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Teaching While Learning
Alternate Routes Fill the Gap

C. EMILY FEISTRITZER

Executive Summary

Alternative teacher certification programs have shown that aggressive, targeted recruitment for specific teachers produces a groundswell of talented individuals eager to fill the demand for whatever teachers are needed and who stay in those jobs longer than graduates of undergraduate teacher education programs who enter teaching right away.

State-defined alternative routes to teacher certification are being implemented by some 600 program providers, producing approximately 62,000 new teachers annually. At least one-third of all new teachers being hired are coming through alternative routes.

The success of alternative routes to teaching is largely attributable to the fact that these pathways to teaching are market-driven. It is not surprising that these teachers stay in teaching longer since they make a commitment to teach and are trained to teach in the schools where they choose to teach.

Few could seriously suggest that the teaching force could not be more ethnically diverse, that more men are not needed in school classrooms, and that mobility of teachers is not important. All of these areas and more are enhanced by alternate route programs and the participants in the programs.

While the lines between alternative and traditional teacher education programs as viewed through the program delivery lens may be disappearing, there is no question that the alternative teacher certification movement of the last 25 years has had a major impact on who enters teaching, what individuals have to do in order to become teachers, when they enter teaching, where they teach, and how long they stay in teaching.

While some teacher educators argue that alternative route programs are generally inferior to traditional college-based teacher education programs, recent research is showing that there is not much difference in the learning of students regardless of which preparation route teachers take. The issue is no longer alternative route versus traditional route, as if each category represented programs within it that mirrored all the others and were distinct and different from those in the other category. What are needed are clear, accurate descriptions of *all* pathways to teaching with data and information useful to consumers all along the spectrum so that all parties can make informed decisions that can result in producing the most effective teachers where and when needed.

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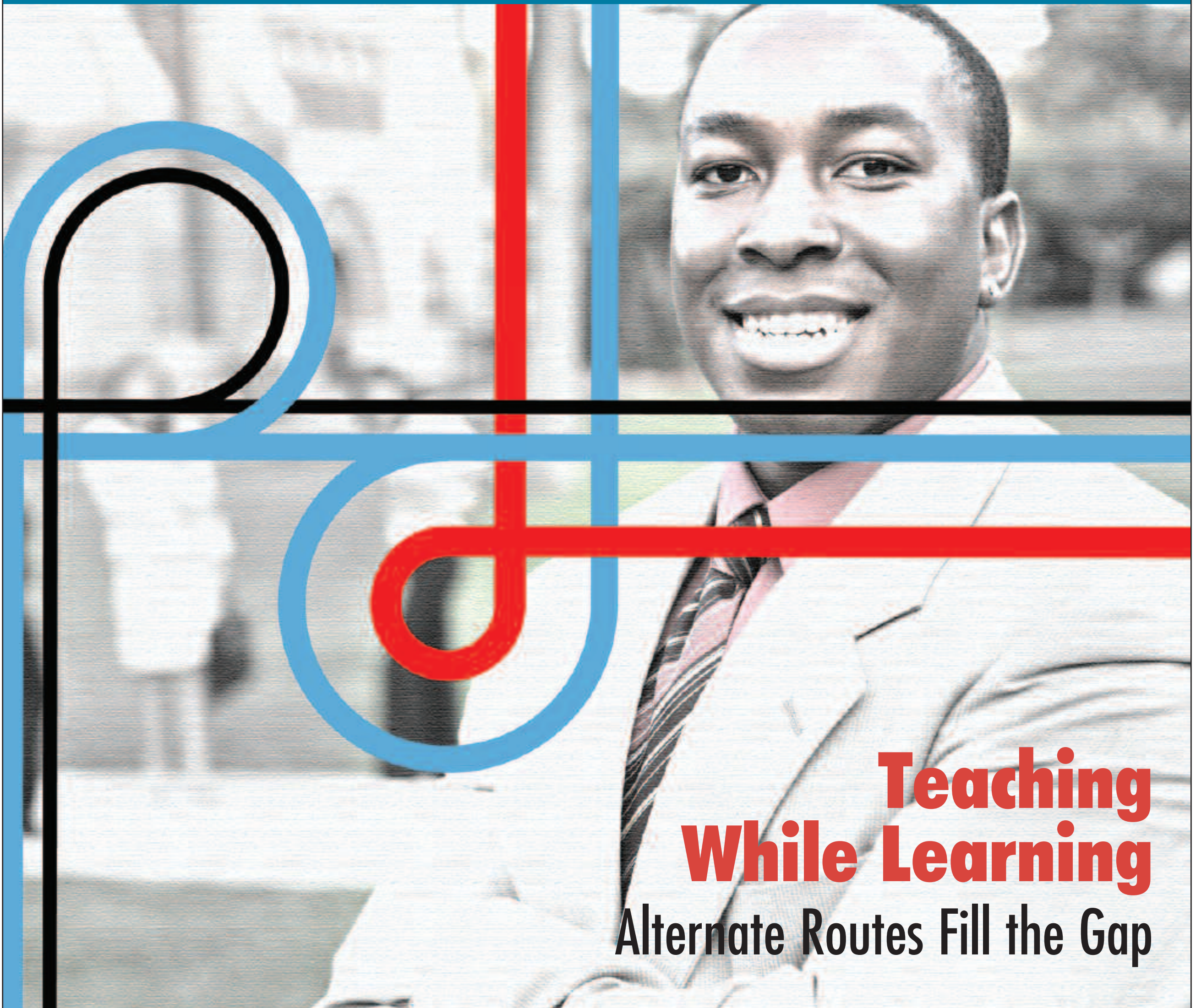
C. EMILY FEISTRITZER



