

**Motivations, Beliefs, and Program Needs of Alternative Certification Candidates at the  
University of Georgia**

by

LISA ANN ROHDE

(Under the Direction of Nancy F. Knapp)

**Abstract**

Sixty-four students enrolled in post-baccalaureate programs at the University to Georgia in order to earn their initial teacher certification were surveyed. Participants were asked questions about their demographics and background, motivations for entering teaching, beliefs about teaching efficacy, anticipated challenges and rewards, and the concerns or suggested changes for their certification program.

The results showed that these programs attracted a higher proportion of minority teachers than traditional programs, but no greater proportion of males. Also, the candidates had a great deal of experience working in education with children and most knew at least one friend or family member who also taught. Alternative certification candidates were mostly motivated by intrinsic or altruistic motivations rather than extrinsic rewards of teaching. Proposed changes to the programs included increased financial aid, changes to the schedule and location of classes, and additional coursework. Further results, implications, and directions for future research will be discussed below.

**INDEX WORDS:** alternative certification, preservice teachers, motivation, beliefs,  
University of Georgia

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LISA ANN ROHDE

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LISA ANN ROHDE

Major Professor: Nancy F. Knapp

Committee: Martha Carr  
James Marshall

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
July 2010

### **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Margie, for all her love and support as well as serving as the inspiration for this research. I also want to dedicate this to my brother and sister who have always had faith in me.

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I would also like to express my gratitude to the College of Education and to all the post-baccalaureate students that completed my survey. Also, I want to thank my advisor, Nancy Knapp, for her endless patience and guidance in completing this thesis.

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## Chapter 1

### Literature Review

#### Definition and History

Alternative certification has been defined in many different ways and has a similarly diverse history. The broadest possible way of defining alternative certification is as “a method of entry into the teaching profession that does not require completion of a traditional teacher education program” (Bradshaw, 1998, p. 5). Essentially, this means that anything which is not a typical four-year undergraduate degree program would be “alternative” in one way or another. Within this broad classification of alternative certification programs, many structural and other differences exist among various programs, making the categorizing of alternative certification programs increasingly difficult. Programs can vary by content, length of time required, and location, as well as testing requirements and what the teacher candidates have to do for licensure (Bradshaw). Furthermore, the use of the term “alternative certification” is by no means consistent in the literature. Humphrey & Wechsler note that “...some differentiate between the terms *alternative certification*, which they define as reduced training for entry into teaching, and *alternative route*, which they define as pathways other than 4-year undergraduate or 1- or 2-year post-baccalaureate programs that enable candidates to meet the same standards” (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007, p. 485).

Although alternative teacher certification is generally considered to have begun in the 1980s, the earliest program which fits the mold of an alternative program dates back to a teacher education program for those who already had a Bachelor’s degree based at Harvard University in

1936 ("New teacher plan draws at Harvard," October 4, 1936). Harvard at the time was under the leadership of James Conant, who introduced a number of other reforms to education. In this program the students earned a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, were expected to demonstrate substantial subject matter knowledge and an understanding of education problems in society by their performance of intensive tests, and were required to have a teaching apprenticeship experience ("New teacher plan draws at Harvard," October 4, 1936). This program is somewhat of an anomaly in the history of alternative certification, as the major growth of alternative programs began in the 1980s; however, the existence of this type of program in 1936 indicates that the current movement for alternative certification may not be as new and innovative as it is perceived.

Alternative certification programs first became a "trend" in the late 1980s, and have grown in number, popularity, and accessibility through the 1990s and 2000s (Feistritzer, 1993, 2007). The major reason for the institution of alternative certification programs was to alleviate teacher shortages by allowing those with training in another field to enter teaching more easily. One of the first alternative certification programs, the Military Career Transition Program, which sought to train former military personnel as teachers, began in 1989 at Old Dominion University (MacDonald, Manning, & Gable, 1994). Troops to Teachers, another program enabling former military personnel to enter teaching, and Teach for America, which places provisionally certified college graduates into classrooms in high need areas with limited training, began at a similar time, also in an effort to bring new teachers into the field (Finn & Madigan, 2001). Troops to Teachers officially began in 1993 and included a commitment from the federal government to reimburse former military personnel for up to \$5000 for the training required to become teachers (Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas State Board for

Educator Certification, Education Service Center Region, & Texas Center for Educational Research, 1999). These military-based programs began in part due to an excess of former military personnel seeking employment after completing their service.

Slightly earlier, the Holmes Group had published their article “Tomorrow’s Teachers” discussing changes needed in teacher certification programs (Holmes Group, 1986). One of the practices they advocated was the creation of five-year Master programs for teacher education in order to give teachers more in-depth subject matter and pedagogical knowledge before they began teaching (Holmes Group, 1986). Another major rationale behind introducing five-year teacher education programs was to improve the professional standing of teaching. However, these five-year programs are not considered alternative certification programs. They are actually more of an adapted traditional certification program because candidates enter their undergraduate program knowing that it will take five years, and that they will earn a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree along the way. While many alternative programs involve teacher certification while earning a Master’s degree, the Holmes group proposals simply added that component to the traditional teacher education program, instead of seeking a Master’s degree after earning the Bachelor’s degree. Most studies of alternative certification do not consider Holmes-type five-year programs to fall into this category.

Similarly, the frequent inclusion of Teach for America as an alternative program when comparing traditional programs with alternative ones creates problems for research in alternative certification. Linda Darling-Hammond (1994), a harsh critic of Teach for America (TFA), points out the fact that TFA is very often included in discussions of alternative teacher certification methods, but in fact it does not typically provide full teacher certification. She concludes that most TFA teachers basically work on emergency or provisional certificates for a few years, and

then leave the profession (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002), perhaps because most TFA teachers work on non-renewable short-term teaching certificates and only have a two year commitment to teach (Darling-Hammond, 1994). In Georgia, TFA teachers must complete some summer training and pass the necessary GACE tests in their subject area to receive a five year non-renewable teaching certificate (Teach for America, 2010). TFA candidates are often advised to enroll in alternative certification programs at local universities so that they can become regularly certified during the first two years they teach (Teach for America), but this is not a general requirement, so that, unlike enrollees in many other programs, TFA teachers may teach for their entire first two years without the benefit of any education offered by a regular teacher certification program. Based on that information, it seems likely that many spend their two year commitment without a thorough understanding of teaching pedagogy. TFA only provides its teachers with minimal training before placing them in classrooms, and since they are not fully certified when they start, should they wish to continue teaching after their two years, they must become certified on their own. However, Darling-Hammond found that many go into other fields (Darling-Hammond, 1994, p. 2). As described in her critique of TFA, her concern is that this constant turnover hinders stability in the struggling urban and rural schools where they are placed, and their short term commitment suggests they are not deeply concerned with the long-term results of their efforts (Darling-Hammond). Additionally, she feels the TFA program only serves to justify the misconception that only interest, not pedagogical knowledge, is necessary to teach.

In an attempt to remedy this classification confusion, Feistritzer (1993; 1994) devised a classification system involving nine classes into which she placed states or their alternative teacher certification programs. Under her system, Classes A and B include programs which lead

to full certification for those with a Bachelor's degree and include a mentoring component; in addition, in these programs teacher candidates are given formal instruction in classes. However, Class A programs allow for training in all subject areas whereas Class B programs only train teachers in areas where there are teacher shortages. In Classes C and D, the candidates "attend individually designed in-service and take courses necessary to reach competencies" (Feistritzer, 1994, p. 136), but in Class C, the state or local districts are responsible for design of the program, while in Class D these are run by institutes of higher learning. Class E includes post-baccalaureate programs at colleges and universities. Class E programs differ from Class A or Class B programs in that the teacher candidates receive a Masters degree upon successful completion and not solely a teacher certification. Class F includes emergency routes, in which the candidates are trained while teaching. Class G includes programs for people with only a few requirements to fulfill for an education degree that they began earlier in life. Class H includes alternative routes for those with special qualifications, such as Nobel Prize winners or well-known authors, for example. And lastly, Class I is for states with no alternative certification. However, there are now no states without an alternative certification program of some type.

**Ubiquity.** Alternative certification programs have multiplied in the last two decades and now exist in most places. In 2001, there were 41 states with alternative certification programs and "two-thirds of the 1,354 colleges and universities that certify teachers ha[d] at least one program for mid-career professionals" (Berry, 2001, p. 32). The availability of these programs has increased in part due to support from legislators concerned about meeting a growing need for teachers in specific areas and in certain subjects. As one of the most active researchers into alternative certification and an advocate for its continued use, C. Emily Feistritzer notes that these programs' influence has continued to grow. She has researched the increase of the use of

the alternative certification through organizations she has founded, to study both the teachers' and their students' performance. In 2007, she stated in testimony before Congress that

... all 50 states and the District of Columbia report they have at least some type of alternate route to teacher certification. All told [sic], 130 alternate routes to teacher certification now exist in these 50 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, these states report that approximately 485 alternate routes programs are implementing the alternative routes to teacher certification they established (Feistritzer, 2007, para. 6).

Based on the ubiquity of these programs, it seems that continued research on their participants is necessary in order to best serve their needs and also to produce effective teachers. Feistritzer serves as the president of both the National Center for Alternative Certification and for the National Center for Education Information (National Center for Education Information, 2010). Every year since the mid-1980s, she has gathered extensive data on the use of alternative certification programs, which she has used to advocate for the continued use of alternative certification programs and field-based teacher education and collaboration with colleges and schools for training teachers (Edutopia, 2010; National Center for Education Information, 2010). Feistritzer (2007) found that the number of teachers certified through alternative routes rose from 6,028 in the 1997-1998 school year to 59,000 in 2005-2006, a steady pattern suggesting the likelihood of further increase in future years. Within Georgia, the number of alternatively certified teachers has increased steadily over the last few years; the number of alternative certification, provisional, and GaTAPP teachers increased from 2,009 in 2004 to 3,374 in 2007, representing 22.5% of the teacher population of the state in that year (Afolabi, Eads, & Nweke, 2008).



**Shortages leading to the growth of alternative certification.** Alternative certification programs are most frequently promoted as ways to resolve issues, or perceived issues, of teacher shortages. Baker and Smith (1997, p.29) noted that “the fear of the national teacher shortage led to the creation of several expert panels to advise on the analysis required to assess teacher supply and demand” in the late 1980s. Legislators’ and scholars’ fear of a teacher shortage arose because of rising school enrollments, increasing numbers of teachers approaching retirement, increasing attrition rates, and no increase in the number of those pursuing education degrees (Feistritzer, 1994; Serow & Forrest, 1994). The “greying of the teacher workforce” and the smaller numbers of teachers entering the field to replace them created a fear that some students might be left without a teacher of any caliber (Serow & Forrest, 1994, p. 555). For example, in 2003, Salyer predicted that by the 2008-2009 school year between 1.7 and 2.7 million new teachers would be required. Estimates like this led legislators to consider new ways of bringing additional teachers into the field to alleviate the problem. Teaching can allow for more unique solutions to staffing shortages because “unlike careers requiring early commitment, there is little to prevent people from identifying themselves as prospective teachers at almost any stage of their working lives” (Serow & Forrest, 1994, p.556). While teaching does require education, unlike a doctor for example, the teacher candidate is not required to take certain courses and have specific experiences at only one point in their life. As a result of the wide variety of subject matter, future teachers can be free to study almost any subject and still be able to find a position to teach it, whereas doctors must have a scientific or medical background in order to pass qualification exams and effectively practice medicine.

Teacher shortages may in part be driven by certified teachers not actually using their degrees. Numerous scholars have remarked that the true problem may be that many of those

trained as teachers simply do not teach, for whatever reason (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2003; Harris, Camp, & Adkison, 2003). “An alarming number of neophyte teachers do not join the teacher ranks,” which leaves many schools and districts struggling to fill teaching positions (Harris, et al., 2003, p. 4). As Linda Darling-Hammond observed:

Contrary to popular perceptions, the United States has many more prepared and certified teachers than it has jobs for those teachers. In California, for example, about 1.3 million credentialed teachers compete for about 280,000 teaching positions. ... Despite this oversupply, California has more than 40,000 teachers with emergency credentials and waivers, a number that has increased over the last three years (Darling-Hammond, 2001, p. 12).

Once teachers have been found and hired, schools still face the challenge of retaining them. While alternative certification may make it easier to train teachers, retention remains a constant problem. Any number of factors may affect a teacher’s desire to continue teaching, some even unrelated to the school or the profession of teaching itself, such as having children or tending to the needs of their family members.

*Shortages in geographic areas.* Some areas feel the teacher shortage more strongly than others because it is more difficult to attract teachers to work in those areas. Schools in urban and rural areas face teacher shortages much more regularly than do suburban schools (Ingersoll, 2001). Urban and rural schools are likely to have fewer resources and less support for teachers than schools in wealthier suburban areas (Wiener & Pristoop, 2006). Shen (1998a, 1998b) has found that alternative certification policies may help reduce teacher shortages in urban areas, but not in rural areas, as a higher proportion of alternative certification teachers than traditionally certified teachers work in large cities. One study, using 14,719 responses from traditionally

certified and alternative certification teachers who completed the Schools and Staffing Survey 1993-94, showed that 67% of traditionally certified teachers and 87% of alternative certification teachers work in urban schools, whereas only 40% of White teachers, regardless of the certification program, work in urban schools (Shen, 1998a). However, alternative certification programs may not do much to remedy the shortage of rural teachers; in one of the few studies addressing this issue, Jelmsberg (1996) found in a sample of 236 teachers in New Hampshire certified between 1987-1990 that 76% of traditionally certified teachers were working in rural schools, while only 67% of alternative certification teachers were in rural schools.

There could be several explanations for the higher proportion of minority and alternatively certified teachers in urban schools. As urban schools and high poverty schools tend to have more difficulty finding certified teachers, they may be more willing to allow alternative certification teachers or teachers who are not fully certified to teach their students. Darling-Hammond is particularly concerned about this practice as “the least prepared recruits are disproportionately assigned to teach the least advantaged students in high-minority and low-income schools” (2000, p. 168), meaning that these recruits may be unprepared to serve the potentially greater needs of this population. An alternative explanation is offered by Natriello and Zumwalt (1993), who found that higher percentages of alternative certification than traditionally certified teachers in elementary, English, and math came from urban areas. As a result, these teachers might be more willing to accept positions in those environments and may even understand the lives of their students better.

*Shortages in specific subjects.* Interestingly, the teacher shortage tends to be focused on specific subject areas as well. Typically, the subjects with the greatest shortages of teachers are math, science, special education, and bilingual education (Bradbury & Koballa, 2007; Darling-

Hammond, 2001). Since those with training in math and science can easily find higher paying jobs outside of teaching, they may not remain as teachers very long. As a result, greater numbers of alternative certification teachers work as math and science teachers, to make up for the shortages of traditionally certified teachers in these fields, who are also more likely to have a major in math or science than alternative certification teachers are (Shen, 1997; 1998a, 1998b). Alternatively, because math and science are areas where there are constant teacher shortages, alternative certification programs may focus more on certifying people in these fields. Special education and bilingual education often require additional knowledge or training beyond traditional certification program offerings, and can be more taxing careers, which could explain the shortage in these areas. Aside from burnout, which is common in special education (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997), bilingual skills are becoming increasingly necessary, and therefore teachers with these skills are in demand in other fields. Thus shortages are somewhat centered on particular fields, while other fields actually have surpluses of qualified teachers. A decade ago, surpluses could be found in Elementary Education, English, Social Studies and Physical Education (Darling-Hammond, 2001) as well as in fine arts and business education (Texas Education Agency, et al., 1999). One study found that in Texas, from 1991-92 to 1995-96, there was a surplus of bilingual and special education teachers, but the researchers only assessed numbers certified and not how many actually were teaching (Texas Education Agency, et al.). There was some speculation that some teachers certified in special education may have actively attempted to avoid teaching that subject and hidden their specialized certification from employers or pursued some field other than teaching (Texas Education Agency, et al.), as the rate of attrition is known to be very high within special education (Boe, et

al., 1997). Special education has frequent turnover because the stresses of the job, so new special education teachers are needed possibly more frequently than in other fields.

*Demographic shortages.* One of the arguments for alternative certification programs is that they will attract a more diverse population to enter teaching than traditional programs do; specifically that they will attract more ethnic minorities, more men, older candidates and those with a more diverse educational background. In addition to their general potential to alleviate teacher shortages, these potential demographic benefits of alternative certification programs have contributed to their becoming commonplace. Despite the diverse minority population in our schools, our teacher population has remained fairly homogenous over the past five decades, consisting mainly of women and especially Caucasian women (Shen, 1997; 1998a). Efforts to increase the numbers of minorities and men in our teacher workforce are felt to be desirable due to the hope that minority and male students, many of whom are struggling, will benefit from having teachers who are closer models and who may better understand students more like themselves. Although alternative certification programs have been touted as an effective way “to diversify the workforce,” whether they actually do attract a more diverse population to teaching is still under debate (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998, p. 190).

*Males.* Teaching is traditionally a female-dominated profession, with 79% of all teachers being female (Anderson, 2008). Previous literature notes the shortage of men in the teaching profession in general, and other studies of alternative certification programs found that approximately 75% of participants in these programs are women, which contradicts arguments that alternative certification increases the number of men in the teaching profession (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Shen, 1998b) and that career switchers, in general, tend to be female (Richardson & Watt, 2006). For both minorities and white teachers, over 70% of teachers were

female (Su, 1996). In contrast, other studies that compared percentages of male and female teachers within traditional and alternative certification programs have noted the opposite effect, finding that slightly greater percentages of men in alternative programs. One study found that 79% of traditionally certified teachers were female whereas 61% of alternatively certified teachers were female (Jelmberg, 1996). However a similar study found that a much smaller difference, in traditional programs, 23.7% of teacher candidates were male and 76.3% were female, while in alternative programs 25.7% were male and 74.3% were female (Shen, 1997). Based on all this information, it seems premature to assert that alternative certification programs are bringing many more men into teaching.

*Minorities.* The issue of the ethnic background of teachers has also been studied in relation to alternative certification programs; indeed, one of the most consistent arguments for alternative certification is that it provides an opportunity for a much more diverse population of individuals to pursue teaching. The majority of teachers, particularly traditionally certified ones, are Caucasian (Anderson, 2008). With the exception of one small study where most of the teachers were European American in the alternative route program (Thomas, Friedman-Nimz, & Mahlios, 2005), alternative programs do seem to have higher number of teachers representing minority backgrounds (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Shen, 1998b). For example, one study found that teachers certified through traditional methods are more likely to be Caucasian and work in schools with fewer minority students and a lower percentage of students on free and reduced lunch than alternative certification teachers (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Another found that 87.2% of candidates in traditional programs were White while 12.8% were non-White, which included a variety of minority groups, but the percentages within alternative certification programs were 79.3% and 20.7% for whites and non-White respectively (Shen,

1997). While this finding still shows that most teacher candidates are White, regardless of program, there do seem to be more non-White teachers in alternative certification programs.

