me from the beginning to the end of my dissertation journey. During my most challenging times and sleepless nights, all of you believed in me and motivated me to never lose focus. For this, I celebrate you and this momentous accomplishment in my life.

To my mom and dad, Tommy and Sharon, and sister, Connie, this work is also dedicated to you. At times when there did not seem to be an end in sight, you provided me strength to persevere. Most of all, you listened. Throughout my life, you have always been there for me and showed me how to work hard to accomplish anything I wanted in life. Thank you!
Acknowledgments

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Abstract

School districts across the United States face the challenges of teacher shortages and rely heavily on alternative certification programs to fill teaching positions. Over the last decade, researchers question the quality of fast-track teacher preparation programs compared to traditional educational paths. This quantitative, causal-comparative study examined two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) and their impact on novice teacher self-efficacy levels in Title I and non-Title I schools. Elementary teachers with five years or less of experience, traditionally and alternatively certified, were asked 24 questions using the Likert-type Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale on student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. In this study, 201 teachers responded from two school districts in Northwest Louisiana. A one-way and two-way ANOVA and MANOVA were used to measure the interactions between alternative Title I, non-Title I schools and Traditional Title I, non-Title I teachers. The findings revealed that the type of teacher preparation program (alternative and traditional) did play a role in the self-efficacy subscale composite scores. In contrast, the type of school had no impact on a teacher’s ability in the classroom. Teachers in non-Title I schools who are alternatively and traditionally certified have higher levels of teacher-student engagement. Alternatively certified teachers tend to have high scores in the subscale instruction. The standard deviation on each of the subscales and the overall teacher self-efficacy score was larger for the alternative certified group than the traditional group.

Keywords: classroom management, novice teachers, highly qualified teacher, teacher education, teacher preparation programs (traditional and alternative), Title I/Non-Title I, self-efficacy
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Alternative certification programs (ACP) have grown in popularity to meet the demands of teaching positions across the United States (Snyder & Fisk, 2016). There is a public outcry for districts to employ highly effective teachers as defined by the state guidelines to meet the demands of the growing student population, which is achievable with alternative certification programs (Fox & Peters, 2013). Traditional education programs at four-year universities provide teachers the training they needed to enter the classroom (Mulvihill & Martin, 2019). In the last decade, fewer professionals are choosing to be a teacher, and more educators are leaving the profession, which has created a teacher shortage (Pazyura, 2015). Many factors contribute to teachers leaving the field of education, which include job satisfaction, feelings of incompetence, and burnout (Glazer, 2018). On the contrary, to help increase the number of professionals becoming educators, ACPs allow those interested with a bachelor’s degree to teach in grades PK-12 (Moffett & Davis, 2014). With the development of alternative certification path programs for non-education majors, programs feature an accelerated fast-track curriculum, decreasing teacher shortages (Consuegra et al., 2014; Moffett & Davis, 2014; Mulvihill & Martin, 2019).

Many researchers may argue that ACPs lack the pedagogy and cultural training teachers need to be successful in the classroom compared to the traditional education path teachers (Fox & Peters, 2013; Pazyura, 2015). For example, novice teachers who are alternatively certified usually gain employment in lower-performing schools classified as having significant achievement gaps. Typically, these schools are located in lower-socioeconomically disadvantaged areas and need additional funding from the federal government. Title I schools receive allocated federal funding if the number of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch is greater than 40% (U.S. Government, 2019). Non-Title I schools have some students
receiving free and reduced-price lunches, but they do not receive additional funding from the federal government (U.S. Government, 2019). Schools that meet specific criteria are labeled as Title I to help improve students’ academic success and close the achievement gap. The funding could provide tutoring programs, professional development training for teachers, additional faculty for decreased class sizes, and additional resources to help students thrive (Kainz, 2019).

The absence of adequate cultural training decreases new teacher’s self-efficacy, which directly affects their performance as a teacher (Bauml et al., 2016). According to Woolfolk and Hoy (1990), a teacher’s efficacy is “the teachers’ judgments of his or her ability to execute particular courses of action in the classroom” (p. 81). By understanding the self-efficacy of novice and veteran teachers’ years of experience in both traditional and alternative certification programs, leaders in the administration can implement professional development strategies to help all teachers. In return, teachers’ self-efficacy could increase while decreasing the teacher attrition rate (Glazer, 2018). Customarily, novice teachers enter the teaching profession in lower-socioeconomic schools (Bauml et al., 2016). Their perception of a classroom is drastically different than what they are experiencing in their first year of teaching (Abdullah et al., 2015). All teachers face challenges during their initial year, but in comparison, ACP teachers have more on the job training than traditional path students (Mulvihill & Martin, 2019).

Teachers in Title I schools face an additional challenge when streamlining instructional practices for students that come from poverty areas in their school district (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2014). In 2002, the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) under the Bush administration required school districts to prove that all teachers employed were considered as highly qualified for schools to receive Title I funding from the federal government. President Barack Obama signed the ESSA law in 2015 to replace NCLB,
which removed the need for districts to prove that all teachers hired were highly qualified to receive funding. Moreover, ESSA requires all teachers to meet licensure and state certification requirements (Adler-Greene, 2019). In addition to specific requirements for a teacher’s certification status, ESSA directs the district’s administration’s attention to lower-performing schools. Schools in high-poverty areas depend on Title I funding to provide students with valuable resources in the parish.

**Traditional Certification Programs**

With traditional certification programs, the completion of an undergraduate degree in education occurs at a four-year university. Notably, education majors in a traditional education path receive exposure to a vast amount of pedagogy and field experiences in classrooms to increase their preparedness to provide instruction to students (Salgado et al., 2018). Unlike elementary certifications that cover multiple content areas, secondary teachers choose a major in a specific content area such as math. For teachers to receive a teaching certificate, they complete their coursework and pass their required examinations. Future educators must pass the specified Praxis content area exam and the grade-level Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) to obtain a certification (Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE], 2019b). By design, the traditional certification programs allow college graduates to choose this path because they want to be teachers when they finish their four-year degrees.

**Alternative Certification Programs**

In the early 1980s, to meet the demands of a growing population, states across the United States implemented ACPs in Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to provide school districts full-time certified teachers (LDOE, n.d.; Pazyura, 2015). As determined by the LDOE (n.d.), college graduates with a four-year degree are qualified to apply for acceptance in an approved,
accelerated teacher preparation program. Many ACPs draw candidates entering the teaching profession as a second career who have never taken an education course (Moffett & Davis, 2014). Unlike the traditional path, candidates can immediately apply within the school districts for employment, once accepted in the program, and have received passing Praxis and PLT exam scores. Students take courses during the program based on their chosen content area and receive formal college supervisor evaluations to increase their skill level in the classroom (Thomas, 2018). Alternative certification programs help fill teaching positions in lower-performing (Title I) school districts with highly qualified educators.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem in public schools is that, despite current teacher instructional programs (traditional and alternative), many new educators are entering the profession ill-prepared and lack the experience in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Abdullah et al., 2015; Bauml et al., 2016). Research indicates a need to explore a teachers’ self-efficacy in ACPs in the subscale of classroom management, student engagement, and instructional practices needed for a successful classroom in Title I and non-Title I schools (Pazyura, 2015). Comparing the characteristics and self-efficacy of teachers who entered the teaching profession through alternative and traditional learning paths may have significant implications in regards to the teachers in the labor market (Pazyura, 2015). Statistically, ACP teachers are on the rise in the workforce, and traditionally trained teachers are on the decline (Mulvihill & Martin, 2019). The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2015-16 over 650,000 teachers currently employed in the United States went through an ACP. By understanding teachers’ needs in the classroom, administrators can prepare teachers for teaching in a diverse setting and improve student performance scores. Historically, the lack of teacher
preparation in a diverse class was not a concern but now is recognized as a growing problem in the United States (Bauml et al., 2016).

By understanding the teacher characteristics and level of teacher self-efficacy for alternatively certified and traditionally trained teachers, preparation programs and school administrators can provide an enriched curriculum targeted to meet teachers’ needs. Teachers will have the confidence and support they need to be successful in the classroom. If we do not study this problem, novice teachers will continue to enter the classroom without the skills required to lead a culturally diverse class.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the present study was to examine two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) and their impact on teacher self-efficacy levels. Moreover, it is vital to understand and address the underlying influence of the socioeconomic factors presented with the independent variables of Title I and non-Title I schools. Achievement gaps between the two types of schools (Title I and non-Title I) have existed for years (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Kainz, 2019). It is critical to narrow these gaps between Title I and non-Title I schools so all students have an equal opportunity for success.

Self-efficacy encompasses many feelings about teachers’ competence and abilities in the classroom (Bauml et al., 2016). Teachers must have the confidence to be successful with their teaching skills or decide to leave the profession. Glazer (2018) emphasized the importance of administration as a supportive resource to address low teacher self-efficacy. Changes begin with the administration as they implement new policies and education reform. Graduating teachers who receive a traditional education degree from a four-year university perceive themselves as having higher self-efficacy than teachers in alternative programs (Fox & Peters, 2013). All
invested community members, including teachers and students, are affected when experienced teachers leave the profession due to a lack of adequate training.

**Research Questions**

This quantitative, causal-comparative study answers the four hypotheses to determine how the independent variables, alternative and traditional, affect the self-efficacy of elementary public school teachers in grades PK-5. Furthermore, the study helped determine if the primary source of certification is consistent across a social-economic factor measured by school settings of Title I and non-Title I schools. The study examined the difference between the independent variables, teacher preparation programs (traditional and alternative), and the dependent variables self-efficacy subscale, (a) student engagement (b) instructional practices (c) classroom management. The research questions were as follows:

**RQ1:** Is there a significant difference in the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

**H1:** There is no significant difference in the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score.

**RQ2:** Is there a significant difference between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on teacher’s self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?
H₂: There is no significant difference between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on teacher’s self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

RQ₃: Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

H₃: There is no significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

RQ₄: Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?

H₄: There is no significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

Quantitative research is the most suitable method to quantify behaviors, attitudes, and opinions from a large sample. This format allows the researcher to confirm a hypothesis about a topic, answer closed-ended questions, and solve a research problem (Salkind, 2010).

Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the following terms help the reader with critical key terms defined as:
**Alternative certification programs.** The alternative certification programs were developed for non-education majors with a fast-track curriculum, shortened teacher preparation time, and to decrease teacher shortages (Consuegra et al., 2014; Moffett & Davis, 2014; Mulvihill & Martin, 2019). In Louisiana, candidates can apply for an ACP with a bachelor’s degree.

**Attrition.** Many districts focus on attrition when teachers leave the classroom, and monitor the increase to determine factors for their decision. Some teachers may stay in the district in another position but are no longer in the classroom (Glazer, 2018).

**Classroom management.** Early in the year, obtaining this strategy creates a safe classroom environment with well-planned lessons and teaching strategies to meet students’ learning needs (DeMathews et al., 2017; Koehler et al., 2013; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Teachers’ self-efficacy is affected by their classroom management skills.

**Diverse learners.** This group includes English learners and the language minority students who speak English only, but not the variety needed for complex texts (Fillmore & Fillmore, n.d.).

**Highly qualified.** For the consideration of highly qualified teachers, one must hold at least a bachelor’s degree from a four-year institution, hold full state certification, and demonstrate proficiency in their subject area (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

**Instructional practices.** Teachers are more willing to try state-of-the-art instructional practices when they have increased self-efficacy in their teaching ability and are satisfied with their methods (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

**Non-Title I School.** These schools show an enrollment of less than 40% of children from low-income families (U.S. Government, 2019).
Novice. Beginning teachers with less than three years of teaching experience and considered new to the profession are novice teachers (Abdullah et al., 2015).

Postbaccalaureate. The postbaccalaureate teacher preparation pathway in Louisiana is more suitable for individuals with at least a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree. Programs can provide a teaching certification for those interested in becoming an educator, especially for non-education graduates. Other educational program opportunities result in a Master’s degree (LDOE, n.d.).