Teaching While Learning

Alternate Routes Fill the Gap

WHILE THE DRUMBEAT of shortages of teachers still rolls on in some places, the supply of competent people who want to teach far outstrips demand for teachers. There is no need for school districts to scrape the bottom of the barrel to fill demand for a teacher in any subject at any grade level in any locale. Alternative routes to teaching have proven this once and for all. These programs have shown that aggressive, targeted recruitment for specific teachers produces a groundswell of talented individuals eager to fill the demand for whatever teachers are needed who stay in those jobs longer than graduates of undergraduate teacher education programs who enter teaching right away.

States created "alternative routes to teacher certification" amidst much criticism 25 years ago as a way to attract talented individuals who already had at least a bachelor's degree into teaching to improve the quality of the teaching force, as well as to alleviate projected shortages of teachers. These state-defined alternative routes now number 125 across all 50 states and are being implemented by some 600 program providers, producing approximately 62,000 new teachers annually (See Figure 1) and growing. At least one-third of all new teachers being hired are coming through alternative routes.

FIGURE 1. NUMBER OF TEACHERS CERTIFIED THROUGH ALTERNATE ROUTES, BY YEAR

Source: Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-by-State Analysis 2009, National Center for Education Information

An estimated half million teachers have obtained their certification to teach through various alternative routes (Feistritzer, 2009).

The success of alternative routes to teaching is largely attributable to the fact that these pathways to teaching are market-driven. They have been created all over the country to meet demand for specific teachers in specific subject areas at specific grade levels in specific schools where there is a demand for teachers.

Alternate routes are based on the premise that post-baccalaureate candidates grounded in the subject matter they will teach, many with maturity and life experience, want to teach and can be transitioned into becoming effective teachers through on-the-job training programs designed to meet their educational and training needs in an efficient, cost-effective way. It is not surprising that these teachers stay in teaching longer since they make a commitment to teach rather than just obtaining a credential. They are also trained to teach in the schools where they choose to teach.

Alternative routes are just that: alternative routes. There is no one route, no one way, no best way. Alternative routes to teacher certification opened the floodgates, as it were, to a grand experiment in re-defining the who, what, when, where, and how of becoming a teacher.

