

certificate, Entry 1 is titled "Writing: Thinking Through the Process." Here the candidate is to demonstrate how she uses writing to develop her students' thinking and writing skills. As evidence, she must submit two "prompts" (directions for student assignments), one related to a social studies-history lesson and one for fictional narrative writing; she must also submit examples of two students' responses to each prompt. The teacher may submit up to twenty pages of drafts per student. Finally, the teacher submits a twelve-page commentary in which she describes the progress that these two particular students are making, what she has done to encourage their progress, and what she would do differently. In her commentary, the teacher is supposed to address the standards for the MC/GEN certificate.

In Entry 2 the "teacher shows his/her pedagogical expertise in science" by submitting lesson plans for a six-week science unit that incorporates "big ideas" and specific skills for students, and by submitting examples of two students' work.¹⁶ The emphasis in both entries is on the teacher's pedagogical expertise, not her knowledge of the content area or the actual achievement of her pupils. The directions are clear: "the focus is on the [teacher's] practice, not on the level of student performance."¹⁷ Thus, teachers are encouraged not to include their top students.

Portfolio Entries 3 and 4: Reflecting on Student Interaction

For Entries 3 and 4 in all certificate fields, the teacher submits short videotapes (fifteen minutes long for Entry 3 and twenty minutes long for Entry 4) and accompanying commentaries to demonstrate how well she meets the standards. For the MC/GEN certificate, Entry 3 asks teachers to show how they "build community in their classrooms."¹⁸ Teachers pose a topic to their students and then film small group discussions about it. For instance, in NBCT Margaret Johnson's class, two fourth-grade students were fighting, so Johnson quickly quelled the fight and formed small groups to discuss what the class could do in the future to prevent this from happening. Along with this videotape, the teacher submits an essay in which she reflects on how well the lesson helped the class build community.

According to NBPTS, accomplished teachers are leaders within their profession and have strong ties to the families of their students.

In Entry 4, the MC/GEN certificate candidate is asked to film her students' discussing a math lesson. Teachers should explain a math concept before the film starts rolling and then capture on videotape twenty minutes of the youngsters discussing it with one another. For example, Matthews, a Maryland NBCT, had his third-grade students sit in a big circle on the floor working with manipulative units and meter sticks to figure out how to build a playground. In his commentary, he explained the ways in which the students were learning about measurement by discovering its applicability to a real-life situation. He explained that his pedagogical approach met MC/GEN's "Standard VI:

Meaningful Applications of Knowledge and Standard VII: Multiple Paths to Knowledge."¹⁹

Portfolio Entries 5 & 6: Documented Accomplishments within the Profession and with the Family

According to NBPTS, accomplished teachers are leaders within their profession and have strong ties to the families of their students. Therefore, a teacher seeking certification in any field needs to document a high level of involvement with her colleagues and her students' families. Entry 5 asks the teacher to keep a log of all her professional activity outside the classroom and to submit evidence that she has served in leadership positions. To ensure that teachers do not manufacture professional accomplishments, a colleague signs the candidate's statement, attesting to its veracity.

For Entry 6, the teacher illustrates that she has a high level of contact with her students' families by keeping a log of all parental contact and submitting letters and summaries of events held for parents, also verified by a colleague. For example, Matthews submitted a summary of an event he organized. To promote literacy, he invited students and their parents to come to school for a bedtime-story night. Parents and students, clad in pajamas, sprawled on the gym floor reading *Under the Lemon Moon* and other books.

All certificate fields require that a candidate respond to four open-ended questions.

Kissing the Box Goodbye

As the April deadline approaches, candidates frantically finish their entries. Procrastinators are writing up their reflective commentaries just days before their deadline, calculating how late they can submit the "box" and still have it arrive on time. The chat room on the NBPTS Internet site is fraught with panic. Last minute questions light up the screen: "Is it acceptable to handwrite Description # and page #s on artifacts? PLEASE ANSWER SOON." "How should I best address the standards? Please, just give me a sample sentence. I'm begging!!!!" Another writes, "Help, my brain is fried!!"²⁰ Apparently submitting the box, which contains the applicants' two videotapes, student work, and numerous reflective essays, is an emotional moment: "I mailed my package this afternoon and I cried letting that box go."²¹ Matthews recalls, "I took [the box] to the UPS and kissed it good-bye. I sent my life for the last year to Texas."

Assessment Center: 4 Separate Scores

With the portfolio entries submitted, the applicants now have a couple of months to prepare for their day in the assessment center. Sometime in the summer, the candidate heads to a local Sylvan Technology Center to undergo the second portion of the application process. All certificate fields require that a candidate respond to four open-ended questions. The purpose is to test the teacher's pedagogical content

knowledge and her ability to make quick judgments about a student's performance as well as to verify the accuracy of the teacher's portfolio assessments.

NBPTS gives guidance about what questions to expect. Questions may be "based on stimulus materials that are mailed out well in advance of the assessment center date."²² Until 1999, candidates could bring materials with them to the assessment center so long as they left them with Sylvan staff. Now they may only bring hand-written notes, although it appears the Board is yielding to candidates' requests to bring typed notes. (Last year, one of the prompts for the MC/GEN was to design a sixth-grade health curriculum. Since NBPTS had informed candidates of the question ahead of time, savvy candidates brought entire health curriculum guides to use during the exam.)

Once the arduous summer day at the assessment center is over, the candidate awaits a decision from NBPTS, which will be issued in November.

How Entries are Scored

To evaluate the portfolios, the Board hires "assessors"—current classroom teachers with at least three years of experience—who assess certificate areas in which they are certified themselves. For example, someone who is state-certified in Early

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Childhood Education would score candidates applying for board certification as Early Childhood/Generalist. If a teacher is interested in earning \$100 per day for summer employment as an assessor and meets these criteria, she is virtually guaranteed an invitation to the summer scoring sessions, which are held in six different places around the country. Each session lasts three to four weeks with five days of training at the beginning. The first four days of training are devoted to anti-bias training (to prevent an assessor from scoring a candidate down for inappropriate factors) and preparation in the scoring method. One day is reserved for mock scoring to make sure the assessor's ratings are "on target" before she proceeds to "live scoring," i.e., judging actual candidates' portfolios.

After spending four days uncovering their biases and deconstructing their concepts of good teaching, as well as learning the ins and outs of NBPTS scoring rubrics, assessors are assigned to a room where they will score just one type of entry in one certificate area. For example, the assessor scoring for the Middle Childhood/Generalist certificate will be assigned to a single category, such as Entry 3.

Each year the scoring system and assessor training have altered somewhat as researchers for the Board have sought to improve inter-rater reliability, that is, the consistency of scores that different assessors assign. An NBPTS staff member at the February 1999 Scoring Institute explained one difficulty with the scoring process like

this: “The history of the National Board was that it was run by good teachers who believed in constructivist practice—that we create our own meaning. Initially, training [for the assessors] was a discovery learning center. Everything was up for grabs; it was chaos.” Therefore, NBPTS staff regrouped and decided to train assessors about “one right way” to score candidates, while insisting that, “there is not one right answer for the candidate.”

The one right way to score led to development of a scoring system that uses rubrics, guiding questions, and scoring paths (a list of instructions about how to score). Scores range from 1 to 4, with 3 or 4 considered a “pass.” The scoring rubrics are dense paragraphs that explain what each numerical score indicates. During the Scoring Institute seminar, leaders asked attendees to identify “buzz phrases” from these paragraphs. For example, the level 4 performance provides “clear, consistent and convincing evidence” that the teachers further the students’ learning and the teachers use “rich and varied assignments” and are able to reflect on their past teaching.²³ Level 3 performance, by contrast, provides only “clear evidence” and “varied assignments.”²⁴

Once the assessors have become comfortable with the rubrics, they are given cases on which to practice scoring. The training staff gives them cases that the Board has judged “dead-on” 3s and 4s to determine how well an individual assessor can identify the more obvious cases. Next, assessors are given less obvious cases but ones that are supposed to come within 1.25 points of the score the Board has determined. To ensure that assessors are grading correctly, National Board uses its version of quality control called “read behind,” a procedure in which trainers—advanced assessors—pull cases at random and score them to see if their scores agree with the assessors. Trainers also “read behind” assessors whose scores are not yet “on target” despite all the training, and those who consistently score low or high.

In live scoring, two assessors grade each entry to ensure that the scores are fair. If their ratings deviate by more than 1.25 points, then the trainer reads the case and scores it. The scores are then reported through “automatic adjudication.” By this policy, if the three scores are within two points on the scale, they’re averaged, with the trainer’s score counting twice. If the three scores do not fall within two points, the trainer’s score prevails. Considering that ten entries (the six portfolios and four assessment center exercises) are appraised in this way, each candidate will have twenty people—or more—reviewing and assessing her application. This helps to explain the Board’s high costs.

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Who Passes?

In November, NBPTS votes on and then announces the candidates who have met its standards. To date, according to Valerie French, the head of scoring and assessment

for the Board, about 45 to 50 percent of all candidates, across the years and the certificate areas, have achieved certification.

French declined to provide more specific numbers. At the Scoring Institute, she deflected this question and instead highlighted the Board's new policy for people who fail to certify. In years past, those who wanted to try again had to pay the \$2,000 application fee a second time and redo all ten entries. The Board now allows the candidates to "bank" their scores for three years and redo certain entries (or retake certain assessment center tests) for \$275 each.

The banking policy, initiated in 1996-97, has been popular. According to French, half of those who do not achieve certification in the first attempt will later pass. Thus, 75 percent of all applicants could potentially achieve certification. The Board also has an appeals process, but few people use it now that they can avail themselves of the banking process.

For those who achieve certification, numerous opportunities and rewards await. Thirteen states have passed legislation to award salary bonuses to NBCTs. North Carolina offers a 12 percent annual salary increase for the life of the certificate. (One presumes that means for as long as a teacher is in the classroom since the certificate is good for ten years and renewable upon expiration.) Some districts have established their own salary incentives for NBCTs. National Board certification in some states allows teachers to waive other requirements for relicensing. For example, in Florida, an NBCT need not take continuing education courses; she can merely present her National Board certificate in order to recertify in the state.

NBCTs report that other opportunities are given to them because of their new status. These include teaching at the college level, testifying before state legislatures, and mentoring new teachers. A handful of NBCTs collaborated with A&E cable network to produce six episodes of "Biography." Clearly, NBPTS certification is a boon to an individual who receives it. The question that remains is whether such certification is a true boon for U.S. teacher quality, student progress, and the public at large.

Scoring the National Board

The National Board has indisputably established itself as a powerful voice in the debate about teacher quality. Its claims, if true, would certainly warrant considerable influence. It purports to offer definitive standards for good teaching in nearly every field. Moreover, the Board claims it is able to identify teachers who are highly accomplished. That would be no minor achievement. How real is it?

For an organization dedicated to evaluation, the National Board has been surprisingly free from rigorous evaluations of its own activities and processes. Yet a number of issues deserve close scrutiny: the quality of the Board's standards, the validity of its scoring system, the rationale for federal funding, the objectivity of research on the

Board's effectiveness, the Board's ties to the teacher unions, and its connections with state policymakers and teacher-training institutions.

1. Standards

Research or Blind Faith?

The National Board has taken on the daunting task of promulgating definitive standards for accomplished teaching in thirty-three different certificate areas. Defining standards in education has been notoriously contentious. Witness the uproar in California that followed implementation of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards. Chuck Cascio, NBPTS Vice President for Certification, Standards and Professional Development is confident that the Board's standards have received the highest levels of scrutiny and represent a professional consensus. This confidence, however, appears to stem primarily from his trust in the people who make up the standards committees. Cascio noted that all of these committees have leading researchers—university professors well known in their fields (most often in teacher education)—as well as successful teachers. Although the standards committees do not themselves prepare any research to back up the assumptions embedded in their standards, Cascio argues that the professors on the committee use their knowledge of their field to guide the standard-setting process. Furthermore, Cascio said that, while the committees' standards are not based on empirical research, they are based on the "experiential research" of the teachers who serve on the committee. He is referring to teachers' personal knowledge of what works well in their classrooms.

Sharon Fieman-Nemser, Professor of Early Childhood Education at Michigan State University and a member of the Middle Childhood/Generalist standards committee, confirmed Cascio's description of how the standards are determined. When asked if the committee sought to research whether or not its standards correlate with student academic progress, Fieman-Nemser explained that they "did not have the time to do so and this was also not the committee's priority." Rather, "people told good stories about teaching. We listened to each other." The committee's top priority was on generating standards that "speak to highly accomplished teachers" and that related to what "teachers practice, talk about, and experience."

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Basing standards on teachers' personal opinions of what is good practice rather than academic research seems problematic. In defining these standards, the committees and, in turn, the NBPTS itself, have supplied no evidence that they correlate with student learning. Furthermore, it is likely that the way in which the standard-setters are selected will lead to a predictable set of criteria. The board of directors selects

the committee members, resulting in an incestuous process involving like-minded persons. Instead of looking at the research base of what underlies good teaching, the committee members work mostly from their gut feelings, and when there is a vacancy someone else with similar gut feelings is most apt to be chosen.

Content or Pedagogy?

NBPTS materials and representatives emphasize how unique the Board is because it stresses rewarding teachers for their practice. Hence, pedagogical knowledge is emphasized as the most important quality that a teacher possesses. Although French, Vice President for Assessment Development, insists that a balance is sought between a teacher's subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, the Board's actual standards suggest otherwise. For example, the Middle Childhood/Generalist (MC/GEN) certificate has eleven standards, only one of which focuses on content: Standard II: Knowledge of Content and Curriculum.²⁵ And, even this standard is obscured by pedagogy, making it difficult to discern just what is the level of content knowledge a highly accomplished teacher would need to possess—or how this would be demonstrated. "Having a firm foundation of the conceptual and procedural knowledge in the subjects that comprise the curriculum . . . is essential," reads Standard II in the NBPTS MC/GEN document. Yet, after a cursory mention of the significance of subject knowledge, specifics vanish and the preponderance of the forty-four-page document is focused on pedagogical knowledge.

In the MC/GEN standards document under the topic of science, candidates are told that accomplished teachers should "draw on their knowledge of fundamental ideas and concepts in earth and space science, the life sciences and the physical sciences."²⁶ But the document goes no deeper than this peripheral comment about teachers' content knowledge. Instead, it emphasizes the way a teacher teaches. Here, NBPTS has a particular type of teaching in mind. Some examples help illuminate this:

- Teachers further personalize science through "hands-on" activities and independent study of important issues and themes. This student-centered learning approach helps students develop a stronger understanding of the concepts and processes taught.
- Exemplary teachers humanize the study of science" by telling stories about scientists and "their doubts and struggles in coming to understand an area of science."²⁷

Whether or not these methods are essential is debatable. Humanizing science may work to interest some students. However, is doing so really an indicator of an "exemplary teacher?" What about the importance of the teacher having demonstrated mastery of the scientific disciplines?

