

A QUALITY TEACHER IN EVERY CLASSROOM: *Appraising Old Answers and New Ideas*

Frederick Hess, Andrew J. Rotherham and Kate Walsh (editors)

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION BY CHAPTER

The training and licensing of teachers has always been a contentious political and policy issue. Recent years have seen increasingly heated debate about the value of teacher licensure and certification and whether certification ensures a highly qualified teacher corps. The book features new empirical research on the nature of teacher training, an analysis of the political and policy landscape, and new models for tackling the need for outstanding teachers.

Chapter One

Back to the Future: The History and Politics of State Teacher Licensure and Certification

Andrew Rotherham and Sara Meade, Progressive Policy Institute

The history breaks cleanly into three phases: in the beginning you had locally-elected citizen boards and local superintendents issuing teaching licenses. During the progressive era, an "establishment" sprang up that set up more standardized approaches, reflecting the "modern science of education." Finally, classroom teachers and organizations sought and gained control over licensure and certification.

Three contextual issues frame today's debate over the emphasis on standards and achievement. First, content has come to the fore, especially with "No Child Left Behind." Second, many states and communities have serious shortages of teachers in some subject areas and in some communities. And, finally, there are various alternatives springing up, like Teach for America, which have spawned lots of research that attempts to measure teachers who have come through different preparatory routes.

Three sorts of major organizations must be considered with regard to the professionalism agenda: higher education, teachers unions, and national groups that work on these issues, like the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It would be a mistake to view this issue, these groups, and these policies as merely self-interested actors seeking to protect or expand turf. Many organizations resist some of the changes in the competitive certification agenda, sincerely believing that there is a science of education and that these approaches are irresponsible and harmful to children. It's also important to think about how governors, state legislators, and policy boards interact with these organizations. The organizations that are supposed to be regulated actually influence and in some cases control the regulators-the tug of war and context against which this debate plays out.

Chapter Two

The Shift from Hands-Off: The Federal Role in Supporting and Defining Teacher Quality

Heidi Ramirez, Stanford University

The National Defense Education Act was the first time the federal government got involved in education, particularly in teacher quality. It did not set standards, but it provided resources, a pattern that characterized the government's role in teacher quality up until the Higher Education Act reauthorization in 1998. That bill is the hallmark of the federal government's effort to define or set some expectations for quality and accountability. From there followed the rest of the Clinton education agenda, as characterized by Goals 2000, which was really an investment both in standards-based reform and teacher quality.

How did we get to No Child Left Behind? Both Bush and Gore had very similar agendas on teacher quality during the 2000 campaign; they talked about school report cards and performance pay. There was another set of questions dealing with the apparent lack of institutional and state accountability in the HEA of 1998: 93 percent of people across the country were passing their licensure tests, but we still had highly unqualified teachers in the field. There was a sense that another party had to be involved to ensure effective accountability, and the federal government took up the challenge with the Highly Qualified Teacher provision of NCLB.

The question is, will we know if HEA, ESEA, or any of the various support programs are really making a difference? Does the public have more information now than it had before? The answer to that seems to be yes; the states are reporting now where they did not before. There are a lot more questions regarding whether institutions, districts, and states really work to improve the quality of teaching. Finally, if this is going to work, what do we need to know, and can we really shift from the hands-off approach that characterized the early federal role to an approach that actively goes after quality issues?

Chapter Three

Why Do We License Teachers?

Dan Goldhaber, University of Washington

Alternative teacher licensure emerged on a larger scale in the '80s and '90s, responding to teacher shortages and promoting the belief that it might be possible to bring different kinds of people into the teacher labor market if you lowered entrance barriers.

Advocates of alternative licensure would say that teaching skills might be acquired in a variety of different settings. There are actually a large number of teachers and potential teachers that would be willing to teach if there weren't such hurdles associated with getting into teaching. Localities feel that they ought to have some more flexibility over the hiring of individuals.

Opponents of alternative licensure feel that very specific training is required to prepare teachers, and that training involves pedagogical content; that getting rid of certification would actually downgrade the profession, which in turn might actually decrease interest in teaching; and that localities might make some costly mistakes in hiring.

Should alternative licensure exist? This is a hotly debated question, but it's not the right question. When you really dig into alternative programs, you see that there's really quite a lot of variation across states in terms of what they are classifying as an alternative program. It's probably better to think about what is the proper regulatory role of the state, who is best suited to make the decisions, and what kinds of training programs lead to

enhanced student achievement. We also need to think more systematically about other kinds of mentoring programs that are associated with those alternate routes or other types of profession development opportunities, working on a holistic level to produce high-quality teachers.