Preservice preparation. The skills in which teacher candidates receive preparation in pedagogy, classroom management, and other tasks needed for a successful first year of teaching (Abdullah et al., 2015).

Student engagement. Classroom experiences filled with high expectations, and student involvement creates an engaging environment conducive for learning and promotes a higher self-efficacy in teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Teacher induction/mentoring. The support new teachers receive from mentors as they enter their first year of teaching to support their success (Curry et al., 2016).

Teacher self-efficacy. This term is a teacher’s judgment “of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of students engagement and learning” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

Title I School. Schools enrolling at least 40 percent of children from low-income families receive additional funding from the federal government (U.S. Government, 2019).

Traditional certification programs. Teachers who received a four-year bachelor with general education courses and one year of student teaching meet the requirements of a traditional
Teacher self-efficacy plays a vital role in the success of novice and veteran teachers’ instructional abilities. Teacher shortages across the United States forced school districts to find alternative means for teacher certifications (Pazyura, 2015). By understanding the difference in teacher preparation programs (traditional and alternative), school leaders can better equip teachers with the resources and support needed for their longevity. In return, students receive educational benefits with prepared teachers as they face the demands and challenges in a diverse classroom. The problem statement, the purpose of the study, and critical terms set a foundation for the literature review presented in Chapter 2.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The requirement to have highly qualified teachers in classrooms across the United States as mandated by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 is a growing problem (Salgado et al., 2018). School districts must depend on nontraditional methods of acquiring teachers to address teacher shortages, which directly affect student achievement in lower-performing schools. Typically, novice teachers gain employment in high-need schools where teacher attrition is more visible. In reality, attrition for novice and veteran teachers affects both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers (Goodwin et al., 2019; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Certification programs must provide teachers with induction programs, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to grow in their field to increase self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is measured based on the task, persistence, effort, and skill attainment (Bandura & Cervone, 1983; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). A valuable support team provides teachers the resources needed to overcome challenges and barriers in the classroom.

A thorough search helped obtain research on the efficacy of teachers completing a traditional or alternative certification program. This search included electronic database searches of Academic Search Premier, Proquest, JSTOR, and ERIC with the Abilene Christian University library. Keywords used in this search were teacher preparation programs, education, and efficacy combined with each of the following additional terms: alternative, traditional, urban schools, Title I, and novice teachers.

Theoretical Foundation

Educators spend the vast majority of their time as preservice teachers observing other teachers’ techniques to enhance their skills in the classroom and the unique behaviors of their students to better guide them in their learning journey. Self-regulated learning (SRL) is defined
as being motivationally, metacognitively, and behaviorally active participants in one’s learning journey (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). Furthermore, self-regulated learning is a feedback loop that monitors the effectiveness of learning, and the critical elements of the feedback are visible with instruction. Behavior theorist Bandura (1977, 2012) discussed self-regulated learning as an intricate part of the social cognitive theory. It serves as the foundation in which educators grow professionally in either certification program, traditional or alternative. Self-regulated learning strategies incorporated Bandura (1977) and Woolfolk and Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy survey in the subscale of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. Each subscale requires teachers to incorporate self-evaluation, self-observation, self-reaction, and self-efficacy because observing a particular behavior pattern is the first step to making positive changes (Bandura, 1991). According to Bandura, self-efficacy was a significant indicator predicting the quality of performance on tasks.

Preservice teachers face challenges in their adult career learning in a professional setting with constant changes to the curriculum, instructional strategies, and classroom management skills. Novice and veteran teachers spend countless hours with additional professional development training to enhance their knowledge of curriculum and technology to enhance their classroom experiences (Liu & Liao, 2019). The social cognitive theory examines the behaviors and beliefs of a teacher’s self-efficacy and the effects on student performances.

**Social Cognitive Theory**

According to Bandura’s (1977, 2012) social cognitive theory, a person can demonstrate control over their actions, but a shared connection exists between a person’s behavior, thoughts, and environment. Wood and Bandura (1989) defined self-efficacy as “To be successful, one not only must possess the required skills, but also a resilient self-belief in one’s capabilities to
exercise control over events to accomplish desired goals” (p. 364). Understanding a teacher’s self-efficacy plays a vital role in job performance and livelihood as an educator. Bandura (1977) incorporates self-efficacy beliefs in four sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal. Figure 1 represents the interpretation of created self-efficacy beliefs with experiences of observing others.

**Figure 1**

*Self-Efficacy Model Sources of Information*

![Diagram of self-efficacy model sources of information]

As Bandura described, performance accomplishments, successes increase higher expectations, while continual failures decrease them. Nevertheless, if the achievement of success is easy, people are undoubtedly dispirited by failure. Through self-reflection and human-like qualities, people can learn from their experiences, which is a fundamental concept represented in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). To gain a robust sense of efficacy, people must have experience in overcoming impediments through perseverance (Wood & Bandura, 1989). The actual effect on self-efficacy depends on the task difficulty, time invested, and support system. Bandura (2012) wrote,

Self-efficacy belief may also diverge from action because of genuine faulty self-appraisal. As noted above, however, in most of the sources of discordance, the problem is not the self-knowledge but rather the extraneous factors that distort the relation between self-belief of capability and action. (p. 11)

Vicarious experience is the second self-efficacy source. One can strengthen self-beliefs by others modeling ways to overcome challenging situations. Hence, successes are contagious and continual effort raises the observers’ capabilities (Bandura et al., 1977). For example, this is imminent in professional careers, including sports, education, and the medical field. Social comparison increases the expectations and judges their success with others. Bandura (1991) expressed concerns about the adverse effects of social comparison as being not only beneficial but also creates detrimental effects.

The third self-efficacy source is verbal persuasion. Motivating people with useful encouragement and giving them tasks to succeed decreases self-doubt (Bandura et al., 1977). Unlike vicarious experiences, the measure of self-improvement ensures progress towards personal development. By leading people to believe with a persuasive suggestion, they can
successfully cope with experiences that have overcome them in the past (Bandura et al., 1977). Verbal persuasion enables one to conquer mastery of a task.

Lastly, emotional arousal is the fourth source of efficacy beliefs. People rely heavily on their physiological state to measure their capabilities. By relieving stress levels and tension, the reduction of physical incapability decreases defensive behaviors (Bandura et al., 1977; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Eliminating high arousal causes individuals to feel more capable of acclimating to their situation.

In Figure 2, the triadic reciprocal determinism explains the psychosocial functioning within the social cognitive theory in terms of behavioral, environmental, and personal factors (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Various dynamics play a role in human behavior. The factors are not equal, and they do not coincide. In Bandura’s social cognitive theory of self-efficacy, a person will thrive in their environment with shaped aspirations and newly acquired confidence levels in their life.
Figure 2

*Bandura’s Triadic Reciprocal Determinism*

![Diagram of Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Determinism]


There is a relationship between self-efficacy and the social cognitive theory, as identified by researchers. Bandura (2012) is a leader in the social cognitive theory concept of identifying controlled behaviors for desired outcomes. With these behaviors, teachers’ job performance and effectiveness flourish with collaboration, interactions, and the environment (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019). Therefore, self-efficacy increases in all areas, including student engagement, instructional practices, classroom management. Goal attainments build self-efficacy for those who need motivation, so showing involvement in activities increases aspirations and satisfactions (Bandura, 1991).

**Traditional Certification Program**

A traditional certification path is for individuals that choose an undergraduate degree in education at a state-approved program in higher education. Traditionally certified teachers can
receive their educational training while earning a bachelor’s degree at an accredited university (Boyd et al., 2007; Shuls & Trivitt, 2015). Education majors take classes based on their selected grade level and content area. After completion of the degree, student teaching allows the candidate to receive a training semester by a certified teacher. As described in the alternative certification path, the last step in the certification process requires candidates to meet the Louisiana State Department of Education’s guidelines for the Praxis test scores in their field (LDOE, 2019b). Teacher candidates request a teaching certificate from the state by completing the application process.

Table 1 identifies newly hired teachers in Louisiana and their completion of traditionally and alternatively certification programs while identifying teachers in at-risk schools. By reviewing the numbers, a declining trend demonstrates fewer teachers are entering the field of education (LDOE, 2019a). The most significant trend recognized in the data is the increase in alternative certification programs and a decline in traditionally certified programs (LDOEa). On average, alternatively certified newly hired teachers are more likely to be employed in high-risk schools with a staggering number of 663 compared to 291 in traditional programs (LDOEa). At any rate, alternative certification programs help provide school districts in Louisiana with highly qualified classroom teachers.
Table 1

Traditional and Alternative Certified Teachers in Louisiana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers newly hired in Louisiana during 2016-17 to 2018-19</th>
<th>Teachers hired 2016-17</th>
<th>Teachers hired 2017-18</th>
<th>Teachers hired 2018-19</th>
<th>Teachers hired in CIR schools (greatest needs schools)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All newly hired teachers</td>
<td>5,669</td>
<td>5,763</td>
<td>5,910</td>
<td>10,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired from Undergraduate Programs**</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired from Postbaccalaureate Programs**</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Alternative Certification Programs

The recruitment of teachers in alternative certification programs is critical to close the teacher shortage gap. School districts must take a proactive approach to fill teaching positions of those leaving the profession for retirement and other career opportunities. According to the United States Department of Education (2016), previously, school districts across America employed uncertified teachers with increasing percentages depending on the grade level and classification as a high-poverty school. Popularity regarding ACPs has grown, allowing people to change their professional careers later in life. Lewis-Spector (2016) believed ACPs attract
individuals committed to longevity as a teacher as a fast-track certification path affecting thousands of schools and students across the country.

Moreover, programs dedicate resources to certify quality teacher candidates and promote more males to the field (Torres & Chu, 2016). This problem is more prominent in middle and high schools compared to elementary. Louisiana is one of four states, with over 5% of uncertified teachers in high-poverty schools. Approximately 15% of all schools in the United States had uncertified teachers in the classroom (United States Department of Education, 2016). Prospective teacher preparation programs are abundant across the United States for those considering entering the teaching profession. Alternative certification programs provide school districts additional candidates to fill teaching positions (Pazyura, 2015). More specifically, Table 2 identifies the ranking order of teacher certification preparation programs in Louisiana. The data reveal some programs offer both traditional and alternative certification programs, while iTeach Louisiana and The New Teacher Project provide teacher preparation alternatively.
Table 2

*Top Five Teacher Preparation Programs in Louisiana 2018-19*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Highest sending preparation program</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Post baccalaureate</th>
<th>Most frequent certification areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>iTeach Louisiana</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>Grades 1-5, English/Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Southeastern Louisiana University</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Grades 1-5, PK-3, Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The New Teacher Project</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>Grades 1-5, English, Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>University of Louisiana at Lafayette</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Grades 1-5, PK-3, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Northwestern State University</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>Grades 1-5, English, Special Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To address a shortage of teachers in school districts, potential teaching candidates have a variety of options in the state of Louisiana when choosing an alternative certification program. According to the LDOE (n.d.), an alternate teaching preparation program guides non-education graduates to teacher certification. All ACP programs require future candidates to have at least a bachelor’s degree. Professionals and college graduates have three options to pursue a career in teaching:
• The Practitioner Teacher Licensure Program (PTL) is a streamlined certification path that combines intensive coursework and full-time classroom teaching (LDOE, 2019b).

• The Master’s Degree Program- results in a master’s degree as well as certification (LDOE, n.d.).

• The Certification-Only Program is for individuals who do not want to participate full-time or pursue a master’s degree through alternative paths to certification (LDOE, n.d.).

• After choosing a path, candidates must select a university and apply for the alternative certification program. Each university clearly defines the criteria and selection process for candidates to be accepted into the program. Based on the chosen content area and grade level, teachers must have passing Praxis test examine scores for the certification process (LDOE, 2019b). Unlike traditional programs, most alternative certification programs allow individuals to begin teaching as they complete their coursework.

