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## Perceptions of Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers in Kansas: A Case Study

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Perceptions of Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed Family and Consumer Sciences  
Teachers in Kansas: A Case Study

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Adult and Lifelong Learning

by

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December 2022  
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This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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## Abstract

Alternatively licensed Career and Technical Education teacher licensure programs have become a more conventional process for licensing new CTE teachers. Evidence from recent research supports that alternatively licensed teachers have a much greater teacher turnover rate than traditionally licensed teachers. This study focused on Family and Consumer Sciences education, which is part of the umbrella of CTE. There is limited research on new teacher training that specifically supports beginning alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in Kansas. This qualitative study examined the experiences of novice alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in Kansas who transitioned from the workforce with no previous teacher training experience. Specifically, this study investigate their sense of self-efficacy in their role. Interviews were conducted with beginning alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in Kansas at the beginning years of their teaching. Teachers were asked questions regarding their experience as it correlated to their sense of self-efficacy and their stories of successes and challenges they experienced. The results of this study may provide educators, mentors, administrators, and researchers with a deeper appreciation of how this unique population may come prepared to teach their content areas and where they may need to improve in essential teaching skills. The data were coded to identify themes related to the research questions. These themes were validated using triangulation methods that include member checks, multiple data points, peer-debrief and audit trails.

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## Acknowledgments

This journey has been such a rewarding opportunity for me to transition further into my educational career. The virtues I have lacked throughout my life, patience and humility, have been gifted to me through this experience. A fire was lit within me to accomplish this goal, not only for myself, but to set an example for my daughter, make a positive impact, and advocate for my educational passions. Life has presented me with many opportunities to grow from, and I am forever grateful for these blessings. Oscar Wilde said, “What seems to us as bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.” I am humbly reminded of this life lesson upon the completion of this dissertation. The amount of time, energy, and money spent to earn this promotion are all items well worth the investment.

There have been many inspirational figures in my life who have inspired me to accept these life challenges, to have the courage to face the unknown, to have the confidence to trust in myself, and to have faith in God to accept the end’s outcome. I would like to take time to thank those in education who have inspired me, firstly, for their great sacrifices and efforts in the field. They have not gone unnoticed. Like an eagle building its nest, I carefully select the traits from these entities like her own twigs chosen to place in my basket and access as needed. I take great pride that I am demonstrating my best self because I choose to thrive to be like these educational figures.

Firstly, I would like to take time to acknowledge my father. My love for my father is the epitome of a loving father/daughter relationship if ever there was one. Over the years, I have come to fall deeper in love with my father and grow closer to him through his support towards my occasional life errors. I can only pray that the same love I house for my own father can be felt between my daughter and her father, my husband. I take great pride in the relationship I have

built with my father. He has also been a model figure in my life who continuously displays actions of deep love and care for those around him. He has a philanthropic heart that is filled through showing acts of kindness and love for others. These are traits I aspire to demonstrate to my family and those around me as well. For my father's financial and emotional support throughout this journey, I dedicate this research, which is intended to positively impact education. Without you, this experience would not have been a reality.

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To Casey and Eliza Wren, I fight to live for you. You are my life's purpose. Everything I choose to do, I choose to better our family and to provide for you through the love that you need and deserve. Gratitude for your assistance in my transition and journey cannot be expressed

through words. Mathematically and scientifically, there is not a measurement to describe the amount of love and thanks for you as a part of my life. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for your patience, your empathy, and your sacrifices throughout this voyage. Lastly, thank you for pushing me when I needed it and for knowing when I needed that push. You helped me to discover a part of my purpose and how to best utilize my skills to inspire change. What you have done for me is a rare and priceless treasure. You and Eliza acted as the catalyst, the gift bearer, from God to be delivered to me.

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## Dedication

For my father, husband, Taz, Eliza Wren, and Uncle Ron



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## **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

### **Overview**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), there were 3,264,900 public school teachers in 2013, and of those, 250,100 left the profession. Thus, if the number of traditionally prepared teacher candidates entering the classroom remains the same, approximately 50,000 openings will be left vacant or filled by alternatively licensed individuals. The teaching vacancy numbers support a clear demand for alternative pathways to teacher licensure. As such, 20-30% of all teacher candidates hired have completed one of the approximately 130 different alternative licensure pathways (National Research Council, 2010). Bowling and Ball (2018) provided information on teacher education challenges, including (a) policy changes, (b) funding issues, and (c) teacher recruitment and retention, which are among some of the challenges school districts are faced with and which necessitate the design of research-based teacher licensure pathways.

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) education is the comprehensive body of skills, research, and knowledge that helps people make informed decisions about their well-being, relationships, and resources to achieve optimal quality of life (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2021). The field represents many areas, including human development, personal and family finance, housing and interior design, food science, nutrition and wellness, textiles and apparel, and consumer issues (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2021). The FCS curriculum prepares secondary students with the skills and core competencies to foster their mental, emotional, and physical development. The core competencies include 12 skills and abilities needed for success in the “information age”: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy,

technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, social skills, and productivity (Stauffer, 2021). The Kansas FCS Secondary Program Standards (2021) identified the following courses commonly taught to students once these teachers are licensed. Table 1 summarizes the courses associated with FCS.

**Table 1**

*Secondary FCS Courses Taught in Kansas*

FCS Course Name	Course Description
Nutrition and Wellness	Demonstrate nutrition and wellness practices that enhance individual and family wellbeing across the lifespan
Human Development	Analyze factors that influence human growth and development
Interpersonal Relationships	Demonstrate respectful and caring relationships in the family, workplace and community
The Family	Evaluate the significance of family and its impact on the well-being of individuals and society.
Parenting	Evaluate the effects of parenting roles and responsibilities on strengthening the well-being of individuals and families across the lifespan
Consumer Personal Management	Evaluate management practices related to the human, economic and environmental resources
Family, Career, and Community Connections	Integrate multiple roles and responsibilities in and across family, work and community settings

**FCS Teacher Shortages**

The current shortage of FCS teachers has threatened the sustainability of the programs nationally. Werhan (2013) surveyed secondary FCS programs in each state to determine the “number of FCS teachers employed and needed” and “ascertain the changes in teacher and student numbers since the last data collection” in the decade before the study (p. 42). Given the

data available, Werhan found that states were struggling to fill FCS teacher vacancies, and the shortage of FCS teachers was growing. According to Werhan, The United States Department of Education, Office of Post-Secondary Education reported a current, active FCS teacher shortage in 20 states.

Teacher shortages in secondary FCS programs are becoming a concern for the program's existence. Nationwide, schools will need more than 500,000 teachers by 2021, according to the Kansas Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (Division of Communications and Marketing, 2012). Challenges faced by career and technical education teachers are quite extensive (Arnett-Hartwick & Cannon, 2020; Arnett-Hartwick & Hagler, 2018; Dainty et al., 2011). Frequently reported challenges for FCS teacher shortages and retention included classroom management and discipline, motivating students, insufficient supplies, insufficient preparation time due to high teaching loads, and relationships with colleagues. Arnett-Hartwick (2020) found that other challenges cited by CTE teachers included the following: (a) time management, (b) facilities and equipment, (c) working with special populations, (d) budgets and funding, (e) curriculum development, (f) student motivation, (g) school policies and procedures, (h) mentorships, and (i) poor or lack of administrative support.

Keeping quality teachers is a high priority for schools and a national concern. The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) mandated for highly qualified teachers for every child. Staffing classrooms with quality teachers has always been a high priority for schools and is no less important today (Dainty et al., 2011). Dainty et al. also stated that career and technical education areas are extremely diverse, and identifying retention factors requires a specific approach to each. In 2006, Kansas had 1,558 career and technical programs, 277 of which were approved FCS programs (KSDE, n.d.). There is an effort in many, if not all, of these programs to employ



highly qualified teachers. Further, according to Song et al. (2011), “Teacher turnover is particularly critical in career and technical education because many Career and Technical Education teachers come to classrooms directly from industry and are very difficult to replace if lost to attrition” (p. 3).

According to the Kansas State Department of Education (n.d.), there are approximately 1,023 total licensed FCS teachers: 286 teachers added the FCS endorsement by testing, 33 have completed restricted teaching program, and 704 have completed standard teacher preparation program. In the state of Kansas, approximately 220 schools have a secondary FCS program. Further, there are approximately 277 schools with a secondary FCS program in Kansas (KSDE, 2021a).

### **Alternative Licensure in Kansas**

There are many routes one may take to receive an FCS teaching license in the state of Kansas. For those entering the program with skills, knowledge, and industry experience, they may be qualified as an expert in their CTE content field of choice. For Grades 8-12, teacher candidates in Kansas can gain their restricted license through a process within the program provided by the supported institution (KSDE, n.d.). Each applicant seeking a restricted teaching license must submit the following to the state board:

- An application for a restricted teaching license and the appropriate fee.
- An official transcript or transcripts verifying completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree in the content area or with equivalent coursework in the area for which the restricted license is sought. Heritage language speakers shall qualify as having met content equivalency for their heritage language.

- Verification of a minimum 2.75 grade point average on a 4.0 scale for the most recent 60 semester credit hours earned.
- Verification that the applicant has attained a passing score on the content assessment required by the state board of education.
- Verification that the local education agency will employ the applicant if the license is issued.
- Verification that the local education agency will assign a licensed teacher with 3 or more years of experience to serve as a mentor for the applicant.
- Verification that a supervised practical training experience has been completed through collaboration of the teacher education institution and the hiring local education agency.
- A statement from the licensing officer of a Kansas teacher education institution attesting to the following:
  - The applicant has on file a written plan that will qualify the applicant for full licensure in the content area for which the restricted license is sought;
  - The plan for program completion can be completed in not more than 2 years and contains a specific designation of the coursework that is to be completed each year;
  - The program provided to the applicant will meet the institution's approved professional education standards;
  - The institution will provide the applicant with onsite support at the employing local education agency, including supervision of the applicant's teaching experience; and

- A statement verifying the local education agency and the teacher education institution have collaborated regarding the approved program the applicant will pursue and the support the applicant will receive.
- The teacher education institution providing a plan of study for any person holding a restricted teaching license shall coordinate the submission of a progress report before July 1 of each year during the effective period of the restricted license.

This progress report shall verify the following:

- The applicant's contract will be renewed;
- The local education agency will continue to assign an experienced mentor teacher to the applicant;
- The applicant has made appropriate progress toward completion of the applicant's plan to qualify for full licensure;
- The institution will continue to support the applicant, on-site, as necessary; and
- The applicant has attained at least a 2.75 GPA on a 4.0 scale in those courses specified in the applicant's plan for full licensure.

(1) Each applicant who is unable to provide any verification or statement required in paragraph

(2) of this subsection shall no longer be eligible to hold a restricted teaching license.

Candidates for this licensing pathway include those who come from previous careers fields such as management, marketing, retail, construction, health care, or technology. The process for receiving an alternative license in Kansas, in which this study is situated, is a multi-step process. According to the Kansas State Department of Education (2021c), an eligible candidate for a restricted teaching license for secondary FCS education in Kansas must contact

participating Kansas universities to assess their eligibility. Next, the university hosting the program evaluates the applicant's transcripts to ensure the content requirements are met for the subject they want to teach. Together, the candidate and advisor develop a plan of study with the alternative licensure program staff at the academic institution. The program length may vary depending on the institution, but candidates must have a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited university, a degree or equivalent coursework the content area they want to teach, have a GPA of 2.75 from the last 60 semester credits hours of college coursework, have a passing score for the Praxis II content assessment in the content area, and supervised practical training experience completed under the collaboration of the supporting institution and hiring school district before a restricted teaching license can be issued. Next, the candidate locates and applies for a teaching position by visiting Kansas Education Employment Board to inquire if a restricted license is appropriate for the position. Finally, the candidate applies for the restricted license in a coordinated effort with sections completed by the individual, the school district hiring the individual, and the higher education institution providing the course work once all requirements have been met (KSDE, 2021c).

Once the license is issued, these individuals teach full-time while completing the required professional education coursework towards full licensure. The teacher must submit an annual progress report verifying appropriate progress towards a full license, and the restricted license is revoked if individuals do not complete the professional education coursework. Each teacher will receive verification that the local education agency will assign a licensed teacher with 3 or more years of experience to serve as a mentor for the applicant. Lastly, each restricted teaching license shall be valid for the school year in which the license is issued and may be reissued for 2 additional consecutive school years if progress reports are submitted as required.

In Kansas, only a few institutions offer this licensing route for interested candidates. Each institution has a designated contact within the Alternative Route option to contact to begin the program. The following Kansas institutions will recommend for a full license upon successfully completing all of the coursework and testing (content and pedagogy) requirements on the plan of study (KSDE, n.d.):

- Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas
- Fort Hays State University, Fort Hays, Kansas
- Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg State University
- Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas
- Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas

### **Background and Context**

The current study was situated in Kansas where approximately 1,000 FCS teacher positions are vacant (Pittsburg State University, 2021). According to the Kansas Department of Education, there are approximately 1,023 total licensed FCS teachers: 286 teachers added the FCS endorsement by testing, 33 completed the restricted teaching program, and 704 completed a standard teacher preparation program. In Kansas, approximately 220 secondary schools have a secondary FCS program (KSDE, 2021a).

These teachers received their license through The Restricted Teaching License Alternative Pathway (RTLAP), a nontraditional education pathway. This pathway offers expedited access to the classroom under a restricted license while completing professional-pedagogical coursework to become wholly licensed. The restricted teaching license allows mid-career professionals with academic degrees or equivalent coursework to teach FCS courses. This pathway allows these individuals to have immediate access to teaching under restricted license while completing professional education pedagogy course work to become fully licensed.