**Changes in program requirements.** No Child Left Behind's emphasis on highly qualified teachers has led to a general increase in the percentage of teachers who are certified, in one way or another, rising to 97.5% in 2005 (U.S. Department of Education & Office of Postsecondary Education, 2006). It has also led to more rigorous requirements in many alternative certification programs, but there remains a great deal of diversity and differences among programs are echoed by conflict in the research as to what is truly a satisfactory alternative certification program. The wide variation in number of credits required by different alternative certification programs as well as in the amount of time spent by candidates in programs leads to questions as to whether a program which requires half as many credits as another can possibly offer the same level of training (Darling-Hammond, 1992). Furthermore, "some states...have traditionally invested a great deal more in teacher preparation than others," so that differences among alternative certification programs simply reflect a old problem in teacher certification in general (Darling-Hammond, p. 125). Some states have higher selection, GPA, or coursework requirements for certification than others. For example, according to a 2007 study of teacher certification requirements, only half of the states require all secondary teachers to have a major in their subject area and pass a content area test in order to be certified, while the others require either one or the other (Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2007). Most states have very specific pedagogy requirements, but the required field experiences for each state vary considerably. Thirty eight states list specific requirements for amount of field experience, but they vary from as little as five weeks to as much as fifteen or twenty weeks (Boyd, et al.). These varied standards result in some states producing stronger teachers, and may

dissuade these states from adopting quicker alternative routes, while other states may have a continuous stream of lesser prepared teachers. Thus, both the purposes and requirements of alternative certification programs may vary by states, and it becomes even more challenging to provide a solid definition of alternative certification programs.

**Similarities.** Notwithstanding the wide variation in current alternative certification programs, there are some similarities among the basic components of most, if not all, alternative certification programs. To begin with, generally candidates are required to have a bachelor's degree, with a college GPA of at least 2.5 (Baines, McDowell, & Foulk, 2001; Texas Education Agency, et al., 1999). Programs generally use similar strategies for training their candidates in the field, including internships, intense supervision, mentoring, and concurrent educational coursework (Bradbury & Koballa, 2007). For example, "lengthier programs, such as the master's degree alternatives mentioned earlier, typically include a fairly substantial amount of study in educational foundations and teaching methods, alongside an intensively supervised internship or student teaching experience" (Darling-Hammond, 1992, p. 129). States have also made an effort to ensure that alternative certification programs produce graduates who are qualified and prepared to teach. Some states have required a certain amount of on-the-job preparation, including work experience with trained teachers and/or have required new alternative certification teachers to be mentored until they are fully certified (Silin, et al., 2008). Partly as a result of NCLB's requirement for highly qualified teachers, most states have established minimum GPA requirements, minimum required scores on state tests of basic skills and general knowledge, requirements that candidates either have a major or minor in their intended subject area or pass a subject matter test, plus additional requirements for specific courses in education and/or passage of a test of teaching knowledge (Darling-Hammond &



Youngs, 2002). Differences among programs are based more on the level, length, and timing of training and coursework, rather than the inclusion of these basic components.

### **Who Seeks Alternative Certification?**

**Demographics.** Alternative certification teachers may differ from the population of teachers that come from traditional programs. Some of these differences are a function simply of the programs themselves. For example, alternative certification candidates are more likely to be older or be parents themselves simply because these programs require candidates to hold a Bachelor's degree, so they have to be at least a little older and may then be at a different point in their personal lives. Zumwalt remarked that "alternative certification is seen as attracting higher-ability, more diverse, experienced people with subject matter majors. Instead of relying on the usual pool of undergraduates, alternative certification promises to open up teaching to a greater range of people" (Zumwalt, 1996, p. 40). Career changers tend to be older than traditional certified teachers, and mean age in most studies ranged from 31-37 years old for alternative certification teachers (Chambers, 2002; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Thomas, et al., 2005). However, Shen (1997a; 1998a) found that alternative certification policies were, in fact, attracting much higher numbers of candidates under 30 years old, especially White individuals, but that a higher proportion of alternative certification teachers (as compared to traditionally certified teachers) were working past the age of 50 and also more minority candidates in alternative certification between the ages of 40 and 49. As a result of being older, alternative certification candidates may have children, and even have been introduced to the possibility of being teachers through their own children's experiences at school (Tigchelaar, Brouwer, & Korthagen, 2008). While alternative certification may attract more minorities into teaching, the

percentage of minority alternative certification teachers is still nowhere near the percentage of minorities in the student population.

**Where do they come from?** Perhaps one of the most defining characteristics of alternative certification candidates is that they often have some sort of prior experience, working or otherwise, between earning their Bachelor's degree and entering a teacher certification program. As a result, it is important to understand the variety of experiences alternative certification candidates may have had prior to entering teaching. To begin with, the undergraduate experiences of alternative certification candidates may be more challenging than those of traditionally certified teachers. A study of seven different alternative certification programs found that on average 56% of teachers earned Bachelor's degrees from competitive colleges (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007). However, the percentages varied based on the program, its location and the fields that the program generally trains teachers to work in. The highest percentage was for Teach for America teachers, but excluding that, the other programs had between 33 and 61 percent from competitive colleges (Humphrey & Wechsler). Other alternative certification teacher candidates may have struggled to attain their Bachelor's degree due to family circumstances or financial difficulties, an issue more common among minority candidates.

Beyond undergraduate education, alternative certification candidates have often had varied experiences in previous careers. Salyer (2003) found that medical and science fields were the most common past careers in his study, followed by business and retail work; however, other studies found that few alternative certification candidates were actually full career changers (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007). Salyer's (2003) data came from a sample of 38 students enrolled in a Master's program for teacher certification, whereas, Humphrey and Wechsler's

(2007) data was derived from case studies of seven different programs with 10-13 participants being studied in each. Those seven programs included TFA, and five other city-based or state-based programs for teacher certification, and only the seventh program, New York City Teaching Fellows Program, offered Master's coursework as did the program Salyer studied. It may be that graduate level alternative certification programs attract a higher caliber of candidates. Since alternative certification teacher candidates could have other experiences and differing levels of commitment to prior careers, several scholars have created different ways of classifying the work experience of alternative certification teachers. The simplest categorization is simply into career changers, those who change from a different career, and "homecomers," those who wanted to be a teacher before and are finally pursuing it (Abell, et al., 2006; Ruckel, 2000). One study found that about one-third of teachers pursuing alternative certification were career changers (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant (2003) further distinguished those entering teaching into six categories, recognizing the many differences between those who change careers. Their six categories identified were: 1) parents, 2) successful careerists, 3) freelancers, those who have had a single career and were largely self-employed, 4) late starters, those who finished school with few qualifications and worked for a few years before returning to school, 5) serial careerists, those who change careers often, and 6) young career changers.

Lastly, as a result of their age and work experiences, alternative certification teacher candidates may have other skills and experiences that are useful in teaching. Salyer (2003) found these skills could include "the ability to incorporate very specialized, practical and real-world knowledge into their instruction; possession of effective interpersonal skills; and possession of management and organizational skills" (Salyer, 2003, p. 21). Tigchelaar, Brouwer, and Korthagen (2008) studied the supervisors of alternative certification programs as well as the

alternative certification teachers themselves. They gave each supervisor a scale of 35 possible characteristics of career changers gathered from previous research as well as an interview on the characteristics they perceived in career changers. The career changers were also interviewed to provide a detailed account of their previous experiences and qualifications. Based on the scales given to the supervisors, Tigchelaar et al found that career changers were typically described in the following ways:

- 1) They have work experience
- 2) ...they have made a conscious choice for working with children
- 3) They have motives for entering teaching, based in part on earlier work experiences
- 4) They go about learning in a focused way
- 5) ...they take responsibility for their learning
- 6) They possess competencies acquired elsewhere...
- 7) They have non-recent experiences as a pupil with frontal, teacher-centered schooling and are therefore open to instructional innovation
- 8) [b]ecause of their earlier experiences in work and in life, they are able to determine their place in the school organization quickly and precisely
- 9) They are shaped by life experience
- 10) They have experience having children

Condensed from (Tigchelaar, et al., 2008, pp. 1537-1538).

Shen's (1997) study gave somewhat contrasting results, with over half of the alternative certification teachers studied entering the program straight from their undergraduate education, while 23.8% came from education-related jobs, and only 22.2% came from a field outside of

education. In this study, a significant number of alternative certification teachers were simply recent graduates who decided too late to become teachers, and many of them had education-related majors or experience and were not changing into a drastically different career.

Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) found that a similar proportion of their study sample were recent full time students or otherwise involved in education, while 59% who had been working actually received a pay raise by going into teaching. This suggests that a majority of their alternative certification candidates were in low status jobs, and that most of the participants in both of these studies were not the typical “career changers” leaving well-paid, established careers in order to teach.

**Why do they enter?** Whether the majority of alternative certification candidates are actually typical “career changers” may be open to question, but much of the literature on alternative certification candidates’ motivations to enter teaching has assumed that they are. A number of studies have noted a variety of reasons alternative certification candidates desire to become teachers, ranging from extrinsic motivations to intrinsic or altruistic motivations (Chambers, 2002; Serow & Forrest, 1994; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Alternative certification candidates may thus have a mixture of motives for teaching; in their 2008 review, Anthony and Ord distinguished between motives which push candidates out of a previous career, like job dissatisfaction, from those that pull them into teaching, such as looking for a challenge. Based on this literature review, those factors fall in one of three groups: 1) instrumental value, 2) personal enjoyment, and 3) altruistic reasons.

***Instrumental value.*** This category of factors are related to extrinsic reasons that teaching will be helpful in candidates’ personal lives, including financial or other job benefits not available in previous careers. Initial interest may begin with dissatisfaction with previous jobs or

job loss which causes them to look to what other careers they would be qualified for or suited to do. Candidates' frustration or burnout with their previous careers was cited in a number of studies as a common motive (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Chambers, 2002; Novak & Knowles, 1992; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008), as were the added benefits of greater employment opportunities, vacation time, a pension, and better pay than previous jobs (Chambers, 2002; Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Salyer, 2003). Furthermore, candidates may have left previous jobs involuntarily through forced layoffs and sought a career that might offer greater security and stability or had greater job availability (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Stevens and Dial (1993) suggested that some candidates seeking a career change may choose teaching simply because they lacked any better options for a career and the practicality and ease with which they could enter the field through alternative certification made it ideal for their situation.

Alternatively, they may be motivated by a desire for stability and for a paycheck, possibly larger than received for their prior work, which may often be the result of family responsibilities.

Women may be more drawn to teaching because it allows them more time with their family or due to a desire to know what was happening at their child's school (Anderson, 2008; Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Salyer, 2003).

Ideally for parents, teacher's schedules are often the same or similar to their children allowing them to spend time with their children in the summer and on holidays. It has been suggested that men and women might have different motivations for teaching, but there is little evidence to support this idea (Novak & Knowles, 1992).

Teaching is a common choice for career changers (Raggl & Troman, 2008). Some alternative certification teachers in a number of studies have remarked that they had wanted to be

teachers when they were younger, but that they were initially dissuaded from teaching due to low salary or parents' believing it was not a prestigious enough career, or were prevented from entering traditional certification programs by factors such as racism, poverty, or inadequate preparation (Chambers, 2002; Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Gordon, 1993). Some candidates may have pursued an undergraduate major that their parents approved of or that was socially acceptable in their world, while others, due to those social forces preventing them from going into teaching initially, may not have been highly educated and worked low-wage, low-skill jobs (Raggl & Troman, 2008). Having grown tired of that experience, they often found themselves working or volunteering at their children's school and realized that teaching could provide the sense of satisfaction they sought from their work (Raggl & Troman).

*Personal enjoyment.* Desire for career change often follows a period of transition around the age of 30, where many adults explore potential job possibilities and a great deal of emphasis is placed on the relationship between personal and career identity (Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008). Because of this period of contemplation and transition, these "older teacher education students typically have well-articulated reasons for seeking careers in education" (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998, p. 188). The intrinsic motivations commonly described include need for personal fulfillment (Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Serow & Forrest, 1994; Su, 1996), a calling or previous interest in teaching (Chambers, 2002; Gordon, 1993; Novak & Knowles, 1992; Stevens & Dial, 1993), the positive influence of family or friends (Gordon, 1993; Sinclair, 2008), desire to work with people or specifically children (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Gordon, 1993; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Su, 1996; Williams & Forgasz, 2009), love of learning and seeking challenges (Gordon, 1993; Grier & Johnston, 2009), love of the subject matter itself (Gordon, 1993;

Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Salyer, 2003), and previous teaching experiences which led candidates to believe they would be successful as teachers (Gordon, 1993; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Salyer, 2003).

Perhaps because of the wide variety of reasons and experiences driving their interest in teaching, Williams and Forgasz (2009) found that many of the alternative certification candidates they studied believed that they possessed the qualities needed in teachers, were satisfied in their programs, felt that they would be satisfied in teaching, and had high levels of intrinsic motivation, which were fairly consistent throughout their training. The number of intrinsic motivations described suggests that often the decision to enter teaching is one coupled with a great deal of introspection and not taken lightly. Significant others in their lives could also influence candidates' decisions to teach. Su (1996) found that white teacher candidates often had the support of their parents for their decision to teach, while minority teachers often had to confront disappointment from parents and friends (Sinclair, 2008; Su, 1996). Despite that, minority teachers often described experiences with a family member who was a teacher or a significant teacher in their lives who encouraged them to pursue teaching (Hood & Parker, 1994). One study found that a number of alternative certification teachers had long held desires to become teachers but for some reason or another had not done so in their undergraduate education (Andrews & Hatch, 2002).

***Altruistic reasons.*** Some career changers are also strongly motivated by altruism (Chambers, 2002). Altruistic motivations included a variety of factors, including a desire to make a difference in society (Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Gordon, 1993; Salyer, 2003; Stevens & Dial, 1993; Su, 1996; Williams & Forgasz, 2009), and those based on past positive or negative experiences in one's own education (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Gordon, 1993; Priyadharshini &



Robinson-Pant, 2003; Salyer, 2003). Regarding their past educational experiences, alternative certification candidates may either want to ensure that all students get the same quality of schooling they did, or, alternatively, to prevent the failures and deficiencies in their own experiences from recurring. As one way of contributing to society, Richardson & Watt (2006) found some alternative certification candidates who cited a specific interest in promoting social equity, similar to those studied by Su (1996), who felt that it was important “to work in a noble, moral, and ethical profession.” Still other alternative certification candidates cited the desire to serve others or to resolve problems in the educational system, including the need for more teachers (Sinclair, 2008).

**Beliefs and expectations about teaching.** As a result of these varied traits and experiences, alternative certification candidates may enter teacher education programs with diverse beliefs about teaching and how to best educate students (Chambers, 2002). Interview responses of second career teachers indicated that they felt that teachers should place a greater emphasis on connecting material to real-world experiences and on using non-traditional pedagogies. Using a sample of 1,653 teacher candidates, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels of Australian universities, Richardson and Watt (2006) found that these teacher candidates reported knowing that teachers need expertise, and were aware of the difficulty of teaching and the low perceived social status of teaching. As a result of the low salaries and lack of social position, there was strong social dissuasion not to teach, but they found satisfaction with teaching. They were not naïve and were fully aware that teaching is a demanding career and one that there will always be a strong need for, but that was poorly rewarded. However, these teachers seemed to expect that teaching would provide satisfaction and rewards beyond a paycheck. Interviews by Stevens & Dial (1993) with 100 alternative certification and TFA

actually teachers indicated that they felt that the job appeared easier than it was, although those with previous teaching experiences or who had witnessed relatives who taught were less likely to have this response (Stevens & Dial, 1993).

**Where do they end up teaching?** Finally, it is important to understand the schools where alternative certification teachers will be employed. Alternative certification teachers have a statistically higher rate of first year employment than graduates of traditional programs (Harris, et al., 2003). Since, many alternative certification programs either help with job placement or require that the teacher candidates have a school willing to hire them upon completion when they enter; it is not perhaps odd that many alternative certification teachers would have an easier time finding work after completion of their certification program. It is also possible that a number of students in traditional teacher certification programs have little intention of teaching or have other goals after obtaining their degree, and so are not seeking teaching positions. Greater percentages of alternative certification teachers end up working in secondary schools, while more traditionally certified teachers work in elementary schools (Jelmsberg, 1996; Shen, 1997). In part, this may be because the alternative candidates are often thought to have significant subject matter knowledge from their previous degrees and past careers, which more highly desired in secondary teachers than in elementary teachers. Intriguingly, alternative certification teachers may be more often tied to a particular local community and school and choose to remain there (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998; Salyer, 2003). These candidates may be more willing to work in less desirable locales because they grew up in those schools or already live in those areas, and perhaps feel that they could make a difference in those schools because they know the backgrounds of the students. The social justice aspect of teaching and being prepared to work in diverse urban environments were most important to minority alternative certification teacher

candidates (Su, 1996). This may be the result of their own experiences and understanding how important it was to have a teacher who had gone through the same experiences.

**What should alternative certification programs do?** Since there is such variation in alternative certification programs, many educators and researchers have also made suggestions about how to design an effective program, but few have research supporting their suggestions. Based on a review of previous literature, Darling-Hammond and Youngs have observed that “when this research is analyzed in terms of program design, it appears that the more carefully designed programs yield stronger outcomes in terms in terms of teacher effectiveness and retention than those that provide less training and support” (2002, p. 23).

One of the few aspects of alternative certification programs that has been studied is the timing and duration of candidates’ student teaching or intern teaching experience. A common method in alternative certification programs is to provide extensive internship experiences and much less actual coursework. However, one study found that only 28 percent of alternative certification teacher candidates preferred learning to teach on the job (Stoddart, 1991). Others have noted that “internships are better suited for those who bring prior work experiences and maturity to the teaching experience” (McKibbin, 2001, p. 139). Internship methods are effective only if the alternative certification teachers are given sufficient support and more guidance and training than a fully trained first year teacher would receive (Salyer, 2003). Since alternative certification programs are quicker, they often rely more on hands-on learning, where candidates learn the practical elements of teaching on-the-job. Even though many candidates do not prefer this method, it continues to be used to varying degrees in alternative certification programs. However, one of the dangers of this practice may be that the intern teachers will be unsuccessful or become frustrated by their inability to control their classes or balance work, school, and home,

and then choose to leave the program all together. The effectiveness of using extensive field experiences depends on the support the teachers are given while teaching and the amount of training they have in teaching prior to entering the classroom. For beginning teachers, the exposure to the teaching environment made the majority of them (two-thirds) more committed to teaching, particularly if their practicum experience matched the expectations they held of teaching (Sinclair, 2008). In order for the field experience to be effective, it seems important that the teacher has enough knowledge of teaching pedagogy in order to be able to apply that knowledge in practice, rather than having to learn a great deal while teaching.

