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New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program

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NEW PATHWAYS TO TEACHING IN NEW JERSEY: A CASE STUDY OF THE ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

By

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NEW PATHWAYS TO TEACHING IN NEW JERSEY: A CASE STUDY OF THE ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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The purpose of this case study was to identify the positive and challenging aspects of the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) Program, an alternate route teacher education preparation program located at the 19 community colleges in the state. The participants in this study included 10 teachers who were in their second or third year of teaching in the K-12 system and had completed their teacher certification program at one community college. Nine administrators who worked with one of the NPTNJ study participants were also included in the study. The major source of information was gathered through participant interviews, teacher observations, document review, and field notes.

The following components of the NPTNJ Program were found to contribute significantly to the teacher participants' preparation for the profession:

1. The summer intensive coursework completed before entering the classroom prepared teachers to skillfully begin the school year;
2. The open discussions held at the beginning of the NPTNJ classes throughout the school year allowed the teachers to receive immediate feedback on how to manage problems and prevent them from continuing;
3. The elements of the NPTNJ curriculum components that most prepared the teachers were course assignments that focused on real-life classroom situations, lesson planning, and assessment methods;
4. The teacher participants identified the Program Coordinator as the significant connection between the theory of the NPTNJ curriculum and the real-life situations in the classroom.

The following components of the NPTNJ Program were found to be the challenges faced by the NPTNJ teachers:

1. The summer observations required of the NPTNJ Program were lacking in quality and difficult to find;
2. The NPTNJ teachers were overwhelmed by the quantity of students with IEPs and 504s and felt they were unable to accommodate these students successfully;
3. The teachers were challenged by excessive behavioral problems;
4. Several teachers struggled to develop appropriate grade-level curricula.

DISSERTATION TITLE

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DEDICATION

Sandra F. Lesser
1936-2004

This work is dedicated to my mother, a woman that graced this earth for only 67 years. She was my teacher, mentor, friend, confidant, and most importantly, my mother. She always saw the good in me and gently nudged me to strive for greater and greater goals. She never lost faith in me or in anyone around her. She was the type of woman that after having met her, people would say they are better for having known her. She was an intelligent and gentle soul. My world will never be the same without her, but I will keep on striving in her memory. Thank you mom.

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My husband Ron, my daughter Emily, and my dog Yuki have been the constants, the day-to-day support that never fails. I love them with all my heart and appreciate how they worked so hard so I could complete each course, each paper, and finally the dissertation. I want to thank Yuki for his companionship while I sat at my computer. I want my daughter to know that her smiles and hugs brighten each day and thank her for making me laugh even when I did not want to. Finally, I want to thank Ron for his editing skills and most importantly for a steadfast heart and an unfaltering belief in me.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter Introduction

This chapter begins with an explanation of the problem and context of the study, the national teacher shortage. Next, the purpose of the study is explained, followed by the research questions postulated and methodology used. The terms used in the study are defined. Then, the assumptions as well as the delimitations and limitations of this study are stated. The chapter closes with an explanation of the significance of this study and an explanation of the organization of this dissertation.

Statement of the Problem and Context

The United States was experiencing a national teacher shortage that was projected to increase through the 2010s. Several factors accounted for this shortage including increased student enrollment, decreased class size, teacher retirements, and the need for schools to hire highly qualified teachers to comply with the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The need for teachers was especially crucial in the areas of Special Education, Mathematics, Science, English as a Second Language, and World Languages (Education Commission of the States (ECS), 2001; Prestwich, 2004). Urban areas were desperate to hire and retain quality teachers since within their first five years as many as 50% of urban district teachers left compared to only 30% of those in suburban or rural situations. Overall, approximately 13.2% of teachers left the teaching profession each year as compared to 11% in quite a few other professions. Moreover, by 2010, 40% of teachers were projected to retire. In states such as Florida this translated to a need of between

15,500-19,000 teachers by 2020. Teachers were leaving the profession because of low pay and unacceptable working conditions (Gederman, 2001; Townsend & Ignash, 2003).

The literature on alternative certification programs suggested that such programs would serve as possible solutions to the teacher shortage; however, they posed significant questions about both teacher and program quality (ECS, 2003; Zumwalt, 1996). Yet, according to Karen Zumwalt, "alternative certification eases entry requirements, minimizes preparation needed prior to paid teaching, and emphasizes on-the-job training" (p. 40).

The New Jersey Department of Education developed two tracks to obtain alternate route certification. The first was the state-mandated program that any baccalaureate degree granting institution may follow. The second was the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) Program begun in 2003. This was a partnership between New Jersey City University and the 19 community colleges in the state. The program was created to answer the state's teacher shortage in certain disciplines and meet specific geographic needs, as were the reasons for most alternate route education programs. In 2003-2004, there were 107,646 teachers in New Jersey. Of 6,823 new teachers hired, 2,908 completed an alternate route certification program. The NPTNJ program allowed those with a bachelor's degree to work in a classroom for one year while taking coursework in teaching methodology at a local community college during the summer and school year (National Center for Education Information (NCEI), 2005; New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey, 2005b).

NPTNJ students passed through three stages en route to certification. In Stage I, students met the following requirements:

- Hold a bachelor's degree in a core content area with a 2.75 G.P.A.
- Apply and obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (CE)
- Complete the NPTNJ application
- Be admitted into the program

In Stage II, students passed the Praxis Exam to demonstrate discipline content knowledge and obtain a full-time teaching position as an alternate route teacher in a public school district (Provisional Teacher Program). Candidates could opt to take the program for graduate credit towards a Masters of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T), finishing half of the degree's coursework or 15 credits in the first year. The M.A.T was offered through Jersey City University. Stage III was the fulfillment of the summer and academic year pedagogy classes along with the full year of teaching under the supervision of a mentor, school administrator, and NPTNJ program coordinator. The student completed a final summer capstone course and applied to the state for certification (New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey, 2005a).

One community college program was studied that had offered the program for all four years of the Pathways Program (see Appendix L). It must be noted that in years I and II teacher participants were allowed to enroll in Stage II without securing employment. In years III and IV teacher participants could not continue to stage II without employment. In 2004, 50% of the participants found employment by program end and in 2005, 60% found employment. In the third and fourth year, 100% had to have employment. Teacher participants were employed in elementary, middle and high schools.

Successful placement of graduates of alternate route teacher preparation programs did not lead to overall acceptance of these programs. Proponents of alternate route teacher preparation programs described successes in areas such as teacher quality and placement in the shortage areas and in urban schools. Critics, however, dismissed alternate route programs because their graduates did not have the traditional pedagogical background. They argued that the disciplinary knowledge that some possessed did not lead to classroom success. Much of the controversy stemmed from the inability to define alternate route programs and to measure success in candidates for the teaching profession (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1992a; Feistritzer, 2005; Stoddard & Floden, 1995; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Community colleges were well situated to partner with the alternate programs because of their ability to adapt quickly to the needs of teacher education requirements and the needs of a diverse student population. In 2006, community colleges enrolled over half of the college freshmen nationwide, and these included the majority of the college-going minority student population. The NPTNJ program fulfilled the unique part of the two-year college mission that endorsed a strong connection to the community it served. Some critics argued that the professional staff at the community college did not possess expertise in teacher preparation (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Imig & Harrill-McClellan, 2003).

The two-year college sector, through normal schools and junior colleges, provided teacher training when a baccalaureate degree was not required. During the 1900s as standards in teacher education and accreditation grew, so too did the emphasis on

certification criterion. The efforts of national organizations such as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the National Education Association, brought teacher preparation programs under the purview of the four-year institutions (Hutcheson, 2002).

Over time, community colleges took on the role of providing general education coursework as well as preparing individuals for the workforce. They were no longer looked to as providers of teacher preparation programs. However, teacher education was still present on campuses in a variety of ways: the informal offering of a few courses, an Associate of Arts in Teaching (A.A.T.) degree, joint admission programs, and formal 2+2 articulated programs with four-year institutions. California, Colorado, Illinois, South Carolina, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Texas conferred the A.A.T. The A.A.T. led the way away from course-by-course articulation to agreements based on the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and competencies. These six states led the way in model 2+2 articulation programs (ECS, 2004b; Imig & Harrill-McClellan, 2003).

Even though there was an outcry of mission creep (community colleges providing services traditionally found at the four-year institution) and competition for student tuition, states allowed their community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in teacher education. Model programs existed in Florida, Nevada, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Utah. The community college BA evolved at three types of institutions:

- The community college continued to offer primarily associate of arts (AA) degrees, but included a few BA degree programs
- The community college that morphed into a four-year college and was renamed, even though it continued to offer AA degrees

- The four-year institution that offered BA degrees in partnership with a community college, with classes on the community college campus (ECS, 2004d).

Proponents of this initiative stated that community colleges were the ideal location to increase the number of teachers because they reached a diverse student population. Community colleges offered flexibility to students with families and to students who were employed. The colleges that offered the BA degree were located in isolated areas, offered a comfort level to students not ready for a four-year atmosphere, and/or provided an environment for older students who remained at a school with an adult population. They also were the higher education access point for the majority of minority students. Challenges of program quality, accreditation, and funding were just some of the issues facing the community colleges investing in the baccalaureate (ECS, 2004d; Furlong 2003; National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to identify the positive and challenging aspects of the NPTNJ Program at the community college level from the perspective of NPTNJ teacher participants and their administrators. For this case study, this researcher examined the program at one community college in New Jersey by conducting interviews with ten NPTNJ teachers and nine administrators who had NPTNJ teachers on their staff. The NPTNJ teachers had graduated from the Program, obtained certification, and were in their second or third year of teaching. Observations were conducted of nine of the ten NPTNJ teachers and an analysis of related documents was a part of the data collection

process. Interviews and observations were conducted in the school in which the NPTNJ teachers and their administrators worked.

Research Questions

The central question for this case study was

- How did participants in the NPTNJ Program and their administrators describe their experiences in relation to the program's coursework and classroom teaching requirements?

In addition, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?
6. What topics of the teaching profession did the participants and their administrators discuss?
7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?
9. What recommendations did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

Methodology

The primary investigator conducted an in-depth interview with each participant that lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Teacher participants were asked to allow the researcher to observe one of their classes. The participants were recruited from a list of all students that had completed the NPTNJ Program at one community college, were certified, and were currently teaching in their second or third year. Participants were sent

a letter inviting them to participate in the study. When participants agreed a letter was sent to the appropriate administrators inviting them to participate. When both parties agreed the interview protocol and Informed Consent Forms were sent to the participants and their administrators.

Participants received a reminder phone call or e-mail one week prior to the interview. Permission to interview and observe the participants on school property was obtained from the appropriate administrator and the interview was conducted in the participant's school classroom or office. The researcher included follow-up questions during the interviews and solicited information through e-mail after the interviews.

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Member checking was used as a validation technique, therefore, participants were asked to review the transcripts of their interview and a preliminary summary of the themes. Documents, including but not limited to the NPTNJ curriculum and lesson plans of the teacher participants were analyzed and classroom observations were conducted of the participants to confirm first hand what the participants had discussed in their interviews. In addition, an auditor or expert in the field was employed to review themes and findings.

Terms and Definitions

Traditional Route Teacher Preparation—Undergraduate programs housed at four-year colleges or universities that prepare students to teach upon completion of their baccalaureate degree and state teacher certification requirements. Students then may apply to the state for a teacher certificate.

Alternate Route Teacher Preparation—Teacher certification programs that train individuals, who usually possess a bachelors degree, but who did not complete a traditional certification program. Upon completion of this program students may petition the state for certification.

Core Curriculum Content Standards—A framework for each content area to improve student achievement by clearly defining what all students should know and be able to do at the end of 13 years of public education. The frameworks provide classroom teachers and curriculum specialists with sample teaching strategies, adaptations, and background information relevant to each of the content areas. In addition, the statewide assessments are aligned to the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Praxis Exam—Subject assessment/specialty area test required for licensure in teaching in some states.

New Jersey Assessment of knowledge and Skills (NJASK)—Test designed to measure how well students are meeting the state's fourth grade academic standards in science, mathematics and language arts literacy.

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA)—Test designed to measure how well students are meeting New Jersey's eighth grade academic standards in science, mathematics and language arts literacy.

High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA)—Test designed to measure how well students are meeting the state's academic standards in reading, writing, and mathematics as specified in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Passing the HSPA is a requirement for receiving a high school diploma.

Certification—The requirements for licensure and certification are explained in detail in New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:9, most recently updated with Phase 4.5 Amendments 21 August 2006. This code states that institutions granting state certification will be accredited by a national professional organization recognized by the Council on higher Education Accreditation and approved by the Commissioner. In addition, a trained team will certify that the institution meets state, professional, and institutional standards

Certificate of Eligibility (CE)—A credential with lifetime validity issued to persons who have completed a traditional or alternate route degree program of academic study and the applicable test requirements for certification. The CE permits the applicant to seek employment in positions requiring certification.

Emergency Certification—A substandard one-year license issued in only limited fields of educational services.

Specials teacher—Primarily an elementary or middle school teacher that does not teach one of the traditional four core subjects (Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies).

2+2+2 Partnership Program—Partnerships that involve two years of education at the two-year college, two years at the baccalaureate institution, and two years at the masters level.

Highly qualified—Teacher who holds certification and demonstrated proficiency in a core subject, a bachelor's degree in a core subject, passes a subject-knowledge test or obtains an advanced degree in the subject.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)—A written plan developed at a meeting that includes appropriate school staff and the parent(s). It determines the special education program for a student with disabilities through individually designed instructional activities constructed to meet the goals and objectives established for the student. An IEP establishes the rationale for the student's placement and documents the provision of a free, appropriate public education.

504 Plan—Students eligible for accommodations or modifications under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and may not be classified as special education. They have an impairment of a major life function such as performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, etc. Any accommodations or modifications for Section 504 eligible students must be specified in the student's accommodation plan and must be consistent with the instruction and assessment procedures in the classroom.

Assumptions

The underlying assumption of this study was that the teachers of the NPTNJ Program and their administrators would in their interviews describe the program in enough detail to understand the program's strengths and weaknesses. A second assumption was that the NPTNJ participants, all products of the program under investigation, would be reasonably objective about their experiences. It was further assumed that observations and document review would serve to validate responses to the interview and provide a thick, rich description of the NPTNJ Program.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The study was confined to investigating one alternate route program in one state. It was confined further to studying two specific groups in relation to the NPTNJ program. The first group consisted of ten NPTNJ teacher participants who attended the one community college, completed the entire program, received teacher certification, and were in their second or third year of teaching in the northern region of the state. The second group consisted of nine administrators who supervised these teacher participants. All participants were asked to recall thoughts and feelings from at least as far back as a year or two. For these reasons, the study is generalizable only to the group studied.

Inherent in a case study design is the fact that the research is based on the "view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). NPTNJ participants, their administrators, and the researcher carried their own biases, and since a qualitative study relies on the individuals' perceptions, biases may have been reflected in the participants views and the researchers findings.

Significance of the Study

Much of the literature showed that there was insignificant research to describe alternate route programs in depth. There was conflicting information, including the definitions of traditional and alternate route education and possible strengths and weaknesses of each (ECS, 2003; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). Moreover, the quality of teacher preparation programs and their graduates was a focus of national attention. Congress mandated a study to examine four key questions:

1. Who entered teacher-training preparation programs, and what was their prior training and educational background?

2. What types of instructional training did the students receive, and who delivered it?
3. To what extent was the training in reading and mathematics instruction consistent with the emerging scientific evidence about such instruction?
4. What systems of data collection could provide information about the content knowledge, pedagogical confidence, and effectiveness of the graduates of teacher-training programs, as well as teachers trained in alternative-certification programs? (Glenn, 2005)

Additionally, this study added to the body of literature on alternate route programs, supplying information about the experiences of NPTNJ participants, and focusing on describing the program and current teaching experiences. Conclusions in the literature stated that more information was needed on teacher education, teacher standards, and model programs (Berry, 2005). Although there were a number of dissertations in the last 20 years that included research on alternate route education, very few highlighted specific state programs. Having this focus allows the reader to learn about best practices and a model program. The accounts provided by participants in the study and the conclusions drawn from them, will improve the understanding of what an alternate route program is and provide information to policy makers, K-16 administrators, teacher educators, and prospective teachers.

Dissertation Organization

Following the introductory chapter, the dissertation continues with a review of the literature associated with alternate route education and teacher preparation programs in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three, the research methodology utilized in this study is described. The data, including the themes that emerged and their relationships to the research questions and observations conducted, are presented in Chapter Four. Each

research question is discussed in detail. The findings of the study and implications for future research are presented in Chapter Five.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Chapter Introduction

This literature review examines how alternate route education interacts with the national picture of teacher preparation. First, alternate route education is defined and described as per the research. Second, the research on model programs enriches the report with specific state examples. Third, the community college role is examined, followed by the role of NCLB. Next, the research on four-year institution involvement with the community college and teacher preparation is presented. Finally, the research on the debate between traditional and alternate route teacher education is explored.

Alternate Route Education

Alternate route education was defined by the different models in use and by its participants. There was no single definition and there were competing views on the value it added to teacher preparation. This section describes those diverse viewpoints and provides a picture of the individuals participating in alternate route teacher education preparation programs.

There were approximately 120 alternate route programs in the United States, sharing many commonalities, but also maintaining their individuality. In 1983, there were eight alternate route programs, however by 2005, these programs were found to be in 47 states, including the District of Colombia, and have produced approximately 250,000 new teachers. New Jersey, Texas, and California were the first programs developed in the early 1980s. Only Alaska and Pennsylvania were not considering implementing an

alternate route certification program. The most rapid growth occurred since the mid 90s. Still, this growth had accounted for only a small percentage of certified teachers when compared to the percentage of teachers prepared in the traditional route (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Feistritzer, 2005b; Newman, & Kay, 1999; U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), 2004; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

The following were the classifications of alternate route programs as delineated by the National Center for Education Information in 1990:

> Class A is the category reserved for those routes that meet the following criteria:
>
> - The alternative teacher certification route has been designed for the explicit purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor degree in a field other than education into elementary school teaching
> - The alternate route is not restricted to shortage, secondary grade levels or subject areas.
> - These alternative teacher certification routes involve teaching with a trained mentor, and any formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year – and sometimes in the summer before and/or after.
>
> Class B: Teacher certification routes that have been designed specifically to bring talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor degree into teaching. These routes involve specially designed mentoring and some formal instruction. However, these routes either restrict the route to shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas.
>
> Class C: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis of the candidate. They involve specially (individually) designed in-service and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design.
>
> Class D: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed in-service and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. An institution of higher education has major responsibility for program design.

> Class E: These post-baccalaureate programs are based at an institution of higher education.
>
> The following classes are exceptions and rarely used:
>
> Class F: These programs are basically emergency routes. The prospective teacher is issued some type of emergency certificate or waiver, which allows the individual to teach, usually without any onsite support or supervision, while taking the traditional teacher education course requisite for full certification.
>
> Class G: Programs in this class are for persons who have few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditional approved college teacher education program route e.g., persons certified in one state moving to another or persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another.
>
> Class H: This class includes routes that enable a person who has some "special" qualifications, such as a well-known author or Nobel Prize winner, to teach certain subjects.
>
> Class I: These states reported that they were not implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers.
>
> Class J: These programs are designed to eliminate emergency routes. They prepare individuals who do not meet basic requirements to become qualified to enter an alternate route or a traditional route for teacher licensing. (National Center for Education Information, 2005, p. 61)

Common characteristics of alternate route programs included requiring participants to hold a bachelor's degree, pass thorough selection processes, pedagogical coursework, field-based work, mentor programs, and high exit standards (Feistritzer, 2005). Sixty percent of the alternate route programs required practice teaching and 85% assessed their students with the same tools as traditionally prepared students (USDOE, 2004).

Meeting with a mentor was a requirement of the NPTNJ Program. However, as Feiman-Nemser (2001) stated, "mentor teachers may not have adequate preparation or time to work with beginning teachers. . . . Moreover, the widespread assumption that

good teachers automatically make good mentors does not hold" (p. 1031). Jorisson (2002) and Woullard and Coats (2004) found that mentors were a key factor in the success of the participants in providing emotional, educational, and professional development support. Moreover, they found that adopting the mentor's practices was a most significant factor for a successful alternate route candidate.

The federal government played a role in state-run alternate route education programs through the Department of Education by providing funding for enhancing teacher preparation, recruiting new teachers in shortage areas and recruiting mid-career professionals for disadvantaged districts. Troops to Teachers, one of the federally funded programs, recruited, trained, and supported retired members of the military to teach in needy areas. Furthermore, the Department of Education continued to create partnerships with independent organizations committed to alternate route certification such as the National Center for Alternative Certification, Teach for America, and The New Teacher Project (TNTP). The National Center for Alternative Certification housed a database for individuals interested in finding alternative certification programs by state. Teach for America recruited and trained over 10,000 teachers working in over 1,000 schools in 22 regions in the United States by 2006. Many of these individuals taught in urban and rural areas that were experiencing a critical shortage of teachers. Finally, TNTP was committed to fill teacher vacancies with highly qualified individuals by working with individual states, districts, and four-year institutions by recruiting and training prospective candidates. TNTP prepared over 10,000 teachers between 1997 and 2005 (Mahatha, 2005; Teach for America, n.d.; USDOE, 2004).

That these alternate route programs evolved was the cause of much controversy and research. The national teacher shortage, failure of emergency route certification programs, and dissatisfaction with traditional route teacher preparation programs were three of the most common reasons for their existence. Yet, opponents of the alternate route programs attacked them because they felt they were not providing quality teacher preparation and/or were encroaching on the four-year institution's "turf" (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1992b; Feistritzer, 2005; Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 2000; Roellke, 2003; Stoddard & Floden, 1995; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

C. E. Feistritzer (2005b) produced a comprehensive profile of 2,647 alternate route teachers during 2004-2005. She collected demographic and retention information, asked how and why individuals chose the alternate route, and had individuals describe their experiences in the alternate route. Thirty-seven percent of the sample was male as compared to 25% in the current United States teaching workforce and 32% were non-white as compare to 11% in the current teaching workforce. Fifty percent of the survey respondents were teaching in a large city (population more than 250, 000) as compared to only 14% in the current workforce. Especially in urban areas, male and minority teachers were sought to be role models for the school's population, where the teacher shortage was more pronounced.

Zeichner and Schulte (2001) reported on peer-reviewed literature of the United States and found that the alternate route programs were created specifically for urban areas where there were more minority candidates, but in reality did not attract a higher

percentage of minority participants than a traditional teacher education program. They found that White and Anglo teacher education students were much more apt to choose a suburban setting. They did find that there was evidence of men and older students being attracted into the alternate route programs in the studies conducted in Connecticut, Georgia, Los Angeles, and New Jersey. However, the majority of studies did not include age and gender information.

Feistritzer (year) also reported that alternate route prepared teachers were found in the critical shortage areas. Twenty percent were teaching in these areas as opposed to 6% in the current workforce. The survey found that 47% of the respondents would not have entered the teaching profession if it were not for the alternate route program. While 22% of the current workforce would be retired in five years, only 2% of the sample responded in this manner. Moreover, 62% of the survey respondents expected to be teaching in five years and 24% expected to have another type of job in the education field.

Feistritzer (year) reported that alternate route teachers in their 40's and 50's remained in teaching longer than their traditional route counterparts. Allan (2003) in his review of 92 studies and Zeichner and Schulte (2001) found support that alternate route prepared teachers had a comparable retention rate to traditional route prepared teachers in the short term. However, there was not sufficient data to compare the two groups in the long-term. Allan (2003) and Zeichner & Schulte (2001) found that subject area and grade level impacted retention figures. For example, it appeared that more alternate route mathematics teachers left at higher rates than the traditional route prepared teachers.

The fact remains that almost one third of teachers left the profession (non-retirement reasons) during the first three years and almost half left by their fifth year. In many low-income areas, rates were higher. Attrition was high in math, special education and science. Critics of alternate route teacher preparation programs argued that teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention were much more complex than originally thought. They stated that the alternate route had not proven to be the solution to the teacher shortage, but did admit that it had not proven to be the disaster some predicted (Feistritzer, 2005; Newman & Thomas, 1999; The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and NCTAF State Partners, 2002; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Only 50% of the students in traditional route teacher preparations programs graduated and usually only 70% of them began a teaching career (Berry, 2005). Those that argued that the shortage did not exist because there were enough graduates believed that by focusing on the following, enough teachers would be available for the classroom:

- better salaries
- working conditions
- preparation
- mentoring
- incentives for teaching in shortage areas
- changing antiquated and cumbersome hiring procedures and late budget decisions to retain teachers. (Feistritzer, 2005; Hardy, 2002; Newman & Thomas, 1999; The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and NCTAF State Partners, 2002; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001)

State Program Models

Florida, ranked among the bottom five states in producing baccalaureate degrees, was called on to produce 27% more teachers than was currently being prepared by the year 2020 to fill the expected vacancies. The teacher education programs had to

concentrate on attracting students to the key shortage areas because of the overabundance of graduates holding elementary certification (Furlong, 2003). In 1996, the Florida state legislature passed a bill that required the articulation of 120 hours of lower division courses, including education courses, which transferred directly to the eleven senior public institutions. In order to increase the number of teachers, in 2001 the state legislature passed a bill permitting community colleges to grant certain baccalaureate degrees after they obtain regional accreditation. In August 2002, St. Petersburg College began teacher education programs in the following areas by request of the local school districts: secondary science, secondary mathematics, special education, and elementary education. Location, facilities, student services, delivery methods, funding, financial aid, marketing, curricular issues, faculty resources, and accreditation became the key components to the development and delivery of the degree. The program was poised to answer the state's need for more teachers, and state policy provided the means by which to do so (Furlong, 2003).

Missouri offered an example of 2+2 articulation, freshman and sophomore level work at the community college articulated directly into the four-year institution's degree program. The Missouri initiative began with the realization that students transferring from community colleges were at a disadvantage primarily in terms of not having the opportunity to enroll in professional education courses in their freshman and sophomore years as did the students at the senior institutions. Next, the State Board of Education identified specific courses for transfer. The Missouri Standards for Teacher Education Programs (MOSTEP) developed standards in line with the Interstate New Teacher

Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Then a statewide articulation committee (STEAP) formed to study the program approval process. Finally, an advisory committee formed to ensure that the students' needs were met by creating the following six areas of action:

1. Research needs to be conducted to allay the fears of lack of preparedness of the community college student by the four-year faculty
2. General education should not be a course by course requirement, rather it should incorporate competencies needed by beginning teachers
3. Issues of trust and territoriality must be faced
4. In order to advise students correctly, all institutions must maintain a written document outlining the teacher education program
5. State agencies have the responsibility to ensure that students graduating from an approved A.A. program in teacher education are at the same point as the student from the four-year institution. (Lindstrom & Rasch, 2003, pp. 20-25)

Virginia offered another example of state-wide collaboration and policy formation that led to successful programming to combat the state's teacher shortage. Important aspects of this plan incorporated information from the professional associations, collaboration of the two- and four-year sectors, and the cooperation of the state through policy initiatives. In 1998 Virginia increased the number of courses in mathematics and science credits required to obtain certification. Then, in 1999, the state encouraged ease of transfer from the two-year to the four-year institutions and requested piloting more programs that had been successful on a small scale. Federal funding was being sought to help implement the pilot programs. The third state initiative was a task force designed to allow communication to flow between all 23 colleges about teacher preparation issues such as licensure, preservice activities, and the curriculum. In addition, the task force would encourage replication of model programs and recruitment and marketing strategies (Wood, 2001).

California targeted the community college to help relieve the state's teacher shortage and included this goal in its Master Plan for education. The state supported three programs with grant funding but other programs persisted without state funding. Some of the programs concentrated on transfer and articulation while others prepared paraprofessionals to enter into teacher preparation programs. The programs focused on obstacles such as cost, scheduling, and academic deficiencies in order to provide a successful avenue for completing the process (Hagedorn, Newman & Duffy, 2003).

Texas accomplished work in the area of alternative certification based on learning outcomes and not a set of courses through the cooperation of the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Collin County Community College District began with a focus on technology and incorporated a mentoring system and portfolio requirement that proved to be key pieces in student success. The State Board for Educator Certification worked closely with the program, making policy changes and regulation enhancements to make sure that students gained certification. Eight factors contributed to the successful planning and implementation: labor market assessment, consideration of competition and end-users, mentoring, operational costs, advisory committees, starting small, candidate selection, and outcomes evaluation (May, Katsinas, & Moore, 2003).

Arizona boasted one of the most comprehensive plans, which was delivered through the Maricopa Community College system. The 2+2+2 partnership programs were marketed to future teachers beginning in high school and there were also programs that target paraprofessionals to complete an associate degree and then continue on to a

baccalaureate degree. Maricopa partnered with Walden University for a Masters Degree, offered an alternate route program for those with a bachelor's degree, and provided endorsements for current teachers aspiring to complete certification for a specialized area. Programs were offered in both face-to-face and online formats. The goal was to reach as many people as possible and eliminate any barriers that obstructed the ability to complete one's goal. The Teacher Education Partnership Commission (TEPC) coordinated statewide efforts and advocated change in the policy arena of the state (Gaskin, Helfgot, Parsons, & Solley 2003).

NPTNJ Program Organization and Content

The NPTNJ Program was an alternate route teacher certification program governed by Jersey City State University and housed at each of the 19 community colleges in the state. At each site a program coordinator oversaw the program. The NPTNJ curriculum was divided into three modules. Module I was delivered in the summer over six-weeks. Modules II and III were each delivered in 12 sessions each during the September to June academic school year. The three modules were connected by the following five themes: planning and preparation, instructional delivery, classroom environment, school environment, and professional responsibilities. The NPTNJ program abided by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards. The standards were:

1. Content Pedagogy
   The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

2. Student Development
   The teacher understands how children learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities that support a child's intellectual, social, and personal development.

3. Diverse Learners
   The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

4. Multiple Instructional Strategies
   The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

5. Motivation and Management
   The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

6. Communication and Technology
   The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

7. Planning
   The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

8. Assessment
   The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

9. Reflective Practice: Professional Growth
   The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

10. School and Community Involvement
    The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being (INTASC Standards, 2006).

The NPTNJ program moved students from theory to practice using a variety of instructional strategies, including discussions, presentations, small and large group activities, role-playing, and field experience. Technology was present to enhance the teaching/learning environment. Attendance was mandatory at all sessions and active participation was expected. The NPTNJ Program was governed by 15 learner/program outcomes. Upon completion of the program, the teacher candidate would be able to:

1. Develop a knowledge base of and apply the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective curriculum development, instructional strategies and implementation techniques, as assessed by projects and classroom activities.

2. Design curriculum and instructional activities that are individually and developmentally appropriate, as assessed by classroom activities.

3. Use classroom observations and information about students, families, and communities as sources for evaluating the outcomes of instruction and as the basis for experimenting with, reflecting on, and revising practices, as assessed by clinical field experience and reflective journals.