Within the secondary CTE program area, FCS has been an important part of the U.S. public school system since the mid-1800s. FCS is a content area taught within the Kansas Career and Technical Education Career Cluster Framework (see Figure 1). It is one of many content areas within CTE that is threatened by teacher turnover and retention rates (Deever et al., 2020). Kansas FCS education is based upon the FCS state and national standards forming a comprehensive instructional model which is project-based, student-centered, and 21<sup>st</sup> century process skill focused. Kansas FCS, along with industry and nonprofit partners, has established locally developed competencies linking to life literacy and workforce needs.

**Figure 1**

*Kansas Career Cluster Pathway Infographic*



### **Problem Statement**

Hiring highly qualified teachers who enter the profession in a nontraditional educational pathway and seek to receive a temporary, restricted teaching license is a way to supplement the growing number of unfilled secondary FCS teachers in Kansas required to sustain the profession. Little is known, however, about the experiences of those who complete these nontraditional

pathways. This study added to the beginning research of investigating alternatively licensed teachers' self-efficacy in the classroom.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. This qualitative research study explored how secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the alternative licensure experience. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study:

**RQ1:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers describe the cognitive skills they learned in their program?

**RQ2:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers describe the facilitation skills they learned in their program?

**RQ3:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers describe their classroom management skills they learned in their program?

**RQ4:** How do beginning alternatively licensed FCS teachers describe their self-efficacy related to teaching?

### **Research Approach**

In this qualitative case study, I purposefully selected participants for individual interviews to probe their experience during the RTLAP program and its relevance to their current teaching situation. The participants consisted of secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers who are in the beginning years of teaching in Kansas. The primary data collection methods for this study consisted of individual interviews and document reviews. The data were collected and

coded to identify themes related to the research questions. These themes were validated using triangulation methods, including member checks, multiple data points, peer-debriefing, and audit trails (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Rationale and Significance**

The research design focused on understanding participants' perceptions of how prepared they were to enter the classroom after receiving restricted licensure. This understanding included their perceptions regarding possible gaps between what they learned and what they needed to learn, their preferred instructional modality, and their self-efficacy following the program. The data from this study may inform educational institutions that provide this entry into FCS Education and district induction programs. The data may also provide evidence towards better interventions to support this population.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined and include the respected language used in this research study to further assist in its methodology.

***Alternatively licensed.*** Alternatively licensed refers to the pathway that provides an opportunity for individuals seeking a career in FCS to have immediate access to start teaching under a restricted license while completing professional education pedagogy coursework to become fully licensed. The alternative licensure program is only available for secondary content areas and limited numbers of all subjects levels (Kansas State Department of Education, 2021c).

***Attrition.*** Attrition refers to the reduction in the number of employees or participants that occurs when people leave due to resignation or retirement.

***Beginning teacher.*** A beginning teacher refers to an individual who entered the field of education and is teaching for the very first time in their career (McKown, 2021).



***Career and technical education (CTE).*** CTE refers to cutting-edge, rigorous, and relevant education which prepares youth and adults for a wide range of high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers (ACTE, 2019). In 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Act modified the preexisting Vocation Education Act, and vocational education adopted an updated definition as “the act of acquiring skills, abilities, and competencies connected to real economic occupations in society” (Abraham & Leigha, 2012, p. 59). The newly defined vocational education allowed students to make real world connections in school via problem-based learning, career-specific field experiences, and the pursuit of industry certifications. According to McCord (2015), the changes in the federal funding provided better opportunities for students to achieve personal goals and to make economic impact as productive citizens in communities and on a global scale. According to Hollenbeck and Huang (2014), students who participated in high school CTE courses earned higher wages during and post-graduation. Additionally, CTE students were 10% more likely to be employed than nonparticipating high school graduates and earned 11% more annually than nonparticipating students (Hollenbeck & Huang, 2014).

***Family and consumer sciences (FCS).*** FCS refers to the comprehensive body of skills, research, and knowledge that helps individuals make informed decisions regarding their well-being, relationships, and resources to achieve optimal quality of life. The field represents many areas including human development, personal and family finance, housing and interior design, food science, nutrition and wellness, textiles and apparel, and consumer issues (AAFCS, 2021).

***Induction.*** Induction refers to the support and guidance provided to novice teachers and school administrators in the early stages of their careers. Induction encompasses orientation to the workplace, socialization, mentoring, and guidance through beginning teacher practice (Induction, 2007).

***In-service.*** In-service refers to the process by which teachers engage in further education or training to refresh or upgrade their professional knowledge, skills, and practices in the course of their employment (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019).

***Learning pathway.*** Learning pathway refers to the specific courses, academic programs, and learning experiences that individual students complete as they progress in their education toward graduation. In its plural form, the term learning pathways—or any of its common synonyms, such as multiple pathways or personalized pathways—typically refer to the various courses, programs, and learning opportunities offered by schools, community organizations, or local businesses that allow students to earn academic credit and satisfy graduation requirements. The “learning pathway” concept nearly always implies an expansion of educational options beyond the course sequences historically offered to students (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

***Mentoring.*** Mentoring refers to the process by which one teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced person (Kansas State Department of Education, 2021d). Required by KSDE, 1 year of mentoring has been required for an individual to move from a 2-year initial license to the 5-year professional license.

***Perception.*** The way you think about or understand someone or something (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

***Preservice.*** Preservice refers to recognized, organized, private, and public educational programs designed to train future teachers to formally enter the profession at a specified level of education. Graduates receive a government-recognized teaching qualification. Preservice training does not cover teachers who do not meet officially recognized training standards and are enrolled

in a teacher training course to earn accreditation concurrent to their work as a teacher (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021).

***Retention.*** Retention refers to the act of keeping or sustaining teachers for future employment. The focus of this research study was on sustaining novice secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas.

***Teacher efficacy.*** Teacher efficacy is considered a type of self-efficacy where teachers form their attitudes and confidence in their ability be an effective teacher in a classroom (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

***21<sup>st</sup> century skills.*** 21<sup>st</sup> century skills comprise the 12 abilities that today's citizens need to thrive in their careers during the Information Age. Those skills are as follows: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills (Stauffer, 2021).

The primary purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. In this study, I analyzed the experiences of the purposefully selected participants in their beginning years of teaching. These teachers specifically received their teaching license through a nontraditional education pathway, which is recognized in Kansas as RTLAP. This pathway offers these individuals an expedited route to access and to begin teaching under a restricted license while completing professional education pedagogy course work to eventually become fully licensed. Restricted licensure regulations are explained in detail to the individual seeking this pathway and provide a timeframe for the individual to complete the expectations and continue their educational career. In Kansas, the alternative licensure program is only available for secondary content areas and

limited numbers of all subject levels. This nontraditional pathway towards a restricted teaching license is designed to recruit mid-career professionals who seek a career change and have a bachelor's, master's degree, or equivalent coursework in a content area they want to teach.

FCS is a content area taught within the Kansas Career and Technical Education Career Cluster Framework (see Figure 1) and is one of many content areas within CTE that is threatened by teacher turnover and retention rates. Within the secondary CTE program area, FCS has been an important part in the U.S. public school system since the mid-1800s. The name of the program changed from domestic economy to home economics early in the 20th century and was again changed to FCS in 1994 (Stage & Vincenti, 1997). Globally, home economics is still the desired and most recognizable name for the profession. The mission of FCS education is to prepare students for family life, work life, and careers in FCS through strengthening the well-being of individuals and families across the life span; becoming responsible citizens and leaders in multiple settings; promoting optimal nutrition and wellness across the life span; managing resources to meet one's own needs as well as their family's material needs; balancing personal, family, and work lives; using critical and creative thinking to address problems in diverse family, community, and work environments; developing successful life management skills; functioning effectively as providers and consumers of goods and services; and appreciating human worth and accepting responsibility for one's actions, leading to a more successful personal and work life. Kansas FCS education is based upon the FCS state and national standards forming a comprehensive instructional model which is project-based, student-centered, and 21<sup>st</sup> century process skill focused. Kansas FCS, along with industry and nonprofit partners, has established locally developed competencies linking to life literacy and workforce needs.

Teacher induction, which usually takes 5 to 6 years, is the total of all the teacher's experiences from the moment the first teaching contract is signed until the teacher is comfortably established as a competent, effective, professional teacher (Wonacott, 2002). Teacher induction programs are professional development programs that incorporate mentoring and are designed to offer support, guidance, and orientation for beginning teachers during the transition into their first teaching jobs. Teachers who stated that mentoring played a role in their decision to return to their school for a second year rated their overall mentoring experiences higher than those teachers who stated that mentoring did not play a role in their decision (Ingersoll, 2001).

### **Chapter Summary**

In Chapter 1, I provided a detailed description of the research collected and the methodological approach to explore and describe the lived experiences of secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in the beginning stage of teacher development. The groups consisted of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature relevant to the current study.

## **Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

### **Purpose Statement and Chapter Overview**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. In this chapter, I present the research that supports the concepts related to the study and its research questions. Further, I introduce the conceptual framework that describes the relationship between the research concepts and the research questions.

### **Search Strategies and Terms**

The search strategies used for locating the literature included mostly electronic resources. I searched the EBSCO Information Services host and ProQuest databases through the University of Arkansas library. I also utilized Google Scholar in an effort to locate additional resources that may not be part of the holdings at the library.

### **Traditional Teacher Licensure**

Conventionally, K-12 teachers are prepared in degree programs at institutions of higher education that are approximately 4 years in duration, include a combination of coursework and field experience (e.g., student teaching and internship), and thus prepare teachers to begin teaching immediately following graduation (National Education Association, 2020). The number of teachers graduating from higher education teacher preparation programs, however, has not been adequate to meet these demands (Lindqvist & Nordanger, 2016; National Education Association, 2020).

### **Advantages of Traditional Teacher Education Programs**

Duncan et al. (2017) reported that traditionally-prepared teachers had a higher perceived level of self-efficacy. Duncan and Ricketts (2008) found that traditionally-prepared teachers

were more efficacious in their program management abilities. The main supporting argument for traditional licensure programs is that the extensive coursework, field experience, and mentoring required before becoming the teacher of record produces teachers who are more qualified and confident in their preparedness to teach (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

In-state requirements for an initial teaching license through Kansas (KSDE, 2022) include the following:

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- Completion of a state-approved teacher preparation program;
- Recency, meaning the applicant must have at least 8 credit hours or 1 year of accredited teaching experience completed within the last 6 years;
- Content assessment in each of the endorsement areas in which one is trained to teach and wishes to put on their license; and
- Pedagogy assessment - Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT).

### **Alternative Licensure Programs**

Alternative licensure has grown in response to a nationwide teacher shortage (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). A national survey of secondary FCS programs from the 2010–2012 academic years indicated that 3,427,601 students were enrolled in FCS classes and were taught by 27,894 FCS teachers. These numbers reveal a decline in enrollment and teachers over the past 10 years (Werhan & Way, 2006). FCS secondary programs are offered in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Werhan and Way also found that 50% of the states report a shortage of highly qualified FCS secondary teachers. Alternative licensure is regarded as an expedited way for individuals who already hold an academic degree to enter the teaching profession. Strong content

knowledge based on previous life and work experience from nonlicensed, degree-holding individuals is a driving force in the progression of alternative licensure (Werhan & Way, 2006).

The proponents of alternative licensure often cite the advantage of second career individuals bringing a sense of maturity to the profession (Martin & Shoho, 1999). Fletcher et al. (2017) reported a regression in traditional CTE teacher preparation programs. The majority of the existing reports of comparisons between alternatively licensed and traditional CTE teachers have focused on measures of teacher self-efficacy (Duncan et al., 2017), while alternatively licensed teachers are more efficacious in their technical content knowledge. Similarly, there is evidence to support the notion that traditionally-prepared teachers are better prepared pedagogically while alternatively licensed teachers are more prepared in relation to content knowledge (Fletcher & Zirkle, 2011; Ruhland & Bremer, 2003). Factors such as time or finances prevent these types of individuals from going through a traditional education preparation method. Over the next few decades, the alternative licensure route will continue to gain popularity. Conneely and Uy (2009) noted an increase of almost 6 million students enrolled secondary CTE courses in just 7 years, while colleges and universities eliminated many existing CTE teacher education.

### **Challenges of Alternative Licensure**

Alternatively licensure programs vary in nature and definition, rendering it difficult to evaluate the quality and the program's effectiveness. Alternative licensure pathways vary by candidate selection and entry, intensity and rigor, and duration (National Research Council, 2010). For example, while some alternative licensure programs have specific grade point average or other requirements for entry into the pathway, for others, being an able and available candidate is seemingly the only entry requirement. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2002),



These programs vary from short summer programs that place candidates in teaching assignments with full responsibility for students after a few weeks of training to those that offer 1- or 2-year post baccalaureate programs with ongoing support, integrated coursework, close mentoring, and supervision. (p. 287)

There is evidence that many teachers who enter the field of teaching through alternative methods leave the profession at a higher rate than those traditionally trained (Darling-Hammond et al., 2001). Wonacott (2002) stated that alternatively licensed CTE teachers require extra assistance during their first year. Alternatively licensed teachers receive little experience in the classroom prior to their teaching career and quickly become overwhelmed.