Beyond specific student teaching experiences, many scholars have offered logical and reasonable suggestions for improving alternative certification programs, but they are often not supported by research. It may be particularly important that alternative certification programs make use of the advantages of this population of teachers and minimize the disadvantages they have, such as the amount of time for training. Given that career changers often have degrees or experience in the field they plan to teach, alternative programs may choose to emphasize teaching pedagogy over the subject matter. However, providing training in pedagogy as well as subject matter knowledge will help ensure that the new teachers can successfully meet the requirements of their jobs and not become frustrated by lacking information they need to succeed (Berry, 2001; Silin, et al., 2008). Since these are teachers with, in some cases, extensive previous work experiences, their instructors should allow those experiences to be used in the classroom and address how previous skills and experiences could influence their teaching. The hands-on work in their program was mentioned by many participants as being important to their success as teachers (Jorissen, 2002).

Alternative certification programs also need to address challenges specific to this population not necessarily related to the coursework, but rather the structure of the program itself. Some of the difficulties for older teacher candidates are the challenge of starting a new career later in life; especially if cohort members are younger than themselves (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998). With respect to their coursework, their educators should be aware of how the lives of alternative certification candidates may differ from that of undergraduate students. One of the struggles of career changers is the idea of having to be a student again and not understanding why having proved themselves competent in another profession they should have prove it in another field (Grier & Johnston, 2009). Consequently, activities such as written reflections or simplistic coursework may seem pointless. Alternative certification programs should focus on coursework that is both challenging and clearly related to the work candidates will doing in the future. As far the cohort problem, one solution is for an alternative certification program to create small cohorts of similar students for support. When the teacher candidates enter in small cohort groups in alternative certification programs, the candidates may feel less isolated than those in larger traditional programs (Shoho & Martin, 1999). One study looking at the persistence of urban teachers in alternative certification programs examined 13 teachers in the Minneapolis area (Jorissen, 2002). All these teachers were teaching while being trained and the researchers interviewed each participant three times for 90 minutes on their experiences while teaching (Jorissen). These candidates said that having a like cohort helped them identify with the group, learn teacher identity, and build trust through shared experience (Jorissen). Programs should recognize that they are teaching adults and not undergraduates and treat the students as such. As mentioned previously, candidates may feel that some assignments are too simplistic and providing assignments too similar to what a younger undergraduate might do shows a lack of

respect for the work candidates have already put in to an undergraduate degree. They often have work experience and families, so their coursework should allow them to draw on these experiences.

The next challenge faced by this population is related to the scheduling of classes, distance and their own family commitments. As mentioned previously, alternative certification teacher candidates are more likely than traditionally certified candidates to have families to care for or to work full- or part-time to support themselves and their families. Programs need to be aware of alternative certification candidates' parental or work commitments and allow for that in the coursework and course rules (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003). One way of taking that into consideration would be by limiting the amount of homework assignments or by providing classes that would work around various schedules. Additionally, being older, these candidates may be more settled in their lives and unable to move somewhere else to take classes (Chin & Young, 2007). As a result, it may be beneficial to offer programs closer to their homes or provide some of the course material through online programs or similar methods. Flexibility in program format and detailed planning in distance learning programs were useful for career changers because it allowed them to select a training program which would work best with their schedule (MacDonald et al 2008). And finally, since the candidates may have work or family commitments to consider, alternative certification programs should be designed to be shorter so candidates can complete their training and move quickly into their future careers. To accomplish this, alternative certification programs should consider focus on eliminating unnecessary coursework requirements (Klagholz & Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2000). Additionally, by compressing schedules and offering greater course availability, the teacher candidates would be able to complete the necessary coursework at a faster pace than traditional programs.

Another challenge common in this population of students is that they have greater financial responsibilities. Financial responsibility for others may affect their ability to pursue teaching (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998). Since they are older, it may be more common to have a family to take care of, and being able to afford to cost of the program and adjust to the financial difficulty introduced by leaving a previous job is a major challenge. As a result of their commitments, these students may have a higher need for financial aid, and yet they face the fact that there is simply less financial aid available through these programs than there would be for undergraduates in traditional programs. The simplest solution for this would be to provide more scholarships or financial aid to support candidates during their time in the program, especially since many may be losing income by quitting another job to enter the alternative certification program, but in today's economic climate, that may not be possible.

The last challenge faced by this population is related to their prior experiences. Their previous skills may or may not transfer to teaching (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998). Those planning to teach a subject unrelated to their previous work may have fewer real world experiences to draw upon in the classroom, and therefore may need extra time to learn subject matter, and also to adapt to the standards of the field. On the other hand, discipline is often less of a problem for alternative certification teachers. Interview studies have found that these teachers were able to use their past experiences to resolve classroom management issues (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Novak & Knowles, 1992). Teachers from programs such as Troops to Teachers tend to bring a strong sense of discipline to their work as teachers based on their prior work in the military, which is something they try to instill in the students as well (Patterson, 1995). However, military methods of establishing discipline may not be appropriate in all school settings. Alternative certification teachers' methods of teaching and classroom management were strongly affected by

their prior experiences and in many ways those experiences taught them how one should teach because those methods were effective for their own learning.

Other recommendations for alternative certification programs have been mentioned in the literature. Programs which allow teachers to begin teaching and then train them while they are currently working as teachers seem problematic at best. In a study by Sandlin, et al. (1993), both beginning teachers, who were first year teachers, and intern teachers, who were teachers enrolled in an alternative certification program and undergoing training while teaching, were initially rated lower on classroom management and instruction. By the end of the year, both felt prepared for the job, but beginning teachers credited their training program, whereas interns credited their previous experiences. For one thing, those in training while teaching often described frustration because the issues they struggled with initially, such as classroom management, were not scheduled to be taught until months after they became an issue in their practice (Silin, et al., 2008). Additionally, Klagholz (2000) advocated that alternative certification programs should educate the public and profession about the nature and availability of alternative certification programs, not only to dispel the many misconceptions about alternative certification programs, but also because advertising the opportunities available might encourage more people to enter teaching if they knew what programs existed and if they would work better with their lifestyle. And finally, alternative certification programs can be used to test out reforms to all teacher education. In the end, alternative certification might lead to the elimination of emergency certificates in favor of these abbreviated teacher certification programs.

### **Purpose of this Study**

Although, as seen above, some research has been done on alternative certification candidates' motivations to enter teaching, there has been little focus on their beliefs about



teaching, or on how differences in candidates' demographics and previous experiences might affect both motivations and beliefs. This study begins to address these specific gaps in the literature, as well as gathering and analyzing a systematic data set to inform planning and improvement for University of Georgia's post-baccalaureate certification programs. The purposes of this study are, therefore, twofold. First, it gathers a wealth of information on candidates in alternative/post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs at the University of Georgia that will greatly aid the University, the College of Education and various individual certification programs in more effectively recruiting and teaching alternative/post-baccalaureate teacher certification candidates. Secondly, it pilots an instrument and gathers initial data that will add to our knowledge and understanding of candidates' motivations for entering alternative/post-baccalaureate teacher certification and the beliefs about teaching which they hold. To accomplish these ends, this study has been guided by the following five specific research questions:

- 1) Who pursues alternative certification at UGA?

First, this information will allow the College of Education and individual programs to know what kinds of candidates they attract. Since previous research indicates that they may be older, more likely to be minorities, and already have subject matter knowledge, it is necessary to see if that is indeed true in this population (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Shen, 1997; Tigchelaar, et al., 2008). Research shows that many of those who enter post-baccalaureate programs to earn a teaching certificate have had some experience in a school setting that has encouraged them to become interested in this field (Shen, 1997). Therefore, it will be interesting to determine the range and amount of experience in education fields held by alternative certification candidates at

UGA, and see whether those who enter have a great deal of experience in teaching-related experiences or if their interest was unrelated to previous experiences.

2) Why have these students decided to become teachers?

It is important that we understand why these individuals are entering teaching, to attract future candidates and to best cater a program to their needs and interests. As mentioned previously, there may be a wide variety of reasons they entered teaching, which may include the extrinsic benefits, personal enjoyment, or altruistic reasons (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Gordon, 1993; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006). These reasons could then affect what candidates want in a program, how long they plan to work as teachers, and even whether they will complete the program.

3) What beliefs about teaching and learning do the alternative certification teacher candidates currently hold?

In addition to their motivations for entering teaching, the alternative certification candidates may hold specific expectations or beliefs about what teaching will be like and what they can expect from their students. Whether these candidates are accurately aware of the difficulties of teaching and the kind of expectations they have of their students and of teaching in general might affect their satisfaction with teaching and willingness to continue teaching despite challenges they encounter. The literature suggests that they may have more realistic expectations of teaching and higher expectations of minority students than traditional certification candidates (Jeanpierre, 2007; Su, 1996), but it is worth finding out about.

4) What concerns or suggested changes do alternative certification candidates report in relation to their certification programs?

Since this study was done with the support of the College of Education, it was necessary to focus on the structure of these programs in particular and what changes the candidates' desire that the programs would be capable of implementing. The literature in this field contains numerous suggestions about the design of alternative certification programs, from scheduling and location of classes (Chin & Young, 2007; MacDonald, Manning, & Spires, 2008; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003), financial aid (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998), to the length of the program and training (Salyer, 2003; Silin, et al., 2008), but it is not clear how many of these would apply in this setting.

- 5) Are there any differences among candidates on these variables based on gender, past teaching experience, minority status, or other variables?

Often, the literature only delineates these participants as alternative certification candidates, but neglects to consider that there may be differences among them due to when in their life they entered certification programs and what experiences they have had. For example, candidates who enter right out of college may have different understandings than a stay-at-home parent or a long time business person, yet often they are lumped together in the literature. So, distinguishing these populations will begin to allow educators to understand if the separate populations should or need to be treated differently in their programs.

For the purposes of this study, alternative certification programs were defined as those programs which offer an abbreviated certification, different from that of a traditional teacher certification programs in which undergraduate students earn a Bachelor's degree in education or a related field. The alternative certification programs in this study are post-baccalaureate level programs for those who already have a Bachelor's degree in some field other than Education. At the University of Georgia almost all of these are Masters programs in specific teaching areas

such as Math Education or Early Childhood Education. Using Feistritzer's (1993) classification system, these programs would fall under Class E programs, which are post-baccalaureate programs in which the students earn a Master's degree along with their certification. It should be noted that, when contacted, some of these programs at UGA did not view themselves as alternative certification programs, but considered themselves more like a traditional certification program because they felt they offered the same in-depth teacher education coursework common in four-year programs, often taught by the same professors who teach in the undergraduate programs.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methods**

#### **Participants**

The pool from which participants were drawn included all students enrolled at the University of Georgia in post-baccalaureate programs who were seeking their initial teacher certification through that program. I spoke to graduate coordinators in each program that might certify teachers to determine which ones had post-baccalaureate programs that offered initial certification. After speaking with the Associate Dean and gaining his and the IRB's approval, I asked the College for a listing culled from the Student Information System of all students earning initial certification beyond the baccalaureate, including name, University email address, program, and degree to be earned. As explained below, the list provided turned out to include many who were indicated as being enrolled to earn initial certification, but who in fact were not doing so.

All the students in programs that do not certify teachers, such as Educational Leadership, Educational Psychology and Instructional Technology, or Counseling Psychology were initially removed from the list. Once the list was narrowed down to include only those programs which matched our criteria, each program was called to confirm that they either certified teachers through Masters of Arts in Teaching programs (the most common), offered post-baccalaureate, non-Masters certification (actually none of our sample), or also certified those in M.A., M.Ed., or Ph.D. programs. Based on that information, the list of potential participants was narrowed down to 447 names in the following programs: English Education, Early Childhood Education, Foreign

Language Education, Mathematics Education, Middle School Education, Physical Education, Science Education, Social Studies Education, Special Education, and Workforce Education.

Then, coordinators of the four teacher certification programs that are not a part of the College of Education itself (Art Education, Dance Education, Music Education, and Agricultural Education) were asked to provide contact information for additional students in their programs who were seeking post-baccalaureate teaching certification. From the final list of 505 potential participants, only 422 had associated working emails. These 422 potential participants were solicited through eLearning Commons and through their University email accounts using follow-up emails for those who had not completed the survey. A total of five rounds of solicitation emails were sent, with the first through eLearning Commons. Based on slow response and the fact that many students might not have email through eLearning Commons forwarded to their University accounts, a second email was sent directly to potential participants' University email accounts about a week later. After that, potential participants who had not responded were emailed again about every two to three weeks; non-responders were contacted four or five times.

Of the 422 students contacted, 125 responded, yielding a response rate of 29.6%. However, only 64 of these 125 respondents met our criteria of a) seeking initial certification past the Bachelor's degree, and b) giving informed consent to be included in this research; these 64 form the sample for this study. The remaining 61 potential participants who replied but did not meet our criteria included 33 who emailed to say that they were not seeking initial certification and 28 who completed part or all of the survey but indicated in their answers to the first three questions that they were not seeking initial certification.

Therefore, participants consisted of the 64 students enrolled in graduate programs for initial teacher certification at the University of Georgia who agreed to participate in the study

and completed our online survey. Based on the demographic data provided by participants in the first part of the survey (see Appendix), in this sample there were 53 women (82.8%) and 11 men (17.2%). Twenty-seven participants were 20-25 years old (42.2%), 19 were 26-30 years old (29.7%), 8 were 31-40 years old (12.5%), 6 were 41-50 years old (9.4%), and 4 were 51-60 years old (6.3%). The sample included 47 Caucasian students (74.6%), 6 Asian American or Pacific Islander students (9.5%), 6 African American students (9.5%), one Hispanic/Latino student (1.6%), one Native American and Caucasian student (1.6%), one Hispanic and Caucasian student (1.6%), one who self-identified as Other (1.6%), and one who declined to indicate an ethnicity, and so is not counted in these percentages.

The participants were in a variety of programs. Nineteen students (29.7%) were in Early Childhood Education, nine (14.1%) in Science Education, eight (12.5%) in Mathematics Education, five (7.8%) in Agricultural Education, five (7.8%) in Foreign Language Education, five (7.8%) in Special Education, four (6.3%) in English Education, three (4.7%) in Social Studies Education, two (3.1%) in Art Education, one (1.6%) in Middle School Education, one (1.6%) in Physical Education and Kinesiology, one (1.6%) in Workforce Education, and one (1.6%) was in both Agricultural Education and Early Childhood Education. No students in Dance Education or Music Education responded to the survey, but only six students of the 505 in the total target population were in these programs, so this may not be surprising.

### **Data Collection**

**Survey.** The survey designed for this study is attached as Appendix A. It consists of 85 total questions, focused on four main areas: respondents' demographic and background information (including previous experiences as an educator – Section A), their motivations for entering teaching (Section B), their beliefs about teaching (Section C), and their suggestions for

changes that would better help them succeed in their given programs (Section D). Questions created for the Motivations and Beliefs sections were derived primarily from the previous research covered in the literature review, including questions used successfully in previous studies of alternative certification candidates and teachers. Questions about changes respondents might want in their programs were based on factors identified in the literature to be issues for returning graduate students and on conversations with the Associate Dean about which characteristics of programs, such as class scheduling or financial aid, he saw as potential areas for change.

Demographic and background questions (Section A) had specific answer choices, while questions in Sections B-D (Motivations, Beliefs, and Program Changes) were Likert-style questions asking participants to rate statements from “1 - Strongly Disagree” to “5 - Strongly Agree” (see Appendix). Three of these statements, Qs 65, 67, and 70, were written intentionally to be reverse scored. Two open-ended questions at the beginning of the survey<sup>1</sup> asked what challenges and rewards participants expected from teaching. At the end of the survey, participants were also given one open-ended question asking them to suggest any additional changes to their programs’ structure and one open-ended question to make any additional comments not covered in previous questions.

**Consent and participation process.** IRB approval to survey this population of students was obtained prior to data collection. The survey was posted as an assessment under the heading

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<sup>1</sup> Due to a technical error, the first ten participants who accessed the survey inadvertently took an earlier draft, in which these questions were listed last, rather than first. The only other differences between this earlier draft and the final draft completed by the other 54 participants were that the first four questions, in which they indicated whether they met study criteria and provided consent, were not visible. However they did all complete the survey, and the approved IRB application stated that completion of the survey would be regarded as consent (these four questions were added later, as an additional precaution), so responses from these 10 participants were included in this study.



of a “course” created especially for this project in eLearning Commons, the online classroom management tool available to all enrolled students at the University of Georgia. Each potential participant was given access to the survey by enrolling them as a student in the “course” containing the survey. The eLC technology allowed me to track who had completed the survey, so that follow-up emails to encourage participation could be sent to those who had not completed it; however, specific responses could not be tied in any way to participant names or email addresses. To obtain and record informed consent, information on the study was provided both as a separate document in eLC and as the first page of the survey. Four questions were added to the beginning of the survey to assess whether respondents met the criteria of the study and to allow them to give or withhold consent. Those who entered the survey but decided to withhold consent would have been recorded as “completions,” so that no one was able to determine by name those who entered and decided not to take the survey, versus those who completed it; this was done to prevent any concern about coercion from influencing the consent process. In actuality, only one qualified respondent refused consent, and that respondent did not continue with the survey beyond the consent question.

### **Data Analysis**

All statistical analyses were performed using PASW software (formerly known as SPSS), while qualitative analyses were done without any specialized software, using just a spreadsheet and MSWord, due to the smaller quantity of data involved.

**Demographic and background data.** Basic demographic data in this section included gender, age, current degree program, full-time or part-time student, distance traveled to attend class, and highest degree already earned. This section also included data about participants’ experiences working in education and their previous jobs in all fields, their undergraduate

majors, number of volunteer experiences teaching or working with students, and whether participants knew friends or family members who teach.

*Major field.* Questions 18 & 19 addressed whether participants' undergraduate majors were related to the fields in which they were planning to teach. In addition to tallying their responses, I went through all those who had marked "No" or "Not Sure" and had provided additional information on their majors to determine whether they were as distant from their current programs as participants believed them to be, in order to deliberately throw as wide a net as possible when considering the applicability of undergraduate work to current teaching majors. I recoded one Art Education student who indicated she had been a studio major in her undergraduate work. I also recoded as "related" three Agricultural Education majors whose undergraduate majors were listed as Ecology, Pre-Vet Animal Science, and Biological Sciences, because knowledge gained from those majors might be useful in teaching classes related to farming, ranching, or animal husbandry. Four current Early Childhood Education majors who listed their undergraduate majors as History and Political Science, Music and Vocal Performance, Speech and Hearing Sciences, and Psychology, were also recoded as "related," based on the rationale that both history and music majors would be able to use information gained in their undergraduate degrees in teaching because Early Childhood teachers teach a variety of subjects, while the psychology major would have gained knowledge on child development that would be useful in her new teaching career. Finally, the speech and hearing sciences degree might be useful in teaching elementary students in terms of noticing developmental problems, working with pathologists, psychologists, or Special Education teachers, or in teaching special populations. In English Education, one student who was a Drama/Theatre major was recoded because that major would provide training in understanding

and analyzing a text for meaning and would provide additional knowledge of texts by Shakespeare or other playwrights frequently taught in the English curriculum. In Mathematics Education, five were recoded because their majors (Management, Accounting, Business Management, and Electrical Engineering) either involved a substantial amount of mathematics and/or would allow them to provide real world examples of mathematics in use. In Science Education, one was recoded who described his major as Ocean Engineering, which would involve the study of several sciences.