4. Identify, use, and evaluate community technological resources to support curriculum goals within a teaching/learning environment. Use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques (e.g. self-assessments, observations, performance tasks, and teacher made tests), to modify teaching and learning strategies and facilitate student learning, as assessed by the clinical field experience and in-class activities.

5. Know the subject matter to be taught and the strategies to teach the subjects to diverse learners so that all students meet the standards for P-12 education, as assessed by in-class group activities, reflective journals, discussions, research, micro-teaching, and lesson plans.

6. Demonstrate an understanding of the process of and the ability to integrate the four components of literacy in developmentally appropriate instructional activities across curricular areas.

7. Develop the important values and commitments that influence teaching and the teacher’s behaviors toward student learning, motivation, and development,

as well as the teacher's own professional growth, as assessed by reflective journals, class discussions, and activities.

8. Reflect on the dispositions expected of professionals in their work with students, families, and communities, as assessed by classroom activities and field experience.

9. Recognize that issues related to gender, language, culture, and special needs of students need to be addressed in the design of an inclusive curriculum, including teaching strategies in the teaching-learning environment, as assessed by a research project and classroom activities.

10. Design age-appropriate physical environments that promote effective classroom management techniques and communication techniques, including the establishment of rules and routines and the ability to deal with challenging behavior, as assessed by the clinical field experience and classroom activities.

11. Use and understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to establish a safe, orderly, and equitable learning environment that fosters positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation, was assessed by the classroom management plan.

12. Implement effective behavior management strategies in classrooms for students with disabilities, including individual and group behavior management interventions.

13. Understand and implement a variety of empirically based classroom management models, as assessed by the classroom management plan.

14. Understand the principles of applied behavior analysis, including demonstration of a thorough knowledge of the concepts, vocabulary, etc. Demonstrate the ability to use principles of applied behavioral analysis in designing and carrying out behavior change programs, including observing and recording behaviors, charting and graphing data, and interpreting results, as assessed by the clinical field experience.

15. Formulate and describe preliminary personal classroom management plan, which includes components of major discipline models, as assessed by classroom activities and the classroom management plan (NPTNJ, 2006).

Each module had a specific purpose and evaluation criteria. Module I focused on teaching as a profession and began to prepare the participants for managing the diverse

learners encountered in the classroom. The participants conducted research on professional practices, began their reflective journals, completed 15 hours of observation, and compiled teacher resources focused on one academic content area. In Module II, participants continued learning about diverse learners and concentrated on effective classroom strategies. They created lesson plans, continued the reflective journal, compiled a literacy resource portfolio, taught their peers, and were observed by the program coordinator/instructor. Module III emphasized curriculum development and assessment. Participants continued their reflective journal, created a mini curriculum unit outlining five lessons, developed an overall assessment rubric for the mini unit plan, were observed by the program coordinator/instructor, wrote a research paper on a literacy topic, and wrote a paper discussing the literacy strategies that were used in two of their lesson plans. In addition, each participant created a thematic or concept driven curriculum unit that included a minimum of five lesson plans each with appropriate rubrics, assessments, objectives, and procedures that were connected to the Core Curriculum Content Standards of New Jersey. The participant described how the lessons would be implemented, the rationale for selecting specific activities, and what differentiated learning strategies would be needed (NPTNJ, 2006).

The Community College Role

Community colleges were not only driven by their mission to be involved in training and retraining, but they were also being given financial incentives from the Bush Administration to participate more heavily in workforce development. NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals were aligned with both of these objectives.

Paraprofessionals could obtain their associate degree or two years of college education at a community college. However, paraprofessionals were working during peak class times and the community college was uniquely adept at offering flexible plans to accommodate these workers with programs brought to the job site, offered after work or online, and within traditional semesters but in creative time plans. Eubanks (2001) in his description of features of successful paraeducator programs added that it is necessary to provide appropriate support services in financial aid, tutoring, test-taking and study skills, access to learning centers, and childcare services. These activities were a strong part of the community college mission. In 2006, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) reported that 200 community colleges offered "either two-year associate degrees or one-year certificate programs specifically designed to train paraprofessionals interested in working in inclusive special and general education, bilingual/ESL, Title I and early childhood programs (ECS, 2004b).

The needs of the classroom teacher, a population that required flexible delivery and time scheduling, could also be met at the community college. In the beginning of the 21st century, technology training and mathematics professional development courses and workshops were the most popular offerings at community colleges. Stevens Institute of Technology, the League for Innovation in the Community College, 13-WNET, and the community college districts of Maricopa (Arizona), Miami-Dade (Florida), and Cuyahoga (Ohio) collaborated on educating teachers to become technology trainers in their individual schools. Kankakee Community College and Aurora University (Illinois) collaborated to offer professional development and/or graduate credits in several areas

including Spanish, classroom management, and learning disabilities. These are just two of the many examples of what was occurring in the area of professional development.

For those holding a bachelor's degree in core academic subjects, the community college offered Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs). Typically, community colleges offered ACPs that expedited the time to certification and cost less than the traditional route. However, the two-year sector had to contend with the college and university perceptions that they were not qualified to offer teacher education at an appropriate academic level and that community colleges were receiving a share of the funds for teacher education programs and did not have to submit to teacher accreditation standards (ECS, 2001; ECS, 2004b).

Gederman (2001) reported that in 1997 over 30% of K-12 students were minorities while only 15% of the teachers were. He also found that minority teachers tended to teach in districts with a student body in which more than half was minority. Community colleges were strategically placed to start minority students in the pipeline towards a teacher education program. They enrolled almost half of the undergraduate students nationwide and 50% of the minority student population attended a community college. Importantly, Allen (2003) found that 40% of the math and science teachers from Bragg's study in 1998 began their career at the community college.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

NCLB was created as an improvement to the 1994 *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS) 2004 report

it offered an improved method for transforming our nation's schools through detailed conditions, incentives, and consequences.

> NCLB clearly establishes the improvement of public education as a vital and urgent national priority, and sets ambitious goals: To eliminate gaps in achievement between students who have traditionally performed well in school and those who have not; and ensure all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by the 2013-14 school year; to guarantee every classroom in the nation is staffed by a highly qualified teacher; and to make all schools safer and more productive learning environments. (ECS, 2004a, p. iv).

According to ECS report findings the United States made significant progress towards fulfilling the NCLB mandates. Some of the major findings were as follows:

- All 50 states had met or were partially on track to meeting half of the 40 NCLB requirements being tracked by ECS – an 11% increase over March 2003.
- All but two states and the District of Columbia had met or were partially on track to meeting 75% of the requirements – an impressive 109% increase as of March 2003.
- Five states – Connecticut, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania – had met or were partially on track to meeting all 40 NCLB requirements. (ECS, 2004a, p. v).

Although the vast majority of states have tested new teachers, assessed student knowledge, and created policy for safer schools, there were still significant issues posing particular challenges.

- Few states were on track to implementing high-quality professional development for all teachers in their subject area.
- Only 10 states appeared fully on track to ensuring both new and veteran teachers are qualified to teach in their subject area.
- Fewer than half of the states were on track to making sure scientifically based technical assistance was provided to low-performing schools (ECS, 2001, p. v).

Some flexibly was allowed in order for certain groups to meet the NCLB requirements. Rural districts that employed teachers to teach in multiple areas, some

without the NCLB required training, would have more time to address this requirement. Science education would be allowed to incorporate the standards of the profession. Lastly, teachers who taught in multiple disciplines would be able to fulfill the NCLB regulations through one process (USDOE, 2004).

Rod Paige, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) in his *Third Annual Report on Teacher Quality* reported that highly qualified teachers raised the level of academic achievement of their students. In addition, the report promoted reducing barriers to certification, reforming state and local educational policies, and providing continuing education for teachers who were not new to the profession. The report supported alternative certification programs because they provided a way to reach these goals and thus, because of this some of the innovative alternate route programs were federally funded (USDOE, 2004).

Four-year Institution Involvement

In the realm of teacher preparation programs, typically, the four-year colleges and universities had control over the way in which courses transfered from a two-year college. In addition, the relationship between the two sectors was strained by the fact that two-year colleges did not have to meet accreditation standards and received funding for teacher education programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), 2002). Articulation and transfer to the four-year institution was done on a course-by-course basis resulting in a loss of credits, repetition of courses, added time to graduation, and completing additional general education requirements. These barriers to the formation of seamless transfer were often caused by the notion that students at the

community college received an inferior education. However, research proved that community college students graduated and succeeded in their jobs at the same rate as graduates from four-year institutions (Boswell, 2004; Van Middlesworth, Carpenter-Davis, & McCool, 2001).

Two transfer problems identified in the literature were the lack of staff to guide the students and the lack of motivation at the four-year level to find time to make successful transfer programs. Yet, there were methods in place to ease transfer. For example, 23 states had a general education core curricula programs that transferred upon completion of an associate degree. Seventeen states had a common course-numbering system program. In addition, the practice of joint admissions allowed students to transition easily to the senior institution when the student was accepted at both institutions (ECS, 2004b).

Four-year teacher preparation programs were held to strict standards. The majority of colleges and universities followed the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) standards. A growing number of institutions were seeking accreditation from the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) or Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). Community colleges were not held to any of these rigorous accreditation models. This created more tension in the area of education quality since the four-year college had to spend much time, effort, and money in order to comply with the accrediting body's standards. Imig and Harrill-McClellan (2003) offered two appealing suggestions to help bring the two and four-year colleges together: (a) create a separate accreditation system for the two-year sector or,

(b) accredit the two–year sector along with the four-year sector in programs that are articulated (pp. 80-86).

There were six NCATE standards that have been developed to ensure quality teacher education programs and aid in the training of quality teacher candidates in the areas of coursework, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability. The conceptual framework was a way to create a shared vision among and within teacher education programs that was consistent with an institution's mission. The six standards were:

- Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions
  Candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional schools personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. Assessments indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institutional standards.

- Standard 2: Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
  The unit has an assessment system that collects and analyzes data on the applicant qualifications, candidates and graduate performance, and unit operations to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs.

- Standard 3: Field Experience and Clinical Practice
  The units and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.

- Standard 4: Diversity
  The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.

- Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance, and Development
  Faculty are qualified and model best practices in scholarship, service, and teaching, including the assessment of their own effectiveness as related to

candidate performance. They also collaborate with colleagues in their discipline and schools. The unit systematically evaluates faculty performance and facilitates professional development.

- Standard 6: Unit Governance and Resources
  The unit has the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and resources, including information technology resources, for the preparation of candidates to meet professional, state, and institutional standards. (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2006)

TEAC's goal was to provide quality teacher education programs and caring teacher educators. Their accreditation was governed by three quality principles and two standards:

- Quality Principle I: Evidence of student learning
  The core of TEAC accreditation is the evidence that the program faculty provides support of its claims about students' learning and understanding of the professional education curriculum, especially their subject matter knowledge and teaching skill.

- Quality Principle II: Valid assessment of student learning
  TEAC expects program faculty to provide (1) a rationale justifying that the assessment techniques it uses are reasonable and credible and (2) evidence documenting the reliability and validity of the assessments.

- Quality Principle III: Institutional learning
  TEAC expects that a faculty's decisions about its programs are based on evidence, and that the program has a quality control system that (1) yields reliable evidence about the program's practices and results, and (2) influences policies and decision making.

- Standards of Capacity for Program Quality
  TEAC defines a quality program as one that has credible evidence that it satisfies the three quality principles. However, TEAC also requires the faculty to provide independent evidence that the program also has the capacity--curriculum, faculty, resources, facilities, publications, student support services, and policies--to support student learning and program quality.

- State Standards
  When appropriate because of TEAC's protocol agreement with a state, an eighth component to the TEAC capacity standards (4.8) is added, with

> subcomponents (4.8.1, etc.) in accordance to the state's particular requirements. (Teacher Education Accreditation Council, 2006)

Teacher Preparation and Student Performance

How quality was defined as it related to a teacher's work in the classroom evolved over the years. In the 1940's and 1950's teacher quality was related to personality traits, in the 1960's the delivery of social values and a prescribed curricula defined teacher quality. In the beginning of the 21st century it revolved around being able to work with a standards-based curriculum and produce a value-added education. Consequently, a quality teacher was defined by his/her students' achievement. Lauer and Dean (2004) found in various studies that that the following six characteristics positively affected student outcomes:

- Years of teaching experience up to five years (beyond five years, no measurable additional benefit has been found for experience)
- Advanced degrees in mathematics and science for secondary teachers of those subject areas.
- Coursework in content areas for secondary teachers of those subject areas
- Pedagogical coursework, particularly when tied to a content area (e.g., methods of teaching mathematics).
- Teachers' scores on tests of verbal ability (pp. 1-2).

This information was consistent with Jennifer King Rice's (2003) analysis of empirical studies conducted in the United States in the last three decades that focused solely on the relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance. Her framework of six characteristics that positively influence student achievement was: teacher experience, teacher preparation programs and degrees, teacher certification, teacher coursework, and teachers' test scores. In the five studies that Rice included about teacher experience, Murnane (1975), Murnane and Philips (1981), Ferguson (1991),

Ferguson and Ladd (1996), and Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata and Williamson, (2000), only the Ferguson (1991) study found that secondary school teachers with nine or more years of experience had an impact on student achievement. The others found that beyond five years, except in the case of Grissmer, who found that beyond two years, no statistical significance was evident on the impact of student achievement.

The seven studies that Rice (2003) reviewed for a connection between teacher education programs and job performance were varied in their approaches and purpose. For example, Clark, Smith, Newby, and Cook (1985) found that teacher education programs, prior beliefs, and student teaching each comprised one third of the practices in use in the surveyed individuals. Adams and Krockover (1997) found that teacher education programs played a role in teacher practices, along with pedagogical knowledge. Hollingsworth (1989) determined that classroom management, teaching reading, an understanding of student learning, and prior beliefs were the key factors of teacher education programs that lead to classroom success. Grossman (1989) and Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin and Place (2003) found that the teacher education programs excelled in teaching individuals how to connect discipline knowledge to classroom instruction. Rice did report on two studies that found evidence that teacher preparation programs were not a factor in classroom performance. Pigge (1978) concluded from questionnaires to principals and teachers that what they needed to know was learned on the job. Dewalt and Ball (1987) reported that unprepared teachers scored higher in creating the appropriate questions for students and holding them appropriately accountable.

Rice (2003) reported on two studies, Summers and Wolfe (1975) and Ehrenberg and Brewer (1994), that showed a positive correlation between teacher preparation program at selective institutions and student achievement. A third study, Murnane and Philips (1981), found no statistical correlation. Rice (2003) described four studies, Andrew and Schwab (1995), Summers and Wolfe (1997), Murnane et al. (1981), Harnish (1987), and Ehrenberg et al. (1994) that found no statistical correlation between graduates of post-baccalaureate degree teacher preparation programs and student achievement and teacher preparation. A fifth study completed by Ehrenberg et al. (1994) found a positive correlation, but only for black students. Rice (2003) reported on four studies Murnane (1975), Eberts and Stone (1984), Kiesling (1984), and Rowan, Correnti, and Miller (2002), which found a negative correlation. Four studies, Ferguson and Ladd (1996), Goldhaber and Brewer (1998 and 2000), and Rowan, Chiang, and Miller (1997), showed a positive correlation between teacher preparation and student achievement.

Darling-Hammond and Ball as reported by Neville, Sherman, and Cohen (2005), who found that 40-90% of a student's academic achievement could be attributed to the quality of the teacher, reflected the varied research results reported on the impact of teacher preparation on student achievement in the study. The Education Commission of the States (ECS, 2003) in its effort to publish on teaching quality reviewed 92 studies containing solid research on teacher preparation. The ECS report found that there was moderate support for having a solid grasp of the subject matter and limited support for the importance of knowledge on how to teach the specific content one was going to teach. Begle as reported by Stoddard and Floden (1995) found that student achievement was

positively associated with the discipline knowledge of teachers of mathematics 20% of the time and negatively associated 15% of the time. Lauer and Dean (2005) in the *Teacher Quality Toolkit* that promoted standards-based education, studied four award-winning teacher education programs that expanded upon the necessary components of teacher education programs:

- Content courses and subject-area methods courses are aligned with national and, to some degree, state K-12 content standards.
- Candidates use content standards documents as part of their course materials.
- Course assignments require candidates to locate standards documents on the Internet and to identify content standards in their lesson plans.
- In methods classes, candidates learn to develop lesson plans that address standards and to assess students' learning in meeting these standards.
- In field experiences, especially student teaching, candidates learn to examine evidence of student learning and to use their instructional practices.
- To help all students reach high standards, candidates learn to teach exceptional learners and other diverse students.
- Candidates learn to generate student work samples that identify the needs of individual students and to modify instruction based on these needs.
- Candidates are assessed on both their content and pedagogical knowledge. The teacher preparation program uses the results of these assignments to monitor effectiveness of candidates and the teacher preparation program itself.
- Education faculty collaborate with faculty from arts and sciences at each institution, which helps to ensure that the content that candidates learn is aligned with K-12 standards.
- Education faculty collaborate with K-12 teachers and administrators, which helps align teacher preparation curricula with standards and provides feedback to the programs about performance of their candidates in standards-based classroom. (pp. 6-7)

Rice (2003) reported on two studies, Hawk, Coble, and Swanson (1985) and Goldhaber et al. (2000), which showed a positive impact on secondary student achievement by teachers holding certification in mathematics. In other of her studies, Rowan et al. (2002) found no correlation. In terms of the impact of alternate route certification on teacher preparation, Rice (2003) looked at seven studies. Goldhaber et al.

(2000) included teachers with emergency certification and were critiqued for not giving an accurate picture of the alternate route teacher. Goldhaber et al. (2000) found no difference in the impact in mathematics and science achievement between the teachers in their study than with the traditionally prepared teachers. The four studies of Hawk and Schmidt (1989), Lutz and Hutton (1989), Stafford and Barrow (1994), and Miller, McKenna, and McKenna (1998) all found no significant difference between alternate route and traditional route prepared teachers. Guyton, Fox, and Sisk (1991) found that alternate route teachers perceived a greater need for teacher preparation programs and the traditional route teachers rated themselves higher in willingness to continue to teach the following year. Rice (2003) reported on the study by McDiarmid and Wilson (1991), which found that the alternate route prepared teachers had a negative effect on student understanding of mathematics, particularly at the elementary level.

Rice (2003) described studies that explored the coursework taken by teachers, both pedagogical and discipline related, some of which included field experience and the impact it had on student achievement. Overall, Rice found the studies including field experience such as Eisenhart, Belm, and Romagnano (1991) to conclude that the student teaching experience was disjointed and not integrated well with the teacher preparation curriculum. Several studies, Nelson and Wood (1985), Ferguson and Womack (1993), Monk (1994), Evertson, Hawley, and Zlotnick (1985), and Ashton and Crocker (1987), found a positive correlation between pedagogical coursework and student achievement. Perkes (1967) found that science education coursework had a positive effect on student achievement, but not the science discipline. Druva and Anderson (1983) found that the

number of science and biology courses taken by biology majors had a positive correlation with student achievement. However, Eberts and Stone (1984) did not find a positive correlation between mathematics coursework and student performance.

Teacher preparation had been assessed quantitatively through exams such as the National Teacher Exam (NTE). Rice (2003) found that literacy and verbal tests were predictors of student achievement, but national exams such as the NTE were not. Several studies, Quirk, Witten, and Weinberg (1973), Ayers and Qualls (1979), Sheehan and Marcus (1978), Piper and O'Sullivan (1981), and Strauss and Sawyer (1986) showed no or little to no statistical correlation between the teachers' scores and teacher aptitude. Stoddard and Floden (1995) found that studies conducted between 1960 and 1980 showed that teacher education students came from the least academically prepared student group. This research coupled with national reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983), *High School* (1983), and *High School and Beyond* (1990), pushed teacher preparation programs to make changes. When the alternate route programs became more commonplace with such different methods for teacher preparation, this posed a threat for critics of traditional route education. For proponents of alternate route certification, it became a way to answer the public's cry for better-prepared teachers.

There was a trend found in the literature that stated that acquiring the necessary pedagogical skills could take place while "on the job" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hess, Rotherham & Walsh, 2004; Neville et al., 2005; Stoddard & Floden, 1995). The ECS (2003) review of literature concluded that it was unclear whether the essentials of teaching one's subject area could and should be learned as a student or as a teacher.

However, critics subscribed to the notion that teacher preparation was the purview of the traditional programs found at the four-year institutions (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002). Neville et al. (2005) found that traditional programs did not provide enough time for student teaching and that the teaching experience was not connected to the academic experience. Stoddard and Floden (1995) reported from various studies that learning on the job could socialize teachers to the culture of the school and not necessarily to the best available practices. This was in contrast to the information found by them that stated that the traditional program setting provided students with the opportunity to study a wide range of concepts.

Traditional vs. Alternate Route Teacher Education Debate

"It's time to abandon the futile debate over 'Alternative vs. Traditional' teacher preparation programs and just set high quality standards" (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and NCTAF State Partners, 2002, p. 15). Unfortunately, this did not occur, the debate persisted. One view asserted that alternative route teacher preparation programs did not prepare qualified teachers when compared to the traditionally prepared teacher (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1992b). The competing view, also relying on limited research, stated that alternate route teacher education programs were as good as the traditional programs (Newman & Kay, 1999; Qu & Becker, 2003; Stoddard & Floden, 1995).

Berry (2005) stated that the debate on teacher education was about deregulation or professionalization. Advocates of alternative certification programs sought to deregulate

education by emphasizing that the teacher needed a deep general knowledge and should be fast-tracked into the classroom. Those that sought to professionalize education valued a deep knowledge base but believed that teaching was tied to the social and political issues of society. The professional teacher was seen as a change agent, one that would be able to be successful in completing and creating a competency-based curriculum. This teacher would raise the standards of the profession and create a confidence level in a public in which 75% did not want a teacher in a classroom without teacher preparation and 73% held teachers and administrators responsible for student achievement.

Given the characteristics commonly associated with teacher preparation, alternate route and traditional route prepared teachers had differences, but the literature contradicted itself. Alternate route teachers did not score any differently than the traditional route teachers on national exams. Studies showed that alternate route teachers did impact positively on student achievement (Qu & Becker, 2003; Stoddard & Floden, 1995). Qu and Becker (2003) conducted a meta-analysis on 24 studies comparing traditional and alternate certified teachers. Their findings again were inconclusive as to choosing which route was better in preparing teachers. Differences were associated with the external forces of location, grade level, discipline, and experience level. The important finding was that exemplary teacher education programs focused on quality preparation as found in the model programs.

Summary

In this chapter, an overview was presented of how alternate route education was defined in the literature. Although there were many definitions and standards, the

majority of programs required a bachelor's degree to enter the program and certified participants on completion of pedagogical coursework and field experience. Several state models were described in order to demonstrate the variation that existed. There was research presented that found that alternate route prepared teachers filled critically needed positions in discipline shortage areas. Moreover, they worked in urban settings at a greater rate than traditional route prepared teachers.

The role of the community college in teacher education preparation was discussed because the focus of this study was an alternate route program based at the community college level. The community college is well suited to fulfill this role for geographical reasons as well as its flexibility to meet student needs. In addition, community colleges enrolled half of the minority undergraduate population, a targeted group for teacher education programs and rural teaching positions. However, the literature showed that a rift existed between two- and four-year institutions. First, there was a long history of disagreeing on articulation and transfer issues. Second, a few two-year institutions had been accorded the ability to grant baccalaureate degrees, although the reasons were typically for geographic purposes or to provide teacher education programs to help fill the vacancies in teacher shortage areas. Third, community colleges did not have the expense of meeting outside teacher education accrediting agency regulations.

The literature explored how teacher quality was found to be influenced positively in several studies by a combination of the following: teaching experience, teacher preparation programs, coursework in content area, degrees, test scores, and prior beliefs. Quality teacher preparation programs were found to include the importance of national

and state standards, classroom management, teaching reading, pedagogy, and focused on developing plans for and assessing the diverse student population. In addition, the literature presented several teacher preparation programs in which the faculty collaborated across the disciplines in their institutions as well as with K-12 teachers. The evidence that teacher preparation had a positive effect on student achievement, however, was conflicting.

Studies that compared alternate route and traditional route programs produced conflicting evidence that one outperformed the other. However, there continued a debate that had critics of alternate route teacher preparation programs stating that teacher preparation was the purview of the four-year institution and that, in contrast to what studies found, one cannot acquire teaching skills while “on the job.” The literature provided some evidence that alternate route programs produced quality teachers, although not enough to end a long-time debate that alternate route education programs could fulfill an integral role in educating appropriately trained teachers. The study presented in Chapter Four added more information to inform educators and policy makers when contemplating the use of an alternate route program in their state or district.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Introduction

In this chapter a discussion as to why the qualitative design was appropriate for the study is presented. Second, the concept and appropriate methodology of the case study is explained. Third, the study is described, including the sampling method, data collection procedures, data analysis strategies, and validation procedures. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations of the study and a summary of the chapter.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Qualitative methodology as described by Stake (1995) is a conceptual structure to study an issue or issues, in this case the nature of the NPTNJ program at the community college level (Stake, 1995, p. 16). The qualitative methodology according to Merriam (1998) focuses on quality, includes fieldwork, incorporates description, is flexible and emergent, and consists of a small sample. In addition, the researcher is the primary source and may discover the case through interviews. Most importantly, it is “comprehensive, expansive, and richly descriptive” (pp. 6-9). “Qualitative research ‘implies a direct concern with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’” (Sherman & Webb, 1988, as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

In order to explore the NPTNJ program, ten interviews were conducted of teachers that have completed the program at the community college site. Each participant obtained teacher certification and was in their second or third year of teaching in a public

school. In addition, nine administrators in the schools in which the teachers were employed, were interviewed. Observations of nine of the teachers were conducted in order to validate the information gained in the interviews. Lesson plans and the NPTNJ curriculum were analyzed and used to verify findings. The findings of this case are presented in the format Merriam described in order to learn about the importance of alternate route education and formulate future initiatives.

The Case Study Inquiry Tradition and Research Design

The case study is a specific qualitative approach that

> is interactive communication, first between a single researcher with the case, later with the reader. The exercise is partly commiseration, partly celebration, but always intellectualization, a conveying, a creating of meaning. Because it is an exercise in such depth, the study is an opportunity to see what others have not yet seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our lives, to engage the best of our interpretive powers, and to make, even by its integrity alone, an advocacy for those things we cherish. (Stake, 1995, p. 136)

The NPTNJ program had not been studied before and included one of the key components of a case study, a "bounded system." Merriam (1998) stated, "the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of the study" (p. 27). The NPTNJ case study was restricted by the northern half of New Jersey and by the schools in which the participants taught. Time (September 2006 – December 2006), occupation (teacher, administrator), and issue (NPTNJ alternate route program) also defined the case.

Sampling Method

The participants were identified through maximum variation and criterion sampling. Maximum variation strategy was designed to elicit participation of individuals

that could provide multiple perspectives about the research question (Creswell, 1998). This strategy allowed the researcher to identify both common patterns and diverse views to create not only the thick, rich description, but also the foundation for analyzing the case. Therefore, the researcher tried to interview participants teaching in the elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, there was a concerted effort to interview participants that taught distinct disciplines and to keep the same number of female and male teacher participants. The teacher and administrator charts in Chapter Four present the variation of participant characteristics.

Criterion sampling delineated a standard by which all participants were judged. The criterion for this study was that all participants were over the age of 19 and participation was not restricted to one gender or to certain ethnic groups. In addition, NPTNJ participants completed the program and were in their second or third year of teaching in a public school. Finally, the administrators had at least one NPTNJ teacher in their district.

The coordinator of the NPTNJ program at the community college provided the names of participants that matched the criterion for this study. It took two months to confirm all 19 interview and 9 observations. The original goal of 20 interviews and 10 observations was not met because A8 did not agree to an interview and T5 did not agree to an observation. First, 10 teacher participants were contacted by letter (See Appendix B) to seek their agreement to participate in the study. Next, all participants were called. Those that had contacted the researcher by phone or e-mail indicating that they would like to participate were asked to set a date for the interview and observation. Those that

had not contacted the researcher were asked to participate. From the original 10 letters, five teachers agree to participate. When an individual declined to participate, another name from the list was chosen always with maximum variation sampling in mind. A letter was sent to that individual and then he/she was called and asked to participate in the study. This pattern continued until 10 teachers agreed to participate in the study.

Once a participant agreed, the researcher asked the teacher participant for the contact information of their supervisor/administrator. The teacher participant chose the administrator, accounting for the variety of supervisors, vice principals, principals, and superintendents. The primary researcher contacted the administrator by letter asking permission to conduct the study in their school and inviting them to participate by being interviewed (see Appendices A and C). Those administrators that did not respond to the letter were contacted by phone.

The primary investigator contacted the participants by e-mail one week before the scheduled interview to confirm them (see Appendix D). Interviews and observations were conducted in the school setting. All teacher participants were asked to allow the researcher to observe a class. Nine out of the ten teacher participants agreed.

Data Collection Procedures

The in-depth qualitative interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes and were conducted face-to-face over a period of three months. Teacher interviews followed the protocol found in Appendix E and administrators followed the protocol found in Appendix F. Interviews focused on the description of the NPTNJ Program. Teachers were asked to describe their educational and teaching experiences. Administrators were asked to

describe their experiences with teachers completing the NPTNJ Program. Interviews were tape recorded, and then transcribed verbatim. Participants were able to review the interview protocol prior to the interview for an explanation of the study to be conducted and the questions to be asked. The interview protocols were e-mailed to participants along with a copy of the Informed Consent form (see Appendices H and I). The participants signed the Informed Consent forms at the time of the interview. The researcher included follow-up questions during the interviews to clarify information.

Observations were conducted the same day as the teacher participant interviews. Only nine out of the ten participants agreed to be observed. The observations followed the protocol found in Appendix G. The primary investigator generated a list of topics to observe that included the following:

- General teaching strategies
- Lesson organization
- Classroom management
- Technology use
- Presentational skills
- Comfort level
- Working with special needs students
- Differentiated learning
- Assessment strategies

The list of topics was checked by two experts in the field of education before the study was conducted. More explanation of their role is found in the validation section. In addition, Merriam (1998) stated that the following components should be the focus of the observation:

- setting
- participants
- activities and interactions

- conversations
- subtle factors, including spontaneous activities and non-verbal communication
- researcher's behaviors.

During the observations, the primary investigator remained in the back of the classroom, did not participate, and took notes about the class, including any initial reflections on the class observed. The notes focused on how the teacher delivered the lesson, teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction, and assessment techniques.