Figure 3 represents a projected growth of eight percent of teachers needed from 2015 through 2027. Districts across the nation feel the urgency to promote ACPs to accommodate the student population in public and private education.
Figure 3

*Projected Increase of Teachers Needed 2002-2027*

![Graph showing projected increase of teachers needed 2002-2027](image)


**Title I Schools**

Schools enrolling at least 40 percent of children from low-income families are considered Title I and receive additional funding from the federal government (U.S. Government, 2019). Economically disadvantaged students have attended schools that received Title I funding since 1965 to improve educational outcomes and reduce achievement gaps in lower-performing districts (Kainz, 2019). Typically, additional funding helps school districts provide professional development training for teachers, instructional resources, and reduced class sizes. According to the Kids Count Data Center (2018), 286,530 children live in poverty. This number represents any children under the age of 18 living with families with income below the federal poverty
requirements. Furthermore, the Northwest Louisiana Parish has 6,280 children in poverty below the Federal poverty threshold (Kids Count Data Center, 2018). In one study, Kainz (2019) found that higher minority schools demonstrated more significant reading gains with smaller class sizes. Furthermore, African Americans and Latinos in high poverty increased mathematic scores with the allocation of funds to professional development. The effective use of Title I funding could help increase professional development opportunities and self-efficacy for teachers in lower-performing schools.

**Gaps in Teacher Preparedness**

Administrators must analyze how to maximize their training curriculum to best prepare educators to enter a diverse classroom. According to Bauml et al. (2016), teachers must be competent in pedagogy and classroom management to provide a productive, engaging learning environment. Alternative certification programs operate in institutions of higher education (IHEs) and most likely have a different office and facility offered for the traditional program (Lewis-Spector, 2016). Departmentally, alternatively certified preservice teachers are trained within a different framework when compared to traditional programs. Teaching literacy requirements for all teacher preparation programs, both traditional and alternative providers, must be adequate to guarantee that candidates are well-rounded in many instructional practices for literacy development and can model them for their students (Lewis-Spector, 2016). Pedagogy is affected by the lack of resources, which becomes the responsibility of administrators when ACPs fail the preservice teacher. Furthermore, administrators feel overwhelmed in providing mentoring and the additional responsibilities to close the gap in preparedness (DeMatthews et al., 2017).
To help provide additional support in the curriculum for students, teachers can incorporate differentiated instruction, cultural integration, and scaffolding of grade-level material (Bauml et al., 2016). Teachers are expected to set a foundation for learning and have the resources to help students (Bauml et al., 2016). Also, ACPs lack exposure to lived experiences in the classroom, and field observations which help prepare teachers for the diversity in urban schools (Abdullah et al., 2015; Bauml et al., 2016; DeMatthews et al., 2017; White, 2017).

Highly qualified and well-trained teachers will demonstrate their skills not only in pedagogy but also in classroom management. Pazyura (2015) determined ACPs should strive to reach high academic standards in the curriculum and to increase the number of possible candidates for school districts to employ. According to Bowling and Ball (2018), one of the most significant irregularities across the nation with alternative pathways is the duration and the required coursework to be certified. Preparation programs need to be more consistent in their curriculum and understand the strengths and weaknesses of their candidates wishing to enter the preparation program. The central idea of ACPs manifested with the notion that specialists in other workforces can become effective teachers (Pazyura, 2015).

Suell and Piotrowski (2006) determined there were no differences between the alternatively certified preservice teachers’ perceptions in the training they received, and the level of preparedness candidates felt to enter the classroom as first-year teachers in Florida. In contrast, Torres and Chu (2016) found those enrolled in an alternative certification program, Teach for America (TFA), were less satisfied with the instruction at a graduate level compared to traditional certification programs. In either case, preparation programs must work closely with school administrators to develop coursework and field experiences to provide preservice teachers
the confidence for a successful first year. Curriculum administrators must provide preservice teachers with the skills needed in teacher preparation programs, both alternative and traditional.

Multiple studies recognized the need for “student teaching” or field-based experiences to provide classroom management skills and impacted the self-efficacy of teachers within the data (Fox & Peters, 2013; Koehler et al., 2013; Lewis-Spector, 2016; Salgado et al., 2018). Teachers who struggle with classroom management skills find difficulty with student engagement and instructional practices. A simulation created by researcher Pankowski and Walker (2015) challenged classroom management skills for novice teachers: dealing with non-compliance and motivating students to learn. While the purpose of alternatively and traditionally certification programs is to prepare novice teachers with the knowledge, talents, and temperaments needed to deliver excellence in performance, the goal is to make the preparation as operational, proficient as possible (Pankowski & Walker, 2015).

By closing these gaps in traditionally and alternatively teacher preparedness programs, educators successfully begin their careers as teachers, especially in a culturally diverse environment. Bauml et al.’s (2016) qualitative study indicated exposure to a culturally diverse high school better adapted urban school teachers. As a result, teachers in an urban setting have a sense of confidence in entering a diverse environment. Also, one participant in the study identified classroom management as a critical skill of an urban teacher to handle discipline problems. Leaders must provide support with resources, mentoring options, and additional professional development training to strengthen teachers’ classroom skills. To close the gaps, leaders in the education field must not only provide the training but carefully selected meaningful skills to increase their confidence as a teacher. The emotional well-being of the
classroom teacher provides an environment conducive for growing not only a teacher’s self-efficacy but also the student’s self-efficacy (Smith & Shouppe, 2018).

Teacher Attrition

Educators leave the teaching profession due to employee burnout from a forced curriculum, underestimated salary of worth, and mandated standardized testing (Glazer, 2018). Attrition leads school districts to rely on alternative certification programs to decrease teacher shortages. Researchers tend to relate the terminology attrition to novice teachers. However, veteran teachers add to the percentage of educators leaving the profession before retirement age (Glazer, 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teacher attrition costs school districts a substantial amount of funding, so the allocation of funds for other resources is more beneficial for students. The professional development expenses and time principals spend on growing the teachers’ knowledge past the first year, contribute to the cost. To help decrease the growing problem of attrition, teacher preparation programs, and leaders at the school level must provide hands-on support to all teachers, both novice and veteran.

A teacher’s self-efficacy plays a vital role in their role as an educator. There is a need to understand the gaps in preparation programs to equip teachers better as they enter the classroom (Glazer, 2018). A higher level of self-efficacy will be visible if a teacher has the confidence and resources needed for student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Wang et al., 2015). Furthermore, the study acknowledged teachers’ benefits by using their controllable self-efficacy for motivating students and regulating quitting intentions (Wang et al., 2015). By increasing a teacher’s self-efficacy, the residual effect can only help decreases attrition as educators decide to remain in the profession.
The first five years of a teacher’s career profoundly impact their self-efficacy, while initial mentoring opportunities decrease the attrition rate (Renbarger & Davis, 2019). Several factors contribute to teacher attrition, which includes the lack of job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Perera et al., 2018). Although these factors can affect both novice and veteran teachers, novice teachers need additional support in their early years. Research indicates teacher attrition affects not only a teacher’s performance but also the skill set of students (Frazier et al., 2019). Novice teachers are the most vulnerable to have challenges in the classroom and depend on job satisfaction, mentorship programs, and self-efficacy to decrease teacher shortages across the United States (Renbarger & Davis, 2019).

The data with the Louisiana Department of Education (2019c) teacher exit survey reported in 2017-18 academic school year teachers leaving the classroom decreased from 11% to 10%. In Table 3, all 69 school districts completed data on the number of teachers leaving the classroom compared to the total employed workforce. These numbers included three top reasons for departure, which include personal circumstances, retirement, or accepted a teaching or leadership position within Louisiana. Teacher attrition hinders school progress, and increases missed opportunities in building relationships with students in lower-performing schools. These students need the consistency of familiar faces in their school.
### Table 3

**Louisiana’s Teacher Workforce 2015-16 to 2017-18 (Teachers Exiting Classroom)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of teachers exiting classroom*</th>
<th>Total teacher workforce*</th>
<th>% of teacher workforce exiting from classroom*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>5,431</td>
<td>50,485</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>5,680</td>
<td>50,555</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>5,301</td>
<td>51,106</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes total teachers in public schools departing. From 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 there was a one percent increase in the retention of Louisiana’s educator workforce. During this time, fewer teachers accepted a teaching or leadership position in another state. At the same time, more teachers accepted teaching or leadership positions within the state. This data includes teachers who accepted leadership positions within the same district and those who accepted teaching or leadership positions in the state. From “Teacher Exit Survey Report,” by the Louisiana Department of Education, 2019 (https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2017-2018-teacher-exit-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=44fd9c1f_5). Copyright 2018 by the Louisiana Department of Education. Reprinted with permission.

### Job Satisfaction

Teaching is a rewarding profession, but several working conditions hinder job satisfaction, including class size, teaching resources and training, testing, and lack of administrator support (Green & Munoz, 2016). By examining teacher preparation programs, researchers can determine their effect on teachers’ self-efficacy and removing the workplace environment affecting job satisfaction, which will improve student achievements. Approachable and supportive school principals, indirectly and directly contribute to a teacher’s job satisfaction (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). Unfortunately, teachers with low job satisfaction tend to leave the...
teaching profession, adding to the turnover problem in urban schools. Teachers with an increased level of self-efficacy may create their happiness at work by shaping their work environment to fit them better and satisfy their needs. Furthermore, Judge et al. (1997) theorized that employees with high self-efficacy will be more effective and satisfied at work. Further, teachers can create an enjoyable environment to increase their self-efficacy (Ozyilmaz et al., 2018).

Teachers face the daunting task of supporting the emotional needs of students in the classroom. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect a students’ behavioral, emotional, and cognitive development along with their ability to function at a school (Post et al., 2020). Students in a dysfunctional home find stability with teachers by building relationships. With these interactions, educators can feel burnout and emotional exhaustion due to the lack of adequate training (Post et al., 2020). At times, it is difficult to predict which effective strategies help because every student is unique and requires different methods to meet their needs. Erichsen and Reynolds (2020) focused on the teacher’s accountability pressures and emotional needs which contribute to low teacher morale and a higher turnover rate. Moreover, the study revealed that the factors of professional culture, job stress, and teacher collaboration greatly influences teacher morale. The administration must provide adequate training to meet the emotional needs of not only students but also teachers.

Lindqvist and Nordanger (2016) pointed out that many of the schools with increased attrition are lower socioeconomically disadvantaged schools, and teachers that leave have not mastered the art of teaching. School administration should look at deficiencies in the preparedness programs to understand what skills teachers lacked, causing them to leave the profession. In Table 4, the Louisiana Department of Education data demonstrates a percentage of
teachers who left the classroom based on their years of public school experience 2015-18.

Teachers with 2-5 years of teaching experience are more likely to leave the profession.

Table 4

Number of Years of Public School Experience of Departing Teachers in Louisiana (2015-2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year or less</td>
<td>2,061</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 years</td>
<td>5,110</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>2,905</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>1,595</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td>3,334</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are several indicators of dissatisfaction by teachers in education. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy subscale focuses on student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). To be an effective teacher, one must be strong in all three subscale areas. If students are not engaged, there is a lack of training in instructional practices. In return, the lack of these skills leads to classroom management issues and affects the delivery of the curriculum and student engagement (Shoulders & Krei, 2015).

According to Green and Munoz (2016), psychological job withdrawals consist of missing meetings, extended breaks, while the other is behavioral job withdrawals, which included absenteeism turnover and retirement. High levels of turnover affect educational reform in high-
need schools. Although teacher retirements added to the present deficit of school teachers, job dissatisfaction of variables inside the classroom accounted for more teacher turnover (Green & Munoz, 2016; Martin et al., 2012).

**Teacher Efficacy**

Self-efficacy encompasses many feelings about a teachers’ competency and own abilities in the classroom. The Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale helps teachers identify three main areas of their efficacy in the classroom. These subscales include student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. Cognitive attention to curriculum delivery, the limit of disruption, and the degree to which the students participate in a learning activity affect teachers’ efficacy (Lekwa et al., 2019).