Van Overschelde and Wiggins (2019) discussed teacher preparation pathways and the gap between teacher supply and demand growing through 2025 among alternatively licensed teachers and those employed from a traditional pathway. The authors stated that alternative licensure programs (ALPs) were created to increase teacher production, but research on who selects ALPs versus traditional preparation programs (TPPs) as well as research on new teacher attrition has revealed mixed results. Bartholomew et al. (2018) provided evidence on principals' perceptions of alternatively licensed CTE teachers in their research. The research revealed principal support for Alternative Routes to Teaching Licensure (ARL) teachers as well as perceptions of a lack of preparation and effectiveness when compared to traditionally-prepared teachers. The authors also revealed differences in perceptions of ARL teachers by the principals' school level and school SES level.

The shortage of prepared CTE teachers willing to work in specific locations has encouraged the need to seek remedies, such as alternative routes to teacher licensure. These alternative programs predominantly involve an alternative route or pathway to licensure which allows individuals to

enter a classroom without an education degree (National Education Association, 2020). These types of programs bypass the college of education and provide a unique approach when preparing individuals to teach, leading many to speculate regarding these teachers' quality and knowledge. With this approach, there has been an influx of alternative routes for teacher licensure.

Researchers in favor of alternatively licensed teachers tend to cite these teachers' content knowledge as a byproduct of industry experience, which the individual brings with them when they transition from the workforce to the classroom (Duncan & Ricketts, 2008; Fletcher & Zirkle, 2011). Conversely, Henry et al. (2014) argued that, although alternatively licensed programs offer an additional pathway and provide a means of alleviating the shortage of teachers, these teachers may be less effective than their traditionally-prepared counterparts in certain subject areas. As the responsibility of hiring and retaining teachers falls largely to the school principal (Hopkins, 2015), an exploration of school principals' perceptions of alternatively licensed and traditionally-prepared CTE teachers is justified.

Principals may face challenges in hiring CTE teachers capable of efficiently teaching, managing a lab/shop space, preserving inventory and supplies, and collaborating with other teachers. Moreover, CTE includes numerous subjects and skill areas through a wide variety of courses which requires teachers to possess a range of technical preparation and skills (e.g., business, sewing, woodworking, and metalworking). Thus, when hiring a new CTE teacher, principals must consider knowledge, skills, experience, instructional ability, potential for collaboration, and prospect of successfully working with students (Fletcher & Zirkle, 2011).

### **Issues in Secondary CTE**

Werhan (2013) provided information on FCS secondary school programs through a national survey to show continued demand for FCS teachers. The survey was sent via email to all

members of the National Association of State Administrators of Family and Consumer Sciences (NASAFACS), an affiliate of the ACTE, FCS Division. After 1 year of inquiries, responses from 94% of states (including the District of Columbia) were obtained and compiled from (a) State administrators assigned to FCS, (b) CTE data collectors, and (c) FCS state leaders. The results indicated that during the academic years considered, just under 28,000 FCS teachers were employed to teach in the content area. This number has decreased 26% over the past 10 years. Compared to the 2006 published data, fewer states have reported a current or anticipated shortage of FCS licensed teachers, but half of all states continue to experience issues with hiring adequate numbers of highly qualified FCS teachers. This research supports the need to further identify specific concerns, needs, and attitudes of alternatively licensed FCS teachers.

A national survey of secondary FCS programs from the 2010–2012 academic years indicated that 3,427,601 students were enrolled in FCS classes and were taught by 27,894 FCS teachers. These numbers reveal a decline in enrollment and teachers over the past 10 years (Werhan & Way, 2006). FCS secondary programs, however, continue to be offered in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia. The shortage of highly qualified FCS secondary teachers is reported to be a concern in 50% of states.

Alternatively licensed teachers have taken a hit from critics in the past who have stated that they are inferior to those who choose the traditional pathway to receive licensure. Kwiatkowski (1999) maintained that alternative licensure strategies will attract more competent and diverse candidates as well as individuals who are interested in and committed to teaching in urban schools and will also decrease the need for emergency credentialing. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) criticized alternative licensure routes. The authors analyzed data from a 1998 survey that was distributed to beginning teachers in New York City according to a licensure pathway

route. Darling-Hammond et al. reported that teachers who completed traditional teacher preparation programs reported feeling better prepared to teach than those who completed alternative programs. A teacher's sense of efficacy, responsibility, and plans to stay in the profession correlate to the teachers' feelings of preparedness.

Shen (1997), while agreeing that alternative licensure can help diversify the teaching workforce and alleviate shortages, stated concerns regarding the route's value. In a study based on the 1993–1994 Schools and Staffing Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Shen reported that (a) alternatively licensed teachers appeared to have lower academic qualifications than traditionally licensed teachers; (b) relatively few individuals were recruited from other fields through alternative licensure, while new college graduates took advantage of alternative programs to avoid the rigors of traditional ones; and (c) a lower percentage of alternatively licensed teachers reported expecting that teaching would be their lifelong career, raising concerns about retention. Further, in Shen's view, the larger proportion of alternatively licensed teachers employed in inner city schools raised questions regarding the quality of teaching and educational equity for low income students. Some states mandate the amount and content within the coursework, while others have no specifications whatsoever (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Watts (1986) suggested that alternative licensure pathways are deficient and, therefore, less rigorous in at least one of four critical preparation areas: (a) applicants may teach in subject areas in which they have no experience, (b) applicants may enter with less college preparation, (c) applicants may complete the program with little to no pedagogical preparation, and (d) applicants may not be required to pass competency examinations for licensure. In a study for the National Center for Education Evaluation, Constantine et al. (2009) investigated teacher

preparation requirements based upon licensure pathways. The researchers determined that teachers participating in alternative certification programs received a vast and diverse amount of teacher preparation instruction, ranging from 75 to 795 instructional hours. Cognizance of one's knowledge, skills, and dispositions are essential for college graduates to excel in the workforce.

Classroom management issues have been cited as the second most common reason for teachers leaving the profession (Arnett & Freeburg, 2008). Considering the shortage of FCS teachers, common sense dictates that preservice teachers can be provided instruction to develop skills essential to success (Pickard & Dobie, 2004; Tran, 2003). Administrators often find themselves repeatedly filling the same vacancies that they filled the previous year. Teachers cite many reasons for leaving their schools, with two of the most common reasons being lack of support and job dissatisfaction.

DiBenedetto and Willis (2020) conducted a study in the Agricultural Sciences department at Clemson University, where the Borich needs assessment model was used to decipher between students' perceived competency and importance of career readiness skills within nine constructs. The researchers analyzed and ranked the constructs using mean and grand mean weighted discrepancy scores. Based on the results, the researchers concluded that career skills, interdisciplinary skills, life skills, and learning skills ranked as the highest areas of need. The majority of the students believed they were most responsible for developing skills to prepare themselves to be career ready. Further, their research proved that the amount of coursework for certification that was required for candidates to complete throughout their first year teaching varied from 63 to 150 hours on average for total instructional time. A traditional 3-hour credit college class typically includes 75 or more total instructional hours, thus supporting how the

perception of alternative pathways to teacher licensure is not held in high regard when compared to their traditional pathway counterparts.

Cook (2020) provided information on understanding FCS teachers' teaching experiences as they begin their first-year teaching through video-recorded classroom observations and interviews. The purpose of Cook's study was to examine new FCS teachers' experiences and describe their perceptions of classroom teaching readiness. The researcher completed a series of three classroom observations and three interviews of five first-year FCS teachers. The Danielson's Framework for Teaching instrument was used for all observations, and Interview Questions for Family and Consumer Sciences Educators instrument were utilized for two sections of interviews. Within the development of this research and the interview questions, this study was used to help inspire and guide the interview questionnaire.

### **Teacher Induction and Mentoring**

Teacher induction programs provide first-year teachers with the support needed to help develop their skills and become effective teachers. Induction combined with mentoring is the best way to support, develop, and promote the skills and knowledge of a new teacher (Wong, 2002). Mentoring helps to develop the novice or protégé into a completely developed and knowledgeable professional (Zey, 1991).

According to Wonacott (2002), a well-designed teacher induction program can improve teacher competence, performance, and effectiveness by providing the following items: (a) ongoing personal support, assessment, and feedback; (b) continuing education that builds on preservice education; and (c) positive socialization into the profession. Wonacott identified the following categories of "induction detractors" (i.e., problems, concerns, experiences, and

challenges) faced by beginning teachers: internal, pedagogy, curriculum, program, student, peer, system, and community.

Teachers who stated that mentoring played a role in their decision to return to their school for a second year rated their overall mentoring experiences higher than those teachers who stated mentoring did not play a role in their decision. Quality mentoring, with the mentor identified as a key ingredient in the success of the program, can help to reduce the attrition rates that affect schools each year (Uttley, 2006). Hardie (2007) conducted a thorough examination of education research and identified “a higher percentage of males, minorities, and older candidates pursued careers in education through alternative routes than candidates who attended a 4 or 5-year college or university.” The traditionally licensed teachers, regardless of gender, race, and age, were retained at higher percentages than alternatively licensed teachers (Hardie, 2007). Veenman (1984) conducted a similar examination and identified 91 studies involving early career teacher concerns containing a list of most frequently perceived problems of beginning teachers, which included pedagogical issues that occur in the classroom. According to Holmes (2001), “It is estimated that more than 125,000 people have been licensed through some form of alternative route to certification” (p. 324). Ruckel (2000) further emphasized this trend, stating,

Human resource managers know the extra burden of training a teacher on the job and generally prefer hiring fully licensed teachers. The alternative candidates they seek, therefore, are those willing and able to take on difficult assignments or to teach in shortage content areas such as math, science, special education, and programs for English language learners. (p. 3)

Deever et al. (2020) provided information on why new career and technical education teachers leave, why new ones stay, and how principals affect attrition and retention rates. The authors’ qualitative study identified how new teacher attrition rates cost school districts a

significant amount of money and impact the education of students. Studies have shown that when students have a new teacher three times, they lose up to 1 year of schooling altogether. The researchers examined the estimated numbers of new teachers who leave the profession within the first few years of teaching.

Technology education studies (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2019) have focused on the factors that caused new career and technology teachers to stay, which produced different results from the previous study that focused on why new technology teachers tended to leave. In this particular research, it was determined that the most influential reasons for teacher retention had to do with (a) the provision for yearly raises, (b) having an appropriate amount of school resources available for professional development, and (c) they perceived their school as being one with a collaborative work environment (Steinke & Putnam, 2007).

Hanna (2020) investigated new CTE teacher training and support and the influence these have on teacher efficacy. In this qualitative study, the author evaluated second-year CTE teachers who transitioned from the workforce with no prior teacher training experience and their sense of self-efficacy as a beginning teacher. The researchers utilized Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-efficacy combined with the teachers' sense of efficacy scale (TSES) to explore CTE teachers' beliefs regarding their training as it related to their sense of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The key findings revealed that teachers lacked training in understanding students' behavior in the affective domain, teacher training in student engagement needed to extend beyond the basics, the mentor-mentee process needed better alignment, and the teacher training needed to include an opportunity for a teaching experience component before new CTE teachers step into the classroom for the first time. Understanding new CTE teachers' sense of



self-efficacy is important in order to help beginning teachers avoid feelings of inadequacy and to deliver instruction that ensures student learning outcomes.

Kidd et al. (2015) examined beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction into the teaching profession. In their mixed method study, the authors sought to gain a deeper understanding of beginning teachers' experiences and the perceptions of their induction into the teaching profession as well as the support they received. A key finding was that many beginning teachers entered the profession through casual or contract positions. Beginning teachers' perceptions of their induction were that the mentor and induction programs are limited. Lack of support, work dissatisfaction, and an informal entrance into the profession influence beginning teachers' career plans and, thus, lead to teacher attrition. Zirkle et al. (2019) conducted a longitudinal study of alternatively licensed CTE teachers and identified and examined emerging trends through collecting demographic data of CTE teachers who completed a summer workshop as a part of alternative licensure.

### **FCS Teacher Retention and Attrition**

Teacher shortages have provided the push for research on teacher supply and demand. In particular, a considerable amount of analysis has concentrated on teacher turnover. In Ingersoll's (1999) study, for example, teachers reported they departed because they were dissatisfied with their jobs or sought better career opportunities.

Contemporary educational theory holds that one of the pivotal causes of inadequate school performance is the inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll analyzed and investigated the possibility of other factors, such as organizational characteristics and school environment, driving teacher turnover and school staffing problems. The results of their study revealed that these problems are not largely

due to teacher shortages and the lack of qualified teachers. The data from the analysis indicated excess demand through the “revolving door” effect where a large number of qualified teachers leave their jobs for purposes other than retirement when compared to teacher retirement, which is relatively minor when compared to associated factors, such as job dissatisfaction or pursuing other careers. The author concluded that education initiatives, such as teacher recruitment programs, are not the solution and do not address the organizational factors of low teacher retention.

Werhan and Whitbeck (2017) conducted a study to examine how government data documenting areas of teacher shortage do not always include the need for FCS educators. The omission of such data may impact awareness of the shortage, recruitment efforts, and financial aid opportunities for college students. This qualitative study sought to explain how this incongruity may occur and provided suggestions for individuals to press for authentic data.