*Career change status.* Participants were sorted into one of three groups related to career change status, based on the length of time since they had earned their Bachelor's degrees and the time they reported spending in previous jobs/careers. Alternative certification teachers are sometimes described in the literature (and more often in the popular press) as "career changers" who have left a lengthy career in another field to enter teaching; however, this was not always to be the case in this sample. The first group of participants, designated as "first career teachers," were those who entered a certification program within two years or less of finishing their Bachelor's degrees. Based on the year in which they completed their Bachelor's degrees (indicated in Q16), it appears that ten of the 28 candidates in this "first career" group entered their Master's certification programs immediately after finishing their undergraduate degrees. Those participants of the remaining 18 who provided any information on what they did in the one or two years prior to entering certification programs indicated only short-term or temporary jobs, such as work in retail or substitute teaching, so clearly teaching would be their first real career. The second group, designated "early changers," indicated two and half to four years of work experience since they graduated. These individuals seemed to have some experience in the fields in which they were trained, but decided fairly early in their careers that they did not enjoy that

field, or perhaps had wanted to teach when they were younger, and so now decided to pursue teaching. The third group were the more typical “career changers,” who had at least five years’ experience (but often much more) working in a different field before they decided to enter teaching.

***K-12 experience.*** I also wanted to understand the amount of experience these teacher candidates might have had working in education or with children in general. Several questions (Qs 28-34) asked participants to describe previous or current work as a teacher, substitute teacher, or paraprofessional, and/or experiences volunteering, mentoring, tutoring, coaching, or in any way working with children in school or non-school settings. Participants’ responses were coded based on the highest level of experience reported, with teaching in their own classroom being the highest level. The four categories derived from these responses were: *K-12 teacher*, *K-12 auxiliary staff*, *other work with children*, and *no experience*. The first group included those who had taught K-12 in private schools, where certification may not be required, those already working as teachers, but on a provisional or emergency certificate, and those who had taught internationally without certification. *K-12 auxiliary staff* included those who had worked as substitute teachers, teaching assistants or paraprofessionals. *Other work with children* included all participants who reported working as a volunteer, mentor, tutor, coach, at a daycare facility, or as a teacher in a non-school setting, such as a Sunday school or giving music lessons. The *no experience* category was reserved for those who reported none of these experiences.

**Motivations and beliefs about teaching.** Exploratory factor analyses were done on responses to Section B (Questions 38-61 about participants’ motivations for teaching) and to Section C (Questions 62-74, addressing beliefs about teaching efficacy) in order both to assess whether themes from the literature, especially on candidates motivations to teach, would emerge

as factors for this population, and to develop combined variables in these two areas (motivation and beliefs) that could be used reliably in subsequent analyses, since using individual questions as variables would obviously result in an unacceptable potential for Type 1 error. Both exploratory factor analyses were conducted using an oblique (promax) rotation because oblique rotations better allow for possible correlations among the factors, which seemed likely in this study. However, it should be noted that an orthogonal (varimax) rotation was used in an initial analysis, and provided similar results.

Derived factors relating to participants' motivations to teach and their beliefs about teaching efficacy were then used in a number of one-way ANOVAs to seek interrelationships among them and to address the final Research Question, comparing the motivations and beliefs of participants of who differed on gender, minority status, K-12 experience, career change status, and whether they knew family and friends who taught.

**Challenges and Rewards.** The qualitative analyses on these open-ended questions were designed to complement the previous analyses related to motivations and beliefs. Working with a collaborating researcher, I initially divided responses to the two open-ended questions (Qs 5 & 6) on anticipated challenges and rewards into idea units, resulting in 118 idea units for *Challenges* and 128 for *Rewards*. These units were then sorted into four categories of *Challenges* (*Teaching Skills, Classroom Management, Outside Pressures, Time management*) and four categories of *Rewards* (*Positive Impact on students, Job Benefits, Personal Fulfillment, and Miscellaneous*), based on Harper's (2006) analyses of similar questions answered by pre-service teachers at UGA (see also Harper and Knapp, in submission). None of our respondents described challenges related to Harper's categories of *Motivating Students* or *Student Diversity*, and due to overlapping comments, we decided to combine challenges related to Harper's

category of *Policy* and those related to parents, which Harper put under *Developing Relationships*, into the single category of *Outside Pressures*. During this process, it also became clear that our respondents had discussed challenges related to *Jobs* and additional *Miscellaneous* challenges that Harper's participants had not. In addition, we decided to include a separate category for challenges participants described that were specifically related to their participation in alternative certification programs; this final category was an overlapping category, containing units that were also coded under one of the previous six categories. To ensure interrater reliability, we each independently coded all idea units and then compared our codings, resulting in 91.5% agreement on *Challenges* and 93% agreement on *Rewards*. Coding of the 10 *Challenges* units and nine *Rewards* units on which we initially disagreed was subsequently negotiated and resolved.

**Program changes.** Questions that solicited participants' needs or suggestions for program changes (Section D) addressed three major issues: scheduling of classes, financial aid, and the distance traveled to attend classes. In order to minimize type 1 errors as much as possible, questions indicating a need for different class scheduling (Questions 75, 76, 77, 79, and 80) were averaged together and used in initial overall ANOVAs comparing average desire for different class scheduling to current outside workload and distance traveled to class. Only if these overall results were significant were separate ANOVAs conducted on each scheduling question to determine which scheduling changes might be most helpful to students. ANOVAs were also done examining the relationship between current financial aid status and indicated financial need (Questions 81 and 82).

A full qualitative analysis of the type done on responses related to anticipated *Challenges* and *Rewards* was not done with the responses to Question 84, about changes participants wanted

in their programs because fewer people responded to this question (n=36), and answers were much shorter and much less open to interpretation (e.g., “More classes at the Gwinnett campus!”) Instead, answers were categorized by area and summarized, and my collaborating researcher and I discussed these results and agreed on themes we saw emerging.

## Chapter 3

### Results

#### Research Question 1: Who pursues alternative teacher certification at UGA?

**Basic demographics.** Participants' programs, ages, ethnicities, and genders are reported in the Methods section under "Participants," and so will not be repeated here. Since the ethnicity variable yielded several categories with only one participant in each, I recoded it for the purpose of further analyses to focus on the minority status of the teacher candidates, in accordance with common practice in much of the literature on alternative certification. Two groups were created, *White* (Caucasian) and *Minority* (African American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic/Latino and multiple ethnicities). Of the 63 respondents to this question, 47 self-identified as White (74.6%) and 16 (25.6%) as ethnic minorities. In comparison, 739 total undergraduate teacher candidates were enrolled in the COE in the Spring of 2010; of the 725 who provided information on their ethnicity, 642 were White (88.6%) and 83 were minorities (11.4%), indicating a higher percentage of minorities in alternative certification programs than in traditional certification programs in this term at UGA.<sup>2</sup> Even if Asian students, often called the "model minority," (Kitano & Sue, 1973) are excluded, the percentage of other minorities enrolled in alternative certification programs at UGA is nearly double those in traditional certification programs: of the 55 applicable students in the alternative program sample, eight were non-Asian minorities (14.5%), whereas the adjusted sample of 697 undergraduate students contained only 55 non-

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<sup>2</sup> Data from the sample in this study, rather than data from the entire alternative certification population at UGA, were used for these comparisons because of the impossibility of reliably identifying which Masters students in the SIS database were actually alternative certification candidates (see Methods section).



Asian minority students (7.9%). This final difference was found to be statistically significant. ( $t_{785}=-3.175$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Results do not, however, indicate that more males were enrolled in alternative programs than in traditional undergraduate certification programs at UGA in Spring, 2010. In the post-baccalaureate sample in this study, there were 53 women (82.8%) and 11 men (17.2%), while in the concurrent undergraduate population, there were 595 women (80.5%) and 144 men (19.5%).

**Program-related information.** Most participants ( $n=41$ , 64.1%) were full-time students, while 23 (35.9%) were part-time students. Of the 63 respondents who answered the questions on financial aid, 52 said that they had received financial aid (82.5%), and only 12 were not receiving any aid (17.5%). Twenty-one indicated they were receiving partial support (40.4%), and 31 were receiving full support (59.6%). Forty-one participants were receiving aid from only one source, 10 received aid from two sources, and one received aid from three sources. The vast majority of those receiving support were receiving some form of government aid ( $n=41$ ), while eleven were supported by the University of Georgia, three were supported by their employers, and nine had support from some other source. Examining these results, it is clear that most participants who reported receiving aid from an alternative source, such as an employer or UGA, were also receiving aid from the government. However, the implications of this finding may be impacted by the fact that this survey did not distinguish between loans and grants as forms of governmental aid.

Despite many participants' receiving financial aid, with a significant proportion fully supported, 48 participants (75%) still responded that they were going into debt to be in the program, whereas only 16 participants (25%) would not have debt to worry about after leaving

the program. Chi-square tests on debt and age and debt and career change status were not significant. This suggests that debt was an issue for all age groups.

In order that programs might be aware of the environments for which they are preparing teachers, participants were asked which type(s) of schools they hoped to work in, public or private, and where those schools would be located (Q36), in rural, suburban, or urban areas. As seen in Table 1, most participants had no preference for working in a public or private school, and fully 96.9% (n=62) were happy with the idea of working in public schools.

Table 1

*Type of School Where They Hope to Work*

	N	Percent
Public schools	24	37.5
Private Schools	2	3.1
Both or Neither	38	59.4
Total	64	100.0

Responses regarding the locations in which participants' hoped to teach are summarized in Table 2. Twenty-four participants had no preference for where they taught (37.5%). Among those who did have a preference, 29 hoped to teach in suburban schools (45.3%), 17 hoped to work in urban schools (26.5%), and 15 wanted to work in rural schools (15.7%).

Table 2

*Location of the School Where They Hope to Work*

	N	Percent
Rural Schools	3	4.7
Suburban Schools	16	25.0
Urban Schools	5	7.8
Rural and Suburban Schools	4	6.3
Suburban and Urban Schools	9	14.1
Rural and Urban Schools	3	4.7
All or None (No preference)	24	37.5
Total	64	100.0

Lastly, most participants intended to work for at least 10 years (Q37). As shown in Table 3, 77.7% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement, suggesting a lasting commitment to teaching.

Table 3

*Planning to Teach Ten Years or More*

	N	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	4.8
Disagree	2	3.2
Neutral	9	14.3
Agree	20	31.7
Strongly Agree	29	46.0
Total	63	100.0

**Educational and work experience.** A large part of what is seen in the literature as differentiating the alternative certification population from undergraduate teacher candidates is that, because they are older, they assumed to have had a greater variety and depth of educational, career, and other experiences prior to entering their certification programs. To examine whether this assumption held true at UGA, the survey included a number of questions (Qs 17-19, 24, 26-32) about participants’ educational and work backgrounds. As shown in the table below, the majority of participants (90.6%) had only a Bachelor’s degree before entering their certification programs. Only five had a previous Master’s degree, and the one participant with a more advanced degree, a dentist trained in South America, explained in comments that she had needed to change careers after moving to the United States ten years ago, since her dental training abroad would not qualify her to practice dentistry here in any position above dental assistant. Participants were also asked to indicate whether their Bachelor’s degrees were “in a field similar to what you are studying now,” and a majority (62.5%) reported an undergraduate major that

would provide at least some subject matter knowledge related to the subject(s) they were planning to teach.

Questions 18, 19, 24, and 26-32 addressed participants' work backgrounds. Results presented in Table 4<sup>3</sup> indicate that no participants in this study had been in the military. The majority of respondents had been students in the last ten years, but since participants were at various points in their degree programs, they might have taken into account their current studies when answering this question.

Table 4

<i>Work Experiences in the Last Ten Years</i>		
Type of Activity	N	Percent
As a Student	49	76.6
As a Homemaker	13	20.3
In the Military	0	0
Part-Time	25	39.1
Full-Time	40	62.5

As indicated in Table 5, almost all participants (95.3%) reported past or current experiences working with children and over half (51.6%) had worked or were working in schools or classrooms specifically.

Table 5

<i>Experiences in K-12 Schools</i>		
	N	Percent
No Experience	3	4.7
Other work with children	28	43.8
K-12 Auxiliary Staff	16	25.0
K-12 Teacher, not certified	17	26.6
Total	64	100.0

<sup>3</sup> Totals in Tables 4 and 6 will exceed 100% because participants were allowed to indicate multiple activities.

Furthermore, those with volunteer or non-school experience working with children often had more than one experience in that area. Table 6 shows the number of participants who indicated each type of non-school or volunteer experience with children.

Table 6

<i>Non-school Experiences with Children</i>		
	N	Percent
Volunteering	28	43.8
Mentoring	15	23.4
Tutoring	36	56.3
Working at a daycare	14	21.9
Coaching	13	20.3
Non-School teaching	27	42.2
Other	15	23.4
Total	62	96.9

Table 7 reports participants' *Career Change Status* and indicates that most participants were either career changers or entered certification programs almost immediately after graduating; few had changed into teaching after only a few years in other jobs.

Table 7

<i>Career Change Status</i>		
	N	Percent
First Career	28	43.8
Early Changer	14	21.9
Career Changer	22	34.4
Total	64	100.0

Nearly all participants knew at least one person who was a teacher, many knew more than one, and over 76% of participants had family members who were teachers (see Table 8), Interestingly, only three participants did not know anyone else involved in teaching.

Table 8

<i>Knowing Others Involved in Teaching</i>		
	N	Percent
Friends	12	18.8
Family	17	26.6
Both	32	50.0
Neither	3	4.7
Total	64	100.0

**Research Question 2: Why have these participants decided to become teachers?**

**Candidates' motivations for entering teaching.** Frequencies, means, and standard deviations for questions in Section B, on participants' motivations for entering teaching, are provided in Table 9.

Table 9

*Frequencies of Responses to Questions on Motivations to Enter Teaching*

	N	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Q38	64	3	10	16	18	17	3.56	1.180
Q39	60	4	15	7	14	20	3.52	1.359
Q40	63	4	12	15	20	12	3.38	1.184
Q41	62	11	12	13	19	7	2.98	1.299
Q42	62	8	16	11	8	19	3.23	1.453
Q43	63	0	1	3	28	31	4.41	.663
Q44	62	42	7	8	3	2	1.65	1.088
Q45	64	2	3	19	28	12	3.70	.937
Q46	63	15	30	13	4	1	2.14	.913
Q47	64	1	0	1	23	39	4.55	.688
Q48	64	10	15	28	5	6	2.72	1.119
Q49	64	0	1	8	26	29	4.30	.749
Q50	64	24	15	13	10	2	2.23	1.205
Q51	64	8	25	10	16	5	2.77	1.192
Q52	63	11	9	21	17	5	2.94	1.203
Q53	64	1	2	8	34	19	4.06	.833
Q54	64	2	6	10	27	19	3.86	1.052
Q55	63	0	1	3	29	30	4.40	.661
Q56	63	14	13	16	15	5	2.75	1.270
Q57	63	18	23	8	6	8	2.41	1.340
Q58	64	1	8	28	13	14	3.48	1.023
Q59	62	0	3	11	26	22	4.08	.855
Q60	64	0	0	1	31	32	4.48	.534
Q61	63	17	20	17	5	4	2.35	1.152

On average, participants agreed most strongly with the following statements:

- “Becoming a teacher will allow me to make a real difference in people’s lives” (M=4.55, SD=.688).
- “I want to teach because teaching allows me to help others” (M= 4.48, SD=.534).
- “I feel my life experiences have given me much wisdom to share with my future students” (M=4.41, SD=.663).

- “I want to teach because I love spending time with children/young people” (M=4.40, SD=.661).
- “I want to teach to share my love of my subject with my students” (M=4.30, SD=.749).
- “My past experiences in teaching have increased my desire to become a teacher” (M=4.08, SD=.855).
- “The job security I will have as teacher is important to me.” (M=4.06, SD=.833).

However, the following questions had means less than 2.5, suggesting that most participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with these four statements:

- “Losing my previous job is one reason I am considering teaching” (M=1.65, SD=1.088).
- “I want a teaching certificate mainly as a stepping-stone to another career (e.g., school counselor or administrator)” (M=2.14, SD=.913).
- “I entered this program because I had few other good career options right now” (M=2.23, SD=1.205).
- “I wanted to be a teacher when I was younger but was unable to pursue it earlier” (M=2.35, SD=1.152).

**Factor analysis of responses to motivation questions.** An exploratory factor analysis was done with these responses. Based on the common criterion of considering only those factors with eigenvalues greater than one, nine potential factors were initially derived for participants’ reported motivations for entering teaching, with question 59 not placing in any factor. The eigenvalues (Table 10) and scree plot (Figure 1) for this factor analysis are provided below.



