

Chapter 6

Career and Technical Education's Role in Alternative Teacher Licensure

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ABSTRACT

The preparation of teacher candidates is highly differentiated among teacher preparation programs across the country. With the increasing development of alternative teacher licensure (ATL) programs, these practices have been the source of considerable debate and contention. The purpose of this chapter is to: (a) provide a historical overview of teacher licensure; (b) review the literature regarding alternative teacher licensure and the needed knowledge base for teachers; and (c) discuss the role Career and Technical Education (CTE) plays in regards to ATL, as well as point out a misconception regarding the original inception of ATL. Further, future trends and implications for future research regarding ATL and the preparation of teachers are outlined.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A seemingly ongoing issue in regards to teacher education is the challenge to supply current schools with competent teachers to meet the demands of public schools (Chin & Young, 2007; Tissington & Grow, 2007). As a result, teacher preparation programs in institutes of higher education (IHE) across the country are charged with the tasks of recruiting, training, and retaining prospective teachers that have the knowledge, skills, and

dispositions needed to maximize student learning in P-12 settings (Tissington & Grow, 2007). In order to fulfill this mission, teacher preparation programs are increasingly turning to alternative teacher licensure (ATL) as a solution (Dai, Sindelar, Denslow, Dewey, & Rosenberg, 2007; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Steadman & Simmons, 2007). According to Legler (2002),

The often-cited need for 22 million teachers over the next ten years has spurred educators to seek alternative routes to fill teaching vacancies, which has led supporters to suggest that we need

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to supplement the pool of potential new teachers with an approach that brings in people from other fields. (p. 3)

In fact, currently, every state in the country has enacted an ATL program with approximately 59,000 individuals entering teaching by way of an ATL program in 2004 (National Center for Alternative Certification [NCAC], 2007).

The purpose of this chapter is to: (a) provide a historical overview of teacher licensure; (b) review the literature regarding ATL; and (c) discuss the role Career and Technical Education (CTE) plays with regard to ATL. The primary emphasis of this chapter is to point out a misconception regarding the original inception of ATL. More specifically, the overwhelming majority of discussions in the ATL literature have reported that ATL has its origins in 1987 with the New Jersey ATL project. However, a deeper investigation of ATL's historical roots has revealed that vocational education has been at the forefront of ATL since 1917 with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act.

6.2 BACKGROUND

6.2.1 Essential Definitions

It is important to define and distinguish between the terms certification and licensure—as these terms are often used interchangeably. According to Bartlett (2002),

Certification: In education, certification means possessing qualifications beyond those required for a license...certification is the process by which a nongovernmental agency or association grants special professional recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications.

Licensure: The official recognition by a state governmental agency that an individual meets state-mandated requirements and is, therefore,

approved to practice as a professional in that state. (p. 107)

6.2.2 A Historical Overview of Teacher Licensure

During the late 18th century, the church was the source for education in the United States (Dial & Stevens, 1993). The ministers that facilitated the education had no formal pedagogical training.

However, free public schools were established in the first quarter of the 19th century, thus creating a demand for teachers (Dial & Stevens, 1993). At that time, the only requirements for recruiting teachers were that they possessed certain values and had an accepted moral character. The preparation of teachers dates back to the 1830s with the development of normal schools for teacher education (Dial & Stevens; McCaslin & Parks, 2001; Pushkin, 2001). However, the quality of preparation for teaching was quite questionable. By the end of the 1890s, undergraduate teacher preparation programs emerged as a function of growing developments of land-grant institutions.

The requirements for teacher training became increasingly more substantive and the duration of the programs became lengthier. In fact, teacher training sessions began with short (ten to twelve week) periods and evolved into longer durations ([e.g., two years] Dials & Stevens, 1993). These later programs were intended to prepare teachers instead of merely training them. In addition, the normal schools initially were designed to prepare teachers for elementary teaching.

It was not until the 1920s in which teacher education was considered to be a professional field of study (Pushkin, 2001). In 1940, according to Pushkin (2001), “recommendations were made for teachers to become content specialists in order to have sufficient expertise to teach assessment-related subject matter. However, it would be another two decades before teachers

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