Data Analysis Strategies

Data analysis followed the methodology commonly used for case studies. First, all interviews were transcribed and a preliminary set of themes was generated, one set for the teacher participants and one for the administrator participants. The transcribed interviews were sent to all participants for review and comment. Second, the preliminary researcher also reviewed field notes, lesson plans, and teacher generated worksheets obtained at the observation to help further the coding process. Third, the transcribed interviews were loaded into the qualitative software Atlas.Ti 5.0. The software was used to assign codes to the transcribed interviews for coding. In vivo coding was used whenever possible. During this process, the primary researcher typed the observation notes and indicated relationships with the created codes by matching themes and sub themes. Fourth, codes were clustered into themes. During this process, redundant codes were eliminated. Fifth, the themes were refocused to create the seven major themes, which were linked to their sub themes. The patterns and relationships discovered were continually analyzed and refocused as the data were analyzed, causing a continual

revising of themes and sub-themes (Creswell, 1998). The themes and sub themes are found in Appendix M.

Validation Procedures

Each case was analyzed separately and then the cases were compared, providing final analysis and interpretation of the findings. Through detailed descriptions of each case, themes were validated and further themes emerged (Stake, 1995, p. 78). As suggested by Lincoln and Guba, the analysis concluded with a "lessons learned" (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 62) from the completed analysis.

Five validation techniques were used. First, two experts in the field of K-12 education, a county superintendent and the Coordinator of World Languages and International Education for the Department of Education of New Jersey reviewed the interview and observation protocols for the teacher and administrator participants. Feedback suggested that the protocols would elicit important information. The coordinator was concerned that the questions may be repetitive and perhaps there were too many questions for a one-hour interview. The primary researcher reevaluated and made modifications to the protocols.

The second procedure was member checking, a technique in which participants reviewed the transcripts and a summary of the themes for accuracy. According to Creswell, member checks are used to verify "the credibility of the findings and interpretations." The third technique used was reviewing the data for disconfirming evidence or evidence that was inconsistent. The fourth technique was the rich, thick description of the interviews which provided information for transferability of themes

(Creswell, 1998, pp. 201-203). Finally, an auditor verified the findings for accuracy (Merriam, 1998). Please see Appendix J for the Confidentiality Agreement of the auditor and Appendix K for the Letter from the auditor. The auditor read the transcripts, coded two teacher and two administrator transcripts, and compared this coding to the primary researcher's outcomes. Next, she reviewed the major themes developed by the researcher and the connecting sub-themes. Lastly, she read the conclusions of the researcher to confirm their credibility and the integrity of the entire process.

Ethical Considerations

Any information obtained during this study which could identify a participant, was kept strictly confidential. For coding and data storage, each interview was numbered. Each teacher participant was given a designation of T plus the number of their interview. Each administrator participant was given the designation A plus the number of their interview. Paper copies of the transcriptions were kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home and will be kept for a period of three years. Electronic copies of the transcriptions were maintained in a password-protected file on the principal investigator's computer. Following the data analysis, the records were transferred to a CD and kept in the locked filing cabinet along with the transcription in the principal investigator's home. The audiotapes were destroyed after transcription.

Summary

In this chapter, an overview of why the case study methodology was appropriate for this study was explained. In addition, the methodology used for the study was presented. The criterion and variation sampling methods, data collection and analysis

procedures were described. Finally, five validations procedures were presented along with the ethical considerations given.

The case study methodology allowed the researcher to focus on the views of the NPTNJ participants and their administrators to gain an understanding of one particular alternate route program. The data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis allowed the researcher to discover themes and develop findings that will be presented in the next chapter. The researcher was cognizant at all times to maintain the confidentiality of all participants and present the findings in a credible manner.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

Chapter Introduction

The seven themes that emerged from the interviews of ten teachers and nine administrators are presented and discussed in this chapter. Interviews focused on how the participants described the NPTNJ Program. Teacher participants were asked to describe their educational and teaching experiences. Administrator participants were asked to describe their experiences with teachers completing the NPTNJ Program. The interviews were structured around the central question for this case study

- How did participants in the NPTNJ Program and their administrators describe their experiences in relation to the program's coursework and classroom teaching requirements?

In addition, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
5. What challenges had participants felt they faced while in the program?
6. What topics of the teaching profession did the participants and their administrators discuss?
7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?
9. What recommendations did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

The interviews were analyzed in order to identify common patterns and diverse views to create a thick, rich description of the case. The chapter is organized around the seven themes to focus on the participants' voice and give emphasis to their ideas. The chapter begins with a discussion of each of the major themes in detail, linking the relevant research questions. Within each major theme, sub-themes will be developed and then each theme will conclude with a summary of the findings and a discussion of the research questions and relevant findings from the observations. The seven major themes that were identified from the data were:

1. Becoming a Teacher
2. NPTNJ Program
3. Pedagogy
4. Classroom Environment
5. Hiring
6. School Support
7. Future Concerns and Recommendations

The characteristics of the teacher and administrator participants are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. A variety of participants allowed the investigator to gain as wide a perspective as possible. The participants were numbered to reflect the relationship between the teacher and the administrator. For example, A1 was the administrator in the school where T1 taught and A2 was the administrator in the school where T2 taught. There were only three male teacher participants out of the ten teachers and only two female administrator participants out of the nine administrators. The teacher participants were in the beginning of their teaching careers: three were in their second year and seven were in their third year. Participants included one elementary, three middle, and six high

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Participant No.	Gender	Years of Teaching	Teaching Level	Discipline	Prior Teaching Experience	Career(s) Outside of Teaching
T1	F	1.5	Middle School	Pre-algebra and Algebra		Electrical Engineer, Software development (13 yrs)
T2	M	1.5	High School	Business	Long-term substitute (2 mos)	Chemical Industry (26 yrs)
T3	F	1.5	Elementary School	Elementary Curriculum	Teacher Aide (1 yr)	
T4	F	2.5	High School	Spanish	Full-time teacher 2 years), Substitute Teacher (1 yr)	Real Estate Appraiser, Office Manager, Freelance Writer/Photographer (10 yrs)
T5	F	2.5	High School	Business and Computer	Teaching Assistant	Computer Programmer
T6	M	2.5	High School	German and US History		Journalist, Technology
T7	F	2.5	High School	Science		Chemist, Technical Writer (12 yrs)
T8	F	2.5	High School	Math		Banking (1 yr)
T9	F	2.5	Middle School	Spanish	Long-term Substitute (4 mos)	
T10	M	2.5	Middle School and High School	Social Studies		Insurance Claims Adjuster, Police Officer (22.5 yrs)

Table 2

Administrator Participants

Participant No.	Gender	Position (s) held in Education (current position listed first)	Years in Education	Traditional (T) or Alternate Route (A) Participant	Career(s) outside of Education
A1	F	Principal, Asst. Principal, Supervisor, Social Studies Teacher	35	T	
A2	F	Supervisor, Art, Business, Media, and Technology Education, Business Teacher	20	T	Secretary, Computer Field
A3	M	Assistant Superintendent/ Principal, Assistant Principal, Elementary School Teacher	10	T	
A4	M	Supervisor of Academic Instruction, English Teacher	42	T	
A5	M	Principal, Guidance Director, Principal, Guidance Counselor, Math Teacher, Teacher of the Handicapped	27	T	
A6	M	Principal, Assistant Principal, Elementary School teacher	19	A	
A7	M	Science Supervisor, Athletic Director, Science Teacher	26	T (Masters program)	Automotive Research and Development
A9	M	Interim Chief School Administrator, Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Student Activities and Athletics, Physical Education and Health Teacher	25	T	
A10	M	Supervisor, Social Studies Teacher	20	T	Navy

(note: there was no interview for A8)

school teachers. They represented seven disciplines including, Spanish, Mathematics, Science, Business, Computer Science, History, and German. One teacher taught the full elementary curriculum. In addition, five teacher participants had experience teaching before the NPTNJ program.

The administrator participants' careers spanned from 10 to 42 years, however, more than half had been in the education profession between 19 and 27 years. All administrator participants had held positions as teachers, one was a guidance counselor and guidance director, six had been supervisors, three had been assistant principals, three had been principals, and one had been an assistant superintendent. One administrator participant completed his teacher certification through an alternate route program. In terms of careers outside of teaching, only two teacher participants never had a career outside of teaching while only three administrator participants had careers outside of teaching.

Theme 1: Becoming a Teacher

Introduction

This section provides information on the way in which the teacher participants came to decide on teaching as a first or second career. Why and how the teacher participants decided on a teaching career was gathered as background information from the participant interviews. Through the interview process, however, the background experiences were found to influence their decisions to become teachers. In order to change careers, the participants found the NPTNJ Program as their means to enter the teaching profession. Although this section is not related to any of the research questions,

the findings and observations revealed much about the participants and allowed for a greater understanding of the teacher participants and why and how an alternate route teacher education program was a viable career choice.

Connection to Undergraduate Study

There were two participants who knew in their undergraduate years that they would eventually become teachers, but they had doubts during that time. For example, T3 was not happy with her major, "it's not that I hated it, but I just knew I didn't want to do it for a living." She began thinking about a teaching career in her sophomore year and started taking the required courses.

> At that point it was going to be another two years of school to get my certification and I figured I'm not even sure that I want to teach. I wanted to be able to experience it first before I committed to going back to school for two years.

She then took a teacher's aide position in the school in which she is now a full-time teacher.

For T9, worrying about being able to find a job in her field gave her the impetus to enter the teaching profession.

> My major was actually communications. My minor was Spanish. I was obsessed and part of me still is, with being a sportscaster. And then I got to school and started to take the communication classes and realized that I didn't really have anyone that was going to connect me with that and I started thinking of plan B. So, that's where the whole Spanish teacher idea came from. Fall semester of my senior year. I had just gotten back from Spain and I was sitting in Spanish class watching my Spanish teacher teach and she was the greatest teacher ever and I said I think I want to do this.

Coming Back to Teaching

Two participants, T4 and T6, had early teaching experiences and then followed different career paths before becoming a teacher.

> T4: I did not consider becoming a teacher until later in life. I did a lot of different work. The years in between I raised three kids and did many things, but didn't really use my Spanish very much. And . . . six years ago I decided I wanted to teach. So I went and did the Praxis test and started the alternate route.
>
> T6: I was a teaching assistant in Vienna. My first wife was a Fulbright scholar and I had studied German and Russian, so I went overseas with her and taught in a Fulbright program. I went into journalism and did that for 11 years. My brother brought me into the Internet boom and I did that for 11 years. I suffered a heart attack and then 9/11, it all happened in the same time frame and I had a period of two years where I was wondering how to make a living. I couldn't. I was afraid about my health issues. I wondered if I could teach. And I wondered if I could teach German specifically.

There were three teacher participants, however, who came to think about teaching again after having at least one other career experience. For example, T1 stated that

> the only other career path I knew well was teaching and I always loved math. My mom was a teacher. My husband's family is all teachers and so I thought about that during previous career changes when (company name) moved. And I said, you know I'm ready to give it a try.

For T7 it became a matter of not "[wanting] to continue in that field and . . . [she] had been thinking about becoming a teacher for a while." Additionally, T8

> was enrolled in the education program at (College name), I did my 20 hours of observation at (high school name) with my former math teacher, and then I did the junior practicum here at (high school name). And I did all of the psychology courses, I just didn't do the student teaching. I wanted to graduate and I would have been behind and also I really couldn't afford to student teach because at that point I was living out of my parent's house. So between working a part-time job, I really didn't have time to student teach . . . but at that time, too, I was interested maybe in doing actuary science with the math and economics. So I was like well, let me look into this and I can always teach. I could always go back to school to become a teacher, but let me first explore everything else. So, I ended up working for a bank for a year.

Having to Choose a New Job or Career

Choosing teaching came to each participant at different times of their lives and for many the impetus was being laid off, the location of their job, family commitments, and

the feelings of wanting to teach. For T2 the journey began because of "a political disagreement with [his] boss." In the end, he "wound up being replaced at the company . . . my wife said to me, do something close to home. Do something you like. And that's what got me thinking about teaching." When T5 was told he had to get a master's degree in order to continue working in the technology field, he chose a master's in education and that is how he began his path to the teaching career. The day T7 returned from her maternity leave, she was laid off. She stated, "I thought [teaching] would be nice once having kids to spend the summers with them and also to not have to commute . . . to be close to home. I like being close to home."

When T1 went back to work after her maternity leave, the company moved locations. She explained how location issues were part of her decision to teach.

> The commute was really lousy and I did that for about six months and that was enough of that. So I started taking all the Praxis exams and psyching myself up for it and was very happy to find the NPTNJ program was right in town and I got into that . . . and I was fortunate to get a job at (school name), which is really where I wanted to work, having lived there and not wanting to commute far.

Also concerned about the location of work was T5 and when she applied for teaching positions, she sent her resumes out "in a 30 mile radius."

School and Community Connections

A prior relationship with the school and/or the community in which they now teach was an influence on the teacher participants choosing a teaching career. For example, T4 explained,

> I'm a parishioner at (church name) and one of the other parishioners, who had been teaching here for a couple of years, said to me that Father (last name) would probably really like to have you, he is always looking for people. I didn't really think much of it at the time. I wasn't thinking about going back to working full

> time yet. But when I decided I wanted to teach . . . we had always thought we wanted the girls to come here. That was the first thing that drew me here. So when I came in to ask for the application, I asked, is it a problem, do the teachers ever have their own children go to school here because if that's the case then I won't even apply because I want my kids to go here. And they said no, that's not a problem.

For T1, the connection to the community came through her family. Her husband grew up in the town in which she now teaches. Her husband and brother-in-law worked in the community and her parents were living in the neighboring community.

> [I wanted to] feel like I was fully a part of the community. Both my in-laws taught locally. My mother-in-law was a kindergarten teacher at (school name) for about 28 years. My children have had kindergarten in the same classroom that she had with the teacher that she helped bring up when she was new, which has been very special. My father-in-law was a 35-year director at (school name). So they have a lot of ties in the community and my husband always felt like it really benefited him and so I wanted the same thing as well and I preferred to be at (school name) where I knew my children would be. There were a lot of things about (school name) that I respected.

Additionally, T6 explored the family/community connection.

> I knew about this job opening, it was advertised the year before I got the job. And I came up here and I know this area of New Jersey pretty well. My folks had a summer house in (town name) years and years ago and I've been to (town name) when I was a kid. One of my earliest memories is of being in (town name) in New Jersey, so I felt a very strong connection, a psychic connection to this place. And I had a premonition that this was going to be my job. And I drove up here the year before and I drove around the campus and sort of soaked it in. And I have this feeling that I really wanted to be here without seeing a soul or talking to anyone.

A third example was T9, who traveled to California to broaden her horizons, but did not find what she was looking for. She sent out some resumes in New Jersey for a teaching position and on a visit home she went on three interviews. She said,

> when I got a call from [school name] it was kind of like . . . going home again, but I was very comfortable. And if I was going to start out with my own classroom and my own stuff anywhere, I was really happy it was here. A good starting point.

Educational Background

The educational background brought out in the interviews described the teachers in terms of the discipline each was capable of teaching. Teacher participants believed that their educational background prepared them fully for teaching on the K-12 level. For example, T8 stated, "the subject matter I was fine with because it was my major . . . I have always been really good at math." She continued on to say that the act of teaching may have been challenging, but "the actual subject matter . . . that's what I knew inside out." Describing her undergraduate experience, T9 stated,

> [it] was amazing. It was phenomenal. I learned so much. I went to a liberal arts school so it was really nice that I got to learn kind of a little bit of everything. My Spanish education was top notch. I have the greatest professors, the most amazing experiences. I couldn't wait to go to Spanish every week. I know I sound like a big dork when I say that. I absolutely loved my undergrad. I wish I could do it all over again.

However, not all participants' educational background connected directly to the curriculum they were required to teach. For example, T7 explained,

> even working as a chemist, you focus on such a small area of chemistry, this historical stuff that I was doing today, I haven't touched it since I was a freshman in college, since I was taking it in General Chemistry then. As an analytical chemist, I was doing analytical chemistry, so a lot of this stuff I had to go back and relearn because it wasn't what I was doing for 12 years.

The administrator participants discussed the strength of the educational background of the NPTNJ teachers and its role in their successful discipline preparation. For instance, A1 stated,

> In terms of their basic knowledge of information, absolutely. They definitely have the information down and that is a plus. For instance traditional route teachers have had a lot of other stuff that they've been required to take as opposed to just the hard knowledge-based facts. I know coming out of school as a social studies teacher, how could I know all that history and geography and economics and

> psychology and sociology? The New Pathways are often teachers who specialized in a specific area. And a lot of times it's in your maths and sciences and I have hired English teachers as well, who have gone alternate route. More than likely, my social studies people are still traditional route teachers. I've hired alternate route in creative arts areas where we're dealing with architecture and graphic arts and engineering. So I guess it's been across the curriculum, but they know their stuff and that's good.

The discipline background of T7 was important to A7. The administrator discussed the fact that she

> has a tremendous chemistry background. She has an MS in chemistry as well as a BS in chemistry. She spent 11 years with (company name), the pharmaceutical industry and got caught in a downsizing and then decided to go into education. She is a (high school name) graduate and I don't think I had her in class but I remember her. She is a nice addition as I mentioned her chemistry background, because she teaches two chemistry classes and two physical sciences. And the physical science class is half chemistry and half forces and motion and energy. So, she has a tremendous background.

Additionally, A2 believed that certain disciplines lent themselves better to preparing an alternate route candidate.

> I would think that if there were a study done, my gut feeling is, the business teachers would have a higher success rate because of the fact that they're actually teaching what they're doing. When you come, for example, you might be a photographer but you don't think about the mechanics of teaching the genres, the elements of photography. As opposed to the business person who is constantly inspired, and knows you can't do it this way, whether it's a software package or . . . that's part of the business world, training and brainstorming and so forth. Where I think that other people sometimes they've done their job in isolation.

Prior Extracurricular Activities

Besides the educational experiences that the participants have had, extracurricular activities have contributed to their competence in the classroom. The extracurricular activity that was mentioned most was athletics. Other influential activities were the 4-H Club, church activities, babysitting, being a parent, and camp. These activities prepared

teacher participants to be successful in the classroom. Two examples were provided by T1 and T7:

> T1: In high school I had been a soccer coach of young kids, so that had helped some. My husband and I help run a church school program; that has helped. My church school class, an eighth-grade class this year, I decided to lay down the law the first day. I said it with a smile. I said there are no grades, there is no vice principal, there's no detentions, in school suspensions, or any of that. But if anyone doesn't want to cooperate, we will go up and will go to the back of the sanctuary and you will go in and find your parents in the middle of the sanctuary. And you'll asked them to come out and talk with us in front of everyone and I'm sure the conversation that you have in the car will be even more entertaining than the one we have in the back of the church that day. And they have been good as gold.

> T7: I think that the experiences that I've had as a 4-H leader have been helpful to me . . . I was the program director for the camp. It was a volunteer basis . . . and I would have a hundred little kids that we would have to get from place to place into different games and stuff. So, I think that helps because I'm used to dealing with different children with different abilities and different personalities. I also think that being a parent is helpful. I think that before I was a parent I wouldn't have had as much patience for some of the things I see in the classroom that I deal with. I think those are two things from my background that were helpful.

Parenting experiences for T10 were a key element to his preparation as a teacher.

> [Being a parent] has prepared me. And [my children] have not all been angels. I've had them at a high level and I have had them at the low. And I had all the problems in between. And I think that enables me more to communicate with the kids and also how I like to teach the discipline. I think I know when to cut them a little bit of slack. And at the same time they know there is a point that you don't cross that line with me.

Athletics and babysitting added to the preparation of T9 as a teacher.

> This might sound odd but [by] being an athlete I was used to kind of being on stage and being in front of people. And I think that really helped me because . . . from day one, I never had the anxiety of being in front of kids. And I know that sounds silly, too, and I baby-sit all the time too or I used to not so much anymore. But I knew that I was good with kids and I knew how to talk with them and I knew how to deal with them.

For T10, coaching activities became a connection to the discipline needed in the classroom. He stated that "on the field . . . the players are only allowed to say, unless it's a question, yes coach or no coach. This is our issue and we respect one another, but ultimately what gets done is what I say we need to accomplish and that is it. Again it goes back to, I'm big on the discipline."

One of the administrators, A1, also discussed how prior activities might influence her. She stated that when looking at résumés, she is influenced positively if the candidate has "had any experience with children on the outside, coaching Little League, religious instruction, things like that."

Skills Learned for a Prior Career

Beyond the extracurricular experiences, there are specific skills that the teacher participants learned while in their prior careers. In the classroom, these skills were used in the transmittal of knowledge. These skills were important to T5, who stated, "I don't know how I would teach the kids how to do all this stuff if I hadn't done it in the world before." For T1, employee education programs, much as the school's new teacher programs discussed in another section, to learn skills in the classroom made the transition into teaching easier. The career experience skills mentioned were communicating and presenting, being organized, mentoring, completing paperwork, being professional and training employees. For T1, teaching "was much more like what I had been doing, presentations in meetings in the office, so that was easy." Another teacher, T3, shared that "being organized [is a necessary skill]. . . . You can't function without being organized. A good sense of organization helped me, definitely."

Several administrators also believed that the skills brought from the workplace were important to the teachers' success in the classroom. For example, A1 mentioned that the skills brought from the workplace by the teacher participants were "absolutely their strength" and A6 saw the workplace skills as "clearly an advantage." The skills A3 mentioned that alternate route hires had were "good presentation skills and communication skills." A10 stated, "they bring a bit more to the party in terms of instructional skills and knowledge of technology." Additionally, A2 connected the academic discipline to whether or not the teacher brought appropriate skills from the workplace.

> I would say the business area; definitely, they're used to the amount of paperwork. They're used to deadlines. For example, someone who's more creative or artistic perhaps does not have to fill out a report. Their pictures are perhaps their assignment. Where I think in the business area, they are used to the communication skills and so forth . . . even like professional conferences, they know how to dress, they know how to act, they know to take notes. Where I think some of the other people have not, per se, been in that realm of attending those type of meetings and so forth.

Conversely, as A2 explained, the career influence could also be a negative.

> I can clearly remember one of our first alternate route people came in as a science person. I was in my other position working with the computers. And she was in amazement that someone was not here to do her photocopying. She found . . . all those extras that a teacher does, to be overwhelming. She was just looking to hand things out to other teachers and trying to use the school secretaries as her own. And she needed this copied then she needed that typed up and so forth like she was still in a managerial type of position. And I think that was definitely a shock to her. I think she thought she was going to have a little staff when she taught.

Summary and Discussion

The background information gathered on the teacher participants led to a greater understanding of each of the participants and their choice to become a teacher. Their

decisions were connected to their undergraduate studies, having to or choosing to leave another career, maintaining connections to a specific community, and having had developed certain skills in the workplace or in other extracurricular activities.

Several teachers prepared to teach in their undergraduate years. Some of them decided to pursue a different career first, one because she could not afford to student teach. Some teacher participants returned to teaching because they were not able to find a position in their chosen career, while others had been laid off or had specific family needs that teaching would accommodate. Having a connection to the school or the community in which the school was located was part of the decision for some to teach. In addition, teacher and administrator participants agreed that the NPTNJ teachers were well-prepared to teach their academic discipline during their undergraduate years.

The skills learned in a prior career or extracurricular activity such as athletics were skills needed to be prepared in the classroom. Themes 3 and 4 explore how teacher participants felt prepared in pedagogy and challenging classroom situations. The skills learned in prior careers relate directly to this preparation and in turn were influenced by the NPTNJ program. Career and extracurricular learned skills and the NPTNJ Program learned skills positively affected how well the teacher participants felt they performed in the classroom. These skills prepared the teacher participants to present material to students and manage a diverse classroom with more expertise and confidence.

Presenting and communicating information in an organized fashion were the professional skills most often mentioned in the interviews. In the observation of T7, the chemist, and T11, the police officer, a clear presentational style was observed using a

PowerPoint presentation. The instructors were interesting and the amount of material presented was not too dense and allowed students to cope with major concepts of chemistry and history respectively. The electrical engineer, T1, had a systematic approach to problem-solving with which students were successful.

Theme 2: The NPTNJ program

Research questions:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Introduction

The second theme provides a description of how the teacher and administrator participants described specific aspects of the NPTNJ Program. They discussed the program in terms of the summer session, summer observations, the program coordinator, course assignments, student teaching, and the necessary time commitment. They described strengths and weakness as well as activities that best prepared them for the classroom.

NPTNJ students must pass through three stages en route to their certification. In order to begin Stage I in the summer, teacher participants had to meet the following requirements:

- Hold a bachelor's degree in a core content area with a 2.75 G.P.A.
- Apply and obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (CE)
- Complete the NPTNJ application
- Be admitted into the program

Upon meeting the requirements, the teacher participants took a six-week summer course that concentrated on preparing them for the classroom in September. The new requirement that students had to pass the Praxis exam and obtain a full-time teaching position as part of Stage I beginning in the summer of 2005, did not apply to the participants of this study.

In order to begin Stage II, students passed the Praxis exam to demonstrate knowledge of discipline content, and obtained a position as an alternate route teacher in a public school district (Provisional Teacher Program). Coursework continued one night per week for the fall and spring semesters. By Stage III, teacher participants had completed the pedagogy classes along with a full year of teaching under the supervision of a mentor, school administrator, and NPTNJ Program Coordinator. They concluded the program with a three-week summer capstone course and obtained certification.

NPTNJ Coursework

The NPTNJ coursework was described in terms of strengths and weaknesses and how aspects of the program had helped the teacher participants to be prepared in the classroom. Most teacher participants gave an overall positive impression of how the NPTNJ program helped in their preparation. For example, T4 found that "the program definitely helped me; that program was so good." T1 stated, "the most important thing is that I would've fallen on my face without . . . the courses. Without that, it would've been extremely difficult." Other examples came from T7 and T8: "I . . . even felt that without

the coursework I would not have been prepared (T7)," and "it was nice because it had been a few years since I had taken some of the courses at (college name) so a lot of it was a refresher and there were other things, too (T8)." While praising the coursework in general, T10 also criticized the fact "because the program was so popular [class size] could be smaller." Taking the coursework for credit is an option for the teacher participants, however, T6 said that "the only thing I did wrong was that I did not opt for the credit. I thought I had, but I didn't."

The administrator participants also reflected on the NPTNJ coursework. A connection between the highly structured orientation for non-tenured teachers and the NPTNJ program was made by A1.

> I always say you can't be a prophet in your own land, we can teach them, we can tell them, we can show them. But what happens now is that they go to the New Pathways training and they're being told the same thing that we're telling them and now they are able to participate and say that's what we do in our school. And people are coming back and saying that's very good we don't do that at our school. And I think that they are able to hear that and see that we are leading them down the right path. We are showing them the right way to go about becoming a good educator. I think that makes them successful.

Moreover, A4 believed that "having the opportunity over an extended period of time helps the new teachers fill in some of the voids and also gives them the opportunity to assess what they're doing and possibly recast or revise accordingly." Although A2 was an administrator that did not know very much about the coursework being taught in the NPTNJ program, she was able to discuss some of the issues the teacher participants studied.

> I knew they were going for the classes, they would start in September; occasionally they would say I have a class after school today. Could I clearly identify what was going on, was there a connection between myself and what

> went on? No. I would say that they might come in and say I have something due or this is what we're talking about in my class could you give me some more information. Occasionally that happened. But I would say, for the most part, it's almost as if they were taking graduate courses.

Only T10 had a criticism regarding one component of the program. He did not understand the relevance of the capstone summer course.

> I thought the seminar at the end, . . . to be honest was a waste of my time. To me that was an added expense to my life. Time away from my life. I might've gotten one or two ideas out of there, but it was nothing, it was reviewing what we learned. I just didn't find it worth it. And again maybe because I was older and stuff like that. That was more burdensome. Again I was a little bitter too, I was hired to do a tournament and that actually cost me probably about those two days $800. Even putting that all aside, I really didn't see the value of it. The classroom was more than enough.

Real-life Topics

The administrators and teachers considered the real-life topics covered in the coursework as a necessary component to being prepared for the classroom. Even though A1 recognized the real-life topics as part of the NPTNJ curriculum, she wanted the program "to find a way to bring in as much as possible, reality of what it's like to be in a classroom." The value-added of being exposed to as many real-life situations during the school year sessions was important to T9.

> I thought that was really good because it was real life stuff that really happens. It made it a lot more relevant to us, I thought. And the other group presentations were also good and with stuff that maybe you don't think about. And you kind of think wow this really goes on in the classroom. So I thought that one was a good thing and kind of useful.

For A2 the real-life topics of the course benefited the NPTNJ teachers in her building.

> The teachers, who have gone through the program, it seems, the one young lady down in the business department . . . she went through the program and she thought it was very helpful to her. She felt that when she came out she could hear what other people were saying and so forth. She felt that she could relate to a lot

> of the different issues they had. I think it does prepare them and gives them that eye-opening, as they go through.

Literacy

Two teacher participants discussed the literacy component of the course. The first, T7, could not see the relevance to her curriculum of high school science; however, literacy training did help at home with her young children.

> (Program Coordinator) focused on talking about our experiences and working through problems that we were having which I thought was wonderful, but the course itself . . . I thought was more geared toward an elementary person. Or even a high school English person would find those things useful. I found it useful personally because I had an emerging reader in the household. I had a little girl that was learning how to read at the time and I found that interesting. She fits right into this stage of it. But as far as high school level, any subject area except for English, I really didn't think it was that important to focus so much on literacy. I think other things could have been more of a focus. I think if the program that occurred during the school year was less focused on literacy and more focused on a lot of varied areas, it would have been better.

Conversely for T4

> the literacy program was amazing, for me as a language teacher. And we talked a lot about it and there were elementary school teachers there who talked a lot about how kids learn language.
>
> There were a lot of things from that literacy program that I could use in teaching Spanish. I never really had approached it from such an elementary level before. A lot of times . . . most kids are okay with skimming over that stuff. They just absorb it because they've learned the language already even though it was many, many years ago. They learned English. And of course we talk about the alphabet, the sounds the letters make, but . . . pronunciation, accentuation. They were things that I thought were missing after we went through that literacy program. The other thing is that I could relate it to . . . remember when you were in second grade . . . I think that drawing that comparison really helped [my students].

Open Discussions

A strength frequently mentioned about the NPTNJ program was the ability to have open discussions with the other members of the class during the fall and spring

coursework. For example, T2 described the open discussions with his classmates as "slavishly absorbing. You had 25 or 30% of the course time spent commiserating as a group about what's going on in the classroom, what are the successes, yeah that's great. What are the failures, more important and why is it a failure and what are you doing to correct it?" A second example by T3 described the open discussions as being "great, being able to talk about any issues that you are having or even listening or helping other people with anything you were experiencing in the class." In addition, T7 said, "I thought meeting every week and the open discussions were great" and later added that they discussed "anticipated problems" during class. Two more views were offered by T5 and T8 on the open discussions.