Table 10

*Eigenvalues for the Motivation Factors*

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings <sup>a</sup>
	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total
		Variance	%		Variance	%	
1	3.489	14.539	14.539	3.129	13.040	13.040	2.092
2	2.765	11.519	26.058	2.299	9.578	22.617	2.486
3	2.246	9.358	35.416	1.895	7.898	30.515	1.968
4	1.847	7.696	43.112	1.379	5.746	36.261	1.700
5	1.758	7.327	50.439	1.362	5.675	41.935	1.781
6	1.493	6.220	56.659	1.062	4.425	46.360	1.528
7	1.346	5.609	62.268	.960	4.001	50.361	1.487
8	1.168	4.868	67.135	.756	3.148	53.509	1.337
9	1.085	4.519	71.654	.658	2.740	56.249	1.671
10	.986	4.110	75.764				
11	.794	3.308	79.073				
12	.786	3.273	82.346				
13	.637	2.653	84.998				
14	.562	2.343	87.341				
15	.530	2.207	89.549				
16	.457	1.902	91.451				
17	.424	1.768	93.219				
18	.411	1.714	94.934				
19	.321	1.336	96.270				
20	.266	1.109	97.379				
21	.189	.789	98.168				
22	.176	.733	98.900				
23	.145	.606	99.506				
24	.119	.494	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

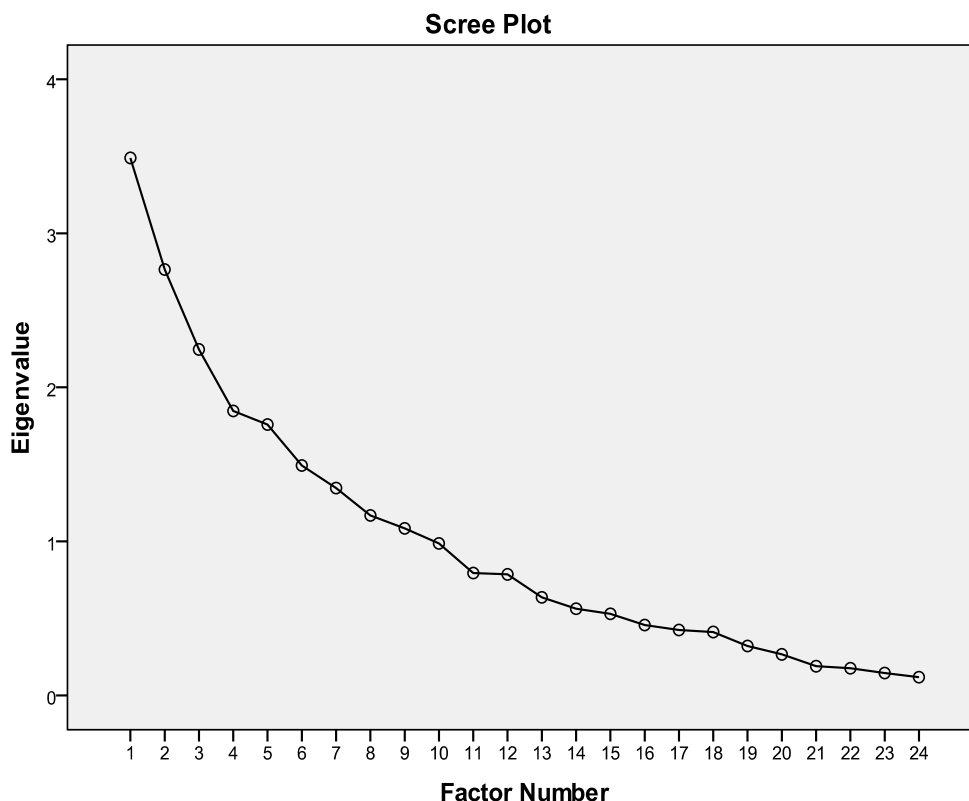


Figure 1. *Scree Plot for Motivation Factors*

As allowed for by the oblique rotation procedure used, the second and ninth factors were subsequently combined due to the strong correlation between them ( $r=.541$ ) and similarity in content of their components. The resulting eight motivational factors (see Table 11 below), used in subsequent analyses, were as follows: *Regret* that they had not pursued a teaching career earlier (Questions 39, 41, 42, 51, 57, and 61), *Altruism*, such as a desire to make a positive difference in students' lives or society (Questions 43, 47, 49, 51, and 60), *Personal Benefits* for themselves, such as vacation time (Questions 38, 45, and 53), *Family Benefits*, such as more time with children in the summer, (Questions 38 and 52), that they enjoy working with disadvantaged or *Struggling Students* (Questions 55, 58, and 60), *Job Benefits*, such as job security or better pay (Questions 44 and 56), issues related to the fact that they *Enjoy School* and learning

(Questions 48, 54, and 55), and the influence of *Friends and Family* and their enjoyment of teaching (Question 40).

Table 11

*Factor Loadings for Individual Question Responses and Eight Identified Motivational Factors*

	Regret	Altruism	Benefits to Self	Family Benefits	Struggling Students	Job Benefits	Enjoy School	Friends and Family
Q39	.452							
Q41	.403							
Q42	.763							
Q57	.529							
Q61	.586					.371		
Q51	.409	.390						
Q43		.787						
Q46		-.536						
Q47		.915						
Q49		.533		-.389			.460	
Q50		-.635						
Q60		.386			.406			
Q45			.691					
Q53			.737					
Q38			.419	.769				
Q52				.641				
Q58					.797			
Q55					.611		.395	
Q48					-.489		.430	
Q44						.699		
Q56						.674		
Q54							.683	
Q40								.906

Note. These questions are not listed in order, but rather grouped closely by the factors which they fit into. Question 59 did not fit into any of the factors, so is not listed. Factor loadings <.35 are not provided.

The frequencies and means for each of these factors are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

*Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for the Motivation Factors*

Factor	# of items	Answer Frequencies					Mean (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
		0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5			
Regret	6	0	10	17	25	6	2.882 (.811)	-.209	-.945
Altruism	5	0	0	1	23	39	4.108 (.480)	.126	-.678
Benefits to Self	3	1	1	12	30	20	3.776 (.792)	-.624	1.199
Family Benefits	2	2	12	13	27	9	3.246 (1.062)	-.374	-.755
Struggling Students	3	10	25	21	4	2	4.127 (.579)	-.233	.040
Job Benefits	3	0	0	2	34	27	2.210 (.917)	.933	1.308
Enjoy School	4	0	2	11	39	12	3.625 (.681)	-.344	.644
Friends and Family	1	4	12	15	20	12	3.38 (1.184)	-.309	-.816

**Research Question 3: What beliefs about teaching and learning do the alternative certification teacher candidates currently hold?**

Table 13 shows that all the means for questions in Section C (Beliefs) were above 3, indicating very little variation in participants' responses to these questions.

Table 13  
*Frequencies of Responses to Questions on Beliefs*

	N	Strongly		Neutral	Strongly		Mean	SD
		Disagree	Disagree		Agree	Agree		
Q62	64	0	1	0	18	45	4.67	.565
Q63	64	0	0	9	27	28	4.30	.706
Q64	63	1	4	15	25	18	3.87	.959
RQ65	64	6	13	11	26	8	3.27	1.198
Q66	63	0	1	2	21	39	4.56	.642
RQ67	64	1	5	11	32	15	3.86	.924
Q68	63	0	1	13	27	22	4.11	.785
Q69	64	0	3	11	20	30	4.20	.894
RQ70	64	6	21	8	22	7	3.05	1.227
Q71	63	5	17	11	21	9	3.19	1.216
Q72	64	0	2	14	32	16	3.97	.776
Q73	63	0	7	14	26	16	3.81	.948
Q74	64	0	3	7	28	26	4.20	.820

On average, participants agreed most strongly with the following six statements:

- “Good teachers know much more than just the subject matter they teach” (M=4.67, SD=.565).
- “Good teachers are able to impact their students in lasting ways” (M=4.56, SD=.642).
- “A successful teacher makes his or her students care about the subject they teach” (M=4.30, SD=.706).
- “Good teachers love the subjects they teach” (M=4.20, SD=.894).
- “Being able to relate to your students is essential to being a good teacher.” (M=4.20, SD=.820).
- “Good teachers are familiar with and involved in the community their students come from” (M=4.11, SD=.785).

**Factor analysis of belief questions.** The initial exploratory analysis of participants' beliefs about teaching yielded four possible factors.

Table 14

*Eigenvalues for the Belief Factors*

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings <sup>a</sup>
	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total	% of	Cumulative	Total
		Variance	%		Variance	%	
1	4.494	34.567	34.567	3.991	30.703	30.703	3.737
2	2.020	15.542	50.109	1.528	11.752	42.455	2.688
3	1.135	8.729	58.839	.653	5.025	47.480	1.964
4	1.070	8.231	67.070				
5	.865	6.651	73.721				
6	.746	5.740	79.461				
7	.611	4.703	84.163				
8	.484	3.725	87.889				
9	.420	3.232	91.120				
10	.363	2.794	93.915				
11	.299	2.297	96.212				
12	.276	2.123	98.335				
13	.216	1.665	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

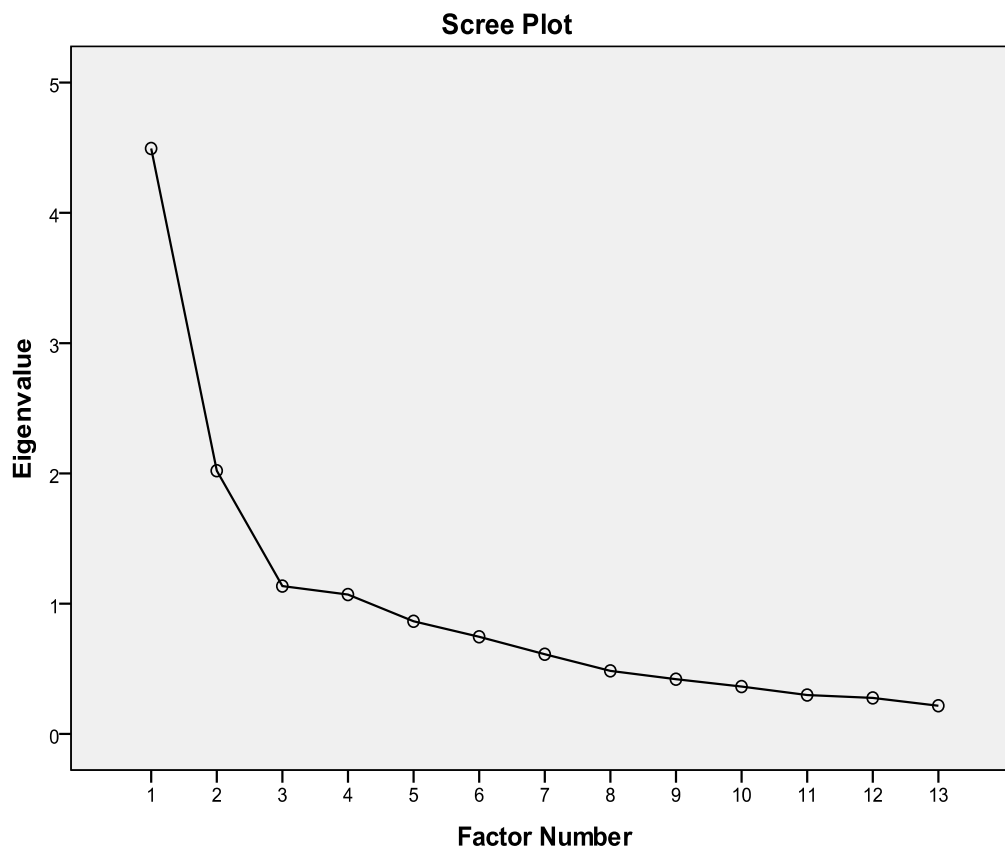


Figure 2. Scree Plot for Belief Factors

However, in evaluating the scree plot for this four-factor solution, it became clear that, although its eigenvalue (see Table 14) was marginally above 1, the fourth factor was weak and not conceptually coherent, and the solution would be more robust with only three factors, so a three-factor limited analysis was run, and these factors were used in subsequent analyses. These factors, shown in Table 15, included a belief that *Effort and Involvement* with students (Qs 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 70, and 73) is a main source of teaching efficacy, that *Subject Matter Knowledge* (Qs 69, 72, and 74) is strongly related to teaching efficacy, and that a skilled teacher can successfully teach *All Students* (Qs 65, 67, 70, and 71). It is important to note that, since orthogonal factor analysis procedures were not used, these factors are not necessarily mutually exclusive; that is, their construction does not rule out the possibility that a participant might

believe that teaching efficacy is related to both *Effort and Involvement* and *Subject Matter Knowledge*. It is exactly any relationships among these three factors which several of the analyses in this study were conducted to identify. The frequencies and means for each of these factors are provided in Table 16.

Table 15

*Factor Loadings for Individual Question Responses for the Three Identified Belief Factors*

	Effort and Involvement	Subject Matter Knowledge	All Students
Q62	.745		
Q63	.770		
Q64	.647		
RQ65			.505
Q66	.634		
RQ67			.792
Q68	.452		
Q69		.964	
RQ70	.495		.366
Q71			-.611
Q72		.558	
Q73	.610		
Q74		.387	

Note. Factor Loadings <.35 are not provided.

Table 16

*Frequencies and Descriptive Statistics for Belief Factors*

Factor	# of items	Answer Frequencies					Mean(SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
		0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5			
Effort and Involvement	7	0	0	3	19	38	4.208 (.563)	-.514	-.495
Subject Matter Knowledge	3	0	1	6	28	29	4.086 (.727)	-.565	-.081
All Students	3	1	7	15	29	12	3.391 (.904)	-.631	-.171



### Anticipated challenges.

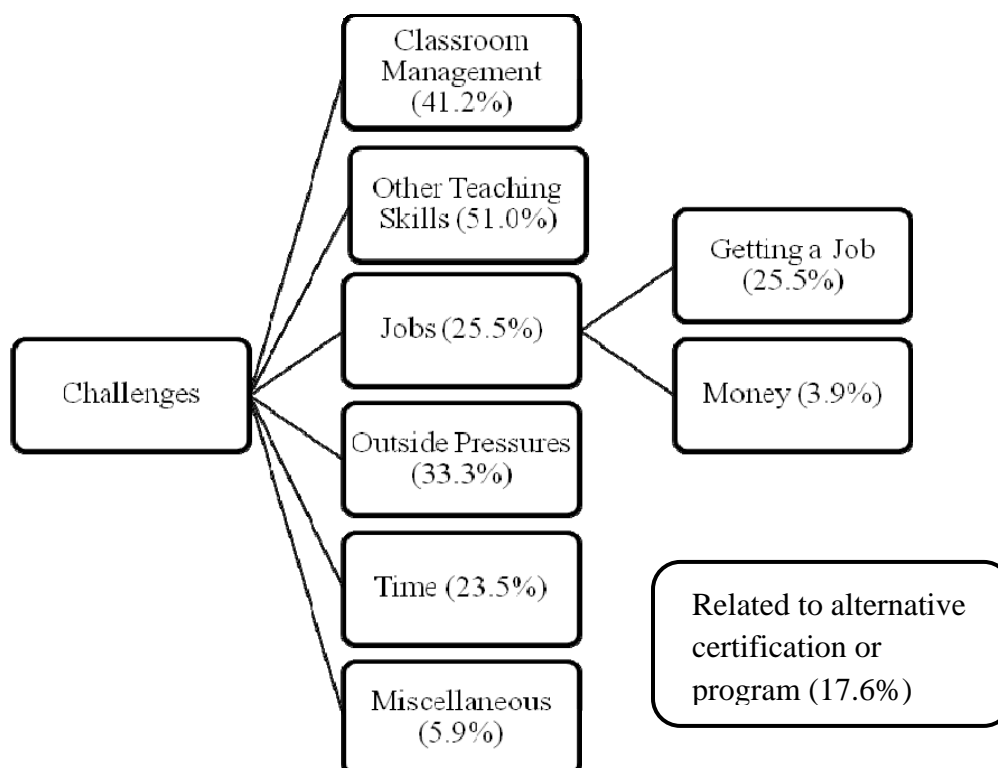


Figure 3. Anticipated Challenges

Note. Percentages represent the percent of participants who provided responses coded into each category. Therefore, the percentages will total to more than 100% since the participants were allowed to provide multiple responses. The “Related to alternative certification or program” category includes comments that were also coded into other categories.

Question 5 asked participants to describe challenges they expected to face when they began teaching. Fifty-two participants wrote responses of varying to this open-ended question, providing 118 different idea units about anticipated challenges. Responses included between one and six idea units each, with most including one ( $n=17$ ), two ( $n=13$ ), or three ( $n=12$ ) units, but some were more expressive and included four ( $n=7$ ), five ( $n=1$ ), or six ( $n=1$ ) units. Through the interrater coding process described in the Methods section, these units were sorted into six mutually exclusive categories, plus an additional, overlapping category created to include all responses related to the various alternative certification programs in which participants were

enrolled or their experiences as alternative certification candidates. The challenges each participant described were typically coded into only one (n=20), two (n=18), or three (n=10) categories, with only a few participants commenting in four (n=2) or five (n=1) categories.

***Classroom management.*** Twenty-five participants mentioned issues related to classroom management and student behavior in 27 idea units. These comments were mostly just a few words long, like “controlling classes” or “classroom management,” but some respondents elaborated on their concerns. One said

Also, I am a bit worried about classroom management. I think a lot of what we focus on and talk about in the education department is too liberal in theory. I mean all of it sounds great and I plan on [implementing] as many methods as possible, but I am still worried about how to directly deal the student behavior problems.

*(Participant 35, female, Social Studies)*

For this respondent and others, the issue was not simply classroom management but a perceived lack of practice dealing with real management issues; classroom management ideas felt to them like theory that might not work in practice.

***Other teaching skills.*** Twenty six participants (in 36 idea units) wrote about concerns related to their own teaching skills. These responses addressed a broad range of teaching-related challenges, ranging from lesson planning and working with other teachers (especially as a special education teacher), to being able to motivate diverse students to creating “differentiated curriculum” for students with varied needs and abilities. For example, one participant worried about

being able to be spontaneous in terms of recognizing those random teachable moments and connecting everything with my head and my heart, finding my teaching style so that I can reach all students and be able to vary my approach in case plan A or plan B or plan C do not work, being able to recognize when a child will truly need me and try to help to the best of my abilities whatever issue/problem they have which may not be related to school.

*(Participant 43, female, Early Childhood Education)*

For this individual, the biggest challenges of teaching came from the need to develop a teacher's intuition about knowing when and how to best intervene and help her students. However, others' challenges seemed more related to a lack of curriculum or training on certain aspects of teaching. An example of this is the participant who said that

I do not know yet how to really devise a lesson plan. I have only practiced this a few times in my coursework, although during my student teaching I will learn more about this

*(Participant 52, female, Early Childhood Education)*

Creating and using lesson plans are crucial to being a teacher so these challenges were related to actually performing the basic aspects of the job.

**Jobs.** Job-related challenges included comments related to either finding a job or to the (perceived) low salary of a teacher; these were contained in 13 responses (15 idea units). Most of these comments (13) related to the challenges of finding a job. Several participants remarked that, "the current economic condition causing school closings and job shortages" would be a problem, or worried that they might not be able to find a job "in the current state of the economy." This may be a reflection of the current economic recession affecting schools that is

restricting the number of new teacher hires in the state and even leading to teacher layoffs. Only two respondents mentioned issues about salary; one of these wrote that she worried about taking a 50% pay-cut since the education sector (unlike most others), [doesn't] give you credit for work experience gained in another profession even when it is the subjects being taught

*(Participant 1, female, Workforce Education).*

Although she was entering teaching because she wanted to, this student was an older student who had had been working in business for years and was frustrated that her extensive subject matter knowledge from work, which she would be drawing on in class, would not be counted as far as determining her salary.

***Outside pressures.*** Seventeen participants, in 24 idea units, discussed outside pressures that they feared may affect how they teach, including pressure from parents, the school administration, or as a result of state or national testing. Many of these responses were related to state and national standards, exemplified by the participant who wrote that she was concerned about “creating engaging lessons that fit the standards, [and] making sure ... my students pass the standardized tests” (Participant 33, female, Middle School Education). Other teacher candidates expressed concerns related to new curricula, like this one who said, “I believe that teaching the new mathematics curriculum will continue to be a challenge for all teachers in the upcoming years.” Another participant expressed concerns about the administration of the school, writing that she was worried about “not having the support of my administration to implement lessons beyond what the curriculum requires” (Participant 54, female, Early Childhood Education). These responses indicate that candidates felt they would pressure from a number of

sources to succeed, but also that they feared this pressure would interfere with their teaching as they wanted to.