Dainty et al. (2011) provided information on factors influencing the retention of secondary FCS teachers. Dainty et al. sought to identify factors contributing to teacher retention in CTE, specifically FCS teachers, in their mixed method study. The authors addressed specific factors affecting the retention of FCS teachers in Kansas. The findings included that administrative support and gaining student respect are important for the social integration of teachers. FCS teachers strongly agreed with their commitment to improve student performance, student engagement, accessing resources, school reputation, incorporating new ideas, and adolescent issues. Additionally, Dainty et al. found institutional factors that were extremely important to their willingness to continue teaching were inner sense of knowing they were doing a good job, adequate time to complete job responsibilities, and administrative support for program development.

Elliott et al. (2017) provided information through their descriptive study of factors influencing the retention of secondary agriculture teachers. The purpose of the authors' quantitative study was to identify specific factors affecting the retention of secondary agriculture teachers. The authors collected data on six factors: educational preparation, teacher commitment, first year teaching experience, skills and abilities, social integration, and institutional factors. The results indicated that gaining student respect was rated as an extremely important part of social integration in their teaching career. Although participants agreed with five of the six items in the first year teaching experience, they were undecided in their confidence in curriculum development. Twenty-six of the 30 items within the institutional factors were rated as very important, with administrative support for program development ranking the highest.

Hasselquist and Graves (2020) provided information on CTE teacher retention and the lessons learned from mid-career teachers. In this qualitative study, the authors addressed how schools across the country are facing a shortage of CTE teachers. The researchers identified challenges regarding recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers, which have far-reaching economic and educational implications. Low pay, absence of adequate teaching resources, and lack of administrative support are among some of the growing issues within this population. The authors aimed to identify factors associated with teacher retention via focus group interviews with mid-career (i.e., 7-15 years) CTE teachers. The following themes were revealed relating to the retention of mid-career CTE teachers: (a) setting boundaries, (b) shifting priorities/focus, (c) building a professional support network, and (d) innovating in the classroom. Recommendations for practice included induction programming focused on prioritizing programmatic opportunities and professional needs and involvement of preservice teachers in professional organizations early and often. Recommendations for research included exploring the

level of involvement in professional organizations and its influence on career satisfaction and examining the benefits a mentor gains from a mentoring relationship.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) investigated the possibility that there are other factors tied to the organizational characteristics and conditions of schools that are driving teacher turnover and, in turn, school staffing problems. The author utilized data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-Up Survey, which was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. The results of the analysis indicated that school staffing problems are not primarily due to teacher shortages, but rather, school staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from large numbers of qualified teachers departing their jobs for reasons other than retirement. The data revealed that the amount of turnover accounted for by retirement is relatively minor when compared to other factors, such as job dissatisfaction and pursual of other jobs.

### **Summary of Topics Reviewed**

In Chapter 2, I discussed specific topics which further support the need to identify the specific perceptions, needs, and attitudes of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. Current research towards the outlined topics was accompanied by supported studies in the field to further identify the need for the current study.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Overview**

In this section, two theories comprise the premise of the conceptual framework guiding the current study. The theoretical framework begins with Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory of self-efficacy that motivates a person's perception regarding their ability to accomplish a task. Bandura believed that there are four sources of self-efficacy which enforce behavior:

mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state (see Figure 2). Bandura's theory of self-efficacy relates to teacher efficacy through exclusive teaching tasks and behaviors designating how the four sources of self-efficacy impact teachers' behavior in the classroom. Therefore, Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy affect the behavior of the three dimensions related to the behavior of teaching.

**Figure 2**

*Bandura's Four Sources of Self-Efficacy*



### **Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1977)**

Self-efficacy is a person's particular set of beliefs that determine how well they can execute a plan of action in prospective situations (Bandura, 1977). Bandura stated individuals develop their self-efficacy beliefs by interpreting information from four main sources of influence. These levels include the following:

1. Mastery Experiences (Performance Outcomes)

The most influential source is the interpreted result of one's previous performance, or mastery experience. Mastery experiences refer to the experiences one gains when they take on a new challenge and are successful in doing so. One of the best proven ways to learn a new skill or to improve one's performance in a given activity is by practicing.

## 2. Vicarious Experiences (Social Role Models)

The second important source of self-efficacy is the vicarious experiences provided by social models. Bandura (1977) posited that seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises one's belief that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed. Vicarious experiences involve observing other people successfully completing a task. When one has positive role models in their life, especially those who display a healthy level of self-efficacy, one is more likely to absorb those positive beliefs.

## 3. Social Persuasion

Receiving positive verbal feedback while undertaking a complex task leads a person to believe that they have the skills and capabilities to succeed. Self-efficacy is influenced by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform (Lopez-Gorrido, 2020).

## 4. Emotional and Physiological States

The emotional, physical, and psychological well-being of a person can influence how they feel about their personal abilities in a particular situation. Bandura (1977) claimed it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important, but rather how they are perceived and interpreted. People who have a high sense of efficacy are likely to view their state of affective arousal as an energizing facilitator of performance, whereas those who are beset by self-doubts regard their arousal as a debilitator. Thus, by learning how to manage anxiety and

enhance mood when experiencing challenging situations, individuals can improve their sense of self-efficacy. Regarding the study's target population, perceived self-efficacy is concerned with people's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives. Beliefs in personal efficacy affect life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning, resilience to adversity, and vulnerability to stress and depression. Individuals must, therefore, have a robust sense of efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed. Succeeding periods of life present new types of competencies requiring further development of personal efficacy for successful functioning. The nature and scope of perceived self-efficacy undergo changes throughout the course of the lifespan.

### **Chapter Summary**

In Chapter 2, I provided a detailed description of literature-supported themes to assist in the exploration of the lived experiences for the purposefully selected population of the current research. Intentionally, a deeper understanding of the population's lived experience, perceived complications, beliefs, and attitudes in secondary FCS education in Kansas was attained. The target population consisted of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. The research results may indicate specific complications, attitudes, and beliefs of this unique population and may further assist in the quality development of FCS education and for in-service and induction programming to be more exclusively designed to address these matters. Furthermore, the results of this research may benefit the projected future for the continued existence and demand of FCS education in secondary institutions in Kansas. The results of this study may assist in secondary FCS program longevity and may influence the program's reputation to attract and supply sustainable and quality teachers in Kansas. In the current study, I examined how the purposefully selected population perceived their beginning years of teaching

FCS content as well as their projected likelihood to return, if offered, based upon their lived experiences. The emerging complications, beliefs, and attitudes may address the need to sustain and employ quality secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. Additionally, I assessed how a nontraditional educational pathway, in-service, and induction programming can be adopted in teaching techniques and methodologies to further address the research questions. Lastly, I presented literature associated with alternative licensure and its implications for teacher self-efficacy.



## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

I designed this qualitative case study research to explore how beginning alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe their experience during the licensure process as well as their perceptions of self-efficacy in the classroom. The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers describe the cognitive skills they learned in their program?

**RQ2:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the facilitation skills they learned in their program?

**RQ3:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in describe the management skills they learned in their program?

**RQ4:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe their self-efficacy in the classroom and the profession after completing their program?

In Chapter 3, I present the research methodology, design, sample, research population and site, data analysis and collection method, ethical considerations, confidentiality measures, issues of trustworthiness, limitations and delimitations, and a chapter summary.

### **Research Sample**

#### **Purposive Sampling**

##### ***Population***

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that purposive or purposeful sampling is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 96). Therefore, the participants for

this study included those who qualified as beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. A distributed list of eligible participants was obtained from the Kansas State Department of Education by request. Of the total 225 FCS teachers in Kansas, about 25 participants were eligible to participate. I selected only those who were alternatively licensed. I sent a letter of request via email to those secondary FCS teachers in Kansas who were alternatively licensed. Only those who responded to the initial email to participate were selected in a detailed timeframe to respond. Five people expressed their interest to participate by the timeline indicated in the initial introductory email.

## **Research Design**

### **Multiple Case Study**

For the current study, I utilized a multiple case study approach. A multiple case study design allows the researcher to explore for similarities and/or differences between cases (Yin, 2003). This design also allows for the replication of data collection across cases to determine emerging themes within and among case settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008.) Yin suggested that multiple case study designs can be used by the researcher to “(a) predict similar results or (b) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons.” The use of multiple case studies can improve the validity and generalizability of the research. Through case studies, the researcher can collect direct evidence and the analyze the data as it becomes available. Further, the emerging results are used to shape the next set of observations (Baškarada, 2014).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that qualitative research that exhibits internal validity (i.e., how closely findings match reality) is a strength if it includes these four characteristics: data collection conducted over long periods of time that promotes continued data analysis and refining of constructs, the data collection is framed from the informant’s viewpoint, observations

and other data are collected in the natural setting of the participants, and data analysis utilizes the researcher's reflection and introspection for self-monitoring for continued reevaluation.

Triangulation is also crucial for enhancing rigor through the use of multiple sources of data, multiple methods, team of researchers, and the use of multiple theories for confirming emergent findings (Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Similarly, the utilization of multiple cases (i.e., comparison of similar or contrasting cases) is also a strategy for enhancing rigor in case study research. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the "inclusion of multiple cases is, in fact, a common strategy for enhancing external validity or generalizability of your findings" (p. 40) in qualitative case study research.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Interview**

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding a phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. Because of its strengths, the case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education, social work, administration, health, any other fields. An applied field's processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring about an understanding that, in turn, may affect and even improve practice. Case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy.

Through the exchange of in-depth interviews, each participant was asked to describe, in detail, their experience of the presented topic in a prompt form. Prompts help to remind individuals of the questions and, at the same time, allow for unexpected data to emerge. To use prompts effectively, a researcher must first design a broad question that might allow for several

different options for an interviewee's answer. Directly under this question, bullet points should be designed to remind the researcher of areas that have emerged from the literature or things they think will enrich their data (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, pp. 4-5).

Through the collection of verbal examinations in this method, the participants completed and provided data for the current research study. Further, a thorough, clear, and logical descriptive disclosure was concluded and demonstrated in the final written data analysis. The interview process, adapted from Kasunic (2010, p. 77), informed the researcher to begin at the orientation stage. Here, introductions were made as well as an exchange of contact details, the description of the study and the interview process, and clarification of any expectations regarding nonattribution, sharing of data, and any other issues. The next stage was the information gathering stage, in which the interviewer used a questionnaire to guide the interview and record responses. The final stage was the closing stage, in which the interviewer reviewed the key points as well as any issues and/or action items and confirmed accuracy with the respondent. The interviewee was invited to provide feedback on the interview process. The interviewer thanked the interviewee and sought permission for any future contact. To maintain trustworthy results to best give voice to the phenomenon being analyzed, it was critical to create a meaningful relationship between the parties. This methodology encouraged the exchange to be as organic and as close to the actual lived experience as possible.

When conducting interviews in case study design, asking "how" and "why" questions provides the opportunity for participants to tell their story in their own words (Yin, 2014). The researcher becomes a listener in the interview process and acts to reduce any researcher bias. Audio recorded documentation of the interview results in a verbatim transcript. Examples of additional documents included participants' educational background and demographic

information. While case studies do not aim to generalize to populations (i.e., statistical generalization), similar to experiments, they aim to generalize to theories (i.e., analytical generalization; Yin, 2009). Thus, according to Yin, replication may be claimed “if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory” (p. 38).

Semi-structured interviews were utilized for the data collection process. Semi-structured interviews, or focused interviews (Dane, 2010), can be more flexible and allow the researcher to better understand the perspective of the interviewees (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). In semi-structured interviews, a researcher is able to refocus the questions or prompt for more information if something interesting or novel emerges. The semi-structured interview involves prepared questions guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses. Thus, the purpose of the interview guide is to incorporate a series of broad themes to be covered during the interview to help direct the conversation toward the topics and issues about which the interviewers want to learn (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 246). These types of interviews are conducted only once with an individual or with a group and generally last between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Semi-structured interviews are based on a semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics that the interviewer intends to explore (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative interviewing takes the form of a “guided conversation” rather than a job interview type of procession through a series of targeted questions (Warren, 2002). Writing lots of small, detailed questions does not allow the interview to freely flow from an interviewee, but rather makes it a choppy back and forth between the researcher and the participant (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

The interview protocol included expert-piloted questions that asked participants about their perceived experience during the alternative licensure process. The interview questions were

given to experts in the field to review and sent back for revisions before the actual interview with the participants began. The piloted interview consisted of probing for subjects, language, and concepts. The interview questions elicited perceptions about the strengths and weaknesses of the alternative licensure process and its contribution to their self-efficacy in the classroom. I collected data through a digital recording device for the purposes of the research and sought to further investigate the explored behavior and characteristics to determine similarities among the unique perception of participants' lived experience as they communicated through recorded interviews. I intended "to derive interpretations, not facts or laws, from respondent talk" (Warren, 2002, p. 83).

### **Document Review**

For this study, I reviewed the participants' educational backgrounds by analyzing their coursework and experience at their institution through the interview questions and prompts.

### **Data Analysis Methods**

#### **Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

This qualitative case study included an in-depth analysis of the reflections of experiences secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers perceived in their beginning years of teaching. Specifically, I investigated participants' self-reflections, which provided a deeper understanding of the level of preparedness this population may encounter when implementing and instructing FCS content, managing their classroom environment, and fulfilling their expected outside teacher duties. The candidates were asked to describe, in detail, their perceived experience with and how substantially they felt their overall experience affected their chances to return for another year of employment. Through the collection of verbal examinations and observations, the participants completed and provided data for the research so that a thorough, clear, and

logical descriptive disclosure was concluded and demonstrated in the final written data analysis. Next, I recorded individual interviews with the participants through Zoom, an online virtual communication platform, or on the telephone. The interview questions guided the conversation between myself and participant and included only a limited number of open-ended questions to further expand upon. This type of exchange allowed me a broader perspective to consider for data analysis. The main objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of this unique population. This research study was distinguished into the outlined process described in the following sections.