**Student Engagement**

Researchers affirm teacher effectiveness as being directly related to students’ engagement in the classroom (Gage et al., 2018; Shoulders & Krei, 2015). Productive classroom practices include decreasing disruptions and an abundance of resources to provide the best education possible for all students. Lekwa et al. (2019) findings indicated the use of evidence-based instructional strategies and behavior management yielded an increased level of student engagement. Furthermore, Gage et al.’s (2018) findings revealed when teachers have low rates of interaction and classroom management practices, students were less engaged.

**Instructional Practices**

Teachers depend on instructional practices to develop students’ academic skills and knowledge (Lekwa et al., 2019). By building relationships with students and establishing guidelines, it is equally important to know the learning. The practices teachers implement impact student engagement and social behavior (Lekwa et al., 2019). Teacher preparedness and the
ability to lead a classroom directly affect teacher efficacy. Student learning depends substantially on how instruction is delivered and the degree of student attention and participation in learning activities (Lekwa et al., 2019).

Classroom Management

Effective classroom management skills are not only learned in teacher preparation programs but also gained through clinical experiences (Davis, 2015). Novice and veteran teachers incorporate classroom management skills in their daily routines and procedures for successful transitions between learning activities. In a recent study, Liu and Liao’s (2019) job-embedded professional development and mentoring had the most significant impact on a teacher’s classroom management skills and directly related to increasing a teacher’s overall efficacy. Korpershoek et al. (2016) reported results of the meta-analysis to confirm the finding of generally positive effects of classroom management interventions on student outcomes in primary education. For example, they found statistically significant results that effective classroom management reduces problem behavior and increases academic achievement. Students exposed to poor classroom managers and low teacher interactions demonstrate lower engagement levels affect their learning environment (Gage et al., 2018). Specifically, the results of this study concluded that teachers’ student engagement and classroom management are linked.

According to Aldridge and Fraser (2016), the self-efficacy scale measures the extent to which educators have confidence in their ability to be effective educators in challenging situations. Teachers and students must have the confidence to succeed in the school to bring favorable outcomes (Bauml et al., 2016). Findings from this study suggest future teachers share concerns in regards to urban teaching and their effectiveness in the classroom (Bauml et al.,
Well-organized and trained prospective teachers meet the academic demands in urban schools.

Novice teachers often obtain employment in lower-performing schools and struggle in their first year. The job of the educational leader to promote academic learning by eliminating the segregation of students based on their academic level and putting the heavy responsibility on new teachers (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Wasserberg, 2014). DeMatthews et al. further concluded that principal preparation programs must support leaders to support the students with fairness in their discipline skills to create a culture of learning. Discipline should not be guided on stereotype threat effects in urban schools because these actions only lead to student anxiety (Wasserberg, 2014). The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy subscale of classroom management is prominently affected by discipline decisions in a school.

The community that surrounds the school, which includes parents, local businesses, teachers, and students, depends on the administration to create a school climate for academic excellence. Although most research is predominantly teacher-based, student perceptions affect a teacher’s self-efficacy (Miller et al., 2017). The researchers looked at a student’s understanding of the teacher and how it affected a teacher’s self-efficacy. To help with a teachers’ self-efficacy, district-level supervisors and administrators should focus on ways to boost morale, inspire, and motivate teachers. Kind words and verbal accolades help remind teachers that their hard work is not going unnoticed. Naturally, instead of always telling teachers where they can improve, it is time to positively communicate their successes and increase their self-efficacy. Teachers need the confidence and the ability to locate resources to enhance student’s performances on standardized testing in a K-12 background.
Millennial Generation Impact on Teaching

According to Castro (2010), the millennial generation of preservice teachers was born after 1985. Millennial generation educators entering the teaching profession possess new technology and cultural adaptation skills compared to teachers of the past. This group provides a vast amount of experience based on their knowledge of high-stakes testing, technology skills, and exposure to cultural diversity as a norm (Bauml et al., 2016). Even with the additional skills, teaching in an urban classroom environment requires more to be an effective educator. Hence, their adaptability to perform and transition to a high-tech classroom heightens their self-efficacy.

Others view millennials entering the field of education as a new way for preservice teachers to change perceptions of teaching in a diverse classroom. Castro’s (2010) study focused on millennial preservice teachers and their ability to adjust to diverse classrooms. With a synthesis of the literature, he looked at their views on multicultural classrooms and the trend in their acceptance and appreciation for teaching in culturally diverse environments. The author noted the addition of intercultural friendships, activities, and experiences contributed to the millennial generation. Makinen et al. (2018) referred to the “generation gap” as differences in beliefs, values, and other social norms. For example, in education, there will always be a gap between students and teachers based on age. Furthermore, millennials have a different outlook on education, work habits, and values.

Student Efficacy

A conducive learning environment improves not only teacher efficacy but also student efficacy. As mentioned with teacher efficacy, the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy subscales with student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management help students achieve academic goals. Each subscale involves the students, which reiterates the need for prepared
teachers entering the classroom. Helping support the efficacy of teachers creates positive outcomes and builds relationships between teachers and students (Shoulders & Krei, 2015). Teachers must acquire the skills needed in their educational path, alternative and traditional, to meet students’ needs. Without quality teaching in all three areas, students’ self-efficacy will suffer, and student achievement will decline (Olivier et al., 2019). More specifically, students achieving a higher self-efficacy in their current grade level will create a ripple effect of success in future grade levels.

Students’ level of self-efficacy impacts the teacher’s efficacy concerning student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. Schools with remedial classes are a perfect example of the wrong way to increase a student’s academic ability, which inadvertently causes low self-efficacy and higher anxiety (Wasserberg, 2014). Promoting African-American racial identity as a cultural advantage allows students to connect to their ethnic group to increase motivation and positive values (Byrd & Chavous, 2011). Students want to have a sense of belonging to their culture and show pride in their heritage.

**Challenges and Barriers in the Classroom**

Teaching in a diverse environment brings challenges to the classroom that some teachers may not have been exposed to in their instructional classes to become a teacher. Having strong leadership and support will help new teachers through their first year, but all teachers are proactive learners in their teaching journey. Redding and Smith’s (2019) findings suggest that schools and districts must include support for individuals completing ACPs, and most candidates receive most of their training once they begin teaching. Results from the study showed there was a difference in the level of preparedness reported by first-year alternatively certified teachers compared to traditionally certified teachers. Novice teachers will benefit from on-site mentoring.
programs, extra class assistance, and professional development. According to Liu and Liao (2019), the data from the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) indicated there was an increase in efficacy for teacher instruction and student engagement for those teachers that frequently invested time for service training and school visits. More specifically, the authors gave attention to professional development concerning the practice of format, content, quality, and duration (Liu & Liao, 2019). For example, school administrators’ implementation for professional development needs to be well-structured, cater to the teachers’ needs, and decide what training will have the most impact on the teachers’ classroom practices.

Another way for teachers to enhance efficacy is through formal and informal observations by administrators which provide valuable feedback for new teachers to improve their classroom management and instruction skills. The school administration is responsible for communicating with district-level supervisors about the resources needed for their staff (Bauml et al., 2016). Although teachers are the front-line staff interacting with students, they need additional help and guidance from who also was a first-year teacher. According to Bauml et al. (2016), teachers face the challenges of being trusted by the students, demonstrating credibility, and being able to relate to students. It is human nature to want to be accepted, which would be no different in the classroom. Students want to know that their teacher cares about them while providing mutual respect.

Low socioeconomic student performance is affected by stereotype labels about their abilities, which creates an educational barrier following them throughout their school career (Wasserberg, 2014). Administration and teachers must strive to change these notions and give students the confidence needed to excel. Teacher preparation programs (traditional, alternative) must incorporate a redesign of culturally responsive pedagogy to address the pitfalls of teachers
across the United States (Zion & Sobel, 2014). The revision of education programs helps remove the barriers of teaching in a diverse environment. White (2017) suggested that educators see children beyond stereotypes and set high expectations in and out of the classroom. On the other hand, diversity in the public school system is viewed based on race and socioeconomic status (Abdullah et al., 2015). Students must have goals set and have reminders of how important it is to meet a teacher’s expectations.

The elimination of a stereotype mentality begins with college mentors, positive school role models, and with a brief writing assignment promoting self-worth (Wasserberg, 2014). Some students do not have a positive role model in their life, and this is an opportunity to communicate weekly with someone that inspires them. Perceptions by teachers entering the profession label students in urban schools as having behavior problems, growing unruly with age, lacking parental support, and coming from a dysfunctional family, but this could change by getting to know students and their backgrounds (Bauml et al., 2016; Byrd & Chavous, 2011). Each student is unique and has a story to tell to whoever will listen. Teachers must identify the strengths and talents of their students and celebrate their accomplishments. Therefore, the relationship between teacher and student is enhanced to promote self-efficacy for the teacher and student.

Summary

Students across the United States deserve highly qualified teachers to prepare them for their next grade and future workforce. Uncertified teachers lack the content training, pedagogy, and classroom management skills needed to provide a safe learning environment (Abdullah et al., 2015). Alternatively and traditionally certification programs help close the gap of uncertified teachers in all grade and content levels (Salgado et al., 2018). Louisiana’s higher education
institutions provide the curriculum and skills needed to immediately fill classroom teaching positions in high-poverty areas with 29 alternative certification programs (LDOE, n.d.). Within the alternative certification programs, school leaders must provide the resources teachers need to provide them the confidence for success. Teacher self-efficacy plays a vital role in the success of novice and veteran teachers’ instructional abilities. The research and literature helped set a foundation for a quantitative methodology approach in Chapter 3.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of the study was to examine two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) as independent variables and their impact on teacher self-efficacy levels. Moreover, it is vital to understand and address the underlying influence of the socioeconomic factors presented with the independent variables of Title I and non-Title I schools. This chapter outlines the overall research design for this study, the setting, population, sampling technique, instruments, data analysis method, and chapter summary. Discussions include research assumptions, study limitations, and delimitations.

Research Design

A causal-comparative research design analyzes traditional and alternative certification programs and their effect on teacher’s self-efficacy. This method was chosen for the present study because the treatment is non-manipulated (Salkind, 2010). In other words, participants predetermine group membership (traditional and alternative). Causal-comparative research for the study answers the four hypotheses to determine how the independent variables, alternative and traditional, affect the self-efficacy of elementary public school teachers in grades PK-5. Furthermore, the study determines if the primary source of certification is consistent across a social-economic factor measured by school settings of Title I and non-Title I schools. Understanding the interactions between the different variables (factors) helps determine the true impact of the main effect, source of certification, and its effect on teachers’ self-efficacy scores (Field, 2018).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study explored four research questions and hypotheses.
**RQ1:** Is there a significant difference in the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

H1: There is no significant difference in the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score.

**RQ2:** Is there a significant difference between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on teacher’s self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?

H2: There is no significant difference between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on teacher’s self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

**RQ3:** Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

H3: There is no significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?
RQ4: Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?

H4: There is no significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

Setting

This study included teachers from two school districts located in Northwest Louisiana. Each school district serves elementary, middle, and high school students, but the main focus for this study is elementary teachers grades PK-5. To eliminate the possibility of confounding variables, middle and high school teachers were not in the data. Secondary grade levels are content-specific. Additionally, the combination of schools includes urban, suburban, and rural. Educators in the school district teach in an environment categorized as departmentalized, self-contained, special education, or inclusion classes. Approximately 40,000 students attend both school districts.