***Time.*** This category included participants' concerns related to time management or balancing work with family life. Most of the 12 responses in this category were relatively short, simply stating that "time management" would be a challenge, but five were more specific about their time management concerns, with most indicating some variation of the idea that "balancing teaching and personal/family life" would be a challenge.

***Miscellaneous.*** Three people provided four idea units (3.4%) that could not be coded in any of the previous categories. One worried about "other people's attitudes toward my sexual orientation," while a second student explained in his or her answer to another question that he or she was transgendered and wanted the university to provide appropriately transgendered restrooms. These two participants may be indicative of a new population of students in alternative certification programs that the College of Education should be aware of in attempting to meet students' individual needs.

***Related to alternative certification or program.*** Lastly, fourteen responses specifically mentioned concerns about circumstances related to being an alternatively certified teacher or to elements of a specific alternative certification program. Five of those responses addressed challenges related to lacking the content knowledge to teach their subject well. One participant wrote

I think my biggest challenge is going to content knowledge. Because I did not fulfill the content in my undergrad. I have a focus of social studies, but I am not focused in the types and variance in my history classes. So, I am really worried

about having to learn information while I go, while trying to understand and apply pedagogy and methods, etc.

*(Participant 35, female, Social Studies Education)*

Another participant commented on this issue of limited coursework in some subjects writing “I also feel under-prepared to teach reading and writing. I am only required to take one course on literacy, and I feel it wasn't enough for me” (Participant 29, female, Early Childhood Education). Such comments seemed mainly to concern the coursework and preparation candidates received in their programs. A similar comment was directed toward the classroom experiences one candidate received in her program; she said one challenge was the “lack of quality classroom experiences. Undergrads in this field get a better [opportunity] to be in a number of classrooms” (Participant 16, female, Early Childhood Education). Another challenge specific to alternative certification teachers was the challenge of adapting to a new career which was described by two participants in three idea units. For example, one participant said that she was concerned about “becoming acclimated to a new and completely different work environment” (Participant 34, female, Mathematics Education). Lastly, two responses in this category related to alternative certification or their program focused on specific requirements dictated by the program related to finding a job. One participant wrote that she was concerned about “finding a job in the state of Georgia before I am completely finished with the Master's program” (Participant 13, female, Early Childhood Education). The other participant’s response related to the transferability of certification earned in an alternative certification program, saying, “[I’m] not sure if I will stay in Georgia after I finish certification, and if my certification will be taken elsewhere” (Participant 44, male, Agricultural Education).

### Anticipated rewards.

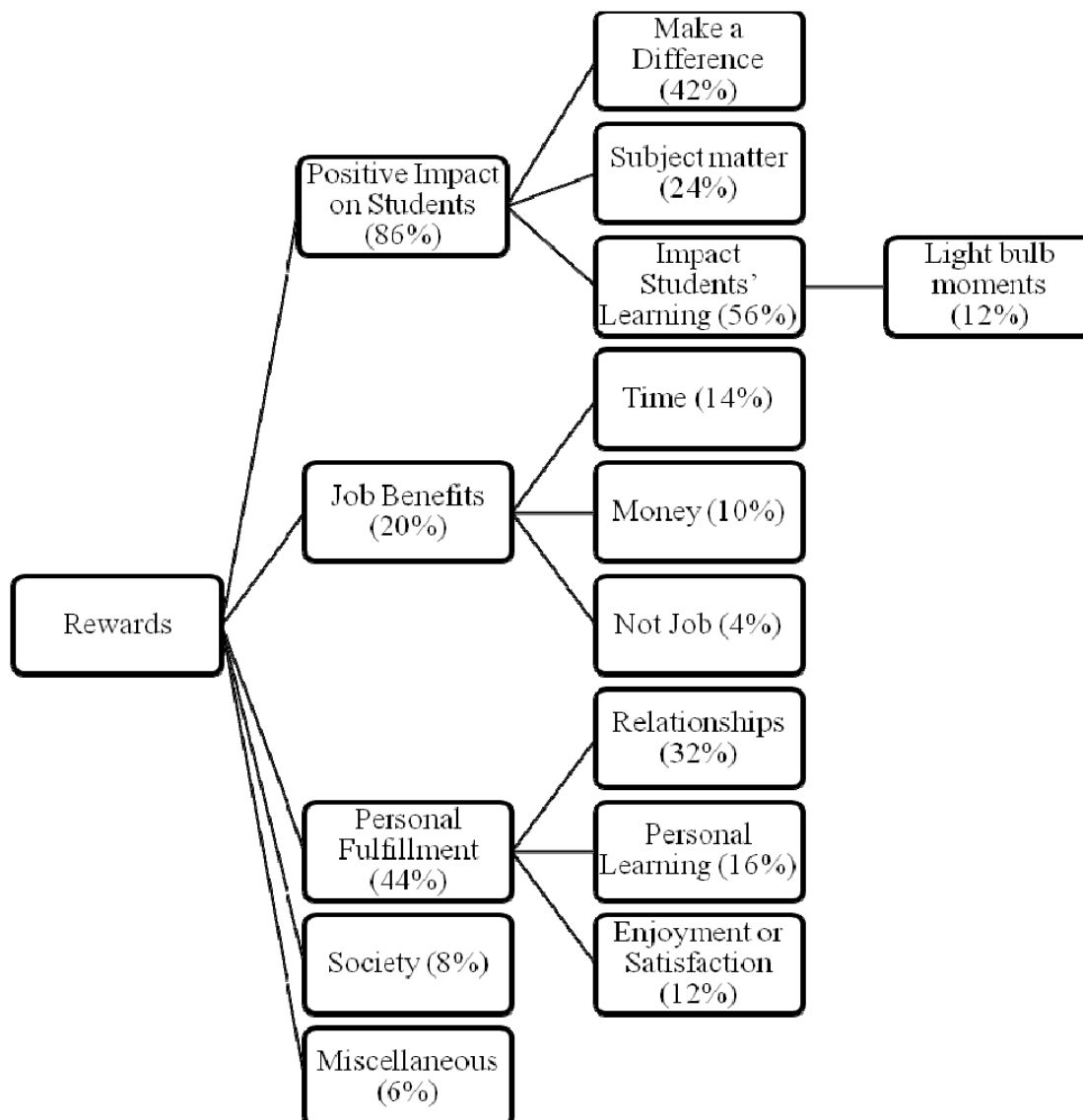


Figure 4. Anticipated Rewards

Note. Percentages represent the number of participants who provided responses coded into that category. Therefore, totals will not equal 100% since participants were allowed to provide multiple answers.

Question 6 asked participants to write about the rewards they anticipated from teaching. Fifty participants responded to this question and provided 128 separate idea units. As discussed in Methods, the coding presented below represents substantial initial agreement between myself

and a collaborating researcher (on 93% of idea units), with all disagreements subsequently negotiated and resolved.

Individual responses contained from one to six ideas units describing the rewards participants anticipated from teaching. Most responses contained one (n=13), two (n=14), or three (n=14) ideas units, while a few participants were more descriptive, including four (n=2), five (n=4), and six (n=3) idea units in their responses. Over half of responses contained idea unit(s) in only one category (n=26), whereas fewer had two categories (n=15), three categories (n=8), or four categories (n=1) represented.

***Positive impact on students.*** Forty three participants described at least one anticipated reward related to positively affecting their students. Participants provided 74 different idea units about impacting their students.

***Making a difference.*** One of the largest subcategories in this area was the hope participants described of making a lasting difference in their students' lives; 34 idea units from 21 participants were coded into this category. Many of these respondents only said vaguely that they were looking forward to "being able to make a difference in someone's life." However, others were more specific about how they hoped to affect their students; for instance, this participant wrote that she looked forward to

the joy of helping students see the potential within themselves so that they can pursue their dreams; the joy of helping students to critically read and think about the world so that they can take all the info, filter through it and then use what's left to make their own informed decisions in life; the satisfaction of knowing that you have a chance to inspire so many kids a year so that they are lifelong learners.

*(Participant 43, female, Early Childhood Education)*



*Related to subject matter.* This second major subcategory described rewards participants expected from encouraging their students to love and appreciate the subject matter they teach, and included 12 idea units from 12 participants. For example, one participant noted that she was looking forward to

the ability to give students my curiosity and understanding of the world around them and me...it is an amazing place and I am looking forward to being rewarded [sic] with their want and will for exploration.

*(Participant 35, female, Social Studies Education)*

Beyond this interest in inspiring their students to pursue the subject they teach, participants also wanted “to be able to show the students some real life applications to subjects that they deem unimportant to their every day [sic] life” (Participant 59, female, Science Education).

*Specific impact on students’ learning.* The final subcategory of Positive Impact included participants’ expectations of rewards from seeing their students learning and succeeding in their classes; 34 idea units from 28 participants were coded into this subcategory. Many of these responses were focused on seeing students learn and succeed in areas in which they had not previously succeeded. For example, one participant described the potential enjoyment of “having a child come to your classroom very low in reading, but leaving your classroom on or above grade-level” (Participant 29, female, Early Childhood Education). Another echoed this sentiment, saying that “it will be rewarding to watch my kids succeed and learn the material that I am teaching them.”

Six participants specifically described wanting to see “light bulb moments” where they could see their students learn and grow right in front of them. One participant described this experience by saying,

I want to be the person who turns on the light bulb for my students. I want them to say, "OH YEAH! I get it now," every time I teach them something new

*(Participant 57, female, Early Childhood Education)*

**Job benefits.** Only ten participants (in 12 idea units) described personal benefits related specifically to the job of teaching. Job benefits related to time tended to focus on perceived benefits of the teaching schedule; participants were excited about getting “more time off during the year than my prior career allowed” or “summer vacation.” Some participants with families specifically mentioned having a “very convenient schedule for my family.” Only five participants mentioned more traditional job benefits, including “steady pay” and “the relative security that teaching provides, including the health care and retirement plans.”

The fact that so few wrote about job benefits like time off or a steady paycheck in answer to this question about “rewards” suggests that most participants were not interested in becoming teachers for these sorts of extrinsic rewards, but rather for more intrinsic or altruistic rewards. In fact, two respondents specifically stated that they were not interested in the material rewards of teaching. One wrote, “I don’t think I expect any physical reward for teaching...in a sense [of] a teacher of the year reward... I’m obviously not doing this for the fame or the money” (Participant 35, female, Social Studies Education). For these two, and perhaps many others, teaching was more of a labor of love than simply another career.

**Personal fulfillment.** Twenty-two participants mentioned rewards related to their own personal fulfillment in 32 idea units. This category encompassed three subcategories: 1) *building relationships* with students, teachers, or parents, 2) *learning* from students or learning about subject matter, and 3) *personal enjoyment or satisfaction*.

*Building relationships.* Sixteen participants were excited by the prospect of building relationships with their students. Some hoped to be “a positive role model” to students and have them “look up to me.” Others described a more two-way relationship, like this participant who wrote that she wanted to develop “better communication skills between teacher and student, make a connection between two different cultures, [and] make a connection between two generations” (Participant 11, female, Foreign Language Education). Other participants hoped to build relationships with parents, other teachers or administrators as well, like this one who wrote that she looked forward to

the satisfaction of working with an array of people from the students and their families to the other teachers, principals and staff in the school to the people in the community

*(Participant 43, female, Early Childhood Education)*

*Personal learning.* Additionally, eight participants saw a personal reward in being able to learn or stay on top of a subject that they enjoyed pursuing or constantly learn more about teaching itself. As one participant noted, she was looking forward to “working in an environment where I can continue to learn, and I am constantly reinventing [the] job.” For another, this love of learning was both the reason he entered teaching and would provide a strong motivation to continue teaching. He wrote that “I love learning, but I feel that I have a responsibility to share the knowledge I gain with others, or there was no reason for acquiring that knowledge.” Teaching for such respondents was one way to continue to study what they liked as part of their work, rather than simply as a hobby.

*Personal enjoyment or satisfaction.* Lastly, six participants wrote more generally about their belief that teaching would provide them a sense of satisfaction or enjoyment, perhaps one

that was absent in their previous work. For example, one participant said that teaching would provide “a sense of accomplishment for myself,” while another explained that he/she expected to feel “self-satisfaction” in teaching. Since these responses were so general about the “satisfaction” gained from teaching, they may actually represent rewards described in previous categories, or perhaps a more self-focused sense of pride or achievement in teaching.

***Contributing to society.*** Only four responses (3.1%) specifically described serving the larger community or benefitting society in some way as a potential “reward” of teaching. These respondents expected a sense of reward from bettering the community through teaching. For example, one wrote about “the reward of giving back to the community through nurturing the minds of students.” Another had a goal that was focused on influencing the character of her students, who would then in turn influence society. She said she looked forward to “teaching with social justice intent and watching the children treat each other with respect, love, and tolerance” (Participant 54, female, Early Childhood Education). While these responses may seem similar to those in the category of “making a difference” for students, they were each thinking about influencing society in general, and not just their students.

***Miscellaneous.*** There were also three miscellaneous responses (2.3%) that did not seem to fit in any of the previous categories. One example was the participant who felt that a reward would be “having my own classroom and HOPEFULLY being able to teach what I need to teach.” Another said “I feel that teaching in and of itself is a reward.” These responses suggest a desire for autonomy as a teacher and a general enjoyment for teaching, respectively.

**Research Question 4: What concerns or suggested changes do alternative certification candidates report in relation to their certification programs?**

**Quantitative Analyses.** Table 17 shows frequencies, means and standard deviations for participants' responses to the questions (Qs 75-77, 79, 80) about scheduling issues. As described in the Methods section, these questions were first combined to yield an overall variable, *Desire for Schedule Change*, for each participant, which was then used in initial ANOVAs, to test whether participants' scheduling concerns in general were related to other variables. This combined mean variable ranged from 1 to 5, with a SD of .84308, indicating a great deal of variability on this issue among participants.

Table 17

*Desire for Schedule Change Variable*

Question	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	Mean	SD
75	4	14	14	20	12	3.34	1.198
76	5	5	13	22	19	3.70	1.204
77	14	11	16	12	11	2.92	1.395
79	5	8	13	8	29	3.76	1.364
80	10	14	16	7	17	3.11	1.427
<i>Schedule Change Variable</i>	1	5	19	20	13	3.3619	.84308

In order to test whether employment status was related to participants' reported desire for changes in class scheduling, an ANOVA (Table 18) between *Desire for Schedule Change* and *Employment Status* was performed, revealing a highly significant relationship between these variables,  $F(2, 60)=5.350$ ,  $p<.01$ . This is particularly noteworthy considering the small sample size in this study.

Table 18

*ANOVA for overall Desire for Schedule Change and Employment Status*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.669	2	3.335	5.350	.007
Within Groups	37.399	60	.623		
Total	44.069	62			

Since this ANOVA, using the combined variable derived from all the schedule related questions, was significant, I decided to perform separate ANOVAs to identify which changes might be most clearly indicated to help employed students. First, *Employment Status* was significantly related to a preference for attending the program part-time rather than full-time,  $F(2, 61)=3.648, p<.05$ . There was also a significant relationship between *Employment Status* and a preference for evening classes,  $F(2, 60)=8.522, p<.05$ . The relationship between *Employment Status* and a preference for weekend classes narrowly escaped significance ( $F(2, 61)=2.856, p=.065$ ); it may be that with a larger sample size this result would be significant. No significant relationships were detected between employment status and a preference for a shorter certification program or for online courses.

An ANOVA conducted on overall *Desire for Schedule Change* and distance traveled to attend classes did not detect a significant relationship between these variables,  $F(1, 57)=3.058, p=.086$ . However, the p-value might be considered marginally significant, so again a larger sample might show this relationship to be significant.

**Financial Aid and Needs.** Neither the relationship between receiving *Financial Aid* (Q20) and needing more *Money for Program Costs* (Q81),  $F(1,60)=.023, p=.879$ , nor the relationship between *Financial Aid* and needing more *Money for Family Needs* (Q82),  $F(1, 60)=.393, p=.533$ , was significant. Since most participants reported receiving financial aid, this

may explain the lack of relationship, although since I do not have information on exactly how much aid they were receiving, it is difficult to differentiate based on that factor.

**Qualitative Results.** Question 84 on the survey asked participants for additional comments about what would help them succeed in their alternative certification programs. Thirty-six participants chose to provide comments, with responses falling into four main categories: *Schedule or Location*, *Coursework or Training*, *Financial Aid*, and *Advising*.

Fifteen participants provided suggestions related to course scheduling or location. Six of these, most of whom were commuters, felt the COE should be “offering more courses at the Gwinnett campus,” or suggested that “the school could be divided into different locations, [so that] it would be easier for students to travel to.” Two more commented on how “convenient” and “helpful” classes at Gwinnett were for them, with one of those noting that “perhaps a closed circuit video course of evening courses [at] UGA held at UGA Gwinnett would save significant commute time and be just as effective.” Only one respondent disliked taking required courses at Gwinnett, mainly because she lived within walking distance of the Athens campus. Four participants commented on the need for better course availability and “more flexibility with class scheduling.” One participant further elaborated on this issue, saying,

It is also very hard to find the classes that I need because, once again, the budget dictates that too. This causes some classes to only be offered once a year.

Because of this I can't get a math endorsement until AFTER I graduate. It seems to me that instead of cutting necessary courses for paying students, President Adams could take a cut from his \$600,000 pay or Damon Evans could do without

his six figure [sic] raise. It is rather frustrating that my education has to suffer so that these people can live the high life.

*(Participant 57, female Early Childhood Education)*

Since a concern for many participants was the lack of availability of required courses, it seemed likely that these suggestions to offer more courses at satellite locations were intended both to make more classes available and make them easier to fit into participants' schedules.

Ten participants (27.8%) discussed issues related to the content of coursework or training experiences in their program. Five participants described ways that the student teaching experience could be improved. Two of those participants wanted "more experience in different school settings" to prepare them for the variety of environments they might teach in. Two participants felt that their student teaching assignments were not beneficial in learning the art of teaching. One was frustrated by being treated as a secretary to the teacher. While the other complained that

Student teaching placements need to be carefully thought over. Student teaching is affecting my desire to be a teacher in a negative way. I am in a failing school and have students who are repeating a class again. Many do not follow the school rules and the administration will not back teachers up.

*(Participant 31, female, Mathematics Education)*

This quote echoes the sentiments of another participant who felt that student-teaching should take place before or during coursework and not afterwards because some teachers find at this point that they are unprepared for what they encounter in the classroom and quit so close to completing their degrees.



Difficulty in completing their required observations was mentioned by three participants. Two of these commented that it was difficult to complete required observations if they did not have “access to students.” Five participants specifically discussed issues related to program coursework. Two felt that “classes were too theory-based, so they often felt out of context” and wanted more “hands-on” coursework. Two participants felt that additional coursework needed to be added to the curriculum. One of these specifically felt there was a need for more subject matter curriculum rather than just teaching pedagogy, such as “actual math classes” for Math Education majors and “a few courses that cover literature in certain regions/periods/times” for English Education. The last one simply asked for “more instruction on classroom management” to be added to the curriculum.