### **Initial Contact with Perspective Research Candidates**

I began this qualitative research case study with an introductory letter to prospective qualified candidates, including an opt-in to participate form. Yin (2003) defined this research as a case study that is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. This letter was sent to a purposefully selected group of preselected candidates who were employed as beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas (see Appendix A). The purpose of the letter was to introduce the research study and outline the objectives and intentions. Furthermore, the letter provided the participant with an explanation regarding their voluntary participation in this study and included an informed consent agreement. An informed consent agreement to specifically address the following aspects was supported by Groenewald (2004) and provided a comprehensive guide regarding the stages of an impactful case study. The case study research method is described below.

1. The participants acknowledge their participation in the research
2. The purpose of the research, which includes the research question
3. The procedures of the research

4. The risk and benefits of the research
  5. The voluntary nature of participation in the research
  6. The participants right to stop or end involvement in the research at any time
  7. The process is used to protect the identity of participants and ensure confidentiality
- (Groenewald, 2004, p. 10).

As recommended before by Boyd (2001) and Creswell (1998), two to 10 participants is sufficient to reach saturation; further, they recommend “long interviews with up to 10 people” for phenomenological study. I selected only beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas for this study. The primary communication exchange for this research study was completed through email, telephone correspondence, or the virtual online communication platform Zoom. I provided candidates with my cell phone number, as I respectfully asked for the mode of communication to be this preferred method.

I informed the candidates that the data would be collected through recorded interviews through the virtual platform, Zoom, or audio recorded on the telephone. The recorded and transcribed interviews were then analyzed using the Qualitative Data Analysis System (QDAS), NVivo, to interpret patterns and emerging themes regarding the unique population’s experience that may support the relevance of this research study in an attempt to answer the individual research questions. In-depth analysis of the data included reading and re-reading the interpreted exchanges to find patterns and emerging themes.

### **Thematic Analysis**

I used coding marks and margin notes to develop themes while reading. The purpose of thematic analysis (TA) is to identify patterns of meaning across a dataset that provide an answer to the study’s research question. TA is a qualitative research method that can be widely used



across a range of epistemologies and research questions and is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A rigorous TA can produce trustworthy and insightful findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarization, data coding, and theme development and revision. One of the advantages of TA is that it is theoretically-flexible, meaning it can be used within different frameworks to answer different types of research question. It is suited for questions related to individuals' experiences, views, and perceptions. Through its theoretical freedom, TA provides a highly flexible approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). The approach to TA developed by Braun and Clarke involves a six-phase process for conducting analysis. Although these phases are sequential and each build on the previous, analysis is typically a recursive process, with movement back and forth between different phases.

1. Familiarization with the data: The first phase involves reading and re-reading the data to become immersed and intimately familiar with its content.
2. Coding: The second phase involves generating succinct labels (i.e., codes) that identify important features of the data that might be relevant to answering the research question. The phase also involves coding the entire dataset and collating all the codes and all relevant data extracts together for later stages of analysis.
3. Generating initial themes: The third phase involves examining the codes and collated data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (i.e., potential themes). The phase then involves collating data relevant to each candidate theme so that the researcher can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme.

4. Reviewing themes: The fourth phase involves checking the candidate themes against the dataset to ensure the data are accurately represented and may be used to answer the research question. In this phase, themes are typically refined, which sometimes involves the themes being split, combined, or discarded. In the TA approach, themes are defined as patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central concept or idea.
5. Defining and naming themes: The fifth phase involves developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, and determining the “story” of each. This phase also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme.
6. Writing up: The sixth and final phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts and contextualizing the analysis in relation to existing literature.

### **Deidentifying Data**

While conducting interviews and recording, I provided a nonidentifying number to each participant’s interview. The participants’ names were not used. This number was used to identify the transcripts along with any of the documents that can be linked to the participant. I kept a master list of the participant names and the number assigned to that participant in a location different from where the data were kept to avoid a breach in confidentiality. To ensure anonymity in the transcript, the participant’s name was removed along with identifiable information such as workplace, place of birth, profession, or any name used in the document. Verbatim transcription with cues of nonverbal behavior is necessary to establish reliability, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study (Easton et al., 2000). The first step in the transcription process is the data analysis, which is outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2***The Transcription Process*

Deidentify participant's data	Discuss with transcriptionist	Transmission of meaning to the text
Participant is given a deidentifying number	Purpose of the research study	Italicize or capitalize for inflection
Interview recorded	Type of words to deidentify	Capture meaning through use of pauses, laughter, and other indicators
		Management of fillers
		Use of double space

I utilized NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) to assist in the transcription process. Poland (1995) defined verbatim audio transcription as the word-for-word reproduction of verbal data in which the written words are an exact replication of the recorded (video or audio) words. Verbatim transcriptions of research data not only attempt to capture the meaning(s) and perception(s) of the recorded interviews and focus group discussions, but also the context in which these were created. Poland (1995) listed three distinct vocalizations and nonverbal interactions that verbatim transcripts aim to capture: involuntary vocalizations response, nonresponse tokens, and nonverbal interactions. Transcribing these features of speech can add to the context and offer clarity of the discussion or interview.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In accordance with the federal regulations and the institutional policy on human subjects research, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is responsible for the oversight of all Human Subjects Research (HSR). This study was submitted to the University of Arkansas IRB for review and approval prior to data collection.

#### **Risk of Harm**

Maintaining participant anonymity was ensured by protecting participants' names, which included avoiding the use of self-identifying statements and information and protecting participants from potential harm and turmoil throughout their experience. Misrepresenting words when reporting can cause shame and harm to participants' reputation.

#### **Confidentiality of Data**

Steps were taken to protect each identity through the assistance of the participants at the institution in which the research study took place. I informed each participant about the fact that he or she was free to depart from the study at any point, and I explained the data collection and storage process. At the end of each working day, I kept the participants' results and the study's ethical intent. Upon conclusion of the study, the data were stored on a flash-drive or kept on an audio-recording device, which I transported from the school to home. Federal regulations require that data are maintained in a locked file in the primary office or in the university archive for at least 3 years after the study closes.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

A simple TA is disadvantaged when compared to other methods, as it does not allow the researcher to make claims about language use (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While TA is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived

from the research data (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability.

### **Audit Trails**

An audit trail provides readers with evidence of the decisions and choices the researcher makes regarding theoretical and methodological issues throughout the study, which requires a clear rationale for such decisions (Koch, 1994). Sandelowski (1986) stated that a study and its findings are auditable when another researcher can clearly follow the decision trail. Furthermore, Koch argued that another researcher with the same data, perspective, and situation could arrive at the same or comparable, but not contradictory, conclusions. Keeping records of the raw data, field notes, transcripts, and a reflexive journal can help researchers systemize, relate, and cross reference data, which are all means of creating a clear audit trail (Halpren, 1983). I kept a self-critical account of the research process, including the internal and external dialogue. A reflexive journal can be used by researchers to document the daily logistics of the research, methodological decisions, and rationales and to record the researcher's personal reflections of their values, interests, and insights (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **Delimitations and Limitations**

### **Delimitations**

There were various delimitations for this study. First, I explored only secondary level alternatively licensed FCS teachers in this study. Another delimitation for the current study was the sampling method. Purposive sampling is different from convenience sampling and is a

judgmental, selective, or subjective type of sampling. Kvale (1996) discussed the importance to seek for not only what is said, but what is said between the lines upon emerging themes.

The relatively small sample size within this study is another primary delimitation to consider, as a small sample size may affect the reliability of findings. This study provided a basis for decoding emerging themes from this unique population. This included surveying a small population concerning their performance and personal factors such as self-esteem in the classroom as an alternatively licensed teacher.

Another delimitation to consider is that the study was completed in the state of Kansas, which limits opportunities to include similar states that are facing similar complications. I understand that variables other than induction programs contribute to the attrition rates of teachers. The research site may also be a contributing delimitation to the research study, representing the entire teacher population who chose to teach FCS education.

### **Limitations**

Limitations for the current study include the lack of variance in gender. Other factors, such as the influence of the socio-economic status of the parents, may have influenced the participants and their choice to study FCS-related material to a great degree. Other factors, such as parental, teacher, and educational institution, may have influenced the participants' perceptions of FCS education.

### **Chapter Summary**

This qualitative, inquiry-based case study research included an in-depth analysis of the unique experiences which support the research relevance and the complications faced by this population at this stage of their profession, which can determine the projection of their sustainability to continue teaching. The purposefully selected participants were provided with

specific reflective prompts that were directly linked to the research questions. I examined a unique population of teachers at the beginning stage of their profession in Kansas and their personal experiences reflected in the form of recorded interviews. The personal reflections provided by the participants were further analyzed to discover emerging themes that correlated with the research findings. I read and re-read the collected data to find emerging themes in the participants' reflections. I grouped, coded, and descriptively generated emerging themes.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

Alternatively licensed refers to the pathway that provides an opportunity for individuals seeking a career in FCS to have immediate access to start teaching under a restricted license while completing professional education pedagogy coursework to become fully licensed. The alternative licensure program is only available for secondary content areas and limited numbers of all level subjects (Kansas State Department of Education, 2021c). The purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. The four research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

**RQ1:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the cognitive skills they learned in their program?

**RQ2:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the facilitation skills they learned in their program?

**RQ3:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their classroom management skills they learned in their program?

**RQ4:** How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their self-efficacy related to teaching?

In Chapter 4, I provide a description of the study participants. Next, I describe how the data analysis process was executed, as was described in Chapter 3. Next, I provided a detailed presentation of the findings. I conclude Chapter 4 with a summary and transition into Chapter 5, which includes the conclusions and recommendations for this study.



## Participants

The participants were a purposeful sample of five secondary FACS teachers who were alternatively licensed in Kansas. Each participant was given an alias to ensure their privacy.

Table 3 indicates the demographic characteristics of the individual study participants.

**Table 3**

### *Participant Demographics*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Years Employed as Alternatively Licensed Secondary FACS Teacher
Agathe	Female	42	3
Eleonore	Female	39	3
Greta	Female	59	3
Liesl	Female	53	3
Maria	Female	36	3

All five participants were female. The participants' average age was 45.8 years, ranging from a minimum of 36 years to a maximum of 59 years. All five participants had 3 years of experience as alternatively licensed secondary FACS teachers.

## Data Analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim into Microsoft Word documents. The transcripts were imported as source files into NVivo 12 computer-assisted qualitative analysis software. The analysis procedure applied to the data was the inductive TA method recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis consisted of the following six steps: (a) familiarization with the data, (b) coding the data, (c) generating initial themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing up the results.

### Step 1: Familiarization with the Data

I gained familiarity with the data by reading and rereading the transcripts in full in NVivo's document pane. I carried out this step to achieve a holistic sense of the data to facilitate the identification of patterns in participants' responses during Step 2 of the analysis.

Accordingly, I made handwritten notes during this step as preliminary documentation of repeated words and ideas. I identified a total of 94 data chunks.

### Step 2: Coding the Data

I coded the data by first breaking them down into data chunks. Each data chunk was a phrase or group of phrases that indicated one meaning relevant to the participants' experiences as beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers in Kansas. The data chunks were assigned to NVivo nodes, with each node representing a code. The codes were labeled with descriptive phrases summarizing the meaning of the data assigned to them. When different data chunks from within the same transcript or from different transcripts had similar meanings, they were assigned to the same code. In this way, the codes were formed inductively, according to patterns of meaning identified in the data itself. The 94 data chunks were clustered into 18 initial codes. Table 4 indicates the initial codes and the number of data chunks assigned to them.

**Table 4**

#### *Initial Codes*

Initial code (in descending order by number of data chunks assigned)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> =5)	<i>n</i> of data chunks assigned ( <i>N</i> =94)
Unprepared to deliver differentiated instruction	4	10
Classroom management not learned in program	5	10
Content not learned in program	4	9

**Table 4 (cont)**

Initial code (in descending order by number of data chunks assigned)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> =5)	<i>n</i> of data chunks assigned ( <i>N</i> =94)
Self-efficacy increased with experience	4	8
Lack of lesson-planning skills	3	7
Mentorship was lacking or minimal	5	7
Self-efficacy increased with peer support	5	7
Effective lesson-planning skills	3	6
No training in instructional technology	3	5
Initially unaware of resources	2	4
Self-awareness as a skill	4	4
Lack of classroom management skills	2	4
Resources increased self-efficacy	4	4
Student organization facilitation not learned in program	2	3
No opportunities for classroom observation	3	3
Content knowledge learned in program	1	1
Lack of self-reflection skill	1	1
Communicating with parents	1	1

### Step 3: Generating Initial Themes

I formed themes inductively by grouping related initial codes to identify a smaller number of broader ideas. Themes were identified as related when they indicated different aspects of one overarching idea. In NVivo, related initial codes were grouped as child nodes under the same parent node, which represented a theme. Discrepant data were identified during this step as initial codes indicating perceptions or experiences reported by a minority of participants that diverged significantly from the perspectives expressed by the majority of experiences. Table 5 indicates how the initial codes were clustered to form the preliminary themes.