Chapter Four

Assessing Traditional Teacher Preparation: Evidence from a Survey of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs

David Leal, University of Texas

How do we ensure the preparation of high-quality teachers? Traditional licensure brings most teachers to public school classrooms, and our trust in this system is based on the argument that schools, colleges, and education departments teach essential skills and knowledge, and weed out unsuitable candidates. My research looked at quality control in education schools, departments, and colleges of education, noting four different places where quality control can take place. First, at the point of entry, there are admissions standards. At the other end, there are state exam standards for graduation. Third, there can be a demanding student teaching requirement. And fourth, there is quality of curriculum.

The study found the wide use of minimum GPA, minimum standardized test score requirements, letters of recommendation, and personal requirements used in admissions decisions. In general, these sorts of entry standards are widely used at both graduate and undergraduate levels. But should these standards be increased? If they were increased, would fewer people be admitted and would fewer teachers enter the profession? Fast-forward to exiting exams—undergraduate programs report a 95 percent pass rate on state licensing exams. Many of them reported that they just tell their students they have to just keep taking it until they pass. Compare this to a 63 percent average state bar pass rate in 2002. Perhaps the students are just extremely qualified, but maybe the exam is actually too easy.

Many people have said student teaching is critical to teacher preparation. Schools reported a 96-percent graduate completion rate and a 95-percent undergraduate completion rate of the practicum. A number of respondents suggest that weeding out takes place before the practicum. The implication is that actually being in the classroom doesn't give us any more information about whether they will be good teachers. The practicum doesn't seem to live up to expectations.

Chapter Five

Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers: An Analysis of Syllabi from a Sample of America's Schools of Education

David Steiner, Boston University School of Education

Is education school coursework really important? Does it effectively contribute to teacher quality by imparting essential pedagogical and professional knowledge? If it

does, then there's a prime argument for the importance of such training. If it does not, then the claims of alternative programs obviously grow in strength. A survey of sixteen schools named by the U.S. News and World Report as some of the top education schools looked at the syllabi for 207 courses, all from 2000 or later, and examined four domains--foundations, reading, mathematics, and methods. Foundations are important because they provide the lens through which students will view their future role as teachers and the intellectual background against which student teachers will then look at their coursework. We looked for four basic sub-areas--readings drawn from the classics, targeted readings in educational psychology, exposure to the history of American education, and introduction to the major debates in contemporary education policy. No single program we examined in any school provided an introduction to all four sub-fields.

The survey then looked at reading at the elementary level for explicit, sequential, systematic instruction in reading skills, especially phonics, as well as practicing and administering various forms of assessment. At the secondary level, we looked for real practice in vocabulary and comprehension skills, and strategies required for reading higher-level texts. Broadly, we were worried by the level of instruction in phonics and practice in the use of assessment tools. We found only two syllabi from two schools that offered extensive instruction in phonics. At the secondary level, these syllabi tended to be weaker in sufficient coverage of content area reading skills. Turning to math, the real weakness we saw was the little actual demand for students to create lesson plans.

Regarding methods, we looked for practice in integrating state frameworks into lesson plans; knowledge of incorporating structural objectives; use of textbooks with specific and practical advice; and properly assessed practicum teaching with videotape analysis. We found that only four schools linked methods instructions to state standards. Five schools incorporate instruction in curriculum models and modes of instruction--for example direct instruction, small group, and so forth. We were rather astonished to see that only two schools of education actually had their student teachers videotaped while they were in their practicum. Teachers who are being prepared to be thoughtful about their craft and about the condition of education in the United States, the profession they're going into, and its major debates ought to have

Chapter Six

The Preparation and Recruitment of Teachers: A Labor Market Framework

Donald Boyd, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb, James Wyckoff, State University of New York

More than half the people who are currently teaching have master's degrees. Much of that results from licensure requirements or the single salary schedule that rewards higher levels of education. There is little evidence, however, that having a master's degree makes a difference in terms of student outcomes. Evidence demonstrates that content knowledge proves crucial to teacher effectiveness, and 50 percent of the folks who have less than three years of experience have degrees in specific academic fields as opposed to education or general education, and this figure has increased over the years.

However, if you look at the bottom 10 percent of New York schools, for example, nearly one in five teachers have had no prior teaching experience, versus none at the other end of that distribution. Nearly one in four are not certified to teach their current subjects,

versus none at the other end. Two-thirds of the variation in teacher qualifications comes from within metropolitan variations, while the remaining third is between metropolitan areas.

The least qualified teachers are in schools with the highest concentrations of non-white, low-income, and academically disadvantaged students. Many of these issues relate to teacher labor markets, and most of the variation in teacher salaries is between metropolitan areas, not within metropolitan areas. There's a lot of evidence that labor markets have tightened recently, increasing the teacher recruitment and retention problems for difficult-to-staff schools at the bottom of the pecking order.

FOUR NEW MODELS of TEACHER LICENSURE

Chapter Seven

Model 1. Cultivating Quality in Teaching: A Brief for Professional Standards

Gary Sykes, Michigan State University School of Education

What role should the state play in regulating entry into teaching? The state ought to regulate both education schools and individuals. Around the world, centralized systems create common and uniform qualifications for entry to teaching as a means of providing access for students to the single most important resource for their learning. But in the United States, where there is a highly decentralized federal system that has institutionalized massive inequalities in access to resources, we are now proposing to deregulate teaching—precisely the wrong move. In such a system, what is instead required is to improve and strengthen the regulation for entry into teaching.

