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Examining the Characteristics of Teachers in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
Program in Varying Exceptionalities: Responding to the “Highly Qualified”
Teacher Mandate

by

Erica Djuan McCray

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Special Education
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EXAMINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS IN A MASTER
OF ARTS IN TEACHING (MAT) PROGRAM IN VARYING EXCEPTIONALITIES:
RESPONDING TO THE “HIGHLY QUALIFIED” TEACHER MANDATE

Erica Djuan McCray

ABSTRACT

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (2002) mandated that every teacher be highly qualified by the close of the 2005-2006 school year. However, the means by which newly certified teachers are prepared has been questioned. In addition to understanding how teachers enter the field, researchers have indicated a vested interest in examining *who* comes into the field. More specifically, the characteristics and experiences of pre-service and in-service special educators are of great interest (McKlesky & Ross, 2003; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). The present study examined the characteristics of six teachers in the final internship phase of a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in Varying Exceptionalities at a Research I/Research Extensive University in the Southeast.

This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods, employing a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design for data collection and analysis. The quantitative phase included descriptive statistics gleaned from pre-existing Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview data, results from the Teacher’s Sense of Efficacy Scale self-report survey, and an adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System protocol. The qualitative data collected for

complementarity included thick, rich case descriptions, descriptive data from semi-structured interviews with mentors and a focus group interview with participants.

Results showed that the participants entered the program with a variety of experiences and backgrounds. Also, the participants demonstrated and reported a range of variability in terms of their classroom effectiveness and their sense of efficacy. Further, the participants discussed several factors that they perceived as contributing to or impeding their professional success. The findings have implications for teacher preparation programs, school districts, and educational policymakers.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Special education is a relatively young field that has been plagued by challenges nearly since its formal inception in 1975 (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). Among these challenges has been a persistent shortage of teachers (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Conroy, 2003). The supply of teachers for students with special needs has been forecasted to diminish as state and federal initiatives increase the demand for the number of classroom teachers (Brownell, Sindelar, Bishop, Langley, & Seo, 2002). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) has emphasized the need for best practices and qualified professionals in educating students with disabilities. However, the critical shortage of teachers for these students in particular has been exacerbated by low quantity and quality in the special education teaching force (Carlson, Brauen, Klein, Schroll, & Willig, 2002). Further, the rates of attrition in special education are alarming (McKlesky, Smith, Tyler, & Saunders, 2002). Thus, there is a dilemma of “increasing numbers and improving quality simultaneously” (Brownell et al., 2002, p.1).

While leaders in special education were actively working to improve the state of special education, the Bush administration devised the *No Child Left*

Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002) to address student achievement and teacher qualifications through statewide assessments, standards, and accountability (Keele, 2004). Shortly, before President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act* into law, he inducted the Commission on Excellence in Special Education (U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [USDOE OSERS], 2002). The Commission was intended to make data-based recommendations for reforms “to improve America’s special education system and move it from a culture of compliance to a culture of accountability” (USDOE OSERS, 2002, p.4). This cadre was charged with analyzing the current state of the field from birth to the terminal degree, documenting areas needing improvement, and making sound suggestions for shifting the focus from federal compliance to excellence in educating children with special needs (USDOE OSERS, 2002). Essentially, the Commission was assessing special education’s ability to promote desired outcomes for students with special needs by involving families, educators, and researchers in the process. Throughout the course of study the committee came to seven summative findings, one of which included concerns about teacher preparation (USDOE OSERS, 2002).

The concerns of teacher quantity and quality prompted the drive for alternate pathways into education. Former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, has been criticized for what has been considered the simultaneous deregulation of teacher education and call for highly qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; McKlesky & Ross, 2004). Thus, in addition to traditional four-year

undergraduate and/or Master's degree programs, alternate routes to teaching were provided. Among the growing alternate routes are district-level alternative certification programs, Post-baccalaureate certification programs, and Master's of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree certification programs. However, there is limited research on how well the alternate entryways into teaching are preparing teachers that can be considered highly qualified beyond the narrow conception outlined in NCLB (i.e., Bachelor's degree, state certification/licensure, and demonstrated competence) or whether these teachers are remaining in the field. Consequently, it is necessary to study how well different training programs prepare teachers for areas of high needs (McKlesky & Ross, 2004; Shepherd & Brown, 2003). Also, understanding who the different routes of entry are attracting will be vital to developing and improving teacher preparation in the era of accountability.

Conceptual Basis of the Study

According to NCLB (2004), the highly qualified teacher is one who holds state certification or licensure, and demonstrates competency in the area being taught. In most states, educators are deemed competent based on the basis of passing a state-approved paper-pencil examination (Coble & Azordegan, 2004). This definition has been criticized by some researchers and teacher educators as being too narrow and void of context (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Professional education organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; Kaplan & Owings, 2002) and the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards (NBPTS, Oakes,

Franke, Quartz, & Rogers, 2002) have suggested broader definitions that include cultural awareness, critical reflection, and dispositions. As learners become more diverse, teachers will have to be highly qualified on these broader terms and be highly effective as well.

Before the term highly qualified gained national prominence, researchers studied the effectiveness and efficacy of teachers (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Haberman, 1995, 2004). Haberman (1995, 2004) described the effective or star teacher using 14 characteristic domains: persistence, physical and emotional stamina, caring relationships with students, commitment to acknowledging and appreciating student effort, willingness to admit mistakes, focus on deep learning, commitment to inclusion, organization skills, protect student learning, translate theory to practice, cope with bureaucracy, create student ownership, engage families in student learning, and support accountability for students placed at risk. Haberman (1995) found these attributes to be predictive of success in even the most challenging schools. The Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview (HUTSI, Haberman 1995; Haberman Educational Foundation webpage, 2003) protocol and Pre-Screen instruments, both developed by Martin Haberman, are currently being used in school districts and institutions of higher education across the country to select and prepare star teachers and administrators to work in high-poverty schools (Haberman, 1995).

Bandura's self-efficacy construct has been found useful in understanding learning and motivation. Teacher efficacy, an extension of this construct, refers to

teachers' confidence in their abilities to promote students' learning. More specifically, Hoy (2000) noted that teacher efficacy has been linked with, "such significant variables as student motivation, teachers' adoption of innovations, superintendents' ratings of teachers' competence, teachers' classroom management strategies, time spent teaching certain subjects, and teachers' referrals of students to special education" (p.2).

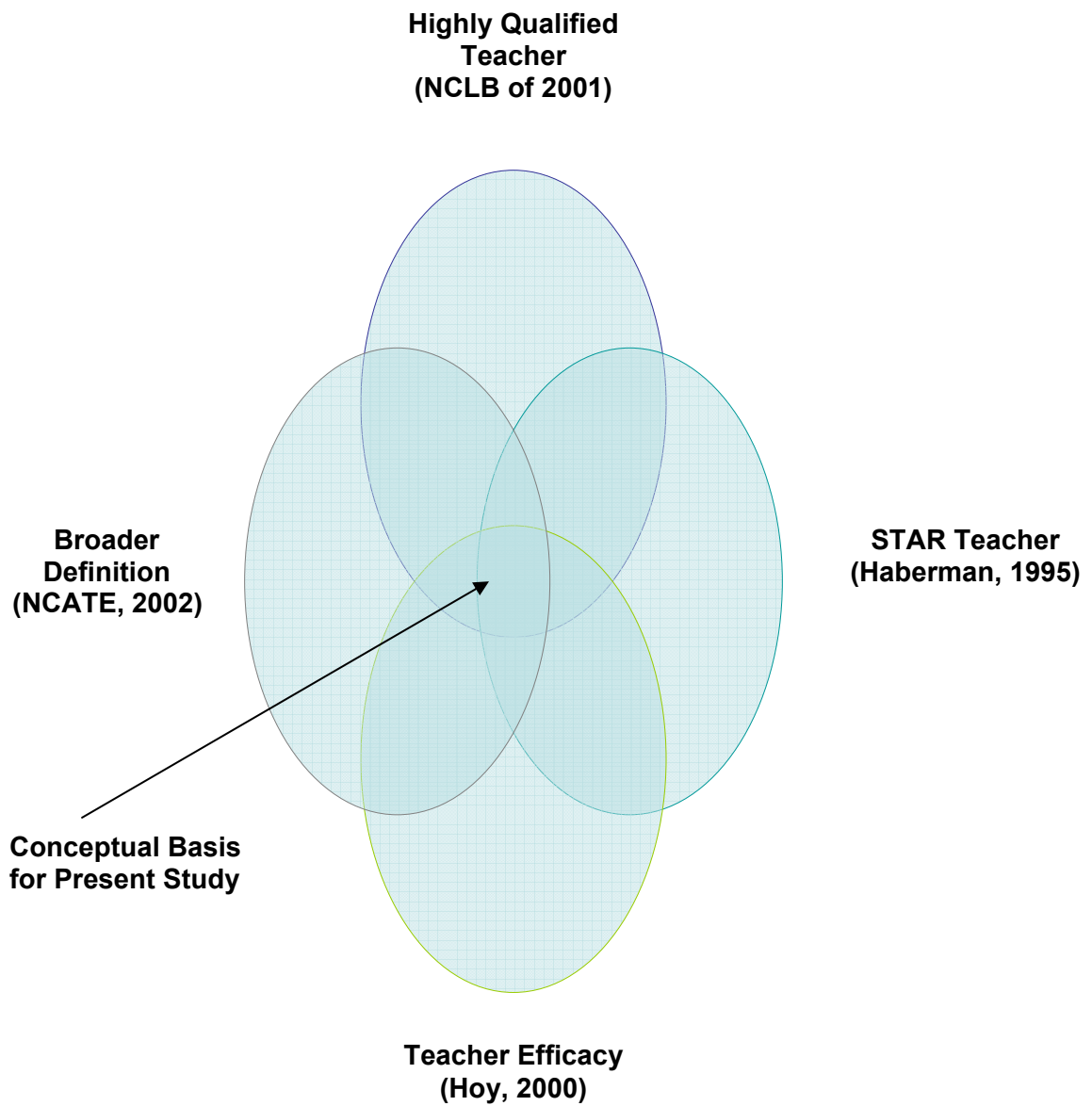
While the three frameworks listed (i.e., NCLB's highly qualified teacher, Haberman's star teacher, and Bandura's teacher efficacy) vary in their determination of the ideal or potentially successful teacher, each component is critical for K-12 student achievement, which is the ultimate goal. The federal government's call for highly qualified teachers (NCLB, 2002) is a call for teachers to have prescribed knowledge measured by degree attainment and certification. Haberman's (1995, 2004) descriptors of effective teachers portray facilitators of learning and masters of pedagogy, collegiality, and classroom management. Finally, teacher efficacy (Hoy, 2002) takes teachers' beliefs in their own abilities as critical to overall effectiveness and success. When merged, these conceptions depict a highly qualified teacher as one who has content and pedagogical knowledge, demonstrates proficiency and efficacy in the teaching, and facilitates learning with consistent success (see Figure 1).

Students served by special education programs are most often those having the greatest need for supports in the academic environment (USDOE OSERS, 2002). However, the means by which the teachers charged with their education are trained have come into question. If, in fact, no child is to be left

behind, students with special needs are included in this mandate and they need and deserve their share of the best prepared and most effective teachers.

Figure 1

Conceptual Basis for the Study



The Master of Arts in Teaching programs gaining national prominence were designed to provide an accelerated graduate program including certification for persons with qualifying undergraduate degrees who decided on teaching as a second-career option (Kelly & Dietrich, 1995). This option has provided a blended model of the intensive alternative certification programs and the traditional university-based programs, providing students already having discipline-related knowledge with pedagogical and curricular expertise (Post, Wise, Henk, McIntyre, Hillkirk, 2004). This innovative option has gained notoriety as teacher educators work to develop high-quality alternative preparation programs that are research based and informed through partnerships with schools.

As noted by McKlesky and Ross (2004), most research in special education has focused on the effectiveness and use of specific interventions. Yet, in order to provide new perspective for policy and teacher preparation, the characteristics of special educators must be studied (McKlesky, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004). Further, there is limited data on the characteristics of those going through the many pathways to teaching, and study is warranted. Additionally, much of the research in special education to date is mono-method; a mixed methodology would provide the field with richer information (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). There is a dearth of literature on the characteristics of special educators, particularly those who have come into teaching through non-traditional programs, and more specifically, accounts of their successes and challenges. Their voices

need to be included in the discussion on teacher preparation and on what is needed for cultivating highly qualified and efficacious teachers. A profession is an occupation that self-regulates and has a specific knowledge base. In order to professionalize the field of education teachers need to be heard and understood (Wise, 2005). Therefore, the purpose of this mixed-method case study was to examine the characteristics of select teachers in the final internship phase of the MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities at a Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast. As suggested by Yin (2002), insight was gained through multiple sources:

- Analyzing existing data on the interns prior to internship entry and throughout their course of study,
- Analyzing existing Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview data,
- Measuring teacher sense of efficacy,
- Conducting structured classroom observations, interviewing mentor teachers, and
- Conducting a focus group interview.

Research Questions

This mixed-method case study followed a concurrent triangulation design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). Through the course of this study, the following research questions were addressed by quantitative and qualitative means.

1. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, undergraduate degree, why special education was chosen, teacher

performance competencies, teaching assignment by exceptionality) of select teachers enrolled in an MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?

2. What are the characteristics of select teachers in an MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to the seven midrange functions identified by Haberman (1995, 2004): persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal vs. professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility?
3. What are the characteristics of select teachers in an MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to teacher efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management?
4. How effective is the classroom practice of select teachers in an MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?
5. What do select teachers in an MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities perceive as attributing to their professional successes and/or challenges?

Significance of the Study

Federal and state actions have called into question the ability of institutions of higher education to produce the needed quantity and quality of teaching professionals to meet the ever-increasing demands (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, & Terhanian, 1998). This study examined the characteristics of teachers matriculating through a recently developed MAT program that addresses the need for teachers to be prepared with content and pedagogical knowledge at an accelerated pace. In addition, the interns have been supported by a federally funded personnel preparation grant aimed at reducing the dearth of fully certified and qualified teachers. To that end, it is hoped that the findings from this study will provide rich information on the broad range of characteristics of teachers in the MAT program through the experiences of selected interns. The researcher believes the conclusions will be useful to teacher educators and researchers, school district personnel, and educational policymakers (Berry, 2004).

Definition of Terms

Case Study. A form of research seeking to find out the particulars of a case and not to generalize findings (Stake, 1995).

Highly qualified teacher. As previously mentioned, there has been some difference in opinion on what is meant by “highly qualified.” For the purpose of this study, a highly qualified teacher is one who has content and pedagogical knowledge, demonstrates proficiency and efficacy, and facilitates learning with consistent success (Brownell, Hirsch, & Seo, 2004; Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2005; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. The MAT program in which the interns are enrolled leads to the MAT degree and certification in Varying Exceptionalities and State Endorsement in English as a Second/Other Language (ESOL). This program is designed for individuals with accepted undergraduate degrees seeking Post-baccalaureate training and initial teacher certification in special education. Ideal candidates have a minimum 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of undergraduate coursework or a GRE score of at least 1000. This particular program requires that students be employed in a special education position by the second-semester due to curriculum requirements. *MAT Intern.* The MAT Intern is an employed special education teacher who is completing a supervised final internship in the MAT program during the semester the study was conducted.

Mixed Methods Research. A type of research that uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the research questions in a single research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Professional Practice Partner (PPP). The PPP or mentor teacher is a certified special educator with 3 or more years of teaching experience with university training in clinical teaching who provides ongoing support to individual teachers who they are paired with in the MAT program. The PPPs consult with their assigned teachers on integrated curriculum projects and conducts formative and summative evaluations on their professional practice.

Teacher's sense of efficacy. A teacher's sense of efficacy is a belief in her own ability to be effective and successful in promoting student learning (Hoy, 2000).

Varying Exceptionalities. Varying Exceptionalities is one of many descriptors for non-categorical teacher certification. Other common descriptors of this type of certification are cross-categorical or inter-related disabilities. A teacher certification is eligible to teach at any level K-12 in any special education classification.

Delimitations

This study employed a case study approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The study was delimited to teachers enrolled in the MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities who were completing their supervised final internship at a Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast during the semester the study was conducted. The MAT interns included in the study had completed protocols from the Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview on file with the department. The participants were the same for both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study.

Limitations

Limitations involved in educational research are recognized. Therefore, the researcher intentionally employed mixed methods to achieve complementarity and triangulation (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Threats to internal and external validity were evident in the quantitative phase and threats to credibility were evident in the qualitative phase. A discussion of the threats to the study will be discussed.

Threats to Internal Validity

Internal validity deals with the ability to limit extraneous possible causes of findings (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Threats to the internal validity of findings stemming from the quantitative phase included instrumentation, construct-related validity, and observational bias. Instrumentation refers to the reliability of scores a particular measure yields (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). This was of concern because this study included secondary data analysis of the quantitized HUTSI responses and the use of the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Because these measures were only administered once, testing did not threaten the internal validity of the findings (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Construct-related validity was another threat because efficacy and highly qualified represent higher-order constructs that are determined by precise definitions and explanations (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Observational bias must also be noted. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the behavior that was sampled was insufficient to draw any certain conclusions. As a component of this study, secondary data analysis may have impacted findings because the HUTSI data was previously collected by persons other than the primary researcher in the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Threats to External Validity

External validity deals with the degree to which study findings can be generalized (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The primary threats to external validity for the quantitative phase of this study included: population validity, ecological validity, temporal validity, and self-report. Population validity refers to

the generalizability of findings (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Because the sample was so specific, it is not reasonable to make broad statements about the findings to other populations or even a different sample from the same population. Ecological validity, like population validity, refers to the generalizability of the findings across settings rather than across groups. While similar programs exist, the researcher would caution the use of findings without further research and/or study replication (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Temporal validity takes differences in time into account (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). It is the researcher's hope that the program and its graduates will continuously improve over time, thus making the findings of this study formative rather than summative. Additionally, the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) is a self-report scale, which poses another threat. Other threats to external validity included specificity of variables and reactive arrangements which also limit the generalizability of the findings of this study. Specificity of variables posed a threat to external validity because the specific instruments used to measure the constructs identified are operationalized for the purposes of this study (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). Further, this researcher has a broadened conceptualization of highly qualified that is unique to this study. Lastly, reactive arrangements acknowledges that the participants' behaviors and responses may have been positively skewed because they were aware of the study and may have performed according to what they believed was desired by the researcher (Onwuegbuzie, 2003).

Threats to Legitimation

The researcher opted to use the terms legitimation and credibility instead of validity, which is a more quantitative term (Onwuegbuzie, 2003). As in the quantitative phase, the researcher cannot generalize findings to other populations or time because the sample was so specific and the findings represent one group at one point in time (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, in press). Threats to legitimation included: descriptive credibility, interpretive credibility, theoretical credibility, transferability, and generalizability. Descriptive credibility refers to the accuracy of the researcher's documentation of events (Maxwell, 1996). Interpretive credibility describes the extent to which the researcher accurately interprets and portrays participant responses (Maxwell, 1996). This was especially critical in the analysis of classroom performance and the focus group interview. Theoretical credibility describes the degree to which the research findings are credible, trustworthy, and consistent with the framework guiding the study (Maxwell, 1996). Transferability, similar to population validity, is not probable as student and program dynamics are likely to change (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lastly, generalizability refers to the ability to generalize findings from the sample to the population or participants within the study. It was not the intention of the researcher to come to broad conclusions about the population or other populations, but to provide insight and recommendations for future research based on the experiences of select interns in a Master of Arts in Teaching program in Varying Exceptionalities.

In an effort to limit threats to the validity and credibility of the study, the researcher triangulated the data, conducted member checks, and left audit trails. The data was triangulated via multiple respondents, data sources, and methods (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, in press). Also, member checks were conducted at various stages of the study. Further, audit trails were maintained in raw data, data reduction and analysis, and data synthesis of artifacts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Throughout the study, researcher bias was a possible threat. The researcher obtained her Master's degree while employed as an out-of-field special educator in a similar program at the same institutions. In the same vein, she understands the demands teachers face on a daily basis.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Support for the relevance and timeliness of this study is provided in the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 includes relevant literature on the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002), teacher supply demand, and shortage, alternate entry into the teaching profession, highly qualified teachers, teacher efficacy and effectiveness, and implications for preparing high-quality special educators. Next, the methodology used to conduct this study is outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 includes the results and analysis of the data collected as well as the researcher's self-reflection. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings, implications for stakeholders, and recommendations for future research in this area.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Relevant Literature

Overview

Few would argue that parents and caregivers are a child's first teacher. However, once formal schooling has begun the classroom teacher has great influence on the child's success and later experiences (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Similarly, researchers have found that the classroom teacher is the greatest determinant of student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Wise 2000/2001). For this reason, it is essential that teachers are of high quality and are effective in the classroom.

The literature review will begin with the conceptual framework for the present study. In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2002) will be discussed as it has greatly impacted the formal call for highly qualified teachers and promoted alternate methods of entry into the field. In particular, Title I and Title II of NCLB (2002) will be discussed; Title I because it emphasizes high-quality education for children living in poverty and Title II because it specifies recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers and school administrators (NCLB, 2002). Title I schools, or high-poverty schools, are relevant to the discussion on alternative certification because these schools are considered more difficult to staff and are often staffed by teachers who are

novices, not traditionally trained, and/or are under-certified (Chait, Hardcastle, Kotzin, et al., 2001). Literature also is included on the teaching force relating to concerns of supply and demand and recruitment and retention efforts (Boe et al., 1998). Further, the characteristics of teachers and the means by which they enter the teaching force are discussed, followed by teacher quality and effectiveness. Also relevant to this study is research on the preparation experiences of students trained in different types of programs.

Conceptual Framework

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2002) has made teacher quality and qualifications a widely discussed and debated topic. The legislation narrowly defines a highly qualified teacher as one who holds a Bachelor's degree, has state certification or licensure, and demonstrates competence in the subject area being taught (Paige, 2002). Yet, educational researchers and learned bodies argue that a broader, more contextualized definition must be adopted to ensure that professional educators are pedagogically trained, culturally aware, critically reflective, and have positive dispositions, which will serve them well in diverse classrooms (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2002). Broader conceptions of teacher quality treat education as more than content dissemination (Darling-Hammond, Dilworth, & Bullmaster, 1996).

Students placed at the greatest risk for failure, including students with special needs, are in need of the most qualified and effective teachers. NCLB acknowledges the need for highly qualified special educators, but gives no more

guidance as to what highly qualified should look like beyond the narrow definition. However, NCLB has impacted the most recent version of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA, 2004). In addition to a Bachelor's degree and certification and/or state licensure in special education, special educators also must hold certification in the core content area being taught.

For the purpose of this study, a highly qualified teacher is one who has content and pedagogical knowledge, demonstrates proficiency and teacher efficacy, and facilitates learning with consistent success (see Figure 1). As previously mentioned, the classroom teacher has been found to have the greatest impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary that teachers are effective and capable of ensuring that learning is taking place.

No Child Left Behind

Overview

For decades the potential for success in the global community has been predicted by the demonstrated abilities of a nation's children. The race for educational superiority can be traced back to the launch of Sputnik in 1957. This historic event sparked the *National Defense Education Act* (1958), which was aimed at improving the academic performance of the nation's children, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which could be considered the follow-up report, left the nation outraged at the lack of apparent progress made

post Sputnik. With a new president and administration, the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994) was signed into law as an educational reform to align national standards in education through systemic reform. Subsequently, data have been collected and reports such as the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS; National Center for Education Statistics, 2004) have been generated periodically in order to track changes in achievement over time (Gonzales, Guzman, & Partelow, et al., 2004).

All the while, the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965* has been restructured and reauthorized numerous times in an effort to reform education by improving various aspects of the schooling experience. The most recent revision, which is driven by standards and accountability, is the *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002). NCLB is divided into 10 Titles, with the first two being the most widely discussed: Title I, to improve education for disadvantaged youth, and Title II, to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and administrators (NCLB, 2002).

Title I

Since its inception in 1965, under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, the primary purpose of Title I has been to provide all children with an optimal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and to develop into good citizens (Chait et al., 2001; US Department of Education, 2005). More specifically Title I is intended to provide the needed resources to close the achievement gap between low- and high-performing students, minority and non-minority students, and students living in poverty and their more affluent peers

(Chait et al., 2001). To this end, additional funding has been allocated to state and local education agencies (i.e., state departments of education and schools) identified as serving children from low-income families (McDonnell, 2005).

Title I funds have been allocated using two models: (a) targeted assistance, which supports individual students based on need regardless of their school's need; and (b) the schoolwide model, which supports schools with 50% or more students that are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Chait et al., 2001). According to Chait et al. (2001), the reauthorization of Title I implemented stronger accountability systems to ensure that the students who had the greatest need actually received supports. The accountability measures are particularly important as districts and individual schools can budget their allocations in a number of ways including instruction, instructional support, and program administration (McDonnell, 2005).

Keeping in mind that student achievement is the ultimate goal, more still needs to be accomplished to close the achievement gap. A case in point, in a 3-year study of low- and high-poverty schools in nine states, the reading gap for elementary students was reduced by 2% to 10% in six of nine states and, in mathematics, the achievement gap declined by 2% to 11% in six of the states (Chait et al., 2001). This is a promising improvement, but more work is necessary.

Title II

Title II of NCLB is intended to raise student achievement by improving the quality of teachers and administrators in schools throughout the country. Part A

of Title II is designated to provide grant money to state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), state agencies for higher education, and other eligible partnerships with any of the listed entities that lead to increased student achievement (NCLB, 2002). These funds are used to prepare, train, and recruit highly qualified educators in addition to preparing paraprofessionals and out-of-field teachers. State educational agencies must designate 2.5% of Title II funds to reform or develop and implement more rigorous programs for certification, mentoring, and professional development. Local educational agency funds are allocated based on need and student population, only after a needs assessment has been conducted on professional development and hiring. Finally, funding for partnerships may only be allocated to a teacher preparation unit of an institution of higher education, a school of arts and sciences, and a high-need LEA. Other eligible activities include technical assistance and accountability, activities that address needs at the national level.

Supporters

Supporters of NCLB have applauded the high levels of standards and accountability measures the Act imposes at all levels of the educational system (Burger, 2002). These efforts are ultimately intended to have all students meet state-identified standards by the end of the 2013-2014 school year (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Performance is measured against state-identified benchmarks to determine success in addition to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards to be met by all individual students and schools in a number of categories (Cochran-Smith, 2005). It is believed AYP standards will provide a common

language for stakeholders to discuss areas of strength and areas still in need of improvement (Simpson, LaCava, & Sampson Graner, 2004). The scores received on the required high-stakes standardized assessments determine success in meeting AYP goals for which schools are held accountable (Simpson et al., 2004).

Supporters also tout the funding for compensatory programs (Mathis, 2005). As previously noted, Title I is a major force in supplemental funding at the state and local level. Efforts to close the achievement gap by holding students and their schools accountable have been considered a way of bringing “market reform to public education” (Karp, 2004, p.55). Schools that fare well are commended for their success and those that fall short are identified as needing improvement and given supplemental funding for remediation efforts.

The demand for highly qualified personnel also is publicized as key to the success of NCLB. It was declared in the Act that by the close of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers of core content would be highly qualified (NCLB, 2002). Further, because the role of paraprofessionals in instruction is undeniable, they must also meet minimum qualifications (Simpson, et al., 2004). This is of particular importance as educational researchers come to consensus on the significant impact the classroom teacher has on student learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002).

Critics

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002) has as many critics as it has supporters because of the controversial nature of many of its mandates. Those

who doubt that NCLB will have a positive impact on education do not deny that teachers and schools must be held accountable for student learning. However, they argue that high-stakes assessment, deregulation of teacher preparation, and harsh scrutiny are not the answers to the educational achievement dilemma (Meier & Wood, 2004; Popham, 2004).

Students are tested for the sake of accountability in reading and math annually in grades 3 through 8 and at least once during high school. In addition, science will be added to the required content area tested during the 2007-2008 school year. Duran (2005) voiced concerns, from the perspective of a school administrator and social science researcher, over the sanctions and consequences that may be imposed based on the results of high-stakes tests. Moreover, he questioned the validity and reliability of the scores the tests yield. In a similar vein, Superfine (2004) noted the importance of considering the testing practices employed for the sake of NCLB. Among the other issues of assessment is the inclusion of students with disabilities and students for whom English is a second language (Goertz, 2005). Beyond validity and reliability, the high-stakes designation has caused the focus in schools to shift from teaching for students to learn to teaching for students to pass the test. Kohn (2004) referred to the testing requirement of NCLB as “compromising the quality of teaching by forcing teachers to worry more about raising test scores than about promoting meaningful learning” (p.79). Simply stated, mandating high-stakes tests does not provide what many would consider genuine accountability (Darling-Hammond,

2000). Worse yet, many states have had to expand their assessment programs and cost and capacity consequences have been considerable (Goertz, 2005).

Another area of concern heightened by NCLB is the recruitment, hiring, and retention of teachers for public schools in the United States. According to NCLB (2002), all teachers must be highly qualified by the conclusion of the 2005-2006 school year. While critics do not argue that this lofty goal is worthwhile, it is challenged for its potential deregulation of teacher preparation. Former Secretary of Education Rod Paige has been cited on several occasions for comments that belittle traditional teacher preparation programs (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; McKlesky & Ross, 2004). There are essentially two camps in this debate: those for deregulation through alternate routes into teacher education and those for the professionalization of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). Supporters of the deregulation stance proffer verbal ability and content knowledge as the most important attributes of highly qualified educators (Paige, 2002; Walsh, 2001). Conversely, challengers of this viewpoint believe verbal ability and content knowledge are important, but not enough. Unless these skills are combined with pedagogical skills and the ability to make decisions informed by research and feedback, teachers are reduced to the role of technicians (Cochran-Smith, 2003). Moreover, the alternate routes to teaching that have grown out of the deregulation movement are not all created equal. These initiatives may get more people certified and into the classrooms, but it may not provide each child with a highly-qualified teacher as mandated in NCLB (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

Another critique of NCLB is the stigmatizing impact it can have on schools and the teachers and students who are there. The AYP results are spoken of in terms of school report cards, with increasing numbers of schools deemed in need of improvement or failing (Popham, 2004). When schools are identified as such, they are allotted additional funding to “fix” the problems with their schools and essentially their children and teachers. If sufficient improvements are not made, then students are allowed to take their enrollment elsewhere, even to private and charter schools. Meanwhile, the stigma associated with receiving a “failing” designation causes teachers to clamor for other schools with better reputations, in most instances schools in more affluent areas (Berry, 2004). In addition, collateral damage occurs with schools retaining in grade, pushing out, and losing students who do not bolster AYP scores (Wood, 2004).

As previously stated, NCLB has as many critics as supporters. The long history of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* suggests that equitable education for disadvantaged students is still a work in progress. Efforts made on both sides of the debate present both challenges and opportunities at all levels of the educational system. However, the ultimate goal of educating children must not get lost in the political crossfire.

The Teaching Force

Overview

If in fact teachers are the most significant factor in student learning, then it is crucial to prepare, employ, and retain competent, effective, and responsive teachers (Wise, 2000/2001). Unfortunately, the supply has been insufficient to

meet the demands of the rapidly increasing population of the United States (Ingersoll, 2001). The school-aged population is expected to rise steadily while the numbers of teachers leaving the field does the same (Ingersoll, 2001). The population spikes have been greatest in areas with considerable immigration and movement south and west, particularly Florida, California, and Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Moreover, increases in concentrations of certain ethnic groups in these and other areas suggest a need for representative numbers of those ethnic groups in the teaching force (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 1996). However, the teaching ranks have remained primarily, White, middle-class, and female—and unreflective of the communities in which many of these educators will teach (Delpit, 1995; NCES, 1996). Compounding these challenges is the overall shortage of fully qualified teachers to staff the nation's schools (Boe et al., 1998). NCLB (2002) has mandated that all schools be staffed with highly qualified teachers by the close of the 2005-2006 school year. It is quite possible that the quantity will be met, but the question still remains as to whether or not the teachers deemed highly qualified by the legislation will provide professional educators that demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to meet the manifold needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Efforts to recruit and retain a diverse and qualified teaching force are pivotal. It is believed that having diverse representation at all levels of the educational system will lead to heightened understanding and affirmation of difference (Nieto, 1999).