> T5: I think the most important part of the New Pathways was, almost an hour of class every night in the beginning, at least 45 minutes we just chatted about what happened during the week. We would give each other advice and (Program Coordinator) would give us his advice and we would just tell our experiences. And I would look forward to that every week because lo and behold there would be something that happened that I needed to share with someone who's going through the same thing. And that was a great place to do it as they were all in the same boat. . . .
>
> I wish we could have met more. Just the chats that we had were more productive than even the formal stuff we were getting. Because it was real stuff that was happening. It wasn't stuff that was happening out of books. It was actually happening to me. Telling me how to fix it. The cool thing was telling you how to fix it.

> T8: It was nice to be able to have a group of people that you could relate to that were going through the same thing that you were going through. And you would always end up feeling better about yourself after leaving there because someone would come with a story that, it was like oh my God, never mind my problems are nothing. And that's the thing, too, if anything just make sure you're always there, that one night a week to come talk about everything that's going on. Because you need that in the first year. It is overwhelming.

The administrators also found the teacher participants' connection to their classmates in the NPTNJ program a benefit. Recognition of the "camaraderie of being with someone in a new situation as they go through [and] being with people that they could relate to" was described by A2. Another example provided by A5 explained that the teacher participants are

> in a class with people who have the same aspirations and they piggyback off each other and they feed each other and they are all for the same goal. I think that's important. You learn best when you talk to people . . . and what do you think about that . . . and it's perfect. You enjoy doing that and you enjoy . . . talking to them.

Stage I: Summer Session

In the summer session prior to the beginning of teaching in the fall, the teacher participants discussed that survival skills were one of the most important components of the curriculum. For T2 the summer session was

> absolutely critical because they gave you the survival skills to start teaching. It really was less on theory and more on the practical, how to survive, absolutely critical to my success in the classroom. After being eaten alive [as a substitute teacher] . . . I was very concerned about whether I had chosen my new career wisely. I was very relieved to find that the summer survival school for new teachers was exactly what I needed to succeed.
>
> That academic work is absolutely critical but as far as starting in September there is nothing more critical than being taught what it means to stand there at the beginning of the first day and say I'm a teacher here we go. Without that summer session, I think all alternate route programs are at risk for producing people that are just not prepared to do the job the way the New Pathways Program has people prepared to do the job.

The summer coursework was described by T4 as

> very helpful. I had already taught for two years, but for the people who have never . . . been in the classroom, I thought it was excellent. It really . . . got them ready for facing the students for the first time and organizing and getting your stuff together so that you're ready for that moment. Knowing exactly what you

> will put up with and what environment you want and how you want your relationship with [the students] to be. I thought that preparation was excellent.

The administrators concurred with the teachers' assessment of the summer session. For example, A6 expressed that

> certainly they're getting an intensive piece in the summer and probably that's important because it's probably the time at which their senses are most heightened to learning. I'm going to have to go through this, so I better learn about this now.

For A1,

> one of the nice things, coming out of the program, especially the summer session they offer, is that they are not so raw coming into a classroom. They basically know what to expect when they first meet kids as opposed to the ones who haven't had that summer and are still going through the alternate route. That can be a shock.

What A4 found was

> that those that come from the New Pathways program are a little bit better grounded in these areas than most of those that don't come from the program. And I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that the program actually starts in the summer with the preliminary session. And that kind of gets them ready for what they need to know when school starts and then the rest just fills in as they go.

Summer Observations

A weakness about the NPTNJ Program brought out by teacher participants was the summer observation component. Participants agreed that summer school situations did not offer an example of the typical classroom environment. For example, T3 stated "that it wasn't a true reflection of what it would really be like to observe a classroom setting." For T4, observations were

> a wonderful idea . . . but in the summer it was hard to find observations . . . that was the only negative I found in the summer. I went and observed a summer school program at (high school name) and being that I had taught for two years, I recognized that this was not a typical situation. You have kids, especially in Spanish, for one reason or another who have not made it through Spanish I in the

> first year. And many of them chose not to make it. Many of them don't want to be there. So, I could see a new teacher who's never been in the classroom being really scared away by that experience.

The only complaint T9 had was about the summer observations. She had trouble just finding observations,

> finding any at all and the ones that I found were real duds. A couple of them I just left and decided it was not going to work for my report and I'll just have to check out something else. That was really tough. They opened it up and said we could do camp and things like that. Still that's kind of tough. That was a rough part, I thought.

For one of the administrators, A5, the summer observations brought him a job hire,

> We had summer school and there was a gentleman who was there and wanted to observe because it was part of the requirements to observe teachers. And while he was observing he said he was in this Pathways course and I asked him what he wanted to do, he was going for math. I said stop right here, let me get my principal, let me introduce you.

Program Coordinator

The teacher participants described the program coordinator as "an incredible instructor (T1)," a master teacher in his own right. . . . I relied very heavily on his insight from years and years of experience. [He is] a master at what he does, so it significantly impacts the success of the program (T2)," "(Program Coordinator) was a wealth of information (T10)." "He was great. He is awesome. You can go to him no matter what and he'll always help you out. And his feedback, too, especially with the observations, his feedback was awesome (T3)." For T4, the Program Coordinator

> tells great stories. He has a wealth of experience; not only his own experiences, but his experiences from observing other teachers. He brought that experience to the table during the summer. He was always just a font of information in that sense. He comes from the same perspective that I do in terms of, it all boils down to the student. That's what you are there for.

> (Program coordinator) was just so good in terms of treating the whole person and not just, you did really poorly on this, and so you just have to work harder. He was very good at communicating with the parents and trying to figure out, getting to the bottom of whatever it is that's making the child do poorly.

The program coordinator's expertise was also deemed successful in the post-observations meetings he had with the teacher participants. For example, T5 stated, "yes, they were good. He gave a lengthy write-up. He gave a lot of points that he addressed. In fact I just came across those in my room the other day. I was cleaning up. They were just really meaningful."

Course Assignments

Different aspects of the coursework deemed important to teacher preparation were the journals, group work, presentations, and the research paper. For example, T8 reflected, "writing the journals . . . was good because it was really nice to be able to go back and look at all you did over the summer." For T3 "the demo lessons in the class . . . were good. I thought that it gave you a sense of whether or not people could really do it."

Several teacher participants described the value of presenting in class.

> T4: I think that the most humbling experience was having to teach with another teacher about teaching methods. And I just remember feeling that I was very comfortable in front of the class every time we had a do a lesson in our content area. But when I had to prepare a lesson outside of my content area, I was a nervous wreck. That really illustrated to me the need to know backwards and forwards the content

> T10: I did remember a lot of the time the students would teach the class. I actually think it was very worthwhile to get the students involved. And I find the other students that they would sit there and be more attentive to it. I thought that it was good because you became a mini expert.

> T9: We had to do a few research projects. We did one that I thought was really great it was a small group project where they gave us a concept. Our group turned it into a little skit . . . the skit was the *Three Little Pigs*. I think it was about

> bullying or something along those lines. Here's a situation that could happen in a school. Figure out what you should do. And we acted out with a little skit in front of the class and everything. So, that was kind of cool.

A criticism about presentations was described by T9. "I remember we had to do presentations on what we had studied and one group went on, no joke, for an hour and 10 minutes and it was supposed to be a 20 minute presentation. I checked out after the first 20 minutes." Finally, T9 spoke well of the research paper.

> I really liked the research paper. We got to pick our topic. We listed in order of our top three. And he tried to give us one of our top three choices and we got to research it out. I think I wound up doing Myers-Briggs or something like that which I found very useful and very helpful.

Student Teaching

The NPTNJ Program does not require student teaching. The NPTNJ participants completed 20 observation hours in the summer, but no hands-on teaching experience. During the interviews, teacher and administrator participants discussed the fact that the NPTNJ participants did not student teach and how that affected their preparedness in the classroom. In addition, the teachers discussed the complications of requiring a student teaching component in the program. For example, student teaching for T1 was not possible because one cannot make a decent salary while student teaching and therefore, impossible to complete with the many financial responsibilities. "The student teaching would've been nice but . . . I had a mortgage and three kids." For T1 student teaching was and issue brought up during the interview process,

> [The interviewer said] you haven't had the student teaching, so you really haven't had any kind of test in the classroom and they had me teach to the administrators and the lead teacher, a little class to see actually how I stood in front, but that was still in front of adults and that's a lot different.

The advantage of teaching before entering the NPTNJ Program was discussed by T9.

> I actually felt great because I had taught that maternity leave. I say that's like my student teaching because I hadn't done any student teaching and the woman that left wanted to make sure that I covered what she would have covered. So she left everything for me. She left me tests, quizzes, some lesson plans. So I basically had to kind of just follow it and tweak it my own way. If I hadn't done that, it would have been a much different story.

Some teacher participants expressed how not having completed student teaching was a disadvantage. For example, T2 stated, "I was lost." The reflections of T8 focused on the issue of one's classroom.

> You can do a whole semester of student teaching and that leaves you with having that experience with a group of live children. But until you have your own class you don't know. I had five different classes and some of them were great and some of them were a nightmare and it just depended on the group of kids.

The administrators had strong feelings about being able to complete a student teaching component believing as A1 that "their first year was very challenging for them because they had never taught before." For A4,

> not [having] undergone student teaching works against them only because I think student teaching, for good or ill, does give new teachers the opportunity to see what a real-life classroom situation is all about. So, those that have had those kind of experiences come with a little bit better understanding than those that don't have the experience.

For two administrators, the traditional route teachers had an advantage because they completed a student teaching component as part of their certification process.

> A5: I would say traditional [route teachers are better prepared] because of the experience that they've had in student teaching and the observations that they have been through their undergraduate degrees. They are more prepared because they've been in there and they've done it. It doesn't mean that they're better at it but they've been exposed to it so they know . . . what it will take.
>
> A6: I think the difference for the New Pathways person is probably less about the coursework than it is about the student teaching because the traditional teachers

> have had a semester or more of student teaching. They've had a chance to work out the bugs of classroom management, of how to multitask and get everything done, how to prepare lessons in a way that you're taught in classes how to prepare them. And the reality of what's going to work and what isn't going to work may be a little different for each person. I definitely see that it's a weakness. I don't know how it would be overcome without having the traditional background, which is having the coursework and the student teaching. I think the student teaching is the big part because then you actually get to be in a classroom and see what it's like.

Time Commitment

The time commitment made by the participants was another characteristic brought out in the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the NPTNJ program. Teacher participants were holding down full-time jobs and studying at night. During the summer, most of the participants were comfortable with the time commitment. For example, T3 stated that "it was a time commitment, definitely. Because in the summer, you're always go, go, go, but it worked out well. It really did. I thought it was convenient and helpful." In agreement was T10.

> It is a very busy time because I run a farm. I have my lacrosse clinics and coaching. But, the summer program I thought it was a time you get through . . . in the evenings and it wasn't bad. The traffic wasn't bad. Again no one wants to give up their summers, but it's the way life is. And then I was also concerned about taking the summer to prep for the oncoming year. But I had no objections to it.

On the negative side, T1 explained, "it was very intimidating because you were just jumping in, it was two nights a week, four hours a night and I had a full-time job and three small children. Fortunately it only lasted six weeks because I would have keeled over already."

Although T8 referred to the classes during the school year as "a blur," she felt "it worked out perfect, the class started at 6:00 and I would just leave here in time to get

there because I was here every day until 5:30 just doing lessons. I just kept thinking to myself you're laying it out and it won't be so hard for you next year." During the school year T5 explained,

> that was much more difficult. It was very stressful to meet so late as a first-year teacher because there's a lot of stuff to do afterwards. And I live not that far away, about 40 minutes, to be in the middle of the week, to stay there until 10:00 and not get home until 11:00 and then come back to school by 7:00 the next morning. That was difficult.

The stress of going to class each week was expressed by T9.

> That was tough with working full-time and everything and I coach during the fall and I do ski club over the winter. So, I am super involved. But, I don't think it was too much for us and we did get a lot of time and a lot of heads up for when projects were due. [Program Coordinator] gave us the syllabus with all the due dates for everything right in the beginning so you could kind of plan ahead, which was really nice. Even if we weren't sure what the project was going to be, you kind of knew, all right, I know the last week of December I'm going to have something to do so I better grade all these papers now so I don't have to worry about them then. I thought that was appropriate, the work level and the amount of time given. It wasn't too much. I think that [Program Coordinator] has a good understanding that we are all working so they kind of know we can't saddle them with all this stuff because they have real lives and real jobs which I thought was really good.

The administrator, A1, was sympathetic to the time commitment.

> They have to go to these meetings once a week in the evenings, which are extensive. By 9:30 at night I'm tired. These teachers are still out there and traveling sometimes to get to where they need to go. I know what the payoff is at the end. You get your teaching certificate and you're good to go. But that's a tremendous amount of pressure on a first-year alternate route teacher.

Summary and Discussion

The teacher and administrator participants described the NPTNJ Program in terms of the overall program structure, coursework and assignments. The participants identified

strengths and weaknesses of the program. The descriptions gave insight into the following research question:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?

The teacher participants were in agreement that the Program Coordinator was a significant strength of the NPTNJ experience. This individual was described as having the requisite knowledge, skill set, and emotional connection that led to their ability to be prepared. In addition, the teachers and the administrators felt the open discussion held at the beginning of each night of class was a program strength. Each group believed that this opportunity gave the teachers a necessary support system. The teachers were able to find emotional support and answers, on a weekly basis, to the problems and challenges they were experiencing in their classrooms.

The following research questions asked teacher and administrator participants about preparation:

3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?

Both teachers and administrators linked the NPTNJ coursework to being prepared for the classroom. During the year, NPTNJ teachers wrote and presented assignments and discussed real-life topics that led directly to feelings of being prepared. They felt that the topics were examples of what they actually faced in the classroom. The open discussions allowed teacher participants to have direct intervention for what was happening in their

classroom and the summer session gave the teachers the survival skills needed to start their teaching job in September.

Teacher and administrator participants discussed the issue of student teaching as a missing component to preparing the teachers and therefore a weakness of the NPTNJ Program. The paradox is that completing a student teaching component would take away a significant part of what makes an alternate route program different from a traditional route program. The teacher participants expressed that they could not take an unpaid teaching position because of financial responsibilities. However, teachers that had substituted or taught before the NPTNJ Program realized that those opportunities gave them a student teaching experience and was a component of their being prepared for their own classes. The issue of student teaching is related to the following research question:

8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Besides being cited as a weakness of the Program, student teaching was referred to as a major difference of the two types of teacher preparation programs.

Another weakness some teacher and administrator participants expressed concern about was the time commitment. The time spent in the program, going to classes and completing assignments, created certain stress because new teachers were busy creating lesson plans, having to participate in school activities, and trying to understand the school culture. In the end, however, the time allowed the participants to be fully involved in the educational and emotional support system of the NPTNJ program.

Teacher participants described the summer observations as another weakness of the NPTNJ Program because they were lacking in quality and were not examples of what they would meet in the classroom. Teacher and administrator participants felt that spending time in the classroom, a real-life situation, should be an essential component of teacher preparation programs. In addition, the literacy component was described as a weakness and strength of the program. The participants suggested that learning about literacy was more relevant for elementary, English, and world language teachers than teachers of other disciplines.

Theme 3: Pedagogy

Research Questions:

2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Introduction

Teacher participants discussed teaching methodology throughout the interview and were observed using different strategies. The teacher and administrator participants explored grade-appropriate curricula, technology, assessment, and lesson plan development. They frequently related these topics back to the NPTNJ program, and sometimes to prior activities. Administrators discussed how prepared they believed the teacher participants were, and the teachers explored how prepared they felt.

Pedagogical Knowledge

There were two participants, T4 and T6, who specifically named the NPTNJ program for their successful preparation in pedagogy.

> T4: Well, the program definitely helped me. I think I was on the right path beforehand just because I got such good support here. That program was so good. It was really a great combination of practical information that you could use and sort of more lofty methods, philosophy about teaching. It was a really good combination.

> T6: The pedagogy I learned in the alternate route, the New Pathways pedagogy, it was awesome. It was great stuff, the way it was presented. The way we had to present to the class and lesson plans. That was all that made it possible for me to come in and be anywhere near successful. If I hadn't done it I would not have survived the first year.

A few administrator participants expressed their displeasure at the level of pedagogical knowledge of the NPTNJ participants.

> A2: Sometimes it is about how to break the lesson down to the students. They want to teach their objectives up here but they've never broken it down to the goals of the actions, step by step. And I also think that sometimes they are unrealistic about what's going to happen in the classroom. They [do not understand] . . . who is this person in my class . . . and [they have to understand that] . . . we have all types of students. I definitely saw that with the chemist person. She thought that . . . she would come in and teach a high level. Coming in you're not going to get the high level. You may have that on your résumé, you may have been a chemist for 30 years, but you're not going to come in here and be teaching the top courses, chances are. So that when you do come in and you're teaching the lower level, perhaps, you're not going to be able to do what you understand.

One administrator, A7, described a link between grade level, discipline, and pedagogy.

> Pedagogy depends on what kind of major they had as an undergrad . . . depending on their background the pedagogy might be somewhat lacking because they are coming from another area. My middle school people, one of the two had considerably more preparation in life sciences than the other. The other had been a substitute teacher and had been an elementary teacher. So, that in terms of pedagogy the one candidate is very much stronger than the other.

> You have to have the preparation in your field at the high school level, but the middle school science is pretty straightforward for the 6th or 7th grader in particular. They can learn the pedagogy as they develop into better and better teachers.

The NPTNJ teacher was described by A3 as having "had probably very similar levels [of pedagogical learning] like someone coming out of a regular education program," which led to her being prepared for the classroom. Additionally, A7 believed in the preparation of the NPTNJ Program.

> I've been impressed at how they have the same philosophy that they like to get the kids up and out of their seats and back into the laboratory or even if its just for 10 minutes to just do a couple of simple things back in the lab. So, they're not sitting there for 40 to 45 minutes listening to a lecture five days a week and so on.

Appropriate Grade-level Curriculum

Some of the teachers did express their need to work on becoming familiar with the grade level-appropriate curriculum. Half of the teacher participants expressed that knowing how to decide what was appropriate for their classroom was a challenge in the classroom. For example, when T9 started to teach, she explained,

> I really didn't know what a third grader or fourth-grader was capable of learning. I didn't know how well they read. Is it okay if I give them a vocabulary list? What can I expect of them? Can they make these words plural in Spanish if I explain the concept of them? Do they know about plurals and pluralizing, making words plural?

For A6 the teachers in the high school had to be more concerned with the level of knowledge that they taught.

> I think it depends on the level that someone is teaching. Here we have middle school and high school programs. I think it's more beneficial at the high school level where you're dealing with some very content heavy material. Not that there's no content in the middle school. Certainly having more of a sense of child-centeredness [is needed].

Technology

The use of Power Point and online and internet resources were the most common technology references. For example, T4 explained, "the introduction of a new chapter . . . that's always a lot of fun. There are a lot of props and I use PowerPoint. . . . It's always fun. The kids are completely engaged because they're all active in what you're doing."

For T6, technology knowledge and use was connected to his background experiences.

> When I was in the Internet business, I trained myself. I achieved levels of technical specification by taking CBTs, computer-based trainings. They are self correcting. You keep taking them until you get it right and then you get a check mark and you get a certification in the mail. Now, strangely enough on taking a pedagogy class . . . last year . . . for world languages [because] it's a requirement, and low and behold I see that people who take computer-based training classes have a much higher level of retention than people who don't.

Therefore, the use of Quia.com for online homework was a natural fit for T6.

> My homeworks are online . . . I string the homeworks together than they are the major test. You can piece the homeworks into a quiz or larger test and then I post those online. I actually post the actual test the night before. There it is. You can take it any time, as many times as you want to get it right. Tomorrow the real test you take one time in the classroom with the Scantron. And strangely it didn't change anyone's grade. It freaks me out. I post the test online and most of the kids can get to the Internet and the ones that can love it and don't ever want to go back to hardcopy homework. Because it's a self-correcting format. So you can take it again, and again, take it again until you get right.

For T5, technology use was comfortable and she made an easy transition to submitting lessons online.

> A lot of the teachers are complaining about it because they're used to just getting their lesson plan books out and scribbling in pencil. Where as my unit plans are all in and all I'm doing is copying and pasting into the program. So, when they tell me it takes them three hours to do their lesson plans, it takes me three minutes. I have to tweak them a little each time, but it's no big deal. It actually worked out well.

None of the teacher participants mentioned any strong connection between the NPTNJ coursework and technology, in fact T9 stated, “I don’t really remember talking about that at all, to be honest. I’m trying to think now. Honestly I don’t remember covering that.” However, A5 believed that the NPTNJ teacher participants were “willing to learn more readily and easily than traditional teachers being here 30 years. New teachers, they want to research and they want to do more.” Nevertheless, A7 stated, “their technology preparation I think are nearly identical.” There was praise by A9 for his alternate route prepared teacher for her use of technology. “Her ability to use technology as a learning tool in teaching her subject area is very good.”

Assessment

All of the teacher participants discussed several aspects of assessment, including the variety of assessments used, the time needed to complete assessments, and what to assess. For example, T3 expressed the fact that the NPTNJ Program gave her the background knowledge of assessment. “I think that (Program Coordinator) really helped us to develop a good sense of what to assess and when to assess and how to assess. I think that it is not necessarily something I could have learned without him.” Additionally, T6 learned

> many assessment types with (Program Coordinator). Unfortunately, . . . I don’t have the luxury because of my student load to really give the assessments I would like to give. If I had 12 kids in a class and I have six classes, I mean my God we would have a written test every week. And I could have them back for them tomorrow. And I could have multiple choices and trues and falses and I could do all these different things or oral exams. I can’t do that. There’s no time.

Learning about assessment for T9 occurred during the summer session.

> We did talk about assessment strategies and things like that and varying the questions, especially for language. You kind of have to cater to all the different areas of language. It really spelled it out and gave me reasons why okay this is why I need to do this. I think they covered that well and also formal assessment, too, was developed well in the class. How to keep tabs on what your students are learning, keeping an informal log and things like that on student progress. I thought that was covered well.

For T4, assessment was covered throughout the NPTNJ Program.

> I think that there was a little bit in the summer, but in the fall we really got more into it and even more in the spring. That was one of the areas I felt I really could have improved on. Especially in Spanish, you have these thematic textbooks and you have quizzes and tests that come with them and it's really tempting to just use them the way they are. But it's not always the best thing for the students. And that flexibility of knowing when to push and expect the most and when to pull back on certain areas and understand that they're not getting it. And make the system fair. And also to have experience when they are pulling your leg and they really get it but they want more time. That whole thing, assessment, I think, is the trickiest component of teaching. And also giving feedback to the students based on those assessments. That I think is probably the thing that requires the most experience.

The story T4 told about her first year illustrated the importance she gave classroom assessment.

> I had one student that was actually out for several weeks . . . due to surgery. And when she came back she had an incomplete for the quarter and I felt like it was necessary for me to give her every single assessment that I gave everybody else. And I was inflexible because I was insecure about will I really get a true picture of how she did with the material. I think that experience is the only thing that really helps you with that. . . . She has 2500 things she was asked to do and I can shorten this up for her and still get a picture of whether or not she understands the material. But I don't think I had a grasp on that. I was just doing it by the book. This is what you're supposed to do, so this is what I'm going to do. And the same thing is true with when you have multiple sections of the same level. I think through the program I came to realize more that you don't have to do everything exactly the same. Different kids are going to learn different ways and you have to be able to assess at the end of each class you have to assess where they are before you can give them a written assessment. Because that grade is going to stay with them.

The difficulty of developing appropriate assessments was described by T1.

> The [tests] that I made last year were harder to grade. I put in a lot of multiple-choice and matching . . . a variety of question types . . . so they were harder for me to grade than they needed to be. And trying also to just gauge, well if I can do it in five minutes, what does that translate to my students. And also to understand the full range of ability in a heterogeneous class . . . which meant I could do it in five, one kid was going to do it in 15 and some of them are going to take the full 45 minutes. So getting that understanding of how much time was important.

Informal assessments used daily in class were discussed by T2.

> I spend most of my time doing Q and A as I'm lecturing to make sure students are getting it and when they're not getting it, at least some percentage of the class . . . you've got to come up with a scenario that you are reviewing or that you're bringing additional insight or additional examples into the class. And at the same time trying not to bore the students that already get it. And that is incredibly challenging.

Teachers specifically talked about how they improved in assessing their students. For example, T6 stated, "I felt good about that. I really did, the second-year especially. The first year was just all figuring it out. But you know what, I make tests well. I rely a lot on multiple choice tests." Additionally, T8 explained,

> I have gotten better. At first I was like what questions do you ask in class, how do you get them all to participate. That had been really challenging and I still am working on it. Even this year in my action plan is to work on more strategies to assess students during class. Because walking around the room just isn't enough. I have found that especially using these whiteboards [the students] come up I can see right away if they get it or not. I can see what the mistakes are and it's a way for us to get them involved and for me to be able to give them an immediate assessment.

Some participants connected their knowledge of assessment to the NPTNJ Program and other educational experiences. For example, T5 described taking

> an assessment course for [an] online degree, which was very helpful. . . . The assessment course I took, I had tried a lot of assessments. And I knew when I started teaching it wouldn't be a lot of tests so I did a lot of projects. My assessments that I created were projects [for the course] and I had rubrics that went with them and we do some of that for the New Pathways also, create rubrics. Learning how to asses people that way.

Another participant, T7, stated,

> I think I . . . had an idea of how to do that before going into it. I think that what we did [in the NPTNJ course] about assessment solidified what I was already thinking. There will be tests, quizzes, and lab reports and just remembering from back when I was in high school, what was expected as a student . . . [what] the grade is based on. We did go into some more specifics about how to make a test and how to divide up the grading and I thought that was helpful as well. But I kind of had an idea about that and I just kind of said yes, you're on the right track.

The administrator participants also expressed their feelings about assessment. For example, A1 pointed out that the teacher participants "have to make sure that [their students] pass the standardized tests, that they know how to do open-ended questions, how to write an essay." Half of the administrators found no difference between their traditional and alternate route teachers and praised their knowledge. For example, A9 described the NPTNJ teacher in his school as "[using] various forms of assessments to test the progress of her children." For A4, the NPTNJ teachers in his school

> seem to be fine. Just last week I went into a Spanish class and the teacher was a graduate of the program and she was right on target with different forms of assessment to reach different kinds of learners in the class. I know of a math teacher who went through the program, he likewise, I think, benefited tremendously from it.

However, A3 had mixed emotions.

> They all need to learn how to assess their students because it is essential [for traditional and alternate route prepared teachers]. I don't think that an alternate route candidate has more or less skill in that regard . . . this is again an assumption, but as an administrator I might make the assumption that the traditional candidate might have had more exposure to methods in different ways of assessing students. They might have had to practice it more. I don't know, just maybe because the amount of time they spend in that type of program.

Lesson Planning

Most teacher and administrator participants discussed the importance of planning lessons and how creating lesson plans was connected to the NPTNJ coursework. Teacher participants felt that the NPTNJ curriculum gave them the background to write proper plans and prepared them for the classroom. For example, T1 remarked, “thank goodness [the Program Coordinator] made us do that.” Additionally, T3 stated, “the summer course prepared me more in a sense of how to develop my lessons. I . . . never saw the planning, the written part and all that and the time that goes into planning lessons.” Learning about thematic units was part of the lesson planning goals for the NPTNJ coursework for T5. “We had to do the thematic units so I did a thematic unit for one of my classes and in fact I’m still using some of the lesson plans that I made. . . .” Important for T8 was the fact that good lesson plans were worth the effort to create in order to use in subsequent years,

> I just kept thinking to myself you’re laying it out and it won’t be so hard for you next year. What was funny is that I spent all of last year really doing stuff from the first year. But at least it was good; I knew what didn’t go well. Don’t do this again and change it for next year.

The administrators believed that lesson planning was critical to the teachers’ success in the classroom and some expressed their annoyance at new teachers not being prepared to write high-quality plans. For example, A2 believed “that coming in the door, they need to be more knowledgeable in things like . . . how to write a lesson plan. I think that they need to learn the difference between a goal and an objective.” Additionally, A4 stated, “I think some new teachers come with no concept of lesson planning and the New Pathways teachers come with a sense of lesson planning.” In the end, A3 believed that

> their major function is to take a lesson plan in whatever form or format you want to use and create a lesson that is differentiated, that has elements of understanding higher-level thinking concepts, infused with technology, all of those types of things. And why they're not prepared to necessarily make that happen is a little frustrating.

Summary and Discussion

In discussing the pedagogy used in the classroom, teacher and administrator participants answered the following research questions:

2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?

The skills the teachers and administrators discussed were appropriate grade-level curriculum, technology, assessment, and lesson planning. During the discussions of these skills participants also mentioned if they felt prepared or if the issue posed a challenge. Overall, the teachers felt that they were prepared pedagogically through the NPTNJ Program. Nevertheless, some administrators did not feel the program prepared the NPTNJ teachers well enough. While several teachers and administrators mentioned the need and challenge of teaching grade-level appropriate material, they did not seem overly concerned with any inability on the part of the teacher. Teacher participants explained that they were able to discuss this issue with a mentor or colleague.

A skill the teachers described as being most necessary was planning appropriate lessons. The majority of teacher participants believed that they were prepared through the NPTNJ coursework. However, administrators did not agree that the teachers were

prepared to write adequate lesson plans. Nevertheless, the administrators did not blame the NPTNJ program for this lack of preparation. They believed that all new teachers lack satisfactory preparation in planning lessons. In addition, teacher and administrator participants discussed being prepared to teach grade-level appropriate material. One third of the teachers felt prepared and several administrators agreed. Yet, half of the teachers felt that knowing if their material was appropriate was a challenge.

The teacher participants explained that they learned various assessment techniques from the NPTNJ Program. Several expressed that assessing students was also a challenge, yet they felt prepared to assess upon entering the classroom in September. They connected their feelings of being prepared directly to the NPTNJ coursework. Half of the administrators felt the teachers were prepared. However, one administrator deemed assessment as one of the areas that differentiated alternate and traditional route teachers, adding more information to Research Question Number 8:

8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Ultimately, he felt that the traditional route teachers were better prepared.

Technology usage was a skill discussed by many participants, however, most teachers felt their ability to use technology came from educational or job-related experiences and not from the NPTNJ program. During the observations, T7 and T10 used PowerPoint to enhance their lessons. The slides provided an aid to students to follow the lecture easily and take better notes.

Teacher participants were observed using other strategies in the classroom such as T1 using humor, making up names in the word problems or using special phrases and rhythms such as boom, boom when changing a minus to plus a negative in a word problem. She had students performing different tasks for solving the word problems, scribe (wrote on the chalkboard) or brain (described the steps of the problem). Humor was used by T6 to reach his students. In addition, he had students read a section of the text and followed this by having another student restate the section in their own words in order for all in the class to understand the meaning. Students of T7 completed several activities, coloring, listening to the lecture, taking notes, and listening to music. For T8, adding a sense of fun and competition was observed when she gave her students white boards on which to write word problem answers and each student tried to be the first to hold up the board with the correct answer.