This tendency to de-emphasize content knowledge is not confined to the MC/GEN certificate. The Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Social Studies-History certificate again devotes only one of its twelve standards to teachers' knowledge of subject matter. Although this document devotes more space than most to content (for example, by identifying precise historical periods a teacher should know) the majority of the document concerns itself with how teachers conduct themselves. For example:

- They frequently arrange students in heterogeneous small groups to bring pupils from different backgrounds into contact with one another.²⁸
- They, also, engage their students in assessing the work of their peers, which can provide them with fresh perspectives.²⁹

Not only are the standards promoting questionable pedagogical approaches, they often deteriorate into vague language such as the following:

- They [accomplished teachers] are aware that there are better and worse ways to offer encouragement and constructive criticism.³⁰

The Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics standards document devotes one of eleven standards to teacher content knowledge. Standard III: Knowledge of Mathematics advises that teachers "have a broad and deep knowledge of the concepts, principles, techniques and reasoning methods of mathematics."³¹ Yet, a close reading of the standards show them to be vague about mathematics itself, describing it as a "'science of patterns,' [dealing] with a wide range of patterns from all aspects of scientific, technical and practical work."³²

Lawrence Braden and Ralph Raimi, two math experts who completed a comprehensive study of state math standards in March 1998, examined the NBPTS Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics standards and concluded that they do not place enough emphasis on proven methods for teaching mathematics. Braden commented, "Words such as 'proof,' 'lecture,' 'hard work,' 'drill,' 'mastery of material' are not mentioned at all or they are denigrated."³³ Raimi noted various content oversights, such as long division—which he describes as the "capstone to decimal notation"—and a lack of specificity when it comes to geometry and algebra. Both Braden and Raimi remarked that they were surprised at how much attention the standards devote to the ways in which teachers should interact with students and even to matters such as exhorting teachers to include different cultural approaches to mathematics.

The Board has clearly prioritized a particular teaching style—one that is inclusive and learner-centered—at the expense of a rigorous assessment of teachers' substantive expertise in their subject field. A teacher with little knowledge of her field might then have sufficient insight into children's psychology, sufficient classroom presence, and

This lack of emphasis on content knowledge among master teachers is alarming in an age when we cannot assume that teachers have studied their subjects in depth.

sufficient deference to multicultural ideology to score a high average grade and become certified as a superior teacher.

This lack of emphasis on content knowledge among master teachers is alarming in an age when we cannot assume that teachers have studied their subjects in depth. Much academic research has shown the importance of teachers' content knowledge. Economists Dan Goldhaber and Dominic Brewer found this especially true in math

The Board never addresses whether or not its knowledge base is well supported by rigorous research.

and science: pupils of teachers with a B.A. in math or science (not math education or science education) performed significantly better academically in these subjects.³⁴ Teachers' troubling lack of content knowledge also surfaced in a recent federal study that found only 38 percent of public schools teachers have a degree in *any* academic subject; the rest majored in some branch of education.³⁵ "You can't teach what you don't know," Michael Poliakoff, Pennsylvania's Deputy Secretary of Education, says, quoting a summary of the problem offered by the Education Trust's Kati Haycock.

Since the Board does not ask candidates to demonstrate their content knowledge as a prerequisite, it seems important that the Board insists that they demonstrate it through a rigorous examination. Yet, as we will see, knowledge of academic content is also de-emphasized in the assessment process itself.

The Board's Pedagogical Assumptions

NBPTS certification rests on the assumption that teaching is a complex act that requires specialized knowledge about pedagogy. Because the Board believes in the preeminent importance of this special knowledge, it is not surprising that the Board emphasizes pedagogical knowledge in its standards and assessment portfolios. In its policy statement, "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do," NBPTS declared, "[teachers'] choices are anchored in their own experience and in the settled ground of the knowledge base that defines both efficacious and flawed practice."³⁶ NBPTS points to mastery of this "knowledge base" as evidence that a teacher is a true professional: "Chief among the [attributes characterizing professions] are a body of specialized, expert knowledge together with a code of ethics emphasizing service to clients," according to an NBPTS policy statement.³⁷

The National Board, through its standards and assessments, is a powerful vehicle for promoting this knowledge base. Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford education professor and strong proponent of NBPTS, points to the example of medicine to support the Board's approach:

The way in which medicine, for example, ensures that new research knowledge actually gets used is by including it on medical licensing examinations and specialty board examinations and in accreditation guidelines to which professional schools and hospitals must respond. In education, however, teachers

examinations have reflected little of what might be called a knowledge base for teaching.³⁸

National Board standards and assessments aim to change this trend in education. Although Darling-Hammond suggests parallels between NBPTS's ability to disseminate new research and that of medical specialty boards, the analogy falters when one compares the research backing medical board certification and the meager research guiding NBPTS assessment.

The Board never addresses whether or not its knowledge base is well supported by rigorous research. Indeed, Bonnie Grossen, University of Oregon research professor, notes, "Teaching procedures are often widely disseminated without any evidence that they work."³⁹ Other professions, continues Grossen, use the scientific method to "ensure to some extent that the procedures shared across the profession actually work to increase the success of all members of the profession."⁴⁰ Most research into professional practices, such as medical treatments, goes through three stages: (1) generate a new hypothesis about a treatment or therapy based on informal observations; (2) test the hypothesis by formally trying to disprove it, and (3), when the hypothesis holds, replicate the experiment in a large scale study, complete with random assignment and a control group. In education, on the other hand, new procedures are widely shared across the profession with only Level I support. Someone generates a theory about a new instructional strategy that might (or might not) be better than an old one and then finds, as Grossen suggests, "access to a powerful means for dissemination, and that procedure quickly becomes a fad widely disseminated without any further testing of the hypothesis."⁴¹

Grossen's critique seems to describe accurately the way in which the National Board developed its standards and the pedagogical style that it advances. The standards committees generated theories about what constitutes good teaching and then disseminated them with no rigorous evaluation of their efficacy. A closer look at the Board's standards and assessment methods also reveals that they are highly supportive of constructivist pedagogy, a theory that assumes only "constructed knowledge—knowledge which one finds out for one's self—is truly integrated and understood."⁴² Despite a lack of research to support this approach to appraising teacher effectiveness, NBPTS encourages it.⁴³ This is apt to pose a dilemma for states that have worked hard to overturn constructivist methods and return the focus to content knowledge, as California recently did in reading and math. Such a state may find itself in a strange contradiction, stressing content in its standards for children while supporting an organization that ordains master teachers by de-emphasizing the very same thing.

The Board encourages teachers to provide "multiple paths to knowledge" in ways redolent of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence (M.I.) theory. Without citing

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Gardner by name, the various standards allude to his theory by suggesting that teachers give students "multiple opportunities to express their understanding and succeed, by raising their level of self-confidence, and by deepening their grasp of topics and skills studied."⁴⁴ While the standards do not explicitly identify Gardner's theory, discussion at the Scoring Institute made clear that teachers generally perceive the Board as endorsing it. Praise for stressing multiple intelligence theory went unchecked by Board staff leading the Institute.

It may be well and good for a teacher to demonstrate a concept to her pupils in several different ways, perhaps reading about it, graphing it, and creating a timeline

As a matter of principle, the Board does not examine teachers with objective measures.

about it. Yet too much emphasis on creating multiple paths may prevent a teacher from ensuring that her students have mastered enough of the basic content itself. Journalist James Traub comments in an article about multiple intelligence theory that "most people who study intelligence view M.I. theory as rhetoric rather than science."⁴⁵ Steven Ceci, a developmental psychologist at Cornell, explains that Gardner's view "provides no hard evidence—test results, for example—that his colleagues could evaluate."⁴⁶ At this point, M.I. remains a theory that is widely accepted among educators despite the paucity of serious scientific research to substantiate it. This theory doubtless remains popular

because it allows teachers to be more egalitarian in praising their students for their intelligence(s). ("Academic intelligence is no more valid than kinesthetic intelligence.") It is unfortunate that NBPTS has embraced yet another education strategy that, while popular, bears no demonstrated connection to improved pupil performance.

Although Cascio insists that "there is nothing in the standards report that says [NBPTS] advances one particular pedagogy," a close examination of the standards and the types of activities teachers have to perform indicates otherwise. The problems outlined above suggest that the Board's professional teaching standards are, at bottom, unconnected to hard evidence that they correlate with successful teaching. The Board's enchantment with today's regnant educational orthodoxies has left it with vague, therapeutic standards and a subjective assessment process that do not inspire confidence in its imprimatur.

II. Scoring Process

Similar problems affect the scoring process. Although NBPTS has invested much time and money in developing a scoring system that it says is fair and accurate, questions of validity and reliability still bedevil that system.

Content

Just as content knowledge ranks low in the Board's standards, it also draws little emphasis in the assessment exercises. As a matter of principle, the Board does not examine teachers with objective measures. Valerie French explained that "[w]e all

know tests don't and can't measure teacher pedagogical knowledge." She also said that objective tests can only measure breadth of knowledge, not its depth—a statement that can be applied to some objective tests, but not all. Instead, assessors are asked to evaluate a teacher's content knowledge by closely reading her reflective commentaries. However, candidates select what they submit and the proliferation of support groups for Board candidates and Internet discussion groups devoted to assessing the Board's tests diminish the likelihood that the portfolios represent only the candidate's work. Thus, there is no guarantee that what the Board sees is truly reflective of the candidate's ability and knowledge. As more candidates apply for certification, the possibility of cheating also increases.

The Board's disinterest in teachers' content knowledge signals to the profession that there is no need to stress content knowledge for pupils either. At the Scoring Institute in D.C., two fourth-grade teachers' portfolios for the writing assignment were shared to demonstrate what should be considered passing scores of 3 and 4.

In the example that represented a 3, the teacher did not give her students grades; instead she gave them comments on their final drafts. In the example that earned a 4, the teacher invited the students to assign themselves grades. As the teacher explained in her commentary, in the name of self-esteem building, she consented to give "Ben" the A he claimed to deserve despite numerous spelling errors and unanswered questions posed by the teacher. Is this the best way to teach kids how to write, or to know whether they are learning Standard English? Yet

Board staff lauded these examples because the teachers relied on peer editing and student self-discovery. We may well wonder just what the student discovered. We may also wonder how assessors can judge a teacher's own content knowledge from these submissions. The only criterion that the Board appears to be evaluating is how well a teacher can justify *why* she did something. Identifying someone as being good at justifying her actions is not the same as identifying someone as being an effective teacher. The Board seems to have confused the two.

The possibility of cheating may also pose a problem.

The Board points to the assessment center exercises as the chief opportunity to test teachers directly on their content knowledge. Yet these exercises are uneven. For example, the exercises for the Middle Childhood/Generalist (MC/GEN) certificate never directly test the candidate on content knowledge. Instead, the four questions ask teachers to plan lessons in light of particular goals and assumptions or to diagnose the status of student learning. Moreover, the questions—or topics very close to the actual questions—are sent ahead of time, so teachers can prepare responses. One MC/GEN certified teacher reassured candidates on the NBPTS website, "Don't sweat the Assessment Center! The exercises are practically given to you this year."⁴⁷ On the other hand, the assessment center exercises for the Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Science (AYA/Science) certificate directly question the candidate on her knowledge of science. Diane Walker, a Florida teacher certified in AYA/Science, related that she answered four tough questions just about science: two very specific ques-

Although the Board claims not to favor any one particular pedagogy, the portfolio entries suggest otherwise.

tions about biological systems, one about chemistry, and one about ecology. Valerie French of NBPTS explained that some fields lend themselves to more content-based questions. The danger in accepting that assumption is that assessment exercises for other fields will be less challenging, at least in terms of their content knowledge.

The possibility of cheating may also pose a problem. Just as teachers can easily share portfolio entries with one another, the availability of multiple test dates for the assessment centers makes sharing the questions with other candidates a real possibility. In early 1999, a naive candidate posted this question on the NBPTS website: "Has anyone taken the assessment center exercises yet for early childhood? If you have are you able to tell others what strand of math the question is about?"⁴⁸ Though this person was quickly chastised by other Board

candidates, we can have little confidence that discussions about the assessment center exercises don't occur. Rather, it happens in a more discreet fashion. At this point, the Board offers the same assessment center questions for each test date, despite this very real possibility of cheating—surely a practice that calls into question the validity of the assessment process.

Subjective Assessments

The constructivist pedagogy that permeates the standards is reinforced in the portfolio entries and assessment center exercises. Although the Board claims not to favor any one particular pedagogy, the portfolio entries suggest otherwise.

NBPTS boasts that the objectivity of its assessment process is guaranteed by its anti-bias training. At the February Scoring Institute, attendees had a taste of the anti-bias exercises. During the two days, everyone participates in four anti-bias activities, although real assessors "go much more deeply" into their personal biases, according to NBPTS staff. Scoring Institute staff admonish the roomful of educators to "accept as a presumption that we all have biases." The Institute's leader instructed the group to examine their personal concepts of "competence and incompetence." After sharing with one another their disdain for teachers who "line their students up in rows" or who "believe in only one right answer," attendees were advised to purge themselves of these personal biases. Three other exercises are meant to help attendees see how well trained assessors are to suppress any "personal biases" during the scoring process. From these exercises, assessors develop a list of "personal biases" that they keep on hand while assessing. For example, one person acknowledged a bias against "U.S.-centrism," so this might become part of her very own "hit list." Assessors read these lists before scoring each entry, in the hopes that they will remind themselves of the evil of condemning a teacher for being a "U. S. centrist," for example.

The two panelists leading the Scoring Institute frequently reminded the group to avoid condemning a teacher for “one fatal flaw: misinformation.” Apparently, if someone makes a content error, assessors are asked to overlook it lest they—amazingly—be biased against error itself. When probed on this point, Thompson, the ETS consultant, replied: “If the entire lesson is blatantly wrong, we would count that against the person, but errors about people’s names, dates, formulas, or writing shouldn’t count against the person.” A few of the teachers attending the Institute worried that the National Board would favor teachers who are good writers, which, in their opinion might rule out good teachers who write poorly. A teacher from Los Angeles asked, “What about a candidate whose writing is all over the map—the prompt is so full of errors that you have to wonder what kind of teacher is this?” In response, Board-certified art teacher Karen Price, who has a year-long fellowship at ETS to help lead these scoring sessions, responded, “Well, the writing is not counted. We’re just looking for substance. For teachers, writing is just not their strength.”

It is curious that an organization dedicated to highly accomplished teaching would set such low standards for teacher literacy.

It is curious that an organization dedicated to highly accomplished teaching would set such low standards for teacher literacy. Is the Board suggesting that the public should simply accept that writing is not a teacher’s strong point—even an English teacher’s—and ignore quality (or the absence thereof) in this area? It seems the National Board would be in an ideal position to raise the bar and challenge teachers to improve their writing rather than stipulate that teachers are not writers. De-emphasizing writing ability and downplaying content errors seem to run counter to the Board’s claim that it has identified teachers who are truly superior.