Five respondents addressed concerns related to financial aid. All five indicated a need for more financial aid to be available for those pursuing alternative certification, or at least more information on what aid was available, “particularly since it (teaching) is beneficial to the community and doesn’t pay well.” One participant mentioned the Noyce Fellowship, but said it is only available to those in math and science, so most of the post-baccalaureate certification students are ineligible. As a result, she was forced to take on student loans and debt to pay for her education. She stated, “If I weren’t married to a husband whose salary is luckily almost enough to cover bills, I don’t see any way I would be able to afford to be in this program.” The issue of being able support themselves or others was also mentioned by two more participants. One said it was hard to support his family “during this time of no employment.” Another worked throughout most of her program, but was forced to quit work during the last semester to do the required full-time student teaching. She remarked, “Not only did I have to pay for the credit hours, but I also lost my health insurance and had to find a way to survive without a job

for an entire semester.” It would seem that for some of the teacher candidates in these programs, it is difficult to complete their requirements and survive financially, especially if they are forced to quit a job to complete the program.

Only four participants commented on issues related to student advisement; however, they all addressed similar problems. All four felt that they were not given the level of advising they needed in regard to prerequisites and planning course schedules. Two of the four mentioned having to ask friends or other students to obtain the information that an advisor should have provided. Specifically, one participant felt that the group advising sessions used in her program were a problem, saying “I always have a lot of questions, but it’s hard to communicate in a large group, and I have found it difficult to communicate effectively via email.”

**Research Question 5: Are there any differences among candidates on these variables based on gender, past teaching experience, minority status, or other variables?**

**Is participants’ gender related to their motivations to teach or beliefs about teaching efficacy?** No significant relationships were found between *Gender* and any of the motivation factors, but only the relationship between the *Altruism* factor and *Gender* closely approached significance ( $F(1, 61)=3.956, p=.051$ ). Likewise, no significant relationships were found between the any of the Belief factors and *Gender*.

**Are participants’ experiences in K-12 environments related to their motivations or beliefs?** Only the *Regret* factor was found to have a significant relationship to participants’ level of experience (*K-12 Experience*) with children ( $F(3, 54)=3.232, p<.05$ ), indicating that participants with more teaching or school-related experiences may be likely to regret not choosing a teaching career earlier. No significant relationships were found between Belief factors and participants’ level of experience with teaching or children.

**Does participants' minority status affect their motivations or beliefs?** No significant relationships were found between *Minority Status* and any of the Motivation factors. The *Benefits to Self* factor had a marginally significant relationship with *Minority Status*,  $F(1, 61)=3.354$ ,  $p=.072$ . There were no significant relationships between any Belief factors and *Minority Status*.

**Are there differences in participants' motivations or beliefs based on career change status?** No significant relationships were found between *Career Change Status* and any of the Motivation or Belief factors. In particular, I had hypothesized that participants' *Regret* factor scores might differ based on *Career Change Status*, but no significant relationship was found.

**Is having friends or family who enjoy teaching related to participants' motivations to teach?** No statistically significant relationships were found between the *Friends and Family* factor (indicating whether they were motivated to teach by observing the enjoyment of friends or family members who taught) and the other seven Motivation factors. Participants' responses to Question 35, indicating whether they knew any friends or family members who were teachers, were then analyzed in relation to these seven Motivation factors, but only one factor, *Family Benefits*, showed a statistically significant relationship, such that knowing friends or family who taught seemed to increase participants' awareness of the potential family-related benefits of being a teacher,  $F(4, 57)=3.077$ ,  $p<.05$ .

Another factor, *Benefits to Self*, had a marginally significant relationship with knowing friends or family in teaching,  $F(4, 58)=2.436$ ,  $p=.057$ , which suggests that perhaps some participants had also observed the personal benefits of teaching in friends' or family members' lives.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Discussion**

This study was designed for several purposes. The first purpose was to collect and analyze data on the demographics and background of the post-baccalaureate population at the University of Georgia. Additionally, both to inform programs at the University and to contribute to literature in this field, this study sought to understand candidates' motivations for entering teaching, beliefs about teaching efficacy, and to investigate whether gender, ethnicity, career change status, or K-12 experience affects these motivations or beliefs in this sample.

#### **Demographics and Background**

As suggested in the literature (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998; Shen, 1998a), the results of this study indicate that the alternative certification programs at UGA are attracting a somewhat more ethnically diverse population into teaching, thus helping the College of Education meet one of its long-term objectives. 25.6% of the current sample of alternative certification candidates at UGA self-identified as ethnic minorities, while COE records show that only 11.4% of traditional undergraduate teacher candidates in the same semester were minority group members. While some scholars in this field have also argued that the alternative certification programs increase the number of males entering teaching, (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Shen, 1998b), this was not a finding of this study, and data from this sample suggest that the large majority of those enrolled in alternative certification programs at UGA, as in other places, (Shen, 1997; 1998a; Su, 1996), are still White and female, just as in traditional programs.

The majority (62.5%) of study participants had undergraduate majors in a field related to their chosen teaching area; thus, the fact that alternative certification programs tend to emphasize teaching pedagogy instead of subject matter may not be a problem, since as other research suggests as well, many have gained this knowledge previously (Chambers, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, since about a third of the respondents did not have an undergraduate major that could have provided in-depth knowledge in their chosen teaching subject, and since several respondents expressed concern about this lack, additional coursework may be necessary for the individuals who do not have extensive subject matter knowledge.

While the public's (and politicians') perception may be that almost all alternative certification candidates have had lengthy careers in business or other non-educational fields before they enter teaching, in this study, over 65% of participants were either "first career teachers" or "early changers." Only about a third had had extensive (at least five years) experience in another career. This proportion is similar to that found by Richardson and Watt (2006), and supports previous research findings that many candidates enter alternative certification programs much earlier in their careers than commonly supposed (Abell, et al., 2006; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Ruckel, 2000). The wide variety of previous career paths described in past research were also seen in the findings of this study (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003).

However, most study participants reported significant levels of experience in schools or working with children, with 95.3% describing some experience, 26.6% as teachers, 25% as staff, and 43.8% in other activities with children. These findings reaffirm conclusions from previous studies that alternative certification candidates often have important experience in schools, various work environments, and just general life experiences to draw upon in their studies

(Gordon, 1993; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Salyer, 2003; Tigchelaar, et al., 2008), experiences which could serve as important resources both during teacher education and in eventual teaching practice. That more than half of this sample had previous job experience in K-12 schools suggests that many alternative certification candidates at UGA have more data on which to base their decisions to enter teaching than does the usual undergraduate, a suggestion supported in other studies as well (Chambers, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Perhaps working in schools is what led some to consider teaching as a viable, enjoyable career, while others may have intentionally sought out experiences as a substitute teacher or paraprofessional as a way of testing whether they wanted to teach before going through the expense of the post-baccalaureate program. In either case, this level of prior K-12 experience suggests that some alternative certification candidates, at least, may face less of the classic “reality shock” common to so many beginning teachers (Gaede, 1978; Veenman, 1984), and considered by many a main reason that nearly 40% of newly trained teachers leave teaching during their first five years (Ingersoll, 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

It is encouraging that the majority (96.9%) of participants expressed a willingness to work in public schools. Despite the challenges of working in public schools related to changing demographics and state and national policies, most still were interested in working in these environments instead of private schools. An even more interesting finding is that many alternative certification candidates were willing to work in high needs areas, such as urban or rural schools. According to anecdotal information from professors who teach undergraduate teacher education courses at UGA, many, if not most, of these traditional certification candidates intend to work in suburban schools similar to those they graduated from (N. Knapp, personal communication, July 1, 2010). Again, this corresponds to previous research showing that

alternatively certified teachers often work in urban or rural schools (Shen, 1998a, 1998b). The fact that our participants seem interested in working in these environments that other teachers might avoid suggests that alternative certification programs at UGA may contribute to alleviating teacher shortages in these areas.

### **Motivations**

Since, past literature has found a number of possible motivations of individuals to enter alternative certification programs those potential motivations were studied specifically in this study. In an age of cynicism about public schooling, it was refreshing to find that most study participants were motivated to teach by altruistic desires to help children or society, or by a personal love for teaching or working with children. In the most agreed with statements, participants hoped to “make a difference in people’s lives,” “help others,” share their wisdom, or that they wanted to spend “time with children/young people,” “share my love of my subject.” Similarly, past research has shown the desire to “make a difference” in the lives of their students to be common reason for alternative certification candidates to enter teaching (Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Gordon, 1993; Salyer, 2003; Stevens & Dial, 1993; Su, 1996; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Additionally, the love of working with children (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Gordon, 1993; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Su, 1996; Williams & Forgasz, 2009) or desire to share their love of subject matter were also seen repeatedly (Gordon, 1993; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Salyer, 2003). These motivations were also echoed in our participants’ comments about anticipated *Rewards* in teaching, particularly in the high proportion of respondents (86%) who anticipated the rewards of making a *Positive Impact* on their students. The desire to watch their students learn and succeed naturally fits with the

motivations mentioned above because teachers must actively want to help their students and want to share what they know about their subjects in order help their students succeed.

This conclusion is strengthened by the finding that the desire for *Job Security* (Q53) was the only “extrinsic” motivation statement agreed to by most participants; however, this agreement may be a reflection of the current unique economic situation and high unemployment rates nationwide. In addition, the statements most disagreed with in this section implied that candidates’ motivation was relation to “losing my previous job,” (Q44) “as a stepping stone to another career” (Q46) or because they lacked other “good career options” (Q50). Previous research on motivations found that job loss was a major motivation for entering teaching (Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006), as well as the lack of other career options (Stevens & Dial, 1993) but participants in this study did not report these as important motivations to enter teaching. External rewards such as a steady salary and vacation time were not major motivations for most participants’ interest in entering teaching either. It is interesting that even this particularly difficult economic situation does not seem to be driving more people into teaching careers at UGA because they believe that it will provide job security, or a steady income. Although some participants did report being motivated by these sorts of job benefits, they did not seem to be the main or strongest motivation; for most, the personal and job benefits were secondary to the desire to teach, seen as more of an added perk of the job, but not the main reason for entering teaching. It may be that shorter and less expensive programs not included in this study would attract more individuals motivated mainly by economic factors to enter teaching quickly in this difficult economic climate, but these Masters level programs did not.



Another major influence on participants' decisions to teach may have been friends and family in the profession. That 95.3% of study participants knew one or more relatives or friends who were teachers echoes the results of previous studies which noted that alternative certification candidates often had the support and guidance of friends and family (Gordon, 1993; Hood & Parker, 1994; Sinclair, 2008). Again, those candidates with close friends or family members who teach may have both a more realistic view of teaching and also a better support system to call upon when faced with the inevitable challenges of novice teaching.

Statements of family-related motivations, such as a desire for more time with current or future family (Q38), to help with their children's after school activities (Q52), and for more vacation time (Q45) had averages closer to 3, indicating fewer participants who "strongly agreed" with these statements. This finding is noteworthy because it does not seem to reflect previous research indicating that family needs motivated women in particular to enter teaching through alternative certification programs (Anderson, 2008; Dieterich & Panton, 1996; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Salyer, 2003). These family-related motivations may not have been as important in this study because many participants were young and perhaps did not have families yet, although as mentioned above, I do not have specific data on this issue. It is interesting that while these statements comprising the *Family Benefits* factor were not identified as so important to participants, when asked to describe anticipated *Rewards*, they mentioned the benefits of teaching for their families frequently, just as previous populations of alternative certification (Anderson, 2008; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Raggl & Troman, 2008; Salyer, 2003) and traditional (Harper, 2006) teacher candidates have. However, participants' discussion of these benefits, such as more time off or job security seemed

mainly related to advantages allowing them to better care for their families or to benefits unavailable in their previous careers.

### **Beliefs**

Beliefs about teaching efficacy endorsed by participants in this study are in some ways similar to those found in some previous research. For example, Richardson and Watt (2006) found that alternative certification candidates were aware of the need for teacher to have expertise in their subject matter. However, little else has been studied in relation to beliefs of alternative certification candidates about teaching efficacy, so this is a main contribution of this study to the field. The relatively high average scores were relatively high, between 3 and 5 on a five-point scale, for all three Belief factors, that teaching efficacy can be achieved through *Effort and Involvement* with students, that efficacy is strongly related to *Subject Matter Knowledge*, and that a skilled teacher can successfully teach *All Students*. Most participants “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the three major beliefs: *Effort and Involvement*, *Subject Matter*, and *All Students*. The averages of each of these questions were between 3 and 5 on a five-point scale, suggesting a great deal of agreement. There may have been some social desirability reflected in their answers and the previously mentioned relatively high averages. The narrow range for the Belief factors, specifically *Effort and Involvement* and *All Students* suggest that these teacher candidates have a sense of confidence in their abilities to teach even difficult or struggling students.

The comparisons done on motivations and beliefs based on gender, K-12 experience, minority status, and career change status found few significant relationships, although, past literature suggests that there may be differences between alternative certification teachers based on gender (Novak & Knowles, 1992), minority status (Sinclair, 2008; Su, 1996), or other factors.

This discrepancy may be due to the higher frequency of qualitative studies in these areas, rather than large scale quantitative studies (Novak & Knowles, 1992; Su, 1996) or to the lack of power caused by my relatively small sample size, as previously discussed. Overall in this study, there seem to be few differences among participants on Motivation or Belief factors, so perhaps differences in demographic variables are more likely to affect Program Changes needed by participants, rather than these two areas.

Under *Challenges*, participants seemed to anticipate many pressures as teachers related to policy, administrators, or parents. These participants' descriptions of potential pressures from many sources suggest an awareness of the challenges of teaching effectively in the current educational environment, and especially of the constraints of policy, that seems unusual in most teacher candidates. Their awareness of these challenges may simply be a function of the times in which everyone is more aware of issues such as merit pay and standardized tests, or it may come from having children of their own in school, so they know first-hand how difficult teaching might be, or it may be a function of the high percentage who report having already taught, worked or volunteered in schools. Whatever the cause, these participants, like some others noted in the literature (Stoddart, 1991; Tigchelaar, et al., 2008), may benefit by being more prepared for pressures they may face as teachers.

Overall, findings on the teaching-related motivations and beliefs of these participants indicate that alternative certification programs at UGA seem to be attracting many candidates with the potential to become very good teachers, based on the types of rewards they anticipate, their realistic view of teaching challenges, their primarily intrinsic and altruistic motivations to teach and their confidence in the efficacy of involvement, effort and sound subject matter knowledge to enable them to teach all students. However, the specific reasons why these

candidates are attracted to and enrolled in UGA's post-baccalaureate certification programs is unclear, nor is clear whether these characteristics are typical of alternative certification students in programs outside UGA.

### **Program Changes**

Despite 52 participants receiving financial aid, a majority (75%) of all participants felt they would be greatly aided by increased financial aid opportunities, especially since they are unlikely ever to command the large salaries of those earning advanced degrees in Business, Law, Pharmacy, Engineering or other professions typically accessed through graduate study, so it may be more difficult for them to repay debt incurred to take these programs. Prior research has noted the difficulty of finding financial aid to enroll in alternative certification programs (Eifler & Potthoff, 1998), so it is not surprising that UGA's students reported similar issues. The large numbers of participants who said they were going into debt to take these programs, despite receiving financial aid only strengthens the significance of their requests for more aid, and perhaps especially for aid that is not in the form of loans, but rather grants or program-coordinated employment.

For those students who were full-time employees, the ability to enroll part-time or take evening classes was important. These findings make sense because it would be difficult for a full-time employee to take a full course load or attend classes during the day if they had a typical 9 to 5 job. The qualitative responses to the Program Change question suggest that, additionally, commuters would prefer more classes to be available at the Gwinnett campus. Although the University budget may lead to cutting courses and programs available at Gwinnett, this decision may make it even more difficult for some students to enroll in or complete an alternative certification program if they are required to drive one hour or more each time they need to come

to UGA. It was interesting, however, that online courses were not of particular interest to the participants in this study. Even those who commuted to school or were working full-time did not indicate any strong preference for online courses. Frequently, online courses are touted as the best way to allow people who work or live far from a post-secondary institution to access alternative certification programs (MacDonald, et al., 2008), but such is not the case for these participants. Why they are not asking for more online courses is unclear. Perhaps they believe online courses can only be offered for some of their coursework, so they would have to travel to Athens for the remainder of their coursework anyway. Or perhaps, since these teacher candidates are often already anxious about how successful they will be as teachers, especially with shortened training, they may want to have more face-to-face interaction with professors so that they can get all their questions answered and feel as prepared as possible for their new careers. The latter hypothesis is somewhat supported by other data from this study, in that the challenges described by candidates related to their own *Teaching Skills* or *Classroom Management* mainly addressed concerns related to the length and intensity of their training program. It is also supported by the past studies, which have found that many of the anxieties and stresses common to the traditional first year teacher, were also present in alternative certification candidates but were more related to the preparation received in their alternative certification program than the challenges of starting a new job (Silin, et al., 2008). Alternative certification programs are generally shorter than traditional certification programs, meaning that candidates may only receive minimal training in some areas such as classroom management or teaching literacy, but are expected to produce the same results as those who have received far more training.

As discussed in their *Challenges*, many participants were concerned about finding a job once they completed their programs. These concerns, not noted in many previous studies, are most likely a result of the current economy. Although, participants in this study may have entered their alternative certification programs believing they would have no trouble finding employment after graduation, because teaching would continue to be a needed profession, the increasing unemployment rate has made this expectation less certain. It may also be the teachers trained traditionally or with greater experience may be have an easier time finding work, especially if school districts believe that traditional teacher certification candidates are more qualified and will therefore be better teachers (Patterson, 1995).

Lastly, some participants commented on the need for better advisement of alternative certification candidates. They reported, in at least some programs, a lack of communication when it comes to the prerequisites and courses they are required to take and those courses' availability. Consequently, some teacher candidates in this study had trouble figuring out which courses to take and when to take them. Especially for courses not offered every term, this may mean that candidates could miss an opportunity to take a required course and have to remain in the program longer than they anticipated. One Early Childhood Education candidate mentioned "group advising" sessions as particularly problematic. Although this may be an issue within only that program, professors should consider these students as not different from other graduate students they advise as far as needing attention and time to receive guidance and get answers to their questions.

### **Limitations**

This study was subject to a number of limitations. First, the College of Education SIS database from which most potential participants were recruited turned out to have a number of

errors. Nearly one-fifth of the emails given were no longer valid, but more importantly, about half of the students who were identified as seeking initial Georgia teacher certification at the graduate level, and who responded to our emails, were not in fact currently seeking such certification. There were students on the list who had graduated months prior to being contacted, but also one who had not yet even begun his program. Many of those who replied to emails indicated that they had been certified to teach through a prior degree program, and so were not seeking alternative certification in their current programs. It may be that some programs update the Student Information System more accurately and more frequently than others, making their information more reliable, so it may be that the responses of one group are disproportionately represented in my data, based on the quality of the contact information the program provided. Likewise, it is possible that a number of students who were in fact seeking alternative teacher certification were, in turn, misidentified as not seeking such, and thus were not invited to take the survey.