In terms of assessment, T1 queried students using questions that ranged from short answer to open ended. T3 assessed student knowledge of U.S. regions using pictures and a map. At first, students were participating excitedly and then four students in the front stopped participating, but the teacher continued without addressing these students. Students of T6 took a quiz at the beginning of class. Noticeably a third of the class needed a few more minutes. The students in the final row who had not finished continued to work and were able to finish before he got to them because he collected the quizzes row by row. Some of the students, who had their papers collected first, did not have this opportunity to complete the quiz.

Theme 4: Classroom Challenges

Research Questions:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Introduction

Once the teachers entered the classroom, their discipline and pedagogical knowledge was tested. Several issues posed challenges to the teacher participants that the administrators included in their discussions, too. Classroom management was a topic discussed several times in the interviews. The teachers discussed the fact that they were challenged from the beginning and still were in years two and three. Moreover, both teacher and administrator participants believed classroom management was important to master. Teachers and administrators also discussed in detail the relationship that the teacher participants had with their students. This complex issue was connected to understanding and managing the academically and psychologically diverse students. Thus, participants discussed IEPs, 504s, and different types of excessive behaviors in the classroom. Concluding this section is the topic of communicating with parents, discussed as part of the overall relationship with the student and managing the classroom. Observation comments are included in the summary about classroom management and the teachers' relationships with their students.

Classroom Management

Most teacher participants struggled with classroom management at one point in time. For example, T6 stated, “I did have classroom control problems, initially. And it was strictly because I found it hard, I still find it hard, I don’t like being harsh with kids. I don’t like disciplining them. I don’t like punishing them. I really don’t.” One of the teacher participants, T5, still found classroom management a difficult part of his job.

> [Classroom management] was the most difficult and it still is and I still struggle with that. My eldest sons are . . . well behaved people. I don’t understand these kids when they’re behaving this way. I just don’t understand that. I don’t come from that. So, that’s difficult for me and sometimes I think I over react to them. . . . It’s my third year here and I’m still having trouble with that one.

Similar to many teacher participants, T8 stated that her problem area was not the discipline she taught, but classroom management. She also considered classroom management a universal issue of teachers. “I needed more help with basically what any teacher needs help with, like classroom management.”

The biggest challenge for T1 was classroom management because she stepped into someone else’s classroom and found out “how hard it [was] to impose a set of procedures and rules midyear.” She connected her classroom management knowledge to the NPTNJ coursework.

> I think everything we were told we desperately needed and while I know we talked about classroom management, I needed someone to hit me over the head [about it] with a sledgehammer. I told [the Program Coordinator] that at the end [of the program]. I know you talked about it, it’s not that you didn’t address it, but that was the challenging part, especially taking on eighth graders. I hadn’t worked with eighth graders since I was in eighth grade, so that was the challenge I really had to deal with. The algebra was easy; there is nothing hard about that. It was the scope of planning and the classroom management, which I found a challenge and that’s what (Principal) said when she hired me. All I have to teach you is the

> classroom management; you know the math fine. And she was right, that was the piece that needed to be taught.

One of the teachers, T6, who completed his summer NPTNJ coursework at a different community college than the other teacher participants,

> learned from (summer Program Coordinator) that classroom control was going to be a very important thing. It absolutely is key to having things go your way with the learning curve as you move people out of ignorance into new areas of learning. It's important to have control and respect in the classroom and that everyone feels welcome and that everyone feels equally tortured or loved, depending on what's going on that day.

For T2, classroom management was a necessary topic at the beginning of the NPTNJ course. "The emphasis on classroom management during the summer session is critical for first-time teachers if they are to create a classroom where learning can occur. Without classroom management no learning can occur." In addition, T7 "thought [the summer part of the program] was wonderful because we do a lot of focus on classroom management and I thought that was primarily what non-teachers needed to know."

Being able to manage group activities with his students was important to T2 and he discussed how he had improved.

> So I've certainly over the last several months . . . gotten used to doing more group activities where any time you let the students get out of their desk and start working together, it can be frightening. If you're worried about classroom management and you're worried about discipline, it's nice to keep them all in their chairs, working on task but you don't have the richness of an educational experience unless you're allowing the students to participate in group activities. Throwing caution to the wind and . . . having the students out of their desks and spending some time working together. . . . That to me is the hard part.

Also feeling more prepared in classroom management was T1 because of the plan she developed. She stated that she "will tweak it again for next year, but it will be easier."

During the observations, T4 learned much and felt that being a parent made managing the class easier. She also explained that classroom management is easier for her because she teaches in a private, religious school.

> The way I look at it especially here, I think I have it pretty easy. (Program Coordinator) was always reminding everybody of the fact that I had it easier because if I have a problem in the classroom and one person is distracting everyone else, we look at it basically in this is the way . . . I tell my kids everyone in this room is paying oodles of money. They are paying tuition out of their pocket, beyond their taxes, and you are reaching into their pockets and stealing money from them.

The administrators discussed the importance of classroom management as frequently as the teachers did. For example, A8 and A9 agreed that classroom management was critical to include in the coursework from the beginning. In agreement was A7, who explained that "(teacher participant) has now realized how critical it is to lay the foundation on the very first day of school in terms of the . . . rules, [the] expectations, [the] policies. You will adhere to them or you have [a] tremendous amount of difficulty." Additionally, A9 believed that

> with new teachers in general there are certain things we always emphasize and work to assist them. Classroom management is one, you can have all the knowledge in the world and if you can't manage students and keep them on task they will not absorb anything that you are trying to teach them.

A few administrators discussed that traditional or alternate route teacher preparation programs did not adequately prepare teachers in classroom management. For example, A1 felt that the NPTNJ participants were weak in classroom management.

> These New Pathways don't know. So we spend a lot of time working with them, if they don't have that natural ability to see everything that is going on, to multitask, to see what's taking place. We spent a lot of time with them. For instance, I have an architect, for 12 years he was an architect. For 12 years what do you do as an architect, you are your own boss and you don't have to pay

> attention to what's going on over there in the corner because you're concentrating here. So he needed to be able to see the entire classroom. Where do you stand? How do you handle that type of situation?

She continued on to discuss classroom management for all new teachers and compared alternate and traditional route preparation.

> I don't think it's just New Pathways, it's all classroom preparation . . . no matter what teacher candidate, it's not the same as practice teaching. You are responsible. If you're not doing it right . . . I sit with new teachers every year . . . 25 years of new teachers, as a supervisor, as an assistant principal and I tell them this is what's going to happen if you'd don't lay the law down. And I'm not a big one, you know for don't smile till Thanksgiving. I'm not a big one of that because I think the kids like to see who you are. But if you don't have control of the classroom, you can't teach. And if you don't have control from the beginning, by January they are out of control. I can talk until I am blue in the face, but until you are in the classroom, until you experience it, you don't know.

In agreement was A5.

> The biggest issue, and it's just not for teachers in the Pathways, is the management issue. You can preach and preach and preach, but until they've had exposure, it's different. One thing that I tell new teachers is that you have to be very structured, very firm, consistent in the beginning. Because if you're not and you want to tighten up at the end, it is not going to work. Most of them understand that and they get a handle on it although it's difficult. With any first-year teacher, it takes time and I try to explain that you are not going to establish yourself into a situation until you're there a few years.

On the other hand, A4 expressed his contentment with the NPTNJ participants in classroom management, but also agreed that classroom management was an ongoing training issue.

> I would say with the New Pathways teachers, they are ready, they have some kind of general notion of classroom management, lesson planning, this kind of thing because they've been through that preliminary session at the college. So, it makes my job little easier since they've already been exposed to some of these ideas and now it's just a matter of firming them up and building on it.

Additionally, A4 expressed his satisfaction with the NPTNJ participants when asked what was critical to teacher success in the classroom. He named classroom management and said, “the New Pathways teachers have that advantage when they come here.” In agreement was A7, who stated, “alternate route teachers because of their greater maturity level have an easier time at [managing the classroom].”

Conversely, A6 believed that the traditional route candidate was better at managing the classroom, although he stated that this is a challenge for all new teachers.

> There is always a kind of a mental note as to who has had that background and who hasn’t. But it’s not a hard and fast line because some people who haven’t had the traditional teaching background adjust to the classroom very well. Others who have been through that teaching background don’t. By and large though, you’ll find the people who have the [traditional background] . . . are better prepared. I think the people who have had the Pathways program may be next better prepared and the alternate route teacher’s the least. That tends to be the case.

Relationships With Students

Teachers described themselves through their relationships with their students. For example, T4 believed “you are there to serve the student’s needs and you have to do everything you can to just figure out what they need and how you can get it to them.” Her administrator validated this belief after several observations, “He talked a lot about my rapport with the kids and keeping them engaged. He was very encouraging, especially after the three observations.” T5, who had students take advantage of her last year, spoke differently about her relationship with students. “Last year I thought well, the ones I had are gone. But a lot of them are back. They’re taking my classes again. They’re taking a different class that I teach. I’m not quite sure if they’re here to torture me? That’s how I feel sometimes.”

For T6, the NPTNJ course helped him define his relationships in the classroom and develop his own philosophies.

> I need to try to personalize the student's experience in my classroom to the extent that they will remember the knowledge along with the anecdotal approach of my pedagogy. That is something that I've tried to implement in my every instruction. Some quirky humor, some personal oblique story, but to make me more of a human being to them and to encourage them to exhibit more of their humanity to me. So that we can hold hands and go through a day. . . . it's important that teachers and instructors recognize you have to mentor these people as if they were your own young.

The administrator participants discussed that a lack of experience with the age group can be a hindrance to developing good relationships with the students. For example, A2 believed that "the toughest thing was getting used to teenagers. Working with teenagers is probably the toughest change for someone who's been out in the business world or been out even in the sciences and working with people, adults." When describing the NPTNJ teacher in his school, A7 stated, "her initial adjustment to 11th graders in the high school was a little bit challenging for her. She has young children at home, but they are not yet teenagers and she hasn't dealt with them in that fashion."

The administrators also described the kind of relationship they were looking for between teachers and their students. For example, A7 stated, "it is reflective of mutual respect and that kind of thing." For A9 she saw in her teacher participant the "ability to interact and get students to respond to her teaching."

Diverse Students

The teachers related a problem or problems they had with their students. Some of the problems stemmed from the diversity of children in the classroom or the quantity of

students. These students were experiencing family issues, had academic challenges, or created a class of mixed abilities. For example, T2 discussed that a teacher must

> recognize that you've got students of different abilities and if you can see that there's trouble you've got to bring extra effort to try to get them where you need them, but ultimately, you got to keep the other students engaged as well. And that's a balancing act. You're always losing someone to a certain degree and you're always boring someone else to a certain degree. And the goal is to be in between there somewhere, where you don't lose either one of those groups. It's a balancing act.

When talking about her students with family problems, T1 explained,

> I try to find that balance of giving them some space, but holding them accountable. You can't use that as a crutch for your whole life, just because your dad was alcoholic or your parents had a horrendous divorce or whatever was the problem. We feel sorry for you for a little while, but at some point you have to stand up and do your job and move on.

Exploring problems with mixed-age groups in an academically low-level class was T8.

> In my first year I had a lower-level math class. Up until [I taught the class] my supervisor knew not to have lower-level math classes taught by first-year teachers. But there was really no choice because they had to add another class and I had it. So, I felt bad because it was a freshman level class, but it was a lower-level freshman level class. So, there were sophomores and juniors and seniors in there also that had failed it before, taking algebra. And they were the ones that caused problems for the poor freshmen that were trying to learn and then you have a handful of the freshmen that jump on the bandwagon with the other kids. I had to have a student removed from that class. He just came in here every day and didn't do anything and he caused distractions and it wasn't fair to the other kids.

Additionally, T10 had problems because of mixed-age students being in school together.

> I had a problem recently with a 19-year-old. He was harassing his girlfriend who just turned 14. . . . He punched a locker and I told him to come over here and [he] gave me an FU and ran away. Instead of talking with [his] parents, he can come in and have a meeting because he's an adult. He ended up quitting. But here is a disruptive. Talking like that. Harassing a kid, who just turned into a teenager and we welcome this into the school?

Some of the problems for T6 stemmed from just "dealing with a lot of kids in the classroom."

> I learned this, when you have 30 kids in a class . . . in my first year German I, I had almost 30 kids and another German I, I had 12. Now I can do anything with the 12. I could have personnel digressions. We could do things. With the bigger class I could not do that because if I set off on an oblique path, they were too many kids who couldn't come back to the task. So, I found you had to teach a large class really strictly without a lot of personal feeling and input from them.

A third of the teacher participants explained that differentiated instruction was part of the NPTNJ coursework. One teacher participant, T7, explained, "we did talk about [differentiated instruction] and . . . like today we did some coloring, we tried to listen to the music, . . . and . . . you try to address different learning styles. And that's all that needs to be said. I don't think it needs to be more of a focus." Additionally, T10 described how he learned to "spell things out" from the NPTNJ Program.

> I use outlines because then the kids come in prepared. I asked them first to make an outline and they didn't know what they were doing. They didn't know Roman numerals. So we have lost that basic stuff. They taught me that you really have to dummy down, not dummy down, but simplify my lessons.
>
> (Program coordinator) said this, teach more by teaching less. And he is so right in that. Teach principles, teach them to think. Who was the secretary of state under Theodore Roosevelt? They don't need to know. If your idea is to teach corruption then look to Clinton's administration why you shouldn't lie under oath. But they had that question . . . it killed me that these kids were forced to remember useless information. That was another good thing that came out of Pathways.

A few administrator participants addressed diverse learners. For example, A4 agreed that how to work with diverse learners "is something that they are introduced to in the college program and then they're getting on-the-job experience, in the classroom, using some of those theories and strategies that are brought up at the college to implement." While A7 believed that the NPTNJ teachers were exposed to the issues of

diverse learners in the NPTNJ program, he felt that "differentiated instruction in a traditional program might be addressed a little more than in the alternate route program with the diverse population of students." Yet, A5 expressed that working with the special needs population is

> very structured. It also depends on the school system. At (school name) I am telling you it's a very structured special ed program. They have support for every teacher and every student. It's hard to establish your own self let alone working with another teacher, hand-in-hand, and it takes time. And sometimes they mix and sometimes they don't, the personalities. But that's part of the learning experience. There is nothing you can do in courses. You have to just be there.

IEPs and 504s

Half of the teacher participants mentioned that working with students with IEPs or 504s added to the challenges in the classroom. They felt that neither the NPTNJ program nor the school in which they worked gave them enough support. They expressed that there were just too many classified children and they were unable to remember how to accommodate each one. For T6

> the IEP, 504 issue is an ongoing issue. You have help in some classes. I have help in one class. I feel that my method always helps the kids who need more because I'm trying to be personable. I'm trying to vary the inputs. So, I think that my methods help me overcome that. Kids generally do well with me who have plans. There are kids that cannot read, they can't decode. They can't do it and they are in the classroom and it's not fair to me because I feel I can't really help that kid. I have 30 kids, 25 kids in the class . . . if I have one class with eight plans, 504s, IEPs, eight out of 25, that's too many.

Additionally, T9 stated,

> I didn't even know what one of those was when I started teaching. I had no idea because I didn't take the education classes until I started over the summer and then it's one thing to hear about them and then you get this huge file thrown down on your desk and you're supposed to . . . I teach every single child in this district between second and eighth grade. How am I supposed to remember that little

> Billy needs the test read to him and Susie needs to sit close to the board? I can't remember all that.

For T3, there needed to be more intervention from the NPTNJ program.

> A little bit more emphasis could be placed on IEPs and 504 plans and how to implement those better. I think I was familiar with them because I was working with students that had IEPs, when I was an aide. So, I kind of know a lot about it, but I think that other people in my class did not have . . . and even for myself, reading them is one thing, but being able to implement them in a way that makes the child succeed in the classroom . . . I think we could focus a little bit on that.

However, T4 described her ability to handle a situation with a student with an IEP.

> I remember the year that I was in the NPTNJ Program that I had a kid who had an IEP. He had a lot of difficulties and struggled. He had a lot of learning disabilities, but he loved music. He played guitar and he wrote songs and he brought in a CD. His music he just made up. He wrote it and it had a very Spanish classical guitar kind of feel to it. And it occurred to me what he needs is music in the classroom. And we were talking about the different learning styles in the classroom and so I said bingo. And I tell you his reaction was so wonderful. He turned around. By the time he took the chapter test in that unit he had a B on the chapter test which he never had gotten anything over a C- on a chapter test before. And I asked him about it. So why, do you study more, what's going on? And he said you did that song in the beginning and it really helped me to memorize the vocabulary and I kept thinking about it and it really kept it fresh in my mind. And also there was a physical component to the song and that really helped him to remember things. . . .

Excessive Behaviors

When discussing classroom management, teachers did not believe that every student would behave perfectly, however, they described certain behaviors that were excessive or surprising. Teacher participants recounted stories of cheating, network break-ins, harassment and immature behaviors as challenging issues. Characterizing her students, T5 stated, "they are just being rude. Saying things that they shouldn't be saying. They seem to like to touch each other, not just girls and boys, but wrestling, just touching

each other." In her interview, T7 described the immature behavior of three of her students.

> There was one girl who turned on the gas and took her lighter and decided to aim it across the classroom. There was a student who beat up another student in my classroom. That same student, he was in an out-of-school suspension for 10 days, he came back and he threw a water bottle at the blackboard while I was writing on it. So, I wrote him up for that and I had the paper that I was going to hand in, that I had written up, and he slapped it out of my hands. So he got another 10 days of suspension for striking a teacher. So, those were things that I was just like . . . how are these kids parented that they don't know that this is not appropriate behavior for classroom.
>
> I had a kid yesterday, he made one arrow out of 2 meter sticks. We were working on a lab that involved meter sticks and they were working back there quietly and he found some string and he made one arrow. He stands up and shoots a meter stick across the room. How can you do that?

In a school with a strict cheating code, T4 described a situation that truly surprised her.

> One time I had a kid and this had never happened to me before or I never really picked up on it before. . . . He was able to see [that] the kid sitting in that desk caddy corner in the next row had put his books underneath his desk, that's what they do when they have a quiz. There was part of this sheet sticking out slightly and it had all the answers to the quiz on it. It was the interrogatory word quiz. So, I gave them the sheet and they wrote in the words. . . . So they were all right there. And I noticed this kid [teacher squinting eyes and concentrating on the area where the test would be]. He didn't have his glasses on that day otherwise I never would have noticed him. He's like this [teacher squinting eyes in concentrating on the area where the test would be] trying to see what it says on the paper and at first I thought that's really odd behavior, I wonder what is he doing? And so I did what I usually do, and I walked around behind and when I got to about there [pointing to the back of the class], I could see what he was looking at. It was a sheet with all the answers on it.
>
> Then, two months later I had this project due and he turned in a project that was just a rough draft and I was just looking at it and checking it off in my book to see that he had done the rough draft. I got to his desk and I think he was in fifth period, he showed me this project and he had the worst handwriting, it was so difficult to decipher, he shows me this project and the hand writing is girly handwriting, very neat, beautiful handwriting. And I said to him what's this? And I picked it up off his desk and turned it over and it still had the name of the student who actually did it on the other side and I recognized it from my third-

> period class. Then when it comes time to turn in the final he came in with the same project he stole out of someone's locker. [The girl he stole from] had come in the period before and said I lost it, it was in my notebook and it's gone. And he comes in the next period with that project. The same project, the final project.

The worst problem for T5 was a network break-in by her students during a time-period in which she had to be absent.

> Some of my students broke into the network. They got a hold of teachers' passwords. It was a big giant disaster. So, I'm curious by nature, a little bit of an investigator. So, I thought they would probably spill the beans on My Space. So, I went on to My Space to try investigate them. I didn't really get much out of it, but I could tell the kids that I've seen you're My Spaces and they're disgusting. How could you possibly put that stuff up on there.

Communicating With Parents

Communicating with parents was a sub-theme connected with challenges the teacher participants faced in the classroom. For example, T4 explained, "every student has parents. Every parent has a concern. In keeping in contact with the parents and communicating well with their kids in the classroom if there's an issue, all those things are part of the picture." Part of the success in the classroom for T5 had been working with the parents. "I realize this year that writing home to a parent or calling the parents is my option. So, that's what I started to do this year. I didn't do that before because I tried to deal with it, without bringing the parents in. So, a couple times I did this year and it made a huge difference." Additionally, T3 felt that

> the only thing I'm hesitant about this year is [talking with parents]. Last year we had conferences with myself and the other teacher who I worked with. We did group conferences because she taught two subjects and I taught two subjects and we talked to parents as a group. This year it's going to be me on my own. So, I'm a little nervous. . . .

In addition, T8 described her nervousness when she had to call a parent the first time. “I was afraid that they were going to be very defensive of their children and attack me. And it was the total opposite . . . at least my first experience ever calling home, the parents were totally supportive.”

There were two administrators that discussed parent communication. On one hand, A1 stated that in her school alternate route teachers “get more parent phone calls than a traditional route. . . . ” On the other hand A3, expressed that [alternate route teachers] have an

> exposure to all kinds of different facets . . . having been employed privately you’re certainly used to dealing with the general public. You would tend to think that their ability to communicate with parents and with colleagues might be strong. But again, these are assumptions. I’ve just been exposed to this one person. But if I was looking at it and hiring somebody coming out of that program instead of a college student, who was living on campus for four years, . . . they’re not necessarily used to dealing with an irate customer or vendor or what have you, who is disappointed with the level of service they are receiving.

Summary and Discussion

Theme 4 was characterized by the challenges the teacher participants described in their classrooms and gave information to answer the following research questions:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Chief among the challenges named was classroom management. While classroom management was described as an ongoing issue, teacher participants felt they had improved. Many teachers felt that the NPTNJ coursework was strong in preparing them

to manage different challenges. Additionally, the administrators felt that classroom management was a challenge for *all* new teachers. Yet, two administrator participants felt that the NPTNJ program prepared the NPTNJ teachers, while one felt the traditional route teacher program was superior.

Communicating with parents was another area in which two administrators felt that there was a difference in how alternate and traditional route teachers were prepared. On one hand, one administrator felt that the alternate route teacher was better prepared because of their communication skills learned and used in the workplace. On the other hand, one administrator related that the alternate route teachers received more parental complaints. While teacher participants felt communicating with parents was a challenge, they also felt that they improved significantly with their experience in the classroom.

The administrator participants felt that relating to students was a challenge for the teachers because of their lack of experience with young people. However, teacher participants felt that the NPTNJ program prepared them to meet this challenge. In addition, teacher participants described the excessive behaviors of their students. They explained that the students used inappropriate language, lied, cheated, and hurt other students. The teachers expressed that they were surprised by the immature and at times violent behavior of their students.

Another challenge the teacher and administrator participants discussed was the diverse student population. The diversity was described in terms of the students' family problems, weak academic skills, and mixed-aged groupings and how they were affected by large class size. Several teachers and administrators felt the NPTNJ Program prepared

the teachers well. However, a few administrators explained that all new teachers needed to work with their school to be successful in managing diverse student needs. In terms of managing the IEPs and 504s, the teachers expressed that the NPTNJ curriculum was weak. In addition, the teachers did not receive support from their schools to manage all the plans.

During the observations, both positive and negative aspects of classroom management were observed. For example, T1 had a very diverse class, characterized by students who struggled with the material, wanting to be the only voice heard in the class, and wanting to disrupt other students. She was adept at reaching each one by moving around the room, calling on students to participate differently, asking different types of questions, and allowing the students to move.

However, T2 had some problems during the group work time. He failed to explain the activity to the students before moving them into groups and never gave any time limits. Thus, when the students moved, they began to talk right away and missed the directions. The teacher had to re-explain the activity and while doing that there were groups that were not working productively.

A set routine for starting each class was observed for each teacher participant. In some of the classrooms students got right to work and in others, students ignored the teacher or talked until the teacher asked repeatedly for their cooperation. On one hand, T6 had to spend several minutes quieting down the class before being able to start. On the other hand, the students in T7's class were ready to begin class right away. She began the

class with an explanation of the day's activity, explained the first one, and students immediately set to work.

As the students entered the class, T2 exhibited having an excellent relationship with his students. The students were obviously comfortable with him and each other. This caring environment was observed in each class. The teachers had worked hard to get to know their students. For example, when a 4th grade student was having trouble reading the word precipitation out loud, T3 helped him and stated that the word was difficult. She was able to steer the students away from making fun of this child. T4 was able to lessen the anxiety of students about their AP Spanish oral activity because of the trusting relationship she had built.

The night before T10 was observed, a student from his school was killed in a car accident and he began his class with a discussion of that student. He felt that this was necessary given that his topic was the Bubonic plague and a good friend of the killed student was in his class. He wanted students to be respectful of the death and he did not want to upset students more. He wanted them to understand that he was not making light of this death. His class was attentive, respectful, and able to participate in the discussion on a meaningful level.

Theme 5: Hiring

Research Question:

7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?

Introduction

The administrators had varying degrees of experience and responsibility with the hiring processes in their school. There were seven administrators that had hired alternate route candidates, but only one consistently had hired them for over 15 years. Only two administrators worked with them in a supervisory position. The NPTNJ participants already had their Certificate of Eligibility (CE), which allowed them to be in the classroom by themselves. Therefore, the school did not have to hire and pay a mentor for 20 days. At the time of his interview for the teaching position, T2 "was told . . . they couldn't afford to put a teacher in the classroom for 20 days." For A1, "one of the nice things about the New Pathways is that those who are going through it, don't have that 20 days. It is very difficult to find a teacher who would be able to be in a classroom with this teacher for 20 hours." In addition, A5 heard

> from other schools [that] if anyone is going to hire teachers that are non-certificated, they want them to have Pathways. It's very hard finding a 20-day mentor from day one. We always had one or two who were willing to serve as 20-day mentors, but most schools prefer that they either have the certification or they have already completed the Pathways.

When talking about why they hire a teacher, administrators revealed that fit was the most important reason. They discussed fit in terms of how the candidate's personality matched the school environment and the school's needs. Clearly, the administrator had to hire for specific discipline needs, but they also needed teachers to contribute to and lead extracurricular activities. Concluding this section is a discussion of the role of how many alternate route teachers employed at the school influenced hiring decisions.

Candidate Fit

When the administrator had a candidate that matched the minimum requirements of the position (discipline certification), he or she next looked at personality fit. For example, A1 stated, “when we interview it doesn’t matter to us whether it’s an alternate route or traditional route teacher. We are looking for the best person to be in the classroom.” She continued,

> but if that individual doesn’t have the personality that would enable them to get into a class, to excite kids about his subject [then we would not hire him]. I don’t routinely say this is an alternate route so I’m not going to look at him. We look at his résumé first and see what the experience is, where he went to school, what his work history is like, does he or she appear to be stable.

In addition, A3 discussed the fact that “I want someone that will contribute to the school, someone that has the right personality, communication skills, and what have you. That’s going to be committed to us and I’ll worry about the other stuff.” The administrators in the school in which A4 worked “look for people who seem to have the qualities that would be demonstrative or acceptable in the classroom and we try to nurture them along so that they will stay in teaching and have a successful experience in teaching.” During the hiring process, A10 was

> looking for somebody who’s going to fit in and grow and hopefully stay with us. Many of the applications, résumés that I looked at are people who were very highly qualified and in many cases overqualified. But it’s been my experience since I’ve been here these 20 years, the core of the department has remained solid, but there are always a few positions coming and going. And the ones that didn’t fit in were the ones that come I think, too set in their ways, loose cannons and wanted to do things their own way, just didn’t fit in.
>
> I guess my main observation is that, in general, teachers who are doing alternate route are more mature and more experienced in other aspects of life. In fact, many of the résumés I received were from people who were making teaching a second career. The people doing the alternate route are generally older, more mature, and more experienced.

The NPTNJ teachers were described by A7 as

> [bringing] a fresh perspective to the classroom because they have a varied background. They have not been involved in education prior to their entry. They have varied preparations. They have varied interests. They have all sorts of different backgrounds. Some are married, some are not, some have children, some do not. Some are younger, some are older. I think that is refreshing.

Discipline Fit

Several administrators discussed the fact that discipline certification influenced the quantity and quality of the candidate pool. For example, A1 observed that "sometimes for instance, in your science candidates, traditional routes start drying up and you may have to start looking at someone who would be able to teach, especially your higher-level math and science skills. And then you might say this guy has been a rocket scientist for years, how can I not take a real big look at him." In agreement was A6, who believed

> the alternate route . . . clearly [have] an advantage. . . . The advantage they do bring is frequently that career experience and life experience, if they're older and not fresh out of college. So, yes there's no question that particularly in harder to find or technical, maths or sciences, if they've had careers in those areas and are now coming back to teaching, certainly they bring that piece.

For A2 certain disciplines were better to hire.

> The ones that I have worked with primarily are in my Business Department. Again, it's a nice match. People are out of business. They leave the business world with a set of skills. They're usually more outgoing, used to presenting, have had some involvement in conferences and so forth.
>
> Now on the flip side, I've had the opportunity to interview people in the Art Department, particularly, because that's an area where I hire that there are alternate route. I do not find them as qualified. I'll give you one example that I can clearly remember somebody, who was into making jewelry and had worked for a jeweler and suddenly decided . . . [he/she] wanted to have the hours of a school person and was looking to do alternate route. And when you ask them about any principles of education, core competencies, they had absolutely no idea. They had not done research where the business people tended to research, check out the web sites, be on the Department of Education. They seemed to be more

> clear-cut in that path to being knowledgeable as opposed to my experience with some of the people in the arts.

However, A10 still preferred to hire a traditional route candidate even in the shortage areas.

> I do think that particularly in the sciences we are not turning out enough candidates from traditional education colleges. I wish that there were more candidates. I got lucky and was able to hire a traditional candidate from (town name) for a three-fifths biology position. She is a (high school name) graduate and I was able to get her to promise me, if I offered her this position, she would take herself off the market for a full-time position. And she said I will give you my word and she has been terrific. And I'm trying to get her converted to a full-time for next year. I promised her that and I just wrote a rationale yesterday for it.
>
> But, the number of candidates that we got when we post a position, particularly in the physical sciences . . . it's a challenge. You don't get a lot of what I would call qualified candidates. I think in the biological sciences there are more candidates available and that's where we were able to hire our two Pathways candidates in August just prior, we got lucky with (teachers' names) because we were impressed with both of them in the interview and within 24 hours offered them each a position. There just weren't a lot of candidates that we felt comfortable with. (Teacher name), she had taught a year in (high school name) but she lives in (town name) within 5 miles and she was commuting to (high school name) and we had a position opened here and she came for an interview and the fact that she had a BS and an MS in chem. was huge. So I had no qualms about hiring her for my high school chem. position.

For two teacher participants, their discipline was directly related to their hiring.