As would be expected, the portfolio entries submitted by teachers parallel the standards, and their reliance on a constructivist philosophy does, too. Indeed, the entries are structured in such a way as to favor the constructivist. A candidate is rewarded for having her students work in groups and avoiding a teacher-centered classroom. The teacher who would like to demonstrate her students’ knowledge through recitations of Homer or by completing geometric proofs on the chalkboard is deterred from this approach. For all the Board’s emphasis on anti-bias training, its constructivist bias is firmly entrenched—yet to be deconstructed or even acknowledged.

Time and Money

The National Board favors teachers who have the personal and professional means to prepare its time-consuming portfolios. Candidates agree that applying for certification requires a substantial time commitment. They say they spend 200 to 800 hours completing the six portfolios. One candidate said she felt as if she had two full time jobs—full time teacher and full time candidate. She would wake daily at 5:00 a.m. in order to work on her commentaries before school and then work each night as well.

Because the videotaped exercises are supposed to be unedited, fifteen- and twenty-minute-long pieces, these might appear to be rather simple exercises to prepare. Yet discussions with NBCTs make clear that this is an arduous and sometimes costly practice. Marnie Thompson, a Scoring Institute panelist, noted that teachers generally have five or six opportunities to film themselves before selecting fifteen consecutive minutes of tape. But what if one's school doesn't have video equipment or the equipment is faulty? Margaret Johnson's response was to purchase her own video camera for \$1000. Having not achieved certification with her first attempt, she learned on the second try that her videotaping needed to improve. Her husband took off from work—fortunately, he runs his own business—to tape her class. Finally, she had nine hours of tape from which to choose her fifteen- and twenty-minute segments.

Learning the ins and outs of videotaping, Johnson concluded, "is something I do not need to know how to do to be a good teacher." Moreover, she noted, there is "not

"Applying to be recognized as an accomplished teacher was undermining my teaching practice this year."

support in the school systems for these kinds of resources." Matthews also used a personal camera, filming his class for two weeks to get the kids accustomed to it. Realizing that the sound didn't work well, he requested help from the district's communications program. Matthews led the class with a cordless mike while a professional cameraman filmed the proceedings of the class. Of course, as Matthews noted, not every district has these sorts of resources.

Despite complaints from candidates, the Board maintains that these performance-based standards—especially the videotaped entries—are the only way that the Board can see the candidates in action. Though these exercises may be time-consuming and costly, Thompson noted that, short of having assessors entering candidates' classrooms, this is the best method for evaluating the teachers' practice.

Yet Roger Marshall, a 1999 candidate, detected a paradox in the process. Having invested over 300 hours preparing his portfolio and \$2,600 of his own money (he'll be partly reimbursed by the local teachers' union), he realized late in the process that he was shortchanging his students. "Applying to be recognized as an accomplished teacher was undermining my teaching practice this year." This paradox was especially painful for Marshall because seventeen of his twenty-five students are bilingual and five have special needs. NBPTS would like board certification to be an option that is equally available to all teachers, but realistically the time commitment and out-of-pocket expenses put it out of the reach of many potential candidates. Marshall's example indicates that the burdensome certification process can actually diminish a teacher's performance.

Peer Review

NBPTS operates on the assumption that the mark of true professionalism is peer review. Peer review, the process by which educators judge one another, is also characteristic of the "new unionism" that Bob Chase and the NEA promote.⁴⁹ The National Board's dedication to hiring teachers as assessors is emblematic of this new view. It assumes that no other group, such as principals or local administrators, can gauge successful teaching. It further assumes that good teachers cannot be identified by charting their students' academic progress over time. There is the assumption that only teachers are skillful at identifying highly accomplished teachers, despite little or no real evidence that they are better than any other group at evaluating teachers.

Banking Policy

As of 1996-97, candidates who failed could bank their scores and retake exercises as needed. The portfolio entries would be the same—of course, the class of students would not be—but the assessment center exercises would be different. This policy has interesting implications. Half of those who bank their scores achieve certification over the three years they have to try, making the overall success rate for Board certification potentially as high as 75 percent. A banking policy may invite manipulation. Candidates can now choose not to complete some entries and wait until the following year to submit them, or choose to focus their attention on only a few of the entries and turn in poor examples for others, knowing they can try again the following year.

III. Government Entanglements

To date, the federal government has appropriated over \$70 million to the Board. According to Sally Mernissi, NBPTS Vice President for Governmental Affairs, the Board expects to be self-sustaining by 2001 through reliance on application fees.⁵⁰ It should be noted, however, that the Board made a similar claim when it received its first federal appropriation ten years ago.⁵¹

The Board's tendency to prolong its dependency on the federal government raises the question of whether and on what conditions Washington should support this endeavor. NBPTS initially justified federal funding as an important subsidy to help it conduct research and develop its certificates before it had any cash flow or applicants. It's interesting to note, however, that no other professional organization, such as medical specialty boards, have needed federal dollars to launch their organizations. After ten years of funding, Congress may fairly ask whether the NBPTS process supports larger national goals for teacher quality and whether it actually does what it promises: identify highly accomplished teachers.

The Board has not kept its promise to seek rigorous, outside reviews of its performance.

When the Board first received federal dollars, it created a unique relationship whereby it would get funding from the U.S. Department of Education but the Department would exercise no oversight authority. The Board claimed that it needed its autonomy in order to avoid being politically influenced. Still, the Board pledged "to submit reports to Congress every year, have its accounts audited, and have its spending of federal funds audited by the General Accounting Office."⁵² Ten years later, the Board has not kept its promise to seek rigorous, outside reviews of its performance. The GAO has never audited the Board. In truth, the Secretary of Education acts merely as a cashier. He has no authority to hold NBPTS accountable for the wisdom and effectiveness of its practices.

At the state level, embracing the Board allows policymakers to sidestep the sticky issue of merit pay while appeasing voters and teachers with some type of differentiated pay for good teachers. When these salary incentives are reserved for Board-certified teachers, NBPTS wields a monopoly on determining who is a good teacher. Is this good public policy? What about the teacher who does not want to take time away from her students to go through the time-consuming certification process, but is nonetheless a great teacher as demonstrated by her pupils' high levels of learning year in and year out? She may get words of thanks from some students and parents, but she will not see additional compensation.

Although its monopoly status is undeniably a boon for the Board, it also poses a problem. As the Board gains more exposure and financial support in the states, the number of applicants will dramatically increase; witness 1999's bumper crop of more than 7,700 applicants. Up to this point, Board-certified teachers may have been good teachers, but that could easily be due to self-selection. The quality of the assessment system will come under greater scrutiny for its consistency in identifying accomplished teachers as the number of candidates soar. Writing in *Education Week*, economists Michael Podgursky and Dale Ballou point out that "if the cost of applying is low and there is a modest probability of success, many less-than-outstanding teachers are going to seek out national board certification."⁵³ The process is "apt to become routinized and standardized."⁵⁴ They then asked, "How well will the board discriminate when thousands of applicants seek certification through a bureaucratized system? No one knows."⁵⁵ Cheri Yecke, Virginia's Deputy Secretary of Education, raises another question: How will states provide salary incentives once the number of board-certified teachers expands? It's a financial time-bomb.⁵⁶

The Board has made little effort to link its credentialing process to gains in pupil achievement.

When Virginia was considering granting salary bonuses to NBCTs, Yecke conducted a longitudinal fiscal impact study for the state. She discovered that, when states offer National Board salary bonuses, the numbers of NBPTS applicants increases dramatically. In Florida, the growth rate was over 1,000 percent and in Mississippi it was over 800 percent. Using these growth models, Yecke determined that Virginia, which

has only twenty-eight NBCTs now, could have between 800–10,000 NBCTs by 2003–04, costing the state anywhere from \$3 million to \$33 million under proposed legislation for salary bonuses. Yecke, knowing the legislature's hesitancy to fund bonuses up to this level, informed legislators that it is unfair "to dangle this carrot in front of teachers when there is no guarantee it will be funded in the future." Yecke also notes that board certification focuses on input measures that are inconsistent with Virginia's emphasis on student and school results, as evidenced in its Standards of Learning and the tests based on them. Yecke concludes that "teachers whose students show the most improvement on the test should be the ones rewarded," not the NBCTs, since there is no evidence that their students do better academically.

IV. Research on Board Effectiveness

The Board has made little effort to link its credentialing process to gains in pupil achievement—the holy grail of education reform. At this point the Board has no evidence that the teachers it certifies produce superior student achievement or even, for that matter, the kinds of "caring, inclusive, stimulating and safe school communit[ies]" the Board is intent on fostering.

The only study, to date, that looks at the impact of Board certification on student outcomes is seriously flawed, both because the Board paid for the study and because all the researchers have had or continue to have professional ties to the Board. For example, Marnie Thompson is an ETS consultant who is deeply involved in assessor training. As the researchers themselves admit, "the power of the study is limited."⁵⁷ Only six teachers were observed. Using classroom observations as their measure, the researchers found "accomplished teachers" among both certified and uncertified groups, and they also found unaccomplished teachers among both groups. Little was learned from this study because the findings were ambiguous and the experimental design had no empirical validity.

The research void may be partially filled by an upcoming study planned by National Partnership for Effectiveness and Accountability in Teaching (NPEAT) and the University of Maryland. With a federal grant to study the Board, a research group under the aegis of NPEAT is supposed to determine "whether teachers who have been certified as outstanding by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards produce better-educated students."⁵⁸ They plan to compare the practices of certified and non-certified teachers; they will also attempt to compare student outcomes.

Like the earlier study, however, this one already suffers from serious problems of interlocking interests. The principal researcher, Ann Harman, is also Senior Executive Associate for Assessment and Research at the National Board itself. She has a built-in objectivity problem. The other researchers employed by NPEAT, Richard M. Jaeger and John Hattie, have also worked for the Board in the past. Moreover, NPEAT counts the National Board as one of its *member groups* and has already pledged to disseminate National Board standards and assessment methods across the education

community. All these factors suggest that the study's findings will be biased in favor of the Board. The Board is essentially studying itself—or engaging friends and allies to do so, which raises the question, Shouldn't the Board pay for this self-serving research and save federal funds for an independent study?

There are other troubling aspects to this study. Officials at the U.S. Department of Education admit that it is deficient because of a small sample—sixty-five teachers—and one that is limited geographically. Also, the research design calls for a study of

Union members represent nearly two-thirds of the Board membership.

various subjective measures of a teacher's practice. The researchers are trying to stay away from measuring student outcomes with standardized test results because the three geographic areas where the teachers are being studied use different tests. Instead, researchers will use structured interviews with teachers, parents, and students, classroom observations, and evaluations of a student writing assignment. These subjective measures of student success, unburdened by objective measures of pupil progress, will still leave the findings questionable.

Thus, even after the government funds this endeavor, reliable, independent research will still be required.

V. Union Entanglement

NBPTS trumpets its support from numerous professional education organizations, ranging from the National School Boards Association to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.⁵⁹ The two most influential groups that support NBPTS and are heavily represented among its directors are the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Nineteen of the Board's directors are NEA members, including the Board's present chair, Barbara Kelley, a physical education teacher from Maine. The AFT has similar numbers on the Board. Thus, union members represent nearly two-thirds of the Board membership.

A number of factors explain this. Since Albert Shanker was instrumental in mobilizing financial and institutional support for the concept of national board certification, it is not surprising that he would also work to ensure that the unions had a strong voice on the board itself. Mary Hatwood Futrell, the former NEA president, also served on the Carnegie Task Force that drafted the bylaws requiring equal representation of the two unions on the Board. The task force determined that forty-two of the Board's sixty-three members would be teachers, most of them public-school teachers who belong to unions. This task force also selected the original board of directors.

Having such a high representation of union members on the Board is a politically astute move for NBPTS. Teachers, who historically have been suspicious of testing and merit pay, are more apt to trust an organization they know to be led and sanctioned by the unions. The NEA assures its members that they can trust NBPTS because the experts behind it are themselves teachers and because "NEA formally supports NBPTS through its resolutions and other policy documents, and considers

National Board certification to be a valuable professional development option for experienced teachers."⁶⁰ Union endorsements also impress politicians who are interested in currying favor with the unions. For example, legislators indebted to the teachers' unions are more likely to vote for measures to support the Board, such as salary incentives for Board-certified teachers. The Board clearly benefits from its strong relationship with the unions.

The unions benefit, too. The NEA and AFT are now able to offer their membership two important rewards through Board certification. First, this credential confers new respect, a new professionalism. Second, in places where the Board and the unions have succeeded in arranging this, the unions can offer their members who achieve certification salary bonuses, national license portability, and credits toward license renewal.

Although the relationship between the unions and NBPTS is clearly beneficial to both parties, it does not necessarily boost teacher quality. The NEA/AFT bloc can veto any Board action to which they are opposed and can also push through any policy they regard as important to union interests. In 1990, the NEA encouraged its members on the National Board to "ensure that eligibility is tied to possession of a state teaching license and graduation from an accredited teacher education program."⁶¹ This measure would have eliminated many private school teachers from recognition. It did not pass, but the episode illustrates how much influence the unions and their allies can wield over Board policy. Full-time union leaders have more time to pursue union interests and access to organizational resources that other directors serving pro bono do not have. Also, union leaders have more influence than unaffiliated members in the appointment of other board members and staff.

The key issue is whether such heavy union influence will, in Lieberman's words, "erode the Board's integrity."⁶² For instance, if teachers of drivers' education, vocational education, or home economics clamor for certification, the Board would need to address the question of whether these fields possess enough specialized content to justify advanced certification. This could lead to a conflict of interest for the union leaders. Teachers for whom no certification is available will surely allege inequity within the profession. It is unlikely that union leaders can long deny certification to any category of their members; instead, they will presumably seek to broaden the possibility of certification to include all grade levels, subjects, and activities. Indeed, the Board is now debating the merits of a certificate for guidance counselors. But is this really a field that warrants advanced certification by a professional *teaching* board.

Union dynamics will also affect the numbers certified. Since the unions are working in the interests of a large base of teachers, they are inevitably interested in expanding the number of individuals who get certified. If the Board is to be financially self-sustaining, it will need to boost the number of teachers who apply, pay their fees, and get certified. Yet, if it ever meets President Clinton's goal of 100,000 NBCTs, states may reconsider the salary incentives they are offering. Thus far, NBPTS has not

acknowledged the probability that salary increments will become less popular in states and districts as more and more teachers are certified and thus rendered eligible for the extra compensation.

Fifteen states, by legislative mandate, have established their own teacher licensing boards that have adopted National Board-compatible standards.