Population

The population for this study was full-time grades PK-5 public school teachers in two school districts in Title I and non-Title I schools. All participants considered must hold a teaching certificate and have received their training through a traditional or alternative certification path. By including two school districts, a larger population size provides an ample sample size for the survey data collection. Participants’ data are kept anonymous and categorized as de-identified data.
Sample

A convenience sampling method was best for this educational study because of the time restrictions in which I had access to potential participants (Muijs, 2011). Participants completed the survey voluntarily. Also, since convenience sampling contains biases, to adjust for weaknesses, there were random sampling techniques taken from the convenience sampling used for more of an accurate estimation (Field, 2018). However, in the present study, random sampling was not possible due to the small sample size and limited responses. There were several procedures in place to increase the number of respondents. Each district’s contact sent an initial email to elementary principals informing them of the research. Then, as the researcher, I sent an email with notes to the principal and teacher for participation. To increase participation, two weeks later, a follow-up personalized email to each principal helped achieve numbers, but not to the extent needed to perform a random sampling. Technological advances allow data collection to happen by sending a survey link to elementary school teachers in two school districts. Teachers received these links via their school email addresses with the approval of each districts’ superintendent. For the participants, no identifiers were collected through demographic data.

Furthermore, the identity of the participants was kept anonymous. A calculated power analysis determined the most favorable sample size to secure ample power is \( N = 331 \). This number includes 15% for attrition purposes. Due to several circumstances in the school system during a pandemic, the actual number of respondents was \( N = 201 \). Again, several measures were put into action to secure more participants. Quantitative research is the most suitable study method to quantify behaviors, attitudes, and opinions from a large sample. This format allows the researcher to confirm a hypothesis about a topic, answer closed-ended questions, and solve
the proposed research questions. Surveyed teachers with five years or less of experience will count towards the study sample to control the confounding variable length of service. This sample of teachers is at the greatest risk of dropping out of the teaching profession due to self-efficacy issues (Gold, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Assumptions

The assumptions for the present study included the following:

1. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) survey optimizes validity and is a valuable instrument for measuring a teachers’ efficacy with student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.
2. A positive relationship between administration and teachers increases their self-efficacy subscales of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.
3. Participants answered the survey questions with integrity and honesty.
4. The dependent variable maintains normal distribution along with the subscales.
5. For the convenience sampling method, at least 30 participants assumed normal distribution in each group.
6. Random sampling was used through SPSS to reduce bias in the convenience sampling.

Limitations

The following limitations are pertinent in the generalization of the data collected:

1. Teachers may not give a considerable amount of time to each question or fail to answer a question, so their exclusion from the study will occur.
2. The sample size of traditionally or alternatively trained teachers could be more substantial than the other group.
3. Geographically, data collection will occur with two school districts in Northwest Louisiana, leaving out a comparison of other districts in the state.

4. A cross-sectional study will not provide as much information as a longitudinal study. Teachers face various stresses as the year progresses.

5. First, self-reported data and the timing of the survey distribution could play a significant role in how the questions are answered based on teacher responsibilities at the end of the school year.

Delimitations

The study has four delimitations. First, participants included in the survey are certified teachers in public elementary schools grades PK-5. Second, the participants’ educational path is with a traditional or alternative certification program. The final delimitation was the data collection process sent as an email to participants in an electronic survey format in two Northwest Louisiana school districts.

Research Design

The research design for this study was causal-comparative, using quantitative survey data. The analysis related to this method involves the use of a nominal measure along with some interval measures. A nominal measure classifies outcomes, while interval measures have an extensive range of possible outcomes. For this study, interval measures an outcome of data that visually represents a bell curve. Causal-Comparative research suggests that due to the nominal classification of some group of individuals, this will cause a bias or difference in the outcome measure. According to Salkind (2010), the definition of causal-comparative research is:

A causal-comparative design is a research design that seeks to find relationships between independent and dependent variables after an action or event has already occurred. The
researcher’s goal is to determine whether the independent variable affected the outcome, or dependent variable, by comparing two or more groups of individuals. There are similarities and differences between causal-comparative research, also referred to as ex post facto research. (p. 125)

By using causal-comparative research, the four hypotheses help determine whether the independent variables certification type (alternative and traditional) and the setting (Title I and non-Title I) interactions affect the self-efficacy of elementary public school teachers in grades PK-5 (Field, 2018). This causal-comparative study examines how an independent variable affects a dependent variable (Muijs, 2011).

**Instruments**

The data collection instruments allowed a deeper understanding of the teachers’ self-efficacy with student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management, which are vital to the skills needed for a successful teacher. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) developed the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) to understand student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Appendix A). The scale analyzes the association between the independent variable, teacher preparation programs (traditional and alternative), and the dependent variables Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) subscales. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reviewed three previous self-efficacy measurement scales with researchers Bandura, Gibson and Dembo, and Rand to develop the instrument used in the TSES survey. After further review, the TSES modeled the Bandura measurement but extended the list of teacher capabilities (2001). For the TSES survey, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) believed teacher efficacy measurements need to tap teachers’ assessments of their abilities across their daily responsibilities. Based on the high reliabilities of the total scale
and three subscales, they were high, ranging from 0.95 to 0.98 for the long (24 items) survey (2001). According to Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s belief about the TSES,

It is superior to previous measures of teacher efficacy in that it has a unified and stable factor structure and assesses a broad range of capabilities that teachers consider important to good teaching, without being so specific as to render it useless for comparisons of teachers across contexts, levels, and subjects. (p. 802)

Table 5 describes the TSES reliability and validity reported in Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) study.

Table 5

*Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Reliability and Validity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Long Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSES</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6 shows the 24 items on the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale used to measure the efficacy beliefs of the teachers completing traditionally and alternatively certification paths. The
survey is brief with the most pertinent questions needed to answer the research questions. If the survey is too long, participants may lose interest and not complete it.

**Table 6**

*Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Subscale and Items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Practices</td>
<td>7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) asks teachers to assess their capability concerning student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The definition of terms is in Chapter 1. Adapted from “Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale,” by Anita Woolfolk Hoy, 2001 (https://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/). Copyright 2019 by Anita Woolfolk Hoy. Reprinted with permission.

A combination of questions was combined and imported into SurveyMonkey. The survey contained demographic questions and a 9-point Likert scale (1-2 = nothing, 3-4 = very little, 5-6 = some influence, 7-8 = quite a bit, 9 = a great deal). The questions explore teachers’ classroom management skills, student engagement, and instructional strategies. Each subscale is labeled as follows: Student Engagement (ESE) 1-8, Instructional Practices (EIP) 1-8, and Classroom Management Skills (ECM) 1-8. There are eight questions for each subscale allowing for 24 questions included in the survey. Table 6 describes the TSES reliability and validity reported in Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2001) study.

The data collected helps school districts in Northwest Louisiana identify the efficacy of teachers, curriculum, and professional development needs for traditionally and alternatively certified novice teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience. Each districts’
superintendent strives to maintain quality teachers with a focus on lower-performing schools. It is vital to compare the self-efficacy of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers and use the data to increase teacher efficacy levels to help provide the most effective curriculum in teacher preparation programs (Salgado et al., 2018). Woolfolk and Hoy’s (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale helps teachers become more effective in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

Data Collection

The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TESE) survey features three subscales to gauge a teacher’s efficacy on student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management skills. It was designed by Anita Woolfolk Hoy, as noted in Appendix B. All voluntary participants received an email with the link to the survey. The email included a letter explaining the study and their rights as a participant. The superintendent distributed the survey to the principals at each school (Appendix C). The letter consisted of a message to the principals requesting teachers to complete the survey during a designated time to ensure a successful submission rate. The principals sent an email to staff expressing their support for the study. With a web-based survey and consent, SurveyMonkey was used to gather data (Appendix D). This survey method allows for the creation of questions, the collection of responses, and the ability to analyze the data (Muijs, 2011). A follow-up email was sent to principals to increase the number of survey participants a week after the original email. After two weeks, the participation was low, so an additional email was sent to the principals. The data collection process took a month to allow time to receive an adequate number of participants. The use of SPSS software was used to analyze the data collected.
Descriptive Sample for the Study

Table 7 describes the overall sample collected for this study’s \((N = 201)\) participants in the survey. The data identifies the certification type chosen to enter the teaching profession as alternative or traditional and the type of school as Title I and non-Title I. According to the data, more teachers responded from Title I schools with traditionally certified teachers, while there were limited responses from non-Title I schools with alternatively certified teachers. Overall, more traditionally certified teachers responded to the survey compared to alternatively certified teachers. The descriptive data are organized to gain an understanding of the number of participants in each teacher certification category and the type of school where they are currently employed.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Title I</th>
<th>Non-Title I</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>82 (61%)</td>
<td>52 (39%)</td>
<td>134 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>45 (67%)</td>
<td>22 (33%)</td>
<td>67 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

The construction and analysis performed with a one-way and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a one-way and two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tested the four hypotheses posted in this study (Field, 2018). In the two-way ANOVA model, the independent variables were the certification type (alternative and traditional) and school setting (Title I and non-Title I). However, note that this study is not interested in the school setting’s main effect but its confounding effect on certification type. Therefore, in the one-way and two-way ANOVA model, only the main effect of certification type and the interaction of certification
type and school setting is reported. These two analyses address research questions one and three. For question one, the data analysis requires the one-way ANOVA test, and question three requires data analysis with a two-way ANOVA. The dependent variable in the one-way and two-way ANOVA model is the composite self-efficacy score. The assumption of the dependent measure was that it is interval or ratio measured, and it fits a normal distribution (Field, 2018).

For the one-way and the two-way ANOVA, the analysis of Tukey HSD post hoc tests determined the significance of the mean between two groups (Field, 2018). The p-values were significantly higher for traditionally certified teachers demonstrating a difference in efficacy beliefs. The inferential statistical data analyzed helps distinguish the difference between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers while analyzing their TSES scores. It is also imperative to determine the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores for traditional and alternative certifications.

In the one-way and two-way MANOVA model, similar to the ANOVA model, the independent variables are certification type (alternative and traditional) and school setting (Title I and non-Title I). Again, note that this study is not interested in the main effect of the school setting, but its confounding effect on certification type. Therefore, in the one-way and two-way MANOVA model, only the main effect of certification type, the interaction of certification type, and school setting is reported. The use of MANOVA models occurs when two or more continuous or scale-dependent variables are compared across one or more categorical independent variables (Field, 2018). The advantage of using MANOVA models is that they reduce the chances of Type 1 error that would result if multiple ANOVAs were used (Field). The dependent variables in the MANOVA model are the three subscale scores on the self-efficacy instrument. The assumption of the dependent subscale measures is they are interval or ratio
measured, and they independently fit a normal distribution (Field). It should also be pointed out
three subscale scores are tested for multicollinearity. Researches often recommend that no
correlation between dependent measures in the model should be above \( r = .90 \) (Tabachnick &
Fidell, 2012). These results address question two with a one-way MANOVA and question four
with a two-way MANOVA in this study.

Furthermore, there is a need to test if there is any regression from normality, so the
Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to determine if the groups are statistically significant, the fairness
between the groups, and the levels of diminished normality (Field, 2018). For this study, if the p-
value is less than or equal to 0.05, the test rejects the normality hypothesis. If the p-value is
greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis will not be rejected. The Shapiro-Wilk visually graphs
the histograms in the output to show the distribution of ranks across the groups (Field, 2018).
The four groups’ means comparison for significant differences is in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

*Groups Compared for Significant Differences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Elementary Title I</th>
<th>Traditional Elementary Non-Title I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Elementary Title I</td>
<td>Alternative Elementary Non-Title I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* If the one-way or two-way ANOVA suggests differences do exist, performing a Tukey
post-hoc test will determine where differences exist. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences
(SPSS -24) software will deliver all data analyses for the current study.
Summary

The current study took place in two school districts located in Northwest Louisiana. With quantitative analysis, I compared educational paths for traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. The chosen methodology helped answer the four research questions by examining the subscales of a teachers’ self-efficacy: student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management skills. By understanding teachers’ perspectives in these three categories, preparation programs can better equip teachers with instructional practices they need for longevity. In return, these changes can decrease teacher shortages in disadvantaged school districts, directly affecting students’ performance scores.