Teacher Demographics

The data available on teacher characteristics indicates that the teaching force is predominately female, recorded at just under 75% in 1999 to 2000 (Henke, Peter, Li, & Geis, 2005; see Appendix A). Similarly, Brookhart and Freeman (1992) reported in a meta-analysis that 75%-80% of teacher education students were female. Further, the numbers of females in elementary and early childhood education programs have been found higher than in secondary programs (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Boyer and Mainzer (2003) reported that the special education teaching force was approximately 85% female. This proportion was only lower in programs for students with emotional disabilities.

The data reported to the NCES (Henke et al., 1997) on teacher race and ethnicity show that teachers are also predominately White, non-Hispanic (84%). It has been noted that teaching was once a career common to African Americans more so than other ethnic minority groups, primarily due to opportunity (Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991). However, as other career opportunities for African Americans were presented, their representation in the teaching field waned (Murnane et al., 1991). In recent years, the numbers of candidates in teacher education programs decreased for Whites and for teacher candidates of color. According to the SPeNSE data, 86% of beginning special educators are White (Billingsley, 2002).

With regard to age, NCES data (Henke et al., 1997) indicated that the average age for teachers in 1999 to 2000 was approximately 42 years. However, there has been an increase in teachers 50 and over as well as the number of

educators under 30 (Henke et al., 1997). According to Zumwalt and Craig (2005), the age increase may be attributed to the increasing number of graduate programs and second-career alternative certification programs that lead to initial certification. According to Boyer and Mainzer (2003), the median age for special educators is just under 44 years. However, close to 22% of special educators are less than 25 to 34 years of age (Boyer & Mainzer, 2003).

Henke et al., (2005) found that education majors were more likely to teach than graduates in other fields. However, students who majored in humanities (17%) and social sciences (9%) were also represented in the teaching force. Other teaching-related experiences such as working as a substitute teacher or teacher's aide were reported as precursors to independent teaching (Henke, et al., 2005). It has also been noted that special educators are more likely to hold master's degrees (46.5%) than their general education counterparts (38.7%). This may be caused by some state's requiring a general education certification and/or degree prior to seeking special education certification (Boyer & Mainzer, 2003). Billingsley (2002) noted that 31% of beginning special educators hold master's degrees and over 60% enter the field certified for their primary teaching assignment.

Supply and Demand

Over the past decade, researchers have studied the supply and demand of general and special educators (Boe et al., 1998; Ingersoll, 2001). The teacher shortage is discussed in a number of ways, primarily in terms of quantity and quality (Boe et al., 1998). Boe et al. (1998) examined the shortage of public

school teachers in terms of certification status and source of supply. The data were obtained from a nationally representative sample of more than 46, 000 teachers in both general and special education. The researchers came to six summative findings for the six-year period studied: (a) there was a chronic annual shortage of fully-certified special educators; (b) the shortage of fully certified special educators was almost twice as large as in general education; (c) the shortage was exacerbated by entering teachers in either general or special education, many of whom were only partly certified; (d) the shortage of teachers was exacerbated regardless of entry category (i.e., certification status and preparation); (e) among continuing teachers in both categories, those who became established in their assignments had higher levels of full certification, yet special education still had lower levels and significant turnover rates; (f) and transitional teachers in both categories attained lower levels of full certification (Boe et al., 1998). Expanded professional development and increased graduation of special education teacher candidates are offered as possible solutions to the shortage of fully certified special educators (Brownell, Ross, Colon, & McCallum, 2003). In addition, Brownell et al. (2003) suggested greater incentives could be offered for partially certified teachers to become fully certified and attracting general educators to become fully certified in and teach special education.

Ingersoll (2001) analyzed data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (Whitener, Gruber, Lynch, et al., 1997) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; Whitener et al., 1997). He found that school staffing challenges were not due to an inadequate

supply of teachers, but due to teachers leaving the field for retirement and other reasons related to organizational factors (e.g., lack of administrative support, low salaries, and limited decision-making authority). Ingersoll's (2001) findings were consistent with other research in this area documenting that teacher shortages are problematic. Additionally, if factors such as teacher job dissatisfaction and teachers leaving to pursue better jobs or other careers are not addressed, teacher attrition will persist (Ingersoll, 2001).

Areas of critical teacher shortage include mathematics, science, English as a Second/Other Language (ESOL), and particularly special education (Boe et al., 1998). Similar to the overall student population, the numbers of students identified and served in special education is growing while high teacher attrition rates continue rise (Brownell, Sindelar, Bishop et al., 2002). McKlesky et al. (2004) have forecasted that shortages will become more dramatic in the coming years. Factors related to teacher attrition in special education fall into three categories: teacher characteristics, working conditions, and affective responses to teaching (Brownell et al., 2002). Brownell et al. (2002) noted that teacher characteristics such as age, experience, preparation route, and certification status duration impacted teacher attrition. Also, job satisfaction and persistence is directly related to work conditions including salary, intrinsic rewards of teaching, and administrative support (Ingersoll, 2001). Further, commitment to teaching is related to stress, empowerment, and classroom experiences (Brownell et al., 2002). The dire shortage of qualified teachers is a reality and the complexities are well documented (Boe et al., 1998; Ingersoll, 2001).

Brownell et al. (2004) reported that despite the amount of money spent by Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to increase the quantity of qualified professionals in the special education teaching force, “the efforts have been insufficient to adequately increase the number of qualified teachers in special education, particularly teachers who are culturally and linguistically diverse” (p.56). The dismal outlook seems more permanent when researchers point to the “revolving door” (Ingersoll, 2001, p.499 abstract) which serves as an entryway for young, inexperienced, and/or under-qualified teachers and an exit for teachers who are lost to factors noted previously by McKlesky et al. (2004). In either instance, students with special needs, the students with the most specialized needs, are placed at a disadvantage. Efforts must be made to attract, recruit, and retain teachers who are competent, effective, responsive to diversity, and committed to staying in the field.

Recruitment and Retention

State and district-level administrators are in a considerable bind when it comes to serving students receiving special education. They seek to recruit and retain qualified teachers, those with content knowledge and pedagogical skills, who can increase levels of student achievement in the midst of a scarcity of fully qualified professionals (Brownell et al., 2004). Therefore, all entities of the educational system must collaborate effectively to recruit and prepare teacher candidates, including graduates of traditional programs and participants in alternative route programs (Sheperd & Brown, 2003). Moreover, attrition will have

to be stifled through effective induction programs and mentorship (Danielson, 2002).

Attrition appears to be a greater challenge than recruitment (Brownell et al., 2002), but recruitment warrants discussion. The use of financial incentives and increased salary are often mentioned for attracting teacher in critical shortage areas and difficult-to-staff schools (Kaplan & Owings, 2002). Further, teaching is one of the only fields that offer little reward for productivity and only modest rewards for persistence in the field. However, some of the large city districts are attempting to draw talented teachers into their schools by boosting starting pay and piloting performance-pay scales (Brownell, Bishop, & Sindelar, 2005; Kaplan & Owings, 2002). The success of such programs is mixed because, again, working conditions and similar factors moderate the potential effects of pay opportunities. It has been posited that teachers are more likely to change schools because of student characteristics than salary (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Teacher movement on the basis of student characteristics suggests that Martin Haberman's (1995) long-held belief that appropriate selection of teachers is critical, especially for closing the revolving door to schools considered difficult-to-staff (i.e., high-poverty, low performing).

Other recruitment initiatives suggest early outreach strategies (Brownell et al., 2005). This is particularly hopeful for rural districts that may be more cost effective than recruiting outside of the community and risking teacher migration. Another method of "growing your own" that has shown potential is the preparation of paraprofessionals to become fully certified teachers (Brownell et

al., 2005). The fact that many teachers return to the areas where they were raised suggests that recruiting as early as high school is a viable option (Southeast Center for Teaching Quality [SCTQ], 2003).

Another recruitment priority is to increase the number of teachers from ethnic/racial minority backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). Henke, Choy, Chen, Geis, and Alt (1997) reported to the National Center for Education Statistics that the proportion of minority teachers in schools is significantly lower than the numbers of students in those schools. As a result, many have called for innovative strategies for recruiting college graduates from ethnic/minority backgrounds who show promise into the teaching force (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, 2003). As Ayalon (2004) pointed out, the shortage of teachers in urban schools is a continued challenge coupled with the disproportionate lack of teachers of color. It is necessary to make clear the potential benefits of having ethnic minority representation in the teaching ranks. This is not to say that educators of color will be more effective than their White colleagues in their work with children from diverse backgrounds. Yet, Darling-Hammond et al. (1996) acknowledged the contextual understanding that teachers of color may have that can impact student connections and subsequent learning. Furthermore, teachers of color may be more willing to work in urban and high-poverty areas (Darling-Hammond et al., 1996), may empower children of color to strive for academic achievement (Nieto, 1999), and mend some of the cultural mismatch between families and schools (Delpit, 1995).

There are many nuances to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers, particularly in schools described as difficult-to-staff. To that end, a variety of strategies have been attempted in order to attract teachers to positions in which they will stay (Berry, 2004; Brownell et al., 2005; SCTQ, 2003). It has been found that beginning teachers are at greatest risk for attrition and goodness of fit is critical (Haberman, 1995). Even more, researchers have noted that once teachers are in the classroom, well-designed support programs increase their likelihood of staying (Brownell et al., 2004). According to the NCTAF (2003), “Teachers are not finished products when they complete a teacher preparation program” (p.79). Thus, high-quality induction and support programs should: (a) indicate clear goals to improve teaching, (b) provide engaging mentors, (c) include relevant professional development, (d) and allocate adequate fiscal and political support (Brownell et al., 2004). The mentoring provided in quality induction programs is vital for building sustained collegial relationships that ward off the sense of isolation felt by many teachers, particularly those who choose to leave prior to retirement (Danielson, 2002; Lortie, 1975/2002). In addition, learning communities can be built through mentoring and other forms of systematic support that will not only lessen attrition, but also help improve the culture of schools and perspectives on the teaching profession through reflection and increased job satisfaction (Kaplan & Owings, 2002).

As noted, beginning teachers are vulnerable to attrition (Danielson, 2002). In fact, 13.3% of teachers with 3 years of experience or less move to different teaching assignments and 8.5% leave the profession all together (Henke et al.,

1997). Due to the specific demands of special education, teachers in this area are at greater risk for attrition (Brownell et al., 2002). All beginning teacher are expected to perform the same tasks as their veteran counterparts and special educators are no exception (Brownell et al., 2002). Therefore, in addition to instruction, classroom management, and building relationships, they must also maintain paperwork, develop needed accommodations, and conduct assessments (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000). That said, beginning special educators may have the least time to participate in induction and mentoring programs; yet, they have the most unique needs. These challenges are compounded when special education teachers come into the field with less-than-full certification (Billingsley, 2002). Furthermore, as teachers come into education by alternative routes, special education in particular, added professional development and support will be essential to their success and the success of their students.

Entering the Profession

Overview

The need for teachers continues as student enrollment consistently rises (Kaplan & Owings, 2002). The current federal Administration has opened several new doorways into the teaching profession, and the traditional teacher preparation programs of universities are no longer the sole educators (Paige, 2002). Former Secretary of Education Paige's support for alternative routes into teaching has been ridiculed because it came at the same time he advocated for more rigorous teacher training programs in higher education, which was viewed as the deregulation of the profession with more stringent regulation of traditional

preparation programs (Coble & Azordegan, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Further, the Secretary's report indicated that subject-matter competency and verbal ability are the most critical components to teacher effectiveness. Conversely, educational researchers have found that verbal and academic ability are important, however, teacher's sense of preparedness (i.e., coursework, pedagogical training, and supervised teaching) and sense of teaching efficacy are critical to their persistence (Brownell et al., 2002; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). The challenge to prepare teachers effectively in a time and cost efficient manner has caused significant changes across the spectrum of teacher preparation programs that now include traditional programs, post-baccalaureate programs, alternative route programs, and other innovative blends such as the Master of Arts in Teaching degree programs (Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001).

Traditional Programs

Undergraduate degree programs. Traditional teacher education programs are housed in institutions of higher education and provide students with coursework and experiences leading to certification and either an undergraduate or graduate degree. Typically, undergraduate programs are designed to be completed in four years. According to Brownell et al. (2003), teacher preparation programs judged as highly effective include:

- Cohesive coursework and field experiences
- Faculty use of varied instructional strategies
- Emphasis on the needs of diverse learners

- Collaborative learning communities
- Emphasis on pedagogical skills
- Clear vision for high quality teaching
- Use of active pedagogy

Graduate degree programs. Another traditional option is the graduate degree program. Most graduate degree programs in education are designed for students with undergraduate degrees in a related discipline. In recent years, teacher education programs have offered combined programs in which students can complete both the undergraduate and graduate degrees in five years (Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001).

Alternative Routes

Post-baccalaureate certification. With the advent of emergency certification, some teachers enter the classroom with no experience and an approved transcript with required coursework taken at a university not a part of a degree program (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Sheperd & Brown, 2003). These teachers agree to take the approved certification exam and, in an instant, are certified teach. This option is undoubtedly the most questioned by educational researchers (Berry, 2004; Coble & Azordegan, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002).

District-level alternative certification programs. School district sponsored certification programs have been criticized as short-term fixes (Berry, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2001). These programs typically offer “crash courses” in classroom management, lesson plan development, and an overview of the

profession. However, some partnership grants for districts and universities have been secured to fund more comprehensive, research-based instruction to prepare better alternative-route teachers (Anderson & Bullock, 2004).

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). Degree programs, such as the MAT, have been developed and refined across the country in a variety of educational areas including secondary education and special education. The MAT is an accelerated graduate degree program designed for initial professional educator certification (Post et al., 2004). It is an innovative opportunity for graduates to receive certification in a relatively short time while benefiting from the core components of a traditional undergraduate degree program (Kelly & Dietrich, 1995).

The advantages and disadvantages of traditional and non-traditional programs have been debated in light of the dire need for highly qualified, effective, and committed teachers. Advocates of the traditional teacher preparation programs declare that the coursework, pedagogical training, and supervised field experiences that are central to those programs are essential to retaining effective teachers (Brownell et al., 2003; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). The sustained involvement in a collegial environment fosters critical reflection and professionalism (i.e., student teaching, cohort models) (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-mundi, 2002; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). However, alternative certification programs have benefits not afforded by traditional programs. Mid-career professionals bring life and work experiences with them. Also, studies have documented the success of alternative programs in recruiting

candidates from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Brownell et al., 2002).

Conventional wisdom suggests that the alternative certification programs are here to stay. Teachers are required to become highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (NCLB, 2002), which makes time of the essence.

That said, it is in the best interest of school districts and colleges of education to collaborate in order to provide the best preparation and professional development opportunities and experiences possible. The NCTAF (2003) has declared the traditional versus alternative certification debate a moot point.

Students need and deserve the most effective and qualified teachers in order to facilitate their learning and achievement. Thus, all pathways to teaching must be of high quality (NCTAF, 2003).

Teacher Quality and Effectiveness

Highly Qualified Teacher

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002) defines the highly qualified teacher as one who holds a Bachelor's degree, state certification, and demonstrates competency in the subject area being taught. Although researchers have argued that these qualifications ensure that teachers are certified it does not necessarily ensure that they are highly qualified as stated (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Thus, broader conceptions of highly qualified teachers have been put forth. The NCTAF (2003) offered the following characteristics abilities for defining a highly qualified beginning teacher:

- Possess deep knowledge of content

- Demonstrate thorough understanding of children’s learning and development
- Demonstrate the necessary teaching skills to ensure learning
- Foster a positive learning environment
- Employ a variety of assessment strategies to monitor student learning
- Integrate technology into instruction
- Collaborate with other stakeholders
- Reflect on their practice
- Pursue professional development activities
- Instill a love of learning in their students

Similarly, NCATE (2002) standards indicate that “candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers or other professional school personnel know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn” (p.14). More specific to special educators, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC, 2005) made known its position on highly qualified special educator in terms of NCLB (2002) and IDEA (2004). It highlighted the special educators’ roles in individualizing instruction; collaborating with students, families, school personnel, and other agencies; employing evidence-based instructional strategies; modifying learning environments; and ensuring their own competence in core academic areas being taught.

Carlson, Lee, and Schroll (2004) identified attributes of special education teachers that indicate high quality. They noted that many studies on general

educators documented the positive relationship between student achievement and teacher experience, attitudes and beliefs, and classroom practices. In their study, Carlson et al. (2004) found the same attributes of great import for special educators.

Few would argue that teachers need to be highly qualified to teach. As the 2005-2006 school year unfolds, the debate over how to ensure that each child has a highly qualified teacher is far from over. Optimally, teachers will be highly qualified beyond the narrow definition given in NCLB (2002).

Teacher Efficacy and Effectiveness

Teacher efficacy is defined as the belief in one's ability to teach effectively and promote student learning (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1993; see Appendix A). Research on teacher's sense of efficacy has been documented to determine possible effects on student performance (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In addition to adequate preparation, researchers have found that teacher effectiveness also is related to their sense of efficacy (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). Hoy (2000) stated that the development of teacher efficacy is influenced by mastery experiences during the internship period and first year of teaching. This suggests that comprehensive, supervised preparation programs may positively impact the teaching efficacy of beginning teachers. In the same vein, Ebmeier (2003) identified supervised teaching and peer mentoring as having a positive impact on teacher efficacy and commitment to teaching.

In other studies, efficacious teachers demonstrated strong characteristics that would benefit them and their students. In particular, teachers with high

efficacy believe they can influence student learning (Guskey, 1988). Also, Johnson, Wallace, and Thompson (1999) noted that teachers with high efficacy felt capable of effecting instructional change and solving problems. Furthermore, highly efficacious teachers were more likely to try innovative instructional techniques (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). These inclinations are of particular importance for special educators, as they face greater challenges in the field and may benefit from significant mastery experiences while in their programs (Boyer & Gillespie, 2000).

Preparation Experiences

The recent research on teacher preparation has ranged from adhering to standards and federal regulation (Hardman, Rosenberg, Sindelar, 2005), to working with specific populations of learners (Ford, 2004). In addition, the impact of varying pathways to teaching has garnered attention (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Flores, Desjean-Perrotta, & Steinmetz, 2004; Nakai & Turley, 2003; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). The studies available identify differences between traditionally and non-traditionally prepared teachers in pedagogical skills, teaching efficacy, and intent to stay in the field.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) analyzed survey data that asked teachers to rate their preparedness and their personal views about teaching. The teachers who were trained in a formal university program felt prepared better than those who were prepared through programs that minimize pre-service training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Stemming from the Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) study, Flores et al. (2004) studied differences in teacher efficacy as a function of

pathways to certification. Similarly, they found that traditional route teachers were more confident in their teaching ability to make a difference, possibly because of their pedagogical knowledge.

The major finding of Nakai & Turley (2003) was that provisionally certified teachers implied that field experiences, through pre-service programs and working as a substitute teacher or teacher aide, were invaluable. Further, the opportunity for immediate application of learning was considered advantageous (Nakai & Turley, 2003). Another recent study compared the challenges identified by beginning teachers from traditional and alternatively certified teachers such as classroom management, pedagogy, and instructional skills (Wayman, Foster, Mantle-Bromley, & Wilson, 2003). The findings of Wayman et al. (2003) indicated that traditionally trained general education teachers felt better pedagogically prepared than their alternatively certified counterparts based on survey responses. The beliefs on pedagogical preparedness were echoed in a study by traditionally prepared career and technical education teachers (Ruhland & Bremer, 2003). One interesting conclusion was that both traditionally and alternatively certified teachers rated positive teaching experience, sense of accomplishment, and positive interactions with students as important in decisions to remain in the field (Ruhland & Bremer, 2003). These findings are consistent with those of Zabel and Zabel (2001), who indicated that degree status and certification were often linked to personal attributes or abilities to withstand job-related stresses.

Summary

The literature shows a persisting need for a committed supply of highly qualified, highly competent, and highly efficacious teachers, particularly in special education. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002) mandates that every teacher be highly qualified by the close of the 2005-2006 school year. However, the limited conceptualization provided will ensure that teachers are highly certified, but may still not be highly qualified. The touted purpose of this legislation is to close the achievement gap and make certain that all students are achieving at high levels (NCLB, 2002). However, the means by which many newly certified teachers are prepared has come into question. If the professionals who come into schools have limited preparation or pedagogical knowledge, they may further impede student learning. The literature has revealed that preparation does matter and that there are specific experiences and abilities that will significantly improve teacher effectiveness, success, and persistence in the field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; NCTAF, 2003). Subject-area competence, pedagogical skill, and ongoing supervised field experiences are pivotal to mastery learning and increased efficacy (Hoy, 2000).

Researchers have indicated a vested interest in examining the characteristics and experiences of pre-service and in-service special educators (McKlesky & Ross, 2004; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). The present study examined the characteristics and experiences of teachers in the final internship phase of the MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities at a Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast. More specifically, the researcher hoped to

gain insight into who the interns are as students in an accelerated initial teacher preparation program and as teachers of students with special needs. Research in special education primarily has involved mono-method studies of instructional strategies (McKlesky & Ross, 2004). Additionally, this study is one of the few that reports on teacher efficacy and also has actual observation data for complementarity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). It is hoped that the findings from this study will provide useful information to teacher educators and researchers, school district personnel, and educational policymakers that will ultimately improve educational outcomes for students with special needs and from diverse backgrounds.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

It is hoped that this study will begin to fill a gap in the extant literature by providing empirical findings regarding the characteristics and preparation experiences of highly qualified special educators who have entered the field through non-traditional means. This study was intended to examine the characteristics of teachers in the final internship phase of a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in Varying Exceptionalities at a Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast.

Additionally, the researcher hoped to provide data that would inform policy and practice on a federal level, particularly in reference to the mandates for teacher quality in NCLB (2002) and IDEA (2004). Further, Title II of the Higher Education Act (1998) outlines standards for preparing effective teachers and administrators and includes initiatives to support such efforts. The findings from this study have implications for alignment of these standards with the types of experiences constructed for educators through University preparation and other forms of professional development. Moreover, the Department of Special Education at this particular institution is committed to research that will improve outcomes for students with disabilities and those who are placed at-risk for

school failure, the very students the aforementioned federal legislations purport to help (Special Education webpage, 2005). This department also fosters a collegial and respectful environment for preparing practitioners and researchers at the undergraduate, Master's, and doctoral levels. To that end, this study supported the mission, goals, and values espoused by this academic unit by studying one facet of its preparation program through a sample of the reflective practitioners it trains.

Research Questions

As a result of the noted federal and local objectives, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, undergraduate degree, why special education was chosen, teacher performance competencies, teaching assignment by exceptionality) of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?
2. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to the seven midrange functions identified by Haberman (1995, 2004): persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal vs. professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility?
3. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in

Varying Exceptionalities with respect to teacher efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management?

4. How effective is the classroom practice of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?
5. What do select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities perceive as attributing to their professional successes and/or challenges?

Participants

This mixed-method case study focused on the characteristics of teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching program, who were completing their final internships in a program in Varying Exceptionalities at a large Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast. During the fall 2005 semester, there were approximately 25 students, both male and female, from diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds, age ranges, and educational backgrounds completing the final internship for the program. In addition, all of these teachers had completed Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview protocols on file in the academic department. Of the targeted population, twelve agreed to participate. However, the sample was reduced to the six teachers teaching within one school district to further bound the case (Merriam, 1988).

This particular MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities provides extensive coursework and other types of experiences leading to certification in Varying Exceptionalities and Endorsement in English to Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL). The 48-hour program (see Table 1) is designed for employed out-of-field teachers seeking initial professional educator certification, but teachers with undergraduate degrees in elementary and secondary education also are admitted and they follow a slightly modified curriculum (Special Education webpage, 2005). Ideal candidates have a minimum 3.0 GPA in their last 60 hours of coursework in their undergraduate program or a score of at least at least 1000 on the GRE. Also, admitted students must be employed in a special education position by the second semester of the program. Students are admitted annually in the summer term and are enrolled in a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours each semester. Their coursework includes three core courses on educating students with disabilities, two reading methods courses, a math methods course, a psychological foundations course, an educational measurement course, 3 ESOL courses, and a final internship and seminar.

Table 1

Course Sequence for Students in an MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities

Summer I	Fall I	Spring I	Summer II	Fall II
EEX 6051 Creating Positive Learning Environments (6 hrs)	EEX 6225 Developing Individualized Education Programs for Students with Disabilities (6 hrs)	EEX 6253 Implementing and Evaluating Programs for Students with Disabilities (6 hrs)	EDF 6211 Psychological Foundations (3 hrs)	EEX 6947 Internship and Classroom Research (6 hrs)
RED 6510 Reading Process in the Elementary School (3 hrs)	MAE 6117 Math Methods	FLE 5430 ESOL I: Theory and Practice of Teaching English Language (3 hrs)	EDF 6432 Foundations of Measurement (3 hrs)	FLE 5432 ESOL III: Language Principles, Acquisition, and Assessment for Teaching English Language Learners (3 hrs)
			RED 6544 Remediation of Comprehension Problems (3 hrs)	
			FLE 5432 ESOL II: Second Language Acquisition and Literacy in Children and Adolescents (3 hrs)	

Selection of Participants

This study employed a concurrent and identical sampling scheme to recruit participants (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2004). The sampling scheme was concurrent because the sample for both the quantitative and qualitative phases were selected at the same time and identical because the participants were the same for both the quantitative and qualitative phases. Teachers completing their final internships in an MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities at a large Research I/Research Extensive university in the Southeast were solicited for

participation in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study. The sample included six students who met the aforementioned criteria and completed the Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview prior to entering the program.

Quantitative Instruments

Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview (HUTSI)

The HUTSI, often referred to as the Star Teacher Interview, was selected because of its reported widespread use in teacher training programs and school districts across the country (Haberman Educational Foundation webpage, 2003). The domains identified by Dr. Martin Haberman (1995) are geared toward identifying teachers who will not only enter the teaching field, but also will have success and remain in classes considered challenging to ensure success for students described as at-risk for school failure.

This instrument was developed and refined by Haberman (1995) to identify teachers who will remain in the field and be effective teachers of students living in poverty and those placed at-risk for school failure. This structured interview protocol contains 14 items based on his research that assess beliefs on seven mid-range functions (i.e., persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal vs. professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility). Responses are rated from 0 to 3 yielding the following overall ratings: 40 to 45, Star; 30 to 39, High; 15 to 29, High Average; and 1 to 14, Low Average. Haberman (1995) noted that if the instrument was administered correctly with appropriate probing, participants' should have a minimum rating of 1.

According to the developer, the interviewer is score-validated by initial entry responses compared to ratings on teacher performance evaluations (Haberman, 1995). In addition, there have been numerous dissertations studying the HUTSI as well as a number of published research articles regarding the use and evaluation of this instrument (Baskin, Ross, & Smith, 1996; Haberman, 1995; Klussman, 2004); some of which will be discussed here. Upon further exploration of its use, the HUTSI has received mixed reviews. For example, Klussman (2004) found that students taught by high scorers on the HUTSI performed better than their counterparts on reading and math scores of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (Texas Education Agency, 2005); yet Klussman's (2004) overriding finding was that student performance was not significantly dependent on the method of teacher selection. On the other hand, it was noted that the HUTSI process should not be dismissed as it "offers benefits that go beyond quantifiable measures of student achievement and adhere to pedagogic principles related to how students learn" (Klussman, 2004, abstract). In another example, Baskin, Ross, and Smith (1996) examined the HUTSI and found that it did not indicate high predictive validity. However, Baskin et al. (1996) did note that such interview procedures are most effective at identifying attitudes and predispositions, which are included in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE) professional standards (NCATE, 2002). Hence, the various aspects of teacher effectiveness are best measured by multiple data sources (Baskin, et al., 1996) as is the case in the present study. This instrument was used by the MAT program staff as a part of the initial interview process.

Thus, HUTSI data included in this study was from a secondary data source and provided useful information on the participants' thinking prior to beginning the program.

Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale

The Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001, see Appendix B) was identified by the researcher as an appropriate measure of efficacy because its developers asserted that it was based on existing research and widely used measures developed in this area including Rotter's (1966) social learning theory, Bandura's (1993) self-efficacy theory, and the work of Ashton and Webb (1986), and Gibson and Dembo (1984). The influence of Bandura's (1997) and Gibson and Dembo's (1984) theoretical frameworks are apparent in this measure. However, it must be acknowledged that several of these foundations and subsequent measures are criticized for their validity, primarily due to conceptual and theoretical inconsistencies (Dellinger, 2005). The developers affirmed that care was taken in their design to improve upon existing measures while ensuring inter-correlation (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The TSES is available in long and short form, using Likert-type scales to assess efficacy across three dimensions: instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom management. The researcher used the long form in this study because the items included could provide more information relevant to the research questions addressed. Further, participant responses on this scale informed the development of the questions for the focus group interview.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) indicated that this measure provided more useful information when compared to the two Rand items related to teacher efficacy (Armor et al., 1976) and the Gibson and Dembo (1984) scales by assessing a broader range of teaching tasks. The developers noted that this self-report instrument has demonstrated reasonable validity and score reliability (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) examined the TSES, also called the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale, in three separate studies during development. During the final study, the developers performed factor analyses for the three teacher efficacy subscales (instruction, management, and engagement) yielding score reliability of .94 for the long form and .90 for the short form (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Additionally, construct-related validity was determined on both forms by assessing the correlation of this measure with other instruments that measure efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), the long form of the TSES was positively correlated with Rand items (Armor et al., 1976) ($r = .16$, $p < .01$).

Adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System

The adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System (see Appendix C) was selected for this study to add another layer of information in understanding teacher effectiveness. The researcher went through the video training modules provided by the developer and received additional training from a researcher in the academic unit who underwent formal training in the use and rating of the

system. The adapted Pathwise is a structured classroom observation system originally developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS, 2005), one of the nation's leading test developers. The system is designed to be a flexible, constructivist, and active diagnostic tool useful for professional development. The Pathwise offers a common definition and means of discussing teaching and professional practice based on empirical research categorized in four domains: (a) Organizing content knowledge for student learning, (b) creating an environment for student learning, (c) teaching for student learning, and (d) teacher professionalism (ETS, 2005). As noted by Good and Brophy (1994), a teacher's ability to describe their behavior in the classroom heightens their awareness and hopefully make informed decisions about how to improve their practice. In this way, the Pathwise is intended to guide professional development by examining instructional planning, formative classroom observation, a class profile, and semi-structured pre-and post-observation interviews. Research conducted using this system in a control-treatment designed study yielded statistically significant differences at or above the .05 level in classroom performance based on 11 of the 19 areas addressed (Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002). The academic unit had previously adapted the observation system for its own use and the adapted forms were used in this study.

Qualitative Instruments

Semi-Structured Interviews

The mentor teachers paired with the interns were interviewed as a follow-up to the Adapted Pathwise Observations. Even though the observations are

thorough and offer prolonged engagement (Danielson, 1996), the researcher conducted interviews as a means of triangulating the data from the observations. The interviews were semi-structured and the questions were aligned with the domains of the Adapted Pathwise Observation (Creswell, 1998; see Appendix D).

Focus Group Interview

Additional data was collected in a focus group interview, with the desired number of six participants in the group to address research question number five (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The focus group questions were also based on participants' responses from the HUTSI, TSES, and the adapted Pathwise classroom observations (see Appendix E).

Krueger and Casey (2000) suggest a maximum of five guiding questions to garner information on a given topic. As suggested by Krueger and Casey (2000), the researcher facilitated the focus group with the assistance of another doctoral student who took notes, and the session lasted approximately 90 minutes. Both the facilitator and the assistant were trained in focus group research methodology. In addition, individual member checks were conducted as a necessary form of verification. The focus group interview was tape-recorded for transcription and analysis.