> T2: I think there was a special fit from the standpoint of the School to Career Program . . . where you're dealing with teaching the students about what they need to know to get a job when they leave high school. It is the responsibility of the instructor to be in touch with people in the workplace, who are doing the jobs that the students are indicating they have an interest in. And getting those people willing to become a mentor, to allow the students to come out for a day to see what it's like to do that kind work. And I know because I've been told that the reason I was hired is because I had 30 years experience in business and was comfortable speaking to people in the business world and because they wanted that particular piece of the program to significantly develop.

> T7: They have a program . . . for students who want to become doctors . . . the Academy for Science and Technology. They were looking for someone to teach pharmacology and since I was coming from a pharmaceutical background they

> thought I would be an actual person to teach pharmacology and they also had an opening for a three fourths chemistry teacher plus the pharmacology.

School Needs

Administrator participants described how they had to fill different school needs. For example, A7 stated, “sometimes you have to fulfill needs, for example, do we need a play director, do we need a choral director, do you need extracurricular activities, do you need an athletic person.” When she began teaching, T1 was asked to supervise the Color Guard and explained about other new hires.

> The guy who got the supplemental math, he has only lesson plans and no grades to do, so he’s young and he likes soccer and I’m sure one of the reasons why he was hired was to help the soccer coach. There was another, the lit. teacher that I taught with, his first year, he had taken on the musicals. He is also an alternate route teacher.

Number of Alternate Route Candidates Previously Hired

Teacher participants felt that administrators that had hired alternate route prepared teachers previously were more open to candidates with alternate route certification during the hiring process. For example, T1 connected her successful hiring to other alternate route candidates

> who paved the way. It started with the technology teacher, who is a local architect who actually did projects on this building. . . . And there’s a science teacher who has a great reputation and our superintendent, who is alternate route. So there really wasn’t a whole lot of stigma or if some people think differently, they haven’t voiced it.

During her interview, T5 was encouraged by her principal to register for the NPTNJ Program and stated that she was being hired along with three others in the program. While T3 was discussing going through the NPTNJ Program with her principal, the principal said there were already “three teachers on the staff that were alternate route

certified. So, I knew that this would be a good place." However, T3 heard from the superintendent's secretary that "after they had hired me, she told me . . . that I was lucky . . . she said, to be honest, they usually put [alternate route candidate resumes] at the bottom of the pile because they have other teachers, who are traditionally certified." Yet in the interview she explained, "I didn't sense that at all. There were a couple of questions about the fact that I hadn't been traditionally certified. But I just put the spin on that, I didn't think it really mattered. Even though it may have been a weakness in one sense, it could've been a strength in another sense."

Nevertheless, A6 expressed that traditional route candidates were preferred.

> I've had other conversations with people who are interviewing for positions, and the time to get into teaching and they asked questions about the alternate route program and about Pathways. And I try to give them some guidance on that versus traditional. And what I said to them and what I say to you is that some of the candidates that will ask a question, is this kind of against me that I'm an alternate route? My answer is simply that certainly all things being equal, I think one would prefer a traditionally certified teacher because they've had all the coursework prior to entering the classroom.

In his previous district, A9 was not encouraged to hire alternate route candidates, however he expressed that his view and that of others had changed.

> More educational leaders are looking at the total package, are opening their doors up to other people for the simple reason that the number widens the available quality applicants out there, especially for the hard to fill positions. Now, you interview five people and that one person has a different preparation program, such as the one we are talking about, and comes across head and heels above everyone else. To not seriously consider that person coming on board to be part of your team because of a different preparation program, I just don't know that you will continue to see that as much.
>
> I think that like with any program over a period of time the product of that program will determine the success of the program. If you're in the school system where you had the opportunity to hire people through Pathways and they've come out to be good teachers when vacancies open up, you're not going to hesitate to at least interview and consider those candidates.

In addition, A10 stated,

> Basically, if I were looking at two candidates for a position, everything is equal, except one is traditional and one is alternate route, alternate route would be an advantage in my eyes. Again because if the person is a few years older, had another profession of some sort . . . I would go with maturity and life experience versus someone right out of college.

The change in attitude towards hiring alternate route teachers was explained by T7.

> Now they're hiring alternate route knowing that NPTNJ is a good program, but previously it was not looked on very favorably. [During the interview,] I found that they were mostly saying that we would rather go traditional route. Even though I was about to start taking the courses through NPTNJ, it was difficult, even with science.

The matter of being an alternate route prepared teacher was a non-issue in the hiring process for T9. She felt that the administration "just wanted to make sure that they were covered, that I was doing what I was supposed to do so that they didn't get into trouble."

Summary and Discussion

Theme 5 described one of the main responsibilities of the administrator participants, hiring. Their discussions helped answer Research Question Number 7:

7. How did administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?

During the hiring process, the majority of administrators expressed that they were looking for a good fit and did not have to worry about providing a teacher to be in the classroom with an NPTNJ candidate for 20 days. The administrator participants wanted to hire a candidate that could connect with the school environment, had the right discipline credentials, and matched a need in the extracurricular area. Teacher

participants expressed that the number of alternate route candidates previously hired helped them to obtain a position.

In addition, some administrators felt that a greater choice of candidates opened up in the shortage areas when they included alternate route candidates. In addition, a few administrators felt that certain disciplines were a better fit with alternate route hires. In the end, only a few administrators still believed that they would choose a traditionally prepared teacher over an alternate route candidate.

Theme 6: School Support

Research Questions:

6. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?

Introduction

The interviews included discussions about how the participants felt they were treated and supported in the school and how the administrators felt they treated and supported the teachers. These discussions focused on the observations conducted by school administrators and their feedback, informal contact, and the schools' new teacher programs. Administrator and teacher participants described the support given in general and support received for disciplinary issues. In addition, this section includes a discussion of how other teachers and the participants' mentors were involved in supporting the teacher participants.

School Treatment

Notably, each teacher and each administrator felt that there was no difference in the treatment of alternate route certified teachers versus traditional route certified teachers. For example, T3 stated,

> everything is the same. Every teacher that starts has to have a mentor. It's not just New Pathways or alternate route. Everyone has to have a mentor. Everything is the same. Everyone gets three observations. It's all standard. I don't see any difference at all, especially starting the same time as three other new teachers, three other first-year teachers.

For A6, he did not

> think any staff member would know the difference. . . . I think we generally treat other people as we see them. In other words if I see someone struggling and having problems, it doesn't matter if they're alternate route or not, I'm going to try to help them.

Only one of the teacher participants mentioned negative feelings about other teachers that may have

> commented on [the fact that I was alternate route]. They thought that I was somehow, not quite sure how to say better, but that I had a real job before. And I had never even said that. They implied that I thought that. That I would say that I had a real job once, as if this wasn't a real job. And I hadn't said it to them. So, they clearly were thinking that I have that kind of an attitude. I don't know if it was widespread or if there were just a few teachers that have made comments about it.

Observing Teachers

Administrators described several models for observing all new teachers. For example, A5 stated,

> there are rules that all non-tenured teachers have to be observed a minimum of three times. And informals could be as many as you want. Each school system is different and (present school name) is three times and at (school name) it was five times. So, it depends on the school. You try to separate so you have different

> pieces of the administrative team going to observe, so it's not the same person. And then you compare, what did you see, what did you not see.

Additionally, A7 worked with three NPTNJ teachers and

> formally observed and evaluated all three of them. However, in this district I am not required to see them as often as I would in other districts. All three of them are non-tenured. Their contracts stipulate that they are observed three times in the course all the year. I, as their direct supervisor, observe them twice, once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. Meanwhile, one of the administrators in our building observes them the third time.

Only A10 was not allowed to conduct formal observations because he was an acting department supervisor, who retained his faculty status.

The teacher participants also described their observations. For example, T1 "had formal observations from the principal, from the vice principal, from the lead math teacher, from the Renaissance Department Supervisor and anybody else who had to make a formal observation, (Program Coordinator). I had quite a few formal observations." In addition, T9 explained,

> we always have to meet with an administrator and that was three times. Besides these observations we met once in the beginning while they explained the whole mentoring program thing. At the end of the year we kind of had a wrap-up meeting to summarize what was your experience. We might have met one other time during the year, just really briefly because there were a couple of us that started, The new teachers, the mentors and the administrators would meet and chat. How is it going, any problems, everything working out?

Post-observation Feedback

Teacher participants discussed a variety of topics in their post-observation meetings. For example, T1 described a relaxed atmosphere in which the principal, lead math teacher and mentor would ask "how is it going, is there anything you need that we can give you, what are you struggling with that we may not be able to help with, so we

will know in the future that it causes an issue?" For T3, feedback on her observations was a positive experience.

> I think just getting positive assurance back that you doing a good job, keep it up, and if I were you, I may have done this differently. Our principal taught fourth grade so he gave me great advice and suggestions for how to make certain things better and change certain things. I think just having him, and he's very approachable, he's easy to talk to. He is really great.

Nevertheless, T2 explained, he wanted the observers to be very critical of his teaching and give feedback in

> as constructive a manner as possible. I wanted them very badly to be critical because that's the only way you get to figure out what it is you're doing and maybe you want to modify to some degree or maybe there's something you didn't do that you want to put into the lesson plan. And I did have several instances where that was just very, very helpful.

In agreement was T5, who also wanted critical feedback and explained the difference between her school administrator and the NPTNJ Program Coordinator's post-observation feedback.

> We have a little feedback meeting but there's no real feedback. It's just everything looks good. I would have rather that they had said you didn't do this right and you did this right and even did this right. So that I can fix it. (Program Coordinator) told me what I didn't do right. . . . a bunch of things I didn't do right. So then I was able to fix them. So when he came back the second time I was doing all right. So that was good feedback. That was good. I wish someone like that would come every year.

For T7 there were no meetings after she was observed. "They would just put the observation sheet in my mailbox then I would sign off." On the other hand, T8, had pre and post-conference meetings.

Informal Contact

Administrator participants described informal contact as a common method to find out how teachers were performing and feeling. For example, A1 explained, "if I hear that there are more concerns out there I might call them in and chat with them informally." She also explained a system called five by five that all of her administrators carried out.

> They go into five different classrooms just for five minutes just to get a feel for what's happening and then there may be an informal discussion. The five by fives are great. Somebody else gave me additional ideas of when you go in for informal things you might have three or five different things that you're going to look for. So you can see if they are on task, are they following the curriculum, are they focused, how is the discipline. All that you can see in five minutes.

The administrators in the school in which A9 worked "manage our building at times by wandering. That is informally walking the halls, going in and out of classrooms, talking to teachers informally about how things are going."

New Teacher Programs

Several teacher and administrator participants described the orientation programs for all new teachers held at their schools as a day or two before school began. However, there were other models discussed. For example, A4 described a year-long program.

> We have an orientation session at the beginning of the school year, in August, and then I have a program where I meet with all the new teachers once a month with a different focus each month. Sometimes it might be grading and other times it might be related to parents or working with students with special needs. And as I said this goes for the year and again the people who have gone through it seemed to have benefited from it. So, it supports what they have known before.

Additionally, A1 described the most comprehensive program that included a summer orientation and academy for teachers.

> We would require them to do 10 hours of training that our teachers provide to them for a period of three years. So until they would receive tenure, they are getting indoctrinated into (the school's name) think process. And they have new teacher meetings because they would meet together to hear about different aspects of the school. Now my understanding is that sometimes what we are doing here is mimicking what is taking place in the New Pathways process. But we want to give it our spin and not somebody else's. We go into training in differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, brain-based research. We've done that in the past and these teachers come in and they must think I'm speaking a foreign language sometimes. They've heard about it but haven't been involved in it.

The teacher participants also described new teacher programs. For example, T1 described her feelings about the three-year program just mentioned.

> So far every single one of them . . . (Program Coordinator) had already taught me, every single one of them. Nothing has been new. The only thing we talked about that I really would have liked more in-depth was . . . differentiated instruction. . . . I have kids that can't multiply and I've kids that [should be] in honors except maybe they were sick on the day they took the GEPA test.

For T5, the new teacher program was not successful because the principal led the program.

> We actually had a program, I guess it is called the new teacher committee or something. We were supposed to meet on a monthly basis and have an open forum to discuss things, although none of us felt comfortable talking because we're all non-tenured teachers and the principal was the head of this little committee. Our real problems were not let out on the table ever. And half the time the meeting was canceled because of something else more important that came up . . . and there were 15 of us that year. There were a lot of us. It was just like a secondary thing. And the second year they did the same thing.

Mentors

The relationship with the mentor was an important part of the teacher's success, but only when a good relationship existed. Part of the formula for success was the time commitment and the type of advice given. For T1 the most important part of her success was the NPTNJ coursework, but second was having a mentor. For T2 "success is

significantly based on the attitude and the willingness of the mentor to participate the way a mentor needs to participate. And I was very fortunate in both cases I had what I would consider master teachers with significant experience." A unique, but positive relationship was described by T9.

> It was actually kind of funny because she was the Special Ed teacher and the grade 1 Spanish teacher. She had to do it because she was the only one with openings in her schedule and you know how that works. We were mentoring each other and she taught a section of fourth-grade also because I couldn't do it schedule-wise because I'm over here on Fridays and there were five fourth-grade sections my first year. I had to teach her Spanish while she was teaching me about teaching. I would have to write out phonetically vocabulary and things like that for her. It was really unique because while she was my mentor, and in a way I was kind of her mentor.

A more informal mentoring relationship was described by T7.

> It would just be here and there and he would say a few things. Sometimes if I had hall duty and he had a free period—and for hall duty in that school we had to walk the halls, here we are stationed somewhere . . . he'd say let's walk and we can talk about things.
>
> He would offer me suggestions. We met before school started, so I could get copies of the textbook and that sort of things and he gave me lots of disks with lots of good resources. So, he gave me a lot of resources, but we really didn't discuss much outside of discipline and classroom management during the mentorship.

In addition, T5 had a very informal relationship with his mentor, but felt he "should've had a more formal mentor. It was really not a good thing. She was a wonderful person, but she just should not have been assigned to me as my mentor. There was just no effort put in at all."

A more negative example was described by T6.

> I had a mentor. There was no relationship. No money passed hands. He never asked for any. He was never on my schedule. He was never put in a position where he could have been helpful to me. I could never see him. He was not on my

> lunch schedule. He was not on my prep schedule. He never offered to meet after school. A couple of times he asked me how I was doing.

Administrator participants described their role in the mentor program in various ways from making sure they followed the state guidelines to being mentors themselves. For example, A6 believed the "mentoring process is more than just assigning a mentor. It's really asking the school to be proactive in thinking through what the needs of a staff member may be. I think that's very helpful." Additionally, A9 described the "mentoring process . . . where they have a colleague, who they can work with very closely. With the person, they can talk about academics, whether it's about dealing with parents or classroom management, whether it's about their rights under the contract. So, it's really anything for a first-year teacher if they have any questions."

Other Support

The help the teachers received to solve the classroom issues came from sources other than their mentor such as the Program Coordinator, administrative personnel or other teachers at their school. However, teacher participants expressed that one had to know who to go to for help. For example, T4 felt that you had to "[keep] the administration out of your problems, solve them yourself." Sending disruptive students to another teacher's class was a tactic used by T2, also.

> I would have a group of teachers in rooms close to mine where we had an agreement that if they had a student that was being disruptive, they could send him to my class and not involve the administration. And I could send my student to their classroom for a timeout and that was very helpful, you wouldn't lose the class for the day because you had someone disruptive.

Additionally, T5 explained that while teachers could send disruptive students out of the class to the vice principal, she did not receive the support necessary for a major discipline issue, the network break-in.

> This thing with the network last year. It was kids that I trusted, who turned out to be the ones that I shouldn't have trusted. I try to be trusting, but not so anymore. They just took advantage of me. I had personal stuff going on, my mom was sick and I was out of school like 20 days last year. So, they just sort of ran crazy while I wasn't here. They broke into the network and did all kinds of crazy stuff. And I think having that happen in a school system . . . if it had happened in a corporate place they would have been fired. They would have been prosecuted. They would have gone to jail. The police would have been there. In school it was [teacher slapped hand] you really shouldn't do that. Let's not make it public. We don't want people to know. So, they shoved it under the carpet. I wanted justice to be served.

Another example of not receiving the necessary help was related by T9.

> I actually have an autistic student in the elementary school who . . . I don't know if it was because I didn't take the education classes and I didn't know what to expect. But still to this day, I really don't know how to deal with him. He refuses to do work. I've had experience where he was violent towards himself, calling out very inappropriate things in front of an entire class and I just don't know what to do because something is not right. Do I let this go even though he just called me ABCD, blah blah blah? That's really hard. I have a very hard time like I said before disciplining. I don't know an appropriate punishment for the crime in a lot of cases, also we don't have the best administrative support.
>
> Last year other teachers and I went to the child study team about this child and asked what can we do. Pretty much we got no answers because they don't even know what to do. He is extremely manipulative. He is highly intelligent and he just knows how to work us. He knows that he can't really get into trouble because his dad is a board member. That's been tough and he's been there since my first year, since third grade when I started.

When some of T5's colleagues found out she was not being mentored, they became her support. For T1, support came from

> the teachers that I worked with last year . . . in seventh and eighth grade we have teams of teachers so the kids cycle through the same five teachers. They don't wind up switching all over like they do in high school. So we meet twice, last year

> we met three times a week, but we're meeting twice a week and they're very supportive.
>
> It was the lit teacher and the English teacher . . . both second-year teachers last year that said I know what you're going through, trust me it will be better next year. They were very supportive. Both seventh-grade math teachers are second career teachers. One of them is up for tenure this year. The other one, (name), has been here about 25 years now and she worked for (company name), so it's another female engineer. And she's fabulous and she said I hated my first year and I do not know why I came back. I was in the high school and I just had rough kids, I was not prepared for that, but for some reason I came back the next year. And it has been wonderful since.

Her administrator, A1, described the idea of grade-level and disciplines teams for providing support for the teachers.

> They are on a team with a 7th grade English, 7th grade math, 7th grade social studies teacher and they have team meetings everyday. They are getting support. They are getting reinforcement. They are getting ideas from their three colleagues plus a special ed person is usually affiliated with that team that might offer suggestions in terms of dealing with classified students. I think that is a real plus for the middle school people.
>
> Plus they are not only members of their team, their grade-level team, but then they are members of their middle school science department. So, they have colleagues that are teaching the same material at the same time. They have colleagues who have had the students last year that they can consult. How did you deal with Johnny when he did this? Being 7th grade teachers they could consult with 6th grade teachers and even consult with 8th grade teachers who are dealing with those kids after one more year of maturity.

The environment in the school in which A6 worked provided an open atmosphere of support.

> Even if it's not your mentor, the teacher next door hears something going wrong, they're likely to come over if it's an emergency or stop by and see that teacher later and say hey I noticed that things didn't go so well, is there anything you need, anything I can help with. And I find that people are very willing to do that. I feel like when any new teacher can feel like they can go to multiple people, that's very helpful. And very often the mentor/protégé relationship sometimes blossoms, sometimes they don't, sometimes they're strained. So, when you have that kind of environment it provides a little bit of a cushion in case that doesn't work as well as you would like.

Summary and Discussion

Teacher and administrator participants described school support in terms of new teacher programs, observation feedback, and the assistance provided by mentors and other school employees. These themes relate to the following research question:

7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?

A key role for administrators was to conduct observations of teachers and provide some type of feedback. Several models were explored and teacher participants described situations in which they received constructive feedback and times when they received almost none. Administrators also discussed that they enjoyed informal time with teachers, just to check in and ensure all was well.

In addition, the administrators and teachers described different types of new teacher programs. While one administrator described the most comprehensive three-year model, her NPTNJ teacher expressed that the information was already part of her NPTNJ coursework. Notably, no administrator felt he or she treated NPTNJ teachers any differently from traditionally prepared teachers. In addition, several administrators explained that collegial support in general, was a necessary component of teacher success and worked to create that environment in their school.

Several teacher participants explained that they relied on the feedback and support from other teachers, mentors, or the NPTNJ Program Coordinator in addition to, or instead of, an administrator. Typically the teachers were advised mostly on classroom management and school policy. Some teachers felt one should not let the administration know if there were problems occurring in your class and therefore were glad to rely on

others. Teachers described relationships they had with other teachers to manage discipline problems by sending the disruptive students to each other's rooms. Other teachers did feel comfortable sending troublemakers to the administration. Frequently, mentors were mentioned positively for their help and support. However, one teacher participant had no contact with a mentor. The teachers, who mentioned a positive relationship with their mentor, described a willing and knowledgeable volunteer.

Theme 7: Future Concerns and Recommendations

Research Question:

8. What recommendations do the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

Introduction

This theme presents information about how the teacher participants discussed their future in terms of the teaching profession. Central to the teachers' feelings on remaining in education were salary, benefits, and the satisfaction derived from teaching. They expressed why they wanted to stay or leave the profession and made recommendations about post-program coursework. In addition, teacher participants recommended spending additional time studying classroom management during the NPTNJ Program. Finally, the administrators made recommendations in the areas of assessing school needs, state organizations, and state standards.

Salary and Benefits

No teacher participant was surprised at the rate of pay for teachers and explained why they were able to accept their salary. For example, T1 stated, the salary and benefits were not

> as bad as I expected it to be because in industry you pay for at least some percentage of your health care premium, but (high school name) at this point still does not [make us pay]. . . . My co-pay used to be $25 and $50 for prescription medicine, last year they were three dollars. They went up this year, but they are still six. It was never that [in industry] even 10 or 15 years ago, that low.

She also explained that she was

> fortunate enough to be in math and physics, there are fewer of them to choose from and they actually did work with me and put me partially up the guide. They didn't bring me in on step one. So that combination and I also have a Masters plus 15 because of the NPTNJ . So all these things have helped close the gap. So there's still some gap, but when I take into account that I'm not working at all in the summer, I have the same school breaks as my children within a day or two.

A teaching career would not have been possible for T2 if his

> children were still at home. And quite frankly I don't understand how teachers manage to have families. . . . In my previous life as a business executive, I had no particular difficulties financially. If I still had the kids at home I couldn't be doing this.

The salary was of great concern to T10. He believed that the schools would loose their best teachers due to low salaries and he "may not be able to stay in education. . . . We are taking that step down. Even with my pension I am still at $20,000 less than I made."

> One administrator, A2, thought that
>
> It [was] amazing . . . for a job that probably would start at $43,000, but a teacher could add on more. . . . I have a young lady who is teaching . . . and she's just out of school for a year. She came out and she was teaching at $43,000 and we had an extra class which was an additional $6,000 and she was up to $49,000 then she picked up the art club for another $2000 so she is just out of college and she's making $51,000. And there are benefits and there are opportunities if you want to coach. So that then has pulled a lot of these people in from other areas.

Satisfaction

Half of the teacher participants spoke specifically about the satisfaction they received from teaching when asked if they would continue teaching into the future. "I

can't see myself getting tired of this. Every year is different" (T4). Another example is T3, who stated,

> I don't think I would want to do anything else. I love it. I do. I love it. I have such a good time. It might be corny to you to say, but I love it. I have so much fun and every single day is different. Even when I have a bad day, it goes so fast and you start a new day everyday. It's different every day. I love it, I do. It keeps me on my toes.

Three of the teacher participants compared the satisfaction of teaching they received with their prior careers. The first example was T2 who stated,

> I'm absolutely loving what I am doing. There's a degree of satisfaction with this work that did not exist with the type of satisfaction that I had in the business world making millions of dollars a year for my employers versus seeing a child actually have a light bulb go on and 'oh, I get it now.' There is a degree of satisfaction that is very hard to put into words.

Another example was T7, who explained,

> I am very happy doing it and I could never say that when I was working in pharmaceuticals. Pharmaceuticals is like, well, a paycheck and I go to work, I do the job, but I never really felt happy or fulfilled . . . I think I was touching lives by making these drugs available to people to help them get better, but I never saw it. I never talked to the people that were being helped by the work that I did. And here I can see when the students are like I get it and I can learn this and I can use it somewhere else. And that I find is very fulfilling.

For T9, "it's something about being around kids all day instead of grown-ups. I still see myself as a kid. I'm almost (age) and I would so much rather work with kids than in a stuffy office with a bunch of adults."

Teacher participant T5, who was not satisfied with the punishments given for the network break-in, stated that she would feel "safe to go do something else if [she] needed to." She explained that "right now I'm comfortable here. And hopefully I will get tenure and then, I'll stay here for awhile. But I'm not worried about my pension and about this

and that because I don't think I'll be here to get my pension. That's not my goal to stay here for 20 years."

Classroom Management

Classroom management was a much-discussed topic during the interviews. The teacher participants recommended emphasizing this issue more in the NPTNJ curriculum. T1 recommended that you "hammer the classroom management" in the NPTNJ program. T2 added,

> I think that I would have enjoyed even more in-depth sort of discussion of classroom management and skills, if this then that, including the discipline program that comes from failure to comply with rules and regulations. [It was] very well-done but from where I was coming from, even more. More would have been just fine. Not that we didn't have any, or a fair amount, but more would have been better.

State Standards and Organizations

One administrator discussed several issues concerning new teachers and their lack of knowledge about state regulations. The issues of major concern for A2 were a lack of knowledge of state standards, certification issues, and pertinent state organizations. For the NPTNJ Program or any teacher preparation program she made the following suggestions:

> I . . . think that the other thing you have to be aware of is that [new teachers] don't even really know what they're certified for. Like in art, you come out with a general teacher of art. But in the business area everything is separate. Most of them come through the typical route, it's called a teacher of finance and economics. And that only lends itself to teaching a few courses. It does not lend itself to everything.

Later in the interview she continued,

> if you're in the state of New Jersey . . . those journals [need] to be discussed in class. . . . So that when they come in, they see what is familiar. Introduce them to the state organizations like the technology organization, the people who are really making policy, go down to the teacher conferences and bring back materials.

Assessment of School Needs

Three administrator participants discussed using the NPTNJ Program as a link between teacher education preparation and meeting school needs. For example, A10, stated, "I'm glad that it exists. . . . A lot of people approached me from other professions, giving consideration to the teaching profession. And I say, tell others about this alternate route to certification. Many people are not aware of it." The recommendation A2 made was to open up the Program to attract people into the teaching profession. "Almost offer it to people who are thinking about it, maybe this would be worthwhile to you." The suggestion from A3 was "to get a sense of what an administrator is looking for in any candidate. And then work backward and then say how do we help them acquire those skills . . . when you're designing classes."

Post-program Coursework

Continuing their studies was an interest of three teacher participants. They discussed the concept of coursework to be taken after the certification process. The NPTNJ Program allowed the participants to take the program for 15 credits. Most did complete the requirements for this option and were then halfway to completing a master's degree. Two teacher participants, T3 and T4, suggested that there be a link from the NPTNJ program to complete the second 15 credits to finish the master's degree.

> T3: I think the only thing that I might want to say is that I know [Jersey City State University] sends people out [to talk] about continuing on with your masters, but I still feel a little foggy about that. I do want to finish my masters, and maybe this

> does not have anything to do with New Pathways, but because I have the 15 credits I started through them, I want to finish with Jersey City State. They sent a couple of people out about it, but I felt it wasn't enough information to get me to do it. But, eventually I do want to go back and finish my masters through them. I was thinking, maybe next semester, I would go. I wanted to take a semester off. I do want to pick up again, whether or not it's in the spring, summer or fall. I want to know more about that.
>
> T4: I would love to finish at night, to do it online, but I've never taken an online course. There was a woman who came to talk to us about that. She was in charge of the Masters, I can't remember the title but it has do with technology. Being that it was about technology, they made it accessible online. But there are also meetings that were required and I can't remember how many were required, but at the time I couldn't do it right away. If that could be brought closer to home for people who did the NPTNJ Program, I think you'd end up with more people with a master's degrees.

One participant, T6, was interested in a post-certification process that involved all teachers and not just the NPTNJ graduates.

> I'm talking about that you have to think about the post-certification process that takes that abomination that happens in (state name), in (town name) away and really make something that is meaningful to a teacher; that gives them an easy way to gather credits and that's affordable.

Summary and Discussion

Several concerns and recommendations of the teacher and administrator participants were presented in this section. The teacher and administrator participants explicitly made six suggestions that helped answer Research Question Number 8:

> 8. What recommendations do the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

In terms of salary and benefits, most participants were contented, however, one teacher will have to move or change careers because of the low pay. This teacher participant believed that the low pay would be a detriment to keeping teachers or attracting the best teachers into the profession. In addition, half of the teacher participants spoke about how

teaching is a satisfying career. Several discussed the fact that they never felt this satisfaction in their prior careers. One teacher felt that a lack of support from the administration in terms of disciplining students for a computer network break-in was the principal dissatisfaction of her job.

Additionally, the teachers discussed the recommendation of adding more time in the NPTNJ curriculum about classroom management. All participants in the study agreed that this is a critical component to any teacher's preparation. Teacher participants also discussed the issue of continuing their studies. Some of the teachers requested knowledge about the types of programs available. For others, they wanted a more convenient way to complete their masters, such as online classes or classes provided nearby.

Another recommendation, which came from one administrator, was connecting new teachers to state organizations and standards. She believed that this knowledge would make them stronger educators. Several administrators made the final recommendation, the NPTNJ Program administrators should network with school districts. They recommended that the NPTNJ administrators work with the schools to find out what the discipline shortages are so they could try to attract them and finally, they felt that they could provide recommendations for the NPTNJ curriculum.

Chapter Five

Major Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from the themes that emerged from the data collected to answer the nine research questions. First, a brief summary of the context of the study is presented along with related literature. Next, the purpose of the study is described, followed by the methodology used in the study. The major findings are presented by describing each of the seven themes that emerged from the data. Answers to the nine research questions and connections to pertinent literature and the central question follow. Finally, the conclusions of the study are presented along with specific recommendations for the NPTNJ Program, general recommendations for alternate route teacher education programs, and recommendations for further research.

There were several instances when teachers and administrators discussed topics in a way that led to different thematic categorization of the topics discussed during the interviews. For example, some participants described an issue as a strength of the NPTNJ Program, while others described the issue as part of the Program that helped them be prepared for the classroom and or a necessary skill. In addition, some participants described a topic as preparing them for the classroom, while others described the topic as a challenge. These differences will be described as the research questions are answered.

Context of Study

During a time characterized by a critical shortage of teachers, alternate route teacher preparation programs have been a method to train more teachers for the K-12

classroom. Although much of the information gleaned from the literature is conflicting, alternate route teacher preparation programs were found to graduate prepared teachers who helped fill the shortages found in the schools. For example, C. E. Feistritzer (2005) studied 2,647 alternate route teachers during 2004-2005 and found that alternate route programs filled certain areas of need such as graduating more minority candidates and candidates who chose to teach in geographic areas of greatest need and in the critical discipline shortage areas. In addition, she found that these alternate route teachers remained in their careers longer than traditionally prepared teachers.