Data collection was approved by both school districts’ administration, so de-identified data collected from the participants was critical to keep identities anonymous. Convenience sampling for participants certified elementary grades PK-5 in the public schools worked best in the educational setting based on time constraints along with a random probability sampling pulled from the convenience sampling. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 as an assumption, a convenience sampling method was performed for data collection. There were at least 30 participants who assumed normal distribution of at least 30 participants, except non-Title I/Alternative. Here, 22 respondents completed the survey. Random sampling was not used through SPSS to reduce bias in the convenience sampling due to limited response. Another factor to limited responses includes COVID-19 during the pandemic. Teachers face challenges like no other in history and must overcome obstacles of an increased workload and responsibility to their profession. A valuable instrument, SPSS, allows analysis of data based on survey answers on TSES. Measures of central tendency and ANOVA help identify characteristics of traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. Chapter 4 presents the results of the SPSS data to help
researchers understand teachers’ self-efficacy from traditionally and alternatively certification preparation programs in Title I and non-Title I schools.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine traditional and alternative methods of obtaining teacher certification and their impact on teacher self-efficacy levels. In addition, the study was designed to understand and address the underlying influence of the socioeconomic factors presented in Title I and non-Title I schools in the United States as teachers’ efficacy affects student achievement. Achievement gaps have existed for years between Title I and non-Title I schools (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Kainz, 2019). This chapter includes a discussion about normality issues with the data and a review of the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test and their implications. Following this discussion, descriptive results, such as frequency counts for the groups being compared with mean scores for each of the outcome measures, were addressed. Finally, the results of the ANOVA and MANOVA were presented to address the research questions posed in this study.

ANOVA and MANOVA Assumptions

When comparing mean scores for significant differences among multiple groups using parametric tools, such as ANOVA and MANOVA, several assumptions govern when interpreting the results. These assumptions include (a) each sample is drawn from a normally distributed population, (b) there is independence of group membership, and (c) the variance of data for each should be equal or very similar. To test normally in this study, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used and interpreted. To determine the independence of the two groups, the data were examined for duplications of individuals in the sample. Duplications were deleted to eliminate the possibilities of individuals being assigned to multiple groups. Levene’s Test determined the homogeneity of variances in SPSS. The test of equal variance becomes more of an issue when there are disparities in sample sizes among the groups. These concerns are true in this study due
to sample size differences in the groups being studied. If Levene’s Test is significant, it implies there is a violation of equal variance by at least one group. Several recommendations have been put forth when a violation of equal variance occurs. These range from the transformation of the data, using a non-parametric statistical method and using alternative $F$ statistics, such as Welch’s or Brown-Forsythe, to determine if overall statistical significance exists. For the present study, Welch’s statistics were used if violations do occur. SPSS offers the option of calculating these statistics as part of the ANOVA analysis.

**Test for Normality**

Table 8 reports the results of the test for normality on teacher’s composite self-efficacy score. The overall mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for the measures are reported. An indicator of normality occurred by examining the skewness and kurtosis associated with the distribution. Field (2018) suggested that if the absolute value of the skewness is less than 1 and the absolute value of the kurtosis is less than 2, this indicates a high degree of normality. The absolute value of the skewness and kurtosis is .165 and .268, respectively, suggesting a high level of normality does exist. A second test for normality is the use of the Shapiro-Wilk test (Field, 2018). This test produced a value of .989 and a $p$-value of .147, which was not significant at the .05 level. These results also indicate that the distribution of the measure represents a high degree of normality.

**Table 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score</td>
<td>163.73</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>-.165 (.172)</td>
<td>-.268 (.341)</td>
<td>.989</td>
<td>.147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A graphical representation of the data (histogram and Q-Q Plot) helped determine normality with the data. In Figure 5, a histogram displays the graph of the data. The histogram presented does demonstrate a high level of normality in the data. In Figure 6, a Q-Q Plot shows a high level of normality in the data as indicated by the close fit of the points to the line.

**Figure 5**

*Teacher’s Composite Self-Efficacy Score*

![Histogram](image)

*Note.* The teacher’s composite self-efficacy score distribution shows a high level of normality in the data. $M = 163.74$, $SD = 22.259$ and $N = 201$. 
Figure 6

Normal Q-Q Plot of Composite Score

Note. The teacher’s composite self-efficacy score displays a high level of normality in the data.

Test for Normality of the Subscales

The subscale dependent variables, efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional practices, and efficacy in classroom management, were also tested for normality. Table 9 displays the overall mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for each of the subscales. The first two subscales, efficacy in student engagement and efficacy in instructional practices, indicate a high level of normality for the measures as indicated by skewness and kurtosis outcomes. The Shapiro-Wilk test for those two measures, the p-values of .162 and .061, respectively, were non-significant. These results indicated that the distribution for both measures had high levels of normality.
Table 9

Means, SD, Skewness, Kurtosis, Standard Error and the Shapiro-Wilk Test (N = 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Student</td>
<td>53.20</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>-.020 (.172)</td>
<td>-.034 (.134)</td>
<td>.990</td>
<td>.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Practices</td>
<td>57.03</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>.109 (.172)</td>
<td>.156 (.134)</td>
<td>.987</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>53.50</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>-.527 (.172)</td>
<td>-.341 (.341)</td>
<td>.965*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $p < .01$

The third subscale, efficacy in classroom management, did have some normality issues.

In Table 9, the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a value of .965, and a $p$-value of .001, which was significant at the $p < .05$ level. Figure 7 graphically depicts that the measure is slightly left-skewed. Also, the Q-Q plot in Figure 8 presents the same data as left-skewed.
Note. For the subscale efficacy in classroom management (ECM), the measure is slightly left-skewed where frequency and classroom management demonstrate normality issues in the histogram. $M = 53.50$, $SD = 10.519$, and $N = 201$. 
To address this issue of skewness of the data for the measured efficacy in classroom management, several data transformation methods have been suggested (Manikandan, 2010). In various attempts to correct for skewness, methods applied to the data were Min-Max and Z-scores; however, these methods did not produce favorable results. Other transformation methods, such as the square root and logarithm, were also applied. The method that produced the best results was the Square transformation. The Shapiro-Wilk test changed from .965 (significant) to .982 (nonsignificant) with a $p$-value of .113. Figures 9 and 10 show the normality plots for the new measure.
Figure 9

Transformed Efficacy in Classroom Management Score

Note. The Square transformation (sqECM) produced the best graph results to determine normality for classroom management. $M = 2972.61$, $SD = 1075.593$, and $N = 201$.

Figure 10

Normal Q-Q Plot of Squared Efficacy in Classroom Management

Note. This Q-Q Plot measures the expected norm for classroom management with transformed efficacy.
Test for Normality Across the Four Groups

The next test for normality considered was the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score across the four groups being compared in the study. The type of certification program and the type of school are the key components for the four groups. Table 10 shows the results of the means, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, standard error, and Shapiro-Wilk test for normality across the four groups. The results for each group indicated that the assumption of normality across the four samples is satisfied.

Table 10

Means, SD, Skewness, Kurtosis, Standard Error and the Shapiro-Wilk Test Teacher’s Composite Self-Efficacy Score (N = 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative/Title</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Shapiro- Wilk</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional/Title I</td>
<td>164.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>.119 (.266)</td>
<td>.260 (.526)</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative/Non-Title I</td>
<td>167.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>-.777 (.491)</td>
<td>-.383 (.953)</td>
<td>.932</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional/Non-Title I</td>
<td>163.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>.033 (.330)</td>
<td>.314 (.650)</td>
<td>.987</td>
<td>.832</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating the Research Questions

The first two research questions were addressed in this study using a one-way ANOVA and a one-way MANOVA. The research questions were the following:

**RQ1:** Is there a significant difference in the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program?
**RQ2:** Is there a significant difference between elementary school teachers that complete a traditional certification program compared to teachers that complete an alternative certification program on teacher’s self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?

Table 11 displays the mean, standard deviation, and $F$-test for the subscales and the overall composite score. To address RQ1, a one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the two types of certification programs on the composite self-efficacy score. The results produced a $F(1,199) = .036$, with a $p < .850$. On the other hand, the test of homogeneity of variances produced a Levene’s Statistic = 9.81 and a significant level of $p = .002$. Levene’s Statistic suggests a violation of the homogeneity of variances exists when using the traditional ANOVA method. Therefore, the use of the Welch statistics $F(1,199) = .030$, $p = .862$ assists in determining the significance. The results using both methods do produce similar outcomes of nonsignificant differences in the group means. The mean scores were 58.27 and 56.42, respectively. The $F$-test and mean scores indicated that there was no difference in the composite self-efficacy scores between the two types of certification programs.

To address RQ2, a one-way MANOVA was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the two methods of certification and the three subscales, engagement, instruction, and management. The overall results indicated a statistically significant difference exists on the three subscales across the two certification methods. The multivariate tests produced $F(3,197) = 1.573$, $p = .634$, and a Wilk’s $\Lambda= 0.994$. When examining the significant difference of each subscale, engagement produced $F(1,199) = 1.186$, with $p = .278$. Instruction produced $F(1,199) = 3.49$, with $p = .043$. The instructional subscale was significantly different between the two methods of obtaining teacher certification because $p < .05$. A post hoc
comparison was not run because only two groups were being compared; the difference can be determined by just looking at the mean scores for the groups. In this case, the mean score on the instructional subscale was higher for alternatively certified teachers (M = 58.27, SD = 7.45) compared to traditionally certified teachers (M = 56.42, SD = 6.14). For the final subscale, management, the results were $F(1,199) = .626$, with $p = .430$. There was no significant difference in the mean scores for the two groups.

Table 11

Mean Comparisons Across Certification Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Alternative Certification ($n = 67$)</th>
<th>Traditional Certification ($n = 134$)</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite</td>
<td>$M = 163.31$  $SD = 26.15$</td>
<td>$M = 163.94$  $SD = 20.14$</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>$M = 52.37$  $SD = 8.88$</td>
<td>$M = 53.61$  $SD = 6.68$</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>$M = 58.27$  $SD = 7.45$</td>
<td>$M = 56.42$  $SD = 6.14$</td>
<td>3.493*</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>$M = 52.67$  $SD = 12.14$</td>
<td>$M = 53.92$  $SD = 9.62$</td>
<td>.221</td>
<td>.430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. *Indicates that the instructional subscale was significantly different between the two methods of obtaining teacher certification because $p < .05$.

The last two research questions were addressed in this study using a two-way ANOVA and a two-way MANOVA. The research questions were the following:

**RQ3:** Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teacher’s composite self-efficacy score?

**RQ4:** Is there a significant interaction between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?
Table 12 displays the mean, standard deviation, and $F$-value for the subscales and the overall composite score for the interaction between certification type and school setting (Title I or non-Title I). To address RQ3, testing the interaction of certification type and school setting on the composite score, a two-way ANOVA was used. The primary interest focused on the interaction to determine if there was a confounding effect of school setting on certification type. The overall model testing the interaction between certification type and school setting produced $F(1, 197) = .754$, and $p$-value of .386. There was no significant interaction of certification type and school setting on teachers’ composite scores.

To address RQ4, testing the interaction of certification type and school setting (Title I or non-Title I) on the three subscale scores, a two-way MANOVA was used. Again the primary interest focused on the interaction to determine the confounding effect of school setting on certification type. The multivariate tests produced $F(3, 195) = .573$, $p < .634$, and Wilk’s $\Lambda = 0.991$. The multivariate tests indicated that the model being used was appropriate for the data collected.