**Table 5**

*Grouping of Initial Codes into Preliminary Theme*

Preliminary theme (i.e., the central idea used to cluster codes)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> =5)	<i>n</i> of data chunks assigned ( <i>N</i> =94)
Initial code grouped to form theme		
Preliminary Theme 1: Cognitive skills	5	24
Content not learned in program		
Discrepant data - Content knowledge learned in program		
Discrepant data - Lack of self-reflection skill		
Initially unaware of resources		
No training in instructional technology		
Self-awareness as a skill		
Preliminary Theme 2: Facilitation skills	5	27
Discrepant data - Communicating with parents		
Effective lesson-planning skills		
Lack of lesson-planning skills		

**Table 5 (cont)**

Preliminary theme (i.e., the central idea used to cluster codes)	<i>n</i> of participants contributing ( <i>N</i> =5)	<i>n</i> of data chunks assigned ( <i>N</i> =94)
Initial code grouped to form theme		
Student organization facilitation not learned in program		
Unprepared to deliver differentiated instruction		
Preliminary Theme 3: Classroom management skills	5	17
Classroom management not learned in program		
Lack of classroom management skills		
No opportunities for classroom observation		
Preliminary Theme 4: Self-efficacy	5	26
Mentorship was lacking or minimal		
Resources increased self-efficacy		
Self-efficacy increased with experience		
Self-efficacy increased with peer support		

#### **Step 4: Reviewing Themes**

I reviewed the themes by first comparing them to the original data. The purpose of this step was to ensure the central ideas represented in the preliminary themes accurately reflected patterns of meaning across participants' responses. The themes were also cross-checked against one another to ensure they were sufficiently distinct to justify their separate presentation.

#### **Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes**

I reviewed the data assigned to each preliminary theme again to develop a propositional phrase that indicated their significance. To guide the comparison, the research questions were referenced with the intention of finding the significance of the themes as answers addressing

them. Upon establishing the significance of the data assigned to each theme, each preliminary theme was named to clarify its significance as an answer addressing a research question. Table 6 indicates how the preliminary themes were named to indicate their significance.

**Table 6**

*Naming of Preliminary Themes*

Preliminary theme name		Finalized theme name
Cognitive skills	→	Theme 1: Cognitive skills were not typically learned program
Facilitation skills	→	Theme 2: Some lesson-planning skills were learned but most other facilitation skills were not
Classroom management skills	→	Theme 3: Classroom management skills were not learned
Self-efficacy	→	Theme 4: Self-efficacy increased through teacher experience and initiative

**Step 6: Writing up the Results**

The results are presented in the following section of this chapter. Direct quotes from the data are provided as evidence for all findings. The direct quotes are also presented as thick descriptions that convey the participants' contexts and perspectives through their own words.

## Presentation of Results

The results are organized by research question, with the themes being presented under the headings for the research questions they were used to address. Table 7 depicts an overview of how the themes were used to address the research questions.

**Table 7**

*Overview of How the Themes Were Used to Address the Research Questions*

Research Question	Theme Used to Address Question
RQ1: How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the cognitive skills they learned in their program?	Theme 1: Cognitive skills were not typically learned
RQ2: How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the facilitation skills they learned in their program?	Theme 2: Some lesson-planning skills were learned but most other facilitation skills were not
RQ3: How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their classroom management skills they learned in their program?	Theme 3: Classroom management skills were not learned
RQ4: How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their self-efficacy related to teaching?	Theme 4: Self-efficacy increased through teacher experience and initiative

## Validity

In qualitative research, the credibility of the findings in a study refers to how accurately those findings reflect the reality they are intended to represent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is therefore analogous to the quantitative standard of internal validity. In this study, credibility was enhanced using three procedures. First, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate preservation of the data, so that it would reflect participants' intended meanings. Second, a thematic analysis procedure was employed so that the

major study findings were themes that incorporated the perspectives of all or most participants, thereby minimizing the potential influence of individual participants' biases or errors, when these were not shared by the majority of the participants. Third, a member checking procedure was conducted to enable the participants to verify that preliminary researcher interpretations of their data were consistent with their intended meanings, to help ensure that researcher error or bias did not reduce the accuracy of the findings.

Transferability in qualitative research is the extent to which the findings in a study hold true of samples and settings other than those from which they were derived (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is analogous to the quantitative standard of external validity. In this study, to assist the reader in assessing the transferability of the findings to other samples and settings on a case-by-case basis, inclusion criteria for the sample were described in Chapter 3, and all participants recruited in this study met the inclusion criteria. In addition, this chapter includes a description of the sample, which the reader may reference to compare the sample from which the findings in this study were drawn with other samples.

### **Research Question One**

RQ1 was focused on how the participants described the cognitive skills they learned in their alternative certification program. The following theme was relevant to addressing this question.

#### ***Theme 1: Cognitive Skills Were Not Typically Learned***

All five participants contributed to this theme, although two participants also provided partially discrepant data. The overarching finding in this theme indicated that the participants did not typically learn cognitive skills in their alternative certification program (ALP). Cognitive skills that most participants reported they did not learn in their ALP included FACS content



knowledge, self-awareness and self-reflection skills, skill in the use of instructional technology, and awareness of available resources to supplement deficient FACS content knowledge. One of the two participants who provided partly discrepant data indicated that she learned FACS content knowledge in her ALP, contrary to the reported experiences of the other four participants. The other participant who provided partly discrepant data stated that she did not perceive herself as having adequate self-awareness or self-reflection skills, either learned in her ALP or elsewhere.

Four out of five participants indicated that they did not learn the FACS content knowledge in their ALP that they were subsequently expected to teach to their students. Agathe said that when she started teaching, because she had not learned FACS content knowledge in her ALP, “I had to spend a lot of my time learning the material I would be teaching.” Eleonore said that when she started teaching FACS, she had to rely on her industry experience as her only source of content knowledge: “The program did not give me specific FACS content knowledge in all of the various areas that FACS encompasses. I came in only with the industry knowledge and experience from my background.” However, Eleonore added of her ALP, “They could not prepare me for the immense amount of instructional preparedness needed for a teacher when they only have a few months. I don’t blame them because there is so much to learn.” Maria said, “I got a general pedagogical and andragogical education [in my ALP], not one directed toward the language under the umbrella of FACS. I didn’t get strict FACS content knowledge and had to really educate myself.” Greta provided discrepant data indicating that she learned FACS content knowledge in her ALP: “My program really prepared me well for the content knowledge of FACS.”

Four out of five participants reported that they had the cognitive skills of self-awareness and self-reflection, but they did not attribute their skill to their ALP. In a representative response,

Liesl said, “I am very self-reflective and am able to make changes and be better prepared for the next time a struggle arises.” Notable in this response was the omission of any mention of her self-reflective skill being derived in any way from her ALP. Agathe described self-reflectiveness as a personal trait she had always had rather than as a learning from her ALP:

I’ve always been a self-reflective and can grow from my past. It has helped me make more sound decisions, build stronger relationships, and communicate more effectively. I can easily see my reactions including thoughts, feelings, behaviors, strengths, and weaknesses, and their impact on others.

Eleonore provided discrepant data indicating that she did not have the skill of self-awareness or self-reflection, either as a personal attainment or from her ALP, saying,

I have very high expectations for myself, and this can get me into trouble . . . I can’t say I am the best at being self-aware because now I am overwhelmed and on the verge of considering a new job.

Three out of five participants reported that they received no training in the use of instructional technology during their ALP, and no participants provided discrepant data indicating that they had received such training in their ALP. Greta said, “Technology integration is a struggle. I lack preparation in [it] . . . I wasn’t proficient in the presentation techniques but was able to utilize my students to help me throughout my first year.” Liesl stated, “My program didn’t necessarily prepare me specifically for FACS technology . . . I wish I would have had more knowledge and preparation in presentation techniques, as my students are far better with its use than myself.” Like Liesl, Maria specifically attributed her lack of preparation in the use of instructional technology to a deficit in her ALP program: “I struggled my first year in learning how to operate my classroom’s instructional technology. This is something my program really failed to prepare me in.”

Two participants reported that, in addition to not learning FACS content in their ALP, they did not learn about the resources available to teachers to acquaint them with the content and

facilitate lesson and assessment planning. No participants provided discrepant data indicating that they were aware of those resources when they began teaching. Agathe stated the following of her lack of knowledge of resources available for FACS teachers:

I was rebuilding everything from scratch and didn't realize the amount of help that was already out there . . . Had I known the amount of resources out there for FACS, I wouldn't have had to reinvent the wheel and stress so much about it before my first year of teaching.

Greta appeared at time of study to continue to be unaware of the available resources, given that she suggested in the following response that her only resource was to “copy” lesson plans from other FACS teachers she knew personally, rather than from generally available resources: “My first year was a disaster, as I didn't have any support from other FACS teachers to copy from and survive.”

## **Research Question Two**

RQ2 focused on how the participants described the facilitation skills they learned in their program. The following theme was used to address this question.

### ***Theme 2: Some Lesson-Planning Skills Were Learned but Most Other Facilitation Skills Were Not***

All five participants contributed data to this theme, although the participants reported different experiences regarding their learning of lesson-planning skills in their ALP. Two participants reported that they did not learn lesson-planning skills in their ALP. Two other participants reported the opposite experience, saying they learned adequate lesson-planning skills in their ALP. One participant reported a mixed experience, saying that she learned some lesson-planning skills in her ALP, but she did not learn other needed lesson-planning skills. Most

participants reported that they did not learn how to deliver differentiated instruction in their ALP. Some participants further reported that they did not learn student-organization facilitation in their ALP. One participant provided discrepant data indicating that she learned how to communicate with students' parents in the ALP, which no other participant reported.

Three participants indicated that they did not receive adequate training in lesson-planning in their ALP, stating that when they began teaching, their lesson-planning skills were inadequate. Maria said, "Speaking to other teachers who had gone through a content-specific program for teaching, I know I didn't come out of my program with the same confidence to prepare lessons." Maria added of the consequences of her lack of preparation in lesson planning, "For the first few years, I just had to fake it to make it, and every day I would be completely exhausted because I didn't have an organized plan to assist with transitioning from one concept to the next." Liesl said that lesson planning was stressful for her at first because of her lack of preparation: "My first year was really stressful because I had to do so much redesigning my lab and making lessons." Greta said of her experiences of planning lessons when she started teaching, "My first year was just [a] trial-and-error, fake-it-until-you-make-it type of situation." Greta also struggled to update her lesson plans between semesters. She said, "Adapting the materials semester to semester or year to year is another terribly time-consuming process I wasn't prepared for."

Greta's data were partly discrepant because she also reported that she learned lesson-planning skills in her ALP, as did two other participants. Despite the challenges Greta faced in planning and updating lessons when she began teaching, she reported, "My program really took time to help us organize our lesson plans and practice them." The reason for the apparent inconsistency in Greta's responses is that the lesson planning she engaged in when she began teaching involved updating outdated teaching resources that her school did not have the funding

to replace, a lesson-planning task that she did not report learning how to do in her ALP. Agathe and Liesl both reported a similar experience of needing to update old materials, corroborating Greta's responses. Eleonore reported that her ALP provided her with adequate lesson-planning skills: "The transition to teaching program prepared me how to plan a regular lesson." Agathe did not explicitly attribute her lesson-planning skills to learnings in her ALP, but she indicated that she knew how to plan lessons before she started teaching: "Because I spent all summer redeveloping curriculum, I felt really good about teaching the concepts because the material was all my own."

Four out of five participants indicated that they did not learn how to deliver differentiated instruction in their ALPs, and the remaining participant did not provide discrepant data. Agathe said, "Adapting instruction to individual learning needs was something I was not prepared for or had been taught much about in my program." Liesl reported an experience similar to Agathe's, saying,

I lacked some skills in preparing lessons for my students with special needs. My program didn't prepare me as well as I would have liked . . . Differentiating my instruction with presentation techniques is [still] a struggle of mine.

Maria said, "Adapting materials to fit the students' learning needs was most challenging just because I had not had many opportunities in college to do this." Greta described her first year of teaching as a "disaster" in relation to the delivery of differentiated instruction and stated that she had to learn the skill before her second year: "My first year was a disaster . . . The next year, I had to adapt my classroom around the second week to adjust for students' needs."

Two participants reported that they were not prepared after their ALPs to facilitate student organizations, and no participants provided discrepant data. Liesl reported that she had not yet attempted, at time of study, to facilitate a student organization, and Eleonore and Maria did not reference the facilitation of student organizations in their responses. Agathe said the

student organization she facilitated was valuable: “It is an amazing organization, and it is also a very timely one to be involved with.” However, Agathe added that she was unprepared to facilitate the organization: “I had never dealt with such an involved organization like FCCLA and wasn’t prepared.” Greta said, “The student organization, FCCLA, is my biggest struggle to adapt to. It is a very demanding and challenging organization for a first-year teacher to try to accomplish.” Greta added of why facilitating the student organization was challenging, “I lacked preparation in getting students involved with the club and advocating for our program and club.”

Agathe provided discrepant data indicating that she learned how to communicate with parents in her ALP. Agathe stated, “I had no problem communicating with parents as my program also helped prepare me slightly for what to say and how to protect myself.” Notable in Agathe’s response was her indication that her program only prepared her “slightly.” The other four participants did not report challenges associated with communicating with parents, but they attributed their proficiency in this communication to their personalities, rather than to learning in their ALP. In a representative response to this effect, Eleonore said, “Communicating with parents has never been a hard thing for me to do, as I am very approachable and easy to build relationships with.”

### **Research Question Three**

RQ3 focused on how participants described the classroom management skills they learned in their ALP. The theme used to address this question is described in the following section.

#### ***Theme 3: Classroom Management Skills Were Not Learned***

All five participants contributed to this theme, and no participants provided any discrepant data. The participants reported that they either had classroom management skills when

they began teaching due to previous experiences outside of their ALP, or that they did not have classroom management skills when they started teaching. Most participants added that they did not have an opportunity in their ALP to observe a more experienced teacher's classroom management through shadowing and classroom observations.

Three participants reported that they had classroom management skills when they started teaching that they gained those skills through experiences other than their ALP. Agathe, for example, said of where she gained her classroom management skills, "Because I am a mother, I was able to manage a class with their [students'] behavior just fine." Eleonore said of the source of her classroom management skills, "Coming from the restaurant industry, managing and herding cats is an easy thing for me to do. You have to have a Type A personality for this line of work to help keep everybody on task and safe." Greta said,

Because I came from a big family and had a large family myself, I was able to immediately implement my ways of running a kitchen setting with so many bodies . . . I felt fairly confident to manage my class like I did my family.

Two participants reported that when they started teaching, they lacked classroom management skills. Maria said, "Speaking to other teachers who had gone through a content-specific program for teaching, I know I didn't come out of my program with the same confidence to . . . manage a lab setting." Liesl said, "My first year teaching, I had struggles in time management," because she often could not manage the classroom proficiently enough to complete the planned lesson.

Three participants added that they did not have an opportunity in their ALP to shadow a more experienced teacher and observe their classroom management skills, and no participants provided discrepant data indicating that their ALP included a similar opportunity. Maria said,

I struggled mostly with how to facilitate a lab and organizing the various preps and extra duties I was obligated to fulfill. I really could have used opportunities to shadow and

observe other FACS teachers during my program to better prepare me for my own classroom.

As a second example, Agathe said that, in spite of the proficiency in classroom management she had derived from her personal experience, she still may have benefitted from opportunities to observe more experienced teachers in her ALP: “When it came time to cooking and facilitating a lab, I struggled more because I didn’t get the opportunity in my program to view classrooms or lab settings to get an idea on how to manage and operate them.” Eleonore said that because her ALP did not include opportunities to observe more experienced teachers, “As an alternatively licensed teacher, I had not been in a secondary classroom before, and there were some classes that were easier than others.”

#### **Research Question Four**

RQ4 focused on how the participants described their self-efficacy related to teaching. The theme used to address this question is discussed in the following section.

#### ***Theme 4: Self-efficacy Increased Through Teacher Experience and Initiative***

All five participants reported that they had at least some self-efficacy related to teaching, but no participants attributed their self-efficacy to their ALP. Instead, the participants attributed their self-efficacy related to teaching to their own experience and initiative. The participants’ own experience of teaching in the classroom was a source of increased self-efficacy for most participants. The participants also reported that they increased their self-efficacy through their own initiative in seeking out peer support from more experienced FACS teachers. For most participants, their initiative in finding teaching resources for FACS teachers increased their self-efficacy. All participants reported that formally assigned mentorships were not a source of self-efficacy because such mentorship was either absent or minimal in their experience.



All five participants reported that their initiative in seeking out peer support from other FACS teachers increased their self-efficacy. Agathe said that her self-efficacy related to teaching increased when, “I grew a support network of other FACS teachers and could utilize what they were doing within my own classroom.” Greta said that to increase their teaching self-efficacy, beginning FACS teachers should exercise initiative to, “Build a network early of FACS teachers. Attend conferences and join organizations to help support you.” Greta added the following of how she exercised her own initiative to obtain peer support: “I had to ask around to other FACS teachers when it came to my curriculum. When it came to building practices, my colleagues were all very easy to approach and help out.” Eleonore reported that on the basis of her experience, she would advise beginning FACS teachers to exercise their initiative to, “Attend conferences and workshops and gain a good network of FACS and CTE teachers to help get you off to a good start.” Liesl reported that her teaching self-efficacy increased when,

I mapped out a plan for the laboratory setting at the beginning of the year with the help of seasoned veteran teachers in the surrounding area. I had one FACS teacher from another district come in and help me get a detailed plan and map out how we can accommodate the students in that setting.

Of the effect of peer support on her teaching self-efficacy, Liesl added, “There wasn’t anything I wasn’t already prepared for in this position after speaking to other FACS teachers.” Maria also exercised initiative to gain peer support to increase her teaching self-efficacy. She said, “I gained a friend across the hall quickly who took me under her wing and mentored me on building and district policies and procedures. I could always go to her when I even had behavior issues and needed interventions.”

Four participants reported that their teaching self-efficacy increased with their own teaching experience, and the remaining participant did not provide discrepant data. Agathe said, “After my first semester facilitating a lab, I could take what I learned and apply it to that next

semester and improve . . . You really have to learn by trial and error.” Eleonore said of the effects of experience on her teaching self-efficacy,

Year by year, I am getting better at not planning or cramming too much into a class period . . . A teacher will mature as they stay in the classroom year to year and so will their management style.

Of the effect of experience on her self-efficacy related to teaching, Eleonore stated, “I learned to be confident in myself.” Greta said of the effect of her accumulating teaching experience on her teaching self-efficacy, “I am learning by doing . . . I didn’t know everything, but I always found the answer and learned a lesson with each course I taught.” Maria stated, “A lot of teaching is simply learned by doing, and I really had to figure this all out on my own.”

Four participants reported that accessing resources for FACS teachers increased their teaching self-efficacy, and the remaining participant did not provide discrepant data. Agathe said of the effect of teaching resources on her self-efficacy as a teacher, “After learning where I could access a lot of FACS resources, I was able to really feel better about going in the next day with a plan.” Eleonore said that based on her experiences of gaining self-efficacy as a new teacher, she would advise beginning teachers, “Don’t reinvent the wheel. There is so much out there to utilize for curriculum.” Maria used language similar to Eleonore’s in providing the corroborating response regarding the advice she would give to a beginning FACS teacher: “Don’t recreate the wheel of new instruction. There is so much out there to utilize.” Greta said that she would tell a beginning teacher to exercise their initiative to, “Find your resources and use them.”

All five participants reported that formally assigned mentors did not increase their self-efficacy related to teaching because such mentorship was minimal or absent. Eleonore explained,

I didn’t have a CTE mentor, but I had a building mentor for two years. My building mentor only really helped with the school processes and any in-classroom technology that I needed help with. [But] an FACS mentor really would have been beneficial in helping me with updating my materials.

Agathe and Liesl also reported that they were formally assigned a building mentor, but not a FACS or CTE mentor. Liesl said, “I had a building mentor that helped me with the school processes, but not one for FACS.” Greta and Maria reported that they had no formally assigned mentor. Greta said of this experience, “To have a specific mentor in the building or within FACS—no, I didn’t have this luxury.” Maria said of using her initiative to gain informal mentorship, “I had to find my own mentor. I wish I had a FACS or CTE mentor because it really would have directed me towards being better prepared for my individual classes.”

### **Summary**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. Four research questions were used to guide this study. RQ1 was, “How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the cognitive skills they learned in their program?” The theme used to address this question was as follows: cognitive skills were not typically learned (in participants’ alternative certification programs). All five participants contributed to this theme, although two participants also provided partially discrepant data. Cognitive skills that most participants reported they did not learn in their alternative certification program included FACS content knowledge, self-awareness and self-reflection skills, instructional technology use skills, and awareness of available resources to supplement deficient FACS content knowledge. One of the two participants who provided partly discrepant data indicated that she learned FACS content knowledge in her alternative certification program, contrary to the reported experiences of the other four participants. The other participant who provided partly discrepant data stated that she did not perceive herself as having adequate self-awareness or self-reflection skills, either learned in her alternative certification program or otherwise.

RQ2 was, “How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe the facilitation skills they learned in their program?” The theme used to address this question was as follows: some lesson-planning skills were learned (in the alternative certification program) but most other facilitation skills were not. All five participants contributed data to this theme, although the participants reported different experiences regarding their learning of lesson-planning skills in their ALP. Two participants reported that they did not learn lesson-planning skills in their ALP. Two other participants reported the opposite, saying they learned adequate lesson-planning skills in their ALP. One participant reported a mixed experience, saying that she learned some lesson-planning skills in her ALP, but that there were other needed lesson-planning skills she did not learn there. Most participants reported that they did not learn how to deliver differentiated instruction in their ALP. Some participants further reported that they did not learn student-organization facilitation in their ALP. One participant provided discrepant data indicating that she learned how to communicate with students’ parents in the ALP, a learning no other participant reported.

RQ3 was, “How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their classroom management skills they learned in their program?” The theme used to address this question was as follows: classroom management skills were not learned (in the alternative certification program). All five participants contributed to this theme, and no participants provided any discrepant data. The participants reported that they either had classroom management skills when they began teaching due to previous experiences outside of their ALP or that they did not have classroom management skills when they started teaching. Most participants added that they did not have an opportunity in their ALP to observe a more experienced teacher’s classroom management through shadowing and classroom observations.

RQ4 was, “How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FACS teachers describe their self-efficacy related to teaching?” The theme used to address this question was as follows: self-efficacy increased through teacher experience and initiative. All five participants reported that they had at least some self-efficacy related to teaching, but no participants attributed their self-efficacy to their ALP. Instead, the participants attributed their self-efficacy related to teaching to their own experience and initiative. Participants’ own experience of teaching in the classroom was a source of increased self-efficacy for most participants. The participants also reported that they increased their self-efficacy through their own initiative in seeking out peer support from more experienced FACS teachers. For most participants, their initiative in finding teaching resources for FACS teachers increased their self-efficacy. All participants reported that formally assigned mentorships were not a source of self-efficacy because such mentorship was either absent or minimal in their experience. In Chapter 5, I discuss interpretations of the results, provide a discussion, and discuss the implications of these findings.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

Approximately 1,000 FCS teacher positions are vacant in Kansas (Pittsburg State University, 2021). Because of this, school districts are hiring secondary FCS teachers who received their license through the RTLAP. Little is known, however, about the experiences of those who complete these nontraditional pathways. Much of the current research on ALPs has focused on teacher retention and suggests that alternatively licensed teachers leave the profession at a higher rate than traditionally licensed teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2001). Additionally, Wonacott (2002) noted that alternatively licensed teachers need more support during their first year of teaching. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas.

Data for the current study comes from five secondary FCS teachers who were alternatively licensed in Kansas collected through individual interviews. Data were analyzed consistent with recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings of the current study indicated that alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas were not taught the necessary cognitive, facilitation, and classroom management skills they needed when they began teaching. Additionally, they did not attribute their self-efficacy related to teaching to their ALP. In the following sections, I discuss the findings of the current study in the context of the literature. I also provide recommendations for future research and implications for practice.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The findings of the current study indicate that ALPs are not adequately preparing alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers to begin teaching. Though there are many proponents of alternative licensing programs for teachers (e.g., Kwiatkowski, 1999), the findings

of the current study are consistent with the criticisms of ALPs. Researchers have noted that alternatively licensed teachers typically need more support when they begin teaching and are overall underprepared to teach (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Shen, 1997; Watts, 1986; Wonacott, 2002).

The findings of the current study build on the current literature in two ways. First, the current study utilized a qualitative methodology to understand alternatively licensed teachers' experiences. This has not been a focus of previous research on alternatively licensed teachers. Second, the current study focused on a population of teachers for which many states are seeing a shortage of teachers. School districts can use the findings of the current study to better support alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas.

### **RQ1. How Do Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed FACS Teachers Describe the Cognitive Skills They Learned in Their Program?**

One theme was identified in response to the first research question. This theme was cognitive skills were not typically learned. This theme focused on participants' reports that they did not learn cognitive skills (i.e., FACS content knowledge, self-awareness and self-reflection skills, and skill in the use of instructional technology) in their ALP.

The findings of this study are consistent with the concerns of the critics of ALPs, who have noted their concern that alternative licensure is not adequately preparing individuals to teach in the classroom. Alternatively licensed teachers are perceived as under-prepared to teach by principals (Bartholomew et al., 2018). They are also more likely than traditionally licensed teachers to become overwhelmed and leave the profession (Wonacott, 2002). If secondary FCS teachers feel they are not being taught the necessary cognitive skills needed to teach in secondary classrooms, it may be easy for them to be overwhelmed and underprepared. If school districts

choose to continue hiring alternatively licensed secondary teachers in order to address teacher shortages, it may be beneficial for states to require additional screenings to ensure that teachers being hired from ALPs have the necessary cognitive skills when entering the classroom.

**RQ2. How Do Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed FACS Teachers Describe the Facilitation Skills They Learned in Their Program?**

One theme was identified in response to the second research question. This theme was that some lesson-planning skills were learned, but most other facilitation skills were not. From participants' reports, it appears that learning lesson-planning skills depends on what ALP they are enrolled in; however, few other facilitation skills were taught.

The intensity, duration, and rigor of ALPs have previously been found to vary widely (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; National Research Council, 2010). The reports of the participants in the current study are one example of how widely experiences in ALPs can vary. One possible step that states can take to improve the quality of ALPs and ensure teachers are leaving ALPs with the skills required to teach in classrooms is to standardize the rigor of ALPs. By reducing the variation in ALPs and ensuring specific skills are being addressed in the program, alternatively licensed teachers may leave ALPs better prepared to work in the classroom.

Additionally, the findings associated with the second research question continue to support critics of ALPs. Secondary FCS teachers in the current study reported that they were not taught the facilitation skills needed to teach in the classroom. If alternatively licensed teachers are not taught the skills necessary to manage a classroom, they may be more likely to become overwhelmed and leave the profession. As a result, the use of alternatively licensed teachers may not help address teacher shortages. If alternative licensed teachers continue to be utilized to



address the teacher shortages, school districts may need to ensure that alternatively licensed teachers are adequately prepared to be in the classroom.

### **RQ3. How Do Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed FACS Teachers Describe Their Classroom Management Skills They Learned in Their Program?**

One theme was identified in response to the third research question. This theme was that classroom management skills were not learned. Participants reported that they did not learn classroom management skills in their ALP and did not have an opportunity to observe experienced teachers' classroom management.

Again, the findings associated with the third research question raise several concerns about alternatively licensed teachers' preparedness to enter the classroom. Secondary FCS teachers need to be both knowledgeable about FCS topics and also able to effectively teach secondary students (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2021). Classroom management is a key skill FCS teachers need to have in order to work in classrooms (Arnett-Hartwick, 2020), and a lack of classroom management skills is also one of the most common reasons for teachers to leave the field (Arnett & Freeburg, 2008). This finding continues to support arguments that ALPs are not adequately preparing alternatively licensed teachers to teach in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Shen, 1997). If alternatively licensed teachers are not being adequately prepared to teach in a classroom, then the benefits of having alternatively licensed teachers (e.g., diverse teachers) may be voided.

### **RQ4. How Do Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed FACS Teachers Describe Their Self-Efficacy Related to Teaching?**

One theme was identified in response to the fourth research question. This theme was that self-efficacy increased through teacher experience and initiative. Participants reported that they

had at least some self-efficacy related to teaching, but no participants attributed their self-efficacy to their ALP. Instead, the participants attributed their self-efficacy related to teaching to their own experience and initiative.

The findings of the current study are consistent with Hanna (2020), who also found that alternatively licensed teachers felt that they were underprepared in terms of pedagogical knowledge. Lacking self-efficacy is a serious concern, as self-efficacy impacts motivation and behaviors in the classroom (Bandura, 1977). It is possible that a lack of self-efficacy impacts alternatively licensed teachers' behavior in the classroom and their motivation to keep teaching. As such, supporting alternatively licensed teachers' self-efficacy should be a priority for ALPs.

Research has shown that traditionally licensed teachers report higher self-efficacy when beginning to teach compared to alternatively licensed teachers because traditionally licensed teachers have ample opportunity to receive mentorship and field experiences that alternatively licensed teachers do not receive (Duncan & Ricketts, 2008; Duncan et al., 2017; Fletcher & Zirkle, 2011; Ruhland & Bremer, 2003). Alternative licensure programs should begin including field experiences and mentoring as a regular part of their curriculum. This may result in alternatively licensed teachers with higher self-efficacy, that, in turn, may result in improved teaching skills and a willingness to continue teaching.

### **Limitations**

The findings of the current study should be considered within the context of a few limitations. First, the current study utilized a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is different from convenience sampling and is a judgmental, selective, or subjective type of sampling (Kvale, 1996). It is also possible that this sampling technique resulted in some response bias. It is possible that the participants in the current study were more motivated to discuss their

unhappiness with their ALP and were therefore more likely to participate in the current study. The responses of the participants in the current study, however, are consistent with previous research (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2002), indicating that if there was any response bias in the current study, its impact was minimal.

Second, the current study included a sample of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers from Kansas. As such, the findings of the current study may not generalize to alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in other states or alternatively licensed teachers of other subjects. Future research may consider expanding the target sample to include all alternatively licensed FCS teachers in the United States.

Third, the sample included in the current study lacked diversity, especially in terms of gender. It is possible that the sample included in the current study was not necessarily representative of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in Kansas. The findings of the current study may have differed if a more diverse sample had been included. Future researchers may consider including a more diverse sample of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers.

### **Recommendations**

Despite these limitations, the findings of the current study provide some direction for future research. First, future research may consider comparing alternatively licensed FCS teachers' experiences based on the rigor of their ALP. The intensity, duration, and rigor of ALPs have previously been found to vary widely (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; National Research Council, 2010). In the current study, participants' experiences of their ALP followed this trend. Future researchers may need to examine alternatively licensed teachers' experiences of beginning teaching within the context of the rigor of their ALP. It is possible that alternatively

licensed teachers who enrolled in more rigorous ALPs have different experiences as being novice teachers than alternatively licensed teachers who enrolled in less rigorous ALPs.

Second, though research has been critical of ALPs and alternatively licensed teachers, few studies have compared the self-efficacy of first-year traditionally licensed teachers and first-year alternatively licensed teachers. It is currently unclear if teachers' self-efficacy varies depending on the route they took for licensure. Understanding if any differences exist may help researchers and school districts support teachers more effectively.

Finally, the current study included only alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in Kansas. It is possible that experiences of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers vary across states due to different alternative licensing rules and differing teacher shortages. As such, future researchers may consider expanding the target sample of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in the United States and may consider comparing the experiences of alternatively licensed secondary FCS teachers in different states.

### **Implications**

This section includes some implications for practice. First, states may consider standardizing ALPs. The intensity, duration, and rigor of ALPs have previously been found to vary widely (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; National Research Council, 2010). This results in alternatively licensed teachers' differing levels of readiness to enter a classroom. To reduce the variation in alternatively licensed teachers' readiness and ensure that students are receiving appropriate instruction, states may consider requiring specific curriculum be included in ALP for those enrolled in an ALP to be eligible for alternative teaching licensure.

Second, school districts may consider identifying more rigorous ALPs from which to hire alternatively licensed teachers. As the rigor of ALPs varies widely (Darling-Hammond et al.,

2002; National Research Council, 2010) and this variation can result in teachers who are underprepared to enter the classroom, school districts may consider evaluating the ALPs in their state and identifying which ALPs meet their standards for teachers, and which do not. By providing principals with this information, school districts may ensure that principals are hiring alternatively licensed teachers who are prepared to enter the classroom.

Finally, school districts may consider developing policies and procedures that provide greater support to alternatively licensed teachers as they begin teaching. Alternatively licensed teachers tend to need more support their first year of teaching (Wonacott, 2002). As such, school districts that choose to utilize alternatively licensed teachers to manage teacher shortages should provide alternatively licensed teachers with the necessary support they need to be successful (e.g., mentoring, additional training, additional monitoring). By providing alternatively licensed teachers these supports, school districts can increase alternatively licensed teachers' skills and self-efficacy and ensure that students are receiving appropriate instruction.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. Data for the current study came from five secondary FACS teachers who were alternatively licensed in Kansas collected through individual interviews. Data were analyzed consistent with the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings of the current study indicate that alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas were not taught the necessary cognitive, facilitation, and classroom management skills they needed when they began teaching. Additionally, they did not attribute their self-efficacy related to teaching to their ALP. The findings of the current study indicate the need for increased regulation of ALPs. By ensuring that

alternatively license teachers are entering classrooms from high quality ALPs, school districts can ensure that the newly hired alternatively licensed teachers are prepared to teach in the classroom.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Invitation To Participate Email

Dear Teacher:

I am a doctoral student in the Adult and Lifelong Learning at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. As part of my research study, I will examine the perceptions of beginning secondary alternatively licensed Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in Kansas, regarding the certification requirements, program, and overall experience as it relates to their teacher sense of self-efficacy. I am very interested in your experience as a beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teacher in Kansas transitioning from the workforce into teaching. I am mainly interested in finding out your perceptions of your training and certification requirements as it relates to your sense of self-efficacy beliefs.

If you agree, I would like to set up a recorded 30-minute interview, via Zoom or telephone, with you to capture your thoughts, which will inform my research study. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. At the end of the interview, I will ask for your address to send you a token of appreciation for your assistance towards my study. Please know your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study.

I hope my research study will be valuable in assisting future teachers and administrators in their efforts to continuously support this unique group of teachers. Thank you for your time and I look forward to getting an answer at your soonest convenience, but no later than Wednesday, February 15th, by 3:00 PM. If you agree to participate, a form will be sent to you for a signature that will further explain the details of the research and the requirements on each of our end as researcher and participant.

Yours in Education,

Jennifer Snell  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville



## **Appendix B**

### **Informed Consent**

#### **Information about Being in a Research Study** University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

#### **Perceptions of Beginning Secondary Alternatively Licensed Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers in Kansas: A Case Study**

#### **Description of the Study**

This qualitative case study is meant to examine the perceptions of beginning secondary alternatively licensed Family and Consumer Sciences teachers in Kansas and their perception of the certification requirements, program, and overall beginning teaching experience as it relates to their teacher sense of self-efficacy.

Jennifer Snell is the Principal Investigator, a student under the direction of Dr. Kit Kacirek.

#### **Purpose of Research**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to ascertain a deeper understanding of the experiences of beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas. In this qualitative research study, the researcher explored how secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the alternative certification experience. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study:

1. How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the cognitive skills they learned in the program?
2. How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the facilitation skills they learned in the program?
3. How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe the management skills they learned in the program?
4. How do beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teachers in Kansas describe their self-efficacy in the classroom and the profession after completing their program?

#### **Procedure**

You will be asked to participate in one recorded interview and answer a series of questions relating to your experience's perception as a beginning secondary alternatively licensed FCS teacher in Kansas. A second follow up interview may be requested depending on the need. The interview will be audio recorded and identifiers removed during transcription. It will take you about 30 minutes of participation in this study. The documents will be analyzed to find patterns and trends in beginning teacher experiences that are relative to this research, and in attempting to answer the research questions.

#### **Risks and Discomforts**

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

### **Possible Benefits**

The focus of the research design was on understanding participants' perceptions of how prepared they were to enter the classroom after receiving restricted licensure. This understanding included their perceptions regarding possible gaps between what they learned and what they needed to learn, their preferred instructional modality, and their self-efficacy following the program. The benefit of participating in this research study may inform educational institutions that provide this entry into FCS Education and district induction programs. The data may also provide evidence towards better interventions to support this population. Therefore, this research may help us understand how to better serve and support skilled individuals transferring from the workforce into teaching so they can maintain a high teacher sense of self-efficacy beliefs and a desire to remain in the teaching profession.

### **Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will not use your name in the results from this study if published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations. The information collected during the study will be retained until the completion of the project.

### **Voluntary Participation Statement**

Your participation is voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which the subject is otherwise entitled

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Jennifer Snell, Principal Investigator: (620) 238-1229 or [jssnell@uark.edu](mailto:jssnell@uark.edu), or Dr. Kit Kacirek, Faculty Supervisor: (479) 575-4875 or [kitk@uark.edu](mailto:kitk@uark.edu). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Office of Research Integrity and Compliance (RIC) at (479) 575-4572 or Ro Windwalker, IRB Coordinator, Research Integrity and Compliance: [iwindwal@uark.edu](mailto:iwindwal@uark.edu) (479) 575-2208

### **Consent**

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**A copy of this form will be given to you.**  
**Consent**

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's printed name:

---

Participant's signature:

---

Date:

---

## Appendix C

### Follow-Up Email

Dear [Teacher's Name],

Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. I really appreciated learning more about your personal experiences in education, thus far. It was great to learn more about your classroom practices and relationships with your students. I particularly liked the way you took careful time to give full detail and disclosure to all of my interview questions and was able to relate them back to my research questions.

I'm looking forward to writing up the final chapters of my dissertation to include my findings towards the research questions and how they relate to your sense of self-efficacy in the classroom as a beginning secondary alternatively licensed Family and Consumer Sciences teacher in Kansas. I will keep in touch regarding its findings and completion.

Yours in Education,

Jennifer Snell

Doctoral Candidate

University of Arkansas

## Appendix D

### Interview Questions and Prompts

<b>Pseudonym:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Sex: (F)(M)</b>	<b>Years Employed as Alternatively Certified Secondary FACS Teacher</b>	<b>Date of Interview:</b>

1. Tell me about your beginning experience teaching FACS content and being instructionally prepared for each course.
2. How do you feel that you do with time management within your classroom?
3. How do you feel that you do when planning instruction, facilitating a lab, and/or managing outside and extracurricular duties?
4. How do you feel that you do with being organized?
5. How do you feel that you do with being self-aware?
6. When considering student behavior, the learning environment, learning expectations, materials, and opportunities, tell me about your beginning experience with handling these classroom management areas.
7. Were there any unrealized expectations associated with the profession you were unaware or unprepared for?
8. Were you assigned a building or CTE mentor as a beginning teacher? If yes, please tell me which one you were assigned and briefly reflect upon the experience.
9. How do you feel your institution's coursework towards obtaining your teaching license prepared you to best to fulfill your duties as a secondary FCS teacher in the following areas:
  - Student Assessment
  - Presentation Techniques
  - Curriculum Development
  - Communicating with Parents
10. What areas do you feel you lack preparation in?

11. Please describe your overall experience from transitioning from industry to the classroom.
12. What advice would you give another potential teacher looking to follow in your footsteps?

## Appendix E

### IRB Permission



**To:** Jennifer Sara Snell  
**From:** Justin R Chimka, Chair  
IRB Expedited Review  
**Date:** 11/15/2021  
**Action:** Expedited Approval  
**Action Date:** 11/15/2021  
**Protocol #:** 2110361517  
**Study Title:** Reflections of Beginning Secondary Alternatively Certified Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers in Kansas: A Case Study  
**Expiration Date:** 10/28/2022  
**Last Approval Date:**

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution's IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

**Adverse Events:** Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

**Amendments:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Kit Kacirek, Investigator