Although many definitions existed for alternate route teacher preparation programs, typically they required participants to hold a bachelor's degree, pass thorough selection processes, complete pedagogical coursework, do field-based work, participate in mentor programs, and achieve high exit standards (Feistritzer, 2005). Several states developed different model programs. For example, Florida permitted community colleges to grant baccalaureate degrees in certain shortage areas. In Texas, the collaboration between education agencies led to a successful alternate route program. Finally, the Maricopa Community College System in Arizona created a system of entry into teaching from the two-year level in which participants could continue to the Master's degree.

The NPTNJ Program began in 2003 and was a partnership between New Jersey City University and the 19 community colleges in the state. The program was created to answer the state's teacher shortage in certain disciplines and meet specific geographic needs. The teacher participants in this study had to meet the following requirements in order to begin the NPTNJ Program:

- Hold a bachelor's degree in a core content area with a 2.75 G.P.A.,
- Apply and obtain a Certificate of Eligibility (CE),
- Complete the NPTNJ application,
- Be admitted into the program.

After meeting these requirements, the teacher participants took a six-week summer course that focused on preparing them for the classroom in September. During the following school year, they met one night per week for class and completed a year of teaching under the supervision of a mentor, school administrator, and NPTNJ Program Coordinator. In addition, the teachers had to pass the Praxis Exam to demonstrate discipline knowledge before the end of the summer session. They concluded the program with a three-week summer capstone course and then obtained certification.

Because the participants entered the program already prepared in their disciplines, program coursework focused on the skills and knowledge the participants would need for a teaching career. The curriculum focused on planning and preparation, instructional delivery, classroom environment, school environment, and professional responsibilities and followed the INTASC Standards for teacher accreditation. Learning outcomes and their assessment were developed for all aspects of the curriculum.

Purpose of Study

The study of the NPTNJ Program was undertaken to expand the literature on alternate route education with information pertinent to preparing teachers for the classroom. The purpose of this case study was to identify the positive and challenging aspects of the NPTNJ Program at the community college level from the perspective of NPTNJ teacher participants and their administrators. The conclusions drawn by analyzing

the data from one particular program added to the understanding of what are the best practices in alternate route education preparation programs.

The central question for this case study was

- How did participants in the NPTNJ Program and their administrators describe their experiences in relation to the program's coursework and classroom teaching requirements?

In addition, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?
2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?
3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?
4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?
5. What challenges did participants feel they faced while in the program?
6. What topics of the teaching profession did the participants and their administrators discuss?
7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?
8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?
9. What recommendations did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

Methodology

The qualitative case study design was chosen in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the NPTNJ Program through interviews with ten teachers and nine administrators. These interviews provided a thick and rich description of the program's strengths and challenges. This study followed the traditions of Creswell (1998), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995), who defined case studies as investigations of real-life situations

that were bounded by their context and that allowed researches to discover meaning in which to draw conclusions.

The sampling methodologies used were criterion and maximum variation sampling. Criterion sampling defined the participants as being over the age of 19. In addition, NPTNJ teacher participants had completed the program and were in their second or third year of teaching in a public school, and the administrators had at least one NPTNJ teacher in their district. Maximum variation sampling allowed the researcher to gain a diverse perspective from the array of participants. Teachers taught throughout the K-12 system and in eight different disciplines. The teachers and administrators provided differing viewpoints on the interview questions, which through the data analysis stage allowed themes to emerge.

In the data collection phase of the study, the researcher conducted 45-60 minute interviews with each participant. In addition, classroom observations of nine teacher participants were completed. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Participants had the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary themes and transcripts. Next the primary researcher reviewed participants' comments along with field notes, lesson plans, and teacher generated worksheets. The researcher used AltasTi 5.0 to assign codes in order to facilitate the emergence of seven themes. The patterns and relationships discovered were continually analyzed and refocused, causing a continual revising of themes and sub-themes

Five validation techniques were used to ensure appropriate reporting of the data. First, two experts in teacher education reviewed the interview and observation protocols

for the teacher and administrator participants. Second, member checking was used as the participants reviewed the transcripts and a summary of the themes for accuracy. Third, the primary researcher reviewed the data for disconfirming evidence or evidence that was inconsistent with the general findings. Fourth, the primary researcher presented the study using thick, rich description. Finally, an auditor verified the findings for accuracy.

Major Findings

This section first provides information on the seven themes that emerged from the data. The major findings of each theme are presented along with specific examples from the study. Each research question is answered next, linking each of them to a theme or themes from the data that emerged. Finally, the central question is answered providing an overall view of how the participants of the study described the NPTNJ Program.

Themes

Theme 1: Becoming a teacher. The first theme emerged from the background data collected from each participant. The teacher participants provided information about how the following influenced their decision to enter the teaching profession: undergraduate studies, desire to teach, having to choose a new job or career, and connections to a specific community. Some teachers explained that they began to prepare to become a teacher during their undergraduate years, but were unable to complete the certification process because of time and financial constraints. Other teachers knew during their undergraduate years that they would teach, but later in life. Several teachers were either laid off or chose to leave their job and then chose teaching as their next career

move. Finally, a number of teachers expressed that deciding where to teach was linked to having a connection to the school or community in which the school was located.

Teacher and administrator participants discussed how the skills learned in prior experiences prepared the NPTNJ teachers for the classroom. The skills that the participants described having from such experiences as coaching or teaching in church, made the transition to teaching straightforward and natural. In addition, teachers and administrators indicated that skills such as presenting and communicating information in an organized fashion learned in prior careers were transferable to teaching.

Theme 2: The NPTNJ Program. The second theme focused on different aspects of the NPTNJ Program. The two components most discussed by the participants were the role of the Program Coordinator and the open discussions during the beginning of each class. The Program Coordinator was characterized as having the requisite knowledge and providing the necessary emotional support for teachers to accomplish their job in a professional and capable manner. The open discussion provided a forum throughout the first year of teaching for support for issues the teachers faced in the classroom. Some administrators spoke highly of these discussions because they recognized the importance of having access to colleagues experiencing issues in their first year of teaching.

Both the teacher and administrator participants deemed the summer component of the program essential. This six-week session was described as the part of the program that gave them the survival skills to be successful in September. However, the summer observation component was described as a major weakness. Teachers had a difficult time

trying to find any classes to observe. In addition, they found that many of the classes observed did not mirror the reality they would experience in their classrooms.

Teachers and administrators highly regarded the coursework completed by the teachers and felt that the information was essential for being prepared in the classroom. Many teacher participants discussed how important it was to talk about real-life topics in the NPTNJ class. Several administrators felt the real-life topics discussed in class were part of the reason the teachers came prepared. The teachers and Program Coordinator discussed such topics as classroom management, bullying, and discipline in the open discussion time of the class and these became topics of research papers and presentations. The teacher participants discussed several types of assignments completed during the program. They felt that the journals, group work, presentations, and research papers were useful components of the coursework.

Two participants discussed the topic of literacy. One found it to be a weakness of the program because the participant felt it was only an appropriate topic for English and Elementary teachers and the other teacher discussed how useful the information was to her teaching a foreign language in high school. Only one teacher identified the summer capstone course as a weakness. He believed it was unnecessary and did not add to the knowledge gained over the year.

The time commitment to complete the program was described as a weakness. The teachers and administrators felt that the summer component worked well. Yet, during the school year, the teachers and administrators acknowledged the difficulty of having to juggle a full-time job and attend class once per week, three hours per night. Additionally,

administrator and teacher participants also discussed student teaching. There was no student teaching component in the NPTNJ Program. Many administrators believed that being responsible for one's own classroom was one of the most important components of a teacher education preparation program. There were a couple of teachers who agreed with this viewpoint of the administrators. Yet, for teachers, student teaching would have been impossible due to financial constraints. More importantly though, half of the NPTNJ teachers came to the program with teaching experience that ranged from substitute teaching to full-time teaching in a private school. Several of these participants did state that this prior teaching experience was important to their preparedness for the classroom.

Theme 3: Pedagogy. Teacher participants felt prepared pedagogically and only one administrator disagreed. Another administrator believed the level of preparedness depended on the grade level. For example, those teaching the higher grades were better prepared. Another administrator praised the pedagogical knowledge of his teacher and believed this part of the Program was a strength. Lesson planning, technology use, and assessment of student learning also emerged as components of this theme. The teacher participants felt able to create and implement appropriate lesson plans, although several administrators disagreed. Half of the teacher participants did feel insecure about always knowing if their lessons were grade-appropriate.

Although technology was integrated into the NPTNJ curriculum, it was not a topic discussed at any length with the participants. They were observed using the internet, PowerPoint, and computers in their instruction, yet they attributed gaining their knowledge from their prior careers or experiences. On the other hand, teacher participants

attributed the NPTNJ Program with their knowledge of assessment. Many discussed their improvements from one year to the next. Half of the administrators discussed that the teachers were prepared in assessment and did not see a difference between traditional or alternate route prepared teachers.

Theme 4: Classroom challenges. Theme 4 presented the classroom challenges discussed by the teacher and administrator participants. They discussed classroom management, relationships with students, diverse students, and excessive behaviors. Teacher and administrator participants felt that all new teachers needed help during their first years in classroom management. Many teachers felt that classroom management was a strength of the NPTNJ curriculum even though they struggled constantly with this issue. While only two administrator participants identified classroom management as a weakness, one believed it was a strength due to the high maturity level of alternate route teachers.

The teachers felt that working with the diverse population of students was a challenge. Yet, one third of the teacher participants felt prepared to handle the diverse learners in their classroom and the administrators agreed with the teachers. For example, the teacher participants were able to accommodate the age and academic mix of students they had in their classes. They were able to accommodate the different learning styles of their students. However, the teacher participants were overwhelmed by the quantity of students that had IEPs and 504s. Most of the teacher participants felt that even in their second or third year, IEPs and 504s were still a challenge.

Most teacher participants stated that they had good relationships with their students although they were surprised at excessive lying, cheating, and violent behaviors. A few administrators felt that their lack of contact in their prior career with the age group was a weakness. Theme 4 also focused on information about how the teacher and administrator participants discussed communicating with parents. The teachers described communicating with parents as an uncomfortable situation. The teachers were wary of the fact that parents could side with their children and not support the teachers' learning and disciplinary objectives in the classroom. However, one administrator felt the alternate route teacher was a stronger teacher because of his or her maturity level.

Theme 5: Hiring. Theme 5 emerged from discussions about the hiring process. The administrator participants identified three important aspects of their decision-making process: candidate fit, discipline fit, and school needs. While administrators had to hire teachers appropriately certified for the discipline opening, a few felt that alternate route candidates from certain disciplines were preferable. For example, one administrator felt that alternate route candidates were better suited for teaching if they had a business background but less suited when coming from the arts. The administrators also wanted candidates to be able to fill coaching and club needs. However, the most important consideration of the hiring process was candidate fit which the administrators described as an individual's personality. The administrators wanted a teacher who exhibited desirable qualities such as the ability to nurture and care for students.

Theme 5 also presented information from the teacher participants about the number of alternate route candidates employed at their school. The teachers believed that

the administrators were likely to be more open to them as a candidate if they had previously hired other alternate route teachers. One administrator preferred alternate route teachers to traditional trained teachers because of their maturity level. A few administrators discussed that they would favor the traditional route candidate because of personal preference or pressure from the district.

Theme 6: School support. Teacher and administrator participants discussed several ways in which they received support from the school. Overall, the teachers believed that they were treated as any new teacher. Administrators agreed, stating that they treated the alternate route teachers the same as any new teachers. Most participants talked about the type of new teacher orientation programs available. The typical program included sessions before school began in September and continued through the first year. For example, one administrator and the NPTNJ teacher participant in her school discussed a three-year new teacher program. The administrator felt that it was essential to give the pedagogical and professional information through the perspective of her school's culture. The teacher participant, though, felt that the program reiterated the NPTNJ curriculum. Another teacher described her new teacher program, a meeting of all first-year teachers with the principal each month, as useless. She explained that you could not be honest in front of the principal for fear of appearing to be incompetent, and many meetings were cancelled.

The teacher and administrator participants frequently discussed formal observations and the feedback received or given. While all participants were observed, several expressed that the feedback received from the administrators was not useful. The

feedback deemed useful was typically about classroom management and lesson presentation. In addition, administrators discussed informal contact with the teachers as a way to maintain open communication and to be vigilant for problems.

Additionally, teacher and administrator participants discussed how mentors, other teachers, and administrators provided support. Only one teacher described a negative experience with their mentor. The mentor did not make any effort to be available. The other teachers described wonderful relationships in which they discussed their academic discipline and classroom management issues. Several teachers described relationships with other teachers out of necessity. For example, they could not approach the administration with problems and, therefore, relied on their colleagues for support. Several teachers described cooperative arrangements for disruptive students.

Theme 7: Future concerns and recommendations. Teacher participants discussed the salary and benefits. They acknowledged that they knew about the low salary upon entering the profession, however only one participant would be leaving the profession because of the low pay. Several participants described the health benefits as an advantage of public school employment. Many teachers discussed that their future in the teaching profession was certain for the foreseeable future because of the great satisfaction they derived from teaching. They stated that they never experienced this type of satisfaction from their previous careers.

In addition, teacher and administrator participants made recommendations for the NPTNJ Program. Several teachers wanted to continue their studies and recommended that this be incorporated in the Program. One administrator believed that information

about state organizations and state standards become a focus of the curriculum. In addition, a few administrators felt that the coordinators of the NPTNJ Program should develop stronger links with the school to assess their academic needs. Both the teachers and the administrators felt there should be more emphasis placed on classroom management. They described classroom management as a difficulty for all new teachers.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. What aspects of the NPTNJ Program did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators identify as strengths or weaknesses?

Data related to research question number one were found in Theme 2, the NPTNJ Program, and in Theme 4, Classroom Challenges. The participants identified strengths and weakness related to the NPTNJ Program structure and curriculum. The topics covered in the curriculum were found to be just as important as when they were covered, especially for the strengths identified. The structure and program were interdependent; each supported the other. The teacher and administrator participants identified strengths that provided the link between theory and practice. This is consistent with the findings of Feiman-Nemser (2001) about components of a strong curriculum. She stated that this link is often found missing in teacher education programs.

The open discussion time held at the beginning of every class during the school year was identified as one strength. This class time was described as indispensable and allowed the NPTNJ students to find immediate support for what they were experiencing in their classroom. Students became reflective practitioners, able to help solve their own problems and those of their colleagues. The assignments assigned to the NPTNJ teachers

were also identified as a strength and were another way for the teachers to be reflective practitioners. The journaling, research papers, and presentations emphasized this skill. Another strength identified was the Program Coordinator. He taught the necessary curriculum and created the link between the NPTNJ Program and the participants' schools. The NPTNJ students relied on him for his professional expertise and his emotional support.

Two other strengths identified were the real-life topics in the curriculum and the first summer session. These two strengths were related because the first summer session focused on preparing the NPTNJ teachers to begin the school year. The real-life topics such as classroom discipline and learning styles that were studied and discussed in class would be the issues the teachers would face immediately.

The weaknesses related to the curriculum were the literacy component, pedagogy, managing diverse learners and their IEPs and 504s. Only one teacher participant relegated the literacy component as a weakness, believing that this was only appropriate for teachers in the English and Language Arts area. Even though teacher participants felt they were prepared in pedagogical knowledge and to manage diverse learners, several administrators named these areas as weaknesses of the NPTNJ Program. They stated that the teachers were unable to put into practice what they had learned. In addition, several teacher participants mentioned that a significant weakness of the Program was handling the quantity of IEPs and 504s. Many administrators believed however, that all teachers would develop this skill on the job.

The weaknesses related to the program structure were the time commitment, summer observation component, summer capstone course, and lack of a student teaching experience. While all teachers and administrators understood that time had to be spent to achieve mastery of the NPTNJ curriculum, the teacher participants were forced to go to school each week at the same time while learning a new career. The summer observations were a source of frustration for most of the teacher participants because of the poor quality and difficulty in obtaining the requisite amount of hours. Only one teacher participant believed the summer capstone course was a weakness because of the lack of new knowledge presented. Student teaching was a weakness discussed by the administrators. Several believed this experience was a necessary component before assuming one's own classroom. Yet, Rice (2003) reported on studies about the teacher's possible impact on secondary student achievement. She found that field experiences were disorganized and lacked connections to the teacher preparation curriculum. She concluded that student teaching may not lead to higher achieving students.

Research Question 2. How did the NPTNJ participants describe themselves as classroom teachers in terms of necessary skills required?

Data related to Research Question 2 were found in Theme 3, Pedagogy. In speaking about necessary skills, teachers discussed being able to deliver appropriate grade-level curriculum by using technology, suitable assessment methods, and appropriate lesson plans. Lesson planning and assessment are also a part of Research Question 3 because of their direct link to how prepared the teacher participants felt in the classroom. The teachers felt that they spent the appropriate time preparing and discussing

lesson plans in the NPTNJ classes. They acknowledged that taking time to plan lessons was important. The teachers also identified assessment as a strong component of the NPTNJ Program. They felt prepared to assess their students well and appropriately. However, they did acknowledge that assessing students was difficult and always needed attention and revision.

The teacher participants discussed technology, but did not link their ability to use it correctly and skillfully to the NPTNJ program. They explained that they entered the program with this knowledge because they developed technology skills as part of their prior career. The literature gave an inconsistent picture of the impact of teacher skill on student achievement. The main reason was that the approaches for the studies differed in purpose. Some of the studies reported by Rice (2003) found a positive correlation between teacher skill and student achievement, while others did not. Moreover, studies such as the one done by the ECS in 2004 found a moderate connection between student achievement and teacher preparation.

Research Question 3. What part of the program did the NPTNJ participants feel helped them be prepared for the classroom?

Data related to Research Question 3 were found in Theme 2, the NPTNJ Program, and in Theme 3, Pedagogy. The teacher participants identified the following five topic areas as components of being prepared for the classroom: pedagogy, lesson planning, managing diverse learners, assessment, and the first summer session. The first summer session was described as a strength of the NPTNJ Program and was explained under

Research Question 1. Lesson planning and assessing students were discussed as necessary skills required of teachers under Research Question 2.

Although several administrators believed that the NPTNJ teachers were not prepared in terms of pedagogical knowledge, the teachers felt that the Program gave them the requisite knowledge to function in the classroom. They were able to create an environment of learning appropriate to their discipline and grade level. Managing diverse learners was another area of weakness discussed by the administrators that the teachers felt they could handle well. They felt prepared to reach their students by developing appropriate lessons that reached all academic levels and learning styles.

Research Question 4. What part of the program did the administrators feel helped the NPTNJ participants be prepared for the classroom?

Data related to Research Question 4 was found in Theme 2, the NPTNJ Program and Theme 3, Pedagogy. The administrator participants identified the following five topics areas as components of being prepared for the classroom: NPTNJ coursework, real-life topics, first summer session, assessment, and lesson planning. The area of real-life topics was identified as a strength of the NPTNJ Program by the teacher and administrator participants and was explained under Research Question 1. The first summer session was described as a strength by all participants under Research Question 1, and as part of being prepared by the teachers under Research Question 3.

Even though the administrators could identify weaknesses in the abilities of their NPTNJ teachers, they felt that they entered the profession with the requisite knowledge gained from the coursework. The teachers identified assessing students as a necessary

skill, Research Question 2, and as part of being prepared, Research Question 3. In agreement was an administrator who described witnessing appropriate assessment occurring during formal observations. The teachers felt prepared to plan appropriate lessons and identified lesson planning as a necessary skill, Research Question 2. The administrators believed lesson planning was an essential skill for a teacher and one administrator specifically identified the NPTNJ Program as having prepared his teacher appropriately.

Research Question 5. What challenges had participants felt they faced while in the program?

The teacher participants identified the following as challenges faced in the classroom: diverse students, IEPs and 504s, appropriate grade-level curriculum, classroom management, excessive behaviors, relationships with students, and communicating with parents. These elements are part of Theme 3, Pedagogy, and Theme 4, Classroom Challenges. Developing appropriate grade-level curriculum was identified as how the classroom teachers described themselves in terms of necessary skills required under Research Question 3. Because of their lack of experience, teacher participants also identified this issue as a challenge. Administrators described managing diverse learners as a Program weakness under Research Question 1; however, teacher participants felt they were prepared to meet this challenge as explained under Research Question 3. The teacher participants noted managing the IEPs and 504s of the diverse student population as a weakness of the Program under Research Question 1. However, it

was delineated as a challenge and teachers felt that they did not receive the support necessary to be successful working with the students with these plans.

Teachers and administrators felt that classroom management was an important but difficult skill to acquire. Because the issue was defined as a challenge by all participants, classroom management was ascribed to this research question, however, participants defined classroom management in a variety of ways. While every participant agreed that all new teachers had to spend time in the teaching profession in order to improve, the teachers and their administrators did not necessarily agree with each other. For example, while one administrator believed it was a talent of the NPTNJ teachers because of their maturity level, several administrators felt it was a skill lacking in their NPTNJ teachers. More specifically, one administrator defined classroom management as a weakness of their NPTNJ teacher although this teacher stated that the NPTNJ Program prepared her sufficiently. A number of teachers felt they did not experience classroom management problems and that their success in the classroom was directly related to the NPTNJ Program. Most of the teachers discussed the strategies they developed to manage their classrooms well in order to create a high-quality learning environment.

When asked what challenges they faced in the classroom, teachers included excessive behaviors, relationships with students, and communicating with parents. While they described having difficulties with each one, they also included how they handled them. Therefore, even as the teachers assigned a certain difficulty to being able to discipline students, and to communicate with them and their parents, they demonstrated their skill in meeting the challenges. Several teachers even stated that in year two or three

they had improved significantly. This progress was attributed by many teachers to the open discussions where they were able to discuss the problems and challenges they experienced and received immediate responses on how to correct them.

Research Question 6. What topics of the teaching profession did the participants and their administrators discuss?

Data related to Research Question 6 were found in Theme 6, School Support. The teacher and administrator participants defined school support in terms of school treatment, new teacher programs, and support received from mentors, administrators, and other teachers. All of the teacher and administrator participants stated that there was no difference in the treatment of alternate route or traditional route prepared teachers. The new teacher programs were described as informational, educational, and lasting from one day to three years. A few teachers felt they were of no value because new teachers could not be open and honest with their administrators who facilitated the program. Findings showed that even though administrators described the new teacher program as having value, some of the teachers disagreed. For one teacher, this meant that she may not continue in the teaching profession for long.

All teacher participants were asked about their mentors and conflicting information was given. Several teachers described high-quality experiences with their mentors. Mentors were supportive in terms of student discipline, academic content, and school culture. This was in line with the findings of the study completed by Jorrisen (2002) that mentors improved teacher performance in these same areas. Other teacher participants described mediocre or even negative experiences as described by Kennedy

(1991). Negative mentor relationships came about because the mentor may not have chosen the situation voluntarily or did not have the requisite skills or interest.

In addition to mentors, teacher participants received support from their administrators and colleagues. Some teachers had poor or no relationships with their mentors or administrators and sought support from other teachers. In addition, teacher participants stated that their colleagues reached out to them because they noticed their need for support. Support was given in the same areas as from mentors: classroom management, teaching the appropriate curriculum, and school environment. These teachers became very important to participants being able to and wanting to return for a second year.

Research Question 7. How did the administrators describe their role in the NPTNJ Program?

Data related to Research Question 7 were found in Theme 5, Hiring, and in Theme 6, School Support. The administrators described their role in terms of hiring candidates because of personality fit, discipline fit, and school needs. In addition, they explained that they were responsible for observing the NPTNJ candidate formally and providing feedback. Most administrators also discussed informal contact with their teachers.

The administrators described their primary role as hiring for the open positions in their school. They had to make sure that the teacher certification matched the position, but they were most concerned with how the candidates would match the school's culture and add to its extracurricular needs. Once hired, the administrator's primary concern was

to observe the new teachers and provide appropriate feedback so that they would continually improve. Several teacher participants described an environment in which they received quality feedback, but there were candidates who did not experience this. Findings show that even though administrators described giving feedback to participants, some of the teachers felt the administrators did not give valuable feedback.

Research Question 8. How did the participants and their administrators describe any differences of teachers prepared in traditional or alternative route teacher preparation programs?

Data related to Research Question 8 were found in Theme 2, the NPTNJ Program, in Theme 3, Pedagogy, and in Theme 4, Classroom Challenges. Only a few administrators described any differences between alternate route and traditional route prepared teachers. The NPTNJ teachers felt they were not only treated the same, but also found no difference in their ability to perform their job when compared to the traditional route teachers. The NPTNJ teachers described having the same problems, concerns, and questions as the traditional route teachers.

Student teaching, described under Research Question 1, was a critical issue for a few administrators. They felt that alternate route teachers did not enter the classroom with as much real-life experience as the traditionally prepared teachers. This lack of time spent in the classroom prior to being hired meant the alternate route teachers were not as practiced as were the traditional route teachers. The administrators did not state that the alternate route teachers could not accomplish the requirements of the position, but they felt that these teachers would have to learn more “on the job.” These administrators

presented one of the views found in the literature discussed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2002), who stated that teacher preparation was the purview of the four-year institutions and that teachers should not be prepared on the job, but in supervised student teaching situations. However, as Rice (2003) described in her study, field experiences such as student teaching were found to be lacking in their ability to prepare teachers properly.

In the area of pedagogy discussed under Research Questions 1 and 2, administrators pointed out three differences: pedagogical knowledge, lesson planning, and technology. Again, only a few administrators discussed these differences. For pedagogical knowledge, the administrators expressed their concern that the NPTNJ teachers could not have received the correct amount of knowledge in the one-year program. They expressed an overall feeling that time spent studying the theory was missing. This is in line with the following studies reported on by Rice (2003): Nelson and Wood (1985), Ferguson and Womack (1993), Monk (1994), Evertson, Hawley, and Zlotnick (1985), and Ashton and Crocker (1987) that found a positive correlation between pedagogical coursework and student achievement.

In addition, the administrators felt that NPTNJ teachers were less adept at creating lesson plans and linking outcomes to state standards. From the studies on alternate route education programs that used administrator and mentor ratings examined by Zeichner and Schulte (2001), only one study showed that traditional route teachers were rated above the alternate route teachers. Technology, however, was one area of this study that the administrator participants remarked that the alternate route teachers surpassed the

traditional route teachers in use and knowledge. The teachers came with experiences from their prior careers that assisted them in the classroom.

In terms of classroom challenges, administrators discussed the relationships the teachers had with their students. The administrators did not agree on this issue. On one hand, a few administrators believed that the NPTNJ teachers had a much more difficult time relating to young men and women because they did not have to in their prior careers. On the other hand, one administrator felt that because of their maturity level, the teachers handled their students better than the traditional route teachers.

Research Question 9. What recommendations did the NPTNJ participants and their administrators make about the program?

Data related to Research Question 9 were found in Theme 4, Classroom Management, and in Theme 7, Future Concerns and Recommendations. One administrator made a recommendation concerning the NPTNJ curriculum. He discussed that NPTNJ teachers needed to be more aware of the state regulations and organizations. He suggested more attention be given to the state standards and time spent understanding the recourses available through state agencies and discipline organizations. This recommendation is in line with the environment of accountability contributed to by the NCLB requirements. Schools must meet specific conditions or they will face certain financial consequences (ECS, 2004a). Other administrators discussed the need for the NPTNJ staff to spend more time networking with the high schools, understanding their needs and working with them to get the best teachers in the classroom.

The NPTNJ teachers made two recommendations, one about the program and one about the teaching profession. First, several teachers recommended that a seamless connection from the NPTNJ Program through completion of a Master's degree be possible. Since the NPTNJ teachers could receive 15 credits towards their Master's degree after completing the one-year program, they felt the Master's degree option should be a transparent process. Second, while teachers were aware of the salary structure, they felt that in order to keep good teachers or attract the best people into teaching, salaries needed to be higher. Finally, both teachers and administrators suggested that classroom management had to be even more of a focus in the NPTNJ curriculum.

Central Question

- How did participants in the NPTNJ Program and their administrators describe their experiences in relation to the program's coursework and classroom teaching requirements?

Participants in the study discussed the NPTNJ Program in relation to the NPTNJ program components, pedagogy learned, classroom challenges, hiring decisions, school support given and received, and future concerns and recommendations. All of the ten teacher participants spoke highly of the NPTNJ program, however, only nine felt they received the necessary support from the NPTNJ Program and the school in which they worked. Some of the teachers may not have had a strong or helpful relationship with their mentor or administrator, but they were able to find a colleague to support them. They described being prepared in pedagogy, assessing student learning, lesson planning, and classroom management. Their administrators, for the most part, agreed with this view. One administrator acknowledged that he preferred the alternate route teacher. Yet, there

were administrators who stated, although not overtly, that they would prefer to hire traditional route teachers. Administrators felt the NPTNJ Program was the best alternate route program and praised the Program for preparing quality teachers.

Only one teacher participant described a negative environment in which she received no support from her school in terms of student behavior problems, understanding the school policy, and fitting into the school's environment. In addition, she had very little communication with her colleagues and administrators, explaining that she was in the only department without a supervisor. Yet, she had only praise for the training she received from the NPTNJ Program and described this preparation and the support of the Program Coordinator as the reason for being successful in the classroom.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are presented in this section. They are followed by recommendations for the NPTNJ Program, recommendations for alternate route teacher education programs in general, and recommendations for future research. This study adds to the body of knowledge that exists, but does not end the conflicting information in the literature about which preparation program is best. However, the following components of the NPTNJ Program were found to contribute significantly to the teacher participants' preparation for the profession and should continue:

- Summer intensive coursework
- Open discussions about challenges faced by new teachers
- NPTNJ curriculum
- Course assignments focused on real-life classroom situations
- Lesson planning
- Assessment methods
- Role of Program Coordinator

The summer component of the alternate route program was the time to prepare the teachers for the realities of the classroom they would confront in September. All the teacher participants and several administrators expressed how the summer component of the NPTNJ Program prepared them to begin their career in teaching. The basics of how to manage discipline issues and teach their curriculum were given. The NPTNJ teachers were able to take their beginning pedagogical knowledge and apply it directly to their classroom.

All of the teacher participants in this study described the open discussions held at the beginning of the class during the school year as one of the most important components of the Program. During these discussions, the problems and challenges faced in the classroom were examined. The teachers were able to listen to various solutions and ideas from the Program Coordinator and fellow students. The quickness and ease with which problems were dealt with gave the teachers more confidence and the ability to handle behavioral difficulties that could have continued had they not had any intervention.

Administrators identified the NPTNJ curriculum as successfully preparing the teachers. Many teachers agreed and specifically mentioned the course assignments such as journals, projects, and research papers that focused on real-life topics as one of the important aspects of the curriculum. Similar to the open discussions, these assignments allowed students to deal with what might happen in the classroom. In addition, both teachers and administrators felt lesson planning and assessing, skills identified as necessary in teacher preparation, were strong components of the Program.