Why do we need both program approval standards and individual licensure standards? If we just regulate programs, then we have no external means of validation that qualified individuals have gone through those programs. If we rely strictly on our licensure system, we would put all the weight only on a system of assessments that by themselves could not possibly be a sufficient guarantee.

The argument for high standards has to be matched with salary interventions because, as any economist would tell you, the implementation of high standards would do nothing on its own but induce a shortage. The combination of intervention around salary and recruitment incentives with high standards is the way to produce highly qualified teachers for all the schools, all the students in a state.

Chapter Eight

Model 2. Cultivating Success through Multiple Providers: A New State Strategy for Improving the Quality of Teacher Preparation

Bryan Hassel and Michele Sherburne, Public Impact

A state role in ensuring that there are plenty of good providers that meet high standards should be emphasized, but there should be no state role in licensing individual teachers. It's very clear that there is no set of teacher qualifications that predict success in the

classroom. There are some variables already discussed that have some predictive value, such as the verbal ability scores of teaching candidates. But all of those variables together, even if we added them all up, don't predict very much of the variation in teaching quality. We also don't have a very good research base on what works in teacher preparation. We can't say with any certainty that any approach to teacher preparation yields better teachers than some others. Furthermore, we have a variety of people wanting to become teachers and diverse employer needs.

State educational leaders have been put under a federal mandate in No Child Left Behind to ensure that there's a qualified teacher in every classroom. For that reason alone, I think we need to consider a hybrid approach that harnesses market dynamics but also retains a key state role in ensuring quality. We call this model a portfolio of providers model or a multiple-providers model, and the basic idea is that the state's role is to authorize providers of teacher preparation that meet certain criteria. Potential providers would apply to the state for the opportunity to offer teacher preparation, and the state would approve them if they meet certain criteria. It would be the goal of the state to create a diverse portfolio of effective programs, both in terms of the type of provider and of the approach that they take to preparation.

This is a broad variation-allowing model. We would envision traditional schools of education, as well as community colleges and other higher education institutions that aren't currently providing teacher education. But school districts or even schools, especially larger ones, non-profit organizations, and for-profit firms could also be potential providers under this approach. We also envision variation in the types of preparation that are provided. The nature and focus of coursework could differ. The relative amount of seat time versus field time could differ along with the nature of field experiences, the kinds of post-graduation follow-up that programs do; the length of time that's required to complete the program; the use of technology, especially distance-learning technology; and finally the reliance the program placed on the screening of the people that enter their program up front versus the preparation.

Chapter Nine

Model 3. A Candidate-Centered Model for Teacher Preparation and Licensure Kate Walsh, National Council on Teacher Quality

Teacher quality in the United States today exists due to the selectivity of colleges and universities and the selectivity of some school districts, and we know that regulation hurts the hiring process. The entry-level standards for candidates going into universities or colleges in the United States are much lower than the European and Asian counterparts. There are some 2,400 four-year colleges in the United States. Half of them have no admission criteria, or you can have below a C average to get admitted. We are therefore admitting a huge number of teachers into the teaching tracks that have met no standard of quality. There is copious criticism of the rigor of the coursework in teacher preparation programs. After coursework, there are the state exams, where 87 percent of all teacher candidates pass the exam.

We are not going to solve the undereducated teacher problem by providing only skills remediation. Most of the measures that the researchers have used to gauge teacher quality have been measures of vocabulary knowledge, and we need to provide a much

stronger liberal arts background to all teachers to raise teacher verbal ability-the one standard that we know matters.

Chapter Ten

Model 4. Improving Academic Performance in U.S. Public Schools: Why Teacher Licensing is (Almost) Irrelevant

Michael Podgursky, University of Missouri-Columbia

The research linking teacher training or licensing to student achievement is inconclusive and provides little support for aggressive regulation of the labor market. If you take the example of certified and uncertified teachers, the average certified teacher is more effective than 60 percent of the non-certified applicants. But the important point here is you have a large dispersion of effectiveness within the two groups. A licensing entry barrier says you can never hire an uncertified teacher if a certified teacher is available. These distributions have tremendous overlap, so that if you have a group of people applying from the two groups, your best candidate may often be the uncertified candidate.

State regulators should focus on what they can measure-student learning-and not on what they can't-teacher quality. Teacher quality is primarily a question of performance and effort, not credentials, and it is a management problem, not a credential problem. If we're really serious about the teacher quality issue, we need to be focused on things that affect the entire teaching workforce-the single salary schedule, tenure, and collective bargaining.

Regulation and accountability are substitutes, not complements. We're moving from a world ten years ago that was essentially all regulation and no accountability toward a world of greater accountabil