The underlying problem is the fundamental tension between a union dedicated to advancing the economic and professional welfare of all teachers and an organization whose purpose is to identify and reward only the best among them. The only way to ease this tension, Lieberman pointed out, "is to separate control of the National Board from control by teachers unions; unfortunately, union control of the NBPTS has been institutionalized with little prospect of change."⁶³

VI. Entanglement with State Policymakers

The National Board is adamant that board certification will remain voluntary, the implication being that no one will have to go through the process unless she chooses. Yet more and more states are overhauling their own teacher licensure processes to reflect the Board's standards and assumptions. This is happening at two levels. First, more than thirty states now belong to the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a group "working together on 'National Board-compatible' licensing standards and assessments for beginning teachers both before they enter teaching and during their first two years on the job."⁶⁴

Fifteen states, by legislative mandate, have established their own teacher licensing boards that have adopted National Board-compatible standards. For example, North Carolina's Professional Teaching Standards Commission is directed by law to "consider current methods to assess teachers and teaching candidates, including the National Teaching Exam and the assessments of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards." Its mandate is to recommend to the State Board of Education the implementation of a rigorous assessment method for initial and continuing education.⁶⁵ The Commission has drafted and is circulating its recommended standards and assessment methods, which the State Board of Education will vote on in the fall. According to Executive Director Thomas Blanford, these standards and assessment methods are indeed modeled after NBPTS and INTASC. The Commission also endorses the assessment methods adopted by the North Carolina Department of Education. By this plan, teachers will now maintain portfolios of their lesson plans, students' work, and letters to parents as evidence that they're meeting these strict standards. Outside observers—other teachers—will come into schools to monitor teachers' portfolios and professional development plans (PDP). While these portfolios and PDPs may be effective ways for teachers to become more aware of how and why they're teaching, there is no attempt on the State Board's part to tie teacher evaluations to student outcomes. Yet the National Board is eager to help schools and states adopt such standards. NBPTS has staff working on "teacher development,"

which, according to Board Vice President Chuck Cascio, "is designed to give every teacher the chance to be challenged to live these performance standards."

INTASC, state standards commissions, and the state boards of education and legislatures that have empowered them, seem to have accepted the premise that there is a solid link between National Board standards and assessments and student academic outcomes. This is an example of how an unproven education theory becomes part of the conventional wisdom and spreads across the land. States have the responsibility to license teachers who can demonstrate that they are qualified to instruct children. By turning over the assessment of teachers to professional commissions that have not proven that they employ superior methods for improving student learning, state officials are failing in their civic duty.

The standards and assessments that the Board uses remain unproven and of questionable value.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that teacher quality must be strengthened if we hope to improve student performance. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards claims that it has found a way to do this. At first blush, the idea of having a nongovernmental organization promote and reward teachers for meeting rigorous standards sounds wonderful. However, the standards and assessments that the Board uses remain unproven and of questionable value. The Board nevertheless enjoys mounting support across the political spectrum. It is worth recalling that the education system's obligation is to students and their learning. We must take a careful look at the National Board and ask whether or not it is in fact succeeding in meeting this obligation. At this point, most of the evidence suggests that it is not.

Appendix A: NBPTS “The Five Core Propositions”

The Five Propositions of Accomplished Teaching

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards seeks to identify and recognize teachers who effectively enhance student learning and demonstrate the high level of knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments reflected in the following five core propositions.

1. *Teachers are committed to students and their learning.* Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances and peer relationships.

Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and their respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation, character, civic responsibility and their respect for individual, cultural, religious and racial differences.

2. *Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.* Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems.

3. *Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.* Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students and to make the most effective use of time. They also are adept at engaging students and adults to

assist their teaching and at enlisting their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own.

Accomplished teachers command a range of generic instructional techniques, know when each is appropriate and can implement them as needed. They are as aware of ineffectual or damaging practice as they are devoted to elegant practice.

They know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to allow the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary failure.

Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to parents.

4. *Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.*

Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students—curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences—and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students. Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

5. *Teachers are members of learning communities.* Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

Cited from <http://www.nbpts.org/nbpts/standards/five-props.html>.

Appendix B: Summaries of the Standards

Framework of National Board Certificates				
	Early Childhood Ages 3-8	Middle Childhood Ages 7-12	Early Adolescence Ages 11-15	Adolescence and Young Adulthood Ages 14-18+
Generalist	Currently available	Currently available	Currently available	—
English Language Arts	—	No release date determined	Currently available	Currently available
Mathematics	—	No release date determined	Currently available	Currently available
Science	—	No release date determined	Currently available	Currently available
Socials Studies/History	—	No release date determined	Currently available	Currently available
Art	December 2001		Currently available	
Foreign Language	December 2001		December 2001	
Guidance Counseling	No release date determined		No release date determined	
Library/Media	December 2001		December 2001	
Music	December 2001		December 2001	
Physical Education	December 2001		December 2001	
Health	—		No release date determined	
Vocational Education	—		December 1999*	
English New Language	December 1999*		December 1999*	
Exceptional Needs/Specialist	December 1999*		December 1999*	
* Projected availability date.				

Source: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *Guide to National Board Certification 1998-1999* (San Antonio, Tex.: Author, 1998), 7.

- ¹ William J. Clinton, President of the United States, "1999 State of the Union Address" Washington, D.C., 20 January 1999.
- ² Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education, "New Challenges, A New Resolve: Moving American Education Into the 21st Century," Sixth Annual State of American Education Speech, Long Beach, California, 16 February 1999.
- ³ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *What Every Teacher Should Know: The National Board Certification Process 1998-99* (Southfield, Mich.: Author, April 1998).
- ⁴ Myron Lieberman, *The Future of Public Education*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), especially 259-270.
- ⁵ Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, May 1986), see especially 66-69. These goals were later adopted by NBPTS and can be found in National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *What Every Teacher Should Know*.
- ⁶ "Board of Directors" www.nbpts.org/nbpts/about/board.html
- ⁷ National Board bylaws, Article II, Section C, 2.a.
- ⁸ Thomas Kean, quoted in Kristin Goldberg, "Teaching Panel's Backers Seek \$25 Million in Aid" *Education Week*, 24 February 1988.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ From 1991 to 1994, the National Board was funded under the Higher Education Act. From 1995 to 1999, the National Board was funded under Title II: Professional Development of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- ¹¹ www.nbpts.org/nbpts/standards/five-props.html
- ¹² www.nbpts.org/nbpts/standards/how-standards.html
- ¹³ Gene Geissert and Myron Lieberman, *Teacher Union Bargaining: Policy and Practice*, 209.
- ¹⁴ Names of NBCTs have been changed to maintain their anonymity.
- ¹⁵ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *Guide to National Board Certification* (Southfield, Mich.: Author, 1998), 11.
- ¹⁶ "A Closer Look at MC/Generalist Assessment," document provided by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards at its 22-23 February 1999 Scoring Institute.
- ¹⁷ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *Middle Childhood/Generalist Entry 1: "Writing: Thinking Through the Process,"* 4.
- ¹⁸ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *Middle Childhood/Generalist Entry 3: "Building a Classroom Community,"* 1.
- ¹⁹ "Middle Childhood/Generalist: Standards for National Board Certification," (Southfield, Mich.: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, January 1996), 33, 35.
- ²⁰ www.nbpts.org
- ²¹ www.nbpts.org
- ²² www.nbpts.org/nbpts/about/candfaq.html
- ²³ "Middle Childhood/Generalist Scoring Rubric," provided by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards at their February 1999 Scoring Institute in Washington, D.C.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ "Middle Childhood/Generalist: Standards for National Board Certification," (Southfield, Mich.: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, January 1996), 17.
- ²⁶ "Middle Childhood/Generalist: Standards for National Board Certification," 21.
- ²⁷ "Middle Childhood/Generalist: Standards for National Board Certification," 22.
- ²⁸ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, *Social Studies-History Standards (for teachers of students ages 7-18+)* (Southfield, Mich.: Author, 1998), 18.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 48.
- ³⁰ Ibid, 45.
- ³¹ "Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics: Standards for National Board Certification, (Southfield, Mich.: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, November 1996), 19.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Personal correspondence.
- ³⁴ Dan Goldhaber and Dominic Brewer, "Evaluating the Effect of Teacher Degree Level on Educational Performance." *Developments in School Finance* (1996): 199-210.
- ³⁵ National Center for Educational Statistics, *Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, January 1999), 12.
- ³⁶ "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able To Do," policy statement (Southfield, Mich.: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1988)
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Linda Darling-Hammond, *Reshaping Teaching Policy, Preparation, and Practice: Influences of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1999), 11.

- ³⁹ Bonnie Grossen, "What Does It Mean To Be A Research-Based Profession?" in *What's Gone Wrong in America's Classrooms?* Williamson Evers, ed. (Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press, 1998), 24.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁴² E. D. Hirsch, *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them*. (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 245.
- ⁴³ Linda Darling-Hammond, *Reshaping Teaching Policy, Preparation, and Practice*.
- ⁴⁴ National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "Middle Childhood/Generalist: Standards for Board Certification, 35.
- ⁴⁵ James Traub, "Multiple Intelligence Disorder," *New Republic*, 26 October 1998.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ www.nbpts.org/nbpts/forum
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Myron Lieberman, *Teachers Evaluating Teachers: Peer Review and the New Unionism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998); Bob Chase, NEA President has written and spoken much about the "new unionism" that the NEA promotes. One concept that is fundamental to this "new unionism" is that teachers will regulate themselves. Hence, this principle of self-regulation inspires peer review and such endeavors as NBPTS. Links to speeches and policy statements about the "new unionism" are found at www.nea.org/newunion.
- ⁵⁰ John R. Phillips and Marci Kanstoroom, "Title II: Does Professional Development Work?", *New Directions: Federal Education Policy in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1999), 71.
- ⁵¹ Kristin Goldberg, "Teacher Panel's Backers Seek \$25 Million in Aid," *Education Week*, 24 February 1998.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Dale Ballou and Michael Podgursky, "Some Unanswered Questions Concerning National Board Certification of Teachers," *Education Week*, 10 June 1998.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ Personal communication.
- ⁵⁷ John Hattie, Janet Clinton, Marnie Thompson, and Holly Schmidt-Davis, "Identifying 'Highly Accomplished Teachers: A Validation Study," University of North Carolina at Greensboro, December 1995.
- ⁵⁸ Ann Bradley, "Ed. Dept. Funds Large-Scale Research Effort on Teaching," *Education Week*, 29 October 1997.
- ⁵⁹ A complete list of education organizations that have pledged support for the Board can be found at www.nbpts.org/nbpts/about/supporters.html
- ⁶⁰ "Questions and Answers for educators interested in National Board Certification" NEA website: www.nea.org/teaching/nbptsqa.html
- ⁶¹ Ann Bradley, "N.E.A. Assails Board's Policy on Prerequisites for Certification" *Education Week*, 17 January 1990.
- ⁶² Gene Geirsert and Myron Lieberman, eds., *Teacher Union Bargaining: Policy and Practice*, 219.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 221
- ⁶⁴ Linda Darling-Hammond, *Reshaping Teaching Policy, Preparation, and Practice*, 13.
- ⁶⁵ North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, Mission Statement. Law cited is Article 20 of the General Statutes, Chapter 115C (295.2).

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education: Whose Standards?

J.E. Stone

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the largest accreditor of teacher training programs in the U.S., and its standards are fast becoming the de facto national norm. In addition to being a time-consuming and expensive process, however, NCATE accreditation reviews seem more concerned with a school's philosophical perspective than with the qualifications of its faculty and the knowledge of its graduates. Moreover, NCATE's standards downplay the role of teaching in producing student achievement and celebrate the learner-centered approach to pedagogy. These stances put NCATE at odds with what many parents and policy-makers want from teachers and the institutions that claim to prepare them.

Introduction

Practically everyone is calling for better-trained teachers.¹ Failure on a state administered literacy exam by 59 percent of Massachusetts teacher education graduates was a key recent factor in drawing attention to the problem.² The 1998 Higher Education Act sent a particularly clear message to the schools of education and state licensing agencies: federal funding in coming years will depend on higher standards for teachers.³

Even the teacher-training community seems to agree that improvements are needed. An organization comprised of education and public representatives—the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF)—has been especially energetic in promoting this message. The NCTAF's Executive Director—Stanford education Professor Linda Darling-Hammond—has been making the rounds of state capitals, telling governors and legislators that it's time to "get serious about [teacher-training] standards."⁴ By standards, however, the NCTAF means teacher-training standards set by NCATE—the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.⁵

NCATE is the largest accreditor of teacher training programs in the U. S. Its president and others of its leaders are members of NCTAF. NCATE accredits roughly half of America's teacher-training programs and, with notable exceptions—Boston University, for example—all the large ones. Its standards have been adopted in whole or in part by forty-five states. NCATE's standards are fast becoming the de facto national standard. Whether this development favors reform or strengthens the status quo, however, is a question that deserves to be carefully examined.

NCATE's Standards

NCATE was founded in 1954. Its members include all the major organizational stakeholders in teacher training. These include the National Education Association, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and similar groups representing school personnel. It also includes subject-specific organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.

NCATE reviews teacher education programs using a process that entails institutional self-study followed by campus visitation. An institution's facilities, personnel, and program are examined every five years. Critics have termed it time consuming and expensive. In a number of states, review by NCATE is, in effect, legally mandated. These are states in which the government agency that regulates teacher training and licensure has adopted NCATE's standards as its own.

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NCATE's standards are undergoing revision. In fact, they are under continuous revision, as required by the NCATE constitution. The current standards were originally written in 1987, and have since been rewritten and refined several times. They evolved from several older sets of standards that were similarly written and rewritten during the sixties and seventies. Over the past two years, still another rewriting has been underway. This latest round of revisions is due to take effect in 2000.⁶ As explained below, these latest revisions—the so called NCATE 2000 standards—are said to be “groundbreaking” in that they will be “performance-based” instead of “curriculum-based.”

NCATE's current standards (i.e., its 1987 standards as “refined” in 1995) consist of twenty very general requirements having to do with everything from curriculum to students, faculty, and governance (see Table 1).⁷

The twenty “standards” are very general statements, and each is accompanied by one or more “indicators” intended to convey the type of evidence that would demonstrate compliance with the standard. Technically, the indicators are not the standards, but without the indicators and extensive additional guidance, written and unwritten, the standards would be virtually indecipherable.

Table 1 NCATE's Current Standards⁸

I. Design of Professional Education

Standard I.A Conceptual Framework: The unit [i.e., the university department or college that is responsible for teacher training] has high quality professional education programs that are derived from a conceptual framework(s) that is knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, consistent with the unit and/or institutional mission, and continuously evaluated.

Standard I.B General Studies for Initial Teacher Preparation: The unit ensures that candidates have completed general studies courses and experiences in the liberal arts and sciences and have developed theoretical and practical knowledge.

Standard I.C Content Studies for Initial Teacher Preparation: The unit ensures that teacher candidates attain academic competence in the content that they plan to teach.

Standard I.D Professional and Pedagogical Studies for Initial Teacher Preparation: The unit ensures that teacher candidates acquire and learn to apply the professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills to become competent to work with all students.

Standard I.E Integrative Studies for Initial Teacher Preparation: The unit ensures that teacher candidates can integrate general, content, and professional and pedagogical knowledge to create meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Standard I.F Advanced Professional Studies: The unit ensures that candidates become more competent as teachers or develop competence for other professional roles (e.g., school library media specialist, school psychologist, or principal).

Standard I.G Quality of Instruction: Teaching in the unit is consistent with the conceptual framework(s), reflects knowledge derived from research and sound professional practice, and is of high quality.

Standard I.H Quality of Field Experiences: The unit ensures that field experiences are consistent with the conceptual framework(s), are well-planned and sequenced, and are of high quality.