Examining the subscales also produced results. The results for the subscale engagement produced $F(1, 197) = 1.042$, and $p = .309$ which indicated that there was no significant interaction between certification type and school setting on teacher engagement time. The instruction subscale results produced $F(1, 197) = .049$, and $p = .824$. These results also indicated that there was no significant interaction between certification type and school setting on teacher instructional time. For the final subscale management, the results indicated that there was no significant interaction between certification type and school setting on teacher management time. The results produced $F(1, 197) = .934$ and $p = .335$. 
Table 12

*Mean Comparisons Across Certification Programs and Title I Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title I (n = 45)</th>
<th>Non-Title I (n = 22)</th>
<th>Title I (n = 82)</th>
<th>Non-Title I (n = 52)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite</td>
<td>161.42</td>
<td>28.37</td>
<td>167.18</td>
<td>20.92</td>
<td>164.08</td>
<td>22.92</td>
<td>163.73</td>
<td>14.92</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>51.33</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>54.50</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>54.07</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>1.042</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>8.08</td>
<td>58.81</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>56.28</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>56.63</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>52.09</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>53.86</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>54.47</td>
<td>10.60</td>
<td>53.04</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Chapter 4 included the results from the statistical analysis conducted in the study. A sequence of ANOVA and MANOVA tests was used to answer the research questions. The analysis revealed no significant difference between the overall composite score of teachers that completed a traditional certification program compared to teachers that completed an alternative certification program. Additionally, the interaction between the four groups, which include alternative Title I and non-Title I and traditional Title I and non-Title I, displayed no significant difference.

Examining the subscales across the two methods of certification did produce one significant outcome. In this case, the instructional subscale score was significantly different between the two methods of obtaining teacher certification. The significant difference favored the alternative certified group. There were no other significant differences between the two methods of obtaining teacher certification on the remaining subscales of classroom management and teacher engagement. Similarly, there was no confounding effect of the school setting (Title I
and non-Title I) on the two methods of obtaining teacher certification when comparing subscale scores.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study’s primary purpose was to examine two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) and their impact on teachers’ self-efficacy levels in Title I and non-Title I schools. Achievement gaps between the two types of schools, Title I and non-Title I, have existed for years (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Kainz, 2019). Additionally, this study adds to the literature on teacher’s efficacy with student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management during a global pandemic caused by COVID-19. During this time of uncertainty, several influences impacted the timing of data collection and the results. It was essential to allow teachers time to prepare for the school year and have actual classroom experiences in a hybrid teaching (face-to-face and virtual) environment. This chapter (a) discusses the findings in retrospect to Bandura (1977, 2012) theory, which was the framework for the study; (b) offers recommendations constructed on the results and discusses implications; (c) recognizes the limitations of the study; and (d) makes recommendations for future research.

The practice of providing mentoring opportunities for teachers with five years or less of experience in the classroom, both traditional and alternative, profoundly impacts their self-efficacy, which decreases their attrition rate (Renbarger & Davis, 2019). Several factors contribute to teacher attrition where teachers leave the profession, including the lack of job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Perera et al., 2018). An escalated attrition rate within a district negatively affects a teacher’s performance and learning among students (Frazier et al., 2019). In addition, many of the schools with increased attrition are lower socioeconomically disadvantaged schools (Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016). In return, teachers that leave have not mastered the art of teaching and would greatly benefit from mentor teachers. According to the Louisiana Department of Education data, teachers with two to five years of teaching experience are more
likely to leave the profession than teachers with more than five years in the teaching profession (LDOE, 2019a). Previous research supports the need for teachers to have professional development opportunities and support from other educators to decrease the number of teachers leaving the profession (Bandura, 1977, 2012).

Bandura’s social cognitive theory is defined as one’s perception of their abilities to accomplish an anticipated performance level (Bandura, 1977, 2012). There is a relationship between self-efficacy and the social cognitive theory, as identified by researchers (Bandura, 1991, 2012). As previously mentioned in the literature review, some of these controlled behaviors might include collaboration, interactions, and the environment in teaching (Khorakian & Sharifirad, 2019). With these behaviors, teachers’ job performance and effectiveness flourish, leading to higher self-efficacy with student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

**Discussion of Research Question 1**

In this study, research question 1 examined whether a significant difference exists between elementary school teachers who completed a traditional certification program compared to teachers who completed an alternative certification program on the teacher’s composite self-efficacy score. By reviewing the overall efficacy scores, leaders gain the holistic knowledge of a teacher’s confidence in all aspects of the classroom. The results indicated that there was no difference in the composite self-efficacy score between the two types of certification programs. Salgado et al. (2018) found that curriculum in alternatively and traditionally certified teachers’ programs did not differ based on student achievement results. The central idea of alternative certification programs manifested with the notion that specialists in other workforces can become effective teachers, which supports the findings in this study (Pazyura, 2015). The knowledge and
experience gained prior to entering the teaching profession helps support the self-efficacy composite score of teachers. These findings corroborate the work of Suell and Piotrowski (2006) who determined there were no differences between the alternatively certified preservice teachers’ perceptions in the training they received, and the level of preparedness candidates felt to enter the classroom as first-year teachers in Florida. Alternative and traditional certification programs showed no differences between the two groups when comparing overall self-efficacy.

**Discussion of Research Question 2**

Research question 2 in this study examined whether a significant difference exists between elementary school teachers who completed a traditional certification program and teachers who completed an alternative certification program on teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. The subscale, student engagement, indicated no significant difference between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. On the other hand, for the subscale, instructional practices, there was a significant difference between traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. A study from Salgado et al. (2018) supports the results where alternatively certified teachers also scored higher in instructional strategies compared to traditionally certified teachers based on survey results of 27 teachers in Texas. Typically, alternatively certified teachers receive less training in pedagogy and instructional strategies, which means they must learn these skills while teaching (Pazyura, 2015).

For the final subscale, management, the results were non-significant. These results are consistent with Moffett and Davis’ (2014) research, which found classroom management perceptions for alternatively certified teachers showed no significant difference compared to traditionally certified teachers. In addition, efficacy in classroom management does have some
normality issues with this measure slightly left-skewed. Cayirdag (2017) investigated normality with the Shapiro-Wilk test for a Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), where measures did not produce a perfectly normal distribution. In both studies, research indicated that reasonably large sample sizes reduce the risk of skewness, affecting the analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The three subscale measures are essential because teacher preparation programs need to recognize that alternatively certified teachers have more confidence than traditionally certified teachers in delivering instruction in a technologically driven classroom. By analyzing TSES scores, school leaders understand educators’ weaknesses and strengths. In return, the administration can provide specific resources and assistance to meet teachers’ needs and improve students’ quality of education.

**Discussion of Research Question 3**

Research question 3 in this study examined whether a significant interaction exists between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ composite self-efficacy scores. The primary interest focused on the interaction of the four groups to determine if there was a confounding effect of school setting on certification type. The results indicated that there was no significant interaction of certification type and school setting on teacher’s composite scores.

Other studies have shown different results where alternative certificated teachers’ efficacy increased with classroom exposure. For example, White’s (2017) study focused on 150 undergraduate and postbaccalaureate students returning for teacher certification. In this case, the students participated in an 80-hour guided field study in a K-12 urban school district. The participants’ perceptions of self-efficacy levels shifted as they received first-hand experiences in an urban setting and realized their potential power as teachers. Typically, alternatively certified
novice teachers gain employment in Title I schools which is why they need additional focus on engagement, instructional, and management skills in the classroom (Pazyura, 2015). Teacher preparation programs, both traditional and alternative, must prepare all new teachers with the reality of a classroom setting in today’s society.

**Discussion of Research Question 4**

In this study, research question 4 examined whether a significant interaction exists between the employment at Title I or non-Title I schools and traditional or alternative certification programs on elementary school teachers’ self-efficacy subscale scores of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. The analysis of the study data showed no significant interaction between the type of certification program and the type of school with the three dependent variable subscale scores. Title I schools tend to serve students from a lower-socioeconomic background which influences student engagement in the classroom (Fox & Peters, 2013; Pazyura, 2015). However, Zion and Sobel (2014) found that Title I schools lack resources and have large class sizes that hinder teachers’ ability to use student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management strategies. School leaders and teachers must find different methods to engage students, which will increase a student’s success with instructional practices and classroom management.

The instruction subscale results produced significant differences. Normally, alternative certification programs lack the exposure to lived experiences in the classroom and field observations which help prepare teachers for the diversity in urban schools (Abdullah et al., 2015; Bauml et al., 2016; DeMatthews et al., 2017; White, 2017). In addition, teacher preparation programs need to update courses inclusive of culturally responsive approaches to
better meet teachers’ needs in a diverse classroom. Teachers who struggle with classroom management skills often have difficulty with student engagement and instructional practices.

The final subscale, management, produced non-significant results. However, this contradicts other studies where alternatively certified teachers lack classroom management skills. Effective classroom management skills are not only learned in teacher preparation programs but also gained through clinical experiences (Davis, 2015). For example, alternatively certified teachers gain these skills once in the classroom with students, while traditionally trained teachers have field observation hours embedded in their teaching curriculum. Multiple studies recognized the need for “student teaching” or field-based experiences to provide classroom management skills that impact the self-efficacy of teachers (Fox & Peters, 2013; Koehler et al., 2013; Lewis-Spector, 2016; Salgado et al., 2018). This idea is important because the confidence levels for alternatively certified teachers in classroom management is an ongoing issue that requires more training in the preparation programs or through school leaders. Once a teacher can successfully incorporate the ability to manage a classroom, the other subscales of student engagement and instructional practices become natural.

Millennial generation educators entering the teaching profession possess new technology and cultural adaptation skills when compared to past teachers, directly affecting the current study results (Castro, 2010). Title I and non-Title I schools employ this age group with a different level of skills than veteran teachers. For example, demographic questions were used in the present study’s survey, and the analysis included participants with five years or less experience. This group has a vast amount of experience based on their knowledge of high-stakes testing, technology skills, and exposure to cultural diversity as a norm (Bauml et al., 2016). Hence, their adaptability to perform and transition to a high-tech classroom heightens their self-efficacy. Even
with the additional skills, teaching in an urban classroom environment requires more preparation, mentoring, and professional development opportunities to be an effective educator.

For this study, the Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) allowed the organization of data in three subscales with individual efficacy results in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management along with the composite score (Appendix A). The data collected for this current study thrived on the cognitive attention to curriculum delivery, the limit of disruption, and the degree to which the students’ participation in a learning activity affected teachers’ efficacy in each subscale (Lekwa et al., 2019). The use of the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale and results for this study reiterates the need for educational leaders to monitor a teacher’s confidence level in the classroom closely.

Contrary to previous studies, which highlighted traditionally certified teachers as having more confidence, this study recognizes that alternatively certified teachers have a newly found confidence in the current education digital world. The TSES specialized areas had key components needed to answer the four research questions for this study.

**Implications and Conclusions**

While conducting research for this study’s literature review, there were a multitude of studies on the effect of teacher certification programs. In relation to the current study, there was limited research found that explored a teacher’s self-efficacy based on a chosen certification path and the type of school they gained employment in as a teacher. The effect of teacher preparation programs showed that alternatively certified, newly hired teachers at the study sites are more likely to be employed in high-risk Title I schools. This trend aligned with past research (LDOE, 2019a). These percentages are substantial because Title I Schools receive a higher number of alternatively certified teachers with a fast-paced curriculum, unlike traditionally certified
teachers. Although research indicated otherwise, for this study, there was no significant difference in the composite self-efficacy score between the two types of certification programs. Alternatively certified teachers faced the same self-efficacy scores when compared to traditionally certified teachers. According to Bowling and Ball (2018), professional development requests for first-year teachers are the same for both alternatively and traditionally certified teachers. These results can be affected based on the teacher’s professional development opportunities, mentor programs, and school leadership after gaining employment as an educator in the classroom.

Further analysis showed a significant difference with subscale results in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management when comparing traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. Student engagement and classroom management indicated no significant difference. On the other hand, the instructional practices subscale results indicated a statistically significant difference across the two certification methods. According to Fox and Peters (2013), teachers with a resilient sense of efficacy have a higher level of confidence in approaching challenges and making decisions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, both alternatively and traditionally certified teachers surveyed learned new ways to navigate virtual learning. This process entailed finding new ways to engage students, deliver instruction, and refine classroom management skills in a virtual environment. However, Lewis-Spector (2016) stated that alternative certification programs were a fast-track path to teach with limited formal instruction in pedagogy, which directly affected the quality of classroom instruction. Alternatively and traditionally certified teachers faced the same challenges with virtual learners in the surveyed school districts.
For this study, it was essential to analyze the interaction between Title I and non-Title I schools and alternative and traditional certification programs to understand their impact on teachers’ self-efficacy composite score. The results indicated there was no significant interaction of certification type and school setting on teacher’s composite scores. Schools with an enrollment of at least 40% of children from low-income families are considered Title I which receives additional funding from the federal government (U.S. Government, 2019). Diversity training for teachers working with students at lower-socioeconomic schools could help them succeed as teachers and create longevity in the teaching profession. Teachers, alternatively and traditionally certified, will thrive in lower-socioeconomic schools with adequate training to teach in a diverse learning environment.