While the variation in delivery of state-defined alternate routes is huge—ranging from test-only options to Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs—an evolving consensus of essential characteristics shows that most alternate routes:

- Are specifically designed to recruit, prepare, and license individuals who already have at least a bachelor's degree. Many have had other careers.
- Require rigorous screening processes, such as tests, interviews, and demonstrated mastery of subject matter content.
- Provide on-the-job training.
- Include coursework or equivalent experiences in professional education studies before and while teaching.
- Involve work with mentor teachers and/or other support personnel.
- Set high performance standards for completion of the program.

Alternate routes have come and gone. Ones that don't meet market demand or don't attract or train candidates die. And that's the way it should be.

On the other hand, successful alternative routes produce teachers who generally are older, more ethnically diverse, more willing to teach wherever the jobs are, and more willing to teach high-demand subjects in hard-to-staff schools than are traditionally trained teachers. These teachers are also more likely to stay in the profession than traditionally trained teachers.

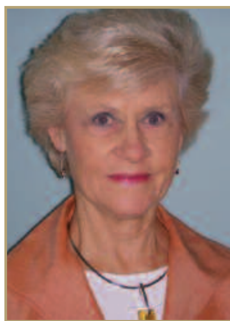
To understand how this movement became so powerful and why it is leading the discussion about all pathways to teaching, it is important to review the context of teacher certification in the United States.

Avenues for Teacher Certification

In order to teach in a public school in the United States, one has to be certified by the state in which one is to teach. Prior to states creating alternative routes, the only acceptable way to get certified was for an individual to complete a college teacher education program that was approved by the state licensing agency. Even though states have always made exceptions to this route—mostly by issuing emergency certificates to individuals who had not met all of the teacher education program requirements, allowing them to begin teaching while they finished all the requisite education courses—it was not until the early 1980s that the alternative teacher certification "movement" began. Now every state in the nation has at least one alternative route for certifying "non-traditional" candidates to teach.

The state of New Jersey is often credited with starting the first real alternative route to teacher certification. In 1983, New Jersey set out to build an alternative route by creating a pathway to teaching specifically designed to attract liberal arts graduates into teaching. At the time, New Jersey was concerned more about the quality of its teaching force than about filling teacher vacancies. Amidst much criticism and controversy, the state-run Provisional Teacher Program was launched in 1985 (Klagholz, 2000). At the same time, the states of California and Texas began alternative routes that were designed to attract and certify individuals as teachers who already had a baccalaureate degree.

About the Author



C. EMILY FEISTRITZER is president and CEO of the National Center for Education Information and the National Center for Alternative Certification, both based in Washington, D.C. These organizations serve as clearinghouses for data and information about education, particularly pertaining to teachers. She is considered by many to be the nation's expert on alternative routes to teacher certification, which she has studied for the last quarter of a century. She has authored numerous reports on this topic, including *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State by State Analysis*, published annually since 1990, and *Alternate Routes To Teaching*, written with Charlene K. Haar and published by Merrill/Prentice-Hall/Pearson in April 2008.

She has testified before the United States Congress and several state legislatures, briefed members of several presidential administrations, delivered numerous speeches, and authored articles in professional journals on the topic of the preparation and certification of teachers and school administrators. Her work has been covered by newspapers and periodicals across the country, including *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, Investors Business Daily, Business Week, Time, Newsweek,* and *U.S. and News World Report*. She has appeared on numerous radio and television broadcasts to discuss issues related to teachers and their qualifications.

California reported that about one-third of its new hires came through alternate routes.

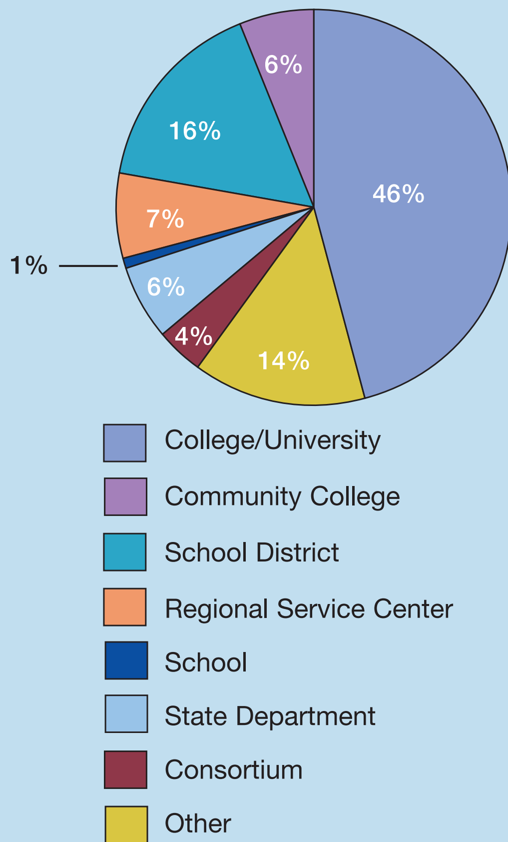
The most prolific alternate routes today, in terms of production of new teachers, are the oldest and most established routes in these three states. The number of individuals certified through the alternative routes in New Jersey, California, and Texas in 2008 accounted for nearly half of all teachers certified through alternate routes that year. New Jersey reported that about 40 percent of its new hires came through alternate routes. California reported that about one-third of its new hires came through alternate routes. In Texas, the state's 178 non-traditional teacher preparation programs now outpace traditional teacher education programs in production of new hires in the state.

Depending on a state's guidelines for its alternative route(s), there may be different providers for implementing the state's routes. States specify eligible providers, such as school districts, regional service centers, individual schools, private companies, consortia, and community colleges, as well as traditional four-year colleges and universities.

Within each state, the eligible providers create programs to implement the alternate routes to certification. Upon successful completion of the state-approved alternative route program and recommendations from the provider, the state certifies individuals to teach in the state. Nearly all of the 62,000 participants in an estimated 600 alternate route programs that implemented 125 state alternate routes in 2007-08 were teachers of record in schools across the country.

Analyses of alternate route provider programs—made possible by a data template developed by The National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC) that is available at www.teach-now.org—reveal striking similarities in most programs, from entry requirements through program completion, even though the number of participants varies widely from program to program.

The biggest difference among providers of alternate route programs is who administers the program. As shown in Figure 2, nearly half



Source: National Center for Alternative Certification, 2009

(46 percent) are administered by a college or university. Community colleges, a fast-growing newcomer in this field, administer six percent. School districts, regional service centers, and schools administer about one-fourth (24 percent) of alternate route programs. State agencies administer about six percent; various consortia, four percent; and "other" about 14 percent. The "other" category included mostly collaborations and a handful of private companies and online providers.

...virtually all program participants teach with salary and benefits during their alternate route programs.

Another major difference among alternate route programs is the number of college courses candidates are required to take for which they pay tuition at a college or university. For example, 38 percent of alternate route programs do not require

participants to take any college semester hours for which they pay tuition at a college or university. At the other end of the spectrum, 28 percent require participants to take 31 or more semester hours for which they pay college tuition.

Not surprisingly, more alternate route programs administered by colleges, universities, and community colleges require participants to take courses on a college campus than do other providers of alternate route programs.

However, just as most alternate route programs require a baccalaureate degree to enter the program, program providers report that virtually all program participants teach with salary and benefits during their alternate route programs. Although most (79 percent) are full time employees, some (21 percent) are employed part time.

Alternate route program providers also reported that while candidates are teaching, they received support most often (95 percent) from mentor teachers. Program providers reported that beginning teachers received support from others as well, as shown in Figure 3: school principals, college personnel, and state agency personnel.

The roles of new teacher support and induction in producing more effective teachers and especially in retaining them have been emphasized by many educators. However, recent studies by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences that focused on conducting just the kind of research called for by these educators (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) show that comprehensive teacher induction has no significant impact on teacher retention after two years. The IES studies (2008, 2009a) also show no statistically significant impacts of teacher induction on student achievement.

Since mentoring and induction are perceived by most educators as a measure of effectiveness of teacher preparation and subsequent retention of teachers, research study results such as those from the IES studies raise crucial questions about what, in fact, *does* matter in the production and retention of effective teachers? Some of the best research in the country being conducted now on retention and other issues related to the preparation of teachers and its effects is being done by the team of Donald Boyd, Pamela Grossman, Hamilton Lankford, Susanna Loeb, and James Wycoff. Their research papers can be found at www.teacherpolicyresearch.org. A recent report by the team looks at teacher attrition by teacher effectiveness and comes up with mixed results by year of teaching and types of schools teachers teach in (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2009).

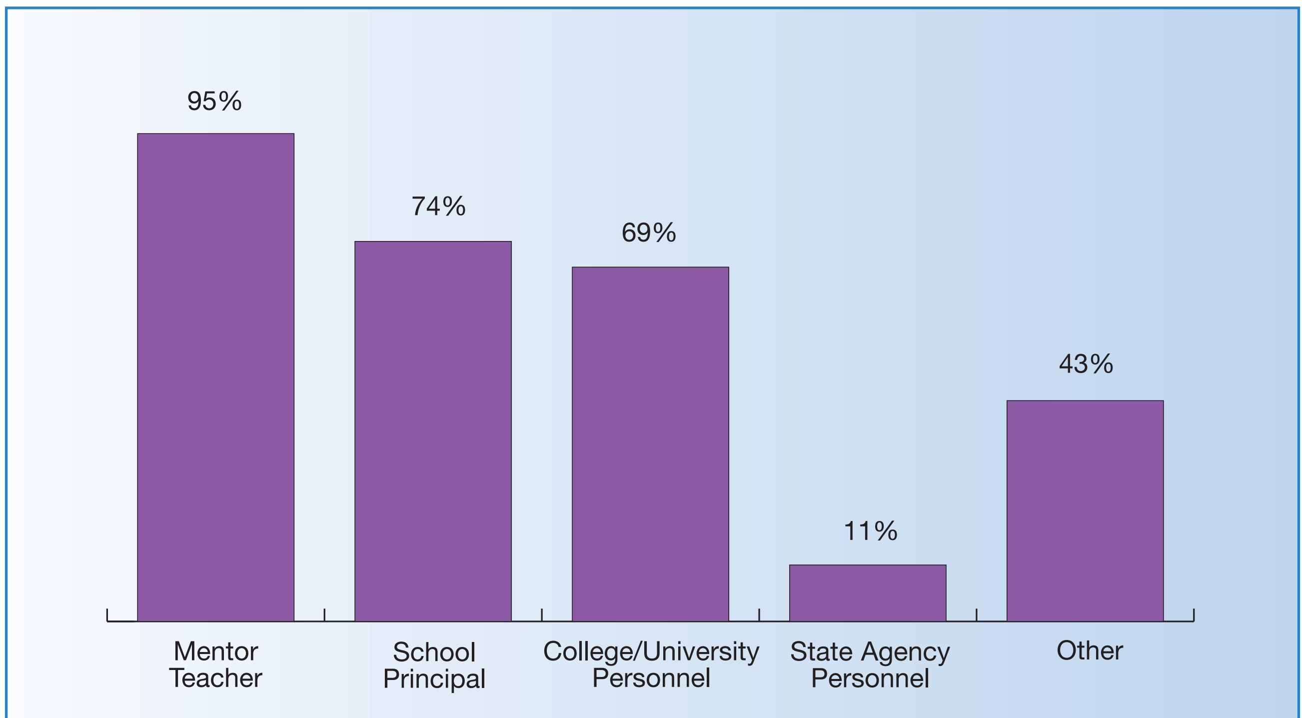
Teacher Recruitment and Alternate Routes

Prior to the mid-1980s, when the controversial alternate routes started springing up, the United States relied almost exclusively on high school students who went to college and majored in education for its supply of new teachers (Rollefson, 1993, p. 1).

By itself, this has not proven to be a fail-safe way to get qualified college graduates into teaching jobs, much less keep them. Data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics show that more than one-third (35 percent) of education bachelor's degree recipients in 1999-2000 were not teaching the following year. Furthermore, the data indicate that 25 percent of education bachelor's degree recipients in 1999-2000 had not even prepared to teach and/or were not certified to teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2000-01). Several studies show that one-third of new teachers leave within three years of beginning to teach and as many as half of them are not teaching after five years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

It is important to remember that institutions of higher education are, for the most part, in the business of granting academic degrees, not training or certifying people for jobs. Alternative routes to teacher certification programs, on the other hand, accept only individuals who not only already have a bachelor's degree, but come into a program because

FIGURE 3. SOURCES OF PARTICIPANTS' SUPPORT DURING AN ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



Source: National Center for Alternative Certification Data Template, August 1, 2009

they want to teach. In most alternate route programs, the participants fill particular existing teacher vacancies.

Most alternate route programs are established to meet market demand for specific teachers in specific subject areas in specific schools. It is no surprise that the retention rate for teachers who complete an alternate route program and are still teaching five years later is about 85 percent in most states (NCAC, 2009). The targeted nature of alternate routes is the reason they are proliferating at a rapid rate, why thousands of people who would not otherwise have done so are choosing to become teachers, and why the routes themselves come and go.

One of the most significant contributions alternative routes to teaching have made is revealing the tremendous interest in teaching among a much wider audience of people than ever thought possible, from recent college graduates to career switchers to early retirees from the military and other occupations. The alternative teacher certification movement grew as much out of a need to create programs that best suited the needs of these changing populations of people who want to teach as it did from the needs of school districts who required teachers to teach specific subjects at specific grade levels in specific schools.

A quarter of a century ago, the alternative certification movement for teachers was suspect, to say the least. The idea that high-quality teachers could be recruited from outside established education channels was met with much skepticism. However, experiences in states all over the country have proven that educated individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds can and do make excellent teachers.

So, who are the people getting certified to teach through alternative routes? The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) and the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC) have been collecting data and information from states since 1983 concerning alternative routes to teacher certification. (All of this information can be found at www.teach-now.org.) These data from state databases, studies focused on specific programs around the

country, and surveys show that teachers obtaining certification through alternative routes are:

- Coming into teaching from other careers;
- Older;
- More ethnically diverse;
- More likely to be men;
- More willing to teach in more difficult-to-staff schools, such as in inner cities and outlying rural areas; and
- Teaching subjects and grade levels where the demand for teachers is greatest: math, the sciences, and special education in middle and high schools (NCAC, 2009).

Most alternate route programs are established to meet market demand for specific teachers in specific subject areas in specific schools.

A national survey of individuals entering teaching through alternate routes to teacher certification in states and regions representative of alternate routes throughout the country conducted by the National Center for Education Information in 2004-05 (NCEI, 2005) found that alternate routes appeal to men and ethnic minorities. The appeal to these two groups are two benefits that proponents of alternate route programs suggest are valuable characteristics of alternate routes. This is yet another result of alternate routes meeting the needs for specific teachers. For example, the demand for teachers is greatest in urban areas, and one half of participants in alternate route programs, compared with 28 percent of all teachers, teach in large cities. Alternate route programs in urban areas target recruitment to meet the needs of students in urban areas, attracting more men and ethnic minorities to mirror the composition of the student body. Consequently, it is not surprising that alternative routes bring more males and minorities into teaching than do traditional teacher education programs, which are designed to grant academic degrees, not fill specific job demands.

In 2005, 37 percent of the respondents to the NCEI survey were male. When compared with the U.S. Department of Education, Schools and Staffing Survey of 2003-04, 25 percent of all teachers and 25 percent of all new teachers were male (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

The NCEI survey of alternate route participants also showed that 33 percent of survey respondents

prepared and certified through alternate route programs were non-white. Again, this is considerably different than teacher preparation programs. The U.S. Department of Education, through NCES, reported that only 17 percent of bachelor's of arts degree recipients who went on to teach in 2003-04 were non-white (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 4).