Standard I.I Professional Community: The unit collaborates with higher education faculty, school personnel and other members of the professional community to design, deliver, and renew effective programs for the preparation of school personnel, and to improve the quality of education in schools.

Continued on next page

II. Candidates in Professional Education

Standard II.A Qualifications of Candidates: The unit recruits, admits, and retains candidates who demonstrate potential for professional success in schools.

Standard II.B Composition of Candidates: The unit recruits, admits, and retains a diverse student body.

Standard II.C Monitoring and Advising the Progress of Candidates: The unit systematically monitors and assesses the progress of candidates and ensures that they receive appropriate academic and professional advisement from admission through completion of their professional education programs.

Standard II.D Ensuring the Competence of Candidates: The unit ensures that a candidate's competency to begin his or her professional role in schools is assessed prior to completion of the program and/or recommendation for licensure.

III. Professional Education Faculty

Standard III.A Professional Education Faculty Qualifications: The unit ensures that the professional education faculty are teacher scholars who are qualified for their assignments and are actively engaged in the professional community.

Standard III.B Composition of Faculty: The unit recruits, hires, and retains a diverse higher education faculty.

Standard III.C Professional Assignments of Faculty: The unit ensures that policies and assignments allow faculty to be involved effectively in teaching, scholarship, and service.

Standard III.D Professional Development of Faculty: The unit ensures that there are systematic and comprehensive activities to enhance the competence and intellectual vitality of the professional education faculty.

IV. The Unit for Professional Education

Standard IV.A Governance and Accountability of the Unit: The unit is clearly identified, operates as a professional community, and has the responsibility, authority, and personnel to develop, administer, evaluate, and revise all professional education programs.

Standard IV.B Resources for Teaching and Scholarship: The unit has adequate resources to support teaching and scholarship by faculty and candidates.

Standard IV.C Resources for Operating the Unit: The unit has sufficient facilities, equipment, and budgetary resources to fulfill its mission and offer quality programs.

For example, "Standard I.A" requires that programs be "derived from a conceptual framework that is knowledge-based, articulated, shared, coherent, and consistent with the unit and/or institutional mission" and indicator "I.A.1" says "The conceptual framework is written, well articulated, and shared among professional education faculty, candidates [i.e., students undergoing teacher training] and other members of the professional community"—still, a rather vague statement.⁹

It isn't until one reads the bullet points under indicator "I.A.1" that the meaning of shared "conceptual framework(s)" begins to emerge: "The framework(s) reflects multicultural and global perspectives which permeate all programs."¹⁰

However, even this statement is less than transparent. In order to gain a more complete understanding of "multicultural and global perspectives," the reader must consult the glossary and it is there that the real meaning of "Standard I.A" becomes evident:

Global perspective. The viewpoint that accepts the interdependency of nations and peoples and the interlinkage of political, economic, ecological, and social issues of a transnational and global character.¹¹

Multicultural perspective. (1) The social, political, economic, academic, and historical realities experienced by individuals and groups in complex human encounters; (2) the representation and incorporation of issues related to culture, demographics, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, and exceptionalities in the education process; and (3) the inclusion of a cohesive, inclusive curriculum representing the contributions of diverse populations.¹²

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In other words, NCATE's standard for "high quality professional education programs" turns out to mean, in part, that an accredited institution's teacher-training curriculum must be infused with a particular sociopolitical perspective—a matter well removed from the issue of teacher effectiveness and one that policymakers and the public might well question. Yet, by virtue of NCATE's remarkably circuitous way of spelling out what is actually looked for, "Standard I.A" appears bland and unremarkable.

Determining the true meaning of other NCATE standards requires similar attention to the "fine print" and, in a number of cases, the fine print turns out to be less a matter of pedagogy than one of social and political ideals. For example, "Standard III, A" addresses "Professional

Education Faculty Qualifications"—a seemingly straightforward matter. An examination of the indicators, however, reveals NCATE's attention to social and political issues that seem more than a little tangential to faculty qualifications. For example, Indicator III, A, 2 says "Higher education faculty exhibit intellectual vitality in their sensitivity to critical issues (e.g., how content

studies and pedagogical studies can be more effectively integrated; and the ethics of equity and diversity in the U. S. culture) and in their efforts to address the issues and become proactive in addressing them."¹³ In other words, as a condition of accreditation, teacher-training faculty are expected to adopt and promote an activist viewpoint with regard to equity and diversity issues. Here again, standards that nominally deal with academic or professional matters turn out to mean something quite different when closely examined.

What is clear from these and similar examples is that NCATE's standards are anything but self-evident and, in truth, could be termed misleading. They address matters well removed from questions of effective pedagogy and, as a practical matter, they require extensive informal guidance. Because much of this guidance comes in the form of communications from NCATE's various boards and offices, any true understanding of NCATE's standards must be based on sources of information beyond the standards themselves.

Happily, for the interested observer, NCATE's standards make reference to just such a source of guidance.¹⁴ Published by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, *Capturing the Vision: Reflections on NCATE's Redesign Five Years After* sets forth the "vision of quality" that guided the development of NCATE's standards.¹⁵ It was written by the parties who interpret and implement the standards, including representatives of NCATE's Board of Examiners, its Unit Accreditation Board, and its Executive Committee. *Capturing the Vision* was written to communicate "the larger purposes of accreditation" to "faculty in the institutions that seek accreditation."¹⁶ It presents what amounts to an ordained interpretation for the NCATE standards that have been in use (in various stages of refinement) from 1987 to the present.

Capturing the Vision's central message is that teacher-training programs must "first and foremost" be "dedicated" to "equity," "diversity," and "social justice"—egalitarian ideals widely approved within the teacher education community.¹⁷ It holds that teachers and administrators are morally obliged to promote social justice, in the same sense that physicians are obliged to promote health and lawyers obliged to seek justice.

Equally noteworthy is what *Capturing the Vision* overlooks. It says nothing about matters that might be thought the core of teaching—namely teaching's role in producing student achievement. For that matter, the standards themselves do not address the issue either. Rather, what *Capturing the Vision* does make clear is that faculty willingness to accept certain sociopolitical views is critical to an institution's efforts to become accredited ". . . we are convinced that units living the three themes will not have difficulty in meeting NCATE's standards."¹⁸ By implication, programs failing to adopt NCATE's views may have difficulty. Plainly, *Capturing the*

Capturing the Vision and NCATE's Standards conceive of teaching as an activity concerned as much or more with social reform than with student achievement.

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Proposed NCATE 2000 Standards

Superficially at least, NCATE's newly proposed "performance-based" standards differ from its current curriculum-based standards.¹⁹ Instead of specifying input indicators of quality—conceptual frameworks, faculty attitudes, etc.—the proposed standards set expectations for the competencies to be displayed by newly minted teachers. They also give some attention to the need for teacher knowledge of subject matter and they acknowledge student learning as the ultimate goal of the teaching endeavor.

Like the current standards, however, the new standards are open to widely differing interpretations and, again like the current standards, they contain repeated references

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to sociopolitical attitudes and ideals. The terms "diversity," "cultural diversity," and teaching appropriate to "diverse learners" are sprinkled liberally throughout the new "Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation."²⁰

Whatever their operative meaning (as may be revealed by some new version of *Capturing the Vision*), the new standards in no way suggest a lessened emphasis on social idealism or any departure from the vision of teacher training expressed in *Capturing the Vision*. Presumably, neither will the proposed standards, once enacted, be any less subject to reinterpretation and "refinement" than were the standards enacted in 1987. As matters stand, the only certain difference between the pro-

posed NCATE 2000 standards and the current standards is that the new ones will attempt to assess program effectiveness by measuring that which recent graduates have learned whereas the standards that have been in use since 1987 assess the curriculum and other aspects of the training program itself.

Two Views of Teacher Training Reform

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has made headlines with its proposals for reforming teacher training—proposals that feature universal adoption of NCATE's standards for teacher-training programs. What policymakers and the public may not understand, however, is that the NCTAF and NCATE have a very different conception of that which needs reforming than do teacher education's critics. They acknowledge that there are too few well-trained teachers but most critics believe there are too many badly trained ones, i.e., teachers who are ill equipped to produce results.²¹

What Parents and Policymakers Want

Few parents and policymakers are opposed to the teacher-education community's passion for education to improve society; they just want the improvements to take place the old fashioned way, i.e., through the intellectual enhancement of students. Unlike NCATE, they want academic matters, not social reform, to be teaching's top priority. They believe that schooling should, first and foremost, equip students with basics such as a broad fund of knowledge, high aspirations for achievement, and a sense of personal responsibility.²² To parents, schooling is about their hopes for their children, not about social engineering.²³

Teacher concern for equity, diversity, and social justice need not undermine academic aims, yet it tends to do so when teachers are taught that social ideals should take precedence over learning. For example, when teachers choose to promote failing students, they foster a spurious form of equity while undermining academic standards. Much the same holds true when they use teaching strategies such as "cooperative learning" and grading based on group projects.²⁴ These methods lessen individual accountability by blurring observable differences in student performance. In contrast to educators, parents and policymakers are less concerned about minimizing differences and more concerned about each child becoming all he/she can become.

Social promotion policies and cooperative learning are familiar examples of education practices that make academic concessions to social concerns. Many less well-known methodologies called "best practices" are founded on the same priorities.²⁵ They include heterogeneous grouping, multi-age classes, and a variety of other teaching, curricular, and organizational stratagems. All subordinate educational outcomes to social aims.²⁶

Teachers and administrators are not only taught priorities that are at odds with those of the public, they are also given to believe that the public's ideas about education are unenlightened, even harmful. A recent *Education Week* essay by a veteran high-school principal reflected the prevailing view.²⁷ According to Principal Jones, "parents expect that their children will be educated just like they were." In his view, the adoption of traditional education practices—academic retention, for example—is a wrongful concession to the public's ideas. Jones lamented the failure of the 1960s student movement to reshape lastingly the public's thinking and suggested that school administrators push the envelope in a more student-centered direction. A similarly critical *Phi Delta Kappan* article by a much-published critic of results-oriented schooling argued that parents who insist on achievement for their children are selfish and an impediment to the success of other students.²⁸

What Teacher-Educators Want

A 1997 Public Agenda survey found a "staggering disconnect" between the priorities of teacher education professors and those of parents and others concerned with

Learner-centered schooling is at odds with the public's education aims.

schooling.²⁹ It showed that professors want less structured schooling, i.e., schooling that "facilitates inquiry" and stresses "learning how to learn." It found that professors are chiefly focused on educational process and favor "learner-centered" teaching. By contrast, Public Agenda and other polling organizations have found that parents want orderly schools that emphasize academic fundamentals. Both they and policymakers want improved pupil achievement.

The gulf between the public and the institutions that train and license teachers is little studied and poorly understood but it explains much about why school reform has failed.³⁰ It also explains why teacher training standards developed by NCATE are unlikely to treat student achievement as an unrivaled priority. Repeated efforts to reform the public schools have failed to improve achievement because they are interpreted and implemented by educators who have been taught that other aims come first. However, if, as recommended by the NCTAF, all teacher training is brought under the auspices of NCATE, virtually all teachers will be trained by programs that emphasize the professoriate's aims, not the public's.³¹

The gap between teacher-educators and the public is neither transient nor recent.³² It is a subtle but profound disagreement about the nature and purpose of public education. Although obscured by jargon and mutating methods, the core difference is that the public takes a *learning-centered* or results-oriented view of education while teacher-educators take a learner-centered or process-oriented view.³³

Over the years, learner-centered pedagogy has been reformulated and repackaged many times. Current names include "student-centered," "developmentally appropriate," and "constructivist." In the early part of the twentieth century, similar practices were called "progressive" and "child-centered." Despite continual relabeling and reinvention, the priorities of learner-centered pedagogy have remained constant. The use of pedagogically correct teaching takes precedence over results.³⁴

Learner-centered instruction is a form of teaching in which classroom activity is built around the learner's aims and inclinations. It idealizes learning as student-directed, discovery-oriented activity in which the teacher acts less as manager or director and more as a facilitator or guide. Learner-centered activities are thought to be especially beneficial because they presume to engage students in higher order intellectual activities—which are considered the epitome of the educational process. Students who are eager, mature, and well behaved are likely to benefit from learner-centered instruction. Students who are less well suited to unstructured and selfdirected activity often founder and learn little in learner-centered classrooms.

Schools attempt to accommodate differences among learners by a variety of means. They include, for example, adaptations of instruction to learning styles and curriculum to student readiness. They include boundless exertions to make learning activities attractive, engaging, and intrinsically motivating. Students who respond poorly to

learner-centered instruction are thought to lack the necessary motivation and maturity by virtue of deficiencies in their social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.³⁵ Although societal change is considered the ultimate corrective, the learner-centered prescription for dealing with such students is to accommodate the school's expectations to the student's current behavior and deportment. In theory, the "right" accommodations make possible—but do not assure—the spontaneous emergence of the good qualities with which learner-centered instruction presumes all students are naturally endowed. For example, if a student seems apathetic about engaging in classroom activity, the teacher might diagnose the deficiency as one stemming from poor self-esteem and a dysfunctional family. The teacher might address the problem by placing the student in a cooperative learning group for the purpose of affording encouragement, participation, and the experience of success. The hoped-for educational outcome would be that the student would come to see himself as capable and would subsequently be more inclined to engage in classroom activities.

A different type of accommodation might be made in the case of students who are believed to be poorly motivated and badly behaved because they have experienced social injustice. The learner-centered prescription might be that teachers should demonstrate greater tolerance of the students' apathetic and, perhaps, angry behavior as a means of showing them that the school is a fair and understanding environment. For example, the school might provide counseling or it might infuse the school curriculum with materials that would emphasize the role and the historic contributions of persons who have the same background. Teachers might undergo sensitivity training. The purpose of these measures would be to assure the students in question that their negative behavior and attitudes were not necessary because the school was sensitive to the circumstances of their lives and sympathetic to their feelings.

These examples illustrate the key reason why learner-centered schooling is at odds with the public's education aims. Whatever the specifics of the accommodations made by the school, their purpose is not the straightforward improvement of achievement but the improvement of conditions congenial to learner-centered instruction. Rather than prescribing a more structured and teacher-directed mode of instruction—one that might be far better suited to students who are not well motivated or well behaved—learner-centered orthodoxy encourages ad hoc intervention for the purpose of facilitating the use of what the teacher-training community believes is an ideal form of teaching. In other words, the learner-centered perspective encourages teachers and schools to concern themselves not with intervening to produce results but with making public-school realities more hospitable to the learner-centered ideal.

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Teachers may recognize that such accommodations are ineffective but they defend their use because doing otherwise would seem an abandonment of educational ideals, i.e., the ideal of the self-directed learner engaged in higher order thinking. They have been taught that even ineffectual learner-centered teaching is better than non-learner-centered alternatives. For example, if the student who participates in the cooperative learning project fails to reach expected objectives, the teacher may argue that at least the individual's self-esteem was enhanced. If angry and unmotivated students fail to read and write, the teacher may argue that the school's multicultural curriculum and sensitivity training at least succeeded in preventing these individuals from dropping out.

NCATE and Learner-centered Teaching

NCATE's standards do not explicitly call for learner-centered teaching but they plainly adhere to a learner-centered vision of education. In this view, schooling cannot be expected to succeed without greater equity, diversity, and social justice in American society and thus teacher training must be infused with rightminded social and political values. In other words, NCATE and the teacher education programs that follow NCATE's standards infuse teacher training with social and political idealism because their learner-centered pedagogical doctrine requires it.

NCATE and the teacher-education community are the primary keepers of the learner-centered faith. NCATE's leaders are published proponents of learner-centered teaching.³⁶ NCATE's approved programs lean heavily toward indoctrinating teachers in an educational perspective rather than training in effective pedagogy. In short, the teacher-training programs accredited by NCATE teach educators that their time and energy should be dedicated primarily to learner-centered teaching and secondarily to results.

Learner-centered thinking has a virtual stranglehold on the teacher-education community.³⁷ Skeptical academics are suspected of being "in denial" about their own or society's responsibility for reforming adverse social, political, and economic conditions. Proponents of more conventional explanations for academic failure—lack of study, for example—are thought to mistake symptoms for causes and are suspected of blaming the victim. Educational innovations are welcomed but only so long as they fit the learner-centered mold.³⁸ As E. D Hirsch puts it, alternatives are not "*thinkable*" (italics in the original):

To question progressive doctrine would be to put in doubt the identity of the education profession itself. Its foundational premise is that progressive principles are right. Being right, they cannot possibly be the cause of educational ineffectiveness.³⁹

Tradition, doctrinal zeal, and an absence of competition explains much about the predominance of learner-centered thinking in schools of education. Another factor,

however, may contribute greatly to its popularity among teachers and administrators. A theory that educational effectiveness is limited by factors such as social justice, high self-esteem, and a variety of developmental considerations explains one thing very well: It explains how so many teachers and so many schools could be working so hard and yet producing so little. In other words, it offers a convenient, comfortable, and nearly irrefutable excuse for educational failure.

As most teachers, administrators, and professors see it, the presence of educational failure implies less-than-optimal conditions for students. Moreover, less-than-optimal conditions argue against educational accountability and in favor of ever greater commitments of resources for education. If doubled education expenditures do not succeed, perhaps they need to be doubled again. Who can say what constitutes optimal conditions for learning? If schools aren't succeeding, society must make a greater effort.

According to learner-centered thinking, educational success is restricted not only by social, political, and economic conditions. The developmental version of the learner-centered view adds biological restrictions. The "developmentally appropriate practice" concept featured in NCATE's proposed NCATE 2000 standards holds that the student's maturationally determined stage of intellectual development restricts that which he or she can learn.⁴⁰ In theory, correctly fitted teaching will result in as much learning as current development permits and academic challenges in excess of that level are apt to cause burnout and damaged self-esteem.⁴¹ In other words, if a student fails to learn that which might reasonably be expected and there are no obvious sociocultural impediments, a state of insufficient development is presumed to exist. It is an attractive theory not because it enables teachers to produce results but because it relieves both teachers and students of responsibility for meeting curricular expectations.

Pedagogical concepts such as developmentally appropriate practice are also attractive to students and parents because they relieve anxiety about failure to achieve. According to developmental theory, students should be expected to make an effort only with regard to those activities they find appealing and engaging. Whether those preferred activities result in meaningful academic achievement is considered a secondary issue.

The "developmentally appropriate" viewpoint promises academic success through natural and spontaneous means and it supposes that students will learn all that they need to learn when the time is right.⁴² If curricular expectations say otherwise, it is the expectations that are wrong. In effect, the developmental viewpoint takes the work out of schoolwork.

Developmentally appropriate practice, education for social justice, and the many other variants of learner-centered education undermine educational effectiveness because they encourage teachers to dedicate their time and energies to overcoming

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social, economic, and developmental impediments and otherwise engaging students in learner-centered instruction. Of necessity, the activities they arrange must be fun and exciting, whether or not they are activities known to enhance academic achievement.⁴³ In effect, student satisfaction with the immediate education experience is given far greater weight than the longer-term satisfactions associated with academic achievement. In theory, learner-centered teachers attempt to produce achievement by accommodating student needs. In practice, they assume that education experiences not well received by students are not well fitted to their needs and thus not conducive to achievement.

In many respects, the flaws in learner-centered thinking parallel those inherent in the "root cause" view of crime—the view that poverty causes misbehavior and thus must be the primary target of social intervention. Both perspectives are loosely grounded in social science, both divert the energies of professional helpers into matters that have little demonstrated relationship to results, and both provide built-in excuses for failure. Not incidentally, both require extensive academic training and thereby assure full employment for training institutions and licensure bureaucracies.

The NCTAF's Campaign for Teacher Training Reform

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future is leading a massive effort to encourage the adoption of NCATE's standards. Originally headed by North Carolina's Governor Jim Hunt and funded by two major foundations, the NCTAF (1996) urges all states to align their teacher licensure regulations with NCATE's training standards and with the standards set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1990)—advanced teacher certification standards that are themselves aligned with NCATE. In effect, the NCTAF is pressing states to enact policy that collides head-on with the public's desire for stronger pupil achievement.

Expecting NCATE to reform teacher training in a way that fulfills the public's hopes is naive. NCATE is an organization primarily comprised of teacher-education's stakeholders, i.e., the very groups that created the standards now said to be in need of reform. Given its history, it may be safely predicted that any NCATE-led reform will be congenial to learner-centered teaching and antagonistic to achievement-oriented alternatives. NCATE's stakeholders—especially the schools of education—will not have it any other way. If policymakers want teacher training that treats pupil achievement as its top priority, they will have to set standards that are independent of NCATE.

Public Regulation of Teacher Training and Licensure

The teaching profession is regulated by state education agencies and these agencies ostensibly exist to promote the public's aims. In fact, they are staffed, led, and decisively influenced by the profession that they purport to regulate—a phenomenon that economists call "regulatory capture."⁴⁴

Instead of ensuring that teaching serves the public's aims, state education agencies collaborate with organizations like NCATE and thereby serve as a conduit through which the teacher-education community's beliefs are injected into the decisions of legislators and boards of education. For example, a group representing the executive leadership of the state departments of education—the Council of Chief State School Officers—is working diligently with NCATE to assure that state licensure requirements are aligned with NCATE standards.⁴⁵ They are also linked by shared leadership. For example, the immediate past chairman of NCATE's Executive Board heads the Kentucky Department of Education and NCATE's current senior vice president is the president-elect of the National Association for Multicultural Education—an advocacy organization bent on infusing multicultural values into teacher training. The effect of these intermingled loyalties is governmental regulation that is supposed to be dedicated to what the public wants but, in fact, enforces what the education community thinks is important.

NCATE and its stakeholders argue that educator control of the regulatory process is proper in that it parallels the professional control of training and licensure in the medical and legal professions. The comparison, however, overlooks a crucial distinction. Consumers can choose among their doctors and lawyers but usually not among their children's teachers. If parents want to make use of the schools they pay for with their taxes, they have few options. Public schools are required to have licensed teachers and nearly all licensed teachers have been trained in the learner-centered mold.

Policy Alternatives

If NCTAF and NCATE succeed, expanded school choice and alternative teacher certification may be the only way parents and policymakers will get teachers who are trained to put achievement first. However, if policymakers are willing to act independently, they can make a vital difference in the kind of skills required of licensed teachers and ultimately in the aims of teacher-training programs.

State requirements for entering the teaching profession vary from state to state but most include a degree from an "approved" teacher training program and successful performance on an exam of pedagogical knowledge. Requirements for subject matter examinations and demonstrations of teaching proficiency have been added or are under consideration in a number of states. The model licensure standards now being collaboratively developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and NCATE will require teachers to demonstrate knowledge, attitudinal "dispositions," and approved teaching skills—all consistent with a learner-centered vision of teaching. Licensure based on such standards will most likely insure doctrinal conformity, not effectiveness in producing student achievement.

Until recently, there has been no good alternative to exams of pedagogical knowledge and classroom observations as evidence of a teachers' ability to produce learning. The product of teaching, learning, could not be used as an indicator because

student learning is influenced by pre-existing differences in student knowledge, skills, backgrounds, motivation, and other characteristics. Within the past few years, however, a statistical methodology that corrects for such differences has been used for teacher accountability in Tennessee and Dallas, Texas.⁴⁶ Called value-added assessment, it measures the gains in learning experienced by the students whom a teacher has taught, and is vastly superior to the indirect measures of teacher effectiveness that are now used.

Given that the teaching skills possessed by novice teachers primarily reflect the training they have undergone, the value-added achievement gains of such teachers could be used as reasonably accurate indicators of a training program's quality. In any case, those gains would be a far better indicator of teacher-training program effectiveness than indicators such as test scores and course credits. Moreover, if teachers with a probationary license were required to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency in producing value-added achievement gains, teacher training programs would have to become more concerned with whether their graduates were able to produce achievement, not with whether they adhere to learner-centered orthodoxy. In addition, value-added assessment could be used to evaluate teachers for tenure and merit pay decisions.

Over the years, the public has assumed that teachers are trained to produce academic achievement. In fact, most teachers have been trained to use learner-centered instruction. It is a subtle but critical discrepancy. A change to an achievement-oriented indicator of teacher preparedness would stir significant change in most teacher-training programs. They would either have to begin emphasizing skills that enable teachers to be effective or fail to produce licensable graduates. Programs that have traditionally taught result-oriented methods, however, would only have to fine tune their efforts.

Used in conjunction with a well-validated achievement test, value-added assessment can provide officials with an indicator of teacher preparedness that is aligned with the public's priorities and independent of those of the teacher education community. If policymakers want teacher training dedicated to results rather than idealism, a change to value-added teacher assessment might be the single most effective action they could take.

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Debating Alternative Teacher Certification: A Trial by Achievement

Michael Kwiatkowski

The number of teachers who enter the classroom through “alternative” routes is small today, but expected to grow. States and districts increasingly turn to alternative certification to widen the pool of teaching candidates with background in high-demand specialties, candidates from under-represented groups, or those prepared to teach in challenging settings. Studies show that alternative certification does increase the representation of teachers with these qualities. While existing studies of the effects of these teachers on student achievement have limitations, most researchers have concluded that alternative route teachers are at least as effective as their conventionally-trained counterparts, if not more so. This report concludes that, while alternative certification is a promising reform, it will not have a real effect until other issues like teacher salaries and working conditions are also addressed.

The Many Faces of Alternative Certification

A rapidly expanding force has emerged in teacher education: the opportunity for school districts, universities, and other educational agencies to offer certification for teachers who complete an in-district teacher preparation program. This contrasts with the traditional approach of awarding teacher certification as part of an education baccalaureate program mainly accomplished through a college or university. It's not an easy alternative to complete, usually; it's not inexpensive, unless there are few other options; it's not common, yet; and it is already one of the most hotly debated issues since chalk first met blackboard.

From 1983 to 1996, over 50,000 teachers received training and certification through Alternative Certification (AC) programs nationwide. This figure does not include thousands more who are now enrolled in newly emerging alternative programs.¹ While the number of teachers certified through AC is a relatively small percentage of the total number of teachers certified, the trend is expected to accelerate.

Driving this trend is a quest to enhance education through at least four important goals:

- 1) increase the teaching pool of those competent in high-demand educational specialties,
- 2) increase the participation of under-represented teachers,
- 3) increase staffing levels of urban schools or "difficult settings," and
- 4) decrease the need for emergency credentialing to meet teacher shortages, although emergency certification is also a form of AC.

Thus, the supposed strength of AC lies in its potential to attract and hold a segment of the population not currently engaged in education. Of course there are numerous related sub-issues to these goals—economics, policy, power, tradition, professionalism, public perception, and the current distressed state of American education, to name only a few. Too often drowned out is the more central issue of student achievement.

Like many contemporary innovations in education, AC actually has roots extending back several decades in teacher preparation. Martin Haberman noted that it was a common practice in the nineteenth century for each school district to hire and certify its own teachers.² Large districts eventually developed their own "Normal Schools" of teaching practice with a system of testing for licensure. Normal Schools often grew into teacher colleges, then became state colleges, and finally developed into universities. As these colleges grew, teacher training left the aegis of the district and was assumed under a baccalaureate program. If there is irony in AC, then it is a return to the traditional source of teacher training. School districts have been and will continue to be ultimately responsible for the quality, and thus, the preparation of its teachers.

Part of the AC controversy stems from a lack of clarity of which kind of AC is under discussion; it's a shibboleth covering state and district training programs rigorous and weak. The National Center for Education, through *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis 1996*, delineated that eight types of AC may be found nationwide:

Class A is the category reserved for those programs that meet the following criteria:

- The program has been designed for the explicit purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree in a field other than education into elementary and secondary school teaching.
- The program is not restricted to shortages, secondary grade levels, or subject areas.

- The alternative teacher certification programs in these states involve teaching with a trained mentor, and formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year—and sometimes in the summer before and/or after.

Class B: Teacher certification routes that have been designed specifically to bring talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree into teaching. These programs involve specially designed mentoring and formal instruction. However, these states either restrict the program to shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas.

Class C: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. *The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design.*

Class D: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. *An institution of higher education has major responsibility for program design.*

Class E: These post-baccalaureate programs are based at an institution of higher education.

Class F: These programs are basically emergency routes. The prospective teacher is issued some type of emergency certificate or waiver which allows the individual to teach, usually without any on-site support or supervision, while taking the traditional teacher education courses requisite for full certification.

Class G: Programs in this class are for persons who have very few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditionally approved college teacher education program route, e.g., persons certified in one state moving to another; persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another.

Class H: This class includes those routes that enable a person who has some "special" qualifications, such as a well-known author or Nobel Prize winner, to teach certain subjects.

Class I: These states reported in 1995 that they were not implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers.³

Complicating this arrangement even more is that some states and districts may have any combination of programs while others may choose to implement just one. All fifty states allow for some form of AC, although several have declined implementation

at this point. Appendix A details the various state programs offering alternative certification.

States electing to implement alternative certification have, on average, two of the eight programs. Georgia has the most with six AC programs; followed by New Hampshire with five; California and New York with four; seven states have chosen three programs; fifteen states went with two programs; and twenty-two states decided on just one program. The most popular license is Class F (emergency routes) with fifteen states including it in their options. Class A and Class D have each been selected by thirteen states. Class C is included in twelve states; Class B and Class G are each included in eleven states; and Class E and Class H are each included in eight states. Of the ninety-plus AC programs found nationwide, each one may be given numerous working titles at the state, county, and district levels. The research dilemmas become apparent when one is faced with a single label that covers a multitude of varieties.

If You Build It, Will They Come?

Yes, and many of them bring the gifts of maturity and experience.

Before looking at who is attracted to alternative certification, one needs to become familiar with the extensive research into career changers just prior to opting for the educational switch; they form the pool of applicants. Traci Bliss' 1990 study of Connecticut's AC program delineated four categories of would-be teachers.

Career Explorers – approximately 25 percent of the total group, these range in age from their mid-20s to early 30s and have spent some years in one or more professions such as law, journalism, marketing, research, computer programming, insurance adjustment, acting, and social services.

Career Changers – constituting 20 percent of the group, these are generally in their mid-30s to late 40s, have had a long-standing and successful career, and now wish to make a change. This group includes anthropologists, a graphic designer, symphony conductor, university vice-president, and news magazine editor.

Second-Career Individuals – composing 15 percent of the class, these have retired from their original careers and include several research scientists and corporate executives, a judge, nuclear submarine commander, and foreign service diplomat.

Educators – approximately 40 percent of the class and the largest category within the program, this group consists of committed teachers who are not yet certified to teach in Connecticut public schools—long-term substitutes, independent school teachers, and a handful of college professors and instructors.⁴

Those who leave their present position and seek teaching through alternative certification do so not as a repulsion from a negative situation, but as a positive attraction to something they consider to be a more worthy occupation.

Of course, Connecticut is considered unique in its program goals. Not faced with immediate teacher shortages, it chose to use AC as a means to further refine and heighten its teacher preparation standards. Not all AC recruitment may be as prosperous in the choice of applicants.

Similarly, the work of Crow, Levine, and Nager, using New York teacher applicants, differentiated among *Homecomers*—where entering teaching resembled a psychological homecoming; teaching was a dream come true. "They believe their earlier plans to teach were thwarted by negative parental and societal attitudes, market forces, and/or financial obligations."⁵ *The Converted*—those who did not consider teaching until some crucial event caused them to reconsider professional plans. Finally, there were *The Unconverted*—while having no previous direct interest in teaching, they were loosely coupled to the schools because of their interest in educational reform.

Additionally, Stevens and Dial reported on a study by Kanchier and Unruh in which "Changers indicated that the greatest constraint in their former positions was lack of challenge, achievement, and use of skills and ideas. The prime reasons changers left the corporation were greater autonomy, disillusionment with the corporation's personnel policies, greater achievement, better fit of values and work, more challenge, and more meaningful work."⁶

However, it would be an unwarranted assumption to simply believe career changers generally pack "dissatisfaction" into their baggage wherever they go. Kerr noted the research of Fountain which concluded that those who came to teaching as a career change expressed greater satisfaction than those who had worked only as teachers.⁷ Lutz and Hutton found that when comparing career changers entering AC to traditionally trained new teachers, the career changers chose the following at a statistically significant higher level:⁸

- Teaching provides a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction.
- I was encouraged by persons I respect to enter this field.
- Teaching provides an opportunity to help the less fortunate.
- Teaching makes better use of my abilities than other careers.
- I felt successful in my first career.

Based on the above information, one could conclude that those who leave their present position and seek teaching through alternative certification do so not as a repulsion from a negative situation, but as a positive attraction to something they consider to be a more worthy occupation. It is not so much leaving the bad as it is going to a "bigger good." As Boser and Wiley found in their evaluation of a Tennessee AC program, "The program did achieve its original objectives by providing an accelerated program that attracted individuals from the target group of academically talented persons."⁹ But just who is this "target group"?

To begin with, if the target is talent, then the target range is huge. "There were 15,358 school districts delivering education to 41,223,804 students in 80,395 regular elementary and secondary schools in the United States in school year 1990-91."¹⁰

However, within this enormous national stage, "By its very nature, an alternative program will attract a different population of participants than traditional programs."¹¹ In effect, one is looking for candidates from a broader pool, compared to the conventional market of educators in general.

Academic and popular literature abounds with the glaring difference in the numbers of minority teachers compared with the number of minority students. It is often argued that minority students need a diverse teacher staff, especially teachers of racial and ethnic minorities as role models, to enhance their academic performance. Martin Haberman succinctly states the case, "The disparity between increasing enrollment of Hispanic and Black children and the dwindling number of minority teachers, even where traditional certification regulations are circumvented, portends a worsening of the problem throughout the urban school districts."¹² "Nationally, state education data show that 9% of teachers and 26% of students are minorities."¹³ And the gap between percentages is expected to widen. Smith indicated that projections of the teaching force into the Year 2000 yielded 5 percent minority teachers compared to a possible 33 percent minority student population.¹⁴ Stoddard noted that for the last twenty years traditional approaches to teacher recruitment have been unable to abate this disparity.¹⁵ But alternative certification may show promise in this regard.

Since AC is a relatively new reincarnation, broad and comprehensive research is often sparse. However, several studies have been extremely important in showing the success of alternative certification in attracting new and under-represented talent. Houston, Marshall, and McDavid, in evaluating the AC program *vis-à-vis* the traditional certification (TC) program at the Houston Independent School District, found significant percentage differences among participants in the two programs—more older, males, and minorities, as shown below:¹⁶

Several studies have been extremely important in showing the success of alternative certification in attracting new and under-represented talent.

Factor	AC Program	TC Program
Males	24%	6%
30-40 year age	42%	14%
African American	29%	13%
Hispanic	22%	19%
Anglo	48%	67%

Minority participation in AC resulted in statistically significant changes in the new teacher cohort ($p=.002$). Expanding to the state level, Texas now certifies over 16 percent of its new teachers through the AC program.¹⁷ Alternative certification is now the primary means of attracting minority professionals into teaching.¹⁸ While 91 percent of the Texas public school teachers are Anglo, 43 percent of the teachers entering through the state's alternative programs are minority.¹⁹ Additionally, "In Texas, alternative certification interns have higher pass rates on certification tests than do traditional education graduates. Minorities have markedly higher pass rates than minorities who are initially certified through regular channels."²⁰

Similar to the Houston group, Trish Stoddart comprehensively reviewed alternative certification for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). From 1985 to 1995, California's student population increased by 900,000 resulting in a need of approximately 90,000 to 190,000 new teachers. Schools in metropolitan Los Angeles add about 14,000 students per year. In 1985, approximately 45 percent of all new teachers hired by LAUSD were on emergency credentials. In other words, this Mother Hubbard-esque dilemma brought severe pressure on changing the way business was traditionally conducted. Since the implementation of its AC program in 1984, LAUSD trains approximately 96 percent of all the alternatively certified teachers in California; approximately 300 candidates a year, or about the entering class cohort size of a California State University teacher education program.²¹

Stoddart has found a fairly uniform picture of AC success in LAUSD. Citing state studies, she found that "In 1984, 775 students graduated nationally with a degree in mathematics education, 103 from California institutions. In the same year, LAUSD began training 30 new math teachers, about 4% of the national figure and 16% of the California figure. Also in 1984, 702 science education majors graduated nationally, 191 from California institutions. In 1984-1985, LAUSD began training 64 new science teachers or approximately 9% of national production and 34% of California production."²² Continuing, Stoddart concluded that, "These figures suggest that district-run alternative certification programs can recruit candidates in high demand subject areas to teach in hard-to-staff urban schools, and they reduce the need to hire teachers on emergency credentials."²³

Besides the ability of LAUSD's AC program to attract difficult-to-fill subject-matter positions, it does an equally admirable job of attracting minority teachers. In a 1987 cohort hiring assessment Stoddart found:²⁴

- Minority English teachers: 33.3% through AC; 0% (zero) TC.
- Minority mathematics teachers: 36.1% through AC; 9.0% TC.

In an earlier study, Stoddart noted that:

The LAUSD intern program (AC) was recruiting minority teachers at a much higher rate than the percentage recruited through traditional university routes.

Over the 6 years since the program's inception, almost one-third (307 out of 1100), of the teachers recruited through the intern program have been from minority groups—12% were Hispanic, 9% Black, 6% Asian. It could be argued that this comparatively high recruitment rate for minorities is a function of California's ethnic diversity. The LAUSD Intern Program, however, recruits minorities at a much higher rate than the California State University System (CSU). The most recent figures from CSU show that in 1986-1987 about 13% of teachers recommended for credentialing from the institution were from minority groups (compared to LAUSD's 33%).²⁵

Caution must be exercised before leaping to a conclusion, especially when based on just two cases of extraordinary success, but optimism is justified. New Jersey's success in expanding its hiring pool through alternative certification, especially its ability to increase minority teacher representation from 9 percent to 20 percent is documented in studies by Feistritzer and Chester and Natriello and Zumwalt.²⁶ Continued investigations have yielded similar results in other areas:

- Transitioning military personnel into teaching²⁷
- Hiring for specific content and curriculum²⁸
- Attracting teachers in bilingual education²⁹
- Hiring more vocational education, mathematics, and science teachers³⁰
- Increasing special education teachers³¹

In a comprehensive study of recruiting teachers through AC, the RAND Corporation concluded that:

These nontraditional programs also appear to be attracting substantially more minority candidates than are other teacher preparation programs. Overall, 20% of the nontraditional recruits are minority group members (compared to) only 9% of all candidates newly qualified to teach.

Whether due to location, financial aid, or active recruitment, these programs appear to be successful at recruiting minority candidates.³²

However, concerning hard-to-fill subject-matter specialties, the same report cautioned that "Those recruits who do come from a scientific working background are more likely to come from the lower paying technical, support, and service fields than they are from the professional and managerial fields. Those coming from nonscience fields are also drawn disproportionately from jobs in the lower salary ranges."³³ "Nontraditional teacher preparation pro-

AC programs, in comparison to TC programs, have attracted proportionately more males, persons over 25, minorities, and persons who have majored in college math, science, and foreign languages.

grams cannot fully overcome other attributes of teaching that make recruitment and retention of teachers difficult."³⁴

Hawley's work echoed the above sentiments about minority and subject matter specialty teachers. He too concluded that "Attracting candidates to areas of teacher shortages through AC does not alter most of the conditions which contribute to the shortages—such as low salaries, poor working conditions, and status of teaching as a profession. Thus, it can be expected that the demand for teachers in certain urban and rural areas, mathematics, some sciences, special education, and bilingual education will continue to exceed the supply."³⁵

While alternative certification might not be able to ameliorate the many forces that drive teachers out of the profession, AC teachers tend to persist in greater numbers.

One possible factor working against AC recruiting efforts is the cost. Hawley found that it costs about 75 percent more to prepare a teacher in a well-designed AC program compared to a TC program. Intensive training like alternative certification does not come cheaply.³⁶ McKibbin cited data indicating that the LAUSD AC program costs approximately \$1,300 per year for each intern (in 1988 dollars).³⁷ Guyton, Fox, and Sisk found that an AC program in Georgia spent over \$11,000 per candidate, but this included food and housing subsidies.³⁸ Texas' AC program has training costs, which average about \$3,400 per intern per year, deducted from the interns' salaries.³⁹

In education, as in most other occupations, it is not surprising that even an expeditious approach like AC cannot do everything and do it cheaply. It is a complex and multi-faceted world calling for diverse and creative approaches to solve real-world problems; in other words—trade offs. Be that as it may, Hawley still concluded that "AC

programs, in comparison to TC programs, have attracted proportionately more males, persons over 25, minorities, and persons who have majored in college math, science, and foreign languages."⁴⁰

After They Enter, Will They Stay?

Yes, and their persistence could well make the program cost-effective.

Few studies have evoked more controversy than Schlechty and Vance's study of teacher preparation and retention.⁴¹ Their critics have come and gone, while their work remains seminal to the field of education. The conclusion that an estimated 40 to 50 percent of first-year teachers will not be teaching in seven years indicates that voting with feet is still popular—teaching is too often too damn tough, regardless of the public fantasies about vacations, hours, and blithe spirits.

Persistence rates are obviously important to any training program, but maybe not real important. If they were real important, then traditional certification would have folded long ago. After all, following years of costly college training and district orientation

expenses, what other profession aside from education would risk abandoning so many of its future generations?

While alternative certification might not be able to ameliorate the many forces that drive teachers out of the profession, AC teachers tend to persist in greater numbers. Adams and Dial, using a population of 2,452 Anglo, African American, and Hispanic first-year teachers, examined the characteristics of those leaving a large urban district:

The risk of leaving the district for women was approximately 37% greater than the risk of leaving for men. Teachers who began their teaching careers before they were 40 years of age were 43% more likely to leave the district than teachers who began their teaching careers at 40 or older. Whites were nearly four times as likely to leave the district as Blacks. Whites were 57% more likely to leave the district than Hispanics. Teachers with only a bachelor's degree were 68% more likely to leave the district than teachers with a graduate degree. Traditionally certified teachers were approximately 19% more likely to leave the district than alternatively certified teachers.⁴²

McKibbin found that in the LAUSD, the annual drop out rate from teaching for AC teacher interns was 20 percent compared to 40 percent for TC first-year teachers during the same period.⁴³ Not only did more stay in teaching, but 91 percent of the AC interns elected to return to that particular district the next year. Stoddart found only a 9 percent attrition rate for AC teachers during the first two years. "The program also has a good retention rate for minority teachers. Of the 307 minority interns recruited by the district, 266 are still teaching in LAUSD—an overall retention rate of 87% compared to 74% for white interns."⁴⁴ Again, AC's retention advantage seems to be built into its targeted demographics.

A RAND Corporation study also found encouraging numbers for AC persistence. Seventy-five percent of the alternative certified teachers were still teaching two years after program completion, compared to just 60 percent of the conventionally certified.⁴⁵ However, in a Dallas study, only 40 percent of the AC interns said they planned to stay in teaching, compared to 72 percent of traditionally trained recruits.⁴⁶

But it makes a difference which AC candidates one asks. Of the group of AC participants, the *new candidates* were least likely to say they planned to stay in teaching while the *mid-career recruits* working on a master's degree were most likely planning to stay in teaching.⁴⁷

In concluding this section, a brief return to Schlechty and Vance is in order. While their teacher selection and retention study is perhaps best known for bringing a number of educational ills to the light of day, less well known is their entreaty that "Responsibility for the professional training of teachers should be divorced from institutions of higher education, and teacher education should once again be placed

Persons going through alternative certification programs are much more interested in working in inner cities.

where it in fact occurs—in the public schools.”⁴⁸ Perhaps this message of fifteen years ago contributed to the current trend of collaborative field-based teacher preparation in a growing number of states.

Alternative Certification and the Urban Setting

Thus far, alternative certification looks extremely promising in attracting a talented new pool of future educators who are more diverse and persistent in their teaching career. However, one of the requirements in contemporary education is to translate this nontraditional certification approach into increasing the number of teachers for urban or special settings. The front page of virtually every newspaper across the country has documented the many challenges facing our urban educational settings. Does AC better prepare new teachers to assume the responsibilities of this demanding milieu? The work of Emily Feistritzer found several insights.

Large urban areas of the country have also experienced greater difficulty in attracting traditional teacher education graduates. Data collected by the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education show that only 4% of undergraduate students studying to be teachers want to teach in inner cities.

However, data show persons going through alternative certification programs are much more interested in working in inner cities. A survey conducted by NCEI in 1990 showed that a third of alternate-route teachers, compared with 12% of persons who had entered teaching through traditional routes, said they were willing to teach in a large inner city if the demand for teachers was great. An additional 21% of alternative-route teachers said “maybe” they would teach in a large inner city. More than one fourth of all public school teachers, 77% of returning teachers, and 67% of new hires said “no.” More than half of alternate-route teachers said they would be willing to teach in a medium inner city. This compared with one third of traditional-route teachers. Half of alternate-route teachers in both Texas and New Jersey are teaching in inner cities.⁴⁹

One possible explanation for this difference in attitude is that AC teachers are more likely to have experienced their own urban education growing up. Natriello and Zumwalt found that AC elementary teachers were more likely to have lived in an urban community (22.7 percent) than TC teachers (13.6 percent).⁵⁰ AC English teachers were more likely to have come from urban schools (16.6 percent) compared to traditionally trained English teachers (11.1 percent). Additionally, AC mathematics teachers were also more likely to have lived in an urban area (16.7 percent) compared to college-trained mathematics teachers (6.7 percent). Haberman succinctly noted that “most teacher education graduates refuse to work in urban schools.”⁵¹ Then again, most are unfamiliar with these difficult settings.

The power of “lived experience” is a strong attractant to staff urban settings. Simply attending a large city’s university-based teacher training program is not potent enough

to encourage candidates to remain in city schools. "Most future teachers who complete teacher education programs in metropolitan universities behave like their counterparts in nonmetropolitan universities. They seek and obtain positions in small towns and suburbs while trying to remain as close to home as possible."⁵²

Stoddart's work with LAUSD may well set the conclusions in stone: 70 percent of the AC interns grew up and attended school in a city compared to only 22 percent of teacher education students.⁵³ Additionally, 70 percent of the AC interns, compared to only 18 percent of TC interns, said that they would prefer to teach in an urban school. Preference is one thing; effectively working with students is quite another. How do the two groups view their big-city students? Does prior location of early education experiences shape present teaching attitude?

AC teachers held higher expectations for low-income and minority students.

Ninety-five percent of elementary (AC) interns, 95% of secondary English (AC) interns, and 81% of secondary mathematics (AC) interns believe that low income and minority students are capable of learning higher order concepts in the subject areas they teach. In contrast, only 76% of elementary (TC) teacher education candidates, 70% of English (TC) teacher education candidates, and 60% of mathematics (TC) teacher education candidates held the same expectations. At least one third of the traditional teacher education candidates believed these students should be only taught basic skills in reading, writing and grammar, and arithmetic.⁵⁴

Stoddart proceeded to cite research indicating that AC teachers not only held higher expectations for low-income and minority students but also attempted to develop curriculum and instructional techniques responsive to the needs of diverse learners. Their approaches to teaching were often based as learners, on prior life-skills, and previous work experience.

The alternative route candidates are also more likely to hold high expectations for low-income and minority students than the teacher education graduates and to take more responsibility for students' academic success or failure.

The university-certified novice teachers found it difficult to relate to students who were different from themselves. They emphasized the difference between themselves and the low-income and minority students they were teaching. Most held a "cultural deficit" perspective on student achievement and believed that their poor and minority student's lack of enriching life experiences made it difficult for them to function as autonomous learners or understand higher-order concepts.⁵⁵

However, given the multitude of problems associated with urban schools, AC must not be seen as a panacea for years of neglect and discrimination. Stoddart's conclusions included serious doubt if a single AC program could do anything to help

improve instruction for at-risk students. This doubt is very healthy. Given the state of contemporary urban schools, even the best AC program may only be a young gallant David without a sling.

The Many Challenges of AC Research

When discussing an educational evaluation of alternative certification, since the field is so new, one actually spends most of the conversation discussing the state of AC research. Evaluation implies a solid grounding in definition and dependent variables; one knows what to look for and how to interpret it. The introductory section of this report delineated eight different types of AC. Knowing that states could implement any and all makes tracking AC effectiveness almost impossible, at least for now. With rare exception, the AC studies included in this report, or appearing elsewhere, never defined which kind of AC program was under consideration. Remember, the AC programs before us are just in their infancy, and like with any infant, one spends most of the time feeding and changing them. However, some preliminary observations are being made.

First, the *caveats*. While most states have some form of a working alternative certification program, little research, especially data-based studies, has been published on the topic. "What is missing are reports of studies that provide analyses of actual data which support or refute a contention about possible outcomes of alternative certification. Of the few which have collected and analyzed data, the generalizability of the studies has been limited because the available samples were limited."⁵⁶ Boser and Wiley noted that measuring the success of teacher preparation programs is difficult at best; "until valid measures of teaching performance become accepted, it is not possible to make quantitative comparisons between teachers from different preparation programs."⁵⁷ Often, studies do not compare teacher training programs within the same district, choosing instead to compare in-district teachers with state or national samples.⁵⁸ Additionally, the previously discussed array of AC definitions makes it difficult to compare alternative certification to other forms of licensure.⁵⁹ This problem is not unique to a comparison of AC and TC programs, but is representative of the general state of educational research.⁶⁰ Trish Stoddart encapsulated the necessary research vigilance: "findings indicate the need for caution in making generalizations about either form of teacher preparation; they demonstrate the importance of comparative research which looks at the influence of type of teacher preparation, level of schooling, teaching assignment, social and geographical context, and individual biography on learning to teach."⁶¹

Yet there is no shortage of suggestions in how to conduct rigorous evaluations. Alternative certification researchers call for investigations that tie outcomes to specific processes;⁶² measuring outcomes against stated goals or comparing success on clearly stated criteria;⁶³ and instituting longitudinal protocols.⁶⁴ Examination of alternative certification is often a study in contrasts; some educators prefer to freely editorialize

that the impact of AC is unfavorable,⁶⁵ while others are the very model of rigor and intelligence.⁶⁶

Evaluation research into program effectiveness may even seem contradictory when done thoroughly. Evaluation of the alternative certification program in New Jersey is illustrative. Natriello and Zumwalt essentially gave it a favorable evaluation in achieving several recruitment goals;⁶⁷ in contrast, Smith was highly critical of its management, organization, and teacher effectiveness.⁶⁸

Determining the effectiveness of the New Jersey program was increasingly complicated when researchers reported that "despite extraordinary efforts by the state of New Jersey to recruit AC candidates with strong academic credentials, the candidates actually selected by school systems, on average, were from the middle range of the academic qualification of those in the selection pool rather than from the top one-third or one-fourth of the candidates."⁶⁹

Despite the incipient and problematic characteristics of AC/TC evaluations, interesting research is surfacing. Stoddart found that there were no significant differences between the AC/TC groups in LAUSD. "The researchers concluded that the alternative route teachers, as a group, were as instructionally effective as their university-educated counterparts."⁷⁰ McKibbin came to a similar conclusion.⁷¹ Adelman, Bogart, and Michie found that AC programs were producing teachers more skilled than their TC colleagues.⁷² Rodman found that AC participants scored higher on the National Teachers Examination than TC participants.⁷³

A Connecticut AC evaluation found that:

(Eighty-eight percent) of supervisors felt that Alternate Route teachers were stronger than other beginning teachers in personal qualities; they described the Alternate Route teachers as mature, hard-working, committed to teaching, willing to improve, willing to be active in all school activities, conscientious, having self-esteem, caring, creative, flexible and enthusiastic. Supervisors' overall reaction to these new teachers was extremely positive. All but three respondents (94 percent) indicated they would gladly rehire their particular [Alternate Route teacher].⁷⁴

Lutz and Hutton uncovered a similar thread in the Dallas AC program. AC teachers significantly outperformed TC teachers on teacher advisor ratings and on a number of other indicators leading the researchers to conclude that the "program did indeed provide (Dallas) with quality teachers."⁷⁵

A collection of research investigations found that while not necessarily better, alternative certification teachers were at least equally effective compared to traditionally trained teachers.⁷⁶ Interestingly, when pooling a large list of variables for use in step-wise regression and discriminate function analyses, Lutz and Hutton found no signifi-

The alternative route teachers were as instructionally effective as their university-educated counterparts.

cant predictors of AC intern success entered into the equations.⁷⁷ The way ahead lies essentially uncharted, inviting much continued exploration. "Too little program evaluation is underway."⁷⁸

A subset of program evaluation pertains to student achievement, perhaps the litmus test of any program's true worthiness. While this is an extremely important pursuit, little information is being generated. Darling-Hammond, in trying to compare "alternate route candidates" with "trained teachers" found student achievement gains were significantly lower for the AC candidates.⁷⁹ (Of course!) Cornett found that the students of AC teachers in her study scored as well on achievement tests as those students taught by traditionally trained teachers.⁸⁰ Hawley summarizes the student achievement dilemma: "How effective are TC teachers, in comparison to AC teachers, in facilitating student learning? The research on AC programs does not provide good evidence on this question. Studies which rate the performance of AC and TC teachers tend to show little difference in ratings and there is little research on whether the students of AC and TC teachers achieve at different levels."⁸¹ Where can one turn to for direction on these matters? Perhaps Lutz and Hutton provide some harmony in the cacophony of AC research through the "Characteristics of a

Good Program" section of their research report.⁸² Ultimately, it may not matter *which* alternative program is implemented as much as *how* the program is integrated into the district. Their work invites unanimity in establishing best practice principles through which evaluative research may take place.

Carefully designed alternative certification programs offer a way to deal with teacher shortages that is superior to the granting of emergency certificates.

The Numbers Are Foreboding

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to clear up some loose ends, i.e., issues related to school conditions as a learning workplace and the supply of teachers in the market. Fetler provided a case-in-point—California: 232,000 teachers were employed in 1996.⁸³ However, by 2005 an estimated 300,000 will be needed, an increase of 29 percent, to offset an expected 18 percent increase in students. Reasons for this projected increased teacher need include not just continued public school enrollment growth but an accelerated effort to reduce class size through state legislation.⁸⁴ Some school districts must use emergency credentialing when faced with a teacher shortage. Emergency creden-

tialing means that the teacher is allowed to work even with little or no training and often with scant, if any, supervision. Does alternative certification mean an end to the dreaded emergency credentialing practice found in some school districts? While studies on this issue are emerging, a certain amount of logical speculation may lead to an informed answer at this juncture—probably yes and no. Nationally, approximately 1 percent of working teachers have emergency credentials.⁸⁵ But national figures are irrelevant to the argument because emergency credentialing is often a local issue, where pockets of under-staffed schools repeatedly seek immediate relief. It is not

that we need just more teachers—we need more teachers HERE! and THERE! Alternative certification does get districts moving in the right direction.

Carefully designed alternative certification programs offer a way to deal with teacher shortages that are superior to the granting of emergency certificates; alternative certification offers a career path into teaching for the academically qualified person who seeks a teaching position but lacks the means or opportunity for a period of sustained professional training. Alternative certification relieves some of the political pressure built up by the demand for choice and for a deregulated economy.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, as Darling-Hammond noted in a review of pertinent research, the number of needed emergency credentials far surpasses the total output of AC programs both nationally and by state.⁸⁷ Even in cities that produce and use AC teachers in record number, the number of hired emergency teachers is still greater; “districts do not have the resources” including the financial resources cited earlier in this report.⁸⁸ For instance, in the fall of 1986, 2,200 teachers were hired in LAUSD, 60 percent of whom received emergency certificates, with no professional training.⁸⁹ This is where education numbers make for a precarious weird science. In California, if districts needed to reduce the average class size by just one student, an additional 10,000 teachers would be needed (along with \$400 million).⁹⁰ Therefore, a few thoughts must be devoted to looking at the teacher employment picture.

One does not have to be a Nobel Prize winner to understand that the teacher job market is punctuated by cycles of high and low surplus. The future existence and amplitude of these cycles is hotly debated.⁹¹ One of the clearest explications of the issues is found in Charles Kerchner’s “Shortages and Gluts of Public School Teachers: There Must Be a Policy Problem Here Somewhere.”⁹² Historically, at least prior to alternative certification, districts or states could increase teacher applications not by raising salaries but by lowering standards. “A teacher shortage is measured by lack of credentialed applicants rather than the lack of highly qualified persons”⁹³

The more manipulable incentives to enter teaching have to do with *salary and structuring the quality of teacher work life* (emphasis added). Both involve money, but it is difficult to foresee a market response in which wages will increase salaries rapidly enough to attract those who have other professional labor market options.⁹⁴

The twin issues of salary and working conditions have led to a problematic transformation in education: some observers claim that those who historically went into teaching, those who wanted to live on teaching wages and work in bureaucratic and deteriorating schools, have tended to be some of the least academically talented and the most poorly prepared.⁹⁵ Of course, many disagree with this contention,⁹⁶ while others have noted that teacher candidate curriculum is a host of irrelevant contractions which get quickly “washed out” by actual teaching experience.⁹⁷

Extending this supply and demand discussion is well beyond the intent of this report, except for how it depletes the strength of alternative certification programs in attracting minority applicants and urban teacher candidates.⁹⁸ There is a very strong undertow working against the promises of AC. "Most minorities in the university are pursuing degrees in business, engineering, and social science"⁹⁹ leaving behind teaching and instead "choosing other jobs which offer better pay, more opportunities for advancement, and better work conditions."¹⁰⁰

Teacher salary has often been a point for heated debate; "More money would bring better candidates currently going to more lucrative positions" goes the argument. O.K. Assume that we raise teacher wages by \$10,000, making them roughly comparable to police officers. "Allan Odden points out that to raise 'the average salary of all 2.1 million United States teachers by \$10,000, to make teaching more financially competitive with other jobs that require equivalent training, would cost more than \$20 billion.' This comes to more than \$500 per pupil"¹⁰¹ political suicide for policy makers.

Haberman offers numerous ways to attract more minority teachers, though his points apply to all applicants. His suggestions include increasing salaries, raising the status of classroom teachers, empowering teachers, and working much more closely with talented students in community colleges, among others. But one suggestion echoes the research cited earlier about AC teachers in urban settings: "If we are truly committed to increasing the number of minority teachers, then improving the quality of preschool, elementary, and secondary schools in urban areas is the key, since most future minority teachers attend urban schools."¹⁰² In a more systems-theory orientation to increase minority teachers, the "Stilwell Approach" delineates eight programmatic steps with fifty-two directly identifiable and accountable district and school-site activities.¹⁰³

Gordon noted that "people of color do not choose teaching as a career because incentives such as salary, prestige, and social mobility are low relative to alternative careers now available;" "a problem not solvable in the present social conditions."¹⁰⁴ Gordon's qualitative research with 140 teachers found numerous reasons why minorities do not select a teaching career; most salient here are low status, low pay, negative image, and bad schools. It is not just would-be-teachers rejecting education, but their sources of support, especially family and friends, are discouraging the choice for exactly the same reasons. If most of one's world says no—then even a gold-plated red-carpeted AC program stands little chance of significantly increasing minority enrollment, subject specialists, and urban teachers. As is so often the case in education, the social context supercedes the school context, including employment.

Moving the AC Debate into a Viable Future

The weird science of alternative certification research means working on many fronts simultaneously; incorporating the data on student achievement; untangling fiscal rela-