Ethical Considerations

As an educational researcher, my intent is to do no harm and to make every attempt to leave the participant site better for my having been there. This study was approved by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as

by the Director of Assessment, Accountability, and Supervision of the school district in which the participants were employed prior to any contact with potential participants. Through the informed consent documents, all participants were provided with information about the researcher, the purpose of the study, and why their participation was being solicited. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participant information was kept in confidence. All study materials were kept in the researcher's locked file cabinet and password-protected computer.

Procedures

The researcher was the primary data collector for this study. The researcher is trained in research methods, having completed two graduate-level statistics courses, a mixed-methods research design course, and a course exploring philosophies of inquiry, and focus group research methods. A doctoral student with similar training was enlisted to assist with the focus group data analysis.

The quantitative and qualitative data for this study was collected using concurrent triangulation design (see figure 2; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). This design is commonly used when different methods are employed to corroborate or strengthen findings within a single study (Creswell et al., 2003). For example, in one study on speech language pathologists' professional efficacy beliefs a researcher administered a survey and later conducted interviews with a sub-sample (Harris, 2005). In this study, the researcher collected all data within the internship semester and the concurrent

design allowed for a shorter data collection period (Creswell, et al., 2003).

Despite the small sample size, the qualitative and quantitative components held equal priority. The findings from both components were integrated during interpretation and analysis.

Timeline for Data Collection

Table 2

Data Collection Timeline

September	October	November	December
-Approval from dissertation committee; school district	-Approval from university IRB -TSES -Compile existing data (i.e., demographics, HUTSI)	-Observations -Mentor teacher interviews	-Observations -Mentor teacher interviews -Focus group

Once the study was approved by the dissertation committee and Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher contacted potential participants and obtained informed consent from the participants. The researcher collected all data during the fall 2005 semester. The teachers who participated in the study were completing their supervised final internships, participating in a classroom action research course, and a course on Language Acquisitions, Principles, and Assessment. The TSES was administered during one of the class meetings of the action research course. Also, once consent was obtained, existing participant data was compiled.

The next phase of data collection was the completion of the adapted Pathwise Classroom observations. The observations included a pre-observation

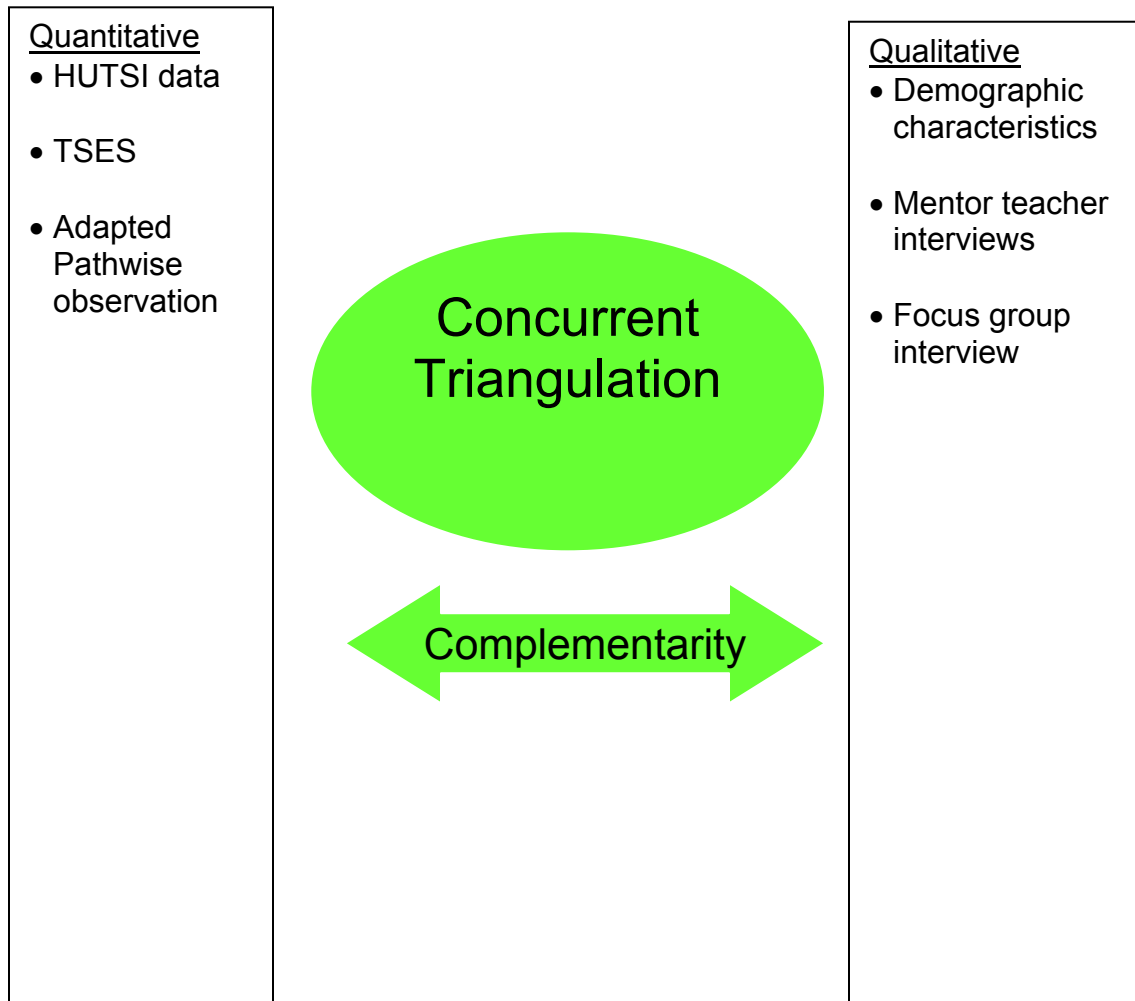
interview, an instructional profile/lesson plan review, classroom profile, the formative observation, and the post-observation interview. Due to time constraints, five of the six participants preferred to complete the pre-observation interview and profiles independently as a questionnaire. Also, two of the six post-observation interviews were conducted by phone.

After all of the observations were completed, the researcher contacted the teachers' assigned mentors. The mentor teachers all agreed to be interviewed by the researcher. Three of the six mentors were interviewed face-to-face and three were interviewed by phone. The researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix D) based on the Pathwise domains in order to triangulate the data collected using the adapted Pathwise.

Finally, a focus group interview was conducted with all participants. The researcher negotiated with the action research course instructor to have the participants excused during one of the last class sessions to respect the participants' time. The focus group interview included questions directly related to the qualitative research questions and others stemming from other data collected (see Appendix E).

Figure 2

Mixed-Method Case Study Design



Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method case study design to examine the characteristics of teachers enrolled in an MAT program who were completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities (Creswell, 1998). According to Stake (1995), the three core elements of case study research are description, issue, and interpretation in an attempt to find out the particulars of a case and not to generalize findings. More specifically, this was a collective case study seeking to gain an understanding of the characteristics of six teachers who chose the same MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities to become certified to teach special education (Stake, 1995). Similarly, Merriam (1988) described the case study as particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive. Further, she offered this method as most appropriate when a bounded system, such as teachers in an MAT program all employed by the same school district, are the focus of study. In this case study, the quantitative and qualitative components held equal priority.

Quantitative Design

The quantitative component of this study was framed in the post-positivist paradigm (Philips, 2004). This paradigm seeks objective answers, often in the form of a questionnaire. This phase of the study involved a descriptive research design with descriptive statistical analysis on participant responses on the HUTSI (Haberman, 1995), TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001), and ratings on the Adapted Pathwise observation system. Participant information was kept in confidence.

Qualitative Design

The qualitative component of the study followed the constructivist paradigm (Lincoln, 2004). This paradigm asserts that meaning is constructed by individuals and groups. This component of the study also followed the tenets of phenomenology with a case perspective, allowing the variables to interact to yield synergistic findings on the essence of the experience (Creswell, 1998). The participants' mentor teachers were interviewed as a follow-up to the adapted Pathwise observations. In addition, participants were engaged in a focus group interview. Again, confidentiality was maintained.

Mixed-Methods Design

While many paradigms provide support for mixed-methods research, the researcher held the pragmatist perspective, believing that mixed-methods research involves employing the most appropriate methods to answer the research questions posed (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The mixed-methods design was QUAN+QUAL concurrent triangulation (see Figure 2; Creswell et al., 2003). The quantitative and qualitative components of the study were interspersed as indicated in the timeline of data collection (see Table 2). The data analysis was exploratory in nature, not seeking to confirm any hypotheses, but to better understand a sample of teachers who chose an MAT program as their route to becoming highly qualified (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003).

Data Analysis

Table 3 provides a pictorial display of how the research questions aligned with the instruments used to collect the data and the analysis procedures used for analysis for this study. The data collected for this case study was analyzed both within and cross case (Stake, 1995).

Table 3

Alignment of Research Questions With Instruments and Analysis Procedures

Research Questions	Instruments/Procedures
1. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, undergraduate degree, why special education was chosen, teacher performance competencies, teaching assignment by exceptionality) of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?	Pre-existing data Qualitative description
2. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to the seven midrange functions identified by Haberman (1995, 2004): persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal vs. professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility?	Pre-existing HUTSI data Descriptive statistics
3. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to teacher efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management?	TSES Calculation of frequencies/percentage of responses Descriptive statistics
4. How effective is the classroom practice of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?	Adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System Descriptive statistics Semi-structured interviews with mentor teachers Qualitative analysis of respondents' comments and alignment with Pathwise results
5. What do select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities perceive as attributing to their professional successes and/or challenges?	Focus group interview Qualitative analysis of respondents' comments

Quantitative Analysis

The researcher obtained descriptive statistics including the mean, range, and standard deviation of ratings from the existing demographic data and the responses on the TSES, HUTSI, and adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System. Version 13.0 of SPSS (2005) was used to analyze the quantitative data because it enables users to enter and analyze data quickly with high-quality output in a variety of formats. In order to provide data in a user friendly and meaningful way tables and graphs were constructed.

Qualitative Analysis

Semi-Structured Interviews. The interviews with the mentor teachers were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The responses of the mentor teachers were triangulated with the observation data the researcher collected (Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

Focus group interview. The focus group interview was audio taped and transcribed using Dragon Naturally Speaking, version 8 speech recognition software (Nuance, 2005). The data were analyzed using NVivo software (QSR International, 2005). Themes and categories were developed by the researcher and an independent coder through multiple iterations (Constas, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The coders met to discuss their coding and to resolve any discrepancies before developing the final themes and meta-themes (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). The researcher then solicited participant feedback on codes prior to summarizing the findings.

Mixed-Methods Analysis

The researcher followed selected stages of the mixed-methods data analyses process outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003). For the first stage, data reduction, the quantitative component yielded descriptive statistics and the qualitative component involved exploratory themes. The second stage, data display, involved reducing the quantitative data into concise tables and the qualitative data was organized using NVivo software. The third stage, data integration, involved compiling both the quantitative and qualitative data into case study format allowing the researcher to make within-case and cross-case interpretations.

Legitimation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The researcher understands the need for legitimation of quantitative and qualitative data and will therefore reiterate what precautions were taken to improve the soundness of the study (Maxwell, 1996). Most importantly, the researcher disclosed bias and personal interest in the subject studied because she was the primary data collector, analyst, and interpreter of findings. The researcher had prolonged engagement with the participants' existing data through observations and interviews. In addition, audit trails were left through all raw data including field notes, audio tapes, and transcripts (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, in press). Participants were solicited for member checks and a colleague assisted in verifying themes.

Because this study was exploratory and descriptive in nature, the researcher did not employ any methods involving confirmatory analysis. This

study was designed to examine the characteristics of a selection of teachers who chose an MAT program to fulfill the highly qualified teacher mandate. Through this study, insight was gained on who chooses to enroll in a program such as this, how efficacious they feel, the effectiveness of their practice, and their perceived success and challenges.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Overview

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics of teachers matriculating through a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in special education. This program is unique in that it addresses the need for teachers to be prepared with content and pedagogical knowledge at an accelerated pace and targets second-career professionals. Participants in this study, referred to under pseudonyms, were in-service teachers completing their final internships (summary data provided in Table 4) in elementary and middle schools within one large school district in the Southeast, which was referred to using the pseudonym Riverton School District (RSD). These interns were supervised by Professional Practice Partners (PPP), also referred to as mentor teachers. PPPs are responsible for providing support on integrated curricular projects, and providing formative and summative evaluations of teaching performance. The Department of Special Education employs the Professional Development School (PDS) model and trains the PPPs to supervise and mentor interns effectively at the undergraduate and graduate levels (summary data provided in Table 5).

This study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods. The concurrent triangulation design allowed for the corroboration of findings and integration of the results (Creswell et al., 2003). The findings were presented in relation to each research question. In addition, the researcher concluded this chapter with a self-reflection.

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, undergraduate degree, why special education was chosen, teacher performance competencies, teaching assignment by exceptionality) of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?
2. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to the seven midrange functions identified by Haberman (1995, 2004): persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal versus professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility?
3. What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to levels of teacher efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management?

4. How effective is the classroom practice of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?
5. What do select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities perceive as attributing to their professional successes and/or challenges?

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, undergraduate degree, teacher performance competencies, teaching assignment by exceptionality) of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?

The first research question involved describing the demographic characteristics of the case study participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend the researcher provided rich, thick descriptions of each participant.

April. April is a White female in her early 30's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Spanish with a 2.63 Grade Point Average (GPA). April had 3 years of experience as a Spanish teacher prior to entering the MAT program. April revealed the following, "I have found the world's greatest feeling is standing at my door as one of my TMH classes walks by and says 'hola' and gives me a big hug to go with it."

April expressed the reasons why she chose to pursue the MAT degree in her letter of application. She explained that she wanted to inspire children by

teaching them how to overcome diversity, an issue she faced firsthand as a non-native Spanish speaker in her undergraduate program. Also, she worked at a local hospital for children as a patient caregiver for more than three years while completing her undergraduate degree. In addition, as a middle school Spanish language teacher, she included students with special needs in her classes. April worked with students identified as having emotional/ behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and physical impairments.

During the semester of her internship, April was employed at Guido Middle School, a Title I school in a rural area of the Riverton School District. Guido has a student population of approximately 1,000 students. Because the school is in its inaugural year, no data have been collected for the State Report Card or for the Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) indicated in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (NCLB, 2002).

April's class was a sixth- through eighth- grade resource room setting for students with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD) and specific learning disabilities (SLD). There were approximately 15 students in each of her four class periods. April's PPP was a White female with a Master's degree in special education and 7 years of special education teaching experience. She also has more than 7 years of experience as a social worker in another state. April and her PPP were employed at the same school at the time the internship was completed.

April received high ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. The final evaluation measures the intern's level of performance on the

State's Accomplished Practices, which is comprised of the following 12 components: Assessment, Communication, Continuous Improvement, Critical and Creative Thinking, Diversity, Ethics and Professionalism, Human Development and Learning, Knowledge and Presentation of Subject Matter, Learning Environment, Planning, Role of the Teacher, and Technology (College of Education, 2005). The interns are rated from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest. A 5 indicates that the intern demonstrated this Accomplished Practice at a level exceeding that expected of a beginning teacher. A 4 indicates that the intern proficiently demonstrates this Accomplished Practice at a level expected of a beginning teacher. A 3 indicates that the intern demonstrates the behavior at a level expected of a beginning teacher with some inconsistencies over time. A 2 indicates that the intern demonstrates the Practice inconsistently at a level less than expected of a beginning teacher and improvement is needed. Finally, a 1 indicates that the intern is unsuccessful in demonstrating the Accomplished Practice. April received all 5's except one rating of 4 in one of the Learning Environment indicators, which was calculated as a 4.99 final evaluation GPA.

Candice. Candice is a White female in her mid 40's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Biblical Languages with a 3.94 GPA. Candice worked as a one-on-one aide for a high school student with autism and Down Syndrome after living as a missionary in another country where she taught a Bible class and an ESOL class. Candice shared that, "As a one-on-one aide for a student who has autism and Down Syndrome, the world of ESE was opened up to me."

According to Candice's letter of application, she began her official career in education after returning from mission work and decided that she would enjoy teaching in the public school. Because she did not have an academic background she began working as a paraprofessional at a high school in the Riverton School District. Candice enjoyed helping people and decided that special education was the field for her and the MAT program would provide the preparation she needed.

During the semester of her internship, Candice was employed at Buckles Middle School, a Title I school located just outside of the inner city. Buckles has a student population of approximately 900 students. Based on the State Report Card for 2005, this school earned a "C" and did not make Adequate Yearly Progress for NCLB, with 77% of the AYP criteria satisfied. In reading, it was determined that African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students in the school need to make improvements. In math, students with disabilities, African American students, and economically disadvantaged students were not demonstrating sufficient achievement. However, in writing, all students met the criteria.

Candice's class was a self-contained class for students in the sixth-through eighth-grade identified as severely and profoundly mentally handicapped (SPMH). Additionally, 4 of the 11 students in her class had other physical impairments, and the majority of the students have limited communication abilities. Candice works with a co-teacher, two paraprofessionals, and a nurse assigned to one of the students. Candice's PPP was a White female with a

Master's degree in special education and 30 years of experience in special education in RSD. Candice's PPP was employed at a nearby elementary school at the time of her final internship.

Candice received high ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. She received twenty-one 5's and forty ratings of 4 across the Practice indicators. In Ethics and Professionalism and Human Development and Learning, Candice received ratings of all 5's. In Learning Environment, she received three ratings of 5 and the remaining were ratings of 4. In Communication, she received two ratings of 5 and the remaining were ratings of 4. In Continuous Improvement, Diversity, Planning, Role of the Teacher, and Technology, Candice received one rating of 5 and the remaining were ratings of 4. Finally, in the domains of Critical and Creative Thinking and Knowledge and Presentation of Subject Matter, she received ratings of all 4's. Candice's final evaluation GPA was calculated to be 4.34.

Cara. Cara is a White female in her late 20's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders with a 2.84 GPA. After completing her degree program, she worked at a medical center for children assisting speech pathologists with therapy and instructional activities. Cara also had prior experience teaching pre-school aged children. Cara explained that, "Going through such a difficult journey with my own family has strengthened the unique qualities needed to work in the field of special education."

In her letter of application, Cara described her reasons for pursuing a career and a Master's degree in special education as personal and professional. Cara's personal experiences with children with disabilities stemmed from years of advocating for a younger Deaf sibling. In addition to her previous work experience, Cara volunteered at a state school for the Deaf. All of her experiences led her to pursue a Master's degree and career in special education.

During the semester of her internship, Cara was employed at Eagle's Ranch Elementary School, located in the heart of an affluent, suburban community. Eagle's Ranch has a student population of approximately 600 students. Based on the State Report Card for 2005, this school earned an "A" and made Adequate Yearly Progress for NCLB.

Cara's class was an Early Exceptional Learning Program (EELP) class. The students in her class were receiving services for language and developmental delays. There were 14 students ranging in age from 3-5 years old. Cara's PPP was a White female with a Bachelor's degree in regular education with an emphasis in Specific Learning Disabilities. She taught for twenty-seven years, two years as a Kindergarten teacher, and 25 years as an SLD teacher at one elementary school in RSD. Cara's PPP was employed at a nearby elementary school at the time of her final internship.

Cara received average ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. She received four ratings of 5, nine ratings of 4, and 46 ratings of 3 across all Practice indicators. Cara received ratings of all 3's in Assessment, Communication, Critical and Creative Thinking, Knowledge and

Presentation of Subject Matter, Learning Environment, and Technology. In Continuous Improvement, she received one rating of 5, one rating of 4, and two ratings of 3. In Diversity, she received three ratings of 3 and one rating of 4. In Ethics and Professionalism, Cara received two ratings each of 5, 4, and 3. In Human Development and Learning, she received two ratings of 4 and two ratings of 3. In Planning, she received five ratings of e and one rating of 4. Finally, in the Role of the Teacher, she received one rating of 5 and two ratings of 4. Cara's calculated final evaluation GPA was 3.33.

Marlene. Marlene is a White female in her early 40's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Criminology with a 3.5 GPA. Marlene had no teaching experience prior to entering the MAT program. She expressed her belief that, "all children need a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment regardless of their disabilities."

Marlene shared the very personal reason why she chose to pursue the MAT degree in her letter of application. She is the parent of a child with special needs and is aware of the call for competent teachers in special education. Marlene felt that the MAT program would provide her with the skills to enter a classroom with confidence in her ability to plan and deliver lessons to stimulate learning.

During the semester of her internship, Marlene was employed at Lakeside Elementary School, a Title I school in an urban area of the Riverton School District. Lakeside has a student population of approximately 600 students. This school earned a "D" grade on the State Report Card and did not make

Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) indicated in NCLB, with 63% of the criteria satisfied. In reading, it was determined that students with disabilities and African American students in the school need to make improvements. In math, African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and with Limited English Proficiency are lacking the basic skills expected by grade level. In writing, the school was identified as not having met the federal criteria for writing proficiency.

Marlene's class was a self-contained setting for first- through third-grade students identified as having severe emotional disturbances (SED). There were five students in her class and she worked with one paraprofessional. Marlene's PPP was a White female with a Bachelor's degree in special education and seven years of special education teaching experience. Marlene and her PPP were employed at the same school at the time the internship was completed.

Marlene received high ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. She received ratings of all 5's and one 4 across Practice indicators. She received her only rating of 4 in the Learning Environment domain. Marlene's calculated final evaluation GPA was 4.99.

Rachel. Rachel is a White female in her early 30's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Speech Pathology with a 3.31 GPA. After completing her Bachelor's degree, she worked as a paraprofessional in an elementary class for students with autism. Rachel wrote in her letter of application that, "I look forward to the rewards of working with these students and unlocking their potential."

In her initial statement, Rachel acknowledged the frustrations and rewards of working with students with special needs, which influenced her decision to pursue a Master's degree in special education and a career in teaching children with autism. Additionally, she noted the demand for qualified professionals in the field and lauded her peers and mentors for their work and for encouraging her to enter the MAT program.

During the semester of her internship, Rachel was employed as a teacher at Pierre Elementary School, a Title I school, which is also the school where she worked as a paraprofessional. Pierre is a Title I school in an urban area of the Riverton School District. Pierre has a student population of approximately 1,000 students. This school earned a "B" grade on the State Report Card and made Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) for NCLB.

Rachel's class was a self-contained setting for Kindergarten through first-grade students with autism. There were nine students in her class and she worked with one paraprofessional. Rachel's PPP was a White female with a Bachelor's degree in Hearing Impaired and Elementary Education and close to 20 years of special education teaching experience. She also worked as an Administrative Resource Teacher in autism in another state. Rachel and her PPP were employed at the same school at the time the internship was completed.

Rachel received high ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. In fact, Rachel received all 5's in across all indicators with a calculated final evaluation GPA of 5.0.

Roslyn. Roslyn is a Latina in her early 50's. She completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Bilingual Education with a 2.86 GPA. Roslyn had 3 years of experience as a special education teacher prior to entering the MAT program. She stated from her experience as a special educator that, "It is no doubt a challenging job, but with many rewards."

Roslyn explained in her letter of application that she has always had a desire to work with students with special needs. Roslyn decided to pursue the MAT to gain knowledge and expertise in behavior and behavior management and explore the effects of environmental and cultural factors on the increasing numbers of students in special education. She felt that as a result she would be better able to provide the tools her students needed to be successful in school and the community.

During the semester of her internship, Roslyn was employed at Childs Middle Magnet School, a Mathematics, Science, and Technology magnet school located in the inner city. Childs has a student population of approximately 700 students. This school earned a "B" grade on the State Report Card and made Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) for NCLB.

Roslyn teaches students identified with E/BD and SLD in the sixth-through eighth-grade in the resource room setting, as well as in the general education setting as a facilitative teacher. There are approximately 15 students with disabilities in each of her seven class periods. Roslyn's PPP was a White female with a Master's degree in special education and 18 years of special

education teaching experience. Roslyn's PPP was employed at a nearby middle school at the time the internship was completed.

Roslyn received high ratings on her final evaluation, which was completed by her PPP. She received ratings of 5 in all Practice Indicators with a calculated final evaluation GPA of 5.0.

Case Summary

The participants in this study were all females and all White with the exception of one Latina. In age they ranged from their early twenties to early fifties. All of the participants were teaching in a different type of setting (i.e., self-contained, resource, and inclusion facilitation) and with students who had different disabilities, except two teachers who both taught students with emotional and behavioral disorders at the middle school level. All of the teachers had different academic backgrounds.

When exploring why the teachers had chosen special education, two of the six teachers indicated that they chose special education because they had immediate relatives with disabilities. Similarly, two of the six teachers worked with children with disabilities in some capacity prior to accepting a special education position. Finally, two of the participants discussed having had a desire to teach students with special needs.

Based on the final evaluations from the final internship, the teachers ratings were a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5. Based on the rubric, all of the teachers were at least performing in all competencies at a level expected of a beginning teacher with some consistency. Further, all of the teachers received at

least one rating of 5, which indicates that in some areas all of the teachers were performing at a level that exceeded what was expected of a beginning teacher. A two-variable case-ordered matrix (see Table 6) displays teachers' demographic characteristics.

Table 4

Summary of Teacher Characteristics

Case	Age	Race	Relative With Disability	Degree	UGPA	Prior Experience	Disability Area	Grade Level	School Grade	Title I
April	30's	W	No	Spanish	2.63	Yes	LD/BD	MS	NR	Yes
Candice	40's	W	No	Biblical Languages	3.94	Yes	SPMH	MS	C	Yes
Cara	20's	W	Yes	Communication Science Disorders	2.84	No	EELP	ES	A	No
Marlene	40's	W	Yes	Criminology	3.5	No	SED	ES	D	Yes
Rachel	30's	W	No	Speech Pathology	3.31	Yes	Autism	ES	B	Yes
Roslyn	50's	H	No	Sociology/Bilingual Education	2.86	Yes	LD/BD	MS	D	No

Table 5

Summary of PPP Characteristics

	Race	Gender	Years of Experience	Highest Degree Earned
April's PPP	W	F	7	Master's
Candice's PPP	W	F	30	Master's
Cara's PPP	W	F	27	Bachelor's
Marlene's PPP	W	F	7	Bachelor's
Rachel's PPP	W	F	19	Bachelor's
Roslyn's PPP	W	F	18	Master's

Table 6

Two-Variable Case-Ordered Matrix of Teacher Final Evaluation GPA and UGPA

Case	Final Evaluation GPA	UGPA	Age	Race	Prior Experience	Grade level of school	Relative with Disability	PPP Race	PPP Gender	PPP # Years Experience	Highest degree Earned
Rachel	5.0	3.31	30's	W	Yes	ES	No	W	F	19	B
Roslyn	5.0	2.86	50's	H	Yes	MS	No	W	F	18	M
Marlene	4.99	3.5	40's	W	No	ES	Yes	W	F	7	B
April	4.99	2.63	30's	W	Yes	MS	No	W	F	7	M
Candice	4.34	3.94	40's	W	Yes	MS	No	W	F	30	M
Cara	3.33	2.84	20's	W	No	ES	Yes	W	F	27	B

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to the seven midrange functions identified by Haberman (1995, 2004): persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal vs. professional orientation toward teaching, burnout, and fallibility?

The second research question involved analyzing the characteristics of the participants with respect to the seven mid-range functions identified by Haberman (1995). Their ratings on the Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview (HUTSI) were analyzed. The researcher provided within-case analyses for each participant followed by a cross-case analysis of the descriptive statistics yielded from the responses.

Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview (HUTSI)

The Haberman Urban Teacher Selection Interview was developed by Dr. Martin Haberman as a tool for selecting teachers who have attributes linked with success and persistence in metropolitan schools (Haberman, 1995). This ideology is founded on the belief that teachers who will remain in urban schools and have a positive impact on student outcomes share attributes that fit under seven mid-range functions: persistence, response to authority, application of generalizations, approach to at-risk students, personal versus professional orientation to teaching, burnout, and fallibility (Haberman, 1995). According to the developer, the HUTSI has been used to select recent graduates without teacher

preparation for alternative certification (Haberman, 1995; 2004). In this study, the participants were interviewed with the HUTSI as a part of the application process. The data included here were collected and preliminarily scored using +/- on the continuum rating scale by three MAT program administrators, all of whom were trained to conduct the interview. Once the researcher gained access to these data, which included notes on participants' responses, she finalized the ratings using the scoring guide included with the instrument manual.

The first function, persistence, is intended to determine how a candidate will persist in trying to resolve a seemingly unending problem. Also, this function addresses whether a candidate feels that persistent and creative problem-solving is a part of the teacher's role or if they feel it is an unreasonable expectation. The second function, response to authority, is intended to identify how a candidate would pursue an activity with which an administrator may not agree and the manner in which they advocate for themselves and compromise when dealing with authority figures. Also, this function seeks to determine how the candidate feels about her authority and takes responsibility for the change in activity with students. The third function, application of generalizations, asks a candidate to share a principle on teaching or learning in order to see the degree to which a candidate can deal with generalizations. Also, this function speaks to a candidate's ability to apply the principle they have identified with specific teaching behaviors. The fourth function, approach to at-risk students, is intended to find out how a candidate places the responsibility for failure on the child's background rather than as the teacher's and school's responsibility to foster student success.

Candidates also are expected to provide responsive solutions that are teacher and school involved. The fifth function, personal versus professional orientation to teaching, is intended to determine the degree of expectation and need for pupil support. Additionally, the realism of the respondent's expectations is taken into account. The sixth function, burnout, is intended to determine the candidates' ability to recognize the external sources of teacher burnout and their ability to counteract the pressures by seeking support and collaboration to make positive change. The seventh function, fallibility, seeks to determine the candidate's ability and willingness to admit serious mistakes that may affect others and how they would work to improve their practice, even in major ways. Each mid-range function is worth from 1 to 6 points (2 items for each function) except for the application of generalizations which ranges from 1 to 9 points (3 items). Three is the highest rating for all items. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the scores, whereas the normative data were used to classify each student as a Star (40-45), High (30-39), High Average (15-29), and Low Average (1-14).

Within-Case Analysis

April

Persistence. April received ratings of 3 and 2.5 respectively for her responses to both items in this domain. She was able to provide several possible solutions to deal with student behavior. April also reported that she thinks about behavior once or twice a day so it appears that she perceives this to be a significant part of her role as a teacher.

Response to Authority. On this domain, April received ratings of 3 for her responses to both items. April was able to offer appropriate solutions for compromising with an administrator on an activity even when it meant stopping the activity. Further, she did not blame the administrator when notifying students of the change.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and April received a rating of 3 on all of them. For the first item, April shared her general principle on learning that, "It does not matter who you are, you can learn any subject especially a foreign language." On the second and third items, April was able to connect this principle with specific teacher behaviors.

Approach to At-Risk Students. April received scores of 1.5 and 3 for the questions in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of students being placed at-risk suggested that the problem was within the child and family. However, the solutions she provided to ameliorate the at-risk status placed the responsibility on the teacher (e.g., give extra support and understanding).

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, April received scores of 2 and 3 respectively. The first item deals with a teacher's expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. April reported that they could learn from someone they did not love, but they would not get much out of it. For the second item, April's response indicated that she could teach students she did not love because it was her professional responsibility. Also, she shifted the focus from not loving the student to not loving the behavior.

Burnout. April's responses to the two items in this domain were rated as a 2.5 and a 1, respectively. On the first item, she discussed stress, class size and need, student behavior, and content and standardized testing as sources of burnout for teachers. Her solution involved removing herself from the situation rather than seeking support and collaboration to effect change.

Fallibility. On this domain, April received a rating of three for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to working effectively with students and families. Her solutions involved increasing her knowledge on the needs of students with disabilities and collaborating with teachers and administrators to meet individual student needs.