Not only could teacher preparation programs benefit from the findings, but school districts could as well. Mentor programs and professional development training should be implemented to help teachers in the classroom. In the analysis of teachers’ self-efficacy in the subscale scores (student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management), there were no significant interactions between the type of certification program and type of school. The type of school, Title I or non-Title I, did not impact alternatively or traditionally certified teachers’ self-efficacy. The data results provide future research recommendations based on teachers’ self-efficacy responses through the Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale survey.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As highlighted in the literature review, school districts across the United States face the growing problem of addressing teacher shortages with alternatively certified teachers. Moreover, alternative certification programs must provide an equal curriculum as traditionally certified teachers receive in a four-year undergraduate program. Future research recommendations include
using qualitative research, expanding the study geographically to other districts in Louisiana, and placing more emphasis on the curriculum provided for alternatively and traditionally certified teachers in Louisiana.

Snyder and Fisk (2016) stated that by applying Bandura’s Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), administrators could help develop an understanding of underlying thoughts leading teachers to leave the profession. Additionally, it serves as the basis for this study’s conceptual framework. By utilizing qualitative research, a future study could articulate interrelationships and allow researchers to find patterns in data. Furthermore, one could continue to look at the phenomenon to build a deeper understanding and meaning in the observation (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). A qualitative study would help the researchers with an in-depth examination of professional development opportunities for traditionally and alternatively certified teachers. An additional component could include the principals’ perspectives of professional development needs for first-year teachers for both educational paths. Conducting interviews could be the most effective method because participants’ responses can generate other questions the researcher may need for clarification as the interview is taking place.

Another recommendation is for future researchers to expand the survey population to include a larger geographical area across Louisiana compared to two school districts in Northwest Louisiana. This piece is essential due to the specific criteria for certification with the Louisiana Department of Education. The certification process, including required coursework, content area testing, and certification programs, varies between states. According to Bowling and Ball (2018), one of the most significant irregularities across the nation with alternative pathways is the duration and the required coursework for certification. Preparation programs need to be more consistent in their curriculum and understand their candidates’ strengths and weaknesses.
In contrast, Torres and Chu (2016) found those enrolled in an alternative certification program, Teach for America (TFA), were less satisfied with the instruction at a graduate level compared to a traditional certification program. The emphasis on comparing alternatively and traditionally certified teachers must remain constant when expanding to additional districts in the state of Louisiana. This study will contribute to future research because teacher preparation programs must adequately prepare teachers by providing them the resources they need to navigate student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management.

Summary

School districts across the nation face the challenges of teacher shortages and rely heavily on alternative certification programs to fill teaching positions. Over the last decade, researchers have questioned the quality of fast-track teacher preparation programs compared to traditional educational paths. Additionally, the exploration of literature and previous studies point out the need for field experiences to adequately prepare new teachers. In this study, alternatively certified teachers tend to have a higher overall composite self-efficacy score than traditionally certified teachers in non-Title I schools, contrary to previous literature. Newly alternative certified teachers enter the profession ill-prepared and lacking experience in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management (Abdullah et al., 2015; Bauml et al., 2016). Past researchers examined the effects of alternative and traditional certification programs on teachers’ self-efficacy. For this study, analysis of the four groups’ interaction (alternative Title I, non-Title I schools, and Traditional Title I, non-Title I teachers) gave more depth to the results.

The purpose of the present quantitative, causal-comparative study was to examine two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) and their impact on teacher self-efficacy levels in Title I and non-Title I schools. Findings for this study are
significant to the decision-makers in teacher preparation programs and public schools. Teachers benefit from the TSES survey by opening a line of communication on their perception of skills in the classroom. A teacher’s self-efficacy level in the three areas of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management significantly affects a school district’s performance goals. Educational researchers need to continue to study alternative and traditional certification programs, so future educators receive a curriculum to prepare them better to teach in today’s society.

Research question 1 indicated that there was no difference in the composite self-efficacy score between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers. Although the teachers surveyed received their training from various education programs, the curriculum differences did not impact their self-efficacy. The results from this study contradicted previous studies which argue that alternative certification programs lack the pedagogy and cultural training teachers need to be successful in the classroom compared to the traditional education path teachers (Fox & Peters, 2013; Pazyura, 2015).

In research question 2, for the three subscales (engagement, instruction, and management), the overall results indicated a statistically significant difference exists on one subscale, instruction, across the two methods of obtaining teacher certification. Education majors in a traditional education path receive exposure to a vast amount of pedagogy and field experiences in classrooms to increase their preparedness to provide instruction to students (Salgado et al., 2018). For the subscales, instruction and management, there was no significant difference between the two groups. Again, these results contradict previous studies, since effective classroom management skills are not only learned in teacher preparation programs but also gained through clinical experiences (Davis, 2015). Typically, alternatively certified teachers
lack the field experience hours compared to traditionally certified teachers. The exploration of literature and previous studies point out the need for field experiences to adequately prepare new teachers.

The primary interest of research question 3 focused on the interaction between school setting (Title I/non-Title I) on certification type (alternative/traditional) within the composite score of engagement, instruction, and classroom. The overall model testing the interaction of certification type and school setting produced a non-significant interaction, which contradicts previous research. Teachers in Title I schools face an additional challenge when streamlining instructional practices for students that come from poverty areas in their school district (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Furthermore, there is a difference in the level of preparedness reported by first-year alternatively certified teachers compared to traditionally certified teachers (Redding & Smith, 2019).

For research question 4, it was important to test the interaction of certification type (alternative/traditional) and school setting (Title I/non-Title I) on the three subscale scores: engagement, instruction, and management. Again the primary interest focused on the interaction to determine the confounding effect of school setting on certification type. This data indicated no significant interaction between certification type and school setting on teachers’ self-efficacy. These results support the findings from Salgado et al. (2018) where there was no statistical evidence that teachers with field experience increased self-efficacy compared to traditionally certified teachers. Unlike this study, previous studies found a significant difference between alternatively and traditionally certified teachers on at least one of the three subscales: student engagement, instructional practices, or classroom management (Martin et al., 2012; Pankowski & Walker, 2016). Working in a diverse school environment creates challenges for teachers
without fieldwork experience, hindering a teachers’ growth process to understand the culture and context of learning in urban Title I schools (White, 2017). This opportunity is not possible for alternatively certified teachers.

Teachers faced challenges as they have never experienced in their lifetime while teaching during COVID-19. The learning gap expanded past first-year teachers and affected veteran teachers with decades of experience (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). Life in the classroom changed immediately with little time to prepare for the new normal of student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management. Although a river separated the school districts surveyed, different leadership and teacher preparation programs altered their self-efficacy in the classroom and opened a new world of technology needed to survive in the 21st century during a global pandemic. Educators must find new and innovative ways to engage students, implement instruction, and maintain classroom management.

Students across the United States deserve highly qualified teachers to prepare them for their next grade and future workforce. Uncertified teachers lack the content training, pedagogy, and classroom management skills needed to provide a safe learning environment (Abdullah et al., 2015). Alternative and traditional certification programs help close the gap of uncertified teachers in all grade and content levels (Salgado et al., 2018). Louisiana’s higher education institutions provide the curriculum and skills needed to immediately fill classroom teaching positions in high-poverty areas with 29 alternative certification programs (LDOE, n.d.). This quantitative, causal-comparative study helped answer the four research questions by examining the subscales of a teachers’ self-efficacy: student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management skills. By understanding teachers’ perspectives in these three categories, preparation programs can better equip teachers with instructional practices they need for
longevity. In return, these changes can decrease teacher shortages in disadvantaged school districts, directly affecting students’ performance scores.
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## Teacher Beliefs - TSES

This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

| Question                                                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?     |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to help your students think critically?            |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to help your students value learning?             |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?        |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to foster student creativity?                    |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?       |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?    |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?             |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you respond to defiant students?                        |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students? |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
Appendix B: Permission to Use the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Dear Rita Sullivan,

You have my permission to use the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy the scoring instructions can be found at:

http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus
Appendix C: Cover Letter to School District Superintendent

Dear Superintendent,

My name is Rita Sullivan and I am a doctoral student at Abilene Christian University, where I am currently at the research stage of my dissertation. I realize this may be a busy time of year for your faculty, however, I would greatly appreciate your approval for teachers in your district to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to gather data on elementary teachers in regards to their teacher preparation (alternative and traditional) and its effect on teacher efficacy beliefs in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management skills. I am attaching a participant cover letter that explains the study and assures that all information will remain anonymous and confidential. I have also attached the IRB approval documentation to conduct research. The survey will take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rita Sullivan Doctoral Candidate, Abilene Christian University
Appendix D: Email and Consent Agreement to Teachers

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study being conducted by investigators from Abilene Christian University. The purpose of the present study will be to examine two methods of obtaining teacher certification (traditional and alternative) and their impact on teacher self-efficacy levels in Title I and Non-Title I schools. Self-efficacy is a teacher's judgment or confidence level of his or her capabilities in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management skills.

You are being invited to be in this study because you are a public elementary school teacher in Northwest Louisiana. I asked your superintendent to forward this information to you on our behalf for your consideration. Approximately 500 people will take part in this study at Abilene Christian University.

If you agree to participate, I would like you to complete an online survey. The survey will ask for some demographic information about you including certification path (traditional or alternative), years of experience, and school name. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey will remain open for 2 weeks, and you will receive one reminder email 5 days before the survey closes. Your principal will not be told if you chose to participate, nor will your principal be told how many teachers in your school participated in the research.

The information you provide will be kept confidential, however federal regulatory agencies and the Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. I will collect the names of your school. This data will be used only to match building-level data and will be deleted once all surveys are matched across buildings.

No individually identifiable teacher data will be shared with your principal. If a report is written about this study it will be done in such a way that you and your school building cannot be identified.

You will be asked to provide information over the Internet. It is possible that your responses could be viewed by persons who have access to the computers hosting the web site or by unauthorized persons who gain access to the web site computers. I will use a secure web site and computers to collect the study information and I will not collect any information through the web site that would identify you.

You will not benefit personally from being in this study. However, I hope that others may benefit in the future from what I learn as a result of this study. You will not have any costs for being in this research study. You will not be paid for being in this research study. Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.
CONTACTS: If you have questions about the proposed activities, the principal investigator is Rita Sullivan, doctoral student and may be contacted at xxxxxx@acu.edu. If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact Dr. Emiel Owens, Dissertation Chair, at xxxxx@acu.edu. If you have concerns about the proposed activities, believe you may have been harmed because of these activities, or have general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU’s Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Executive Director of Research, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

(pec) xxx-xxxx
xxxxxxx@acu.edu
320 Hardin Administration Bldg., ACU Box 29103
Abilene, TX 79699

Clicking on the survey link and completing the online survey will indicate your consent to participate in this research study.

If you wish to keep a copy of this information page, please save or print the page before going on to the survey. If you do not wish to be in the study, please close your web browser window now or at any time before submitting the survey.

Thank you very much for your consideration.
# Appendix E: SPSS Data Analysis

**SPSS Data Analysis**

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Appendix F: IRB Approval

July 28, 2020

Rita Sullivan
Department of Education
Abilene Christian University

Dear Rita,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Comparison of Traditional and Alternative Certification Programs and their Effect on Elementary Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs in Title I and Non-Title I Schools", (IRB# 20-100) is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs