University of Nevada, Reno

Alternative Routes to Teacher Licensure:
Experiences and Perceptions of Professionals

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by
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Abstract

This qualitative study explored and described the phenomenon of alternative route to licensure (ARL) policies and programs from the perspectives of professionals who work with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. While ARL policies and programs have been a long-standing debate in teacher education reform discourse and the existing research on ARL is voluminous, there is a dearth of information on the experiences and perceptions of professionals who work with ARL policies and programs and the integrated work they do implementing the wide array of teacher policies that exist to support having a high-quality teacher in every K–12 classroom. This study provided opportunity for reflection and information sharing through an assemblage of narrative conceptualizations towards ARL policy and program developments. Interview data was used to analyze and interpret the participants’ individual and collective accounts. Six participants were chosen for their intimate knowledge and experience with ARL, and their willingness to participate in this iterative research process. The study was informed and guided by the framework of research as historically situated social practice (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a) and examined ARL as a phenomenon integrated with social, cultural, and institutional factors. The results showed that the participants’ shared ideological frameworks. They saw ARL as an emergent and transitional measure to attract more teachers into the profession; they shared the idea that ARL was a tool for attracting and retaining second career professionals and unemployed graduates into teaching; and their accounts reflected a need for more data and data systems to support decision making around ARL programming. The results also culminated as an assemblage of the participants’
suggestions towards ARL policy and program improvements. The study contributed to the discourse on teacher policies and provided valuable information and direction towards meaningful understandings and developments for ARL policy and program stakeholders.

*Keywords*: alternative route to teacher licensure, alternative teacher certification, educators’ perspectives
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Alternative Route to Teacher Licensure (ARL) programs are a long standing, controversial aspect of modern teacher preparation and recruitment and the focus of immense amounts of research in teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a). Despite the availability of vast amounts of information on ARL, the discourse on the topic continues to dig deeply into the foundations of education; it probes into the ontological and epistemological foundations of modern education to get to the heart of why and how ARL has evolved as such a controversial topic of interest (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a).

To contribute to this important discourse, this study examined the phenomenon of ARL through the perspectives of educators and educational administrators who work with ARL. As ARL policies continue to evolve and ARL programs proliferate, research was needed to continually expand and improve understandings of ARL. This study filled that need by probing into the lived experiences of professionals who work with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes to illuminate ARL as it was perceived by those who have in-depth experience with ARL policies and programs. It contributed to the discourse and knowledge base on the current developments of ARL, illustrated the complex nature of ARL, created opportunity for professionals to collaborate and share information, and highlighted the participants’ ideas towards improving ARL policy utilization and program improvement.

Background of the Study

Alternative Route to Teacher Licensure (ARL) programs are part of a modern educational reform movement enacted in the United States (U.S.), extending almost
globally over the last three decades (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2006; Connell, 2013; Feistritzer, 2008; Fraser, 2007; Tucker, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2004), and intensifying in the U.S. with the convergence of increased federal and state government interest in teacher workforce policy with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2002 and The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in 2009 (Superfine, Gottlieb, & Smylie, 2012).

ARL is best defined as an opening in the point of entry for a certified teacher to enter the classroom as the teacher of record. This opening in the point of entry for certification may be viewed as the regulatory process of increasing the number of qualified teachers by decreasing the opportunity costs related to becoming a teacher (Rice, Roellke, Sparks, & Kolbe, 2009; Ronfeldt, Schwarts, & Jacob, 2014). Under traditional routes to teacher licensure in the U.S., state mandated methodological and pedagogical coursework were taken prior to being offered a contracted position as a classroom teacher (Fraser, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Under ARL programs and policies, teachers were often contracted to perform as the teacher of record prior to completing the full spectrum of methodological and pedagogical coursework required by former state mandates and traditional college and university based teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Feistritzer, 2008; Fraser, 2007).

ARL programs were designed to be attractive to individuals who may have financial obligations. Individuals with financial obligations may be less able to spend years going back to school to retrain for a new career; as such, ARL desirability was fostered by circumventing the completion of the traditional pattern of teacher education coursework prior to obtaining a teaching position, not requiring an unpaid student
teaching placement supervised by an experienced teacher, and offering individuals quick access to the salary and benefits allocated to classroom teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

One of the primary reasons for the development of ARL programs was to fulfill the need for additional teachers (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2009). According to Fraser (2007), the demand for teachers has historically been greater than what the traditional routes of normal schools, colleges, and teachers’ academies could supply. The teacher labor market is highly complex, recurrent, and responsive to movements in the economy (Education Commission of the States, 2016). Recently in the U.S., the percentage of public high schools reporting staffing difficulties in hard to fill content areas dropped (Malkus, Hoyer, & Sparks, 2015). Elementary schools nationally had the lowest percentage of teacher vacancies and experienced greater decreases in teacher vacancies than high schools (Malkus et al., 2015). Mathematics and special education were the most difficult-to-staff content areas, and in some years, physical sciences, foreign languages, biological sciences, and life sciences had teaching vacancies that were comparable to special education (Malkus et al., 2015). Overall, the number of difficult-to-staff schools and number of difficult-to-fill content areas were declining, with school characteristics such as rural schools, certain geographic areas, schools serving minority populations, and schools serving low income families, undergoing the most significant staffing challenges (Malkus et al., 2015). The Hamilton Project (2017), an economic growth initiative by the Brookings Institution think tank, contended that the recurrent nature and longevity of teacher shortages indicated that current public policies were inadequate to deal with
current teacher labor market issues. Despite overall decline in teacher vacancies (Malkus et al., 2015), need for improvements in teacher recruitment and retention policies still exist (Hamilton Project, 2017).

International economic competitiveness and the preparation of students for the global knowledge economy are the ideological core of ARL reform movements, with “improving teacher quality as the most important policy lever” (Akiba, 2017, p. 153). These educational reforms provide a market orientation and human capital management framework to pedagogy and educational policy; thus, promulgating a culture of data based decision making and an emphasis on teacher quality and accountability, as well as other educational consumer choice mechanisms and diversification systems developed to facilitate the production and availability of education services to stimulate competition and innovation in the education world, including the teacher preparation market (Akiba, 2017; Superfine et al., 2012; Zeichner, 2014).

Specifically, ARL policies expand and sometimes streamline the traditional college preparatory route into teaching by enabling alternative vendors in teacher preparation such as school districts, for profit ventures, and various forms of higher education, including traditional college and university programs, to generate varied pathways through teacher training and licensure (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Feistritzer, 2008; Fraser, 2007; Johnson, Birkeland, & Peske, 2005). Teacher education is seen by the private sector as an optional, low-cost and high-volume, market that is prime for private investment (Levine, 2010).

According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, ARL programs are just one approach to educational innovation; other
similar approaches include “public school choice, supplemental education services, charter schools, magnet schools, and alternative pathways to school leadership” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. v). Whereas traditional, college based teacher education programs meet the needs of individuals who decide early in their lives to become teachers, ARL programs are often designed around the needs of non-traditional students who may be more experienced and mature (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Examples of non-traditional students are midcareer professionals, retired military personnel, and middle-aged retirees (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Leading proponents of ARL contend that ARL programs successfully cultivate a more socially, racially, age, and gender diverse teaching force (Feistritzer, 2008). According to Roderick Paige, the U.S. Secretary of Education from 2001 to 2005, ARL programs “are not the entire solution to our nation’s teacher quality challenge. But it is an important part of the solution” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. vi).

While traditional, college and university-based teacher preparation programs still produce the most teachers and may always be the dominate route into teaching in the U.S., ARL programs are diversifying opportunities to enter the teaching profession. ARL programs allow more non-traditional students access to teacher training (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) through the provision of additional venues for recruiting, inducting, and retaining a spectrum of teachers (Connell, 2013; Fallona, & Johnson, 2017; Feistritzer, 2008). In 2012–2013, 11% of all teacher preparation program enrollees in the U.S. joined ARL programs; 5% enrolled in institutions of higher education (IHE) based ARL programs and 6% enrolled in ARL programs that were not at IHEs (U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2015). In some states, 30%
to 40% of all new teachers are hired from ARL programs and these percentages are increasing (Feistritzer, 2008).

Internationally, teacher education does not always have a historical grounding in a monolithic tradition based in colleges and universities (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). Countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Maldives (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015), South Korea, Japan (Akiba, 2017), and Canada (Walker & von Bergmann, 2013), as well as countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the Arabian Gulf (Kuehn, 2004), are also implementing ARL policies and the resource management and market orientation framework that accompany these policies (Teach for All, n.d.). Backed by intergovernmental organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank, education-economic growth models have become almost ubiquitous (Akiba, 2017). Increased empirical investigation, international data production and comparisons, and efforts in global standardization enable unprecedented levels of assessment and accountability of students, teachers, and teacher education programs (Akiba, 2017). While international standards and best practices are the political rationale behind countries borrowing education and economic policies from the west, it is unclear how the pedagogies implicit in international policy borrowing will impact localized communities, particularly those who are underserved and underrepresented in global and national policy making processes (Akiba, 2017; Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015; Kuehn, 2004; Weber, 2011).

The voluminous extant research on ARL programs underscores scholars’ interests and the global educational community’s need for information on ARL policies (Cochran-
Smith & Villegas, 2015a). Prior research documented that ARL programs have had an impact on education (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a; Connell, 2013; Feistritzer, 2008; Fraser, 2007; Humphrey & Weschler, 2007; Tucker, 2012). Many of the impacts of ARL are still emerging as subtle, social, structural, intellectual, demographic, and economic features of the development of both K–12 education and teacher preparation both in the U.S. and globally. Despite prodigious amounts of research on the topic, the impacts of ARL policies and programs remain an elusive topic with scholars coming to disparate conclusions on the advantages and disadvantages of ARL policies and programs and their outcomes.

With such fundamental concerns, ARL policies have been a subject of interest and investigation since their formal inception in the 1980s and continue to be a hot topic in teacher education research (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a; Fraser, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). Due to wide variation within and between state departments of education enactment, school district use, and program provider implementation, there is no sign of reconciliation in the discourse on ARL (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a; Rice et al., 2009). Quality teachers are one of the most significant factors to student success and a “lack of knowledge about the education production process, specifically with respect to teachers’ knowledge and skills, has limited policy makers’ ability to use qualification and associated salaries to enhance teacher quality” (Rice et al., 2009, p. 515). Despite the documented importance of teacher quality, challenges in assessment and accountability of both teachers and teacher preparation programs, and a glut of research on teacher policies and practices, public school districts continue to have unfilled teacher positions in specific contexts,
geographic settings, and subject areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b); and, ARL programs continue to be a growing supplier of U.S. public school teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a).

Part of the pedagogical scheme behind ARL programs was that a practicing teacher, as opposed to a preservice teacher, might have a more realistic understanding of classroom practices and the needs of students as learners and thus be more equipped to learn from mentorship (Hunt, 2010). As ARL teachers are working as practicing teachers and have a base of experience, they can potentially gain more skills from the advice and support of more experienced teachers and retain more of the educational strategies that they are taught than would individuals who do not have the advantage of real life classroom experience (Hunt, 2010). The downside of this idea is the concern that ARL teachers, faced with a sink or swim experience, may not persist in the profession (Hunt, 2010). Teachers who have been trained in traditional teacher preparation programs, as well as some educational researchers and research consumers, have expressed concerns about permitting people with little or no formal training in education to create a continual turnover in classroom personnel (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Hunt, 2010).

Research focusing on the integrated systems involved in implementing education policies, rather than teacher quality as an isolated entity, is needed to supplement analysis of educational reform in the global context (Akiba, 2017). In the international education policy discourse, how educators and administrators who work daily with educational reform policies in general, and teacher reform policies specifically, perceive ARL is largely unknown. Educators and administrators who work with teacher policies and who manage the functions of teacher and school leader acquisition, negotiation, preparation,
quality control, diversification, and retention, and who have experienced shifts in the point of entry for classroom teachers on an intimate level, should be brought into the discourse.

This study was designed to expand understandings of how educators and administrators who work with ARL policies, through teacher acquisition and training systems, experience ARL. Under the current, historically situated and sociopolitical constructs of their professional positions and personal understandings, this study explored ARL from unique vantage points. Having insight on how educational professionals view ARL provides educational research consumers, future teachers, teacher preparation program faculty and administrators, school districts personnel, and policy makers, with rich data to inform decision making.

**Purpose of the Study**

As ARL policies continue to evolve and programs proliferate, it was important to uncover the insights and recommendations of professionals who have in-depth experience with teacher acquisition and preparation policies and programs and describe their lived experiences and relationships with ARL. This study examined the phenomenon of ARL through the perspectives of professionals who work closely with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes to expand and improve understandings and implementation of ARL policies and programming. In addition to adding to the knowledge base of ARL, this study provided opportunities for the participants and the researcher to reflect on and compile ideas towards improving the use of ARL policies and implementation of programs. Accordingly, the research questions explored in this study were:
1. How do professionals who work with ARL policies and programs perceive ARL?
   a. How did they first learn about ARL?
   b. How do they view their roles and responsibilities in relationship to making decisions about using ARL policies or implementing ARL programs?
   c. What are their beliefs about ARL?

2. Should any changes be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs? And, if so, why and how should those changes in ARL policies or program implementation be made?

Definition of Terms

Assemblage: a form of data collection and analysis (not measuring or categorizing information, targeting variables, or triangulation) representing a complex, multilayered collection of accounts.

Complexity: the idea that a phenomenon may have multiple, interacting parts and that those emerging parts may culminate into something greater than the sum of the parts.

Education-economic growth model: an education reform ideology (not self-governance or social justice reform ideology) focused on economic growth whereby education is used to transform an industrial economy into a knowledge economy through information management and technological innovation.

Historicism: describing social and cultural phenomenon as lived experiences to learn about the past for the benefit of the future.

Intersectionality: a conceptual framework that recognizes the interconnected nature of social positions, particularly regarding social or institutional power.
Knowledge economy: an economic system using information, predominately through technology, to generate value (not the industrial economy that used the means of production to generate value).

Narrative inquiry: to incite and use biographical stories as tool for empirical study to transfer or share representations of the experiences and perspectives of individuals as knowledge. It centers interactional process, participant and researcher voice, intersubjectivity, and interpretive authority as empirical practice.

Neoliberal: a political ideology (not socialist planning) in favor of reduction in government spending to increase the role of the private sector, market economics, free trade, deregulation, and austerity.

Positionality: the idea that location, perspective, and values, influence how individuals understand the world and how position reflects particular places and spaces and therefore challenges the concept of value-free understandings.

Delimitations

During the literature review for this study, the researcher came to understand the conflict on ARL as a debate on the nature and purpose of education itself. To probe into the depth of the phenomena of ARL and illuminate the lived experiences and relationships of the participants, the researcher chose interviews as the method of data collection. There are countless professionals who work with ARL policies and programs; however, the study was designed to give voice to only a few professionals with working knowledge of ARL. It was not designed to provide a comprehensive perspective on all educators or administrators’ perceptions on ARL. The researcher sought in-depth
perspectives, over broad generalities, and therefore chose to spend more time interviewing fewer participants to arrive at deeper and more nuanced understandings.

No currently practicing classroom teachers were interviewed for this study. Both traditionally trained and ARL classroom teachers have interesting perspectives on ARL; however, many other studies have examined classroom teacher perspectives and experiences with ARL. The researcher chose to interview individuals who had professional involvement with ARL policies or program implementation to access a more executive or metacognitive perspective of ARL. Most classroom teachers would not have extensive experience with ARL policy decision-making or ARL program implementation. This study focused on the insights and recommendations of professionals with intimate knowledge, depth of understanding, and extensive experience with ARL policies and programs.

While readers may be interested in the characteristics of the location of the study, this study was intentionally not attentive to site specific data. The reason for this delimitation was twofold: (a) Concealing site specific data was necessary to protect the anonymity of the participants and their institutional settings, and (b) this study sought detailed particulars of the participants’ views of their lived experiences. Characteristics of the participants’ experiences, and portrayal of those experiences, as they are understood by the participants were the empirical material and units of analysis for this study. The location of the study site or its characteristics were not used as a source of evidence, nor did they bear directly on the study outcomes.

Organization of the Study
This chapter introduced the topic of ARL. It provided contextual and background information and identified the need for increasing understandings of the perspectives of professionals who work with ARL policies and programs. It discussed the research goals as illustrating how educators and administrators experience ARL, expanding knowledge about ARL as a complex system, and building recommendations for ways to improve ARL policy utilization and program implementation. Additionally, Chapter I established the research questions, defined terms, and concluded with a discussion of the delimitations of the study.

Chapter II provides a review of the relevant literature and research on ARL to situate the study within the broader framework of research on teacher acquisition, preparation, and retention. Specific topics related to ARL in the review of research include the professionalization versus deregulation debate, accountability and effectiveness, the knowledge economy, and equity and diversity. Chapter III presents the study’s qualitative research design, the method of choosing participants, the data collection technique, and data analysis procedures. Chapter IV outlines the study’s results. In the final chapter, the author provides a discussion of the results, relates the current study to previous research, discusses implications and recommendations for ARL policy and program improvements, and makes suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the first section begins by describing how the literature search was conducted and organized. The next section provides a brief review of pertinent literature discussing the historical information necessary for understanding ARL policies and programs. The author then describes the literature around the general debate in teacher education on deregulation versus professionalization. The following section moves from the general debate in the literature to the more specific topics involving the research on ARL around accountability and effectiveness policies, research on how ARL is related to preparation for the knowledge economy, and research on ARL and teacher preparation for equity and diversity. Lastly, the researcher articulates how this literature review informed and guided this dissertation study through the theoretical framework of research as a historically situated social practice.

Conducting and Organizing the Literature Review

As this study examined ARL as it relates to educators and administrators who work with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes, the literature review began with numerous online searches in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Education Research Complete database using descriptors for ARL such as “alternative route to licensure programs,” “alternative teacher credentialing,” “fast track teacher preparation programs” and “alternative teacher credentialing programs.” An online search of ProQuest Dissertations and Theses databases using the same search terms listed above was also conducted.

Special attention was given to ARL studies that pertained to teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. Through this
broad online search, a metanalysis conducted by Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2016) was revealed identifying three primary areas of research in teacher preparation: (1) research on accountability and effectiveness policies; (2) research on preparation for the knowledge economy; and (3) research on teacher preparation for equity and diversity. Three sections of this literature review were organized around Cochran-Smith’s (2016) metanalysis results. The author used the Boolean operator of “and” to narrow the search. Using “and” combined with the search terms listed above with “assessment and accountability,” “knowledge economy,” and “equity and diversity” produced research results containing both terms. The author discussed a conceptual framework by Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) and how these three broad areas of study tie into the perceptions of professionals who work with ARL through their social practices, further in the last section in Chapter II.

Most of the literature reviewed for this study was peer-reviewed research that was conducted between 2001 and 2017. As the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was pivotal in many of the educational reform measures discussed in the literature review for this study, the literature search was focused on research conducted after 2001. Such a proliferation of research was available on ARL that the researcher was able to selectively choose research that was also conducted after NCLB’s proceeding legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). Accordingly, empirical research conducted between 2015 and 2018 was given preferential attention, with some exceptions of older literature providing potent examples, or rich, historical, or contextual background information.
Research from both the U.S. and international studies was included in the literature review for this study. This was appropriate given that numerous articles tied ARL policies and practices in the U.S. to international teacher preparation policies and practices (Blumenreich, & Gupta, 2015; Connell, 2013; Exley, 2014; Friedrich, Walter, & Colmenaries, 2015; Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017; Kuehn, 20014; Park & Byur, 2015; Tucker, 2012; Weber, 2011). How global perspectives of the knowledge economy, human resource management, education-economic growth models, and cross-national differences in teacher policy reforms are related to ARL were discussed in detail later in Chapter II. These multinational studies and global perspectives were included to provide accurate context and to depict the full extent of the emergent social, economic, and political forces influencing the development of ARL.

A graphic representation of the areas of literature that form the conceptualization of this literature review process is presented in Figure 1.
Situating ARL within the historical and political context of teacher education: The professionalism versus deregulation debate

Framing ARL research within teacher preparation research
- Accountability and effectiveness
- Preparation for the knowledge economy
- Teacher preparation for equity and diversity

Informing and guiding the need to illuminate the perspectives of professionals who work with ARL to deepen understandings and engage with the phenomena of ARL

Figure 1. Conceptualization of the organization of literature reviewed for this study. This figure depicts the process of moving from a general understanding of ARL to specific branches and sub-areas within teacher education as the structure for the organization of the literature review for this study.
Historical Information

ARL policies and programs play a complex role in the development of education reform involving teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. Understanding what an ARL program is requires an understanding of what traditional teacher preparation is, and how both traditional and alternative teacher education programs have evolved (Fraser, 2007). This section of the literature review discusses pertinent work depicting the historical information necessary for understanding ARL policies and programs.

ARL is a state-level, flexible form of teacher recruitment and preparation and as such, each state governs their own regulations around ARL (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). ARL programs are extremely diverse in their structure, propose, and outcomes (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Humphery, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008; Morettini, 2014) and come in a variety of forms, from IHE sponsored educational programs to private, independent teacher preparation programs sponsored by venture capitalists and the U.S. Department of Education (Zeichner, 2016). ARL programs that operate and provide teacher education coursework under their own authority are known as autonomous programs (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014), in contrast to teacher preparation programs that are part of public, state institutions. Some ARL programs are sponsored by school districts (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008) and other ARL programs are structured through IHE or independent teacher preparation program partnerships coupled with district recruitment programs or state level initiatives (Zeichner, 2016). ARLs may be nonprofit or private organizations or state or local government agencies (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Many ARL programs are structurally identical to
traditional teacher education programs, are managed by IHEs, and differ only in prerequisites prior to licensure (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014).

Similarly, ARL programs can be defined by their entry type. Some programs have lateral entry offering qualified individuals with a bachelor’s degree the opportunity to teach before any coursework in methods or pedagogy is taken (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teachers in a lateral program have a specified time to take coursework and meet standard licensure requirements (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Some states allow alternatively licensed teachers three years to meet standard licensure requirements. Other ARL programs have specialized entry types where students enter an ARL program, take some coursework, and concurrently teach under program guidance and guidelines while completing the specialized ARL program requirements (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

Since the 1950s, individual states in the U.S. approved IHE based teacher preparation programs; and generally, IHE faculty determined the program requirements within the parameters of state statutes (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Fraser, 2007). After successfully completing a state approved program, a student was eligible for a credential to teach in a public school in that state (Fraser, 2007). Since the 1980s, other types of ARL programs have evolved and it is no longer specified who determines program requirements within the parameters of state statutes.

ARL programs typically recruit, prepare, and certify individuals to teach (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2015a) and commonly require a screening process for entry, such as the passing of teacher licensure exams, interviews with program representatives, or demonstration of the mastery of content subject matter (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). ARL programs have generally provided professional
development in education foundations and methodologies, generally through coursework, while the alternatively licensed individual was concurrently gaining experience as a practicing teacher (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008). Because most ARL programs require candidates to have a degree, ARL programs tend to focus less on area specific subject content and focus more on pedagogy and practice (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a).

In 2015, about a third of all teacher preparation programs in the U.S. were ARLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a). Of all teacher preparation programs, about 20% were IHE based and about 10% were not IHE based (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). While all states “claim to offer prospective teachers some form of alternative routes into the classroom” (Greenberg et al., 2014, p. 1), there were three states that did not offer ARL programs—Ohio, North Dakota, and Wyoming—all other 47 states and most U.S. jurisdictions had ARL programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a).

Globally, ARL programs spanned 47 countries including Afghanistan, Argentina, Cambodia, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ghana, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Qatar, Sweden, Uganda, and Vietnam (Teach for All, n.d.) with 83,000 participants and 56,000 alumni (Teach for All, n.d.). Teach For America (TFA) alone represented about 13% of all ARL programs in the U.S., producing about 5,500 teachers annually, which was about 2.6% of the teacher production in the U.S. (Greenberg et al., 2014).

**Deregulation Versus Professionalization**

The discourse on ARL, at its broadest, was an ontological and epistemological debate regarding the nature and purpose of education. This debate situated ARL within
the historical and political context of education by exemplifying how the different understandings of ARL have developed. On the deregulation side of the debate, it was believed that the positive outcomes of education should be students’ knowledge, as defined by students’ standardized test scores, so that teachers, parents, administrators, policy makers, and tax payers in general could see tangible results from investments in education. In this line of thinking, schools, teachers, and students should be held accountable for their knowledge delivery and acquisition through results-based accountability systems (Zeichner, 2014).

On the professionalization side of the debate, it was believed that the purpose of education ought to be positive impacts on students’ learning. Following this line of thinking students’ test scores played a formative role in understanding the process of a student’s learning, but the performance outcomes of both students and teachers was what mattered most (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Demonstration of effective teaching and learning were construed to be the most important outcomes of education (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015).

This section on deregulation versus professionalization unfolds these divergent epistemological stances on the purpose of education to situate ARL within the historical and political context of education reform. This section also describes the work and ontological rationale of two primary voices in the discourse on ARL, Emily Feistritzer for deregulation, and Linda Darling-Hammond for professionalization.

**Innovation and competition.** The concept of deregulation in education was founded by the idea that civil society and social good was produced through innovation, freedom, and experimentation (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015b). In the case of ARL,
those who are proponents of education reform towards deregulation believed that the way to get more talented teachers was to eliminate barriers into the teaching profession (Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Zeichner, 2014). Diversifying routes into teaching created competition, innovation, and eliminated the monopoly that colleges and universities have held over the preparation of teachers. From this perspective, deregulatory educational reform policies allowed more creative innovations and more diverse ideology into education. ARL as a deregulatory reform policy allowed more people, and a more diverse population, access into the teaching profession (Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Zeichner, 2014).

Deregulation of teacher education was tied to standardized testing results by the idea that local district and school administrators, as opposed to college and university faculty, should make decisions about who may enter the teaching profession (Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Zeichner, 2014). Standardized test scores and value-added results-based accountability systems provided the structure to ensure teachers were teaching and students were learning (Zeichner, 2014). Test scores provided evidence that teachers were educating students and that schools were hiring good teachers (Zeichner, 2014). The argument for deregulation supported flexibility and ingenuity towards widening the pathways into teaching and emphasized the importance of standardized test scores as the most important outcome. This stance was focused on measurable and demonstrable results. It supported the simplification of teacher hiring processes and assumed that knowledge of pedagogy was not necessary to enter the classroom (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). It held schools, teachers, and students accountable for the outcomes of
education, and embraced the idea that experience and mentorship in the classroom cultivated teachers most capable of producing the desired outcomes.

Deregulation in education was supported by conservative critics of education who wanted to reduce costs and investments in public education while increasing performance outcomes and productivity (Zeichner, 2014). Both the Bush administration and the Obama administration supported deregulation of education. Examples of deregulatory funding were federal support of the *New Teacher Project*, funding for *Teach for America*, and funding for the *Boston Teacher Residency Programme* and *Race to the Top* (Zeichner, 2014). Deregulation was also supported by heavy philanthropic investment, lobbying, and powerful boards and foundations with thinktanks producing targeted research. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) was one example. NCTQ contended that the research supporting the efficacy of teacher preparation was selective, outdated, technically unsound, and used unstandardized measures. From this perspective, teacher preparation mattered less than experience and mentorship; student learning was not associated with inputs such as pedagogical or methodological coursework, the level of education of the teacher, or the degrees a teacher had earned (Zeichner, 2014). Teacher training “should be very brief and take place mainly on the job” (Zeichner, 2014, p. 552).

Emily Feistritzer, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TEACH-NOW and founder and CEO of the National Center for Education Information, has been a figure head and strong voice in the decentralization of education discourse. She wrote extensively about the potential and benefits of ARL programs to revolutionize teacher preparation (Feistritzer, 2008). Feistritzer has written 45 books on education, many of which advocate for ARL programs as a critical component of education reform to
diversify the teacher workforce and end the monopoly of college-based teacher preparation (Education Writers Association, n.d.). Feistritzer collected and published mass amounts of data on ARL, mainly documenting the quantity and characteristics of ARL teachers and programs. She espoused the merits of deregulation, competition, innovation, and diversification in education.

Much of Feistritzer’s work was descriptive, quantitative research that exemplified her positivist ontology. Her focus was on the outward, objective demonstration of teacher market deficiencies. She showed that ARL programs contributed needed teachers to the teacher labor market and helped fill teacher vacancies across the U.S. (Feistritzer & Harr, 2008; Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2009). She documented how ARL programs changed long standing traditions in IHE run teacher education by building connections with the human resource (HR) offices of high-need districts. As a tenant of ARL organizational structure, the IHE and school district connection was much stronger than IHEs had historically achieved (Feistritzer & Harr, 2008; Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, 2009). Targeting teachers from minority populations (Ramirez, 2009) and teachers to serve students in high-need communities with low socioeconomic status, Feistritzer (2008) reported that ARL programs were diversifying the education field and spreading teacher talent more equitably (Feistritzer, 2008).

**Learning centered relationships.** The concept of professionalization in education was founded on the idea that the teacher was the most important factor in student learning (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). From this perspective, the teacher’s knowledge and expertise heavily influence the students’ learning experience. Proponents of professionalization in education preferred rigorous and complex definitions of quality
teaching, over single measures such as students’ standardized test scores. Professional regulation, and a push for autonomy and respect within the teacher education profession, was preferred over political regulation (Cochran-Smith, & Villegas, 2015; Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Zeichner, 2014).

Organizations such as National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the National Education Association (NEA), and American Educational Research Association (AERA) support high standards for teacher development to enhance the professional learning experiences of teachers across the continuum of a teacher’s career (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Private foundations, such as the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation, have also backed the professionalization in education reform movement with funding to improve the quality of teacher education in the U.S. (Zeichner, 2014). The Teachers for a New Era project was a teacher education reform movement which focused more than 60 million dollars to maintain teaching as an academically founded clinical practice (Zeichner, 2014).

The focus from advocates of professionalization was on the demonstration of teaching performances that engaged all students in learning (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Professionalization ideology imbued a highly skilled teacher workforce with specific teacher dispositions and attitudes regarding students and student learning and equipped teachers with knowledge and skills for effective teaching through self-reflective learning. It encouraged teachers to think systematically and critically about teaching practices, collaboration with families and communities, and prioritized the development
of democratic learning environments and cooperative learning relationships (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015).

Linda Darling-Hammond has been a voice in the discourse towards the professionalization of teaching. Darling-Hammond was Professor Emeritus at the Stanford Graduate School of Education, Faculty Director of the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, President and CEO of the Learning Policy Institute, past president of the American Educational Research Association, and former executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (Learning Policy Institute, n.d.). Darling-Hammond consulted with local, state, and federal agencies, including serving as leader of the Obama presidential education policy transition team (Learning Policy Institute, n.d.). She was a critic of ARL policy early in the ARL debate and has continued to advocate for full training and licensure for teachers prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record. Darling-Hammond’s areas of research and publication included deeper learning, accountability and improvement, educator quality, equitable resources and access, and The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (Learning Policy Institute, n.d.).

Darling-Hammond’s research contended that there was risk involved with putting unprepared teachers into classrooms as the teacher of record (Darling-Hammond, 2007). She described how the achievement gap in the U.S. was widened by inexperienced teachers who were not fully prepared with skills in effective instruction or knowledge about teaching English-language learners or teaching students with disabilities (Darling-Hammond, 2007). She showed how teachers who were not fully equipped with a background in pedagogy and methodologies often did not persist in the teaching
profession and thus, increased instability in challenged school communities (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Although Darling-Hammond has published an extensive amount of empirical research, much of her research was theoretical in nature and depicts her holistic, constructivist ontology.

Both Feistritzer and Darling-Hammond were integral in the discourse and evolution of ARL in the 1980s and continue to be cited in literature. Among many other scholars, Feistritzer and Darling-Hammond contributed to understandings of deregulation and professionalization in education and the controversial questions spurred by teacher policy reforms such as ARL.

Situated within the broad understanding of ARL as framed within the debate of deregulation versus professionalization of education, the following sections of this chapter look more specifically at the research within teacher preparation on accountability and effectiveness policies, preparation for the knowledge economy, and teacher preparation for equity and diversity.

**Accountability and Effectiveness**

Many countries around the world have implemented educational reforms targeting teacher education and certification, and teacher evaluation and compensation (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017). Many of these reform measures were geared towards improving teachers and teaching through accountability and effectiveness in teacher preparation with policies influencing the recruitment and selection of teachers, accreditation and monitoring of teacher quality, and licensing regulations (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017). Who should be accountable for education effectiveness and quality teaching continues to be a matter of political concern. If the desirability of teaching as a career was held as
prominent, accountability would likely be placed on governments to increase the wages and working conditions of teachers relative to other professions (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017). Governments, however, would likely prefer to have accountability for quality teachers placed on teacher education providers, through more stringent program assessments and accreditation measures (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017).

There are mixed results regarding the effectiveness of teachers prepared through different teacher preparation pathways (Boyd et al., 2009; Fallona & Johnson, 2017), with broad variability within and among programs tending to defy generalization (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014; Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). Teacher effectiveness, as with most domains of educational research, has its own set of assumptions regarding the purpose of education (Gitomer & Bell, 2016). These assumptions guide conceptualizations of effective teaching and learning, as well as the education systems that support the educational practitioners’ craft. Teacher performance may not be associated with teacher training preparation routes at all (Sass, 2011; U.S Department of Education Institute of Education Science, 2009); when various routes into teaching were compared, the data points to meaningful differences in the student achievement gains produced by teachers from the different types of preparation programs (Boyd et al., 2009; Henry et al., 2014; Ronfeldt et al., 2014).

**Determining effectiveness.** What the purpose of education is and what the aims of teaching are or should be, and what defines teaching expertise, is continuously evolving (Russ, Sherin, & Sherin, 2016). The definition of effective teaching should be culturally, socially, and historically situated, and as such, can be approached in different ways (Russ et al., 2016). A learning systems approach, for example, frames effectiveness
and accountability as involving a conceptualization of how people learn and recognition of how the knowledge of teachers and students was absorbed, processed, and retained in relationship to prior experiences, cognition, emotional states, and environmental influences (Russ et al., 2016). Carter and Darling-Hammond (2016) asserted that teaching and learning were methodological and sociocultural processes. From the perspective of teaching and learning as complex methodological and sociocultural learning systems, multiple choice tests used to assess teachers and students can undermine higher-order thinking, analytical skills, complex problem solving, and creativity (Turnipseed & Darling-Hammond, 2015). Assessing teachers and students’ educational attainment through numbers can be contrary to their developmental needs, as well as the needs of the modern workforce (Turnipseed & Darling-Hammond, 2015). Portfolios and performance assessment that were authentic and engaged individuals in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and complex problem solving, not only reflected the work world, they were more likely to cultivate engaged talent (Turnipseed & Darling-Hammond, 2015).

The trend in U.S. education has been to assess teacher performance using criteria that were consistent with perspectives on employee evaluation practices, plus organizational and economic theory (Rowan & Raudenbush, 2016). For example, the use of rigorous, performance-based evaluations for personnel decisions or teacher compensation was a recent innovation for identifying teacher effectiveness which evolved from the 2009 U.S. Department of Education Race To the Top (RTTT) grant (Rowan & Raudenbush, 2016). Prior to RTTT, teacher evaluations were skewed toward being positive and were rarely tied to student achievement (Rowan & Raudenbush,
The use of rigorous, performance evaluations and the maturation of organizational employee evaluation systems was not unique to education (Rowan & Raudenbush, 2016). Objective measurements of workplace performance tied to incentives, pay, and advancement have been evolving in a majority of economically based enterprises in the U.S. over the last three decades (Rowan & Raudenbush, 2016).

Student growth percentile (SGP) measures were a form of teacher evaluation where estimates of student progress were attributed to a teacher’s effectiveness (Hewitt, 2015; Reddy et al., 2015). A new-generation of teacher evaluations and support systems were implemented that had multidimensional assessment measures of effectiveness, such as gains in test scores, observational data, teacher self-evaluation, and student perspective data (Hewitt, 2015; Reddy et al., 2015). More sophisticated systems of teacher evaluations produced data to objectively inform education policy so that the most equitable distribution of resources, including quality teachers and administrators, was achieved (Hewitt, 2015; Reddy, Kettler, & Kurz, 2015). Value-added models (VAMs) or SGPs that account for student and teacher variability; teacher observation rubrics that were conducted by trained, certified, or outsourced professionals; and a minimum of three performance rating categories, were recommended for teacher evaluation systems measuring teacher effectiveness (Troppe et al., 2017).

VAMs, one of the most common forms of student growth measures, used statistical analysis to estimate student growth with standardized achievement tests over time. Different strands of VAMs produced different estimates of teacher effectiveness (Hewitt, 2015). The appropriateness of VAMs and which models should be used has been under scholarly review (Hewitt, 2015). Students were not randomly assigned to schools
and classrooms and sorting bias likely existed; therefore, VAMs were most effectually used with longitudinal, multiyear data (Hewitt, 2015). Spillage, or how teachers in untested content areas affected student learning and persistence and decay of that learning, meaning how long a teacher’s influence may have lasted or not, were difficult to account for statistically (Hewitt, 2015). Non-teacher influence, such as student background, school culture, and leadership were also technical considerations that were a challenge to account for using statistical methods (Hewitt, 2015). VAMs estimates were relatively unstable between different types of standardized tests, from year to year, content area to content area, or from one class period to another (Hewitt, 2015). These technical challenges had implications for teacher accountability policies in both what measures were selected and in how they were used, particularly for high stakes decision making (Hewitt, 2015).

Studies using VAMs also had mixed results regarding the effectiveness of ARL teachers. Some studies showed that the most effective teachers were those who were fully licensed and educated in their content areas and pedagogy (Dee & Cohodes, 2008; Easton-Brooks & Davis, 2009) and that teachers who operated with temporary or probationary certification or with alternative certification produced lower student achievement gains (Easton-Brooks & Davis, 2009). Although these studies showed greater VAM student achievement gains from traditionally trained and fully licensed teachers, they did not show greater student engagement (Dee & Cohodes, 2008).

Sass (2011) compared ARL teachers to traditional teachers using VAMs to assess student achievement gains. Based on the designs of the ARL programs in the study, most ARL teachers showed greater entry qualification than the traditional college prepared
teachers. ARL programs with little or no coursework produced teachers with the greatest positive effects on student achievement. Sass (2011) determined that additional coursework in education did little to contribute to VAM student achievement gains, and that any gains that occurred from education coursework were offset by the innate abilities of talented individuals.

With such dichotomous conclusions in the research, it was determined that ARL programs were not the best unit of analysis for the evaluation of teacher effectiveness (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a; Humphrey & Weschler, 2007; Kane et al., 2008). Studies evaluating the effectiveness of subgroups or individuals within ARL who had similar backgrounds, experiences, or school settings proved to be more useful (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a; Humphrey & Weschler, 2007; Kane et al., 2008). The effect of a teacher preparation program on a teacher’s ability to produce student achievement gains should not be oversimplified and was only evident when viewed in light of: (a) the backgrounds and experiences that ARL teachers had prior to beginning an ARL teacher program; (b) the nature and experiences teachers had with their preparation programs; and (c) the contexts, administration, resources, and cultures of their school placements (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a).

**Partnerships and support structures.** Another aspect of accountability and effectiveness was how teachers entering through ARL programs were supported in the classroom. Dunlap, Brister, Davidson, and Starrett (2011) examined conflicting processes around novice, alternatively credentialed teacher support from an ARL program itself, the school context where the teacher was placed, and the background and experience of the ARL teachers. Although ARL teachers were initially attracted to ARL programs due to
the nontraditional approach and fast track into the classroom, they were surprised by the workload and demands of fulltime teaching and wished they had additional preservice and practicum experience (Casey et al., 2011). ARL teachers had challenges in time management, knowledge of teaching strategies and curriculum, implementation and differentiation of instruction, lesson planning, and classroom management (Casey et al., 2011). Administrators were often asked to provide supports for structural challenges such as teamwork, parental involvement, and emotional support systems, but the ARL teacher participants reported they did not ask for support with other challenges such as understanding cultural differences, legal issues, or campus expectations (Casey et al., 2011). There was concern that “Without effective support systems, the teachers fail or leave creating constant turnover” (Casey et al., 2011, p. 302); ARL programs could exacerbate the very issues ARL policies were designed to alleviate (Casey et al., 2011; Dunlap et al., 2011).

Forming partnerships between state and district administrators and IHE was a focus for those trying to understand teacher staffing issues and policy responses (Rice et al., 2009). District and IHE partnerships were a tenant of many ARL programs throughout the nation and have demonstrated success in streamlining the preservice and in-service professional development opportunities for educators (Rice et al., 2009). According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement, most ARL programs were location specific partnerships designed around the recruitment, selection, preservice training, support, and mentorship needs of local educational communities (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) and many of these partnerships were
forged between IHE and school districts through action research and teacher staffing policy implementation (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014; Stairs, 2010).

Examples of productive IHE and school district partnerships were extant in the literature (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014; Stairs, 2010). Partnerships that expand the teacher pool with adequately qualified teachers who persisted in the teaching field constituted productivity (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014; Stairs, 2010). The research on IHE and district partnerships provided models for collaborative work and suggested that not only was research a component of healthy district partnerships, but that more research needed to be done in the domain of IHE school district partnerships (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014). One aspect of suggested study was how middle managers in these technical structures, mainly school district administrators and university faculty, interact and share technical expertise and capacities (Baker, 2011).

**Teacher policies and hiring practices.** With the complexities and multidimensional fields of teacher staffing such as expanding the pool of qualified teachers, recruitment, distribution, and retention, policies developed in many states in the U.S. offer integrated strategies for staffing solutions (Rice et al., 2009). Teacher policies that use several different modes of approach were used by states, districts, and schools to achieve teacher productivity, equity, and adequacy (Rice et al., 2009). ARL, as an avenue into the teaching profession, was only one of five reform policy strategies used; other approaches were policy reforms in economic incentives, working conditions, professional development opportunities, and hiring process reforms such as accepting out of state credentials or offering experienced teachers tenure or years of service reciprocity (Rice et al., 2009). Considering the intricate, multifaceted reforms involving educational
personnel, Rice et al. (2009) documented that “education leaders at all levels of the system are involved in some way with alternative certification programs” (pp. 531–532).

With a cost of both billions of dollars and student academic well-being, teacher turnover was shown to be a negatively impacting issue in the U.S. (Lee, Patterson, & Vega, 2011; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). In 2011, the Gates Foundation examined a wide variety of factors involved in teacher attrition and retention such as leadership, collaboration, professional development, safety and environment, and curriculum and resources (Zhang & Zeller, 2016); however, studies linking the method of preparation’s impact to attrition or retention have been scarce (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011) and extant research had not produced conclusive results (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Principal and administrative support, mentorship and counseling, collegiality, success with students, and teacher pay, were shown to influence teacher retention and attrition (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Access to high-quality curriculum and teaching resources, buildings that were safe and well maintained, and relevant professional development opportunities were indicated as even more influential than pay in a teacher’s decision to persist in or terminate his or her employment (Smollin, 2011). The teacher’s perceived support from their school and district, their personal backgrounds and competency knowledge, and their students’ backgrounds and cultures were also factors impacting teacher retention and attrition (Lee et al., 2011).

Zhang and Zeller (2016) showed that ARL teachers had similar short-term retention rates to traditionally trained teachers, but that long-term retention rates were worse for ARL teachers. The long-term lack of persistence of ARL teachers may be related to the higher placement rates of ARL teachers in hard to fill, disadvantaged school
communities (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teachers cited student behavior, school environment, and inadequate supports as reasons for leaving teaching (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Teachers attending traditional teacher preparation programs may have had more experience with the school environment and thus had an easier time finding teaching positions in schools that were similar in structure and organizational culture to their student teaching host school or their university (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Due to the unique circumstances of the participants and the high variation in their ARL programs, Zhang and Zeller (2016) did not conclude that their results were generalizable.

According to Scribner and Heinen (2009), variations in ARL programs have implications. “Program variation leaves the term alternative teacher certification with little conceptual value, and challenges the utility of comparative studies and large-scale studies that treat these preparation tracks homogeneously” (Scribner & Heinen, 2009 p. 484). The central variables included the quantity of school districts ARL programs serve, the types of external partners ARL programs had and did not have, differences in the structure and procedures, and the types and quantity of field experiences that were provided by ARL programs (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Program variability should be an important distinction for researchers and policy makers (Rice et al., 2009; Scribner & Heinen, 2009; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

Scribner and Heinen’s (2009) ARL program theory analysis resulted in two program theories, the internal integration model and the external adaption model, based on how ARL programs responded to environmental and contextual factors. The internal integration model ARL programs were built around broader accountability policies facing teacher education, they were federally grant funded, built around national standards, and
focused on specific teacher shortage areas (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). The external adaption model ARL programs were based on multiple and single client approaches with a state based focus. External adaption ARL programs usually partnered with urban school districts and were often funded by philanthropic sources. The external adaption model ARL program’s use of state policies was malleable and policy ambiguities were used to create strategic flexibility and program marketability (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). One of the areas of program malleability was in field experiences where “once a teacher is a ‘teacher of record’ mentoring becomes a district responsibility” (p. 486) and thus, ARL programs were statutorily released from the expense and responsibilities of providing ARL teachers the advantage of working under qualified master mentor teachers (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). Scribner and Heinen (2009) concluded that the use of program theory analysis provided an effective tool to deepen understandings of ARL program variability and supported their assumption that ARL program complexity increases when viewed in light of environmental and contextual factors. Large-scale ARL research was limited in its use to explain and describe ARL program quality (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Powerful external partners, entrepreneurship based pressures, and a need for a continuous flow of certified teachers, provided contexts that affected ARL program cross-comparisons (Scribner & Heinen, 2009).

Countries varied considerably in the quality of overall teacher assurance arrangements, such as recruitment and selection, teacher preparation program accreditation requirements, and certification requirements (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017). Countries scoring higher on quality teacher assurance arrangements, such as China and Singapore, also had higher scores in teacher instructional and content knowledge and
student learning. Countries scoring lower on quality teacher assurance arrangements, such as Georgia and Chile, also scored lower in teacher instructional and content knowledge and student learning (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017).

Although accreditation and certification significantly influenced the production of high quality teachers, Ingvarson and Rowley (2017) concluded that without ensuring teaching salaries and status that are comparable to other professions, recruitment efforts were not likely to produce the kinds of high quality graduates that were desired. When teaching was seen as a high-status profession with societal respect, larger numbers of students desired to become teachers (Park & Byun, 2015). Park and Byun (2015) contended that status and salaries commensurate with other professions would ensure that the brightest and most talented individuals could be hired to educate the future (Park & Byun, 2015).

**The Knowledge Economy**

The knowledge economy is defined as the “production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advances, as well as rapid obsolescence” (Powell & Snellman, 2004, p. 1). Under a knowledge economy framework, intellectual capabilities, as opposed to natural resources or physical inputs, function as the primary source of value in economic production (Powell & Snellman, 2004). Examples of shifting to a knowledge economy paradigm have been measured by increases in patents and intellectual property, growth in the scope of the science and engineering workforce, and information management and knowledge distribution services as expanding industries (Powell & Snellman, 2004). The pedagogical supposition within the knowledge economy framework maintains that
student intellectual capabilities and innovation are human capital in the form of tangible and intangible business products, expertise, and production assets (Powell & Snellman, 2004).

The focus on students as potential contributors to the knowledge economy as the future stage of global economic development situated much of the research on teacher preparation generally, and ARL programs specifically, around global human capital management (HCM) and market system ideology (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Knowledge and information production and dissemination are “real, recognizable and inter-related forces at work in the modern world” (Weber, 2011, p. 2590). An HCM perspective on educational goals and desired outcomes continues with increasing economization in the education field (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015), on education policy as it relates to teaching and learning (Gitomer & Bell, 2016), and with increased funding by intergovernmental and supranational organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the World Bank (Akiba, 2017; Zeichner, 2014). Global policy borrowing and implanting was normalized within the knowledge economy paradigm (Akiba, 2017), meaning that less economically developed countries around the world mirror many educational policy decisions made by more economically developed countries, generating a dominate international paradigm of education-economic growth models. Despite the dissemination and persistence of a human resource management orientation, international comparisons, increasing standardization, market ideology, and economization in education, some scholars contest the perspective that education’s purpose should be to competitively prepare students for
the global knowledge economy (Connell, 2013; Gitomer & Bell, 2016; Powell & Snellman, 2004; Weber, 2011).

Global policy making and HCM constructs in teacher quality and effectiveness are widely accepted and were situated as foundations for major education policy documents such as Race To The Top (2015) from the U.S., Students First (2015) from Australia, and an analytical report for the European Commission The Future of European Education and Training Systems: Key Challenges and Their Implications (2008). In each of these documents, teacher quality and effectiveness were primary tenants of educational reform, with teachers positioned as the primary agents of change, and individual teacher performance predicated as the dominant factor in student achievement (Skourboumbis, 2017). The presence and continued development of ARL programs was supported by Race To The Top policy through global education reform movement ideology based on HCM data (Skourboumbis, 2017). Framing pedagogical work into scientism, with a focus on HCM, Race To The Top defined an effective teacher as one whose students achieved acceptable growth rates of at least one grade level in a school year and a highly effective teacher was one whose students achieved high growth rates of one and one-half grade levels in a school year (Skourboumbis, 2017). Standardization of educational data through testing was promoted globally so that students, teachers, programs, and schools could be compared, thus encouraging competition through educational choices with information about achievement provided to education consumers (Kuehn, 2004; Skourboumbis, 2017).

Teach For All is an example of how knowledge can be transformed into economic value through the economization of the social sphere (Friedrich, Walter, & Colmenares,
By leveraging knowledge of the social demographics of public education and the teacher preparation market, a Princeton University undergraduate thesis was turned into an international nonprofit organization comprised of a network of more than 30 ARL organizations spanning six continents, now a growing business worth millions (Friedrich et al., 2015). Exley (2014) characterized Teach For All as one of the “most successful and influential movements in global education” (para. 9).

On the Teach for All website they illustrate:

Teach For All is a growing network of over 46 independent partner organizations and a global organization that works to accelerate the network's progress.

Through the global network, partners and their teachers and alumni can share ideas and innovations across borders and adapt promising ideas in their own countries (Teach for All, n.d.).

By targeting low-resourced, underrepresented schools with high teacher turnover and low academic achievement, Teach For All used discursive practices and data, or units of information that supported modern policy decisions, with the stated intention of combating systemic and pervasive poverty, racism, sexism, and broad inequities (Friedrich et al., 2015). Teach For All recruits were employed from outside of education into teaching positions in challenged schools for two years (Friedrich et al., 2015). The recruits often moved into political positions in education or started educational technology companies. Examples of TFA recruit startup operations are Khan Academy, Kickboard, Smarter Cookie, and Edthena (Friedrich et al., 2015). Teach For All corps members serviced a global infrastructure, massive international data gathering, and were situated at the forefront of the educational data market (Friedrich et al., 2015). They used
pre- and post-intervention data to demonstrate student learning couched in “universal(izing)” language of shared problems and solutions to personalize and adapt teaching towards the necessary skills to succeed in the 21st century economy (Friedrich et al., 2015).

High profile ARL programs such as Teach For All espoused efficiency, goal-driven processes, and selectivity as primary values and many of the ARL teachers who ascribed to these competitive values were specifically recruited to teach, often temporarily, in hard to fill teaching positions in poor, urban, or rural schools, regardless of the localized understandings, knowledge of traditions of social being, or common interests of the communities in which they taught (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). For example, countries with strong oral traditions and religious cultures such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar, generated education policies aligning their primary, secondary, and tertiary education systems to HCM outcomes (Weber, 2011). As peak oil approaches and economic needs were shifting in the Arabian Gulf, Middle East and North African (MENA) countries, educating citizens who create, maintain, and use knowledge productively was seen by the World Bank, and others who were funding educational reforms, as more efficient than education based in cultural traditions or religious heritage (Weber, 2011). The pedagogical assumption was that innovation, as the “central capacity builder for nations,” functions entirely as a derivative of knowledge; specifically, information and communication technologies, biotechnology, and intellectual property can be generated without liberal studies and culturally integral responsiveness (Weber, 2011, p. 2590). Under the knowledge economy framework, brain-drain and illiteracy threaten the national prosperity of less economically developed
countries, and technical subjects such as English, science, and math supplant traditional knowledge systems (Weber, 2011).

International studies in comparative education focused on teacher quality in relationship to student outcomes (Akiba, 2017; Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015) with the typical metrics being standardized test scores (Akiba, 2017; Skourboumbis, 2017). However, when education is viewed as socially and culturally situated, the concept of student outcomes becomes less distinct (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). The need for localized examination of the purposes of education and the systems, structures, and organizations that circulate cultural values, curricula, and ways of learning are documented (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015). Scholars expressed the need for more research on how teacher policies in general, and ARL policies specifically, can provide teachers with pedagogical foundations to support the discernment of teachers’ implicit beliefs and tacit knowledge necessary for effectively working with culturally diverse children and communities in a global knowledge economy context (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015; Skourboumbis, 2017; Weber, 2011).

Equity and Diversity

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2015b), the demographic makeup of teachers in the U.S. did not match the demographic makeup of the U.S. student population. “Although the student population is increasingly diverse, the teaching force is overwhelmingly White, middle class, and monolingual English speaking” (Cochran-Smith & Villegas 2015, p.11). National data on teacher diversity in the U.S. showed that in 2011 teachers of color comprised 17% of the teacher population, while students of color were 40% of the student population; in addition, diversity grew by
3% per annum from 2011 to 2014 (Boser, 2014). Of newly hired public school teachers in 2011–2012, 80.4% were White, 7.2 % were Black, 4% were Hispanic, and 1.9 % or less were Asian, Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander (Warner-Griffin, Noel, & Tadler, 2016). In private schools, 85% of the newly hired teacher in 2011–2012 were White. In 2011–2012, 76.3% of the newly hired public school teachers were female (Warner-Griffin et al., 2016).

According to the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2012), more than 50% of children in the U.S. will be from historically racial and ethnic minority groups by 2050. Students who were from first generation immigrant families or were foreign-born were more likely to come from impoverished or limited resource backgrounds; these students often entered school linguistically disadvantaged compared to students who spoke the dominate language at home, and were less likely to fully optimize their talents and skills in schools or perform to academic standards (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016). The poverty rate in the U.S. was 12.5% in 2007, increasing to 15% in 2012 (Nasir, Scott, Trujillo, & Hernandez, 2016). Overall, this posed a national challenge to adjust the demographic of teachers to more closely match the population of students who are economically, linguistically, and culturally different than the current teacher population (Cochran-Smith & Villegas 2015).

In most states in the U.S., diversity data documented a teacher population that was unrepresentative of the student population, and in large school districts the population of people of color entering the teaching force was decreasing (Boser, 2014). While a majority of states have a significant diversity gap between teachers and students, the state in which this study takes place, ranks second from the last on the diversity index scale,
with a diversity index of 42, in contrast to the national average diversity index of 30 (Boser, 2014). The diversity index was calculated by subtracting the percentage of non-white teachers from the percentage of non-white students. In this western state, the teacher population in 2014 was 4% Black, 9% Hispanic, 6% other or two or more races, and 81% White. In contrast, the student population was 10% Black, 39% Hispanic, 12% other or two or more races, and 39% White (Boser, 2014).

The implications of the current teacher student diversity gap are stark (Boser, 2014). Both teachers and students enter classrooms with their own diverse perspectives and a “teacher’s ability to engage with their students and support students’ academic success is shaped by what teachers know about their students’ lives, their family backgrounds, and their learning needs” (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016, p. 593). Teachers who were representative of the student population functioned as role models for minority students (Boser, 2014). Teachers from the same race and ethnic backgrounds as their students also showed more knowledge of students’ cultural frameworks and were able to create more welcoming learning environments and improved student learning outcomes (Boser, 2014).

Nationally, the largest gap relative to students was with the Hispanic population (Boser, 2014). Hispanic children—mostly of Mexican origins—represent 53% of the population of children who were foreign-born in the U.S.; 41% of Hispanic children come from parents who did not have a high school diploma (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016). With 9% of the teacher population in this western state being Hispanic and 39% of the student population in this state being Hispanic (Boser, 2014), the state in which this study occurred was noted as a state that was challenged to recruit more Hispanic teachers.
Inequity was documented between students who had state certified teachers and students who had teachers with over five years of teaching experience compared to students who had teachers who were not state certified and who had less than five years of teaching experience (Rahman, Fox, Ikoma, & Gray, 2017). Approximately 90% of students in U.S. primary and secondary schools had teachers with state certification, and 75% of students had teachers with five or more years of teaching experience (Rahman et al., 2017). Rahman et al. (2017) also documented that some states faced teacher inequity for 2015 in five categories: (1) students eligible for National School Lunch Program (NSLP) had a lower percentage of state certified teachers than students who are not eligible for the NSLP; (2) eighth graders in the English Language Learning student populations had a lower percentage of state certified mathematics teachers; (3) fewer Black eighth grade students compared to White eighth grade students had a state certified reading teacher; (4) eighth grade Hispanic students had a lower percentage of teachers with more than five years of experience compared to eighth grade White students; and (5) students eligible for NSLP had a lower percentage of teachers with more than five years of teaching experience than students who were not eligible for NSLP.

There were disparate results regarding ARL programs’ abilities to attract and retain a more diverse teacher workforce (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). According to Feistritzer (2008), alternative licensure programs diversified the teaching force and supported a process for second career professionals to enter the teaching profession without the time commitments to or the costs of earning additional college degrees. The majority of research and data from the U.S. Department of Education supported this

Redding and Smith (2016) found that even if ARL programs attracted more diverse teachers, it was not clear if alternative pathways into teaching helped retain teachers from diverse backgrounds. Their research from the 2007–2008 school year suggested that even when controlling for factors that predicted higher turnover, such as school placement characteristics, early career ARL teachers had a higher turnover rate than early traditionally certified teachers. In 1999–2000, early career ARL teachers showed to have more position longevity than early career traditionally certified teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016). During the Great Recession, in 2007–2008, there was a layoff of over 100,000 teachers; this reduction may have been responsible for the differences in early career teacher turnovers (Redding & Smith, 2016).

Humphrey and Weschler (2007) established that of seven ARL programs reviewed, the programs brought in a slightly more diverse teacher population than traditional teacher education programs. The diversity criteria examined by Humphrey and Weschler (2007) included race, age, gender, education, and previous employment experience. Within the seven programs studied, African American and Hispanic individuals were recruited by ARL programs at a higher percentage than the national average of traditional teacher education program recruits (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). Men were recruited through ARL into single-subject classrooms, but not into self-contained classrooms, at a slightly higher rate than the national average of traditional teacher education programs (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). The average age of individuals recruited into teaching through ARL programs was consistent with national
averages of traditionally trained teachers, while education and previous employment experience data were varied (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007). Humphrey and Weschler (2007) also concluded that differing recruitment strategies, local community demographics, and proximity to different types of colleges accounted for the variation in diversity data of the ARL program participants.

Most ARL programs target minorities (Feistritzer, 2008; Ramirez, 2009). According to Feistritzer (2008), 97% of all ARL programs asserted that their ARL teachers served students who were in high-need communities, had low socioeconomic status, and had high minority populations. An examination of low, ethnic and racial minority teacher representation in the teacher workforce by Ramirez (2009) listed programs nationwide that actively recruited young minority students into the teaching profession. Academically motivated students who had high grade point averages, were interested in attending college or graduate school, and were ethnic and racial minorities, stated that due to the low salaries of teachers, “teaching is a profession worth considering only if other goals do not develop” (Ramirez, 2009, p. 22).

Despite research that suggested ARL programs may be able to provide a more diverse teaching population (Humphrey & Weschler, 2007; Redding & Smith, 2016), it remains unknown if ARL programs can help span the growing “cultural chasms between educators and students” (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016, p. 598). In 2007–2008, most White families in the U.S. (87%) enrolled their children in schools that had more than 50% White student enrollment; 57% of Hispanic families enrolled their children in schools with more than 50% Hispanic enrollment; and only 48% of Black families enrolled their children in schools with over 50% Black student enrollment (Nasir et al.,
2016). Despite these documented disparities, opportunity and achievement gaps were only loosely tied to teaching and learning in both educational research and in the field of K–12 teaching (Nasir et al., 2016).

Research in the three broad areas of accountability and effectiveness, the knowledge economy, and equity and diversity represented some of the competing ideas that informed the social, structural, demographic, intellectual, and economic features of the development of global society, and have provided an organizational structure for the literature related to this study. Education policies that directly influenced teacher quality and instruction were critical to the development of ARL policies (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

Viewing the complex systems involved in understanding educational policy is an important step for understanding global education reform (Akiba, 2017) and the complex issue of teacher quality and the various pathways into teaching. There is need to direct attention to the importance of a collective perspective, where teaching can be understood as a culturally situated, social enterprise (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016). Understanding ARL requires understanding the dominant pedagogical education-economic growth model as well as the other possible social, structural, demographic, and intellectual contexts of ARL (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

The last section of this literature review presents the theoretical framework of research as a historically situated social practice to help guide the study of ARL as a complex phenomenon. It presents the rational for examining the perspectives of professionals who work with ARL policies and programs and seeing their involvement
and relationships with ARL as social practice. Further, this last section of Chapter II justifies seeking the ideas and recommendations of professionals with deep understanding of ARL policy utilization and implementation geared towards program improvement. It explains why “communities in support of reform practice must extend to the administrators, who must understand the nature of the changes required so that they can provide the necessary supports” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p. 909).

**Research as Historically Situated Social Practice**

This study was designed to explore the perspectives of professionals who work with ARL policies and programs and was built on and informed by empirical and theoretical research on teacher policies regarding teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes, and on ARL program practices and partnerships. The methods used to identify and organize the literature for this study were outlined in the first section of Chapter II. The historical information necessary to understand ARL within the broad context of teacher preparation was then presented and situated the succeeding section on the debate between deregulation and professionalization. The section addressing the debate on deregulation and professionalization introduced the key researchers and described the political context and academic discourse around ARL. The following sections in Chapter II covered the specific branches of accountability and effectiveness policies, including sub-sections on how to determine effectiveness, partnerships and support structures in ARL, and policies on hiring practices. The section then reviewed the research on ARL and teacher preparation as related to educational preparation for the knowledge economy and as related to equity and diversity in education. This last section in Chapter II explains how
this dissertation study was informed and guided by the theoretical framework of research as historically situated social practice, developed by Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015a, 2015b, 2016).

The theoretical framework on research as a historically situated social practice was described as “a process wherein differently positioned researchers with diverse aims and objectives engage in multiple configurations of research practices, which emerge from and are located within complex social, historical, and political contexts” (Cochran-Smith & Villegas et al., 2016, p. 439). Cochran-Smith and Villegas et al. (2015a) contend that researchers approach their research problems and research questions from their unique positionalities, alignment with political agendas, and “differing configurations of social practice in which researchers engage” (p. 493). In this framework, social, economic, and political forces are continuously competing. These forces must be taken into consideration when analyzing data. It must be recognized that not only is research a method of producing knowledge, but the sociohistorical contexts in which the researchers are positioned affect the knowledge that is produced and how that knowledge is interpreted by others (Cochran-Smith & Villegas et al., 2016).

This dissertation study assembles data from professionals who work with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes on multiple levels, to capture their perspectives on ARL. The focus was on the description of the unique and lived experiences and relationships of the study participants to ARL, specifically probing the insights and recommendations of professionals with intimate knowledge, depth of understanding, and broad experiences to their relationships with ARL policies and programs. Additionally, this study sought the participants’ ideas around
improving ARL policy utilization and implementation towards program improvements. As recommended by Akiba (2017), the study seeks information about the integrated systems involved in applying policies, rather than ARL or teacher quality as an isolated entity. Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015a) also state:

Most of the existing research is not sufficiently powerful to substantially challenge the material conditions and social relations that reproduce inequalities and profoundly influence teaching/learning in elementary and secondary schools. We need much more research about aspects of teacher preparation and certification—conducted with many different kinds of research designs—that deeply acknowledges the impact of social, cultural, and institutional factors… (p. 391)

This dissertation study examined ARL as a phenomenon integrated with social, cultural, and institutional factors; from the perspectives and lived experiences of the professionals who work with ARL; and informed and guided by the framework of research as historically situated social practice. A complex, integral view of ARL accounted more fully for the contexts and processes of teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal. Examining ARL programs and pathways as complex phenomenon helps researchers understand how they function as complex systems (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014).

The framework of research as historically situated social practice emphasized that individuals' interests, commitments, and social and professional involvements guide the theories and perspective they adopt. The framework was informed by Bourdieu’s (1930–2002) work on the theory of practice “which conceptualized sociology as a science of
social practices situated in social spaces and defined by struggles among agents with
different resources and inclinations about how to use those resources” (Cochran-Smith &
Villegas, 2015a, p. 381). This dissertation study explored the perspectives and lived
experiences of professionals who work with ARL policies and programs to discover the
ideas, involvements, situations, and inclinations of their social practices. Social practices
include how ARL professionals view problems and questions around ARL, the
underlying assumptions that are made or the logic used to frame perceptions of ARL, as
well as identities and positionalities relative to ARL policies and practices. These kinds
of social practices are situated within competing historical, social, political and economic
forces (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a). They shape the ideologies that are assumed,
and those ideologies contribute to how the researcher and participants perceive and
implement ARL policies and programs.

Because the study participants were selected due to their in-depth knowledge of
ARL policies and programs, their positionalities and social practices gave them a unique
vantage point from which to see ARL, form opinions, and make recommendations. In
addition to exploring the participants’ lived experiences with and relationships to ARL,
this study sought the participants’ ideas and recommendations on ARL procedures and
applications. The researcher and participants not only hold highly specialized knowledge
about teacher policies, their positionalities and social practices gave them power for
agency. The researcher recognized her own intersectionality with the complex
phenomenon of ARL as well as to her study’s participants. This intersectionality
provides, as Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) suggested, a reform platform through those who
understand the nature of the changes and support structures required for effective reform.
The following chapter of this dissertation, Chapter III, describes the methods used for this study. It outlines the research design, the researcher’s background, the selection of participants, and the data collection and analysis procedures. Lastly, Chapter III identifies the limitations of the study.
CHAPTER III: METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the research method used in this dissertation study. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section addresses the research design and reiterates the research questions. The second section discusses the researcher’s background as it pertains to the study. The third section identifies the participants and the criterion used to select the participants for the study. The fourth section describes the instrumentation and procedures the researcher used for data collection. The fifth section explains the data analysis processes. Finally, in the sixth section of this chapter, the limitations and researcher’s biases are discussed.

Overall, this chapter describes how the research developed deeper understandings of ARL by inciting, compiling, and illustrating the perspectives of individuals who implement teacher recruitment, selection, preparation, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. It explains how the researcher used negotiated interview data to understand the phenomena of ARL through the meanings and interpretations that the participants ascribe to their roles, responsibilities, ideas, and beliefs about ARL. It describes how the researcher illustrated the participants’ self-narrated stories about ARL to assemble the participants’ general and particular understandings for improving the integrated work that is done to support having high-quality teachers K–12 classrooms.

Research Design

This study was exploratory and descriptive in nature and used phenomenology and narrative inquiry as the research design. The primary purpose was to examine the perspectives of professionals who work closely with ARL policies and programs, at multiple levels, to describe and deepen understandings of ARL in the context of their
professional lives. A secondary purpose of this study was to provide opportunity for ARL professionals to reflect, share information, and collaborate by compiling ideas on ARL policy utilization and implementation through the assemblage of their experiences and ideas towards policy and program developments.

During the literature review for this study, no research was found that examined how professionals who have intimate knowledge of ARL processes and programs perceive ARL. In the education policy discourse, how educators and administrators who work daily with educational reform policies in general, and teacher reform policies specifically, perceive ARL remains unknown. Akiba (2017) contended that knowledgeable professionals needed to be brought into the discourse on teacher policies and the integrated systems involved in implementing education policies, rather than teacher quality as an isolated entity.

This study used qualitative research approaches to bring the voices of ARL professionals into the discourse. The use of the qualitative design was necessary to maintain the flexibility for the research process to unfold and evolve during data collection so that new, unexpected, and increasingly sophisticated data could be brought into the empirical process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

As discussed in Chapter I, the following initial research questions were developed:

1. How do professionals who work with ARL policies and programs perceive ARL?
   a. How did they first learn about ARL?
b. How do they view their roles and responsibilities in relationship to making decisions about using ARL policies or implementing ARL programs?

c. What are their beliefs about ARL?

2. Should any changes be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs? And, if so, why and how should those changes in ARL policies or program implementation be made?

To answer the research questions, phenomenology and narrative inquiry techniques were used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. As the intent of this research was multi-faceted, the approach used to answer the research questions also took multiple forms. To examine the essence of ARL through the perspectives of professionals who have extensive experience with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes, this study used thematic patterns as units of analysis. Additionally, to incite the individual stories of the participants to facilitate the opportunity for ARL professionals to reflect and share information on ARL policy utilization and implementation through the researcher as mediator, this study placed ARL professionals’ voices, representations, and interpretive authority at the center of the empirical work. The particulars of the participants’ biographical experiences were another unit of analysis. These analysis processes are described later in this chapter.

The perspectives and recommendations of professionals who work with ARL were examined as a complex phenomenon integrated with social, cultural, and institutional settings through the theoretical and conceptual framework of research as historically situated social practice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014) as explained in Chapter II. The researcher systematically examined the perspectives and experiences of the
participants to uncover symbolic, pictorial, and relational truths of ARL while also considering the social, cultural, and institutional factors related to the participants’ ideas (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014). The researcher also engaged the participants in a dialogical process to highlight their positionalities, draw out their ideological and conceptual assumptions, and create an interactive link between the researcher and participants, “all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them” (Chase, 2005, p. 651). The research process supported reflective thinking and encouraged pedagogical strategies for teacher preparation by functioning as a stimulus, mediation tool, and interactive model for reflective learning (Chan, 2017).

The flexible design and conceptual framework of research as historically situated social practice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014) situates the research within a strategy of empirical inquiry that recognizes that “there is no such thing as value-free inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 309). The study design allowed the researcher to make her value-commitments transparent, while also making connections between the lived experiences of participants and the larger social and cultural structures of global, neoliberal times (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The use of multiple units of analysis and diversity in analytic approach aided the researcher in answering the research questions in systematic ways yet, it also cultivated different types of outcomes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and provided the study with methodological triangulation as described by Denzin (2018, as cited in Flick, 2018). Flick (2018) suggested that although methodological triangulation does not provide validity to a study, it does deliver a fuller picture of the data.
To provide the reader with a blueprint of how the researcher examined, reflected upon, illustrated, and attributed meanings to the complex phenomenon of ARL, the rest of this chapter lays out the researcher’s background and value-commitments, the selection of the participants, and the collection and analysis procedures for the different types of data.

**Researcher Background**

The researcher was a developer and administrator of an ARL program and an assistant professor with a state approved teacher licensure program culminating with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. As such, the researcher had been facilitating the placements of ARL teachers into classrooms. She initially developed relationships with the participants through her professional position, coordination of her institution’s ARL program, and the collaborative placements of students from her MAT program into student teaching placements in local school districts. Prior to the start of the study, the research had been working with new, statewide ARL policies connecting prospective teachers who had met initial ARL requirements to school district administrators who placed the MAT track ARL teachers into contracted teaching positions. Consequently, the researcher had positionalities and relationships that were entangled with the phenomenon of interest. As opposed to being an autonomous individual making sense of ARL, the researcher recognized her interconnectedness with the topic of study and the intersectionality with the positions of the research participants.

**Selection of Participants**

For this study, the researcher used purposive and criterion sampling. Six participants were chosen for their professional roles, their active relationship with the
topic of interest, and their willingness to participate in the study. The participants had to possess extensive knowledge of ARL policies and processes as they related to teacher recruitment, selection, preparation, negotiation, and retention or dismissal. As shown in Table 1, three participants were chosen from IHEs and three participants were chosen from K–12 education systems. The two participants from IHEs worked in academic administration as either Deans, Associate Deans, or Department Chairs, and one was a Professor who had extensive experience with the topic of interest. From K–12 school systems, the three participants were involved in HR Administration. The foremost criteria for selection was current, substantial engagement and professional experience working with ARL policies and programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Professional Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dean, Associate Dean, Department Chair, or Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HR Superintendent or HR Administrator</td>
</tr>
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To protect the anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were used throughout the entire research process. Similarly, the names and locations of the participants’ respective systems and institutions remained anonymous. Strict confidentiality was maintained to ensure data could not be tracked back to participants. A copy of the Letter of Consent to Participate in ARL Dissertation Research is presented in Appendix A.

The IHE participants. The IHE participants were Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Meng (pseudonyms). Dr. González had about 25 years of experience working with ARL. She was a former employee of a Department of Education Office of Teacher
Licensure in a western state. She has a research background that included research in ARL and during the course of this study worked at a large, public research university in teacher preparation. She helped support the administration of an ARL program and provided academic advising for ARL students. Dr. Markus also had experience working with a Department of Education Licensure Office in a western state. Although his research background did not originally include ARL, his professional experiences with the Department of Education Licensure Office provided roughly 8 years of first hand, in-depth experience with ARL policies and programming. He was a Professor at an IHE in a western state. Dr. Meng worked with ARL for about 14 years. She had developed and directed an ARL program at an IHE in a western state.

The K–12 HR participants. The K–12 HR Participants were Mr. Burns, Dr. de la Cruz, and Dr. Francois. Mr. Burns was an HR Superintendent of a large, public school district in a western state. He had about five years of experience working with ARL. Dr. de la Cruz had worked in multiple public-school districts, both rural and urban. At the time of the interview, Dr. de la Cruz was the HR Superintendent of a small, rural school district in a western state. Dr. Francios was an HR administrator in a large, urban school district in a western state. At the time of the study, he had about five years of in-depth experience working with ARL.

Data Collection

The data collection process covered a three-month period, from October 2018 to December 2018. Semi-structured interviews were used as the instrument of data collection. A three-phase interview process was conducted with each of the participants, where the interview data was collaboratively negotiated.
The first phase consisted of initial interviews. The first interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participants’ offices and were recorded using a voice recorder application on the researcher’s cell phone. The goal during the interviews was for the researcher to “attain the open, wondering, curious, uncertain, and reflexive mind-set this work requires” (Vagle, 2016, p. 81). During the interviews, the initial research questions were asked and the researcher focused on careful and deliberate listening. The initial research questions were:

1. When did you [the participant] first learn about ARL?
2. How do you [the participant] view your roles and responsibilities in relationship to making decisions about using ARL policies or implementing ARL programs?
3. What are your [the participant’s] beliefs about ARL?
4. Do you [the participant] think any changes should be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs? And, if so, why and how should those changes be made?

The shortest interview was about 15 minutes long. The longest initial interview was 35 minutes long. After the initial interviews were conducted the participants’ answers to the initial interview questions were transcribed. The second phase, or follow-up interviews, were conducted by email. For the second interview, each initial interview transcription was sent to the respective participant as an email attachment. Along with the initial interview transcription attachment, two follow-up research questions were sent to the participants in the body of the email. The second interview research questions were:

1. Is there anything you [the participant] would like to add or revise to the transcription of your interview?
2. Is there anything else you have experienced or thought about that you [the participant] would like to share?

When necessary, the researcher added clarifying questions to the corresponding email interview. In this manner, through the second email interview process, the generation of the interview data was collaboratively negotiated as the participants had opportunity to review the transcription of their interview, discuss, add to, or make revisions on the interview data, and respond to the researcher’s clarifying questions. All accounts gleaned from the second interview were added to the original transcriptions.

After the data collected from the first and second interviews were analyzed, the third interview phase was conducted via email. The third interview was an opportunity to ask any necessary, clarifying questions regarding the participants’ responses to the questions from the first and second interview. For example, during the second interview one participant expressed concern about a statement she had made during her initial interview that she thought might reveal the identity of the individual she made the statement about. During the third interview the researcher asked the participant if she was still comfortable participating in the study or if she wanted any of her statements removed from the transcription.

**Data Analysis**

The data collection process resulted in interview transcriptions that the participants had reviewed and consented to the use of the transcripts for the study. As this research study had multiple research questions targeting the different goals of this project, the data collected was analyzed in several ways. Overall, the data analysis for this study was iterative. The data collection and analysis were multistep progressions.
The iteration involved in the three-phase data collection process helped inform subsequent data collection and analysis. For example, it was important during the second interview to share the interview transcriptions with the respective participants to get their responses as input for further analysis. This process provided opportunity for the participants to affirm, add to, subtract from, or reject the text from their interview transcription altogether.

Additionally, Denzin’s idea of qualitative methodological triangulation (2018, as cited by Flick, 2018) was used with the development of two different units of analysis: (1) Some of the research questions asked elicited general responses producing sociological type data. Sociological type data, or participants’ responses that directly addressed broad, general ideas about ARL formed one unit of analysis. (2) Participants responded to some of the research questions with narratives. Narratives, or biographical stories expressed the experiences related to ARL as they are understood by the participants (Chase, 2018). The particular understandings imbedded in the individuals’ stories formed the second unit of analysis.

First, the researcher sought the essence of ARL from the perspectives of professionals who have intimate knowledge of the processes involved in teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention. The language used by the participants was examined as an emergent way of experiencing the phenomenon of ARL. A whole-parts-whole process was used where the entire data transcriptions were read focusing on the whole, reread to examine the details, and then those details were applied to the research questions (Giorgi, 1997).
Bridling was actively employed as a reflective practice. Using bridling allowed the researcher to attend to her prior knowledge, while not letting presuppositions or prior beliefs get in the way of the lens (Vagel, 2016). The use of bridling encouraged some, but not full, restriction of the researcher’s presuppositions (Vagel, 2016). Through this reflective practice, the researcher was able to remain open and reduce her use of prior knowledge of the phenomenon (Vagel, 2016). The researcher’s value-commitments were acknowledged, but she did not let her ideals dominate the encounters with participants or the data analysis process (Vagel, 2016). The data were reduced with the following procedures:

1. The interview transcriptions were read using the whole-part-whole process.
2. Bridling was used to recognize and hold back personal, value laden presuppositions so that the readings of the transcriptions could be as clear and unbiased as possible.
3. The text was read again, line-by-line, attending closely to the material.
4. Through multiple readings, the researcher drew out invariant structures, themes, and patterns of meaning identified in the text.
5. A list of statements was generated for each participant and those statements were attributed to concepts and diagramed as concept maps attributed to each participant.
6. The six concept maps were read again, closely studied, and the similarities and differences among the concept maps were identified graphically.
7. Themes, patterns, and meanings were drawn from the graphic representations and the text was articulated as data transformations.
8. Statements depicting the essence of the content were generated and written in third person and narratives were developed in first person.

The researcher used a cyclical pattern, not a linear approach, that produced analytic thoughts and new interconnectivity in the data. These analytic thoughts and interconnectivity, or transformations (Giorgi, 1997) were added or subtracted through reflection (Ihde, 1971; Vagle, 2016). A balance was maintained “among verbatim excerpts, paraphrasing, and descriptions/interpretations”; although the researcher was “coding, categorizing, making assertions, and reporting” (Vagle, 2016, p. 97), the objective was to relive the multiple, partial, and varied contexts of the language.

Transformations that were unrelated to the research questions were eliminated. The researcher’s focus stayed on dialectical intentionality throughout the readings, as opposed to subjective experience. Text answering the research questions were crafted in a generative form. By these means, the researcher did not seek simplicities and essences; she sought complexities, and symbolic and tentative understandings.

Next, the researcher wanted to facilitate a collaborative, interactive experience to uncover and illustrate the stories of those who played roles and had responsibilities with ARL policies and programs, to assemble their biographical stories, and build imaginative space for ARL policy and program developments through creative narration. The researcher developed biographical narratives inspired by the participants’ interview data, staying close to the participants’ own words, but removing identifiable facts. The researcher used the narratives to provide empathetic validity (Dadds, 2008) and aesthetic merit for the study (Tracy, 2010). The narratives were included in the study to help the reader visualize and identify with the unique ways the individual participants related to
made sense of ARL. The use of narrative inquiry provided historicism through an authentic presentation of the findings (Chase, 2005). The descriptive data interpretations enabled the reader to create a connection to the participants and develop more meaning from the participants’ perspectives and recommendations. Narratives were used to highlight the distinctiveness of the experiences conveyed through the participants’ accounts (Chase, 2018). Capturing and relaying the uniqueness of each participants’ narrative provided the reader with a deeper and more nuanced picture of how the participants each individually perceived of improving ARL policy utilization and programing improvements. The procedures used for the narrative inquiry were:

1. Data from the interview transcriptions were identified as narrative or nonnarrative; that is, clauses from the interviews were identified as either: (a) storied, discursive discourse using the narrator as a protagonist, or (b) or nonstoried, linear discourse conveying conceptual, ideological, or theoretical information.

2. The narrative data from each interview was extracted.

3. The analysis of the narrative data focused on how each participant depicted the answer to the following research question: Should any changes be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs? And, if so, why and how should those changes be made?

4. The results from this narrative inquiry process were then displayed as prose, told by the researcher, in the voice, manner, and character of each participant.

Limitations
This study had multiple limitations. As emphasized by the title of Gitelman’s (2013) book, “Raw Data” is an Oxymoron, data is a cultural resource that is generated, constructed, and interpreted. The researcher strove for awareness of her own bias as an educator, administrator, and researcher who works closely with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes with both ARL and traditionally trained teachers. She made every effort to avoid bias by scrutinizing her presuppositions about ARL, avoiding the formation of hypothesis and fixed beliefs about ARL, and by allowing participant responses to challenge, rather than confirm, her preexisting assumptions. She endeavored to avoid leading questions and wording bias and tried to be as cognizant as possible to her own social and cultural assumptions. Nonetheless, despite all efforts towards objective consciousness, the research’s antipathies and sympathies could have tainted the data interpretations and reporting of results.

Although the study was delimited by the purposive selection of the participants to capture their experiences and perspectives with depth and breadth, the study was limited by the voluntary cooperation of those participants. The perceptions illuminated in the study only represent a small portion of perspectives on ARL from specific, criterion selected professionals who were interested and willing to participate in the study. ARL policies are inevitably perceived differently in various contexts and through innumerable perspectives. This study does not capture the full scope of experiences or perspectives on ARL.

The researcher and participants’ positionings limit the study. The researcher had prior professional relationships with the participants and was known by most of the
participants as a developer and coordinator of an ARL program. The participants’ views of the phenomenon and the researcher could have affected the answers the participants give to the questions that were asked. Participants could have given polite or partial answers that they think the researcher might have wanted to hear. To mediate such reluctance or acquiescence bias, the researcher endeavored to focus questions on the respondents’ true points of view and avoided questions or statements that presented the researcher as an expert on the topic.

The researcher’s analysis may be affected by her emergent understandings and continual interaction with the ARL program she manages. Positioning of the researcher and participants includes the timing of the study. Time limits the investigation in that both the researcher’s and the participants’ perceptions, understandings, and relationships are evolving. The study only presents a snapshot of the participants’ current perceptions of ARL during the research collection process and was based on the interpretations of the researcher as moderator during the data collection and analysis process.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

As stated in Chapter I, this investigation explored and described ARL from the perspectives of IHE and K–12 HR professionals who have in-depth knowledge and experience working with ARL programs and implementing ARL policies. As described in Chapter III, there were two main units of analysis: (1) sociological type data that addressed broad, general ideas about ARL as expressed by the participants, and (2) narratives, or biographical stories, that gave voice to the participants’ unique, lived experiences with ARL. This chapter answered the questions of ‘how do professionals who work with ARL policies and programs perceive ARL?’ and ‘should any changes be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs?’ The researcher answered the research questions by retelling the participants’ individual ARL stories. She employed creative historicism by generating stories that were inspired by the participants’ interview transcriptions but retold eliminating or transforming identifiable factors to protect the participants’ confidentiality. Additionally, she answered the research questions by extracting and presenting the themes and general ideas as conveyed by the participants. The last section of this chapter synthesized and summarized the results.

Participant Perceptions

The participants’ narratives provided “different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other” (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou, 2008, p.1). The intention of providing the reader with narratives was to connect readers to the lived experiences of the participants and the nature and characteristics of their respective positions and relationships to ARL. The narratives
illustrated the participants’ histories with ARL. They were provided to generate an understanding of the participants’ depth of experience and to give a rich description to establish context, strength, and empathic validity to the participants’ perspectives.

Through the theoretical lenses of research as historically situated social practice, these narratives invite the reader to see how each participant may attribute equivocal meanings and interpretations to ARL. The narratives provided more complexity and depth to the social, historical, and political positions and understandings of the participants. Through the narratives, details were provided that showed readers the participants’ perspectives and aided readers to come to their own conclusions.

The analysis of the interview transcriptions indicated commonalities. After each interview was mapped into concepts, diagramed, and coded, the common themes that were discussed by the participants were visible. The dominant themes that emerged from the analysis were that the participants perceived ARL as emergent and transitional, that the participants perceived ARL as playing a role in encouraging second career professionals and unemployed college graduates to enter the teaching force, and that the participants perceived that more data was needed to determine the effectiveness of and guide the future of ARL. The narratives for each participant were provided below. The narratives were followed by graphic representations of the concepts conveyed by each participant in Figures 2–7. Lastly, the commonalities and contradictions in the participants’ perceptions were explicated as themes.

**IHE Participant I: Dr. González.** I learned about ARL, gosh it has to be at least about 25 years ago now. I actually went through an ARL program myself. I had
graduated and didn’t have a job in my field. Someone threw out this ARL idea. They were looking for teachers.

Now, I advise a lot of ARL students. If they’re in an online class and they aren’t getting the nuts and bolts of the expertise of the instructor by not having it face to face—I work with the department as to the rigor and issues as it relates to these individuals who are making a degree and a career change—you know—a classroom management course that is online and how that might affect individuals who are attempting to be a teacher, because they are struggling.

We’re getting a lot of individuals directly out of their undergraduate programs and I don’t think that was originally what it was intended to do. But as far as beliefs go, I support ARL, but we keep lowering the rigor and requirements. Some states are attempting to significantly reduce the amount of coursework required. What should be done is to increase the rigor and increase the amount of coursework. Our K–12 kids deserve the best teachers we can provide. We need to make sure our ARL teachers get great mentoring. We need to make sure the quality and rigor of the online and for-profit ARL programs is consistent across states and across the different types of providers and institutions. We don’t have the data systems in place to do this yet. Our kids deserve better.

Don’t get me wrong, I think good people need a legitimate way to enter teaching. Are they ready for the classroom? I don’t know. Can we prepare them for the classroom? I think the answer is yes, we can, but we need to raise the bar. The quality of the programs being produced and approved by the state has to truly be reviewed.
Figure 2. IHE Participant I Concept Map: Dr. González

Figure 2. IHE participant I concept map. This figure displays IHE Participant I’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
**IHE Participant II: Dr. Markus.** Approving programs is a huge responsibility. We looked at each program objectively, reviewing applications, making sure they met the guidelines. You have to look at the regulations and what the application needs to include. Does the provider understand the context of the state and things like that. We did take the charge seriously and reviewed every word of every application, which were sometimes twelve binders that were submitted. For the most part people were approved if they met the general very basic guidelines that were required of them by the regulations. When they didn’t, clearly didn’t understand the context, didn’t follow the application procedures, then they were turned away. So, as far as decisions go, that was a pretty big one.

I think we could be informed a little bit more from or by the residency models of teacher preparation, where we are looking at practice-based learning by doing, but in a very mentored way. So, in those models I’m interested to see what the impact is on the teachers that come from a residency-based model. I know they are time intensive and resource intensive programs, but one aspect specific to ARL that might be informed by that is the presence of a very high quality mentor that is available not just a couple times a week, stopping by and checking in and making sure you are not dead, but someone who is actively coaching, whisper coaching, and being present to help guide that teacher’s sense of themselves as a teacher. That is one idea to policy and implementation of ARL. The other I think that would be helpful would be, and I think some programs do this, they require some coursework before that teacher is allowed to go and get hired by a district. My gut says that they would need to have some time to process, to think about teaching in an intellectual way before you are asked to actually implement and do. So, I would like
to be able to look at data on the effectiveness of those kinds of programs that have more time in their initial training. That the initial training requires more intensive, more time, and they can be taking courses but not necessarily as the teacher of record yet. And then jumping in and still taking coursework while they are the teacher of record. So, ultimately, they have a lot more exposure to professional learning before they are teachers.

People should not assume that providers who are taking college students who want to become teachers and helping them to do that are necessarily a hundred percent opposed to alternative ways of becoming a teacher. I believe there is room for everyone at the table.
Figure 3. IHE Participant II Concept Map: Dr. Markus

This figure displays IHE Participant II’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
IHE Participant III: Dr Meng. I’ve been working with ARL for about 12 years; I see it in two ways. One, how do we develop a teacher from a teacher education standpoint? We are trying to accelerate that from a traditional bachelor’s approach. And, two, we can view it from a member of the public standpoint, that is, what kind of teachers do we want out there. Anything that we do, would we be okay with our kids being in that class? What’s best for the state? In working with other people, other entities who may want to be ARL providers, how do we work with them and share ideas. Hopefully we are working with them and still being good shepherds of teacher training within the state.

There are also two things about ARL that need to change. The first one is 391.105, where if somebody is in an ARL program they have to be in the classroom teaching full time in order to maintain their ARL license. Now there are pieces of that that I agree with but, we are trying to build a pool of teachers. If a job comes available in, say a rural district, we want a candidate to be ready to take the position. If a student is taking the coursework, I would like them to be able to have that ARL license sitting there. As it stands now, with the student having to have the job to be in ARL, it incentivizes programs to force students into the classroom early. If a student wants to take some or all of their teacher preparation coursework first, before they jump into full control of a classroom, they should be allowed to do so and still receive all the allowances ARL has to offer. If the student can’t get the alternative license before they get the teaching position they often end up working in teaching positions as long term substitutes, which really disadvantages the student.

The second thing I would change is how and when the clock starts for the alternative license. Right now, a student has to teach on the ARL for a minimum of two
years and a maximum of three years. Once they have two to three years of teaching experience, and have completed the coursework, the ARL student can apply for a standard license. The question is when are they considered a program completer? Really, when do we start judging their performance and judging their programs’ ability to generate effective teachers? In their first year of teaching before they have completed the required coursework? Some people argue that they are impacting children right away, so we need to be looking at their effectiveness in that first year. I get that, but it goes back to my premise that ARL should not be a go-to for developing a teacher. It is a stopgap to fill the current need. I would argue that they should be a completer after they have taken all their coursework and have that standard license; just like someone who is completing a traditional bachelor’s degree program. ARL teachers are essentially student teaching, and they may have full control of that classroom, but we should recognize that they are teaching students, and should not be judging them the same way that we are judging a lead teacher.
Figure 4. IHE Participant III Concept Map: Dr Meng

Figure 4. IHE participant III concept map. This figure displays IHE Participant III’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
**K–12 HR Participant I: Mr. Burns.** We knew we didn’t have enough teachers coming through the pipeline to fulfill the vacancies that we had. We were pleasantly surprised from the results of ARL—we really were. I had to make sure we had the resources available to really support our ARL teachers. We evaluated their success from the beginning, and our experience was that the data showed us that ARL could produce high quality teachers to be with our students. I’m a strong advocate for ARL programs. Our traditional teacher preparation programs certainly create wonderful teachers as well, but when we looked at all of our teachers’ evaluations and persistence rates, we had about the same data for people who were successful in ARL. And data speaks, it says a lot. For one year we had a better percentage with ARL—we are talking N size and percentages change with N size—but none the less…some principals love it and some principals don’t love it, but that’s okay, we can place ARL teachers where it’s a good fit.

If we’re talking about making changes to ARL, I just want to make sure that it gets easier, not harder, for an individual to enter the teaching field. It’s difficult to recruit people into teaching. ARL allows us to draw from our local community, to groom our own. I just don’t want to make it too hard for people who are entering those ARL programs. We can teach you how to teach, we can teach you about curriculum, we can teach you all you need to know—we just need to continue to expand the pathways and make sure we continue to develop the right kinds of support structures for our ARL teachers.
Figure 5. K–12 Participant I Concept Map: Mr. Burns

This figure displays IHE Participant III’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
K–12 HR Participant II: Dr. de la Cruz. For me, ARL has been in my system now for over 20 years. I take that knowledge with me wherever I go. I knew ARL when I was a principal, and now that I’m in the district office, I do have some ideas for changes. I think first, the state requirements need to be lessened. It’s tough to become a teacher and it needs to be easier. Second, I think we need to be more flexible with coursework. I almost want some kind of way, kind of like when you go to any website, like a chat function, that in a time of desperation or need, a clarifying question as an ARL teacher, when you can chat with someone 24-7. Some of the issues that occur, they’re unknown, unexpected, it isn’t covered in the coursework, it isn’t covered by your mentor. I don’t want people feeling lost and not getting the support they need. And not that they’re are not getting the support, I just think that sometimes—and I have experienced this as a teacher—where I don’t know what to do with a situation that I’m given. You might know that you are going to see your mentor the next day, but what if my mentor or principal doesn’t have the answer for me. Is there another way I can find an objective person to help me with my issue that I might have at school? I am not sure what that takes, but I think that would help with the retention of ARL candidates. Especially when anyone has doubts about ‘am I doing it right?’, ‘should I keep going with ARL’, ‘should I even be a teacher?’ I think those are all normal, human questions. It’s almost like we need a hotline. I don’t mean just for ARL, I think that’s for all people coming through the system. We need like what we do with urgent care for physical needs. We need an urgent care for education. I think that is the one thing missing from teacher preparation. Once you are established, you kind of know where your supports are, where you can get information. Even if it is wacky, wild stuff that you have never seen before, you usually
have your resources underfoot. As a beginning teacher, ARL or not, you’re lacking that support system. There are business hours and office hours and all kinds of restrictions on how to—how can you Google things about what’s happening in your classroom—it’s tough. We need like an urgent care, 24-7 chat. I know that in the middle of the night, when people are struggling and assessing their day as a new teacher, they are wondering if they are doing it right. I don’t want to lose them because they may have doubts. I think that’s normal. I want people to know that it’s okay if they have doubts. But, if they need support, I want them to get it quicker.
Figure 6. K–12 HR Participant II Concept Map: Dr. de la Cruz

Figure 6. K–12 HR participant II concept map. This figure displays K–12 HR Participant I’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
**K–12 HR Participant III: Dr. Francois.** I learned about ARL a couple of years ago. We were trying to fill the hard to fill positions in the district, you know, special ed, music, sometimes language. My involvement was in several different capacities. We had to put together a training program for people from other walks of life who want to be a teacher. They do some hours here with us and then they still have to go do an actual teacher education program. So, we developed a professional standards and responsibilities course for when they first come in. I do that initial meeting, I help match the ARLs up with principals who are looking to hire, I do initial interviews, screening interviews, and make recommendations. Sometimes, when needed, I’m involved with their internships and assessments with the school administer. I have my hands in all of those different aspects of the ARL. I feel good about the foundation we give them plus the internship; although, we take in ARLs from other programs as well.

I think that if you’ve got an ARL program without an internship component to it that you should look at that program a little bit harder. I think that’s an important part. Personally, I think that you need to see if you really enjoy being around kids. Now whether that means that you should be a substitute for a few weeks, or actually do an internship for a few weeks, or something like that. Either way, you really need that experience before you actually jump into a classroom and start teaching kids.

ARL is great for filling the hard to fill areas. But I know other ARL programs that do things like social studies. What are they thinking? I have 50 social studies applicants in the pool and there’s like two jobs. You do a disservice to people when you offer ARL if there are no jobs available. I feel like programs need to be more responsible with that. It’s not just about taking peoples money so you can fill a quota. It should come with some
responsibility. We need more special education ARL, not more social studies. I’m pretty vocal about these kinds of things.

Another thing I’ve learned along the way, a recommendation I would make, is to have candidates do the required testing in advance. Passing the tests should be part of the process to qualify to get into the ARL program. It’s really disheartening. I’ve seen people take the test three or four or five times. It doesn’t matter how much we like working with you, if you can’t pass the test, you’re going to get stuck. I hate to see people waist a lot of time and money when they could be doing something else. The tests really need to be upfront in the process.
Figure 7. K–12 Participant III Concept Map: Dr. Francois

Figure 7. K–12 HR participant III concept map. This figure displays K–12 HR Participant III’s responses to the interview questions mapped as concepts. Hexagons denote the theme shared among participants of needed ARL data; squares denote the theme shared among participants of career changers and unemployed graduates; and diamonds denote the theme shared among participants of ARL as emergent and transitional.
Theme 1: Emergent and transitional. The theme of ARL being emergent and transitional was the most dominant concept the interview participants discussed when answering the interview questions. Sometimes the emergent and transitional aspect of ARL was explicitly discussed by the participant, but often it was a tacit aspect of the participants’ narrative. For example, both Dr. González and Dr. de la Cruz had been intimately involved with ARL policies and programs since their conception in the late 1980s. Both of these participants talked indirectly about changes in ARL programing over time. Dr. de la Cruz noted that, one of her first administrative jobs in education was as the coordinator of an ARL program. She stated:

ARL was well oiled before I took over the helm. Back then, my school district already had a partnership with their large, local, public university ensuring that anyone who had a bachelor’s degree would fit into any of the ARL programs that were established for special education, math, science, and English. There were too many elementary [candidates] back then. They had a streamline process for two kinds of ARL.

Later in the interview Dr. de la Cruz highlighted even more changes in ARL overtime:

If you happen to be a paraprofessional, they had a really great incentive where you could still make your salary but attend class fulltime during the day, get all that coursework done as soon as possible, and then do your student teaching during your last semester. And then, obviously, get hired if you pass. So, it was a very expensive program, but it was worth it because we could grow our own people. There were all kinds of paths to teaching. There was Troops to Teachers, it was not just our traditional ARL. We even had adds about homemakers who
were maybe tired of being homemakers and might be able to work part time in halftime positions.

Dr. González noted:

It started in 1983 in New Jersey. New Jersey was struggling to acquire enough teachers to teach so they implement this [ARL], and I think the goal was to obtain individuals who were career changers. They wanted folks who had degrees in fields other than education and to bring that level of expertise and experience into the classroom and produce that teacher, through a true deviation of career choice. What ARL has become now is really a shortcut into the classroom for a bunch of individuals who have degrees, i.e. sociology, psychology, and they can’t find a job.

These excerpts illustrate how much the participants perceived that ARL can and has changed over time. Dr. Meng, who had less time than Dr. González or Dr. de la Cruz working with ARL, described how much ARL has changed during the time she had been working with ARL policies and programs:

I actually learned about ARL, it would have been 12 years ago, when we were individualizing contracts that were set up between the school district, the individual employee, the college, and the state department of education. And those individual contracts really formed the basis for the program that we submitted for approval when we decided to formalize the ARL process.

Dr. de la Cruz, Dr. González, and Dr. Meng made it clear that they thought ARL was, at its core, adaptable. Dr. Markus and Dr. Meng also stressed ARLs adaptability. Dr. Markus commented that changing the regulations was done through the Commission on
Professional Standards by “just tweaking.” Dr. Meng said, “If a program wants to make changes, they have the ability to go through the processes that are put in place by the commission.” The statement, “I think there is quite a bit of leeway in terms of what an ARL program can do” depicts how these professionals saw ARL as adjustable over time.

Dr. González, Dr. Markus, Dr. Meng, and Mr. Burns talked about the need to guide ARL as it transforms. Mr. Burns acknowledged that it required “a lot of education on our side to educate our teachers about what was going on.” He admitted that “there would be a learning curve around that [ARL] but we also had high hopes for what that program could do to help us and our students.” These participants seemed to recognize that ARL was still in a process of coming into being; a process that they, as professionals, could help form and reform.

Dr. Meng recognized that ARL was transitional, but she was less optimistic about how ARL was emerging:

I still feel that ARL should not be the go-to for developing a teacher. It was a necessary program for teacher shortage, but we never wanted it to replace traditional programs. It is a necessary stop-gap. Having somebody working through an ARL program is better than having someone in a long-term sub position who is not receiving any sort of support. And, we always viewed it as, we would be quite happy if it went away in five or ten years if we had a strong pipeline of teachers coming through a bachelor’s program or a post bachelors certificate route where they student taught before they ever went out into a classroom. We never viewed it as the ideal way to train teachers.
Dr. González saw the emergence of ARL as “lowering the bar.” She said, “The requirements throughout the states and the nation get lowered, and it becomes less and less versus more and more.” It was her opinion that “The folks that are participating in the programs are getting less and less training. And, ultimately the kids, the students, are receiving less and less quality because their teachers were trained with less.”

Dr. Francois drew a relationship between changes to ARL and larger picture changes in the broader educational climate. He said:

My personal belief is that it [ARL] is awesome. We are in an age where teachers are not as valued as they used to be years ago. Certainly, we do hold them up to certain standards, but with the things that are in the news with students using their phones and recording things that happen in the classroom, with school shootings, with students going off on teachers, with teachers doing things to students, there is a lot of things happening in the world of education. It’s getting harder and harder to do the job…I don’t have enough people that come in from the universities and colleges to fill the positions here. There is just not enough. Every year it gets lower and lower, the amount of people we are able to hire and recruit. Our needs are getting higher and higher because the reality is that I have teachers that are resigning, retiring, moving, or getting fired. And I’m having more of that happening every year. …We need teachers really bad, and we are not going to get them from our colleges. So, another way that is great for us to fill the needs that we have for our students is the ARL programs.
The participants did not just convey concrete, historical changes in ARL over time, they thought that there had been ideological changes in ARL over time. Mr. Burns expressed an ideological change by saying:

It took some time for people to get used to the fact [of ARL]. To what this is, what does it really mean, how does it work? But I’m super excited. For our school district, one of biggest testaments to ARL and the ARL program in general was that we had someone very highly involved with the Association who was not big on ARL in the beginning and he has become one of our strongest advocates for our teachers. I think that says a lot about the program.

Mr. Burns also noted, “We kind of bought in [to ARL]. But that took at little while.” He alluded to him and his school district coworkers initially questioning ARL, but after being involved with ARL they determined it was a positive thing.

Dr. Francois expressed a similar sentiment when he said, “two years later, people are more receptive.” When asked about his beliefs about ARL, Dr. Francois expressed a conceptual change quite explicitly by saying, “Well, at first I was not a big fan. I was this traditionalist.” Then he went on to explain:

If you didn’t go to university and do the traditional route what kind of teacher are you going to be? Was it second class or third-class kind of teaching? That was my initial belief many many years ago. …my belief system has changed. Now I am just grateful that we have anyone who wants to go into education.

Although all of the participants conveyed emerging ideas around ARL over time, most of the ideological transitions were balanced between support and concern. Most of the participants expressed ideological transitions in terms of their professional learning
and institutional understandings. For example, Dr Markus said, “My personal beliefs about ARL are nuanced.” He recognized the controversial nature of ARL but said:

I find myself somewhere in the middle with my personal beliefs about if it is the best thing or not. Especially when you consider the context of the state needs for teachers and the ability of current higher ed institutions to provide the number of candidates that are needed to fill the positions given the holes in the bucket in terms of retention of teachers in the district once they are there, and the difficulty of the job. Though, I don’t think ARL is the solution to that, but it is certainly a stopgap measure.

Mr. Burns expressed his professional neutrality succinctly by saying, “I think schools get used to the fact that ARL is different, but not any worse or better.”

Dr. González brought up the neo-liberal narrative. She believed that ARL itself is part of an even greater ideological shift. She exemplified this point in her statement:

It [ARL] appears to be a huge push to truly crush colleges of education and draw the money to the private ARL producers. And, that is truly a shortcut. It’s cheaper and its lesser quality in that the bulk of them [private ARL producers] are 100% online. And that is a key piece to note. I don’t believe that this was what the original intent of ARL was. It was to address a critical teacher shortage. And even though we might have a critical teacher shortage in various states, I think the initiative is to negatively impact the colleges of education and to positively impact the for-profits, even to positive the nonprofit ARL programs.

Mr. Burns was concerned about ARL’s changeability and his statements suggested some resistance to potential ideological shifts in the future:
I just worry that I don’t want us as a state to try to morph the ARL to be like a traditional program. I think they are very different for reasons and we have to embrace that difference and not try to make ARL look like a traditional program. I say that because I feel like we try to do that sometimes. I don’t want to make it harder for someone to get into an ARL program.

Later in his interview, Mr. Burns was very clear regarding his ideas of the evolution of ARL, and reiterated his concerns when he said, “I think we always have to evolve, but I just hope that we can make this a bigger and better program for our public.”

Another aspect of the participants’ perceptions of the emergent and transitional nature of ARL that arose out of the interview data was the potential for ARL to diversify the teaching population. Dr. de la Cruz said, “I do want more diversity in hiring, which is hard to do in this state.” She noted that, “There are not a lot of minorities that go into education.” Dr. González, Mr. Burns, Dr de la Cruz, and Dr. Francois mentioned that they had hopes that ARL was diversifying the teacher population. Specifically, Mr. Burns said:

That is another plus [to ARL] that people don’t always think about but is very important. The more we can diversify our teachers, our staff, the more our staff can reflect our student population the better for us as a community.

Analysis of the interview data presented a substantial amount of talk around the emergent and transitional nature of ARL. The participants, both explicitly and implicitly, expressed views of ARL as in flux, changing, and changeable in both historical and ideological contexts. They saw themselves as developing and learning in their relationships to ARL, and they expressed emerging beliefs towards ARL that were
sometimes positive or negative, but most often neutral and in recognition that while they supported ARL they also had concerns about its development.

**Theme 2: Career changers and unemployed graduates.** A second theme that emerged from the analysis of the interview data was the participants’ perceptions of ARL as a means for inspiring career changers and unemployed graduates to enter the teaching profession. Dr. González, Dr. Meng, Mr. Burns, Dr. de la Cruz, and Dr. Francois commented on ARL as it related to career changers or unemployed graduates, and all of the participants spoke of ARL as it related to local communities. Dr. González referred to ARL as a paradigm shift and Dr. de la Cruz and Dr. Francois made remarks about the characteristics of more experienced career changers as teachers over new, young graduates of traditional programs.

There was consistency among the participants in describing the characteristics of ARL teachers. The descriptions were “people from other walks of life,” “hard working,” “generally older students,” and “more experienced.” Dr. González, Dr. de la Cruz, and Dr. Francois also threw out the word “needy” multiple times. Dr. Francois, for example, described ARL teachers this way: “The groups that we have here are really needy. They really advocate for themselves. They are needy and have questions—which is great. They know what they want, and they work for it.” Dr. Francois also explained:

They are generally older students. They generally have life experiences. They’ve got work experience doing other things too. They are used to working hard, and it’s a lot different than taking a 24-year-old and putting them in the situation where they might not know how to really work hard. So, the ARLs with their life
experience and things, they are more mature, and it generally helps them be more successful in the classroom. And I think they do much better.

Likewise, Dr. González described:

We have to look at the individuals who have a degree and a career and enter the teaching force between the ages of 25 and 30. There is a significant difference between an adult who has decided to become a teacher versus a 21 or 22-year-old puppy saying ‘I’m going to do this because I just can’t find a job’. That’s what we are getting into whether they are doing it through TFA or another organization. Is it just a passing through or is it an actual ‘I want to be a teacher and I majored in psychology because I didn’t know what I wanted to do when I was 17 or 18-years-old?’ I think we have to look at that.

Mr. Burns said:

They give up a lot to be a part of a [ARL] program. Often coming from completely different careers to enter that program. Put that all aside and start all over and people are willing to do that. And it’s because they have that same intrinsic motivation that they want to serve students. Just like our wonderful teachers who are coming out of our traditional programs.

Dr. Francois noted that it was his job to “…hire the best, no matter where they come from or what their background is, personal or professional frameworks they come from.”

The teacher candidates’ motivations for joining an ARL program and to become a teacher seemed to play a role in how the participants viewed ARL.

I think one of the benefits to an ARL program that is hard to quantify is students may be coming though that have less of the formalized traditional experience with
all the classroom work, but they have very very high internal motivation to work with students. And it’s really hard to say that you have to have this many years of being in the classroom or having pedagogy and all of that. They’re so wanting to learn and grow and learn what they need to be great teachers and that comes through, and that comes through in the relationship with their students.

The participants all thought highly of the teacher candidates and of ARL when the choice to become a teacher was very deliberate, and it required hard work and sacrifices. Dr. Francois described going into ARL as, “…not the default” and that they “really chose to do this.” It was clear that passion and caring about kids were sought after characteristics that had been observed in ARL teachers and had convinced participants that ARL was important. Dr. Francois explained: “That really changed [my belief] and it was shattered by actually meeting ARL folks who were doctors, dentists, whatever. They came in from all walks of life who truly had passion.” He went on to say how many ARL teachers were “…determined to teach and to contribute to kids’ welfares for the good.”

Dr. de la Cruz described:

That, to me, was universal in anyone that was going into education. That is the heart of a teacher. Once I saw the heart of the applicants who were coming in from ARL, I say that they were not that much different from our folks who were coming in from traditional route people. Except for they were probably a little bit older, a little bit more experienced with life. In many ways, probably a lot more prepared for the classroom than a newly minted, fresh out of college 20 something.
Although the overall views of ARL candidates were positive, Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Francois also expressed concerns about ARL teachers who had not completed coursework in methodologies. “We want to teach them some things before they actually start going into the classroom,” remarked Dr. Francois. His concern was, “we are getting people here that have never actually been in a classroom.”

While ARL candidates do eventually take the required courses in pedagogy and methodologies to obtain standard licensure, Dr. Meng expressed her view of ARL as a “slightly different paradigm, not totally different.” She said:

What kind of teachers would we want out there? That is, how do we train them in this accelerated pathway, and how do we make sure we have quality teachers so that if my kids are taking a class in their classroom that they are also receiving quality education.

Dr. González noted that, “they are still taking the classes they would whether they were doing a post bachelor’s certificate route or a regular degree pathway.” Her concern was that, “If you are a career changer who has not gone through a teacher preparation program, you are already behind the eight ball.” She further expressed that “To reduce the amount of coursework you are essentially reducing the amount of rigor which ultimately then impacts the children, the students who are being taught by that.”

These juxtapositions, of support and concern, of life experience versus theoretical background, were expressed by all the participants. An example was when Dr. Francois said:

It’s hard. They are starting a job before they actually have the real education and pedagogy to draw from. But they have to do that as they are teaching, so they are
teaching, which involves a lot of hours of preparation and planning, and then on top of that are doing a master’s program, going to school, and they are still coming out being successful.

Mr. Burns expressed the relationship between these contrasting variables when he said:

I just think that ARL has an important part in our educational system. I really feel like we have found another way for people to enter the teaching profession and its nice for people in our community who haven’t really thought about education before, or may be when they were younger, who decided to make teaching a career that they have this other path to get them to where they can be very successful in the school district and working with students.

Overall the participants seemed to believe that second career professionals and teacher candidates who did not initially major in education as young, undergraduate students needed a “legitimate way to enter the teaching profession.” That if the candidates “are actually people that really care about kids and they want to be there,” it “really fills a need that we have.” The program the teacher candidate attended did not seem to matter to these professionals as much as the candidates’ attitudes and motivations. Hard work and interest in making a difference in children’s’ lives seemed to be the most important characteristics.

This idea was expressed by Dr. Francois who said:

There are a lot of people that go into different kinds of fields and they are not fulfilled. So, this the other big thing about ARL. They maybe got a job as an accountant and they go in there and say, ‘I’m in an office doing accounting all day’ and after about 10 years it’s like, ‘I hate my life. I hate what I do. I’m not
making a difference. I really want to make a difference in someone’s life, and have meaningful work.’ We get people from all different kinds of occupations that come in from the ARL programs and they have life experience and job experience. They come in and teach our kids and they really do a great job and I think that’s really valuable.

Dr. de la Cruz referred to this combination of teacher qualities as “the preferred mindset.” She preferred not to “discriminate with regard to ARL versus traditional.” She said, “they are all needy people” and that “we don’t treat our non-traditional route, versus traditional route any different.” She believed that the mindset of the ARL teacher was sometimes more “fixed” and that was the biggest challenge with hiring career changers. Specifically, she said, “I think that is one of the challenges in hiring someone who is more seasoned with life, is that they think education should be a certain way.” ARL teachers can “get a little disenchanted.” She insisted that a growth mindset was the critical characteristic for teachers to be successful.

Dr. Francois suggested that, “ARL is a great way for people in our community to come in and help our students.” Dr. de la Cruz said that, “the community is super involved.” She also noted that, “our great teacher mentors that have taught in ARL programs around our region are my best recruiters. They help me fill hard to fill positions with people and for that so I am very grateful.”

Analysis of the interview data showed that ARL as a resource for attracting career changers and unemployed college graduates was a theme for all of the participants and all of the participants made remarks that indicated that ARL had some relationship to community. Dr. Francois and Dr. Meng saw community as a significant component of
Despite the participants’ concerns of teachers entering the classroom without foundations in teaching methodology or pedagogy, it appeared that hard work, intrinsic motivation, and the appropriate mindset were perceived as the teacher qualities that were most essential to face the adversity of the difficult job of teaching.

**Theme 3: More data needed.** All of the participants repeatedly talked about data. They talked about using data to make decisions, about aligning data systems so that comparisons could be made, where they had data, where they lacked data, and how, without appropriate data structures in place, it was impossible to tell if the “experiment that we are doing with ARL, is it working, or is it not?” When these data concepts arose out of the interview transcriptions, it was usually in the context of how each district, each ARL provider, and each IHE had its own rules, regulations, policies, and procedures around ARL and its assessment. Dr. de la Cruz stated that “constant contact” and “being in sync” with the other entities was a key component towards ARL functionality. When the different organizational structures’ data collection and evaluation systems were not compatible and aligned, Dr. Markus and Dr. Meng both referred to a “disconnect.” Below are several examples of what ‘needing more data’ looked like from the participants’ perspectives, and one example of where data had been used.

**Comparisons and multi-level complexity.** Dr. González, Dr. Markus, Dr. Wong, Mr. Burns, and Dr. Francois mentioned having the ability to compare ARL teachers and programs to traditionally trained teachers and programs and the organizational complexity in making such comparisons. Dr. Markus said:

I certainly don’t think that people should have two weeks or four weeks of exposure to some ideas about teaching and then be handed over a classroom of
their own. That part of ARL is what I think my colleagues who are super against it are railing against. Is that, the idea that you can just get a little professional learning, like a fire hose, right? Maybe a lot of professional learning in a short amount of time and then be responsible for an entire classroom. I don’t think that is fair to the kids, the P-12 students, or to the teacher because it sort-of sets them up for failure because there is so much that they don’t know that they don’t know.

Later on, in his interview, Dr. Markus noted:

It is already sort-of happening that as the state is reviewing ways of renewing and approving teacher preparation programs, they are looking at doing both ARL and traditional in the exact same way. Treating them similarly. So, this is the application that is required of both, this is the review process that is required of both, this is the yearly data that you must provide to use for both ARL and traditional programs. That will force the data to have to be in a similar format at least…

Dr. de la Cruz spoke to the complexity of data comparisons saying that, “We had our own policies, rules, regs, and procedures for that curriculum instruction and assessment of all those programs.” She noted that, “there were a lot of expectations for the district level as well as things from the universities and the state. All those three factors [the district, the IHEs, and the state] needed to be in sync with any ARL program that we provided.”

In the same vein of linking and making multilevel data comparisons, Dr. González said:
Well, first of all, very few people have the data, even though some organizations have it, and that is to truly see and look at the student performance data of a traditional track teacher as opposed to an ARL track teacher. And not just one or two, but you have to look at many. Education is a social science. It is a moving target. Sometimes we have a wonderful year, and students test off the map that year, and the next year it is a totally different group of kids and in that sense the target is always moving. I think until we can truly look at student performance data, a lot of them, and longitudinally, you can’t discern if ARL is doing the job of the traditional track or is the traditional track teacher truly out performing an ARL trained teacher. Until that data is really gathered, then you can say, ‘okay, is it [an ARL program] not rigorous enough?’.

Dr. Francois spoke directly to his desire to use data for future decision making saying:

One of the things I’ve been talking to my team here is to actually look at the data. I’m compiling the data from our colleges in the area, our interns, to see as a first year teacher, second year teacher, third year teacher, what is your evaluation? What were you rated? Were you effective, minimally effective, highly effective? I’m putting that data together from the last five years.

Dr. Francois also pointed to the multi-level complexity in ARL data analysis saying that, “We do have several ARL programs that come into the district.” And, “Each one of them has different requirements for their program.”

Mr. Burns comment on his use of data. He said:
We did a lot of data collection and we had about the same data about people who were successful in their ARL program percentage wise as in the traditional teacher programs. There are fabulous traditional teacher prep programs out there and, yes, we are grateful for those too. But, when we looked at the ARL program and the percentage of folks who didn’t successfully complete three years or weren’t currently with us in the fourth or fifth year, it was about the same in terms of people who weren’t there anymore. And we also would look at the evaluations and we looked at the first year traditional programs and our ARL folks and it was also very similar. And data speaks. It says a lot.

Dr. Francois, Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Meng expressed concerns about having the ability to compare ARL teachers and programs to traditionally trained teachers and programs and the organizational complexity in making such comparisons. Dr. Francois, Dr. González, and Dr. Markus expressed concerns about rapid professional preparation and teachers’ exposure to curriculum prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record. They expressed concerns around the ability to compare ARL programs to traditional teacher preparation programs and the need to have access to data in similar, comparable formats, and the need for the data systems to be synchronized between the school districts, the IHEs, and the state.

Teacher quality. When looking at the participants’ perceptions of ARL through the lenses of how they talked about data, teacher quality was also a recurring topic. The big questions that came up were articulated when Mr. Burns said, “Are these teachers who are coming through an alternative pipeline meeting the needs of our students? Do they have strong instruction? Do they have all the standards that we need, classroom
management etc.?" Mr. Burns said part of his “role and responsibility is to be continually evaluating that.” He further explained:

One of the things I was pleasantly surprised with was the level of engagement they [ARL teachers] have in the classroom with the students. So, that is what my role is now, evaluating the quality of the teachers as they come through the programs.

Dr. Francois said, “That’s what I’m seeing, but I don’t have actual numbers; I’m seeing that they [ARL teachers] are doing really great.”

All three K–12 HR participants commented on the importance of individual assessment of each ARL candidate. Mr. Burns said, “You really have to look at each candidate individually just like you have to look at each teacher individually upon hire.”

Dr. de la Cruz said, “I interview and screen all ARL and student teaching candidates, not just ARL, but anyone who is thinking about teaching in front of our kids. I screen them first.” Dr Francois’ school district had their own ARL program. He conveyed that:

We get them in the classroom, and they are actually teaching, working with the lead teacher, working with the administrator, getting a flavor of learning what teaching is all about. So, it’s a kind of also in a way a screening out, a self-selecting out for some of them.

Dr. de la Cruz and Dr. Francois seemed to agree that “Some [ARL candidates] don’t make it. It wasn’t for them. Which was also a good thing, when you know that your ideal didn’t match reality.”

Shared accountability was part of the topic of teacher quality. Mr. Burns said it succinctly:
I want to make sure that we are all held accountable—the programs for who they are entering into the programs, the schools that are hiring from the ARL programs, and I think we will have to be accountable for each of our roles in that.

Teacher quality was a clear area of concern in relationship to data. The three HR participants wanted to know how well ARL teachers were doing in the classroom. Screening and evaluating ARL teachers were significant tasks. There was a sense of shared accountability for teacher quality and data played a role in the participants’ abilities to get their jobs done effectively.

*Judging the quality of ARL programs.* The timing of teacher assessment, when a teacher preparation program could be held accountable for the quality of the teacher, or the variation and challenges between program comparisons were topics that Dr. González, Dr. Markus, Dr. Meng, Mr. Burns, and Dr. Francois discussed. Based on the nature of their professional roles, all the participants were aware that through ARL teachers become classroom teachers before they complete a full spectrum of teacher preparation coursework. The question was posed by Dr. Meng was, “When do we start judging programs?” Should teachers be assessed, and teacher preparation programs get judged on that teacher assessment data, right as teachers start impacting children, or should ARL teachers complete their preparation programs before their performance data is used to judge the teacher preparation programs? Regarding teacher quality and teacher preparation program evaluation Dr. Francois said:

That is one of those things where we need to track that and look at the data. We can probably break down our ARL programs and say ‘okay, from each of these programs, what does it look like, the evaluations and stuff. That would really be
the piece that would show. We can look at our colleges, and online colleges, and their ARL program, those with internship, and those without. Who’s doing okay? …it might come down to, no matter what that person did, no matter what program they went though, they would still come out a rock star teacher. No matter what they did.

Dr. Francois, Dr. Markus, and Dr. González also brought up internships as an area of concern regarding the lack of data around ARL program quality. As mentioned above “who is mentoring and monitoring” intern teachers and “our colleges, and online colleges, and their ARL program, those with internship, and those without,” “the quality of the programs being produced and approved by the state have to truly be reviewed.” Dr. Francois, who was supportive of ARL programs in general, described his concern this way:

The ones I am concerned about are the ones that don’t have an internship piece. There are a couple of them that don’t have an internship piece. You can actually just finish their modules. They might just have like 10 modules that you have to finish. By the time you get to the fourth module, you go through the process with them and with me, and I screen their application. I bring them in for the interview. If they pass that, then I put them into our hiring pools. My personal opinion is that they are not really prepared for teaching. They may have never substitute taught. In this statement, he suggested that teachers without internship experience or substitute teaching experience might not know the basic fundamentals of teaching:

They might not know things like, ‘I can’t leave the classroom to go to the bathroom. I can’t go up and touch a child…grasp their shoulders and shake them.
Different things that happened in schools 40 years ago, but now we don’t have hand-on’.

Dr. de la Cruz said:

…it’s a bit different from our traditional route people. Traditional route people are willing to try this or that. They don’t know any different. They don’t know about common core assessment. They may know it by theory, but they are willing to try new data systems. Versus those that are a little bit more experienced, they want to question things and why, which is fine, but I think there is a little bit more resistance because they know that it ran efficiently in their head in a different situation and setting, therefore it should run and be as successful in public ed. It’s a hard crash when that happens.

From the perspectives of the participants, it seemed that each teacher candidate needed to be judged individually and each ARL program seemed to need to be judged individually. It appeared as if, from the participants’ viewpoints, there was not always a relationship between the quality of the teacher preparation program and the quality of the candidate the teacher preparation program produced. Currently, in the context of these professionals’ lives, adequate data and data systems to make comparisons and determinations did not exist.

Mr. Burns, Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Meng brought up persistence rates of the teaching careers of ARL versus traditionally trained teachers. Again, data and data systems to make comparisons were scarce. Dr. Markus exemplified this concept by saying:
How many, I’ve wanted to know the answer to this question for years, how many candidates who come to you actually end up staying after those three years? If not, it is a tremendous waste of money and time for all those teachers to be with you for three years and then to go away.

He further commented that, “I think we could be informed a little bit more from or by the residency models of teacher preparation, where we are looking at practice-based learning by doing, but in a very mentored way.”

When and how teachers and teacher preparation programs were compared was a concern for the participants. As ARL teachers enter the classroom as the teacher of record prior to completing the full spectrum of coursework required for licensure, participants expressed thoughts about when programs would be judged for the outcomes of their program participants. The use of data to judge program needed to be comparable; specifically, if ARL programs were all online or did not offer internship experiences for their participants, how could these variables be aggregated? The participants wanted to be able to establish correlations between different program inputs to program outputs, but they did not currently have the data to build these types of meaningful connections.

**Incentives, allowances, and education as a political football.** Continuing to look at how the participants talked about ARL data, it was clear that some participants thought “we are getting to the point where that is going to be possible—to look at the data and to use that data to inform what we decide to do.” Although it was surprising that data decision making was not already being utilized, Dr. de la Cruz spelled it out plainly. She said, “Education has been such a political football—it shouldn’t be—it should be the
most important thing we do in our social system besides human health and mental welfare of our citizenry.” Dr. González noted:

Most importantly, is that whoever the ARL provider is, because a lot of them are running themselves out of one state, but then operating in other states, to check on their mentoring and monitoring piece, what does that look like? If you are operating in one state but your teachers who have signed up for an ARL program are operating in another state, who is mentoring and monitoring them as they are struggling. If it is just by email, it is clearly not enough. That is another component. Because we are not just getting institutions operating these programs. It is a lot of for-profits and non-profits operating, and if you can come up with $1,400 bucks, you’ve got yourself a license and you’re there to teach the children, and I think it is going to be a disaster.

Dr. de la Cruz said, “At best it’s hard work, making sure that the egos and all the politics and the policies and the teachers mesh between all the groups, state, universities, and the district.”

Even though they were supportive of ARL, most of the participants appeared to see challenges, and using data to make decisions played a part in managing those challenges. Deficiencies in data capacities and data alignment between the different organizational structures influencing ARL (e.g., differences in regulations across states, lack of distinction of authority and accountability between the school district and ARL program provider, and variances between different school district policies and procedures) offered a void for incentives and allowances that were economically, rather than scholastically, motivated. For example, Dr. Meng described the following scenario:
It just seemed like we had more loopholes for people to get into the classroom right away, but if it were delayed by a year then those loopholes were not there anymore, and we delayed them [the teacher candidate] by even more. So, I would like that ability to be more streamlined between a traditional and an ARL route. It really made it so if somebody were on the fence about ‘well, I think I would rather get all my preparation done ahead of time and student teach before I was thrown into the deep end of the pool’, we were doing them a disservice by saying ‘okay, but you have to meet all of these other requirements in terms of content. But if you are willing to go into the classroom right away and go into survivor mode, then we are not worried about the content classes’. That seemed like a disconnect. So, if I could change anything it would be greater alignment between—maybe loophole isn’t the best word—but the allowances, if you will, under the alternative route versus the traditional route.

From the perspectives of Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Meng, the lack of data and data systems in various states that are pushing alternative routes seemed to muddy the information processes. The lack of clear information made it difficult to understand and determine what changes to the regulations might be necessary and, in Dr. Markus’ words, know “whether or not this experiment is successful.”

The organizational complexity necessary to make comparisons between ARL and traditional programs; concepts of how to use data to make determinations about the quality of teachers trained through ARL programs versus teachers trained through traditional teacher preparation programs; and how to hold the different types of programs accountable for the quality of teachers were specific concepts the participants talked
about in regards to the perceived lack of data. All six of the participants seemed to think the use of data to make decisions around ARL was on the rise, but it was apparent that data decision making was not, in their experience, consistently in practice. There was some use of data decision making, but there was also an expressed perception of incentives, allowances, and ARL being used for economic, rather than scholastic, motivations.

**Contradiction.** Although there were many commonalities regarding the participants’ ideas regarding ARL as emergent and transitional, ARL for career changers and unemployed graduates, and the lack of ARL data decision making, analysis of data also presented contradictions. Two notable contradictions were apparent: (a) the treatment of ARL teachers, and (b) the future vision for ARL.

The data portrayed an ideological contradiction between the participants regarding how ARL teachers should be treated. Dr. de la Cruz believed in a “nondiscriminatory” approach to the treatment of ARL teachers. Mr. Burns believed that ARL teachers needed special care and support, and that ARL teachers should be distinguished from their traditionally trained peers who had completed the full pedagogical and methodological coursework requirements as set forth by the state. The excerpts below highlight the contradiction. Dr. de la Cruz said:

I don’t like the term, ‘alternative route to licensure’. I think it is an awful name. Why can’t we just call it teacher preparation program. Why can’t we just call it what it really is? I think anyone going into education, it’s an alternative lifestyle altogether. Whether you have been raised by teachers or come from a family of teachers, it is different when you have your own classroom. It is your own world.
It’s alternative from what your other world looks like. So, I don’t like the name, or label, alternative anything, because honestly, everything is alternative. It’s all relative to me. I would change ARL and just say ‘we have a teach program’, period, and not have to make that delineation.

Dr. de la Cruz further explained:

We have really good supports for all our new teachers. We go above and beyond in making sure we have really good relationships for our new hires and our ARLs. We don’t treat them any different. We don’t treat our non-traditional route, versus our traditional route, people. They are all needy peoples. So, we all understand that it’s a struggle, so there is not discrimination with regard to ARL versus traditional.

Respectively, Mr. Burns said:

I feel like we got some experience around ARL and making sure that we are providing the right kind of support to our ARL teachers, because it does look different for them. And it requires a different kind of support. Not more support, just different.

Where Dr. de la Cruz saw ARL teachers as “part of the mixing pot of teacher continuum preparation, success making, support giving, leadership training….” Mr. Burns said, “I think that we have learned that over the years we need to continue to look at that [ARL] to make sure we are doing what we need in the right way for our teachers.”

Another contradiction that was apparent was the participants’ future vision for ARL. There was a difference in perspective of the K–12 HR participants and the IHE participants. Although professional neutrality was the dominate stance, all of the K–12
HR participants were entirely accepting and in gratitude for ARL, while the IHE participants were supportive yet discerning. Dr. de la Cruz said: “ARL has always been part of my language of district office. It is not foreign to me at all, it’s like breathing.” In contrast, Dr. Meng said:

…this [ARL] should not be a go-to for developing teachers. It is a stop-gap for developing a teacher. With that, we know, well, we are fairly certain they [the ARL teachers] are not going to be highly effective in that first year of an ARL program, even thought they are teaching students. We know it, we get it, that’s why it shouldn’t be our go-to.

The K–12 HR participants generally thought ARL programs should expand. Dr. de la Cruz said, “I think anyone getting a teaching license in the state, firstly, it’s a tough road. It needs to be easier. Secondly, I think we need to be more flexible with coursework.” On the other hand, the IHE professionals thought ARL should be a temporary, “stopgap” measure. Dr. González said, “The bar continues to be lowered and lowered as opposed to raised higher.” She noted that, “What should be done is probably to increase the rigor and increase the amount of coursework as opposed to reducing the amount—that’s number one.”

Now that the six narratives and three major themes in the participants’ discussions have been brought out and the two contradictions have been presented so that the reader can develop a deeper relationship to the participants, their experiences, and their perspectives about ARL, this chapter concludes with the summary of results.

**Summary of Results**
The six professionals who participated in this study conveyed their experiences and perceptions of ARL, bringing to light their unique understandings. The narratives entailed retelling of the participants’ stories, not necessarily in the participants’ exact words, but inspired by the sentiment of the participants’ biographical accounts and conceptual understandings. Through the narratives, the reader could visualize how the participants experienced and perceived ARL; how their stories overlapped and intertwined to build a deeper picture of how ARL functions in each of their professional worlds. Overall, the data brought forth the participants’ collective 78 years of experience working with ARL and provided historical and empathic validly to support the participants’ suggestions towards working with ARL.

They talked about ARL as an emergent and transitional process; they talked about the benefits of using ARL to attract individuals who worked in other careers or who had degrees in areas other than teaching but who were intrinsically motivated to serve and contribute to students’ lives; and they talked about the lack of data that was available to support good decision making in and around ARL policies and programs. There was consistency between many of the ideas the participants communicated, and there were also some contradictions.

One contradiction was an example of data usage in ARL decision making. Another contradiction exhibited that not all participants perceived ARL the same way. Mr. Burns and Dr. de la Cruz, both K–12 HR participants, had quite disparate ideas regarding setting ARL teachers apart from their standard licensed peers, or, being nondiscriminatory and lumping all new teachers together. Dr. de la Cruz thought all novice teachers were equally needy, regardless of their prior training or lack of training.
While Mr. Burns thought ARL teachers decisively needed not more but, different kinds of supports.

There was additional contradiction in the data from participants who thought it should get much easier to obtain a teaching license, versus participants who thought the rigor of teacher preparation programs should increase. The K–12 HR participants, Mr. Burns, Dr. de la Cruz, and Dr. Francois, wanted it to be easier to become a teacher. They generally thought ARL was a wonderful aspect of teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention; while, the IHE participants, Dr. González, Dr. Markus, and Dr. Meng, generally thought ARL should be a temporary measure, and that producing quality teachers likely required rigor, exposure to pedagogy prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record, and focus on teacher internship experiences and quality mentorship.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study explored and described the phenomenon of alternative route to licensure (ARL) policies and programs from the perspectives of three IHE and three K–12 HR professionals who have in-depth experience with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. The purpose of this exploration was to contribute to the discourse in teacher education research on alternative routes to educator licensure by assembling data in the form of the participants’ narratives and analyzing that data through the theoretical framework of research as historically situated social practice. As noted in Chapter I, ARL was defined as an opening in the point of entry for a certified teacher to enter the classroom as the teacher of record. This opening in the point of entry for certification may be viewed as the regulatory process of increasing the number of qualified teachers by decreasing the opportunity costs related to becoming a teacher (Rice, Roellke, Sparks, & Kolbe, 2009; Ronfeldt, Schwarts, & Jacob, 2014). As such, ARL has evolved as a controversial topic in teacher education research.

Interest in ARL is evidenced by the immense amount of literature on the topic; and, although vast amounts of information exist, researchers have concluded that more information on the topic was necessary (Akiba, 2017; Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015; Cochran-Smith and Villegas, 2015a; Skourboumbis, 2017; Weber, 2011). This study was designed to bring the experiences and stories of a few select individuals who support having high-quality teachers in K–12 classrooms to the forefront of empirical investigation. The study used phenomenology and narrative inquiry techniques to examine the participants’ experiences and perspectives, provide opportunity for reflection and information sharing, and compile narrative conceptualizations towards ARL policy.
and program developments. Specifically, this research project answered the questions: (a) How do professionals who work with ARL policies and programs perceive ARL? And, (b) should any changes be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs. And, if so, how should those changes in ARL policies or programs be made?

The study used the framework of research as historically situated social practice (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a), recognizing that ARL is integrated with social, cultural, and institutional factors. The results of the study gave a picture of the participants’ diverse backgrounds and histories with ARL. The positionalities and experiences the participants conveyed illustrated multiple configurations and various understandings with overlapping and intertwined stories that, both put together and taken individually, built a deeper picture of how ARL functions in their professional worlds.

The results described in Chapter IV portrayed ARL as complex historical, social, and political practice, imbedded with competing scholastic and economic forces; it built on prior ARL research by exemplifying the challenges and advantages of ARL policies in action; and it lent credence to scholars’ pleas for further research on the topic. The analysis showed the participants’ ideological commonalities. The participants’ implicitly and explicitly discussed the emergent and transitional nature of ARL. Their accounts showed their perceptions of and experiences with changes in ARL overtime and an understanding that they could impact transitions and guide developments in ARL policies and programming. The participants further discussed motivations, both theirs and ARL teacher candidates’; pointing to how the participants perceived ARL as tool for attracting and retaining second career professionals, unemployed college graduates with degrees outside of education, and local community members interested in the teaching profession.
They conveyed a belief that ARL teachers and teacher candidates were intrinsically motivated individuals, and that their motivations to contribute positively to the lives of K–12 students superseded their lack of formal exposure to teaching methodologies and pedagogy. The participants’ unique positionalities gave the reader a picture of how most of the participants, despite their desire to use data to make decisions about ARL, have not encountered adequate data. The results suggested that ARL was developing overtime without being well informed by data decision making and how some of the participants expressed their perceptions of educational decision-making processes as overtly political.

**Relationship of the Current Study to Previous Research**

This dissertation study built on prior teacher education research and contributed to the discourse on ARL. Scholars have described ARL as an ontological and epistemological debate regarding the nature and purpose of education (Gitomer & Bell, 2016). Prior research recognized the controversial aspects of ARL (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Feistritzer, 2008; Feistritzer & Harr, 2008; Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015; Zeichner, 2014) and situated ARL within the academic debate around the deregulation or professionalization of education (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015).

Scholars who sit on the deregulation side of the debate usually support innovation and competition in education, where students’ knowledge, as defined by standardized test scores, points to tangible results from investments in education. From the deregulation approach to education, schools, teachers, and students should be held accountable for their knowledge delivery and acquisition through results-based accountability systems (Zeichner, 2014). Scholars who sit on the professionalization side of the debate usually
support learning centered relationships; that is, they support the idea that the teacher constitutes the central factor in student learning (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). The professionalization approach to education leans towards rigorous and complex definitions of quality teaching, over single measures such as students’ standardized test scores. Professional regulation also favors a push for autonomy and respect within the teacher education profession. Advocates for professional regulation in education desire more self-governance and prefer that the research informing education policy be dominated by teacher research, as opposed to education policy regulated by politicians and informed by economic research (Cochran-Smith, & Villegas, 2015; Walker & von Bergmann, 2013; Zeichner, 2014).

This current dissertation study illustrated the participants’ ontologies regarding ARL in its presentation of how the participants saw the essence of ARL in their ideological similarities. The participants had parallel ideological concepts and shared similar ideas about the nature of ARL. They categorized ARL similarly as an emergent and transitional process; they defined it equally as a tool to attract more teachers into the profession; and they correspondingly talked about data and their interest in using data to make decisions about ARL. Where the participants differed was in their epistemological approaches on ARL; their rationales and justifications for their beliefs were different. Some participants saw ARL as an innovation, while other participants saw ARL as a necessary evil.

The participants’ epistemological viewpoints, supported by their experiences and professional roles and responsibilities, were not as congruent as their ontological perspectives. The K–12 HR participants seemed to be most excited about ARL’s
innovative capacities; they subtly leaned towards a deregulatory epistemology. They tended to be more inclined to support ARL as the regulatory process of increasing the number of teachers and decreasing the opportunity costs related to becoming a teacher. They justified ARL by their dire need for teachers and they believed ARL was an ideal pathway for making it easier to get into the teaching profession. The K–12 HR participants tended to function out of a positivist ontology; their jobs revolve around the fact that it is difficult to attract and retain excellent teachers into the teacher profession. This fact, the difficulty of hiring and retaining teachers, was proof for the K–12 HR participants that the opportunity costs of becoming a teacher needed to be decreased and ARL was one of the best options available to them. Their professional roles seemed to orient them towards relative positivism regarding the appropriateness of ARL. Their experiences showed them that routes into the teaching profession needed diversified and ARL was an effective option. They sought outward, objective demonstration of teacher market proficiencies, and ways to simplify the teacher hiring process. They did not seem to question ARL as a pedagogical debate. For these three K–12 HR participants, ARL was effective ingenuity eliminating barriers into the teaching profession.

The three IHE participants who participated in this study tended to lean towards a professionalization epistemology regarding ARL. They spoke about additional, creative ways of increasing the number of teachers while still focusing on the preservice learning experiences of perspective teachers. They recognized the dire need for teachers but did so in relationship to their belief in the need for rigor in teacher preparation programs. These three IHE professionals sought complex solutions for teacher hiring and training practices. Although they generally supported ARL as a solution to immediate and
persistent teacher shortages, they did not think ARL should be the dominant or permanent solution to the teacher shortage issue. The IHE professionals interviewed for this study were most concerned about enhancing the professional learning experiences of preservice teachers. Their positionalities lent them a constructivist ontology; specifically, they thought it was important to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to think about pedagogical and methodological practices prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record. Although they seemed to support the idea of learning on the job, they also talked about not lowering the bar for teachers and teacher preparation programs, and how to provide a continuum of strong mentorship and guidance to help teachers develop meaningful understandings out of their teaching experiences. The IHE participants in this study took a systemic and critical approach to ARL, teacher shortages, and teacher development.

Not only does this study bring the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the six participants of this study into the discourse, this study also helps illuminate the challenges of using data to support accountability and effectiveness in education. Many countries around the world have implemented education reforms and teacher assurance policies targeting teacher education, certification, evaluation, and compensation, with an emphasis on accountability and effectiveness (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017).

The results from this study were consistent with prior studies (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014; Rice et al., 2009; Stairs, 2010) suggesting that partnerships between school district administrators, IHEs, and other ARL program providers should be a focus to better understand teacher staffing issues and policy responses and streamlining the pre-service and in-service development opportunities for teachers. This study showed how
finding balance between deregulation and the teacher acquisition systems’ ability to innovate, experiment, diversify, and eliminate barriers into the teaching profession, while at the same time professionalizing the teaching field and developing higher levels of respect, compensation, and complexity in the evaluation of teacher and student engagement and learning outcomes, will require more collaboration between IHE and K–12 professionals. In short, creating accountability and effectiveness necessitates greater systems integrations. The development of collaborative research partnerships among the professionals who support having high-quality teachers in K–12 classrooms has the potential to support more reflection, information sharing, data collection, and decision-making process that are balanced by multiple ontological and epistemological perspectives. As prior researchers have asserted, collaborative partnerships help facilitate a shared responsibility in the support of teachers (Baker, 2011; Holen & Yunk, 2014). This study affirms the conclusion that school district, IHE, and ARL provider partnerships should include high levels of interaction between organizational entities, continuous collaborative research, and the exchange of technical expertise and capacities.

This dissertation study also connects to prior research that shows that ARL programs have such variability, both within and among programs, that they tend to defy generalization (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014; Humphrey & Weschler, 2007) and that these variations in ARL programming have implications (Scribner & Heinen, 2009). The results of this study emphasized the fact that there was a dearth of data; and, that the systems to make comparisons regarding the effectiveness of different kinds of resident teacher preparation programs had not been part of the evolution of the development ARL policies. As was evidenced in prior studies (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015a;
Humphrey & Weschler, 2007; Kane et al., 2008), this study illustrated that ARL programs should not be used as a unit of analysis for the evaluation of teacher effectiveness due to the wide range of program attributes and participant characteristics. Although prior research did suggest that studies evaluating the effectiveness of subgroups or individuals within ARL who had similar backgrounds, experiences, or school settings could be more useful (Casey et al., 2011; Dunlap et al., 2011), the participants in this study did not have the systems capacities to effectively aggregate data in these kinds of useful ways. As Scriber and Heinen (2009) asserted, and this study demonstrated, program comparisons are difficult to make, and accountability is difficult to ascribe, when different types of teacher candidates and preparation tracks are treated homogenously. The term ARL has little conceptual value in terms of understanding the effectiveness or accountability of different types of teacher preparation pathways (Scriber & Heinen, 2009). Thus, until more data and more systems integration capacities are developed and implemented in these local contexts, it will be difficult to monitor or manage the accountability and effectiveness of assurances for teacher quality.

The perceptions of the participants involved in this study supported prior research that claimed that exposure to coursework in teaching methods or pedagogy may not be the most important factor in producing quality teachers (Sass, 2011). Likewise, Nasir et al. (2016) suggested that student achievement gaps may only be loosely tied to teaching and learning. As Sass (2011) and Nasir et al. (2016) described, and the participants in this study agreed, the innate abilities of talented individuals potentially offset deficiencies in the exposure to, or knowledge of, pedagogy.
As was noted by Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), analysis of the effects of teacher preparation programs should not be over simplified. The current study exemplifies this concept by assembling the diverse experiences and perceptions of the participants. Although the participants were asked the same questions and were discussing the same topic, they had different resources, inclinations, and objectives. The context and positionalities of their professional worlds contributed to a spectrum of ideas and beliefs about ARL policies and programming. From a positivist perspective, ARL is a rational, innovative response to a persistent teacher shortage issue and deregulation of teacher education is an obvious and productive approach to persistent teacher shortages. From a constructivist perspective, ARL is devaluating pedagogy, methodology, and the teacher as the most important factor in student learning; it ultimately deteriorates the autonomy and respect of the teaching profession. The participants in this study developed their respective understandings and perspectives of ARL through their intersectionality as differently situated configurations of social, historical, economic, and political circumstance. This study illustrates, what prior researchers have asserted (Cochran-Smith & Villegas et al., 2016), that different positionalities affect and inform the understandings that are produced and guide the perspectives that are adopted.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

As ARL is an expanding, global educational reform movement (Blumenreich & Gupta, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2006; Connell, 2013; Feistritzer, 2008; Fraser, 2007; Tucker, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2004) with increasing influence over teacher workforce policies in the U.S. (Superfine et al., 2012), the findings of this study have implications for educators and others interested in both global education reform
measures and U.S. teacher assurance policies. Knowing how these professionals view
ARL provides future teachers, school district personnel, and policy makers with rich,
qualitative data to inform their decision making. Those engaged in the development of
ARL policies and program implementation strategies will find the results of this study
particularly useful.

Historically, the need for teachers has always been greater than traditional college
and university teacher preparation programs could provide (Fraser, 2007) and according
to Feistritzer & Haar (2008) and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education
(2016), ARL programs were primarily developed to fulfill teacher shortages. Although
research has noted some decline in teacher staffing challenges (Malkus et al., 2015);
overall, there are still severe teacher shortages in many subject areas and geographic
settings across the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b). This current study is
consistent with other study’s (Hamilton Project, 2017) that indicate that there is still
considerable need for improvements in teacher recruitment and retention policies.
Considering the importance of improving teacher quality as a primary policy lever for
economic competitiveness (Akiba, 2017); the predominance of competitive market
orientation and human capital management ideology in education internationally (Akiba,
2017; Superfine et al., 2012; Zeichner, 2014); and the teacher education market being
prime for private investment (Levine, 2010), it is highly likely ARL policies will
continue to proliferate at a rapid rate. As ARL programing expands and plays an
increasingly important role in teacher preparation, ARL policies and program
development should be well informed by the perspectives of professionals with firsthand
experience and specialized knowledge of ARL.
One important finding of this study was that, in the context of these professionals’ lives, there was insufficient use of data or sophisticated enough data systems to ensure ARL policies and decision making were data driven. With minimal data and data systems available, it is not apparent that ARL reforms targeting teacher education, certification, evaluation, and compensation are supported by evidence. Evidently, there is need for continued development and understanding of best practices in ARL policy and program implementation.

The participants’ consensus on ARL being an emergent and transitional process indicates that ARL has been and is likely going to continue to be in a dynamic progression of change. This study assembled insider information and outlooks from experts to support constructive changes in ARL development. The framework of research as historically situated social practice suggests a powerful reform platform (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016) by which those with nuanced understandings and intimate knowledge, such as the six participants of this study, are credited with important insights and the knowledge of the appropriate change and support structures required for effective reform.

To this end, the program participants proposed the following suggestions for practice:

**IHE Participant I’s recommendations: Dr. González.** The rigor of teacher preparation programs should be increased and the bar to teach K–12 students should not be lowered. Researchers, policy makers, and professionals participating in teacher licensure and preparation processes need to look at the licensing requirements held by the state, examine the teacher preparation programs that are running across state lines, check on their mentoring and monitoring structures, and ensure that rigor and oversight is maintained.
IHE Participant II’s recommendations: Dr. Markus. Those who implement ARL and traditional teacher preparation programs should learn from residency models and practice-based learning by doing models in teacher preparation. Research on the advantages of high-quality mentorship and active coaching practices needs compiled and should inform teacher preparation programs. Those involved with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes should ensure ARL programs and traditional teacher preparation programs are approved and assessed in the same way, so that data can be used for future examinations and comparisons.

IHE Participant III’s recommendations: Dr. Meng. Regulations on evaluating ARL teachers and evaluating ARL programs, and the time frames around these processes, should be examined. Policy makers and educational professionals should ensure that the incentives and allowances developed for ARL programs are not privileging ARL programs over traditional teacher preparation programs.

K–12 HR Participant I’s recommendations: Mr. Burns. Professionals in the teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes should be held accountable for the quality of the individuals who enter ARL programs and get hired to teach children. Licensing and teacher preparation program policies should not make it difficult for motivated and talented individuals to enter ARL programs.

K–12 HR Participant II’s recommendations: Dr. de la Cruz. School districts, IHEs, and ARL providers should maintain constant contact. Professionals working with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes should focus on fewer delineations between ARL programs and traditional
teacher preparation programs. More information structures and technological supports need to be developed and made available for all novice teachers.

**K–12 HR Participant III’s recommendations: Dr. Francois.** Researchers, policy makers, and professionals involved with teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes need to closely examine ARL programs that do not have an internship component. Those working directly with the teacher acquisition process need to ensure that the candidates who are being recruiting into ARL programs have some experience with and enjoy being around children. Policy makers and professionals involved with the teacher acquisition process should also ensure that candidates who are recruited into ARL programs are academically qualified, as evidenced by test scores, to obtain teaching licenses. Lastly, ARL program providers should not provide programing into areas where teaching positions are not available. Programs should only provide ARL tracks for students to enter consistently hard to fill teaching areas, such as special education.

Another important implication of this study is based on the finding that these six professionals perceived of ARL as a tool for attracting and retaining second career professionals, unemployed college graduates with degrees outside of education, and connecting to local community members interested in the teaching profession. This implies that, at least in the context of these professionals’ lives, ARL policies are serving their stated intent of providing additional teachers in these local contexts. As noted in Chapter I, ARL programs were designed to be attractive to individuals who may have financial obligations, who are less able to spend years going back to school to retrain for a new career, and who would not be able to complete an unpaid student teaching
The participants’ acknowledgment of this function indicates that, for at least some communities, ARL is indeed offering some second career professionals and interested community members a divergent access route into the teaching profession and therefore is fulfilling its initial purpose.

**Suggestions for Additional Research**

It is important that educators and education policy stakeholders understand the environmental and contextual factors that constitute teacher assurance arrangements, including teacher preparation, recruitment, selection, negotiation, and retention or dismissal processes. This study contributes to this understanding, but far more research is needed to develop a deeper and more complete picture of the types of teacher assurance arrangements that will secure high-quality teachers for all students.

As suggested by one of this study’s participants, additional research is needed that compares teacher preparation programs that require some coursework before entering the classroom as the teacher of record, to teacher preparation programs that do not require coursework prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record. This research should specifically examine the effects of the time to process teaching practices in an intellectual way before implementing teaching practices.

Although it is known that ARL programs are diversifying opportunities to enter the teaching profession and that as ARL programs proliferate more non-traditional students entering the teaching profession (U.S. Department of Education, 2004), more research needs conducted to examine if ARL programs are diversifying the teaching force in local contexts. Feistritzer (2008) contends that ARL programs have diversified the teaching force and most of the research supports this assertion (Humphrey & Weschler,
However, Humphrey and Weschler (2007) had disparate results regarding ARL programs’ abilities to attract and retain a more diverse teacher workforce. Redding and Smith (2016) also suggested that retention of teachers from diverse backgrounds was a persistent issue. ARL programs clearly provide more diverse opportunities to enter the teaching profession and more non-traditional students are entering the teaching profession than ever before but, this does not mean that ARL programs were the cause of diversification or that ARL programs in all local contexts will inherently attract and be able to retain more men, individuals who identify with non-binary gender categories, people of color, gerodiversity (age diversity), or people from non-dominant cultural, language, religious, or socio-economic groups.

Similarly, how ARL programs were supporting teachers’ understandings of the diverse populations they may teach or how ARL programs can help bridge the growing cultural divide between teachers and students (Carter & Darling-Hammond, 2016) remains an elusive and important area of inquiry. These fields of study were beyond the scope of this dissertation, but more research on the deregulation versus professionalization debate in education, and how ARL forwards education deregulation, could lead to additional insight on how global human capital management frameworks and market ideology impact teacher diversity and the learning outcomes of students from diverse populations.

In conclusion, this researcher also recommends more research of similar methodologies to build partnerships between the professionals who support having a high-quality teacher in K–12 classrooms. As suggested by Cochran-Smith and Villegas
(2015a), research that seeks the cultural and institutional intricacies has potential to provide a picture of the material conditions and social relations that effect teacher quality and student learning. Collaborative examinations of the complexities of teacher acquisition systems would likely help educators, educational administrators, and educational research consumers develop better understandings of ARL as it relates to teacher assurance arrangements. Using research to bring together the different domains of teacher recruitment and selection, teacher preparation programs, and accreditation requirements and certification systems, has potential to support the desired exchange of information, expertise, and accountability needed to ensure all K–12 students have high-quality teachers.
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Appendix

Appendix A: Letter of Consent to Participate in ARL Dissertation Research

Subject: Research on Experienced Professionals’ Perspectives of ARL

Dear Participant,

For my doctoral dissertation at UNR, I am conducting research on experienced professionals’ perspectives of alternative route to licensure (ARL). The abstract for the study is attached. Your name, your specific role or job title, and the name and location of your institution are not part of the study. Your anonymity will be maintained with strict confidentiality. Obviously, your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I anticipate your participation in this study will require about an hour to an hour and a half of your time.

The data collection process for this research project will be done through a three-step interview process of semi-structured interviews. The first set of research questions will be asked in a face to face interview:

1. When did you first learn about ARL?
2. How do you [the participant] view your roles and responsibilities in relationship to making decisions about using ARL policies or implementing ARL programs?
3. What are your [the participant’s] beliefs about ARL?
4. Do you [the participant] think any changes should be made to ARL policies or the implementation of ARL programs? And, if so, why and how should those changes to ARL policies or program implementation be made?

After I have conducted and transcribed the first set of interviews. You will be sent a copy of the transcription of your interview in an email. That email will constitute the second interview. In the email, you will be asked the following questions:

1. Is there anything you would like to add or revise to the transcription of your interview?
2. Is there anything else you have experienced or thought about that you would like to share?
Once I have collected the responses from the second interview via email, a third email interview will be conducted. The third interview will be an opportunity to ask any necessary, clarifying questions regarding your responses to the questions from the first and second interview.

Please let me know if you have any questions. You will be asked to sign a study participation consent form when the first interview is conducted. Again, your participation is appreciated, but entirely voluntary. Other than the opportunity to reflect upon and share information about ARL policies and programs, you will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

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