Table 7

April: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	5.5
Response to Authority	6.0
Application of Generalizations	9.0
Approach to At-Risk Students	4.5
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	5.0
Burnout	3.5
Fallibility	6.0
Total	39.5 (High/Star)

Candice

Persistence. Candice received ratings of 2.5 and 3 respectively for her responses to both items in this domain. She was able to provide viable possibilities for managing student behavior. April also reported that she thinks about behavior management every day and every moment; thus, it appears that she perceives this to be one of the most important facets of her role as a teacher.

Response to Authority. On this domain, Candice received ratings of 2.5 and 2 respectively for her responses to the items. Candice was able to offer appropriate solutions for handling the situation and intended to include students in the process of deciding on another activity. When asked about how she would inform students of the change she said she would be upfront, but it was not clear whether she would take full responsibility for the change.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and Candice received a rating of 3 on the first two and a 2 on the third question. For the first question, Candice shared a few general principles on learning. For example, “Everyone learns best when they are happy and comfortable.”

On the second item, Candice was able to connect this principle with specific teacher behaviors. When asked to generalize this belief to a specific method the connection to the principle was less clear.

Approach to At-Risk Students. Candice received scores of 1.5 and 2.5 for the items in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of students being placed at-risk suggested that this problem was owned by the student with regard to home life, disabilities, and peers. However, she suggested shared

responsibility to counter the at-risk status (e.g., teamwork between teachers and parents).

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, Candice received a score of 2 on each. The first item deals with a teacher's expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. Candice reported that it would be difficult for them to learn from a teacher they did not love, but not impossible. For the second item, Candice's response appeared more conflicted. She posited that love was a moral obligation and that a teacher's personal feelings toward a student should not cause differential treatment.

Burnout. Candice's responses to the two items in this domain were both rated as 3s. She believed that burnout was a real possibility for anyone. When asked about the causes, Candice mentioned systemic factors such as lack of administrative support, paperwork, and work-related tasks such as assessments, dealing with student behavior, and parent conferences. For solutions, Candice recommended that administrators and mentor teachers work with teachers and reduction in class size.

Fallibility. On this domain, Candice received a rating of 2.5 for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to working effectively with students and effective teaching practices. Her solutions involved making assignments more appropriate and communicating with parents.

Table 8

Candice: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	5.5
Response to Authority	4.5
Application of Generalizations	8.0
Approach to At-Risk Students	4.0
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	4.0
Burnout	6.0
Fallibility	5.0
Total	37.0 (High)

Cara

Persistence. Cara received ratings of 2 and 3 respectively for her responses to both items in this domain. She was able to provide possible solutions to address behavior problems. Cara also reported that she thinks about correcting students' behaviors constantly; thus, it appears that she perceives this to be a significant part of her role as a teacher.

Response to Authority. On this domain, Cara received ratings of 3 for her responses to both items. Cara was able to offer appropriate solutions for compromising with an administrator on an activity she felt was relevant. Further,

she did not blame the administrator when notifying students of the change. Cara instead offered to find other activities for students to enjoy with their parents.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and Cara received a rating of 3 on the first two items and a 2.5 on the third. For the first item, Cara shared her belief that, “Students go through many challenges and teachers need to help them reach their full potential.”

On the second item, Cara was able to connect this principle with specific teacher behaviors through a variety of teaching models and a student focus. On the third item, she felt that lecturing, the method specified, was not the only way to teach and that was not the only way students can learn.

Approach to At-Risk Students. Cara received scores of 1 and 1.5 for the items in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of students being placed at-risk pointed to factors in the child’s background as the cause (e.g., disabilities, family problems, divorce, drugs, and alcohol). Further, the solutions Cara gave placed little onus on the teacher or school for the child’s outcomes. She did suggest working with parents and teachers to see what could be undertaken to help the student.

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, Cara received a score of 3 on both. The first item deals with a teacher’s expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. Cara reported that they could learn from someone they did not love and that it was the teacher’s role to teach so that students could learn. Similarly, Cara felt

that it was the teacher's responsibility to try to connect with students and to ensure that learning was taking place, regardless of personal feelings.

Burnout. Cara's responses to the two items in this domain were rated as a 1.5 and a 1, respectively. On the first item, she discussed personal challenges, long hours, workload, student issues, and a long teaching career as sources of burnout for teachers. Her solution involved trying to be positive and removing herself from the situation rather than seeking the support and collaboration of colleagues, which suggest feelings of isolation.

Fallibility. On this domain, Cara received a rating of three for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to teaching students effectively within school expectations. The solutions she posed involved seeking out resources.

Table 9

Cara: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	5.0
Response to Authority	6.0
Application of Generalizations	8.5
Approach to At-Risk Students	2.5
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	6.0
Burnout	2.5
Fallibility	6.0
Total	36.5 (High)

Marlene

Persistence. Marlene received ratings of .5 and 3 respectively for her responses to both items in this domain. She was able to provide several possible challenges, but only one solution to deal with conflict. Marlene reported that she thinks about the keeping the classroom in order, teaching on the appropriate level, talking with parents, students' personalities, and paperwork frequently. Marlene added that it is the biggest part of being a teacher and she thinks about it several times a day.

Response to Authority. On this domain, Marlene received ratings of 2 and 3 respectively for her responses on items. Rather than providing convincing

arguments, Marlene chose not to take students off-site, but chose to bring elements from the intended site to the classroom. However, she did not blame the administrator when notifying students of the change and took full responsibility and moved on to an alternative activity.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and Marlene received a rating of 3 on the first and second and a rating of 2.5 on the third. For the first item, Marlene shared her general principle on learning that teachers should teach students how to learn. On the second item, Marlene was able to connect this principle with specific teacher behaviors. When given a specific method, she was able to provide a rationale for its use, but less able to directly connect it to the principle she provided.

Approach to At-Risk Students. Marlene received scores of 1.5 and 2.5 for the items in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of students being placed at-risk rooted the problem within the child and family (e.g., disabilities, family life). However, the solutions she provided to ameliorate the at-risk status included providing resources not present in the home and getting students involved in extracurricular activities.

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, Marlene received scores of 1.5 and 2 respectively. The first item deals with a teacher's expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. Marlene reported that they could learn from someone they did not love, but that respecting and liking a teacher was important. For the second item

that addressed a teacher’s ability to teach a student they did not love, Marlene simply responded yes.

Burnout. Marlene’s responses to the two items in this domain were both rated as a 1.5. On the first item, she discussed going through stages, stress, and personal and professional challenges. Her solution involved removing herself from the situation and finding ways to offset stress rather than addressing systemic issues that may directly impact job satisfaction and retention.

Fallibility. On this domain, Marlene received a rating of three for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to working effectively with students and families (e.g., paperwork, communication with parents). Marlene provided appropriate solutions for resolving these issues.

Table 10

Marlene: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	3.5
Response to Authority	5.0
Application of Generalizations	8.5
Approach to At-Risk Students	4.0
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	3.5
Burnout	3.0
Fallibility	6.0
Total	33.5 (High)

Rachel

Persistence. Rachel received a rating of 3 for both of her responses to the items in this domain. She was able to provide a number of challenges that could arise as well as solutions to deal with each. Rachel reported that she thinks about these challenges, particularly behavior, all of the time. It appears that she sees solving a number of problems to be central to her role as a teacher.

Response to Authority. On this domain, Rachel received ratings of 3 for her responses to both items. Rachel was able to offer appropriate solutions for compromising with an administrator on an activity even when it meant stopping the activity. Rachel did not blame the administrator when notifying students of the change. Instead, she chose to conclude the activity with a discussion and to go on to the next topic.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and Rachel received a rating of 3 on the first two and a 1.5 on the third. For the first question, her general principle on learning, Rachel offered that it takes a whole team (e.g., parents, teacher, paraprofessionals, and therapists) to teach. On the second item, she described how she would involve all members of the team in the teaching of different content. When Rachel was asked to apply her principle to lecturing, she only made a minimal connection to its use.

Approach to At-Risk Students. Rachel received scores of 1.5 and 3 for the items in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of students being placed at-risk suggested that the problem was within the child and family (e.g., home life, undiagnosed disability). However, the solutions she provided to

ameliorate the at-risk status placed the responsibility on the teacher to find what works for each student.

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, Rachel received scores of 2.5 and 3 respectively. The first item deals with a teacher's expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. Rachel reported that they could learn from someone they did not love, but they may not learn a lot. However, she did place the responsibility on teachers for learning. Similarly, Rachel's response to the second item indicated that she could teach students she did not love because it was her professional responsibility.

Burnout. Rachel's responses to the two items in this domain were rated as a 2 and 3, respectively. Responding to the first item, she discussed frustration and behavior problems as potential sources of burnout. Rachel discussed reflecting on her reason for becoming a teacher and seeking support from colleagues.

Fallibility. On this domain, Rachel received a rating of three for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to consistently using appropriate teaching methods and behavior management strategies for students with significant learning and behavior issues. Her solutions involved reflecting and taking the appropriate next steps in each situation.

Table 11

Rachel: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	6.0
Response to Authority	6.0
Application of Generalizations	7.5
Approach to At-Risk Students	4.5
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	5.5
Burnout	5.0
Fallibility	5.5
Total	40.0 (Star)

Roslyn

Persistence. Roslyn received ratings of 3 for both of her responses to the items in this domain. She was able to provide several possible solutions to deal with student behavior. Roslyn also reported that she thinks about behavior daily and it appears that students are “acting out” more frequently. It appears that she perceives behavior management to be a significant part of her role as a teacher.

Response to Authority. On this domain, Roslyn received ratings of 3 and 2.5 respectively. Roslyn was able to offer appropriate solutions for compromising with an administrator on an activity even when it meant stopping the activity. It

was unclear how much responsibility she would take for ending the activity early based on her response that she would follow the rules and work as a team.

Application of Generalizations. This domain included three items, and Roslyn received a rating of 3 on the first two items and a 2.5 on the third. For the first item, Roslyn shared a few guiding principles on teaching and learning including, “All children can learn to high expectations given support.” On the second item, Roslyn was able to connect this principle with specific teacher behaviors, specifically using higher-order thinking questioning techniques. With respect to the third item, high expectations were apparent, but the stance was more authoritative.

Approach to At-Risk Students. Roslyn received scores of 1.5 and 2 for the items in this domain. Her response to the meaning and causes of at-risk suggested that the problem within the child’s family and community. The solutions Roslyn provided to ameliorate the at-risk status placed the responsibility on the family, community, and school.

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching. For the items on this domain, Roslyn received scores of 2 and 2.5 respectively. The first question deals with a teacher’s expectation for student adulation in order for learning to take place. Roslyn reported that they could learn from someone they did not love, a belief that stemmed from her own experience learning from a teacher she did not like. For the second item, Roslyn’s response indicated that she could teach students she did not love because she would have an open heart and would be professional.

Burnout. Roslyn’s responses to the two items in this domain were both rated as 3. On the first item, she identified job-related demands and unrealistic personal demands as sources of burnout for teachers. Her solution involved administrative support in terms of reducing paperwork and numbers of meetings, and working as a team to resolve academic and behavioral issues, as well as personally enjoyable activities.

Fallibility. On this domain, Roslyn received a rating of three for both items. The mistakes she discussed were directly related to working effectively with students and professionalism. Her solutions involved reflection and making changes in behavior and interpersonal relations.

Table 12

Roslyn: Summary of HUTSI Results

Domain	Raw Scores
Persistence	6.0
Response to Authority	5.5
Application of Generalizations	8.5
Approach to At-Risk Students	3.5
Personal vs. Professional Orientation to Teaching	4.5
Burnout	6.0
Fallibility	6.0
Total	40.0 (Star)

Cross-Case Analysis

Persistence

Based on the raw scores on the domain items related to persistence, Rachel and Roslyn rated the highest with scores of 6. They were followed closely by April and Candice with 5.5 and Cara with 5. Marlene scored the lowest with a rating of 3.5. This suggests that Rachel and Roslyn have a realistic expectation of the amount of persistence and problem solving ability required in the role of the teacher. The mean score for this domain was 5.25 with a standard deviation of .94.

Response to Authority

Based on the raw scores on the domain items dealing with response to authority, April, Rachel, and Cara scored the highest with scores of 6. Roslyn and Marlene were close in rating with 5.5 and 5 respectively. Candice scored the lowest on this domain with a 4.5 rating. This suggests that April, Rachel, and Cara are most able to articulate how they would respond to criticism and compromise with an authority figure on an activity they believed was relevant to their students' education. The mean score for this domain was 5.5 with a standard deviation of .63.

Application to Generalizations

April scored the highest when asked to propose and apply a generalization about the teaching and learning process with a rating of 9. Cara, Marlene, and Roslyn also were quite capable of making these connections with scores of 8.5. Candice and Rachel had the lowest scores on this domain with 8

and 7.5 respectively. The mean score for this domain was 8.333 with a standard deviation of .52.

Approach to At-Risk Students

Overall, the participants received the lowest ratings when defining the at-risk child, determining the causes, and proposing solutions. April and Rachel received the highest rating of 4.5 Candice and Marlene each received a rating of 4. Roslyn and Cara received the lowest ratings with 3.5 and 2.5 respectively. The participants primarily placed the cause for a child's at-risk status within the child, family, and community. When proposing solutions, they were able to communicate that it was their professional responsibility to make the curriculum and school more responsive to the students' needs. The mean score for this domain was 3.83 with a standard deviation of .75.

Personal vs. Professional Orientation Toward Teaching

The total raw scores for this domain indicated that Cara had the most realistic expectations with regard to pupil support and fulfillment with a rating of 6. Rachel and April also scored relatively well in this domain with scores of 5.5 and 5 respectively. Roslyn's score of 4.5 and Candice's score of 4 were just above Marlene, who scored the lowest with a 3.5. The mean score for this domain was 4.75 with a standard deviation of .94.

Burnout

The items on this domain are intended to determine the participants' ability to recognize the great physical and emotional demands associated with teaching and the issues at work in large school districts. Even more important is the ability

to recognize the sources of burnout as systemic and not internal and the willingness to seek support networks to effect positive change. On this domain Candice and Roslyn were rated the highest, both receiving a 6, followed closely by Rachel who received a 5. April and Marlene were less able to identify the systemic issues at work and the collaborative efforts necessary to stay in the field. Cara's response was rated the lowest with a 2.5. The mean score for this domain was 4.33 with a standard deviation of 1.54.

Fallibility

When asked to identify mistakes that could be made as a teacher and offer appropriate responses to rectify the issues, the participants all scored relatively well. The responses provided all recognized that significant mistakes might be made and may require the teacher to go to great lengths to correct them. April, Cara, Marlene, and Roslyn all received a rating of 6 for their responses. Rachel and Candice received 5.5 and 5 respectively. The mean score for this domain was 5.75 with a standard deviation of .42.

Overall Findings

Based on the total raw scores, Rachel and Roslyn were considered "Stars" with 40 points. The "Star" rating indicates that these teachers demonstrate "withitness" (Kounin, 1970). According to the developer they are able to implement advice and act on their own plans (Haberman, 1995). They would be expected to do well starting out, even in the most difficult schools and act as change agents. The other participants were all rated as "High", April was not far behind with a 39.5, Candice received a 37.5, Cara received a 36.5, and

Marlene received a 33.5. The “High” rating means that these teachers have great potential as teachers, but may be hesitant (see Figure 3). The developer suggested that these teachers are able to conceptualize about teaching and be sensitive to the purposes of activities, but may find implementing their ideas challenging (Haberman, 1995).

The participants’ scores varied the least on Fallibility and the greatest on their feelings about Burnout. It appears as a whole, the participants had the greatest difficulty in their Approach to At-Risk Students, based on their scores which ranged from 2.5 to 4.5. Conversely, all responses were rated high for their ability to reflect on serious mistakes and propose appropriate solutions (See Table 13 for descriptive statistics across the domains). A profile plot map displays the ratings for all participants (Figure 4).

Table 13

HUTSI Descriptive Statistics for All Participants

Domain	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Persistence	3.5	6.0	5.25	0.94
Authority	4.5	6.0	5.50	0.63
Generalizations	7.5	9.0	8.33	0.52
At-Risk	2.5	4.5	3.83	0.75
Orientation	3.5	6.0	4.75	0.94
Burnout	2.5	6.0	4.33	1.54
Fallibility	5.0	6.0	5.75	0.42

Figure 3

HUTSI Overall Ratings

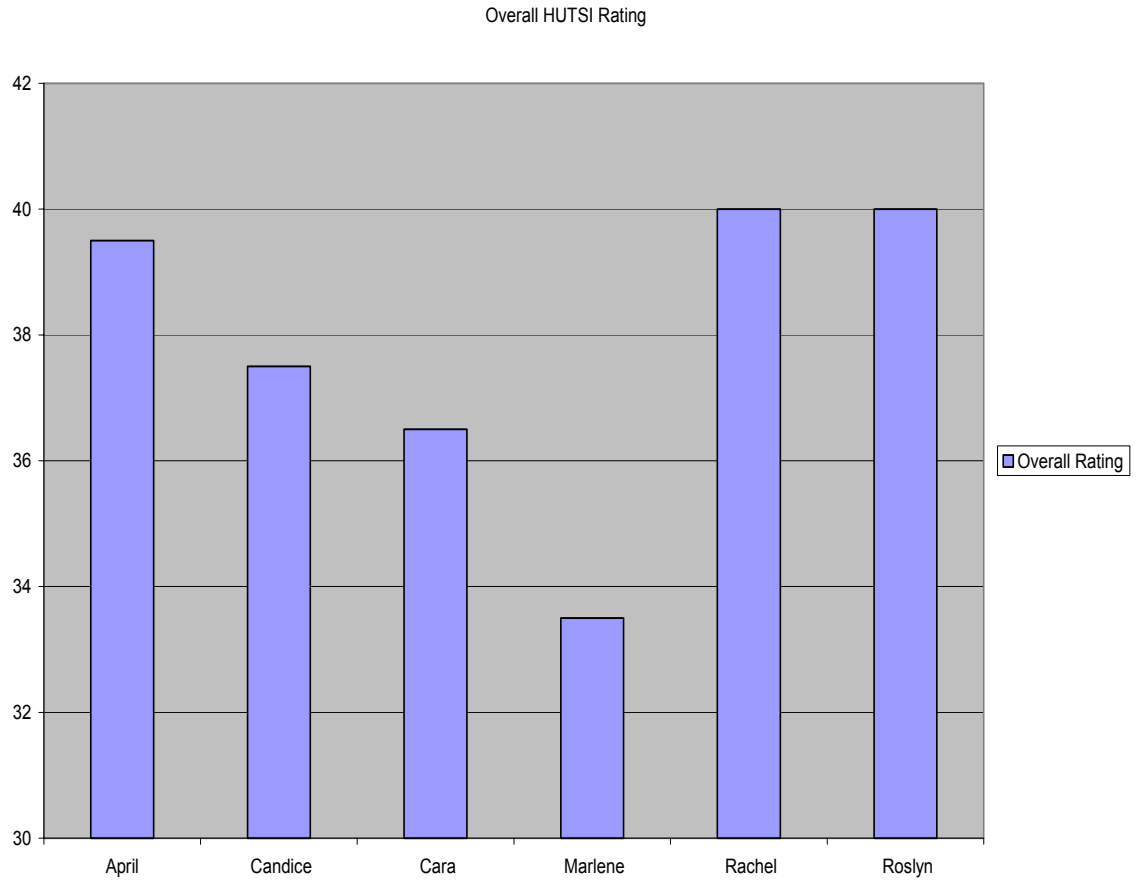
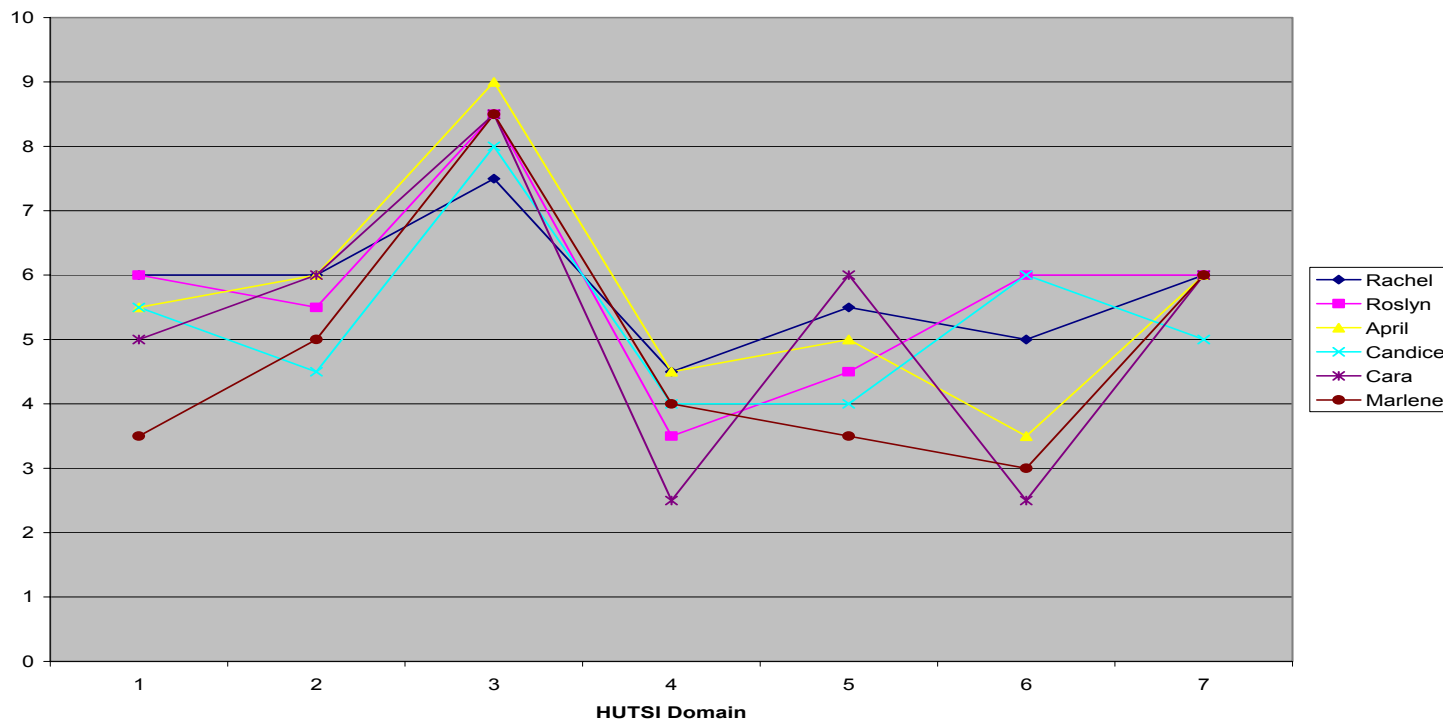


Figure 4

HUTSI Profile Plot Map for All Participants



1= persistence; 2= authority; 3= generalizations; 4= at-risk; 5=orientation; 6= burnout; 7= fallibility

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are the characteristics of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities with respect to teacher efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management?

The third research question examined the teachers' sense of efficacy in the areas of engagement, instruction, and classroom management. The Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) was administered to address these areas. The researcher provided frequencies/percentage of responses within-case and descriptive statistics cross-case.

Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)

Teacher's sense of efficacy was measured in this study using the TSES (Tschannen-Horan & Hoy, 2001), a self-report scale. It has been noted that when teachers feel efficacious, they are more likely to adopt innovations, use more effective classroom management strategies, and be rated higher on overall teaching competency measures by school administrators (Hoy, 2000). In this particular study, the 24-item long form of the TSES was used (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

The TSES comprises three subscales: Student Engagement, Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management. Efficacy in student engagement addresses the respondent's belief in her/his own ability to keep students involved in the

educational process (e.g., “How much can you do to help your students to think critically?”). The subscale dealing with efficacy in instructional strategies considers the teacher’s belief in his/her ability to facilitate learning through appropriate strategies, monitoring, and feedback (e.g. “How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?”). The final subscale, efficacy in classroom management, focuses on the teacher’s belief in her/his capacity to maintain a positive classroom environment to ensure that learning is taking place (e.g., How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?”). Each of the three subscales on the long form includes eight response items. The 24 items on the TSES were represented via a 9-point scale anchored at five points: (1) Nothing, (2) Very little, (3) Some degree, (4) Quite a bit, or (5) A great deal. For scoring purposes, the ratings were demarcated as follows: 1 and 2 rated as “Nothing”, 3 and 4 rated as “Very little”, 5 and 6 rated as “Some degree”, 7 and 8 rated as “Quite a bit”, and 9 rated as “A great deal.” The scale yielded a possible total and subscale mean score of 9.

The developers reported that the normative sample size was 410 participants that included 103 pre-service teachers, 255 inservice teachers, and 38 respondents who did not indicate their teaching status (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The mean scores for the sample were as follows: Overall, 7.1 (SD= .94); Instruction, 7.3 (SD= 1.1); Management, 6.7 (SD= 1.1); Engagement, 7.3 (SD= 1.1). The results for overall efficacy and efficacy for each subscale were

reported in mean scores. In addition, each participant's response patterns were reported in percentages.

Within-Case Analysis

April

Sense of Efficacy. April's total mean score on the TSES was 6.33. The majority (62.5%) of her responses fell in the "some degree" range. Overall, more than one-third (37.5%) of April's responses fell in the "quite a bit" range. Table 14 shows the data for April's overall sense of efficacy. April's overall mean response of 6.33 was slightly below the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= -0.07). Further, her overall mean score was below the normative mean score of 7.1.

Table 14

April: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	37.5%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Student Engagement. April's mean score on this subscale was 6.38. April's responses on this subscale were equally divided between "some degree" (50%) and "quite a bit" (50%). Table 15 shows the data for April's

efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.38 on this subscale was slightly higher than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD=0.05). Further, her subscale mean score was below the normative mean score of 7.3.

Table 15

April: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	50%
Quite a Bit	50%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, April's mean score was 6.25. Three-fourths (75%) of her responses were in the "some degree" range and the remaining one-fourth (25%) fell in the "quite a bit" range. Table 16 shows the data for April's efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 6.25 was lower than the group mean of 6.37 for this subscale (SD= -0.09). Further, her subscale mean score was below the normative mean score of 7.3.

Table 16

April: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	75%
Quite a Bit	25%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, April's raw score was 6.38. The majority (62.5%) of her responses fell in the "some degree" range. The remaining (37.5%) responses were in the "quite a bit" range. Table 17 shows the data for April's efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 6.38 was below the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= -0.16). Further, April's mean score was below the normative mean of 6.7.

Table 17

April: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	37.5%
A Great Deal	

Summary. Based on these data, April's sense of efficacy was similar across the three subscales. Her sense of efficacy in student engagement and classroom management was equal with a mean score of 6.38. Additionally, April's sense of efficacy in instructional strategies was only slightly lower at 6.25.

Candice

Sense of Efficacy. Candice's total mean score on the TSES was 6.63. The majority (70.9%) of her responses fell in the "quite a bit" range. The next highest response category was the "some degree" range with 20.8%. Two responses (8.3%) fell in the "very little" range. Table 18 shows the data for Candice's overall sense of efficacy. Candice's overall mean response of 6.63 was slightly above the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= 0.16). However, her overall mean score was lower than the normative group (7.1).

Table 18

Candice: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	8.3%
Some Degree	20.8%
Quite a Bit	70.9%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Candice's mean score on this subscale was 6.63. Candice's responses (75%) on this subscale primarily fell in the "quite a bit" range. One of her responses (12.5%) fell in the "some degree" range and one (12.5%) fell in the "very little" range. Table 19 shows the data for Candice's efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.63 on this subscale was slightly higher than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD= 0.25). However, her mean score was lower than the score for the normative group (7.3).

Table 19

Candice: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	12.5%
Some Degree	12.5%
Quite a Bit	75.0%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, Candice’s mean score was 6.75. The majority (87.5%) of her responses were in the “quite a bit” range and the remaining response (12.5%) fell in the “very little” range. Table 20 shows the data for Candice’s efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 6.75 was higher than the group mean of 6.37 for this subscale (SD= 0.30). However, it was lower than the normative mean score of 7.3.

Table 20

Candice: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	12.5%
Some Degree	
Quite a Bit	87.5%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, Candice’s raw score was 6.5. Her responses were equally distributed between the “some degree” range and the “quite a bit range” with 50% in each. Table 21 shows the data for Candice’s efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 6.5 was slightly below the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= -0.07). Further, Candice’s mean response on this subscale was below the normative mean (6.7).

Table 21

Candice: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	50%
Quite a Bit	50%
A Great Deal	

Summary. Based on these data, Candice’s sense of efficacy was similar across the three subscales. Her mean score for sense of efficacy in student engagement was 6.63. Candice’s raw score for sense of efficacy in instructional strategies was slightly higher at 6.75 and her sense of efficacy in instructional strategies was only slightly lower at 6.5.

Cara

Sense of Efficacy. Cara’s total mean score on the TSES was 5.54. The majority (66.7%) of her responses fell in the “some degree” range. An equal percentage of Cara’s responses (12.5%) fell in the “very little” and “quite a bit” range. Two of her responses (8.3%) were in the “a great deal” category. Table 22 shows the data for Cara’s overall sense of efficacy. Cara’s overall mean response of 5.54 was below the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= -0.68). Further, her overall score was below the normative group mean (7.1).

Table 22

Cara: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	12.5%
Some Degree	66.7%
Quite a Bit	12.5%
A Great Deal	8.3%

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Cara’s mean score on this subscale was 6.75. The majority of Cara’s responses (62.5%) on this subscale fell in the “some degree” range. Two responses (25%) fell in the “a great deal” category and one response (12.5%) fell in the “quite a bit range”. Table 23 shows the data for Cara’s efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.75 on this subscale was somewhat higher than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD= 0.34). However, her mean subscale score was lower than the normative mean score of 7.3.

Table 23

Cara: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	12.5%
A Great Deal	25.0%

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, Cara’s mean score was 4.88. The majority (62.5%) of her responses were in the “some degree” and one-fourth (25%) fell in the “very little” range. Only one response (12.5%) fell in the “quite a bit” range. Table 24 shows the data for Cara’s efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 4.88 was lower than the group mean of 6.37

for this subscale (SD= -1.17). Further, Cara’s mean subscale score was lower than the normative mean of 7.3.

Table 24

Cara: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	75%
Quite a Bit	25%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, Cara’s mean score was 5.0. Three-fourths (75%) of her responses fell in the “some degree” range. The remaining responses were equally distributed between (12.5% each) the “very little” and the “quite a bit” range. Table 25 shows the data for Cara’s efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 5.0 was well below the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= -1.20). Further, her mean score was below the normative mean (6.7).

Table 25

Cara: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	12.5%
Some Degree	75.0%
Quite a Bit	12.5%
A Great Deal	

Summary. Based on these data, Cara’s sense of efficacy varies across the three subscales. Her sense of efficacy in student engagement was the highest with a mean score of 6.75. Cara’s mean score for sense of efficacy in classroom management was 5.0. Similarly, her mean score for sense of efficacy in instructional strategies was her lowest at 4.88.

Marlene

Sense of Efficacy. Marlene’s total mean score on the TSES was 6.88. The majority (70.9%) of her responses fell in the “quite a bit” range. Marlene had 20.8% of her responses in the “some degree” range. Two of her responses (8.3%) were in the “very little” category. Table 26 shows the data for Marlene’s overall sense of efficacy. Marlene’s overall mean response of 6.88 was above the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= 0.36). However, her overall sense of efficacy was below the mean of the normative sample (7.1).

Table 26

Marlene: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	8.3%
Some Degree	20.8%
Quite a Bit	70.9%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Marlene’s mean score on this subscale was 6.13. Half of Marlene’s responses (50%) on this subscale fell in the “quite a bit” range. The remaining responses are equally distributed (25% each) the “very little” and “some degree” categories. Table 27 shows the data for Marlene’s efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.13 on this subscale was slightly lower than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD= -0.14). Further, her mean response was below the mean of the normative group (7.3).

Table 27

Marlene: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	25%
Some Degree	25%
Quite a Bit	50%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, Marlene’s mean score was 7.25. The majority (87.5%) of her responses were in the “quite a bit” range. The remaining response (12.5%) fell in the “some degree” range. Table 28 shows the data for Marlene’s efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 7.25 was higher than the group mean of 6.37 for this subscale (SD= 0.69). However, her mean subscale score was lower than the normative mean of 7.3.

Table 28

Marlene: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	12.5%
Quite a Bit	87.5%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, Marlene’s mean score was 7.25. Three-fourths (75%) of her responses fell in the “quite a bit” range. The remaining two responses (25%) were in the “some degree” range. Table 29 shows the data for Marlene’s efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 7.25 was above the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= 0.5). Similarly, her mean score was higher than the normative group’s score at 6.7

Table 29

Marlene: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	25%
Quite a Bit	75%
A Great Deal	

Summary. Based on these data, Marlene’s sense of efficacy is equal on two of subscales. Her sense of efficacy in instructional practices and efficacy in classroom management were equal with mean scores of 7.25. Marlene’s mean score for sense of efficacy in student engagement was somewhat lower with a mean score of 6.13.

Rachel

Sense of Efficacy. Rachel’s total mean score on the TSES was 6.92. Half (50%) of her responses fell in the “quite a bit” range. The next highest category of responses (41.7%) was in the “some degree” range. Two of her responses (8.3%) were in the “a great deal” category. Table 30 shows the data for Rachel’s overall sense of efficacy. Rachel’s overall mean response of 6.92 was above the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= 0.39). However, her overall mean was lower than the mean of the normative group (7.1).

Table 30

Rachel: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	41.7%
Quite a Bit	50.0%
A Great Deal	8.3%

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Rachel's mean score on this subscale was 6.0. More than half of Rachel's responses (62.5%) on this subscale fell in the "some degree" range. The remaining responses (37.5%) were in the "quite a bit" category. Table 31 shows the data for Rachel's efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.0 on this subscale was slightly lower than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD= -0.24). Also, her mean score was lower than the normative group's mean score of (7.3).

Table 31

Rachel: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	37.5%
A Great Deal	

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, Rachel's mean score was 6.63. The majority (62.5%) of her responses were in the "some degree" range. One-fourth of her responses (25%) fell in the "quite a bit" range and one response (12.5%) was in the "a great deal" category. Table 32 shows the data for Rachel's efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 6.63 was slightly higher than the group mean of 6.37 for this subscale (SD= 0.20). Conversely, her mean response was lower than that of the normative group (7.3).

Table 32

Rachel: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	25.0%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, Rachel’s mean score was 8.13. The majority (87.5%) of her responses fell in the “quite a bit” range. The remaining response (12.5%) was in the “a great deal” range. Table 33 shows the data for Rachel’s efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 8.13 was well above the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= 1.17). Similarly, Rachel’s mean response was higher than the normative group (6.7).

Table 33

Rachel: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	
Quite a Bit	87.5%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Summary. Based on these data, Rachel’s sense of efficacy is noticeably higher in classroom management (8.13). Her sense of efficacy in instructional practices was the next highest rating with a raw score of 6.63. Rachel’s raw score for sense of efficacy in student engagement was the lowest with a raw score of 6.0.

Roslyn

Sense of Efficacy. Roslyn’s total mean score on the TSES was 6.25. The majority (66.7%) of her responses fell in the “some degree” range. The next highest response category was the “quite a bit” range with 16.7%. Roslyn also had responses (12.5% and 4.2% respectively) in the “great deal” and the “very little” categories. Table 34 shows the data for Roslyn’s overall sense of efficacy. Roslyn’s overall mean response of 6.25 was slightly below the overall TSES mean (6.42) of the participant group (SD= -0.13). Further, her overall sense of efficacy was lower than the normative group at 7.1.

Table 34

Roslyn: TSES Overall Efficacy

Response	Frequency
Very Little	4.2%
Some Degree	66.7%
Quite a Bit	16.7%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Efficacy in Student Engagement. Roslyn’s mean score on this subscale was 6.0. Roslyn’s responses (62.5%) on this subscale primarily fell in the “some degree” range. The remaining responses were equally distributed (12.5% each) across the “very little”, “quite a bit”, and “a great deal” ranges. Table 35 shows the data for Roslyn’s efficacy in student engagement. Her mean response of 6.0 on this subscale was slightly lower than the mean response for the sample group (6.31; SD= -0.24). Further, her mean response was lower than the mean of the normative group (7.3) for this subscale.

Table 35

Roslyn: Efficacy in Student Engagement

Response	Frequency
Very Little	12.5%
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	12.5%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. On this subscale, Roslyn’s mean score was 6.5. The majority (62.5%) of her responses were in the “some degree” range. One-fourth of her responses (25%) fell in the “quite a bit” range. Roslyn had one response (12.5%) in the “a great deal” range. Table 36 shows the data for Roslyn’s efficacy in instructional strategies. Her mean response of 6.5 was slightly higher than the group mean of 6.37 for this subscale (SD= 0.10). However, it was lower than the normative mean of 7.3.

Table 36

Roslyn: Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	62.5%
Quite a Bit	25.0%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Efficacy in Classroom Management. On this subscale, Roslyn’s mean score was 6.25. Three-fourths of her responses (75%) were in the “some degree” range. Her remaining responses were equally distributed between the “quite a bit” range and the “great deal” range with 12.5% in each. Table 37 shows the data for Roslyn’s efficacy in classroom management. Her mean response of 6.25 was below the mean response of the sample (6.59; SD= -0.26). Further, Roslyn’s mean response was lower than the normative group (6.7) for this subscale.

Table 37

Roslyn: Efficacy in Classroom Management

Response	Frequency
Very Little	
Some Degree	75.0%
Quite a Bit	12.5%
A Great Deal	12.5%

Summary. Based on these data, Roslyn's sense of efficacy was similar across the three subscales. Her mean score for sense of efficacy in instructional practices was the highest at 6.5. Roslyn's mean score for sense of efficacy in classroom management was slightly lower at 6.25 and her sense of efficacy in student engagement was only slightly lower at 6.0.

Cross-Case Analysis

Overall Sense of Efficacy

The data from the TSES indicate that Rachel (6.92) had the highest overall sense of efficacy followed by Marlene (6.88), Candice (6.63), April (6.33), and Roslyn (6.25). Cara had the lowest overall teacher sense of efficacy (5.54). The mean score of the participants was 6.42 (SD= 1.29). Rachel, Marlene, and Candice scored above the mean of the sample and April, Roslyn, and Cara scored below the group mean.

Efficacy in Student Engagement

The subscale raw scores indicated that Cara (6.75) had the highest sense of efficacy in student engagement followed by Candice (6.63), April (6.38), and Marlene (6.13). The lowest scores on this subscale were reported by Rachel and Roslyn with raw scores of 6.0. The mean score for efficacy in student engagement was 6.31. Cara, Candice, and April scored above the group mean and Marlene, Rachel, and Roslyn scored below.

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies

The subscale raw scores showed that Marlene (7.25) scored the highest in efficacy in instructional strategies. She was followed by Candice (6.75), Rachel (6.63), Roslyn (6.5), and April (6.25). Cara (4.88) scored the lowest in this area. The group mean for this response set was 6.38. All of the participants except April and Cara scored better than the mean on this subscale.

Efficacy in Classroom Management

The subscale raw scores indicated that Rachel (8.13) scored relatively high in efficacy in classroom management. She was followed by Marlene (7.25), Candice (6.5), April (6.38), and Roslyn (6.25), respectively. Cara (5.0) scored the lowest in this area. The group mean for this subscale was 6.59. Rachel and Marlene scored higher than the mean and Candice, April, and Cara scored below the mean.

Overall Findings

The findings from the TSES self-report instrument suggested that the participants felt fairly confident in their abilities in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. Overall, Rachel rated her abilities the highest with a total mean score of 6.91 and Cara rated her abilities the lowest with a raw score of 5.54. The scores on all subscales ranged from 3 to 9. The overall mean score was 6.42 and the mean scores for student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management were 6.31, 6.37, and 6.59 respectively. This indicates that overall, the participants felt most confident in their ability to manage the classroom. Table 38 shows the descriptive statistics from the TSES. In addition, Figure 5 shows each participant's total score and Figure 6 shows their scores by subscale raw score.

A partially-ordered matrix revealed interesting findings (Table 39). Rachel and Roslyn had the highest ratings on the HUTSI (Star=40) and the highest final evaluation rating GPAs with 5.0 each. However, Rachel had a higher mean sense of efficacy (6.92) than Roslyn (6.25). April and Marlene had equally high final evaluation GPAs (4.99) but differed on both their HUTSI ratings (39.5 and 33.5, respectively) and their sense of efficacy (6.33 and 6.88, respectively). This finding was particularly interesting because April and Roslyn had more classroom experience than Rachel and Marlene yet, they had both had a lower sense of efficacy. Further, Marlene had a higher final evaluation GPA and sense of

efficacy than Candice and Cara (4.34 and 3.33, respectively). However, both Candice and Cara had higher ratings on the HUTSI (37.0 and 36.5, respectively).

Table 38

TSES Descriptive Statistics

Subscale	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall	3	9	6.42	1.29
Student Engagement	3	9	6.31	1.29
Instructional Strategies	3	9	6.37	1.27
Classroom Management	3	9	6.58	1.32

Figure 5

TSES Overall Efficacy Mean Scores

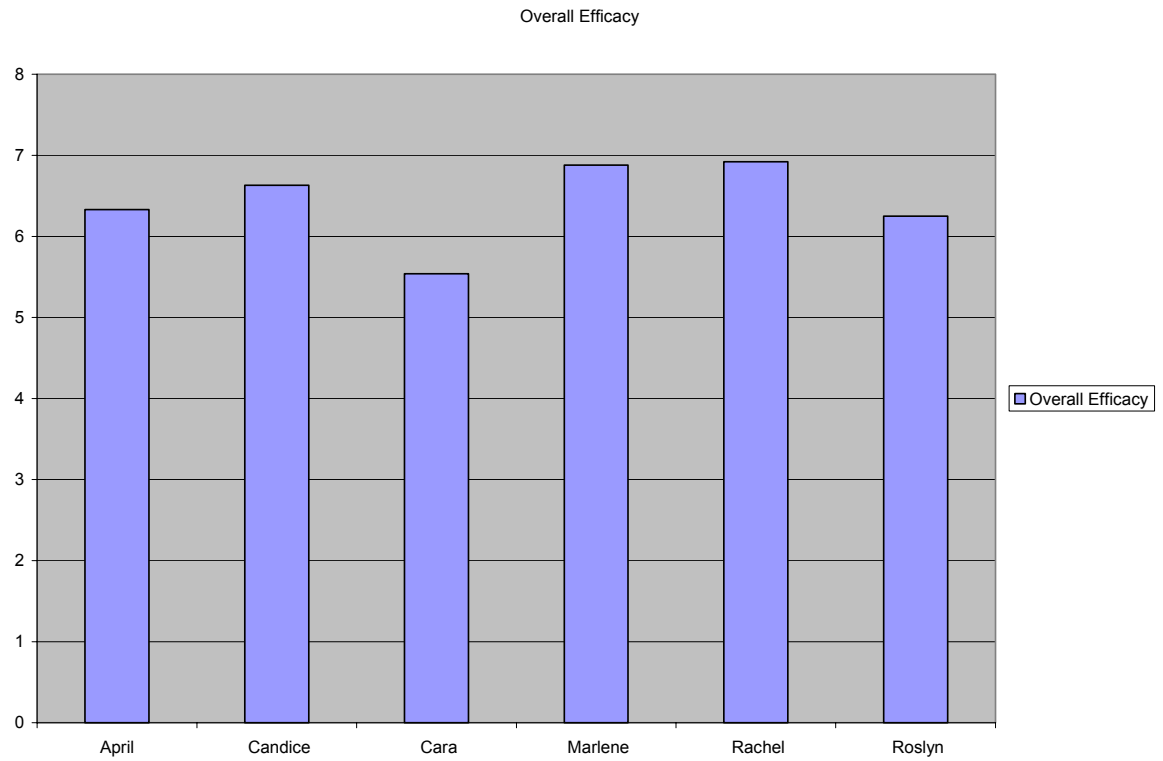


Figure 6

TSES Subscale Mean Scores

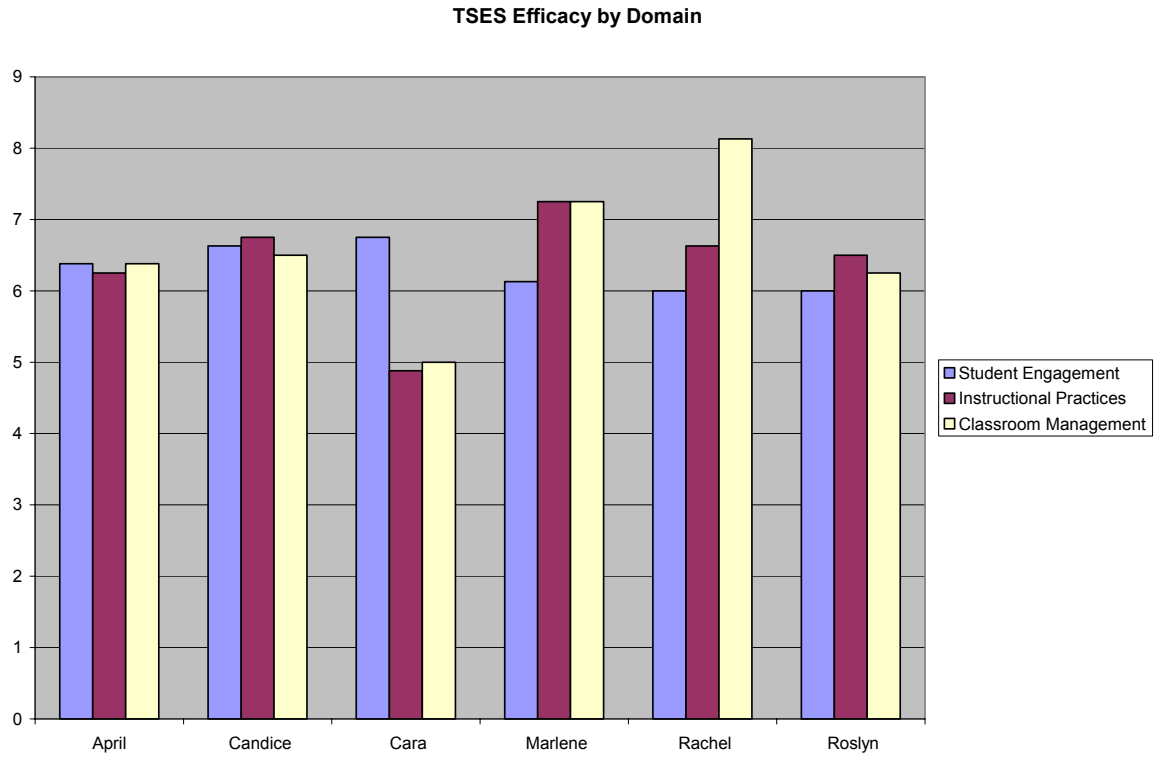


Table 39

Partially-Ordered Matrix: Final Evaluation GPA, HUTSI Ratings, and TSES Ratings

Case	Final Evaluation GPA	HUTSI Overall Rating	TSES Overall Rating	TSES Engagement Subscale	TSES Instruction Subscale	TSES Management Subscale
Rachel	5.0	40.0	6.92	6.0	6.63	8.13
Roslyn	5.0	40.0	6.25	6.0	6.5	6.25
April	4.99	39.5	6.33	6.38	6.25	6.38
Marlene	4.99	33.5	6.88	6.13	7.25	7.25
Candice	4.34	37.0	6.63	6.63	6.75	6.5
Cara	3.33	36.5	5.54	6.75	4.88	5.0

RESEARCH QUESTION 4

How effective is the classroom practice of select teachers enrolled in a Master of Arts (MAT) program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities?

The fourth research question was examined both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation yields quantitative ratings of teacher performance. Descriptive statistics are provided within- and cross-case. To gain another perspective on the teacher's effectiveness, their mentor teachers were interviewed. Comments from the mentor teachers were aligned with the ratings from the Adapted Pathwise for each case.

Adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System

The Pathwise Classroom Observation System was adapted for use in the academic unit in which this particular MAT program is housed. This comprehensive tool was originally designed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS, 2005) as a formative and summative tool to provide a common language for mentors and pre-service and/or in-service teachers to discuss teacher performance (Danielson, 1996). The Pathwise is described as a flexible, constructivist tool that provides a holistic picture of the way a teacher makes sense of the teaching and learning process in a comprehensive way (Danielson, 1996). This system, which is a component of the Praxis III, has been used in school districts and universities across the country and is correlated with the standards put forth by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) (Danielson, 1996).

The Pathwise divides the components of professional practice into four domains: (a) Planning and preparation, (b) Classroom environment, (c) Instruction, and (d) Professional responsibilities. Domain A is broken down into the following five criteria: demonstrating knowledge of students, selecting appropriate instructional goals, demonstrating knowledge of content, demonstrating knowledge of pedagogy, and assessing student learning appropriately. Domain B has five criteria: creating an environment that promotes fairness; creating an environment of respect and rapport; communicating challenging learning expectations; establishing and maintaining consistent standards of behavior; and organizing physical space for maximal learning and safety. Domain C is divided into eight criteria: communicating learning goals and instructional procedures; making content comprehensible to students; extending student thinking; monitoring learning, providing feedback, and adjusting learning activities to meet learner needs; using instructional time effectively; communicating clearly and accurately; integrating technology; and impacting student learning evidenced by assessment. Finally, the following four of the criteria from Domain D were addressed in this study including, reflecting on teaching; demonstrating a sense of efficacy; building professional relationships; and communicating with families and communities. This system relies on the teachers' self-report for the data collected for Domains A and D and the researcher collected the data through observation for the data collected for Domains B and C. A rubric yielded scores from 1 to 4 for each criteria was used: 1 being unsatisfactory, 2 being basic, 3 being proficient, and 4 being

distinguished (Danielson, 1996). The rubrics are designed to assist teachers as they develop from teachers working to grasp the fundamentals of teaching (unsatisfactory) to continuously improve and progress toward the Distinguished level of performance, that of a master teacher. The results were reported in raw scores with the corresponding level of performance by domain (Danielson, 1996).

Within-Case Analysis

April

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. April's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3; A2=2.5; A3=3.5; A4=3; and A5=3. The mean rating was 3.0 (SD=0.43), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction in the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. April's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=3; B3=3.5; B4=3; and 3.5. The mean rating was 3.2 (SD= 0.85), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning just above the proficient range.

Domain C: Instruction. April's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=3; C2=3; C3=3; C4=3; C5=3; C6=3; C7=2.5; and C8=3. The mean rating was 2.93 (SD= .58), which placed her overall ability on the fringe of the proficient range in instruction.

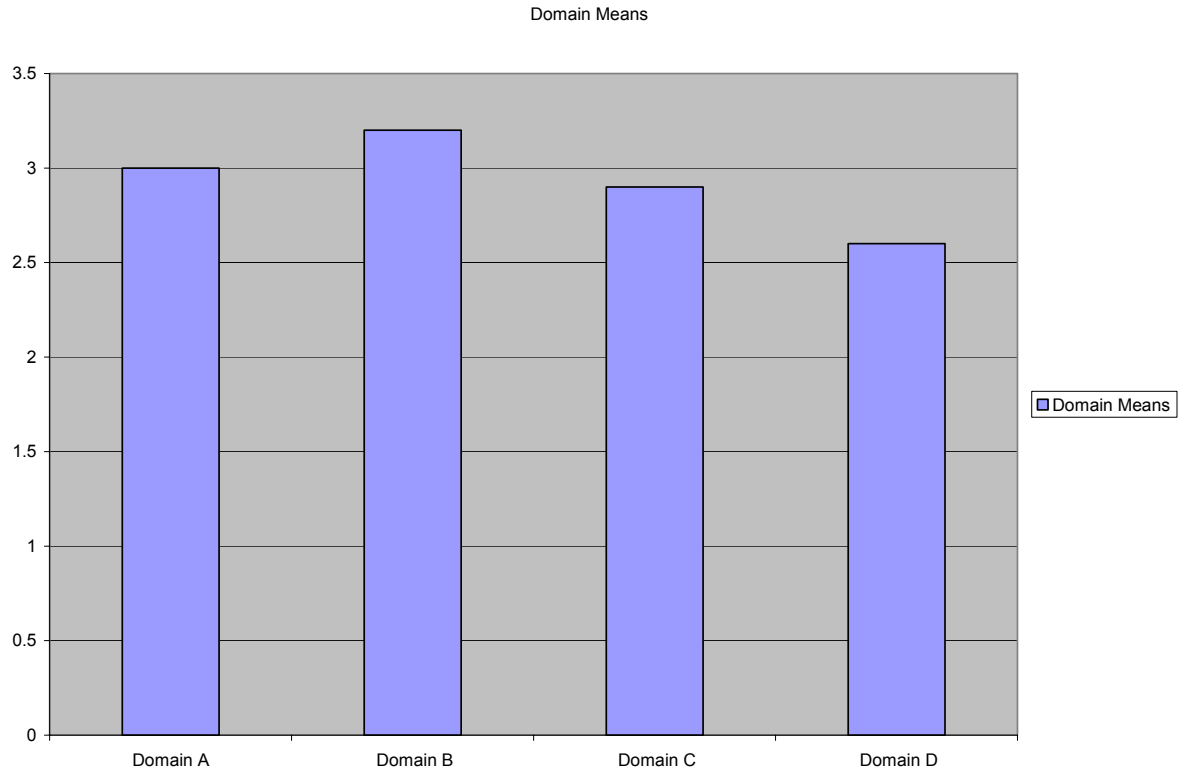
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. April's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=2; D2=3; D3=3; and D4=2.5. The mean rating was 2.6 (SD= -1.65), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities between the basic and proficient range as it related to reflecting

on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. April's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated a proficient level of teaching performance. She was strongest in her ability to create an environment conducive to learning (3.2), specifically in communicating challenging learning expectations. She had the greatest room for improvement in managing her professional responsibilities (2.6), specifically in reflecting on her teaching. Figure 7 shows data for April's level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 7

April's Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Candice

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Candice's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3; A2=3; A3=3; A4=3.5; and A5= 3. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= 0.87), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction in the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Candice's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=3; B3=3.5; B4=3; and B5=3. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= .46), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning at the proficient level.

Domain C: Instruction. Candice's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=3; C2=3; C3=2.5; C4=3; C5=3; C6=3.5; C7=3.5 and C8=3. The mean rating was 3.06 (SD= 1.13), which placed her overall ability between the slightly above the proficient range in instruction.

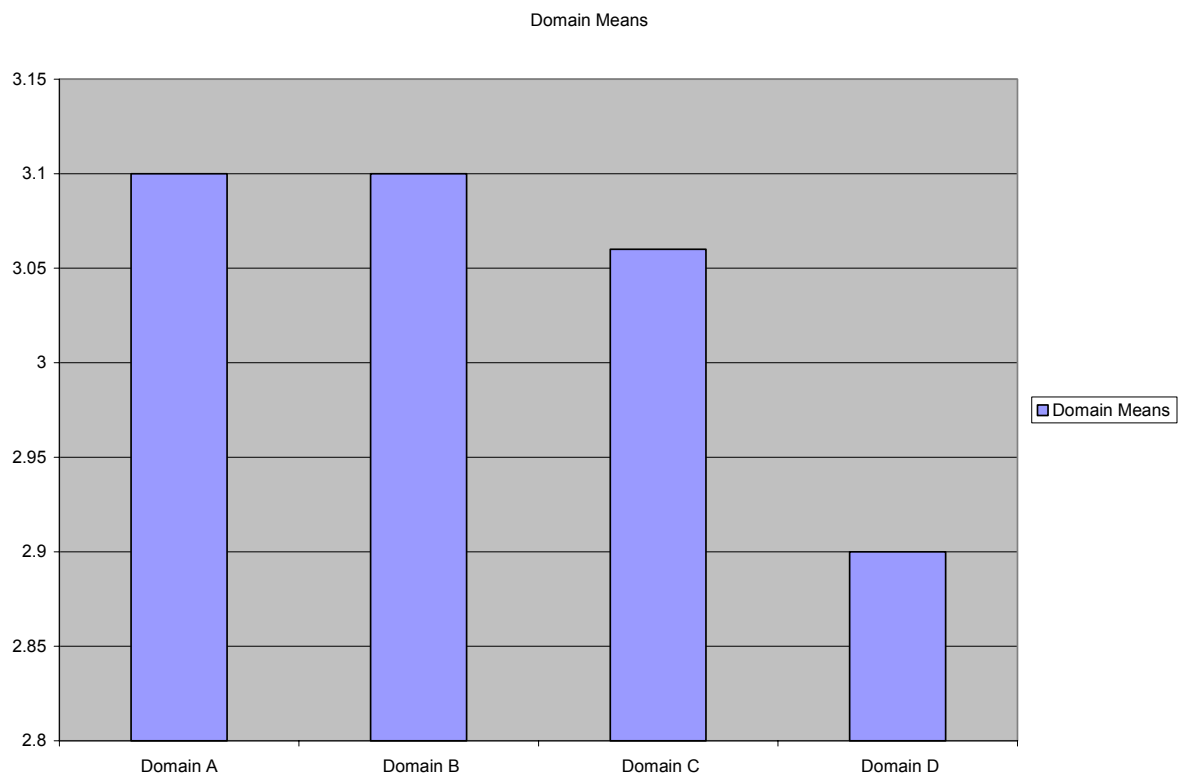
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Candice's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=3; D2=2.5; D3=3; and D4=3. The mean rating was 2.9 (SD= 0.12), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities just below the proficient range as it related to reflecting on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. Candice's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated a proficient level of teaching performance. She was equally strong in her planning and preparation and her ability to create an environment conducive to learning (3.1), specifically in using appropriate pedagogy and

communicating challenging learning expectations. She also performed well in the area of instruction (3.06). Figure 8 shows data for Candice's level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 8

Candice's Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Cara

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Cara's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3; A2=2; A3=2.5; A4=2.5; and A5=2.5. The mean rating was 2.5 (SD= -1.74), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction midway between the basic and the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Cara's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=2; B3=2.5; B4=2; and B5=3. The mean rating was 2.5 (SD= -1.85), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning between the basic and the proficient levels.

Domain C: Instruction. Cara's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=2.5; C2=2.5; C3=2.5; C4=2.5; C5=2.5; C6=3; C7=3; and C8=2. The mean rating was 2.6 (SD= -0.79), which placed her overall ability between the basic and proficient range in instruction.

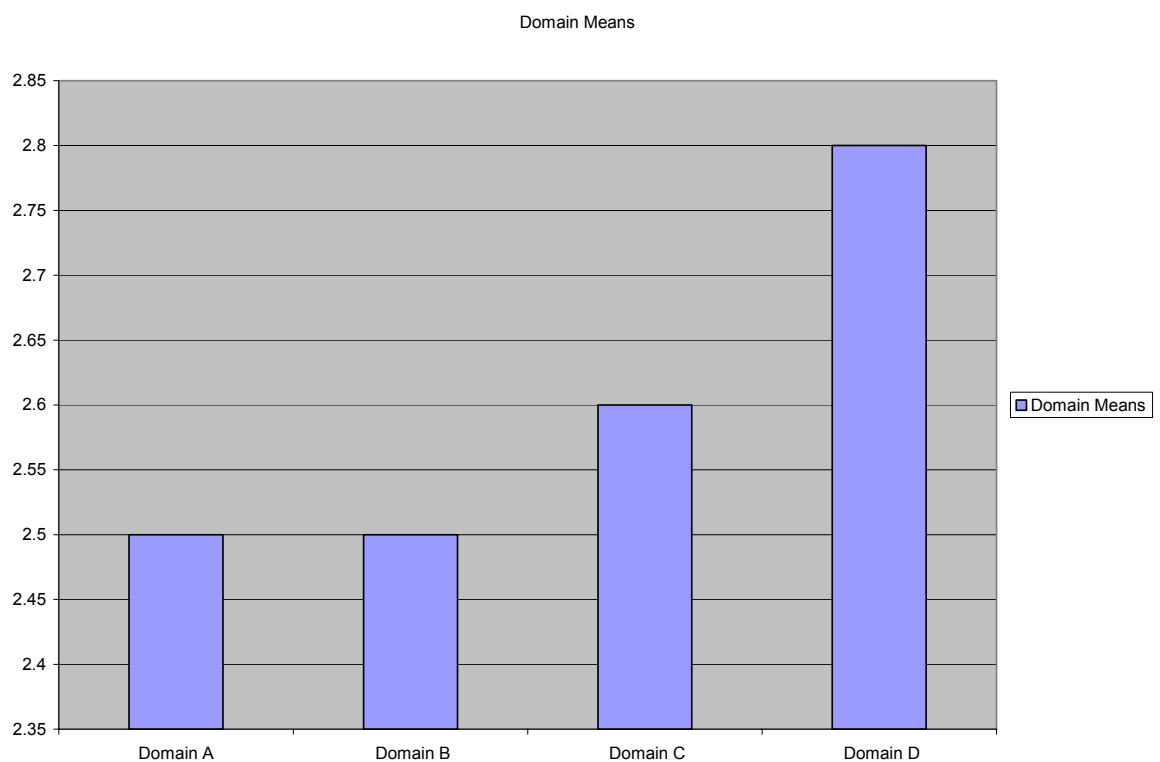
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Cara's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=3; D2=; D3=2; D4=3; and D5=3. The mean rating was 2.8 (SD= -0.47), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities below the proficient range as it related to reflecting on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. Cara's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated a level of teaching performance between the basic and proficient levels. She was strongest in her ability to manage professional responsibilities (2.75). She had the greatest room for improvement in planning and preparation

and the classroom environment (2.5), specifically in selecting instructional goals and establishing and maintaining consistent standards of behavior. Figure 9 shows data for Cara's level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 9

Cara's Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Marlene

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Marlene's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3; A2=2.5; A3=3; A4=2.5; and A5=3. The mean rating was 2.8 (SD= -0.43), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction slightly below the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Marlene's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=3.5; B3=3; B4=3; and B5=3. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= 0.46), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning at the proficient level.

Domain C: Instruction. Marlene's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=3; C2=3; C3=3; C4=3; C5=2.5; C6=3; C7=3; and C8=3. The average rating was 2.9 (SD= 0.46), which placed her overall ability on the fringe of the proficient range in instruction.

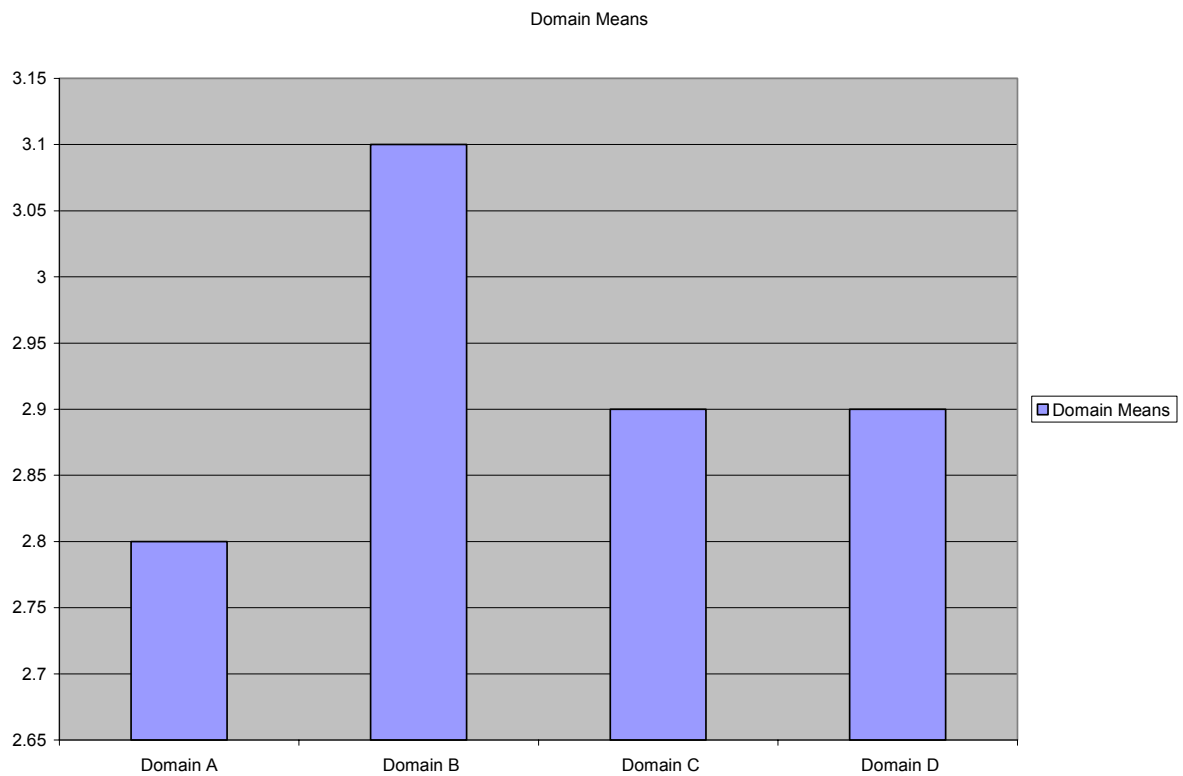
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Marlene's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=3; D2=3; D3=3; and D4=2.5. The mean rating was 2.9 (SD= .012), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities just below the proficient range as it related to reflecting on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. Marlene's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated just below a proficient level of teaching performance. She was strongest in her ability to create an environment conducive to learning (3.1),

specifically in creating an environment of respect and rapport. She had the greatest room for improvement in planning and preparing for instruction (2.8), specifically in selecting appropriate instructional goals and pedagogy. Figure 10 shows data for Marlene's level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 10

Marlene's Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Rachel

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Rachel's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3; A2=2.5; A3=3; A4=3; and A5=3. The mean rating was 2.9 (SD= 0.0), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction on the fringe of the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Rachel's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=3; B3=3; B4=3; and B5=3.5. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= 0.46), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning at the proficient range.

Domain C: Instruction. Rachel's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=3; C2=3; C3=2.5; C4=3; C5=3; C6=3; C7=2; and C8=3. The mean rating was 2.4 (SD= -1.63), which placed her overall ability between the basic and proficient range in instruction.

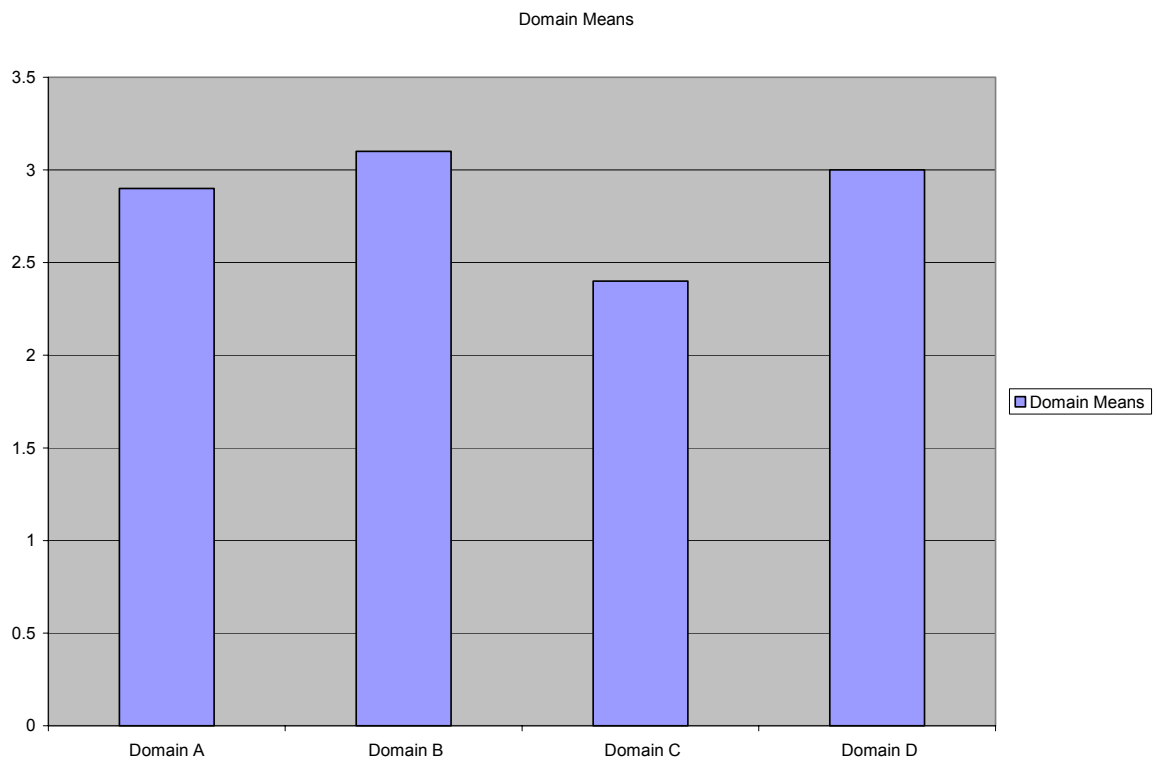
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Rachel's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=3; D2=3; D3=3; and D4=3. The mean rating was 3.0 (SD= 0.71), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities in the proficient range as it related to reflecting on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. Rachel's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated slightly below the proficient level of teaching performance. She was strongest in her ability to create an environment conducive to learning (3.1), specifically in organizing the physical space for maximum learning and safety.

She had the greatest room for improvement in instruction (2.4), specifically in integrating technology. Figure 11 shows data for Rachel’s level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 11

Rachel’s Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Roslyn

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Roslyn's raw scores for the five criteria on this domain were A1=3.5; A2=3; A3=3; A4=3; and A5=3. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= 0.87), which placed her overall ability to plan and prepare for instruction in the proficient range.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Roslyn's raw scores for the five criteria in this domain were B1=3; B2=3; B3=3; B4=2.5; and B5=3. The mean rating was 2.9 (SD= -0.31), which placed her overall ability to create a learning environment that is conducive for learning slightly below the proficient range.

Domain C: Instruction. Roslyn's raw scores for the eight criteria on this domain were C1=3; C2=3; C3=3; C4=3; C5=2.5; C6=3; C7=3; and C8=3. The mean rating was 2.9 (SD= 0.46), which placed her overall ability on the fringe of the proficient range in instruction.

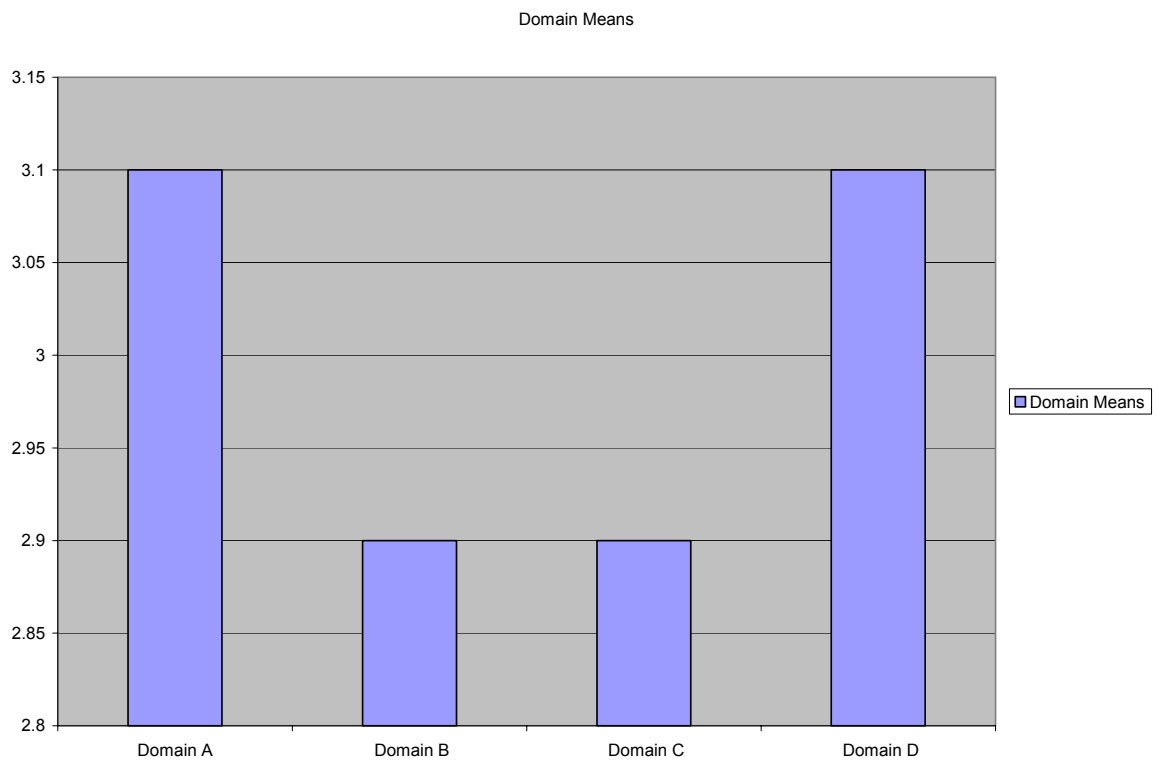
Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Roslyn's raw scores for the four criteria included were D1=4; D2=3; D3=3; and D4=2.5. The mean rating was 3.1 (SD= 1.29), which placed her overall ability to manage her professional responsibilities in the proficient range as it related to reflecting on teaching, efficacy, building professional relationships, and communicating with families and communities.

Summary. Roslyn's ratings across the four domains indicate that she demonstrated her abilities at the proficient level of teaching performance. She was equally strong in her ability to plan and prepare for instruction and managing her professional responsibilities (3.1), specifically in demonstrating knowledge of

her students and reflecting on her teaching. She had equal room for improvement in creating a learning environment conducive to learning and in instruction (2.9), specifically in establishing and maintaining consistent standards of behavior and using instructional time effectively. Figure 12 shows data for Roslyn's level of teaching performance based on the adapted Pathwise system.

Figure 12

Roslyn's Pathwise Domain Mean Scores



Cross-Case Analysis

Domain A: Planning and Preparation

The mean scores on this domain indicated that Candice and Roslyn (3.1) demonstrated the greatest ability to plan and prepare for instruction. They were followed closely by April with a mean score of 3.0, and they were all in the proficient range. Rachel and Marlene demonstrated abilities slightly below the proficient range with scores of 2.9 and 2.8, respectively. Cara scored the lowest on this domain with a mean domain score of 2.5, midway between the basic and proficient level of teacher performance.

Domain B: Classroom Environment

The mean scores on this domain indicated that April (3.2) was most capable of creating an environment conducive to learning. Candice, Marlene, and Rachel demonstrated equal abilities in this area of the framework with scores of 3.1, which placed them all in the proficient range. Roslyn was slightly below the proficient level with a mean score of 2.9. Cara (2.5) showed the greatest room for growth in this domain rating midway between the basic and proficient levels.

Domain C: Instruction

The mean scores on this domain indicated that Candice demonstrated the greatest overall ability in instruction (3.06). April, Marlene, and Roslyn demonstrated equal ability in instruction (2.9), performing slightly below the proficient level. Cara followed closely with a score of 2.6, which placed her between the basic and proficient levels of performance. Rachel (2.4)

demonstrated the greatest room for growth in this area with demonstrated ability between the basic and proficient levels.

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities

The mean scores on this domain indicated that Roslyn demonstrated the greatest ability in this domain with a mean rating of 3.1 and Rachel scored just below with a mean rating of 3. Both were in the proficient range. Candice, Marlene, and Cara demonstrated abilities slightly below the proficient range with mean scores of 2.9, 2.9, and 2.8 respectively. April (2.6) demonstrated the greatest room for growth in this domain.

Overall Findings

The data from the adapted Pathwise indicated that the teachers demonstrated abilities at or slightly below the proficient level of performance. As a group, the teachers demonstrated the greatest ability to create classroom environments conducive to learning (3.0). The group showed the greatest room for growth in the area of instruction (2.79). The mean scores for the other two domains, planning and preparation and professional responsibilities, were both 2.9. The range of mean scores for all domains was 2.4 to 3.2. Table 40 shows the descriptive statistics for the adapted Pathwise and Figure 13 shows all the domain mean scores by participant.

A partially-ordered matrix (Table 41) showed that with the exception of Rachel, the teachers (i.e., Roslyn, Marlene, and April) who received the highest ratings on the adapted Pathwise also had the highest final evaluation GPAs. In addition, both the adapted Pathwise rating and final evaluation GPA indicated

that Cara had the greatest room for growth. However, the same table (Table 41) did not have the same level of correlation for sense of efficacy.

Table 40

Pathwise Descriptive Statistics

Domain	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
A. Planning And Preparation	2.5	3.1	2.90	.23
B. Classroom Environment	2.5	3.2	2.98	.26
C. Instruction	2.4	3.06	2.79	.24
D. Professional Responsibilities	2.6	3.1	2.88	.17

Figure 13

Pathwise Domain Mean Scores

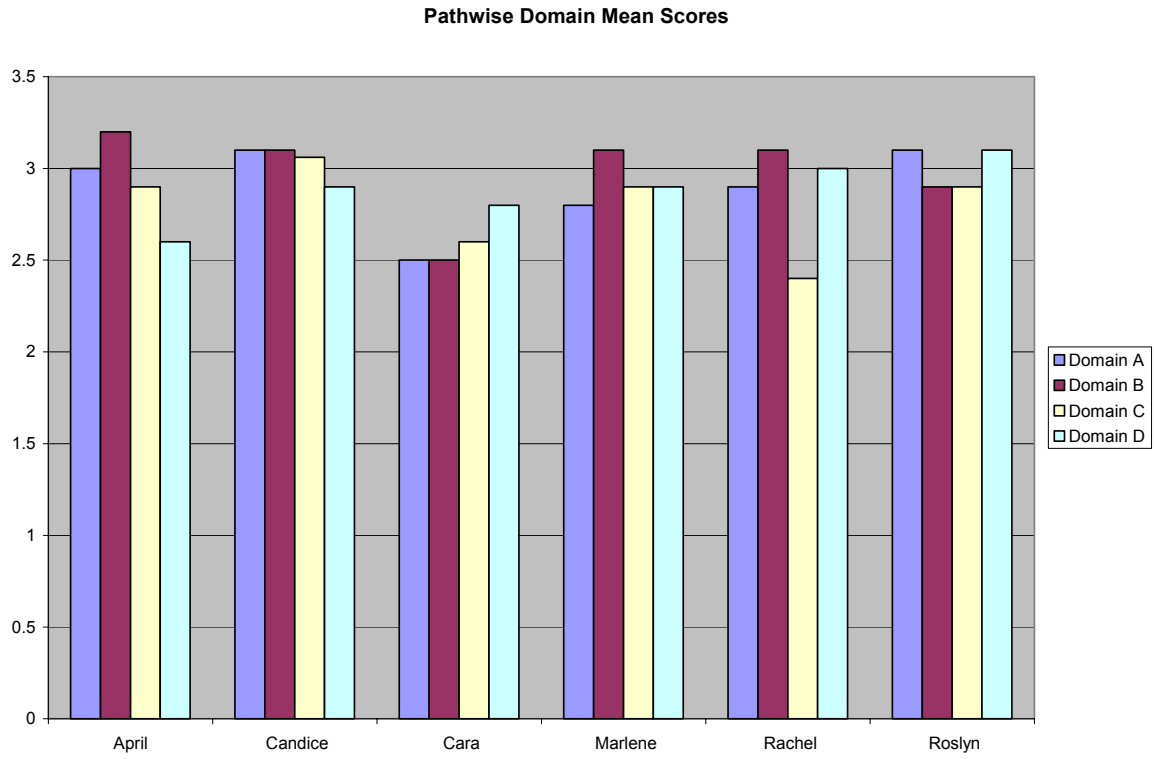


Table 41

Partially-Ordered Matrix: Pathwise Data

Case	Pathwise Domain A	Pathwise Domain B	Pathwise Domain C	Pathwise Domain D	Final Evaluation GPA	TSES Overall Rating
Roslyn	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.1	5.0	6.25
Marlene	2.8	3.1	2.9	2.9	4.99	6.88
April	3.0	3.2	2.9	2.6	4.99	6.33
Candice	3.1	3.1	2.6	2.9	4.34	6.63
Rachel	2.9	3.1	2.4	3.0	5.0	6.92
Cara	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.8	3.33	5.54

Semi-Structured Interviews of Mentor Teachers

The purpose of the mentor teacher interviews was to obtain additional information regarding the participants' levels of performance based on the domains of the adapted Pathwise Classroom Observation System. Each mentor teacher was interviewed using a set of aligned semi-structured questions (see Appendix D) in order to make connections and to triangulate the data collected using the adapted Pathwise. The researcher conducted the interviews with each mentor face-to-face or by phone after the teacher's observation had been conducted. Each interview was audio taped and manually transcribed by the researcher. Next, the researcher conducted a word analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) examining the transcripts for words associated with the goal indicators on the adapted Pathwise rubric. Finally, the researcher ratings were compared to the text gathered from the mentors.

April's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. April's mentor began the discussion on April's ability to plan and prepare for instruction by noting how she gets to know her students' strengths and weaknesses (A1=3). She also mentioned that April uses assessment data to determine her students' abilities in order to differentiate instruction (A2=2.5; A3=3.5; A5=3). April also was described as creative and well organized. As exemplified by the following statement:

She does great because she does a lot of pre-testing to see what they do know. Especially in math, she wants to know where they are and then she

takes it from there. The way she differentiates it [instruction] and she meets all the learners (A4=3). She uses all the modalities.

Similarly, April was rated at the proficient level (Mean= 3.0) by the researcher, which indicated that she has a thorough understanding of content and pedagogy and understands and affirms what students bring to the classroom.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. April's mentor described her ability to create a classroom to maximize learning and safety as consistent. Her mentor noted that April makes learning accessible by using visual aides (B5=3.5). She stated that:

She's a very visual person. A lot of things are just on her board as review, the steps. With her math, step 1, step 2, and she left it up there [on the board].

Also, her mentor discussed how April is always visible and available and makes sure that students are held to high standards of behavior and learning (B4=3). Additionally, she noted how April's students are comfortable in sharing what they have learned with their classmates (B2=3). For example, April's mentor revealed that:

For safety, she's always at her door, she's always made available, she always circulates around the room. She has rules posted and she's firm.

Another illustration of the safe environment that April creates is the following:

They feel comfortable going up there doing problems on the board and teaching the class (B1=3).

Similarly, the researcher noted April's strength in this area. Her mean rating (3.2) on this domain was slightly above the proficient level of performance.

Domain C: Instruction. As far as instruction, April's mentor discussed how she uses the information she has on her students to engage students in content learning (C1=3). She described how April allows the students to demonstrate their learning and enhance the learning of their peers by working through math problems on the board (C2=3; C4=3). She stated,

That's a great way for other kids to learn and having them come up and say well 'I divided these two digits,' and they're talking it through and they feel comfortable, she'll use that (C3=3; C6=3).

According to her mentor, April also uses a variety of technology to present new material and to reinforce student understanding of concepts (C7=2.5). Although April's mentor did not mention indicators of goals C5 (uses instructional time effectively), the researcher documented smooth pacing and transition during the lesson observed. The researcher noted April's strengths in this domain, rating April just below the proficient level at 2.93.

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Continuous improvement and growth is a component of managing professional responsibility. April's mentor teacher indicated that, as for most teachers, classroom management would be an area in which April could improve. She mentioned,

Classroom management, I think is the hardest part for everyone and anyone because you're getting a mix of kids in the ESE population...I

think that's the hardest part. Maybe having different tactics to keep them interested.

This indicated to the researcher that classroom management is inextricably tied to instruction and as April's strengths in instruction progress so will her ability to manage behaviors in the classroom. Further, April's mentor noted that her interactions with her students and peers are open (D3=3) and she is conscientious about participating in her students' educational planning and special education program meetings (D2=3). In this domain, the researcher saw room for improvement in April's reflection on her teaching and in communicating with families and communities (D1=2; D4=2.5). Also, these aspects (i.e., reflection on teaching; and communicating with families) of professional responsibility were not mentioned by April's mentor teacher. The researcher's mean rating in this domain was 2.6.

Summary. Overall, both April's mentor teacher and the researcher observed her as a teacher at the proficient level of performance. She has demonstrated ability in all four domains above the basic level of performance, including her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning slightly above the proficient level. April's ability to reflect on her teaching will be critical to her continued progress toward the Distinguished level of performance.

Candice's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. When asked about Candice's ability to plan and prepare for instruction, Candice's mentor teacher noted that she knows her students and what each child needs (A1=3). She also mentioned that

Candice plans appropriate activities for the students with whom she works in the SPMH class. She stated,

Candice does demonstrate a knowledge of her students, she seems to know what each child needs, how each child can perform in the classroom, and what she needs to do to help each child perform in the classroom (A2=3).

In addition, her mentor noted that she tries different methods such as picture and object schedules in order to teach time sequencing (A3=3; A4=3.5). Further, Candice's mentor also revealed that assessment with these particular students can be challenging because of their cognitive levels. She noted that:

I've been there mostly during circle time, so if they're able to identify their name, she's going to observe that and keep data on whether they can identify their name or not. She has to do that over time and I've seen her do that (A5=3).

Similarly, the researcher rated Candice's ability to plan and prepare for instruction slightly above the proficient level (Mean=3.1). The researcher visited Candice's class during circle time and noted how the lessons were appropriate for the students' ability levels and how she documented student progress continually.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Candice's mentor emphasized the ability to create a classroom to maximize learning and safety as being of great importance. Many of Candice's students also have physical challenges. Her

mentor discussed the importance of organizing the room effectively for safety and accessibility (B5=3). She indicated the following:

As far as safety, the kids are safe and they move around safely. I've seen her put kids in standers and she had to learn to do that.

On another note, she described Candice's interactions with students as respectful and fair. She shared that,

She includes everybody. She doesn't forget anybody, which is really good because some teachers, when they're being observed, have a tendency to work with the ones that can respond. She gets them up and moving and that's good (B1=3; B2=3; B3=3.5).

The researcher observed similar interactions and an equal respect for all members of the learning community. Even though the mentor did not mention any specific indicators for Goal B4 (consistent standards of behavior), the researcher observed a student taunting another and Candice immediately and discretely addressed the behavior. When the behavior continued, the student was asked to go to the designated time out area (B5=3). Candice encouraged all students and provided equitable access to instructional activities (Mean=3.1).

Domain C: Instruction. Candice's mentor indicated that she is very enthusiastic about her teaching and seeks out and tries different methods of instruction (C4=3). She uses assistive technology like Tech Talk and visual aids to include students who are non-verbal (C2=3; C6=3). Further, she accesses information and activities on the Internet (C7=3.5):

She was doing tooth brushing and she did a very good sequence of how to brush their teeth (C1=3). She got some things off the internet, some interactive things for them to do.

Candice's mentor teacher did not comment specifically on Goals C3 (extends students thinking) or C5 (uses instructional time effectively). However, the researcher observed some attempts by Candice to extend student thinking for students who were higher functioning (2.5). For these students, she added more steps to the tasks the other students were to complete (i.e., students were required to select their name out of a group three or more). As far as using instructional time effectively, Candice's transitions were routine and her students appeared to know what activity was next (C5=3).

The researcher's rating of Candice on this domain was slightly above the proficient level (Mean=3.06). Further, the mentor's observations suggest that Candice is making progress expected of a beginning teacher in this area. Further, the unique demands of the students in this class may present specific challenges that she will master over time (C8=3). Candice's mentor teacher noted that she asks for help in this area and accepts the feedback and adjusts her teaching accordingly.

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Collaboration is an important part of managing professional responsibility. Candice's mentor mentioned that Candice is very professional, but could improve in her self-advocacy with her co-teacher (D3=3). It appeared that Candice is taking on more than her share of the

responsibilities in order to meet the needs of the students (D2=2.5). She observed:

She just takes over if she needs to...She's very professional about that...in fact she didn't even mention it to me, I'm the one that brought it up to her and she didn't say a word.

Other than the concern about Candice taking unequal responsibility in the classroom, Candice's mentor teacher says she's doing well for a beginning teacher. Similarly, the researcher rated Candice's performance in this domain just below the proficient level (Mean=2.9).

Summary. Overall, Candice's mentor teacher and the researcher observed her teaching abilities close to the proficient level, particularly well for a beginning teacher. Candice's willingness to seek feedback on her teaching and incorporate suggestions will help her progress. This will be critical in the area of instruction where she had the greatest room for improvement, specifically in extending student thinking.

Cara's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Cara's mentor noted that she understands what the children in her class need (A1=3) and realized that the curriculum she was using was developmentally inappropriate (A2=2). This awareness indicated that Cara had at least a basic understanding of the content and knew that her students needed instruction that was more developmentally appropriate (A3=2.5). Also, she mentioned that Cara had to regroup and reassess the group she had constantly (A5=2.5).

Although the mentor teacher did not address Goal A4 (knowledge of pedagogy and methods) specifically, the researcher observed Cara's use of various techniques and materials during her visit including: music, books, arts and crafts (A4=2.5). Based on the researcher's observation, Cara demonstrated a basic level of understanding what would work for her students with regard to instructional goals and learning activities (Mean=2.5).

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Cara's mentor teacher described her ability to create a safe and caring learning environment. She noted that Cara was intentional in planning the physical layout of the classroom (B5=3). She made sure that areas were designated for different activities and that the flow of the room would prohibit students from leaving the room unsupervised. Also, she noted some challenging behaviors specific to the EELP population. She mentioned that these difficult behaviors can be attributed to the young ages of the children and the developmental delays that are common to students in the program. However, the researcher noticed some inconsistencies in the standards of behavior, which negatively impacted the classroom environment (B2=2; B4=2). Cara was careful to provide all students access to learning and to ensure they all felt valued in the classroom. Her mentor mentioned,

As far as creating a warm environment, they had a lot of their things up, she had a lot of pictures of them so that things were labeled and were very personal (B1=3).

Cara's mentor did not discuss her communication of challenging learning expectations (Goal B3). She did discuss factors that have affected the overall

classroom environment, including a challenging combination of children and paraprofessional attrition. During the researcher's visit, she documented Cara's attempts to engage all of her students in the group and individual activities (B3=2.5). Cara demonstrated an overall ability level on this domain between the basic and proficient ranges (Mean=2.5).

Domain C: Instruction. When discussing Cara's instruction, her mentor teacher indicated that she looked at the needs of each child and tried new methods and activities (C4=2.5). In fact, she used books, props, and music that interested the students and asked questions that engaged them in discussion (C3=2.5; C7=3). The mentor noted that the students in Cara's class were on many different instructional levels and that the challenging behaviors in the class may have affected Cara's confidence and subsequently her instruction. The researcher observed that the activities Cara implemented were appropriate for most of the children in her class (C2=2.5). However, managing individual student behavior impeded the instructional process at times, which was alluded to by the mentor (C5=2.5).

Cara's mentor teacher did not address Goals C1 (communicating learning goals and instructional procedures), C6 (communicates clearly and accurately), or C8 (impacts student learning). Her mentor focused more on the behavior challenges in the classroom and how it was impeding Cara's self-efficacy and her teaching effectiveness. She revealed that:

[Cara] She kept looking at those situations and trying new things and I think she's very good at reflecting on what needs to be changed. So

I think it's the confidence level in dealing with behavior issues in a large group of children. It's not that I think she can't handle them she just had an extremely challenging group of children. I felt for her the moment I went in the room. I think the worst thing is when you don't realize others have those situations.

The researcher did note that Cara expressed the learning goals and procedures during the observation. Yet, again the various behaviors kept some of the students from knowing what was expected and participating (C1=2.5; C6=2.5; C8=2). Cara's overall ability in instruction was between the basic and proficient ranges (Mean=2.5).

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. In this domain, Cara's mentor indicated that she was proficient. Also, as previously noted, she reflected on her practice and tried different methods (D1=3). She noted that Cara sought out assistance and collaborated to improve her work in the classroom (D3=3). Also, she mentioned that Cara appeared to have built relationships with parents and was not hesitant about getting them involved in their child's education (D4=3). For example, Cara's mentor stated that:

She seems to have a very good rapport with the parents that come in. She does a good job in expressing her concerns and asking for help and easing parents' minds which turned out, in the situation she was in, to be a very good skill.

Cara's tendency to reflect on her teaching and to work collaboratively with peers, are strengths that will help her to improve continuously as an educator.

This also suggested that she felt responsible for her students learning (D2=2).
Cara's mean rating in Domain D was 2.8.

Summary. Cara performs above the basic level in all domains, but is still working to demonstrate proficiency, which should come with experience. The challenges noted by Cara's mentor and the researcher are primarily in behavior management, which is impacting her performance in planning for instruction, implementation of instruction, and the classroom environment as a whole.

Marlene's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Marlene's mentor began the discussion on her ability to plan and prepare for instruction by noting how well she knew her students and their families (A1=3). Additionally, she indicated that Marlene plans fun, curriculum-based activities that are individualized (A4=2.5). She noted,

She tries to pick things that interest the kids that also follows along with her curriculum...Everything she does in her class is individualized (A2=2.5; A3=3).

Similarly, the researcher rated Marlene's ability to plan and prepare for instruction close to the proficient level (Mean=2.8). Marlene shared several methods for making instruction appropriate, including student and parent conferences, pre-assessments, and collaborating with other teachers.

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Marlene's mentor teacher described again how she takes the time to get to know her students and what may be triggers for undesirable behaviors in the classroom, which is critical for working

with students identified as severely emotionally disturbed (SED). In this way she creates an environment of respect and rapport by treating students equitably (B1=3; B2=3.5). She stated,

With her population she does a lot of getting to know the students and what sets them off and what doesn't set them off... (there's a student) that when he gets mad he starts rocking...and if she leaves him alone he'll kind of come together and get back on track, but if you keep trying to get him on track while he's upset, it'll kind of set him off and he'll end up right in time out.

Marlene's mentor teacher further explained that there are set behavior expectations in the classroom, but it is also understood that each student has different needs in order to maintain order in the classroom environment. In this way, what is an appropriate consequence for one student may not be appropriate for another (B4=3). The researcher documented similar aspects of the interactions in the classroom environment and rated Marlene's performance slightly above the proficient level in this domain (Mean=3.1).

Although the mentor teacher did not specifically address Goals B3 (challenging learning expectations) or B5 (organizes physical space for learning and safety), the researcher noticed the designation of areas for reading, independent work, and small group instruction (B5=3). Also, she documented the questioning techniques Marlene used during individual instruction with each student (B3=3).

Domain C: Instruction. On this domain, Marlene's mentor indicated that she is aware of the educational needs of her students as evidenced by her pacing and monitoring and adjusting of lessons (C2=3; C4=3):

...it didn't work in the regular classroom, so she knows she has to go slow and she might have to re-teach things with them, but she's very positive with everything.

Also, she mentioned that Marlene is willing to try new methods of instruction and also seeks feedback on her teaching. Her mentor also noted how Marlene uses ongoing assessment to inform her instruction and re-teaches concepts when necessary (C8=3). The researcher noted similar strengths (Mean=2.9) as well as the use of technology to extend student thinking and to reinforce the concepts learned (C7=3). Although not mentioned by the mentor, the researcher documented the extent to which Marlene explained the learning objectives to each student and connected it to skills learned previously (C1=3; C3=3; C6=2.5). During the observation, Marlene worked with each student individually, but was aware of what other students were doing. It appeared that most of the students knew what they should be doing and were on task for most of the instructional period (C5=2.5).

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Marlene's mentor indicated that she manages her professional responsibility well. She had mentioned previously that Marlene communicates with the families of her students to determine what strategies are used at home to increase their comfort and success in the classroom (D4=2.5). She also noted that Marlene reflects on her teaching and

self-corrects (D1=3). The mentor did compliment Marlene on her willingness to collaborate with other professionals and participate in additional training to meet the needs of her students (D2=3; D3=3). She felt the only area that she could improve in was in the collaborative relationship with her paraprofessional. She shared that they had a good relationship, but the roles were not well established. The researcher rated her close to the proficient level on this domain (Mean=2.9).

Summary. Overall, Marlene's mentor and the researcher observed her teaching practices close to the proficient level of performance. She was rated close to the proficient level across all four domains, even above the proficient level in her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning. Marlene's ability and willingness to build respectful relationships with students and families and collaborate with colleagues will be helpful in her progress toward the distinguished level of performance.

Rachel's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Rachel's mentor teacher stated that she plans thematic units with the team of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) teachers. Also, she indicated that Rachel increases her knowledge of content and pedagogy by supplementing the adopted curriculum (A3=3; A4=3). Rachel's mentor shared,

This is a group who she has all praise for nine children with one assistant. It's a tough situation and there are lots of needs in this class. She's really looking at how to meet the diverse needs of that group of kids (A1=3).

Also, the mentor teacher indicated that she has been assisting Rachel in using the adopted language program and how to design lessons to supplement the program to meet each student's learning goals (A2=2.5). Rachel's mentor did not specifically address student assessment (Goal A5), but Rachel explained to the researcher that the assessments that she uses are incorporated with the curricular materials used and described the steps she takes for remediation when needed (A5=3). The researcher noted Rachel's attention to detail planning and preparation and rated her slightly below the proficient level (Mean=2.9).

Domain B: Classroom Environment. Rachel's mentor identified safety as a big priority. She mentioned Rachel's use of sensory-type activities for calming and specific areas for students to go to for activities or for time alone (B5=3.5). Also, she noted Rachel's behavior management system that offered several opportunities for students to feel successful (B2=3). Rachel's mentor mentioned specifically that:

They're day is quite segmented, where they're earning either a happy face or a sad face at the end of each segment. So really, I think that helps contribute to the safety in the classroom...A big part with this group, is planning enough events to keep ahead of the game (B1=3; B4=3).

Further, she emphasized that the student's day is scheduled for purposes of behavior management as well as for students to be aware of what learning activities were to come. During the observation, Rachel worked with two students at-a-time on language arts and praised them consistently for what they had accomplished during previous lessons and the skills they were adding (B3=3).

The researcher observed that Rachel's interactions with students were consistent and students seemed to know the behavior expectations when engaged in different activities. Rachel was rated slightly above the proficient level of performance in creating an environment conducive to learning (Mean=3.1).

Domain C: Instruction. In this domain, Rachel's mentor noted that she is consistently improving and trying different strategies (C1=3; C2=3):

Looking at their individual needs and looking at the strategies that are going to best meet their needs throughout the day. The sensory activities have been really nice. She's trying hard to find different ways to integrate technology (C7=2)...She's also implemented PECS [personal exchange communication system] with one of the students and created this wonderful PECS notebook for this youngster (C6=3).

The mentor stressed the use of the PECS notebook as a means of helping a non-verbal student to communicate and also to enhance social skills development. Also, Rachel's mentor teacher noted that she is still building her repertoire of methods in the core content areas (C4=3). Similarly, the researcher observed limited use of higher-order questioning (C3=2.5). This may have been difficult because of the young ages of the students and their exceptionalities.

As previously shared, Rachel's schedule incorporated behavior and learning expectations and helped students with transitions, which can be particularly difficult with the ASD population (C5=3). Similarly, the researcher noted that Rachel is still developing in this area, but with the support of her team

and her pursuit of innovative methods she will make progress in this area (Mean=2.4).

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Rachel's mentor noted that she is good about reflecting on her teaching and incorporating feedback to improve continuously (D1=3). She mentioned that Rachel is a team player and builds collaborative relationships with colleagues and parents (D3=3; D4=3):

She's a team player. Again, as a teammate she definitely pulls her weight when we plan. We have a parent support group here, and we meet monthly and she certainly pulls her share.

Additionally, her mentor discussed how Rachel attends to her students' individualized educational plans (IEP) and communicates regularly with parents about academic and behavioral issues. Also, she shared that Rachel takes responsibility for her student's success (D2=3) and is always willing to ask for assistance in meeting the needs of her students (i.e., asking for ideas). The researcher observed that Rachel works well with her paraprofessional to meet the needs of her students. Rachel was rated at the proficient level on this domain (Mean=3).

Summary. Overall, Rachel's mentor teacher and the researcher rated her abilities close to the proficient level. She is still developing in her teaching of the core academic areas, but her reflection and willingness to work collaboratively will help her progression. Also, her strength in creating an environment conducive to learning is a benefit to her students. Her mentor commented,

It takes time and experience and being able to work with kids, seeing what works and what doesn't. She doesn't give up and that's...I'm telling you, perseverance in this field is everything.

Roslyn's Mentor

Domain A: Planning and Preparation. Roslyn's mentor described how she prepared for instruction in terms of getting to know her students personally and based on their academic records and individualized educational plans (A1=3.5). She described how she used this information to find appropriate materials, specifically materials that her students will be able to read and comprehend (A2=3). The mentor also discussed Roslyn's planning incorporates ongoing assessment and how she will re-teach when necessary and build on content as students are ready developmentally (A5=3; A3=3). She highlighted that the extent of her planning allowed Roslyn to provide "solid instruction with the kids (A4=3)." Similarly, the researcher noted that Roslyn spent a significant amount of time researching activities that were of high interest to students and aligned with the curriculum and standards. She was rated slightly above the proficient level in planning and preparation (Mean=3.1).

Domain B: Classroom Environment. On this domain, Roslyn's mentor teacher observed how she organized the physical space to meet the needs of students with emotional and behavioral challenges (B5=3):

The kids all have their assigned areas and she keeps a distance between those that have behavioral needs and that need to have a little more space than others.

Also, she mentioned Roslyn's use of different grouping strategies to promote respect and rapport among students and to facilitate learning (B1=3; B2=3). She shared,

When the kids are working in groups and things, I had an opportunity to observe them, and they had the opportunity to pretty much formulate their own groups as needed for the task. She did monitor and make sure that everything and everybody was still on task (B3=3).

The mentor did not explicitly address Goal B4 (consistent standards of behavior). However, the researcher documented how Roslyn managed discretely the behavior of a student who was off task. In this way, she was maintaining a consistent standard of behavior while treating him with respect. During the observation there were other behaviors that were managed with less success (B4=2.5). She was rated just below the proficient level in this performance domain (Mean=2.9).

Domain C: Instruction. Roslyn's mentor teacher described her strengths in implementing high interest activities (C2=3) and providing students with high expectations and learning goals (C1=3). Further, she commented that Roslyn uses activities that are out of the ordinary, accesses the internet for lesson ideas and allows students to use the computers in the room for research and enrichment (C7=3). Also, she described specific strategies that were observed:

She incorporates hands-on time and a time to discuss their opinions. It works out very well (C6=3).

The mentor also shared that Roslyn asked for assistance in structuring activities for maximum effectiveness (C5=2.5). As previously noted, Roslyn's mentor sees her as capable of monitoring student learning through the use of ongoing assessments (C4=3). The researcher observed a lesson that involved a fable where she used props and allowed students to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways (C1=3; C8=3). She was rated close to the proficient level in this skill area (Mean=2.9).

Domain D: Professional Responsibilities. Roslyn's mentor discussed her relationships with her colleagues (D3=2.5). She noted that,

She seems to have a pretty good relationship with the faculty there. We've discussed on a couple of occasions where the teachers share with her the successes of her kids in the classroom. She ran a social skills program for her final internship. Some of the things transferred into the mainstream classes and the teachers came and told her specific things that the children had said to the teachers.

This also indicated that Roslyn felt responsible for her student's learning in her class and in other classes by teaching them self-advocacy skills (D2=3). Although not mentioned specifically by the mentor, the researcher also noticed how Roslyn reflects on her teaching. She was able to express very concisely the strengths and weaknesses of the observed lesson and provide several alternatives that she planned to implement with future activities (D1=4). In addition, Roslyn mentioned two of the behavior challenges observed during the lesson. She discussed the reasons why she would need to contact the parent and discussed

the rapport already established and how it would be helpful in addressing the inappropriate behavior (D2=3). She took the success of the lesson personally and articulated how it may have impacted student learning. Roslyn' mean rating was 3.1, which indicated that her overall ability in this area was slightly above the proficient level.

Summary. Overall, Roslyn was viewed by both her mentor and the researcher to be at the proficient level of performance. The depth of her planning and reflection on instruction will help her to continuously improve toward the distinguished level of performance. Her mentor remarked,

There are people out there who know what they're doing and who care.

It's kind of refreshing.

Overall Findings

The mentor teachers were clear on what the teacher's strengths were and the areas in which they were still developing. Much of the information provided by the mentors was consistent with the observations of the researcher. However, discrepancies were uncovered that warrant discussion.

Table 42 provides a componential analysis of each case. Spradley (1979) offers componential analysis as a means for understanding distinctive features using binary terms (i.e., +/-). The features included are: the researcher's ratings using the adapted Pathwise, the researcher's interpretations of the mentor teacher data by domain, and the teacher's sense of efficacy ratings by domain using the TSES. Through componential analysis, it was determined that Pathwise Domain A did not closely align with any of the TSES domains.

However, Pathwise Domain B aligned with the TSES Classroom Management domain, Pathwise Domain C aligned with the TSES Instructional Strategies domain, and Pathwise Domain D most closely aligned with the TSES Student Engagement domain, encompassing teacher responsibility for student learning. The pluses for the Pathwise ratings were determined by a rating of 2.8 or greater and a TSES rating of 6.5 or greater.

Cara was given a mean rating of 2.5 in Domain A. The researcher noted her abilities between the basic and proficient levels. Cara's mentor discussed challenges in this area, but felt they were more external (i.e., administrative) and that Cara knew what was appropriate for her students. This discrepancy may have had more to do with Cara's mentor being more familiar with her specific situation than the researcher.

Rachel was given a mean rating of 2.4 in Domain C. The researcher noted her abilities between the basic and proficient levels. Rachel's mentor discussed that she was still building her repertoire in content-specific methods, but that she was making great progress. The discrepancy in this instance may be attributed to the specific lesson the researcher was invited to observe. The lesson involved a scripted language program that allowed for minimal variation in instruction.

The componential analysis (see Table 42) revealed that Candice and Marlene rated their abilities similar to the researcher and their mentors. However, April rated her abilities across all TSES domains lower than her mentor and the researcher. April's limited self-efficacy may have been the result of both professional and personal issues alluded to over the course of the study. Also,

Roslyn rated herself lower in classroom management and student engagement as measured by the TSES. During the post- observation interview, Roslyn expressed a desire to connect more with her students and discussed specific students she was working on managing in the classroom.

Table 42

Componential Analysis of Cases

Case	Domain	Teacher	Domain	Teacher	TSES	Domain	Teacher	TSES	Domain	Teacher	TSES
	A	Interview (A)	B	Interview (B)	Management	C	Interview (C)	Instruction	D	Interview (D)	Engagement
April	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-
Candice	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Cara	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
Marlene	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Rachel	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-
Roslyn	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-

Pathwise Domain +=2.8 or higher rating; TSES +=6.5 or higher rating

RESEARCH QUESTION 5

What do select teachers enrolled in a MAT program who are completing their final internships in Varying Exceptionalities perceive as attributing to their professional successes and/or challenges?

The fifth and final question explored what the teachers perceived as impacting their work. The researcher conducted a single focus group with all participants to address this question. Intensity effect sizes, frequency distributions, and a thematic analysis were provided.

Focus Group Interview

The purpose of the focus group interview was to gather qualitative data on what the participating teachers perceived as attributing to their professional successes and challenges. The researcher facilitated the focus group interview and a graduate student assisted by taking notes during the discussion. Responses were solicited using five prompts: a) Talk about a time you felt really certain in your ability to teach your students; b) To what would you attribute your success?; c) What experiences have been the most challenging for you?; d) What about the program has worked well for you?; and e) What do you feel was missing?

Eight themes emerged from the group's responses *a posteriori* (Constas, 1992). The categories were specified iteratively, emerging through a constant comparison procedure. The categories were designated by the researcher and were verified by another graduate student to establish inter-coder reliability. More

specifically, the focus group was audio taped and the researcher transcribed the tape manually with the aid of Dragon Naturally Speaking voice recognition software (Nuance, 2005). Once the transcripts were completed, the researcher imported the files into NVivo (QSR International, 2005) qualitative software. NVivo aided in organizing codes and revealing themes. In addition, it simplified the process of calculating frequency data. Then, the researcher manually reviewed the transcripts and began the coding process. Next, another graduate student independently coded the data. Once each reader had coded the data, a meeting was held to discuss the codes and to collapse the codes into themes identified and named by the researcher.

The following themes were agreed upon: school system and school culture, program culture, student characteristics, building relationships, teacher effort and effectiveness, behavior management issues, working with families, and instructional issues. Table 43 displays the frequency effect sizes and frequency distribution for the eight themes. Through the iterative process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) the researcher and the independent coder found that the emergent themes could be sub-divided into five meta-themes: school system and school culture, teacher effort and effectiveness, program culture, student characteristics, building relationships (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). The thematic structure is displayed in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Thematic Structure of Meta-themes and Frequency Effect Sizes (FES) for Focus Group

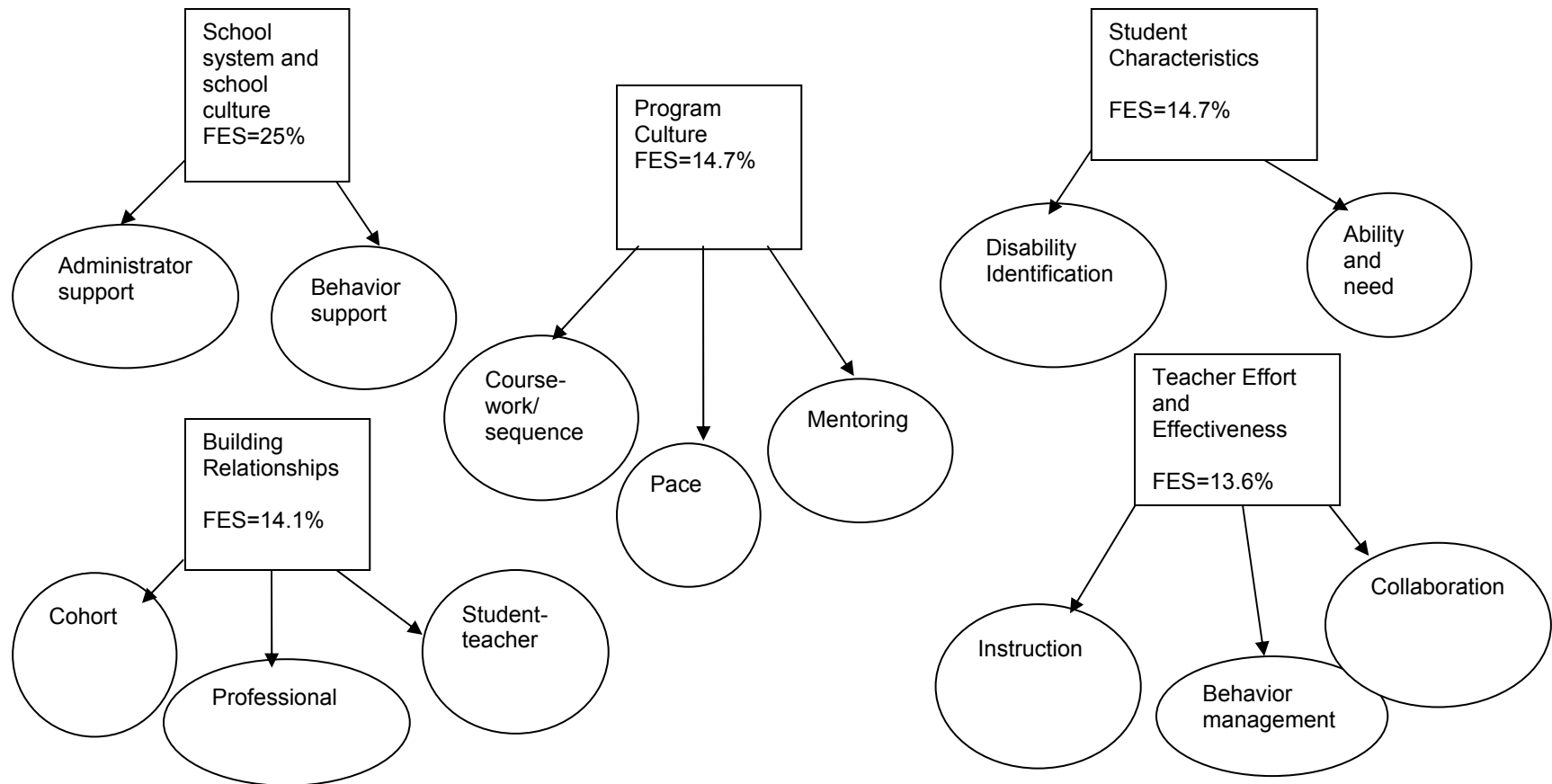


Table 43

Frequency Effect Sizes and Frequency Distribution for the Focus Group

Category Number	Generic Category	Number of Descriptor Codes in Each Generic Category	Frequency of Occurrence	Frequency Effect Sizes (percentage of total)
1	School system/ School culture	10	68	25
2	Program culture	9	40	14.7
3	Student characteristics	8	40	14.7
4	Building relationships	6	38	14.1
5	Teacher effort and Effectiveness	10	37	13.6
6	Behavior management Issues	4	27	9.9
7	Working with families	6	14	5.1
8	Instructional issues	5	8	2.9
Total	8 overall categories	58	272	100

The results from the focus group interview will be discussed in terms of the meta-themes. Focus group research is intended to reveal attitudes and perceptions of people through group interactions. In order to create what Krueger and Casey (2000) describe as “permissive” environments the participants were

assured that their comments would not be reported individually. Thus, individual quotes will not be attributed to individual participants.

School System and School Culture

The most endorsed meta-theme was school system and school culture (25%). Participants discussed systemic issues that they felt impacted them and their teaching both positively and negatively. They discussed concerns about provision of services across the continuum and appropriate setting for students. In addition, they discussed models of service delivery including the FUSE co-teach model. Other concerns included administrative support at the district and school level. In the same vein, peer support and collaborative partnerships were critical to their teaching experiences.

The teachers had the most to say about systemic issues and the culture of education, the school district, and their individual schools. Some of the systemic issues raised centered on the provision of services. For example,

He's socially maladjusted. He's not necessarily EH (Emotionally Handicapped) that's how they've got to label them to service them.

In the same vein, teachers discussed models of service delivery, specifically the Varying Exceptionalities (VE) model. One commented,

It's the VE approach. It certainly creates a lot of frustration for ESE (Exceptional Student Education) teachers. It gets in the way of being effective, it definitely does.

Another teacher added:

I think we do have a push for equity with this population, the ESE population and we have this philosophy that we all buy into, but then in the real situation it really seems that we really are not seeing that equity within the real setting in the schools.

Another concern identified was that of administrative support. The teachers brought up challenges they were experiencing in their particular settings. For example, one teacher questioned factors impacting the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education setting:

Is the administrator really buying into the needs of these kids? Are the other teachers really giving them what they need?

Another teacher added,

Now it's like I'm on my own. I have a few people's support, but the problem is we all band together and then we are the ones being the troublemakers. We know what's right.

One of the participants shared some serious challenges she is having with one of her student's behavior. She said she had been asking for behavioral support at her school level and at the district level. Reflecting on the situation she declared:

I'm thinking if we had done the FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment) when I requested it, it wouldn't have gotten to this point where her behaviors wouldn't have been this destructive. I really think we would have been able to help her.

While the teachers voiced some serious concerns, not all of their experiences have been difficult. One teacher spoke highly of the culture and climate at her school.

I got hired at this school that is just awesome and is very supportive. It's a low income, urban school and everybody is supportive of each other and if I need help, not help, but advice or want to find out better strategies I can go to any teacher, not just ESE...I feel like if I was in a school that I didn't feel like that I probably wouldn't be there and I might not be here.

Another teacher was very optimistic about her future as an educator. She was able to dissect the situation she was in and discuss what it would take to be successful in the field:

I know that some day I will actually be able to enjoy what I do, with the school's support and me giving 100%, and working as a team.

Program Culture

The next meta-theme was program culture (14.7%), specifically components that they felt worked well and others that concerned them. Participants mentioned whether or not their needs were met with regard to the population they were teaching or previous experience, outcomes related to specific projects, and shared their appreciation for the accelerated, applied nature of the program. Other issues that arose included the perceived benefit of specific coursework.

These teachers were all sharing the common experience of matriculating through the same teacher preparation program as members of a cohort. They

had both positive reflections and constructive criticisms with regard to their experiences in the program. On the positive end of the spectrum, the teachers liked the accelerated and applied nature of the program. They also appreciated the support and flexibility of the program faculty. The following comments illustrate this perspective: (a) One thing I think that has worked for me in this program as opposed to other MA programs is that it is project based; (b) Everything that we've done, as far as academics and learning, has been in the classroom. It's been real knowledge; and (c) I would not get my Master's any other way. It's very quick and condensed and not just because it's so quick, but it's also hands-on.

Even though the teachers liked the accelerated pace and their families were supportive, they acknowledged that time away from their families was a sacrifice. Some of the constructive criticisms that were expressed pertained to coursework and sequencing. For example: (a) We should have had a course on different disabilities and ways of adapting to like the autism, or the TMH (Trainable mentally handicapped), or the EELPers (Early Exceptional Learning Program); (b) There were a couple of classes that I took and literally thought, why did I take this? Psych was one; and (c) Don't leave ESOL III until the last semester.

Another critique was on the intended audience and the mild/moderate focus of the program. The teachers felt the program was excellent, but it did not meet all of their specific needs. For example, one teacher with teaching experience said,

I think I would've gotten more from it if you would have said, 'ok this group is experienced, but they're not necessarily ESE experienced so they need to sharpen some skills in some different things.'

Other teachers who were teaching in settings with more severe or intensive needs stated: (a) Because I am teaching the severe and profoundly mentally handicapped, this program was an excellent program, but it didn't help me in my classroom and (b) It just pertained to the middle of the line ESE.

The discussion also took into account the mentoring component of the program. All of the teachers felt it was worthwhile but had concerns about how it was structured. Some teachers found connecting with mentors challenging. The common perception was that they had to find their own mentor and it was difficult in some instances. This experience also seemed to differ when the teachers were not at the same school as their mentors, which was the case for three of the six teachers. One participant shared,

That became frustrating. You want to connect with your mentor and develop a relationship where you're going to be interacting and you have to make accommodations for each other. It has to be special and that's what the word mentor kind of denotes.

Others had very positive experiences and felt that the mentoring relationships were invaluable. This was evident in one teacher's reflection,

My mentor comes in and picks me up and I'm very grateful because if it weren't for her, I don't know where I'd be. I wouldn't be sitting here that's for sure.

Student Characteristics

Student characteristics (14.7%) was another meta-theme that emerged. The teachers noted differences in student disability identification, student need and ability levels. Also, they discussed student potential, challenges, and offered each other possible solutions.

Student characteristics were discussed in terms of disability category and need. Also, the teachers discussed factors impeding their students' level of achievement. One middle school teacher mentioned a concern for teachers of adolescents. She noted,

With my students self-esteem is a big issue. A lot of the anger that they feel is all inside. With that it becomes difficult to teach or for them to learn. Teaching goes on, but for them to reach their potential it can be really difficult.

Another concern that was mentioned earlier was that of student age and the potential for dropping out of school. The teachers of adolescents in the mild/moderate population shared this concern. Further, they felt their efforts were not going to be successful. One middle school teacher commented,

You've got kids who are older, you're looking at 15 or 16-year olds and they're just counting down the days until they can drop out.

Conversely, teachers also shared highlights of their students' successes. One beamed as she shared the turning point for one of her English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) students:

He said, 'I got it! I got it!' He says, 'I finally got it. Come here'. Sure enough, the light bulb came on and that was the first time this year that it actually happened.

Building Relationships

Building relationships (14.1%) was another topic of discussion. The participants discussed different types of relationships and the importance of each to the work they were undertaking. Most often the cohort relationship was mentioned fondly. Also, the teachers discussed relationships with university faculty, mentor teachers, colleagues, and students. The importance of supportive relationships for the participants was evident across all themes. Building and maintaining positive relationships was described as critical to these teachers' successes. The connections involved their cohort, students, colleagues, and their families.

Based on the discussion, the cohort relationships had extended beyond the university classroom. The teachers created a support networks and made lasting friendships. They shared the following: (a) We know everybody who we can call because we know what everybody can get done; (b) I've never been with a group of people who have been so supportive; (c) It was just wonderful. It's one of those things you can't put a price tag on; (d) We've formed a bond; and (e) I've really made friends. Whether we remain connected there is a connection.

The student-teacher relationship was discussed in terms of creating community. Further, the teachers perceived this relationship to be necessary for student learning. One teacher offered,

You have to make a connection with those kids and I think after all these years that is like the number one thing. You have to find a way to get in.

It's the only way.

Finally, relationships with colleagues also were considered important. One teacher gave her perspective on the teacher paraprofessional dyad.

In the class I'm not the teacher and she's not the paraprofessional. We are together a team that works for the kids.

Repeatedly, the mentor teacher relationship was discussed. This particular teacher had a strong relationship with her mentor who works on the same team. Their relationship has gone beyond their school and the university. She was pleased to report,

I have a success story again because my mentor and I do things outside of school together. Our kids are together, I'm going over there tonight. We interact so much now. I don't know if that would be the case if she wasn't my mentor.

Teacher Effort and Effectiveness

Another meta-theme was teacher effort and effectiveness (13.6%). Of the emergent themes, behavior management issues, working with families, and instructional issues were subsumed into this meta-theme. These teachers discussed specific times when they felt either effective or ineffective, seeking out resources to improve their effectiveness, and shared strategies that have worked for them or not worked. Also mentioned were what they perceived to be experiences that stood out as highlights and low points in their careers.

Many of the comments made about the participants' noted successes and challenges included glimpses into their teaching philosophies and beliefs on teaching and learning. Also included in this category are behavior management issues, instructional issues, and working with families. These factors all impact teacher effort and effectiveness. The teacher's varied philosophies were evident in comments such as: (a) I think that just believing the child can learn, period; (b) it's my way and you're here to learn; (c) I'm not a control freak, but my room will not be in chaos.

One of the teachers indicated that a student-centered focus was critical. She pointed out,

My kids, we have good days and we have bad days, but it's all about them. It should be all about the kids and making it right for the kids. If you can't let five or six [kids] ruin it for the rest. You have to take care of it so everyone else has a positive learning experience.

A teacher in an inclusive setting identified the link between academic engagement and behavior. She revealed:

I feel that academics definitely affect patterns of behavior. If they don't have things to hang onto to see themselves succeeding it's going to create a pattern of failure and frustration. Before you know it you have a kid who is 15 in EH or SLD who is on his way to dropping out of school.

Some of the teachers mentioned some serious challenges in managing student behavior. One had this to say:

I have one that likes to bite. He tries to hit you and then you hold his hands and then he tries to kick you. Then you hold his feet and he spits in your face.

Another teacher, whose comments were previously mentioned on requesting an FBA, said this about the behavior that prompted her to request it:

I have this little girl with destructive behaviors...they've escalated to the point where my classroom is no longer safe.

Teachers also identified changes they had made in their teaching practice to improve their effectiveness with their students. One teacher credited her mentor and teaching team with the improvements she made based on their feedback and suggestions:

In the first six months probably, the first half of the year I was doing things completely different and they were not effective. Then, I changed everything around. I changed my behavior management, how my room was organized, even the way I spoke to my kids.

In addition, a few of the teachers referred to seeking outside sources that pertained to their teaching. One in particular stated,

(On teaching students with SPMH) What I learned to teach the students that I have, I had to either learn on my own or get out of whatever colleagues I could get my hands on.

Another topic of discussion dealt with working with families. One teacher discussed being an advocate:

I was on the parent side of sitting at those IEP meetings fighting for my sibling. I never thought I would be on the teacher side fighting for my kids in my classroom.

Another issue raised was a family issue as well as a systemic issue. One of the participants shared a time when a parent felt isolated by a situation at her school:

So everybody was pushing towards the other placement. Mom wasn't happy about the school or the reputation of the school. It was just so overwhelming and the whole meeting was very negative. It was like we wanted to kick her out and she told the other people, 'I feel like nobody wants my daughter.'

Summary

The focus group interview was intended to gather data on what the participating teachers perceived as attributing to their successes and challenges. Many issues were brought up that could ultimately affect their persistence in the field. By the end of the discussion, it was clear that the relationships they had with colleagues, cohort members, and their families helped them to persist in their classrooms and in their teacher-preparation program.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

April

April, a White female in her 30's began her teaching career prior to starting the MAT program. April earned her undergraduate degree in Spanish and later became certified to teach Spanish. As a foreign language teacher, she came into contact with a cross-section of the entire school population. April

decided to pursue the MAT in Varying Exceptionalities as a result of including students with special needs in her class. At the time of her final internship, she was teaching in a resource room at a Title I middle school in a rural area.

Based on April's rating on the HUTSI (39.5), she should perform at High levels, close to the level of a Star. This indicated that she should be successful in schools considered difficult-to-staff. However, her rating on one of the mid-range functions suggested that she would be susceptible to burnout. This suggested that buffers, such as a supportive network of peers, could help her resist the conditions that lead to burnout.

April's overall sense of efficacy rating (6.33) was just below the participant group mean of 6.42. The majority of her responses (62.5%) fell in the "some degree" range. This suggested that April felt somewhat capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was below the mean of the participant group across all subscales.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that April proficiently performs her role as a teacher based on the Pathwise domains. Her greatest strength was in her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning.

The HUTSI rating (39.5) predicted that April would be successful in her teaching. This was consistent with the Pathwise data and her final evaluation GPA (4.99). However, her responses on the TSES (Mean=6.33) suggested that she has less confidence in her ability to provide effective instruction than she demonstrated.

Candice

Candice, a White female in her 40's, earned her undergraduate degree in Biblical Languages prior to serving as a missionary in a Spanish-speaking country. After returning to the States, she was employed as a one-on-one paraprofessional for a student with autism and Down Syndrome. She indicated that working with that student influenced her to pursue a degree in special education and a career in special education. At the time of her final internship, Candice was employed in a self-contained program for students with SPMH at a Title I middle school on the fringe of the inner city.

Based on Candice's rating on the HUTSI (37.0), she should be able to successfully conceptualize teaching and appropriate activities, but may experience difficulty in implementation. She may have difficulty understanding the factors that place students at risk for failure. Additionally, Candice's personal orientation towards teaching may cause her to experience disappointment if her students do not overtly display their affection. This suggested that if Candice could gain a better understanding of factors that place students at risk she could alter her orientation towards teaching and create an environment conducive to learning.

Candice's overall sense of efficacy rating (6.63) was above the participant group mean of 6.42. The majority of her responses (70.9%) fell in the "quite a bit" range. This suggested that Candice felt quite capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was above the mean

of the participant group on the Student Engagement and Instructional Strategies subscales and below on Classroom Management.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that Candice performs her role as a teacher close to the proficient level based on the Pathwise domains. She was equally strong in her planning for instruction and her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning.

The HUTSI rating (37.0) predicted that Candice would be successful in her teaching, although she may be initially hesitant. This was consistent with the Pathwise data and her final evaluation GPA (4.34). Further, her responses on the TSES (Mean=6.63) suggested that she was confident in her ability to provide effective instruction which may have increased her willingness to explore and implement new strategies.

Cara

Cara, a White female in her 20's, earned her undergraduate degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders. She worked in clinical settings as well as at a preschool. Her experience with a Deaf sibling inspired her to pursue a career as a special educator. She chose the MAT program as her route to become qualified and certified. At the time of her final internship, Cara was employed in an EELP program housed at an elementary school in a suburban neighborhood.