At some point in the process of shortening the list of potential participants, students in the SETWEB program were removed from this list, due to some confusion about the nature of this program, since it differs greatly from the other post-baccalaureate certification programs in the College. It became clear near the very end of data collection that the students in this program did most likely meet study criteria; however, it was too late to contact them. As a result, this population was not invited to participate. Since SETWEB is an entirely online certification program in Special Education, one area that the inclusion of these students may have changed would be responses to Question 77 about a preference for online courses.

In addition, while a 30% response rate is not considered poor for an uncompensated survey, the elimination of nearly half of these respondents (due to their not meeting study

criteria, see above) left a smaller-than-hoped-for sample size, and despite multiple contacts, I was not able to interest more individuals in completing the survey. This small sample size may have particularly affected the results from the factor analyses, since ideally one would use samples of several hundred for such analyses, and may have also contributed to the failure of several statistical tests to achieve significance (see Results). The sample was also not very diverse as far as minority status or gender. Although this lack of diversity may accurately reflect the alternative certification population at UGA, it may not be reflective of other alternative certification programs; therefore, one should be careful when generalizing results to populations of alternative certification teachers other than those in programs at UGA. The small sample size and the consequently low number of minority and male participants also made it less feasible in some cases to analyze results specifically for these two groups.

Another limitation is that only alternative certification candidates enrolled in Spring, 2010, were surveyed; candidates enrolled at different times may comprise a different population, with different views of teaching, especially of its rewards and challenges. Finally, as with all survey research, some participants may have provided socially desirable, rather than completely honest, responses (which may account, in particular for the lack of variability in the Beliefs section) and participants who chose to complete the survey may have differed in numerous and important ways from those who were invited but did not choose to participate; because of the ambiguity of the SIS system data, it was not possible to meaningfully compare even the gender and ethnicity of respondents versus non-respondents. However, even with these limitations, the findings of this study suggest a number of interesting points about the population of students enrolled in alternative (post-baccalaureate) teacher certification programs at the University of



Georgia: who they are, why they have chosen to enter teaching, what they believe about teaching, and what potential changes or improvements in their programs might help them.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Methodological Implications

The process of completing this study has suggested several revisions to this survey and survey process that will make it more useful in future research. First, in an effort to attract more participants, I will consider offering a gift card or other incentive to participants in future studies. As far as the survey questions themselves, I also plan to make a few changes. First, I will add questions about participants' marital status and children since answers to those questions will help me better understand their responses regarding motivations to teach, rewards of teaching and suggested program changes. For example, questions in Section B about the benefits of more time with family are mainly relevant only to candidates who are married and/or have a family to care for. Also, a couple of participants noted that they wished the question concerning the distance they drove to classes could be changed to allow for the option of walking. Questions in the Beliefs section (C) would have to be carefully considered and possibly significantly revised before being used again because for the most part they failed to yield any significant results, due in part to lack of variability in responses.

A positive aspect I would retain in future versions of this survey would be to keep the open-ended questions on challenges and rewards at the front of the survey. As noted in results, many fewer respondents answered the two open-ended questions on needs and "other" at the end. After completing the more than 80 other questions, it is possible that fatigue became an issue. The error which caused the first ten respondents to reply to an earlier survey draft with all

open-ended questions at the end (see Methods chapter) actually helped confirm this hypothesis, since only three of those ten participants actually wrote responses on rewards or challenges and also gave shorter answers. So, in order to obtain more and fuller responses, it is clearly better to ask open-ended questions earlier, before participants become fatigued by the length of the survey. Due to such considerations, it might also be beneficial to move the open-ended question about program changes to the front of Section D.

### **UGA's Alternative Teacher Certification Population and Programs**

**The Student Information System.** Results of this research clearly highlight the need for improvements in the Student Information System (SIS) available to the College of Education. The list from the SIS, selected by the criteria of current post-baccalaureate students obtaining initial teacher certification, in fact included students who had graduated previously, students listed as seeking initial certification in programs that did not grant such, students who had obtained initial certification in their undergraduate programs, and in at least one case, a student who had not yet received official acceptance from his program. These discrepancies suggest that the COE needs more accurate and timely data on just who is in alternative certification programs, to enable better course planning and scheduling at the program, department and College levels, as well as to give a more accurate picture of student demographics, which will allow the College and University to better recruit students into such programs and better plan to meet their instructional, financial and other needs while in these programs, thus increasing retention and student success.

Toward these ends, alternative certification programs may also wish to collect additional data from candidates upon entry regarding parental status, prior and current employment, age,

and where they hope to teach, in order to better understand both the needs and resources their students are bringing to their programs.

**Financial aid.** If at all possible, more financial aid should be more available to alternative certification candidates, who often do not qualify for other types of graduate fellowships and scholarships that are more research-oriented. Programs should also seek out, assemble and provide applicants with clear information about financial assistance available from outside the University. From their concerns about debt, it seems likely that many of the alternative certification candidates in this study supported by the government aid were receiving most of it in the form of loans to be repaid. However, such loans can impose a financial burden on fledgling teachers for years to come, and also further discourage teachers from working in high need, especially rural districts, where salaries are often lower than in well-off suburban districts. So efforts to develop further sources of financial aid should focus most heavily on non-loan types. If additional sources of funding could be made available, this might encourage more individuals to enter alternative certification programs who previously thought they could not afford the cost. Debt was a major concern of many participants, so finding ways to lessen that stress would make their time in the program easier, and also lessen the stress during their first few years teaching.

**Course scheduling.** Greater availability of classes, or even entire programs, at the Gwinnett campus might allow potential candidates who live and work in Atlanta to more easily earn their degrees, and might increase recruitment of candidates from that area as well. Perhaps offering some sort of video conferencing option for certain courses would make those courses available at Gwinnett for minimal cost.

Adding more courses on Saturdays and making sure required courses are available outside of normal working hours might also increase course access for current and potential alternative certification candidates. While this study had a limited sample, at least these participants did not particularly favor the addition of more online courses as a solution to scheduling problems, which suggests the College may wish to rethink what seems to be a recent trend in this direction.

**Field work requirements.** Good alternative certification programs, like traditional certification programs, typically require candidates to complete extensive field experiences in classrooms, beyond their student teaching work. Candidates who are full-time employees (as were 62.5% of participants in this study) unless they work in schools, may not be easily able to fulfill these requirements if they are working during the school day. Alternative certification programs may need to work with candidates to find viable alternatives to meet these requirements on weekends or evenings; for instance, such candidates may be able to gain experience at alternative schools or programs for nontraditional students that offer classes in the evening for the same reasons.

**Advisement.** The advising that the alternative certification candidates received in their programs was strongly criticized by some candidates. These programs should make it a priority to ensure that alternative certification candidates are advised at least as well as other graduate students are advised. While group settings may work well for sharing general information, candidates should be given individual time with knowledgeable advisors on a regular basis to ask and answer questions specific to their own concerns. Although only a few participants discussed issues related to the advisement they received in the program, since this was in response to an

open-ended question, it may be that other candidates have similar complaints but did not think to list them on this survey.

Additionally since many participants expressed concern about finding a job, especially given the current tough economic climate, alternative certification programs should consider providing some support in this area. Either programs could provide in-house assistance for students' job search, or, if appropriate, students should be deliberately connected to the UGA Career Center, perhaps through some sort of structured introductory meeting followed by opportunities for individually scheduled appointments with job counselors. Again, targeted assistance with job placement would be a recruitment point to get more well-qualified candidates into alternative certification programs, as well as a help to successful placement of program graduates, one of the criteria on which the University, College, and individual programs are evaluated.

**Subject matter education.** Since approximately one-third of the candidates were entering a field for which they did not have a related undergraduate major, and since some expressed concerns about a lack of subject matter knowledge, some alternative certification candidates may need or want additional training in the subject matter they will be teaching. One way to resolve this need might be to provide an option for candidates to add an additional semester to their programs, in which to take additional courses on subject matter. Candidates who already had the requisite subject matter knowledge would not have to take additional courses beyond current requirements.

### **Implications for Alternative Certification as a Field**

This study offers some implications for how we view alternative certification programs in general. First, although the practical suggestions made above are focused specifically on

alternative certification programs at the University of Georgia, suggestions provided in this study may also be applicable to a number of other alternative certification programs. For example, concerns about financial aid and scheduling of classes are likely to be issues for most alternative certification candidates regardless of program. Since other alternative certification programs may attract a either similar or different types of candidate in terms of their demographics, background, and work experience, other programs should collect some of this additional information on their students as well, so they can best address needs and concerns specific to the populations they serve.

Candidates' motivations to enter alternative certification programs have been studied for years, and the literature provides a lengthy list of potential motivations (see Chapter 1), but little research has addressed which of these motivations might be most important to specific groups of alternative certification candidates (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Gordon, 1993; Novak & Knowles, 1992; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). This study attempts to distinguish which motivations are most important to the alternative certification candidates at UGA. The finding that extrinsic or job related motivations were not very important to the candidates suggests either that the importance of such motivations may have been unduly assumed in previous work or that different motivations may be more or less important different group of alternative certification candidates. In either case, additional work comparing different types of motivation to teach and their relationships to on alternative certification candidates' past experiences, current characteristics and circumstances, current beliefs about teaching, and eventual future success is clearly indicated.

Far less research has focused on the beliefs of alternative certification candidates about teaching itself (Chambers, 2002; Richardson & Watt, 2006). This study attempted to distinguish

among participants' possible beliefs about "good" teaching and teachers, and instead found that participants, while seeming to have fairly definite ideas about teaching efficacy, attributed it fairly equally to both subject matter knowledge and effort put into teacher/student relationships. This lack of variation in responses suggests that additional research may be necessary to develop better measures of teacher beliefs in this population.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Several suggestions for future research have already been given above. As previously mentioned, great caution is needed in applying results from this study to understanding other alternative certification populations and programs. Since the programs studied were all Masters programs, the findings may not be particularly applicable to a program like GaTAPP (Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy) or other similar short, non-University alternative certification programs; similar research with these populations would be very useful, if only for comparison.

Additionally, the small sample size, and consequently small samples of minority and male students, effectively prevented the drawing of any meaningful conclusions about potential differences between minority and White or male and female students in this study. Some previous research has suggested differences in a few areas, such as how minority students may view teaching other minorities (Su, 1996), or why minority students may be more likely to pursue alternative certification rather than traditional undergraduate teacher certification (Sinclair, 2008; Su, 1996); however, very little is really known about such differences, and such information would be very valuable in recruiting, teaching and retaining the minority and male teachers that are sorely needed in schools. A larger and/or more diverse sample may reveal these



differences, so future research with this survey should be targeted to gather a more diverse sample to determine whether differences exist and what they may be.

Future research should also work towards further understanding the nature and impact of alternative certification candidates' motivations to teach, beliefs about teaching and anticipated rewards and challenges in teaching. A major question is whether the kind or number of rewards or challenges alternative certification candidates anticipate affects their likelihood of remaining in the profession. For example, an individual who expressed a greater number and variety of anticipated rewards might show greater retention in the field because they are receiving rewards from a number of sources. Likewise, we know very little about these same factors, and their effects, in more traditional pre-service teacher candidates, and research in this area would have similar benefits.

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## **Appendix A**

## Post-baccalaureate Teacher Candidate Survey

1. I have finished my undergraduate degree.

Yes, I already have my Bachelor's degree

No, I am still working on my undergraduate degree

2. I am not currently certified to teach.

Yes, I am not certified to teach.

No, I have already been certified (any subject, in any state)

3. I am currently attending UGA to become certified to teach in the state of Georgia.

Yes

No

4. I understand the procedures described on the previous page, and I agree to participate in this study by completing this survey.

Yes, I agree to participate

No, I do not agree to participate

[Note] Since this survey is completely voluntary and is for students past the undergraduate level who are seeking their first teacher certification, if you answered NO to any of the above FOUR questions, you should NOT proceed with the rest of the survey. In order to exit, please click FINISH at the top of the survey, confirm your response, and close the browser. We thank you for your time!

5. What particular challenges do you foresee when you begin teaching? Please list as many as you think of:

6. What particular rewards do expect from teaching? Please list as many as you think of:

**SECTION A**

7. Which certification program are you currently enrolled in?

- Agricultural Education
- Art Education
- Dance Education
- Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education
- English Education
- Foreign Language Education
- Mathematics Education
- Middle School Education
- Music Education
- Physical Education Pedagogy
- Science Education
- Social Studies Education and Social Science
- Special Education
- Workforce Education
- Other

8. If you selected OTHER in the previous question, please specify what program.

9. How are you enrolled in this program?

- Full time
- Part time

10. How far do you regularly drive to attend classes?

- less than 30 minutes
- 30 min. to 1 hour
- 1 to 2 hours
- over 2 hours
- I stay overnight in the Athens area temporarily to attend classes

11. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

12. What is your age?

- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Older than 60

13. How would you classify yourself (please check all that apply)?

- American Indian
- Asian American/Pacific Islander
- Black/ African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White/Caucasian
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. Was your bachelor's degree in a field similar to what you are studying now?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

15. If you marked NO or NOT SURE to the previous question, tell us what it was in.

16. What year did you earn your last degree?

17. What is the highest degree you have obtained?

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Medical degree
- Law degree
- Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D, etc)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you have work experience in a field similar to the degree you are currently pursuing?

- Yes
- No

19. If you marked YES to the previous question, please briefly describe what experience you have:

20. Are you receiving any funding or financial aid as you pursue this certification program?

- Yes
- No

21. If you answered YES to the question 20, is it partial or full support?

- Partial support
- Full support

22. If you answered YES to the question 20, from where are you receiving financial aid? (check ALL that apply)

- The government
- My employer
- UGA
- Some other source

23. Are you incurring debt to be in this program?

- Yes
- No

24. Which of the following characterize how you have spent the past ten years (please check ALL that apply):

- as a student
- as a homemaker/parent
- in the military
- as a part-time/temporary employee
- as a full-time employee

25. What is the last year you were a student?

26. If you were working before entering this program, how long were you employed there?

27. Are you currently working?

- Yes, full time
- Yes, part time
- No

28. Are you currently working in education?

- Yes, in my own classroom
- Yes, substitute teaching
- Yes, as a teaching assistant or paraprofessional
- Yes, other
- No

29. If you marked any YES answer to question 28, do you work in a private or public school?

- Private school
- Public school

30. If you marked any YES answer to question 28, please tell us what you do/what age(s) & subject(s) you teach:

31. Have you previously worked in any other positions in education?

- Yes, in my own classroom
- Yes, substitute teaching
- Yes, as a teaching assistant or paraprofessional
- Yes, other
- No

32. If you marked any YES answer above, please tell us what you did/what ages and subjects you taught:

33. What other experiences have you had related to teaching or working with children? (Please check ALL that apply):

- Volunteering in a school
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Working at a daycare/childcare facility
- Coaching (Little League, drama group, etc)
- Non-school teaching (music or art lessons, Sunday school, etc.)
- Other

34. If you marked COACHING, NON-SCHOOL TEACHING, OR OTHER in the previous question, please describe what you did.

35. Do you have friends, parents, siblings, or other family members who are teachers? (check ALL that apply)

- Friend(s)
- Parent(s)
- Sibling(s)
- Other family member(s)

36. Where do you hope to teach? Please check ALL the types of schools you would like to teach in.

- Public schools
- Private schools
- Rural schools
- Suburban schools
- Urban schools

37. I plan to teach for at least 10 years.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

## SECTION B

38. One reason I want to teach is that teaching will allow me spend more time with my current or future family.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

39. My past job(s) did not allow me to contribute to society the way that teaching will.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

40. I was encouraged to teach by knowing a parent(s) or friend(s) who enjoyed teaching.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

41. I chose teaching because I was dissatisfied with my previous career.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

42. I wish I had earned a teaching certificate during my undergraduate education.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree



43. I feel my life experiences have given me much wisdom to share with my future students.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

44. Losing my previous job is one reason I am considering teaching.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

45. I am really looking forward to the vacation time I will have as a teacher.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

46. I want a teaching certificate mainly as a stepping-stone to another career (e.g., school counselor or administrator).

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

47. Becoming a teacher will allow me to make a real difference in people's lives.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

48. I hope to teach mainly gifted or advanced placement students.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

49. I want to teach to share my love of my subject with my students.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

50. I entered this program because I had few other good career options right now.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

51. I want to be a teacher in part so that my students won't have the negative experiences I had in school.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

52. The schedule of a teacher gives me more opportunities to help with my child's afterschool activities.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

53. The job security I will have as teacher is important to me.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

54. I am looking forward to teaching in part because I have always enjoyed school.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

55. I want to teach because I love spending time with children/young people.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

56. Teaching will pay better than my previous job(s).

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

57. I wanted to be a teacher when I was younger but others told me not to.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

58. As a teacher, I particularly want to work with disadvantaged or struggling students.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

59. My past experiences in teaching have increased my desire to become a teacher.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

60. I want to teach because teaching allows me to help others.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

61. I wanted to be a teacher when I was younger but was unable to pursue it earlier.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

### SECTION C

62. Good teachers know much more than just the subject matter they teach.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

63. A successful teacher makes his or her students care about the subject they teach.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

64. Good teachers are involved in activities at the school besides teaching.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

65. Even a good teacher is unlikely to succeed with students whose families do not or cannot support their education.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

66. Good teachers are able to impact their students in lasting ways.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

67. Good teachers focus their main energies on the students who show they are ready to learn.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

68. Good teachers are familiar with and involved in the community their students come from.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

69. Good teachers love the subjects they teach.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

70. Students who don't bring any motivation to class are not likely to learn much, no matter how good the teacher is.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

71. Above all, good teachers need to be experts in their subjects.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

72. Good teachers should be available after school for their students.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

73. Almost every student can be successful with the right teaching.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

74. Being able to relate to your students is essential to being a good teacher.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

#### **SECTION D**

75. It is/would be easier for me to enroll in this program part-time, rather than full-time.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

76. It is/would be easier for me to complete a certification program that takes a year or 15 months (e.g., a year and 2 summers), rather than 2 years.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

77. I prefer courses that are offered online, rather than face-to-face.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

78. I think some courses in my program should be offered face-to-face, NOT online.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

79. Courses offered in the evening (5:00 or later) are easier for me to take.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

80. Courses offered in a few concentrated weekend sessions (e.g., 5 Saturdays) are easier for me to take.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

81. Having enough money to pay for tuition, books, and other program costs is difficult.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

82. Having enough money to support myself or my family while I am in this program is difficult.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

83. Courses offered closer to my home would really make it easier for me to be in this program.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree

84. Are there other changes or suggestions that would make it easier for you to succeed in this program?

85. Is there anything else you would like to say?