The teacher participants proclaimed the Program Coordinator as the most critical component of the program. This coordinator was the conduit by which the theory and practical applications of the Program were learned. He taught the appropriate curriculum, connected students to schools, and mentored them individually and during the open discussions in class. He had the essential knowledge to help each student become an effective teacher.

Recommendations for the NPTNJ Program

The following includes recommendations for the NPTNJ Program in the following areas:

- Managing IEPs and 504s
- Excessive behaviors
- Appropriate grade-level curriculum
- Summer observations
- Network with K-12 school system
- Post-program coursework

The first four areas were derived from the weaknesses identified by the teacher and administrator participants. The participants identified the last two recommendations.

The first two recommendations to the NPTNJ program are to add more theory about and practice in how to understand and manage the IEPs and 504s and the excessive behaviors that teachers will face in the classroom. The NPTNJ teachers were overwhelmed by the quantity of IEPs and 504s and were not prepared to deal with the excessive behaviors. A possible solution would be to provide case studies, scenarios, and/or simulations that would provide more real-life practice.

The third recommendation is to enhance the discussions of appropriate grade-level curriculum. Because the teacher participants felt that they had difficulties deciding

what was suitable for their classes, more attention must be paid to the specific needs of each teacher. Assignments should focus on their particular grade level and discipline, including activities in which they cover different learning modalities.

Additionally, I would recommend a change in the observation component of the NPTNJ Program. The Program required 20 hours of classroom observation to be completed in the summer when the teachers did not find typical or appropriate observations. I recommend that the summer component of the Program include videotaped classes that the NPTNJ teachers can observe and discuss together. This activity would allow NPTNJ curriculum items to be part of the discussions and enhance those aspects of the curriculum. In addition, peer observations in their own school during the academic year would be a convenient manner to observe master teachers. These observations can then become part of the discussions during class time.

Only one administrator participant identified the fifth recommendation, networking with the K-12 school system. He suggested that NPTNJ coordinators assess the needs of the K-12 schools. Open lines of communication would allow discussions about discipline needs and any problems the NPTNJ teachers were experiencing in their classrooms. School administrators would be much more informed as would be the NPTNJ coordinator. One of the teacher participants had no supervisor and an ineffective new teacher program; in short, she did not have a good support system at the school. This situation needed attention and an open communication system could have helped.

Only one teacher participant identified the sixth recommendation, easy access to post-program coursework. The NPTNJ teachers could opt to take the program for

graduate credit towards a Masters of Arts in Teaching, finishing half of the degree's coursework, 15 credits, in the first year. Several teachers expressed that they should have taken the option of the first 15 credit while several others, who completed the 15 credits, wished they had the time to complete the Masters. I agree with their recommendations that this could be offered online or at the community college. Most of these professionals have family obligations, all have full-time teaching positions, and many would find a post-work drive of an hour or more to the main campus difficult. I recommend easy access to post-program coursework.

General Recommendations for Alternate Route Teacher Education Programs

The recommendations for any alternate route teacher preparation program include the following:

- Hire an appropriate Program Coordinator
- Create a seamless connection of support with mentors and administrators
- Emphasize classroom management in the curriculum
- Use skills learned from prior experiences
- Create connections with community colleges

All teacher participants agreed that the Program Coordinator at their community college had excellent teaching, communication, and interpersonal skills. His experience as a teacher and supervisor gave them insight into how to manage not only their classroom, but also their school's environment. To find such an individual with strong connections in the community and the extensive knowledge of teaching may be difficult for other alternate route programs. However, the role does not have to be filled by one person. The recommendation is to have an individual or individuals teach the curriculum

expertly and provide a link to the schools in which the alternate route teachers are working.

All of the teacher participants discussed their relationships with their mentors and administrators who supported them in their first years of teaching. Every participant felt that they needed support from one or more of these people. Many participants spoke about negative relationships with one or more of these individuals. There needs to be a seamless connection of support with mentors and administrators. This is in line with Feistritzer's 2005 comprehensive profile of 2,647 alternate route teachers. She found that 67% of the teachers felt that the support of teachers/colleagues was very valuable in developing the competence to teach. My recommendation is to formalize the process, structuring the time for meetings and the topics discussed. I recommend using a set of guidelines such as those used in the Academy for Leadership and Development (2007). The Academy described the attributes of the mentor and mentee, outlined their roles, and set the expectations and actions for both. In addition, I recommend providing a way for either the mentor or the mentee to suggest a change if the relationship is not productive or mutually satisfying.

Classroom management was a topic discussed by all teacher and administrator participants of the study. Although the NPTNJ teachers felt prepared in classroom management, they felt it was a constant challenge. These teachers expressed the desire to have ongoing guidance in classroom management. In addition, the administrators discussed the fact that all new teachers needed to spend more time on classroom management. I recommend spending more time on the topic and linking classroom

management directly to hands-on practice in the classroom. This recommendation is in line with the findings of Rice (2003) who found the study of classroom management in teacher education programs to have a positive effect on teacher success in the classroom.

The next recommendation is to identify the skills that alternate route teachers bring with them from prior careers and experiences. The administrator participants spoke very highly of the teachers' abilities to present information, communicate clearly, use technology, and act professionally. These abilities were identified as strengths, especially for individuals coming from a business or science background. In addition, several teacher participants had prior teaching experience that gave them familiarity with issues such as classroom management, diverse students, and excessive behaviors identified as challenges by the participants of the study. If teachers understand that they possess these strengths, then they can tap into their abilities when creating lessons for the classroom.

Finally, I recommend seeking connections with the community college sector for alternate route teacher education programs. First, half of all college-going freshmen attend a two-year institution and the majority of minority students are attending these institutions. Second, the community college provides a link to potential teachers that live and work close-by. The community college can make a needed impact on the teacher shortage in the United States identified by the Education Commission of the States (2001) as well as serve their community.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study added to the body of knowledge on alternate route teacher preparation programs, in particular the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey Program. The study

described the positive and challenging aspects of the program identified by the teachers and their administrators. Studies have been completed on teacher preparation programs however, there are still many gaps in our understanding of how to best prepare teachers. Therefore, the main recommendation is to continue to study how teachers are prepared in the traditional and alternate route settings. Specifically, I would make five recommendations.

1. The results of this study were based on only 19 participants and the 10 teacher participants were from one community college NPTNJ Program site. Therefore, I recommend replicating this study with additional NPTNJ teachers and their administrators, who were prepared at different community colleges in the state.
2. I recommend adding to the NPTNJ study by focusing on grade level and discipline. Studies should include only elementary, middle or high school teacher participants. The additional studies could focus on particular disciplines to identify and understand any differences that might exist. The information produced would allow alternate route educators to make any preparation modifications needed for program participants.
3. Future research should include studies of participants in alternate route programs other than the NPTNJ program to allow program comparison to be made among various teacher preparation routes.
4. Having identified in this study that skills learned in prior experiences had a positive impact on being prepared in the classroom, I recommend focusing a

study on the skills with which alternate route teachers enter the teaching profession.

5. This study should be expanded to include the examination of student achievement in a classroom led by an alternate route teacher. Additional research is needed on the effects of teacher preparation on student success in both alternate and traditional route programs in order to clarify the conflicting results identified in the literature. I recommend studies be completed in particular grade levels and disciplines.

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Appendix A

School District Approval Letter

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

November 13, 2006

High Point Regional High School
299 Pigeon Hill Road
Sussex, NJ 07461

Ms. XXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXX, XX XXXXXX
September 1, 2006

Dear Madam:

My name is Cheryl Reagan and I am the Dean of Liberal Arts and Education at Sussex County Community College and a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am writing to ask your help on an exciting new study about the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) alternate route program. The goal of my study is to be able to add to the limited research on alternate route education. I believe the NPTNJ Program is an important part of the alternate route movement in the United States and the information that you provide on the strengths and challenges of the program can improve the quality of education in this country.

I seek your permission to conduct interviews and observations in your school. I am interested in conducting a 60 minute interview and one classroom observation with teachers who have completed the program and our now teaching in their second or third year. In addition, I would like to interview administrators that supervise these teachers. Participation is voluntary and participants may choose to withdraw at any time. I would like to audio record all interviews and then transcribed them verbatim. I will share the transcripts and the major themes brought out by the interview with the participants.

Any information obtained during this study, which could identify a participant will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings. Pseudonyms will be used in reports and presentations when referring to participants. The interview will never include questions about specific staff members and any information shared will not be communicated from teacher to administrator and vice versa.

I will contact you in a few days to answer any questions you might have and inquire if you are willing to grant permission. I look forward to talking with you about this project.

141 Teachers College Hall / P.O. Box 880360 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0360 / (402) 472-3726 / FAX (402) 472-4300

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Reagan
Dean, Liberal Arts, Social Science, and Education
Sussex County Community College
Newton, NJ 07860
(973) 300-2257
creagan@sussex.edu

Permission granted by:_____ Date_____

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter to NPTNJ Teachers

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

September 16, 2006
Mr. XXXXX
xxx
xxx
xxx
xxx

Dear Mr. XXXXX,

My name is Cheryl Reagan and I am the Dean of Liberal Arts, Social Science, and Education at Sussex County Community College (SCCC) and a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I am writing to ask your help on an exciting new study for my dissertation about the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) alternate route program. Gaylon Powell, the NPTNJ Coordinator at SCCC, recommended that I contact you because he believed in your ability to contribute to this study.

I am interested in interviewing teachers who have completed the program and our now teaching in their second or third year. The goal of my study is to be able to add to the limited research on alternate route education. I believe the participants in the NPTNJ Program are an important part of the alternate route movement in the United States and the information that you provide on the strengths and challenges of the program can improve the quality of education in this country.

I would like to conduct a 60 minute interview with you at the school in which you teach. You will have a chance to see all interview questions and form an opinion about them prior to the interview. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time. I would like to audio record all interviews and then transcribed verbatim. I will share the transcripts and the major themes brought out by the interview with you. Any information obtained during this study, which could identify a participant will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings. Pseudonyms will be used in reports and presentations when referring to participants.

I will also be conducting interviews with school administrators who have NPTNJ teachers on their staff. I will be asking them to reflect on alternate route education and how the NPTNJ program prepares teachers. The interview will never include questions about specific staff members and any information you share will not be communicated to any administrator. In addition, I am asking your permission to observe one of your classes.

141 Teachers College Hall / P.O. Box 880360 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0360 / (402) 472-3726 / FAX (402) 472-4300

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

I will contact you in a few days to answer any questions you might have and inquire if you are willing to participate in this study. Feel free to contact me at any time. I look forward to talking with you about this project.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Reagan
Dean, Liberal Arts, Social Science, and Education
Sussex County Community College
1 College Hill Road
Newton, NJ 07860
(973) 300-2257
creagan@sussex.edu

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter to Administrators

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

September 16, 2006
Mr. XXXXX
xxxx
xxxx
xxxx
xxxx

Dear Mr. XXXXX,

My name is Cheryl Reagan and I am the Dean of Liberal Arts, Social Science and Education at Sussex County Community College and a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln I am writing to ask your help on an exciting new study about the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) alternate route program. I am interested in interviewing administrators that have of teachers who have completed the NPTNJ program on their staff. The goal of my study is to be able to add to the limited research on alternate route education. I believe the NPTNJ Program is an important part of the alternate route movement in the United States and the information that you provide on the strengths and challenges of the program can improve the quality of education in this country.

I would like to conduct a 60 minute interview with you at the school in which you work. You will have a chance to see all interview questions and form an opinion about them prior to the interview. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. I will share the transcripts and the major themes brought out by the interview with you. Any information obtained during this study, which could identify a participant will be kept strictly confidential. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings. Pseudonyms will be used in reports and presentations when referring to participants.

I will also be conducting interviews with teachers who have completed the NPTNJ program and are in their second or third year of teaching. I will be asking them to describe the NPTNJ program and reflect on their teaching. The interview will never include questions about specific staff members. In addition, I will invite the teachers to allow me to observe a class.

I will contact you in a few days to answer any questions you might have and inquire if you are willing to participate in this study. I look forward to talking with you about this project.

141 Teachers College Hall / P.O. Box 880360 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0360 / (402) 472-3726 / FAX (402) 472-4300

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Reagan
Dean, Liberal Arts, Social Science, and Education
Sussex County Community College
1 College Hill Road
Newton, NJ 07860
(973) 300-2257
creagan@sussex.edu

Appendix D

E-mail Reminder to Participants

Thank you for volunteering to help me complete a requirement of my doctoral coursework. We have scheduled a 60 minute interview for XXXXXX at XXXX in XXXX office. As described to you before I am conducting research about the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey alternate route program. I would like you to describe your experiences as a participant in this program or as an administrator.

I have attached the protocol for interviewing participants in the study and an Informed Consent Form. I will have you sign the informed consent form on the interview day.

As a reminder, interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim and you will be asked to review the transcription and the major themes brought out by the interview. Any information obtained during this study, which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to participants. Participation is voluntary and you will be able to withdraw at any time.

Thank you again for agreeing to help me become a better researcher and complete my doctoral dissertation.

Best regards,

Cheryl A. Reagan

Appendix E

Interview Protocol for NPTNJ Teachers

Interview Protocol for NPTNJ Teachers

Project title: New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program

Participant Name _____ Date _____

Institution _____

Location of Interview _____

Scripted Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I will be audio recording our interview, and then transcribing what is said verbatim. I want to assure you that all responses will be anonymous and confidentiality of participants will be maintained. In addition, I want to reiterate the participation in this study is voluntary. You will have the opportunity to review the transcription to make sure I am representing your views. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

Yes_____ No _____

What I am interested in finding out in this study is how you describe your experiences with the teacher preparation through the alternate program and your experiences as a classroom teacher. The final written paper, resulting from 20 interviews is a requirement of the doctorial program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings, but the data will be reported as aggregated data with pseudonyms being used as needed.

You have had a chance to review the questions I am going to ask you today and give them some thought. I truly want to know your perspective so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify for me what you mean. Are you ready to start?

1. Tell me a little bit about your background - where you are from, including your higher education experiences you have had.	
2. What career or careers have you had before deciding on teaching?	
3. What caused you to change careers to teaching?	
4. Please describe your experiences with the summer coursework through the NPTNJ Program.	
5. When you finished the summer coursework, how well did you feel prepared to teach? [Probe: did you feel you had enough background in your discipline, in education coursework, specifically classroom management, assessment.]	
6. Please describe your experiences with the coursework completed during the school year.	
7. Please describe how you found a place to teach. [Probe: Was the school looking for NPTNJ teachers in particular?]	
8. Please describe the interviewer's attitude towards the NPTNJ Program and its teachers.	

9. Describe how your background contributed to your success in the classroom.	
10. Please describe any problems that you faced in the classroom that you were not prepared to deal with.	
11. How did you resolve these problems, if you faced them?	
12. What do you believe helped you the most to become a successful teacher?	
13. What would have helped you be more successful or prepared? [Probe: discipline specific courses, education courses, specifically classroom management, assessment].	
14. Did you see any difference in how you were treated as opposed to those schooled in the traditional route?	
15. Please describe the relationship that you had with the your mentor during the first year of teaching?	
16. What did you talk about when you got together?	

17. How have the meetings helped you in the classroom?	
18. Did you meet with an administrator, how often did you meet?	
19. Please describe what you talk about.	
20. Has this helped your success in the classroom and if yes, how has it helped?	
21. Describe how prepared you feel to teach now as compared to your first year.	
22. Do you plan to teach next year? [Probe: Do you believe you will stay in education for 5 years, 10 years?]	
23. Is there anything else you want to add about your experiences in the NPTNJ Program or about your teaching experiences? [Probe: Any recommendations you would like to make to improve or add to the NPTNJ Program to help NPTNJ teachers be more successful?]	

Scripted Conclusion:

Thank you for participating in this interview. As I said, I'm going to transcribe this interview, and then provide you the opportunity to read the transcript to make sure I've understood your views. The transcription will be a verbatim one, so be prepared to see any “uhs” or “ahs” that you say. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those will not be there. It is important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation. I will be contacting you within a week to set up a time to meet again. Thank you again for your time.

Appendix F

Interview Protocol for Administrators

Interview Protocol for Administrators

Project title: New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program

Participant Name _____ Date _____

Institution _____

Location of Interview _____

Scripted Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I will be audio recording our interview, and then transcribing what is said verbatim. I want to assure you that all responses will be anonymous and confidentiality of participants will be maintained. In addition, I want to reiterate the participation in this study is voluntary. You will have the opportunity to review the transcription to make sure I am representing your views. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

Yes_____ No _____

What I am interested in finding out in this study is how you describe your experiences with the alternate program and its participants. The final written paper, resulting from 20 interviews is a requirement of the doctorial program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at professional meetings, but the data will be reported as aggregated data with pseudonyms being used as needed.

You have had a chance to review the questions I am going to ask you today and give them some thought. I truly want to know your perspective so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify for me what you mean. Are you ready to start?

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself – where you are from, what is your role at this school and main responsibilities, what higher education experiences you have had.	
2. What career or careers have you had besides teaching and administration?	
3. Describe your experiences with alternate route education and teachers prepared through this route. [Probe: How did your first learn about the NPTNJ program?]	
4. Have you had experiences with other alternate route programs? If yes, please describe them.	
5. Describe the role you have played in with the participants of the NPTNJ program.	
6. Describe how the NPTNJ teachers were chosen to be at this school?	
7. Did you feel they were well prepared in their discipline, pedagogy, and classroom management, technology, teaching diverse learners, assessment? Please explain why this is so.	
8. Did you have formal or informal meetings with the NPTNJ teachers? If yes, please describe how the process worked. [Probe: How often did you meet with the NPTNJ teachers?]	

9. What did you discuss at the meetings with NPTNJ Teachers? [Probe: Have these meetings had a major impact on their teaching? If yes, in what way?]	
10. What do you believe helped the NPTNJ teachers most to become a successful teacher?	
11. What do you believe are the main strengths of the NPTNJ teachers?	
12. What do you believe are the main weaknesses of the NPTNJ teachers? [Probe: What would have helped them be more successful or prepared? discipline specific courses, education courses, specifically classroom management, assessment, more structured meetings with you].	
13. Are there differences in how alternate route and traditional route prepared teachers are treated? If yes, please explain.	
14. How have your feelings changed about NPTNJ teachers since you started working with them?	
15. Will you continue to hire NPTNJ Teachers, why or why not?	
16. Is there anything else you want to add about your experiences with the NPTNJ teachers? [Probe: Any recommendations you would like to make to improve or add to the NPTNJ Program to help the teachers be more successful?]	

Scripted Conclusion:

Thank you for participating in this interview. As I said, I'm going to transcribe this interview, and then provide you the opportunity to read the transcript to make sure I've understood your views. The transcription will be a verbatim one, so be prepared to see any “uhs” or “ahs” that you say. If I use any quotes in the final written paper, those will not be there. It is important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation. I will be contacting you within a week to set up a time to meet again. Thank you again for your time.

Appendix G

Observation Protocol for NPTNJ Teachers

Observation Protocol for NPTNJ Teachers

Individual Observed:

Date and Time:

Place:

Preliminary guide that will be used to frame the observations:

- General teaching strategies
- Lesson organization
- Classroom management
- Technology use
- Presentational skills
- Comfort level
- Working with special needs students
- Differentiated learning
- Assessment strategies

Drawing of room:

Descriptive Notes: **Reflective Notes:**

Appendix H

Informed Consent Form for NPTNJ Teachers

University of Nebraska Lincoln

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

Informed Consent Form for NPTNJ Teachers

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB# (Labeled by IRB)

Identification of Project:
New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program

Purpose of the Research:

This is a research project that will describe the experiences of teachers and administrators with the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) Alternate Route Program. You have been invited to participate because you are a teacher, who has completed the entire NPTNJ program and holds certification and is currently teaching in a public school in his/her second or third year.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will require no more than two hours of your time. The interviews and/or follow-up meetings will be conducted at the school in which you teach. You will have a chance to see all interview questions and form an opinion about them prior to the interview. Demographic questions about your background, including your higher education experiences and prior careers will be included in the interview. The investigator will ask questions concerning your involvement with the NPTNJ Program, including questions about coursework and preparation. Questions concerning how successful you feel in such areas as discipline, pedagogy, classroom management, working with diverse learners and assessment will be included. Participation is voluntary, you may withdraw at any time, and you may refuse to answer any question. You will receive a reminder e-mail two to three days before the interview. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. You will be asked to review the transcripts and the major themes brought out by the interview. The researcher reserves the right to add follow-up questions during the interview.

In addition, all teacher participants will be asked if they will allow the researcher to observe one of their classes, approximately 40-50 minutes in length. A preliminary analysis of the interviews will be completed and an initial set of themes will be generated. From this first analysis, the researcher will generate a list of topics to observe that could include the following: general teaching strategies, lesson organization, classroom management, technology use, presentational skills, comfort level, working with special needs students, differentiated learning, assessment strategies.

141 Teachers College Hall / P.O. Box 880360 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0360 / (402) 472-3726 / FAX (402) 472-4300

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. If there is a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer it. All of the information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and your identity will not be revealed in any research materials.

Benefits:

While there are no direct benefits, you may find the interview experience enjoyable. Thinking about and describing your experiences may be helpful to your teaching. The information gained from this study will be useful in better understanding the NPTNJ Program and gaining insight in how to improve the alternate route teacher certification program in New Jersey.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study, which could identify a participant will be kept strictly confidential. Each interview will be numbered, and a pseudonym will be utilized to identify participants for coding and data storage. The audiotapes will be erased after transcription. Transcriptions will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home for a period of three years. Transcribed records will be maintained in a password-protected file on the interviewer's computer. Following the data analysis, the records will be transferred to a CD and kept in the locked filing cabinet along with the transcription.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may call the primary or secondary investigators at any time at the phone numbers listed below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965

Freedom to Withdraw:

You may withdraw from this study at any time or decide not to participate in this study. Your decision will not adversely affect your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the school in which you are employed. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your participation may affect your relationship with the investigator, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and/or your school. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____ Check if you agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Signature of Participant:

_____ _____
Signature of Research Participant *Date*

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

Cheryl A. Reagan, MA, Principal Investigator Office: (973) 300-2257
Alan T. Seagren, Ed.D, Secondary Investigator Office: (402) 472-0972

Appendix I

Informed Consent Letter for Administrators

University of Nebraska Lincoln

IRB#2006-06-463 EP
Date Approved: 11/09/06
Valid Until: 08/06/07

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Educational Administration

Informed Consent Letter for Administrators

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

IRB# (Labeled by IRB)

Identification of Project:
New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program

Purpose of the Research:

This is a research project that will describe the experiences of teachers and administrators with the New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey (NPTNJ) Alternate Route Program. You have been invited to participate because you are an administrator that has an NPTNJ teacher on staff.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will require no more than two hours of your time. The interviews and/or follow-up meetings will be at the school in which you work. You will have a chance to see all interview questions and form an opinion about them prior to the interview. Demographic questions about your background, including your higher education experiences and prior careers will be included in the interview. The investigator will ask questions concerning your involvement with the NPTNJ teachers and about their strengths and weaknesses in such areas as discipline, pedagogy, classroom management, working with diverse learners, and assessment. Participation is voluntary, you may withdraw at any time, and you may refuse to answer any question. You will receive a reminder e-mail two to three days before the interview. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. You will be asked to review the transcripts and the major themes brought out by the interview. The researcher reserves the right to add follow-up questions during the interview.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. All of the information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and your identity will not be revealed in any research materials.

141 Teachers College Hall / P.O. Box 880360 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0360 / (402) 472-3726 / FAX (402) 472-4300

Benefits:

While there are no direct benefits, you may find the interview experience enjoyable. Thinking about and describing your experiences with the NPTNJ Program may be helpful in supervising program participants. The information gained from this study will be useful in better understanding the NPTNJ Program and gaining insight in how to improve the alternate route teacher certification program in New Jersey.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study, which could identify a participant will be kept strictly confidential. Each interview will be numbered, and a pseudonym will be utilized to identify participants for coding and data storage. The audiotapes will be erased after transcription. Transcriptions will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the principal investigator's home for a period of three years. Transcribed records will be maintained in a password-protected file on the interviewer's computer. Following the data analysis, the records will be transferred to a CD and kept in the locked filing cabinet along with the transcription.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this research. If there is a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, you may refuse to answer it.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may call the primary or secondary investigators at any time at the phone numbers listed below. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the investigators or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965

Freedom to Withdraw:

You may withdraw from this study at any time or decide not to participate in this study. Your decision will not adversely affect your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the school in which you are employed. Your decision will not result in any loss or benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____ Check if you agree to be audio taped during the interview.

Signature of Participant:

_____ _____
Signature of Research Participant *Date*

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

Cheryl A. Reagan, MA, Principal Investigator Office: (973) 300-2257
Alan T. Seagren, Ed.D, Secondary Investigator Office: (402) 472-0972

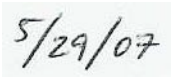
Appendix J

Confidentiality Agreement for Auditor

Confidentiality Agreement for Auditor

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I will in no way disclose the identities of the subjects or convey known data from the study entitled: New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Education Program. I will maintain participant confidentiality in all matters to which I have been given access relative to this study.

Signed: Date:



Appendix K

Letter from Auditor

External Audit Attestation
By Tricia L. Paramore, Ph.D.
Hutchinson Community College

Cheryl A. Reagan asked me to do an educational audit of her qualitative dissertation entitled *New Pathways to Teaching in New Jersey: A Case Study of the Alternate Route Teacher Education Program*. She is a Ph.D. candidate in the Educational Administration Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The audit was conducted May 29-June 12, 2007. The purpose of the audit was to determine the extent to which the results of the study are trustworthy.

Creswell (1998) indicated that the role of the auditor is to carefully examine "both the process and the product of the account, assessing their accuracy" and assuring that "the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data" (p. 203).

The researcher provided me with the following materials via Priority Mail:

- 19 interview transcripts (10 from teacher participants and 9 from administrator participants) which had been coded in the Atlas.Ti 5.0 qualitative software.

The researcher provided me with the following materials via a total of 58 email messages:

- A copy of the dissertation
- The confidentiality agreement for the auditor to sign
- Copies of all letters of contact with IRB approval numbers
- 10 school permission forms signed by the 10 school administrators
- Signed informed consent forms from teacher and administrator participants
- Original interview protocols with handwritten notes for A1-A7, A9-A10
- Preliminary handwritten notes on interview transcripts for A1-A7, A9-A10
- Preliminary handwritten themes from interview transcripts A1-A7, A9-A10
- Original interview protocols with handwritten notes for T1-T10
- Preliminary handwritten notes on interview transcripts for T1-T10
- Preliminary handwritten themes from interview transcripts T1-T10
- Original handwritten classroom observation notes for T1-T4, T6-T10
- Typed/organized classroom observation notes for T1-T4, T6-T10
- 3 documents with preliminary codes
- 9 handwritten documents with preliminary themes

The audit consisted of the following steps:

1. I printed all documents sent via email.
2. I signed the auditor confidentiality agreement.
3. I catalogued and reviewed all materials submitted and made handwritten notes.
4. I thoroughly read the dissertation paying particular attention to the purpose, central question, and sub-questions of the study.

5. I thoroughly read through each interviewee-validated interview transcript and classroom observations.
6. I coded 4 total transcripts (2 from teacher participants, 2 from administrator participants) and compared my coding to that of the researcher.
7. I reviewed the researcher's themes and subthemes based on the coded transcripts and classroom observations.
8. I compared the themes and subthemes to the researcher's conclusions to confirm accuracy.
9. I thoroughly reviewed all materials, recorded detailed notes, and formulated conclusions regarding the audit trail and trustworthiness of the findings.
10. I visited with the researcher regarding small discrepancies in the quotations used in Chapter 4 of the dissertation and she made the appropriate changes based on the conversation.

It is this auditor's assessment that the trustworthiness of this study can be established through both the process and the product. The findings are certainly grounded in the data. The researcher carefully designed and implemented the project and left a clear trail for audit. The materials submitted for audit were detailed and well organized.

Attested to by Tricia L. Paramore on June 12, 2007.

Tricia L. Paramore, Ph.D.
Co-Chairperson, Natural Science and Mathematics Department
Hutchinson Community College

Appendix L

Community College NPTNJ Program Information

Community College NPTNJ Program Information

Explanation of tables:

1. In years I and II teacher participants were allowed to enroll in Stage II without securing employment. In years III and IV teacher participants could not continue to stage II without employment.
2. Records were not maintained from January 2005-June 2005.

Year I of the NPTNJ Program (2003-2004)

Area of Certification	No. of Students Enrolled in Stage II	Employed prior to end of Program
Elementary Education	7	0
Science	4	4
Mathematics	3	3
Social Studies	2	1
Home Economics	1	0
English	2	1
Art	1	1
Totals	20	10

Year II of the NPTNJ Program (2004-2005)

Area of Certification	No. of Students Enrolled in Stage II	Employed prior to end of Program*
Elementary Education	12	4
Science	7	5
Mathematics	4	4
Social Studies	8	2
World Languages	7	7
Computer Science	1	1
Business Education	1	1
Psychology	1	1
Art	1	0
Totals	42	25

* as of January 2005.

Year Three of the NPTNJ Program (2006-2007)

Area of Certification	No. of Students Enrolled for Stage II
Elementary Education	16
Middle School Mathematics	3
Middle School Science	1
Middle School Social Studies	1
Middle School World Languages	1
High School Business	2
High School English	3
High School Mathematics	4
High School Physical Education	1
High School Science	2
High School Social Studies	3
High School Speech Arts & Dramatics	1
Totals	38

Year Four of the NPTNJ Program (2006-2007)

Area of Certification	No. of Students Enrolled for Stage II
Elementary Education	9
Middle School Science	2
High School English	3
High School Mathematics	2
High School Science	2
High School Social Studies	1
High School Technology Education	1
High School World Language	1
Totals	21

Appendix M

Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes and Sub-Themes

Theme 1: Becoming a Teacher	**Theme 2: The NPTNJ Program**
Connection to undergraduate study	NPTNJ coursework
Coming back to teaching	Real-life topics
Having to choose a new job or career	Literacy
School and community connections	Open discussion
Educational background	Stage I: Summer session
Prior extracurricular activities	Summer observations
Skills leaned for a prior career	Program coordinator
	Course assignments
	Student teaching
	Time commitment

Theme 3: Pedagogy	**Theme 4: Classroom Challenges**	**Theme 5: Hiring**
Pedagogical knowledge	Classroom management	Candidate fit
Appropriate grade-level curriculum	Relationships with students	Discipline fit
Technology	Divers students	School needs
Assessment	IEPs and 504s	Number of alternate route candidates previously hired
Lesson Planning	Excessive behaviors	
	Communicating with parents	

Theme 6: School Support	**Theme 7: Future Concerns and Recommendations**
School treatment	Salary and benefits
Observing teachers	Satisfaction
Post-observation feedback	Classroom management
Informal contact	State standards and organizations
New teacher programs	Assessment of school needs
Mentors	Post-program coursework
Other support	