Based on Cara's rating on the HUTSI (36.5), she should be able to conceptualizing teaching and understand the purposes of a variety of activities, but may experience difficulty in implementation. Cara's individual ratings on the

mid-range functions indicated that she may not clearly recognize the factors that place student at risk for failure. Further, she may be susceptible to burnout. This suggested that developing supportive peer networks may reduce her vulnerability for burnout. Further, through collaboration, Cara may be able to counter some of the factors that place students at risk for failure.

Cara's overall sense of efficacy rating (5.54) was below the participant group mean of 6.42. The majority of her responses (66.7%) fell in the "some degree" range. This suggested that Cara felt somewhat capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was above the mean of the participant group on the Student Engagement subscale, but below the mean on the Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management subscales.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that Cara performs her role as a teacher above the basic level based on the Pathwise domains. Her greatest strength was in managing her professional responsibilities.

The HUTSI rating (36.5) predicted that Cara would be successful in her teaching, although she may be initially hesitant. This was consistent with the Pathwise data and her final evaluation GPA (3.33), which showed room for further development. Further, her responses on the TSES (Mean=5.54) suggested that she lacked confidence in her ability to provide effective instruction.

Marlene

Marlene, a White female in her 40's, earned her undergraduate degree in Criminology. Her decision to pursue the MAT degree and become a special

educator was the result of navigating the system as a parent of a child with special needs. At the time of her final internship, Marlene was teaching students identified as SED in a self-contained primary classroom.

Based on her HUTSI ratings (33.5), Marlene could be expected to conceptualize the duties of a teacher, but may be initially hesitant in implementing ideas. According to her individual mid-range ratings, her greatest challenges would be persistence, burnout, and her orientation towards teaching. This suggested that her expectations for student adulation may impede her success and willingness to stay.

Marlene's overall sense of efficacy rating (6.88) was above the participant group mean of 6.42. The majority of her responses (70.9%) fell in the "quite a bit" range. This suggested that Marlene felt quite capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was above the mean of the participant group on the Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management subscales and below on the Student Engagement subscale.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that Marlene is close to proficient in performing her role as a teacher based on the Pathwise domains. Her greatest strength was in her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning.

The HUTSI rating (33.5) predicted that Marlene would be successful in her teaching, although she may require considerable support. However, based on the Pathwise and her final evaluation GPA (4.99), Marlene was doing well for a beginning teacher. Further, her responses on the TSES (Mean=6.88) suggested

that she was confident in her ability to provide effective instruction which may have increased her willingness to explore and implement new strategies and to persist in the field.

Rachel

Rachel, a White female in her 30's, earned her undergraduate degree in Speech Pathology. After graduating, she was employed as a paraprofessional in an elementary classroom for students with autism. Rachel indicated that working with the students in that program encouraged her to pursue a career in special education. At the time of her final internship, she was employed in a classroom for students with autism at the same Title I school where she was a paraprofessional.

Based on her HUTSI ratings (40.0), Rachel could be expected to perform as a Star teacher, one who is able to implement their own plans or plans suggested by others. Rachel scored well in all areas, but she had the greatest difficulty in appropriately identifying the variables that place students at risk for failure.

Rachel's overall sense of efficacy rating (6.92) was above the participant group mean of 6.42. Half of her responses (50.0%) fell in the "quite a bit" range. This suggested that Rachel felt quite capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was above the mean of the participant group on the Instructional Strategies and Classroom Management subscales and below the mean on the Student Engagement subscale.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that Rachel performs her role as a teacher close to the proficient level based on the Pathwise domains. Her greatest strength was in her ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning.

The HUTSI rating (40.0) predicted that Rachel would be successful in her teaching. This was consistent with the Pathwise data and even more on her final evaluation GPA (5.0). Further, her responses on the TSES (Mean=6.92) suggested that she had a high level of confidence in her ability to provide effective instruction.

Roslyn

Roslyn, a Latina in her 50's, earned her undergraduate degree in Sociology and Bilingual Education. She taught ESOL prior to entering the MAT program. Roslyn indicated that she had always had a desire to teach students with special needs. At the time of her final internship, Roslyn was employed at a math, science, and technology magnet middle school in the inner city.

Based on her HUTSI ratings (40.0), Roslyn could be expected from the onset to implement her own plans or plans suggested by others as a Star teacher. Roslyn had high ratings in all areas, but had the greatest challenge in appropriately identifying factors that place students at risk for failure.

Roslyn's overall sense of efficacy rating (6.25) was below the participant group mean of 6.42. The majority of her responses (66.7%) fell in the "some degree" range. This suggested that Roslyn felt somewhat capable of impacting student learning. Her sense of efficacy as measured by the TSES was above the

mean of the participant group in Instructional Strategies and below on the Student Engagement and Classroom Management subscales.

Researcher observation and mentor teacher interview data indicated that Roslyn proficiently performs her role as a teacher based on the Pathwise domains. She was equally strong in her ability to plan and prepare for instruction and in managing her professional responsibilities.

The HUTSI rating (40.0) predicted that Roslyn would be successful in her teaching. This was consistent with the Pathwise data and her final evaluation GPA (5.0). However, her responses on the TSES (Mean=6.25) suggested that she has less confidence in her ability to provide effective instruction than she demonstrated.

Researcher's Self-Reflection

Even before this study began, I acknowledged that my personal experiences were pivotal to the undertaking of this study thus, this section is purely reflexive (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Further, I chose to write about my experience as a story, retrospectively and introspectively. Therefore, only some of the participant data are mentioned.

As previously mentioned, I began my career as a special educator teaching out-of-field. During our first meeting, I believed that the participants were willing to be involved in this study because they felt that I understood what they were going through in the program and as novice teachers. This sentiment was expressed by one teacher with whom I previously worked and another teacher who was interested in what I would find and what impact it would have

on the program and the field. The purpose of this reflection, as suggested by Moustakas (1994), is to provide a glimpse into my perspective on this topic and one of the reasons why this particular study was carried out.

I felt an immediate connection to each of the participating teachers. Similar to Marlene and Cara, I had a relative with special needs. As a child, I knew she was different, but she was my cousin and I loved her. It never occurred to me the degree of the impact this had on her life and those charged with her care. My experience with disability was not as intimate as Marlene and Cara who have an immediate family member with a disability, but it has encouraged the zeal with which I pursue teaching students with special needs. These two teachers discussed understanding the need for competent teachers and the level of advocacy required when navigating the educational system.

Like April and Candice, I began my work with students with special needs in a limited capacity. I worked as a long-term substitute teacher and became aware of the diversity of abilities within the classroom. I eagerly accepted the challenge of making content comprehensible and engaging for all of the learners in my middle school classroom. It was not long before I accepted the opportunity to begin a career in special education.

My first position was contingent upon my agreement to earn the required credentials. Because of the climate in education and the dire shortage of special education teachers, I had the option of passing the state certification exam to become fully certified. Even though this was a viable option, I knew like Marlene, that in my self-contained class for elementary students with emotional and

behavioral disorders, I needed pedagogical training and research-based behavior management strategies. Similar to reports of the teachers during the focus group, I had an excellent collaborative relationship with my paraprofessional and teaching team, but administrative support was scant.

At the end of my first year of teaching, I decided that pursuing a Master's degree and certification, through a program similar to the MAT, would benefit my students and me with regard to my effectiveness in the classroom. Similar to the MAT program, the program that I graduated from provided coursework in educational measurement, psychological foundations, creating positive learning environments, and an internship that included a classroom-based action research project. However, my program also included coursework on collaboration, working with families, assessment, and individual courses on emotional and behavioral disorders, mental retardation, and specific learning disabilities. Aside from the coursework, I built support networks and lasting friendships just as the participants did.

By the time my Master's degree was conferred, I felt confident in my ability to reach and teach students with special needs. Like Rachel, the required coursework and my growing experience bolstered my confidence as a teacher. I subsequently worked at two middle schools with administrations that gave me greater support and responsibility. As was noted in the focus group, administrative support impacts job satisfaction and inevitably teacher effort and effectiveness. For example, one of the teachers discussed the supportive climate

in her school and how it compelled her to persist on the job and in the program (Carlson, Brauen, Klein, et al., 2002).

I entered doctoral study with the hopes of having an exponential impact on the outcomes of students with special needs via teacher education. As I began each phase of this study I reflected on my experiences and how I felt when I was in the position of each of the participants. It was challenging, but I understood the need to bracket my experiences in order to capture the essence of each case (Creswell, 1998). It is clear that some of the issues raised by the participants were experienced by teachers entering the field before them. For example, the need for more pedagogical tools was seen throughout (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2002). Also, the support of administration and peers was mentioned repeatedly. This indicated that some of the challenges experienced may be inherent in the culture of schools and systems and may cause some of the attrition from the field (Ingersoll, 2001). This has implications for teacher preparation programs, school districts, and educational policymakers. A detailed discussion, including implications for stakeholders and recommendations for future research, is presented in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study examined the characteristics of six teachers completing their final internships in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in Varying Exceptionalities. Specifically, the researcher explored the teachers' (a) demographic and background information, (b) expectancy to persist in difficult-to-staff schools, (c) sense of efficacy, (d) teaching effectiveness, and (e) perceived factors attributing to their successes and challenges. The data were collected using a concurrent triangulation mixed-method design via pre-existing data, surveys, interviews, and a focus group interview. This chapter includes a summary of findings and implications for teacher preparation programs, school districts, and educational policymakers. Additionally, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are provided.

Summary of Findings

Demographic and Background Information

Recent research has indicated that the supply of teachers is limited in terms of both quantity and quality (Boe et al., 1998; Ingersoll, 2001). The field is being replenished with graduates of traditional teacher education programs, alternative teacher education programs, and blended models such as MAT programs for candidates with varied academic backgrounds (Ruhland & Bremer,

2003; Wayman et al., 2003). The proliferation of teachers from non-traditional entryways is even more prevalent in areas of critical shortage including special education (McKlesky & Ross, 2004; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2001). The replenishers of the field are changing the demographics, even if only in some features. For example, studies have shown that beginning teachers remain predominately female and White, but are now older, with a mean and median age in the 40's (Henke et al., 1997; Henke et al., 2005; Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Also, a considerable number of teachers are coming into teaching from the social sciences and humanities (Henke et al., 2005).

Consistent with the literature, of the six participants in the present study, five were White and all were female and ranged in age from the late 20's to the early 50's. Further, their undergraduate degrees were all from social science programs. At the time the study was conducted, the participants were employed in special education teaching positions within one large district in the Southeast and opted to earn their initial certification for their primary teaching assignments through an MAT program in Varying Exceptionalities. They all had either personal or professional experiences with students with special needs that influenced their decisions to enter the special education teaching force.

The literature on teacher recruitment and retention suggests that the types of schools in which teachers begin their careers also should be considered. According to Zumwalt and Craig (2005), new teachers are disproportionately employed in schools that qualify for Title I support, or schools often described as difficult-to-staff (Berry, 2004). Although it was not a requirement of the MAT

program, this phenomenon was true for the participants in this study, with four of the six teachers employed in Title I schools and another in an urban school not identified as Title I. This finding may impact retention of these teachers in special education, in their schools, or in the field of education. As Haberman (1995) noted, there are challenges unique to teaching in inner-city and high-poverty schools.

Expectancy to Persist in Difficult-to-Staff Schools

Retention is of great concern to stakeholders in the educational enterprise. Brownell et al. (2002) identified three major areas related to teacher attrition in special education: (a) teacher characteristics; (b) workplace conditions; and (c) affective responses to teaching. In the same vein, the HUTSI (1995a) was intended to identify teachers who will remain in difficult-to-staff schools and be successful. It must be noted that the HUTSI has been criticized for inconclusive findings of its predictive validity (Baskin et al., 1996; Klussman, 2004). However, researchers have suggested that it is a useful tool for identifying pedagogical principles (Klussman, 2004) and for identifying teachers who will remain in the field (Frey, 2003). Thus, it is appropriate for use in conjunction with other measures.

The HUTSI data analyzed as a part of this study were collected by trained interviewers prior to the teachers' entry into the MAT program. All of the teachers were rated at the Star or High level of performance (33.5-40.0). Consistent with previous research, the HUTSI was fairly consistent in predicting the performance of the participants, as measured by their mentors on the final evaluations. The

HUTSI rating correlated well for Rachel and Roslyn, who were rated as Stars and also received 5.0 on their final evaluation GPAs. Also, April was rated High (39.5) on the HUTSI and received a 4.99 on her final evaluation GPA. Similarly, Candice was rated High (37.0) on the HUTSI and received a final evaluation GPA of 4.34. However, there were discrepancies for Marlene who was rated High (33.5), but received the lowest rating on the HUTSI (33.5) and received a near perfect final evaluation GPA (4.99). Finally, Cara received a fairly High (36.5) rating on the HUTSI and the lowest final evaluation GPA (3.33).

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

Teacher efficacy has been identified as a significant factor related to high quality teaching (Carlson et al., 2004; Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). Moreover, it has been found that teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to persist and be more innovative in their teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). In this study, the responses to the TSES indicated that overall, participants had the greatest sense of efficacy in classroom management (6.59). This finding was inconsistent with the normative sample (6.7), which scored the lowest on this subscale. However, it was consistent with the findings of Callins (2005), who used the TSES to measure the efficacy of teacher candidates in their final internship. The sample means for Instructional Strategies and Student Engagement were close at 6.37 and 6.31, respectively. The most interesting finding was that Roslyn's and April's actual levels of performance were better than they believed based on their TSES responses. Rachel and Marlene had the highest sense of self-efficacy and received high ratings on their evaluations,

which suggested that their sense of efficacy may have positively impacted their levels of performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Teaching Effectiveness

According to Danielson (1996), the Pathwise instrument is intended for use as a framework for understanding and demonstrating teaching proficiency. It is developmental in that it can be used as a means of communicating proficiency in teaching. The findings indicated that overall, the teachers who participated in this study were competent, highly-qualified teachers. Based on the Pathwise ratings and the mentor teacher interviews, the teachers were all performing above the Basic level of performance. Overall, the teachers received the highest rating for creating a classroom environment conducive to learning, which is consistent with the teacher's sense of efficacy in classroom management. The participants showed the greatest room for growth in instruction. The mentors consistently mentioned that the teachers were willing to explore and implement new methods in their classrooms (Darling-Hammond et al., 2004). If the teachers continue to incorporate different strategies, it is likely that their levels of teaching performance will continue to improve as expected.

Perceived Factors Attributing to Successes and Challenges

Interesting data came from the focus group interview. Overall, the teachers perceived that systemic issues had the greatest impact on their success. However, there were differing views on this topic. Some of the participants felt they were in supportive environments and that was essential to

their staying. On the other hand, teachers who did not feel supported planned to stay in the field, but were less certain about their school placements. This belief was consistent with the findings of Ingersoll (2001), who noted that school climate and organizational factors impact teacher success and retention.

Additionally, the teachers indicated that student characteristics were of regular concern to them. They mentioned specific student characteristics, both academic and affective, as sources of challenge. Ingersoll (2001) also documented that teacher retention is impacted by student needs. Conversely, they mentioned specific instances when they felt the greatest sense of accomplishment through their students' successes.

The teachers also discussed the experience of completing the MAT program. They indicated that the pace was a benefit and a detriment. The teachers shared that they were pleased that they could finish the program in a short time frame, but also felt that they had to make sacrifices in other areas of their lives. Brownell and colleagues (2002) provided support for post-baccalaureate programs that require students to participate in extensive coursework and include collaboration between teacher educators and school-based professionals. Although, there is a paucity of research on the effectiveness of such programs, the research that exists suggests that they produce competent educators (Berry, 2004; Brownell et al., 2002).

Limitations

Threats to Internal Validity

The threats to internal validity specific to this study were instrumentation, construct-related validity, observational bias, and reactive arrangements. Instrumentation posed a threat because the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001) was used. In order to limit this threat, normative data provided by the developers were included. Instrumentation was also a concern because secondary data from the HUTSI (Haberman, 1995) were analyzed and interpreted as a part of this study. The developer does not provide reliability or validity data, because the data are to be measured against subsequent classroom performance. Construct-related validity presented another threat to internal validity because efficacy and effectiveness are higher-order constructs that require precise definitions. Also, observational bias was a threat. The adapted Pathwise framework provides a thorough picture of the teachers' performance, but it could be criticized as an insufficient sample because the researcher observed each teacher one time (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lastly, reactive arrangements acknowledges that the participants' behaviors and responses may have been positively skewed because they were aware of the study and may have performed according to what they believed was desired by the researcher (Onwuegbuzie, 2003).

Threats to External Validity

The nature of case study research is to understand the sample at the time of study and not to generalize beyond the current study (Stake, 1995).

However, the primary threats to external validity for the present study could be considered population validity, ecological validity, temporal validity, and self-report. Self-report was of concern because participants reported their own sense of teaching efficacy. Also, specificity of variables posed a threat to external validity because the specific instruments used to measure the constructs identified are operationalized for the purposes of this study (Onwuegbuzie, 2003).

Threats to Credibility

This researcher has a broadened conceptualization of highly qualified that is unique to this study and cannot be generalized beyond this study (Maxwell, 1996). Again, having a sample size of six limits the generalizability of findings. Descriptive validity was a concern because of the use of secondary data sources, self-report, and choice of language and selection of relevant data (Maxwell, 1996). Also, interpretive validity was considered a threat because the researcher was responsible for providing a valid account of the characteristics of the participants (Maxwell, 1996).

Implications

The results from this case study are not intended to generalize, but rather to describe a sample of teachers who chose an MAT program to further their practice as special educators and to obtain initial certification. Similarly, the implications that follow are not representative enough to generalize to a larger population, but rather to prompt discussion and action among those who are stakeholders in education and who are in positions to affect positive change.

Teacher Preparation Programs

The findings from this study suggested that the Varying Exceptionalities focus may not be meeting the preparation needs of all teachers, particularly those teachers who serve students with more intensive needs. However, it was noted in the focus group data that the accelerated programs are desirable. For these reasons, Institutions of Higher Education should continue to develop and refine teacher preparation programs that are research-based as well as time- and cost-efficient. These programs also must actively work to augment the quantity and quality of the teaching force by focusing on the following:

- *Recruit potential teacher candidates with a wide angle lens.* If the numbers of traditional candidates are reducing, it is imperative that recruitment efforts are bolstered. One method that has been successful is recruiting from within school districts, including high school students and paraprofessionals (Berry, 2004). Providing pre-collegiate preparation and financial assistance is critical. Additionally, the description of the participants in the present study supported the literature that recommends recruiting students from other disciplines such as mathematics, the sciences, and social sciences; and other careers are viable options;
- *Diversify the pool of qualified teachers.* Campbell-Whatley (2003) documented the disproportionate representation of teachers of color, whereas approximately 37% of students in special education are from diverse backgrounds, only 14% of special educators represent diverse groups. This discrepancy suggests that more needs to be undertaken to

attract a more culturally diverse cadre into the teaching force. Even though the majority of the participants in this study were White and female, there were other members of their cohort who were African American. Targeted recruitment may help reduce the persistence overrepresentation in America's public schools. This may be achieved by partnering with community organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Pan-Hellenic organizations;

- *Create a pipeline for new knowledge producers.* Recruitment efforts should include attracting talented educators who will not only make an impact in their individual classrooms, but also pursue graduate study. While not all of these talented individuals will pursue careers in higher education, it is probable that some will pursue positions in the professoriate and others will return to their districts to assume leadership roles. In either instance, educators with varied experience and expertise can serve to improve teacher effectiveness as teacher educators, mentor teachers, or in professional development roles. Again, the knowledge producers and leaders that are nurtured also must be representative of the increasing diversity of our nation and schools (Shealey & McCray, 2005);
- *Venture out of the ivory towers.* In order for teacher preparation programs to remain current and have a significant impact on the field, scholars and researchers must actively collaborate with schools and conduct research in the schools. Additionally, it is apparent that universities are no longer

the sole preparers of educators (Paige, 2002), but they prepare teachers most effectively (Brownell et al., 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2003). That said, university-based programs must take an active role to collaborate with districts to create quality alternative certification programs and induction programs. The research that is pursued and disseminated through universities must be made accessible to school-level professionals. As the teachers indicated in the focus group, even though they know what the best practices are, they are often times discouraged from implementing them in their classrooms.

Former Secretary of Education Rod Paige declared that quality teaching only requires adequate verbal ability and a degree covering content (Paige, 2002). Since that report was disseminated, research has shown that professional educators must also have pedagogical knowledge and certain dispositions to be successful (Darling-Hammond, & Youngs, 2002; NCATE, 2002). Teacher educators must hold themselves personally responsible for recruiting and retaining high-quality teacher candidates.

School Districts

School districts have a continued need for highly qualified and highly effective teachers. Furthermore, districts need to take careful measures to recruit skilled teachers. Additionally, school systems must foster a culture that will encourage teachers to stay in the field. As previously mentioned, the focus group data showed a strong need to examine school culture and administrative support,

which the participants felt impacted their performance. Specific recommendations to school districts include:

- *Form and strengthen university partnerships.* Professional Development Schools are an effective way for administrators to interact with pre-service teachers who may eventually transition into employment (Wise, 2000/2001). Also, the PDS model allows education professionals to have access to researchers and research-based best practices;
- *Identify and support promising individuals from within the school system.* School systems are in a prime position to recruit individuals who are already involved in the milieu of schools. Possible recruits from within include paraprofessionals, parents, and high school students (Brownell et al., 2005);
- *Actively recruit a diverse pool of teachers who are likely to stay.* Recruitment also a responsibility of school district personnel. Education professionals must take responsibility for recruiting potential educators who are vested in education and will persist and act as change agents in schools deemed difficult-to-staff (Berry, 2004). This is noteworthy since many novice teachers begin their careers in schools identified as high-poverty or with large ethnic minority populations;
- *Foster a positive school culture.* Organizational factors have been blamed for educator attrition. Fostering a positive school culture characterized by respect, collegiality, and professionalism is critical (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, induction and support programs must be in place. Again, the

participants in this study indicated that they felt more efficacious in their ability to teach their students when they were in a supportive school.

In recent years, the education profession has been under attack. It is up to individual educators, schools, and school systems to correct the blemished image of the profession. Educators must take their work seriously and have high expectations for themselves and their peers. Only then will other professions begin to see education as a profession of equal status.

Educational Policymakers

Educational policymakers are responsible for the current climate in education. In an era of high-stakes accountability, teaching is becoming a field devoid of professionalism. In fact, education is characterized more by quantity and not quality. Increasing the numbers of teachers and raising test scores is the driving force, not producing quality teachers to prepare learners who can critically think and consume. The teachers in this study demonstrated high levels of teaching abilities, but also voiced their concerns about having improved throughout the course of the program. This suggests that educational policymakers should refocus and attend to the following:

- *Understand the implication of decisions before they are made.* NCLB (2002) has laudable goals. However, many effective teachers' careers are in jeopardy due to high-stakes testing of their own and of their students. Thus, there will be collateral damage that may be irreversible (Mathis, 2005);

- *Make well-informed, research-based decisions.* A complaint of many professional educators is that the laws that impact them the most are made by politicians, many of whom have never taught in a public-school classroom. Both quantitative and qualitative data from the field are warranted (US DOE OSERS, 2002).
- *Develop policy that empowers teachers.* Although the tenets of NCLB (2002) are admirable, many would argue that it does not take the everyday complexities of the classroom into account. In fact, Sunderman, Kim, and Orfield (2005) documents how implementation has exacerbated the very gaps it intended to close. Policy must empower teachers to perform more effectively rather than discourage them and potentially push them out of the field.

Ultimately, educational policymakers at the federal and state levels are in the position to affect the greatest widespread change. Data-based decisions and legislations are warranted and necessary.

Recommendations for Future Research

As stated previously, research in special education has focused primarily on specific interventions (McKlesky & Ross, 2004). However, to have a broader impact, teachers need to be studied more closely. Studies regarding specific characteristics, pathways to the profession, and overall teacher effectiveness are needed (McKlesky, Tyler, & Flippin, 2004). The findings from this study revealed that there is much more research to be conducted. Research should be undertaken using both qualitative and quantitative methods and using multiple

data sources. The following recommendations are a direct result of the present study:

- *Expand and replicate this study longitudinally.* This case study included some data that were previously collected. If this study were to be expanded and conducted longitudinally, the researcher could collect data on an entire cohort of teachers from the initial interview through graduation. Also, conducting periodic observations would provide more representative information on teacher effectiveness. In addition, teachers' lesson plans and daily journals would provide rich data on the instructional process.
- *Conduct research on specific groups.* In the present study, the researcher solicited the participation of all teachers in a cohort who worked in a particular district. She was pleased to have a Latina participate in the study, but was disappointed that none of the African-American teachers volunteered to participate. It is possible that these teachers would have participated if the study pertained only to them.
- *Conduct research examining the quality of teachers in the field with the expanded definition of "highly qualified" offered in the present study.* The present study operationalized the highly qualified designation to include other dispositions and traits. Evaluating teachers in the field and those planning to enter the field with this definition would help stabilize the teaching force by ensuring high quality teachers enter and persist in the field.

Research based on the preceding recommendations will expand the knowledge base on teachers and teacher preparation. If teachers have the greatest influence on learning, students in the nation's public schools must have qualified teachers who will remain in field. Children on the far side of the achievement gap, those who are typically marginalized, are counting on them.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Teacher Demographics and Characteristics

Author(s)	Design	Participants	Findings
<hr/> Studies Examining Teacher Demographics <hr/>			
Billingsley (2002)	Phone interviews	358 administrators and 8,061 service providers	31% of beginning special educators Hold Master's degrees; 60% enter The field certified for primary assignment
Boyer & Mainzer (2003)	Secondary analysis of survey data	8,000 special education teachers, administrators, Para-educators, general educators, and speech pathologists	Special Education teaching force approximately 85% female; median age 44
Brookhart & Freeman (1992)	Meta-analysis	44 studies	75%-80% of teacher candidates were female
Henke, Choy, Chen, Geis, & Alt (1997)	Statistical analysis	SASS:93-94 data and TFS: 94-95 data	Teachers 75% female; 84% White, non-Hispanic; average age 42
Henke, Peter, Li, & Geis (2005)	Statistical analysis	B & B data	75% of teaching force White and female 1999-2000

Appendix A (continued)

Zumwalt & Craig (2005)	Meta-analysis	NCES and SASS data; education journals; databases and internet sites	Females more prevalent in elementary than secondary programs; average teacher age is in the early 40's; diversity among beginning teachers
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Studies Examining Teacher Efficacy

Billingsley (2002)	Phone interviews	358 administrators and 8,061 service providers	96% of special educators agreed to a moderate or great extent that they were prepared to deal with student learning needs
Carlson, Hyunshik, & Schroll (2004)	Factor analysis	1,475 special educators	Factor loadings for variables of self-efficacy were reasonably high suggesting that self-efficacy was important for teacher quality
Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, (2002)	Statistical analysis of survey data	3,000 beginning educators in New York City	Teacher preparedness significantly related to sense of teaching efficacy
Ebmeier (2003)	Statistical analysis of survey data	calibration N=222 teachers; validation N=332	Principal supervision and peer mentoring impact positively teacher efficacy and commitment to teaching
Flores, Desjean- Perrotta, & Steinmetz (2004)	Statistical analysis of survey data	162 teachers pursuing MA degrees at one IHE	Traditionally-prepared teachers had greater self- efficacy than alternative certified teachers
Hoy (2000)	Statistical analysis of longitudinal data	55 teacher candidates in two cohorts	Teacher efficacy rose during teacher preparation, but fell with actual teaching experience

Appendix B

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (long form)

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Teacher Beliefs How much can you do?	Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal	
Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.										
1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
21. How well can you respond to defiant students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

Appendix C
Adapted Pathwise Observation Rating Form

Teacher: Observation Date: Time:
Observer:

School / Classroom Context:

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE	
6a. How do you become familiar with what your students already know?	
6b. How do you become familiar with your students' background, culture, and cultural resources?	
7. How have you addressed the needs of this particular group of students?	
8. How do you communicate with parents or guardians of students in this class?	
9. Is there anything about the learning environment or your school that you think might affect your students for the scheduled observation?	
10. What are the most important classroom routines, procedures, rules and expectation for student behavior that will be in operation during the observed lesson?	
11. Who do you talk to about your teaching or student(s)? How often?	
12. How do you coordinate and or collaborate with other colleagues?	
13. What are your goals for student learning in the lesson we will observe?	
14. How does the content of the lesson build on what students have already studied?	

Appendix C (continued)

15. How does the content of this lesson relate to what students will be learning in the future?
16. How will you group students for instruction? Why?
17. What teaching methods will you use for this lesson? Why?
18. What activities have you planned? Why?
19. What instructional material will you use if any?
20. How and when do you plan to assess your students' learning?
DOMAIN B: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
1. Creates an environment that promotes fairness.
2. Creates an environment of respect and rapport.
3. Communicates challenging learning expectations.
4. Establishes and maintains consistent standards of classroom behavior.
5. Organizes physical space for maximum learning and safety.

Appendix C (continued)

RATINGS: B1- B2- B3- B4- B5-
COMMENTS:
DOMAIN C: INSTRUCTION
1. Communicates learning goals and instructional procedures.
2. Makes content comprehensible to students.
3. Extends students' thinking.
4. Monitors learning, provides feedback, and adjusts learning activities to meet the needs of all students.
5. Uses instructional time effectively.
6. Communicates clearly and accurately, encourages students to communicate effectively.
7. Integrates technology into instruction.
8. Impacts student learning as evidenced by formative and/or summative assessments.
RATINGS: C1- C2- C3- C4- C5- C6- C7- C8-
COMMENTS
POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW
1. Did students learn what you intended? How do you know?
2. How would you group student for similar instruction in the future?

Appendix C (continued)

3. In what ways were your teaching methods effective?
4. In what ways were your activities effective?
5. In what ways were your materials effective?
6. Assessment
7. How will you use the information from the assessment data in planning future instruction?
REFLECTION
1. Did you depart from anything you planned for today?
2. If you were going to teach this again to the same students, what would you do differently?
3. Based on what happened today, what do you plan to do next with this class?
4. Identify an individual or group of students who did well in today's lesson. How do you account for this individual or group's performance? What might you do in the future to challenge this (these) student(s)?
5. Identify an individual or group of students who had difficulty in today's lesson. What accounted for this individual or group's performance? How will you help this (these) students' achieve their learning goals?
6. Any further comments, or reactions about the lesson?
Ethical issues?
Diversity issues?

Appendix D

Mentor Teacher Interview Protocol

1. Please discuss _____'s ability to plan and prepare for classroom instruction.	
a. Knowledge of students	b. Designing appropriate lessons
c. Use of effective methods	d. Assessment for instruction
2. Describe how _____ creates a classroom environment to maximize learning and safety.	
3a. What are _____'s strengths in instruction?	
3b. Areas needing improvement?	
4. Tell me how _____ manages her professional responsibility.	
a. Professional demeanor	b. Builds relationships
c. Communicates openly	d. Maintains records/paperwork

Additional Comments:

Appendix E

Focus Group Interview Protocol

1. Talk about a time you felt really certain in your ability to teach your students with disabilities?
2. What would you attribute those successes to?

Probes: Any particular experiences or course work?

What about students with EBD, Gifted?

3. What experiences have been the most challenging for you?
4. What would you attribute those challenges to?
5. What in your teacher preparation program worked really well for you?
6. What was missing?
7. Are there any other thoughts that have come up that we haven't discussed?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Erica McCray received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology in 1998 and a Master's degree in Special Education: Varying Exceptionalities in 2002, both from the University of South Florida, Tampa. She was employed as a K-12 special educator while completing the MA degree until she entered the Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida in 2003.

While in the Ph.D. program at the University of South Florida, Erica made several paper presentations at various meetings of national organizations. In addition, she authored two publications in *Urban Education* and *Intervention in School and Clinic* and co-authored a publication in *Remedial and Special Education*.