Supply and Demand

Teachers who enter teaching though alternate routes also reflect a higher degree of mobility than does the overall teaching force. Not only do alternate route teachers already teach in high-demand communities, they also are more willing to move if the demand for teachers warrants such a move. Thirty-six percent of alternate route teachers said that it was very likely or somewhat likely that they would move to a large metropolitan area within the state if demand for teachers were great; 31 percent said it was very likely or somewhat likely that they would move to a rural area within the state. Thirty-one percent indicated they would be very or somewhat likely to move to an out-of-state metropolitan area and 22 percent said they would be very or somewhat likely to move to an out-of-state rural area if there was a demand for teachers there.

Mobility of teachers prepared through alternate routes may be a partial explanation of the survey findings that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of alternate route teachers were not teaching within 150 miles of where they were born; in contrast, 64 percent of all public school teachers were teaching within 150 miles of where they were born, according to a 2005 NCEI study of public school teachers.

Alternate route teachers also teach subjects and grade levels where demand is greatest. For example, 20 percent of alternate route teachers were teaching mathematics in 2005, whereas 7 percent of all teachers were teaching mathematics. In the sciences, including biology, geology, physics, and chemistry, 28 percent of alternate route teachers, compared with 18 percent of K-12 teachers, teach science subjects. Similarly, 44 percent of alternate route teachers were teaching special education classes. From survey results in 2004-05 of teachers who had entered teaching through alternate route programs, 40 percent were teaching pre-k and elementary grades; the 60 percent who were teaching in junior and senior high grades were evenly divided between the two upper grade levels.

Retention Rates and Alternate Routes

States that account for a large portion of all the teachers in the United States—California, Florida, Texas, New Jersey—also account for most of the alternate routes in the nation. These states report that 85-90 percent of teachers who enter the profession through their alternate routes are still teaching five years later. This compares with about two-thirds of teachers who enter through their "traditional" teacher education programs.

There are, of course, reports that alternate route teachers leave at much higher rates than traditionally trained teachers (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005). These reports include high proportions of teacher candidates entering teaching through the Teach For America (TFA) program. The real news story about TFA is that anybody is still teaching after two years since TFA only requires its candidates to make a two-year commitment to the program and gets them into teaching jobs almost right away. A recent study shows that 61 percent of TFA Corps members continue to teach beyond their two-year commitment (Donaldson, 2008).

It really should come as no surprise that alternate route teachers stay in teaching at relatively high rates. Again, it is the market phenomenon at work. Individuals entering teaching through alternate routes make a conscious choice to teach. They do not enter an alternate route just to get a degree or a certificate to teach. The programs they enter are designed to recruit, select, train, and place individuals in teaching jobs where the demand for teachers is greatest. Candidates *choose* to teach subjects at grade levels in specific schools where they are supposed to obtain the training

necessary to be effective teachers, based on their specific needs, as well as obtain certification to teach. That is the model for alternate route programs.

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Expanding the Pool of Teachers

Probably the most critical question regarding alternate routes to teaching is this: Would the individuals entering teaching through these routes have become teachers if the alternate route had not available? The answer: Not likely.

A national survey of individuals entering teaching through alternate routes to teacher certification in states and regions representative of alternate routes throughout the country conducted by NCEI in 2004-05 indicated that only one-fifth of teachers entering the profession through alternative routes would have gone back to college and completed a traditional teacher education program in order to become a teacher. Nearly half (47 percent) of those entering teaching through alternate routes said they would not have become a teacher if an alternate route to certification had not been available, and 25 percent of survey respondents said they were not sure. An additional 6 percent reported they would have found a job in a private school or in a setting in which they would not have to be certified to teach.

This NCEI survey of alternate route teachers further showed that nearly half of the people entering teaching through alternate routes were working in a non-education job the year before they began an alternate route to teacher certification program. Forty percent were working in a professional occupation outside the field of education.

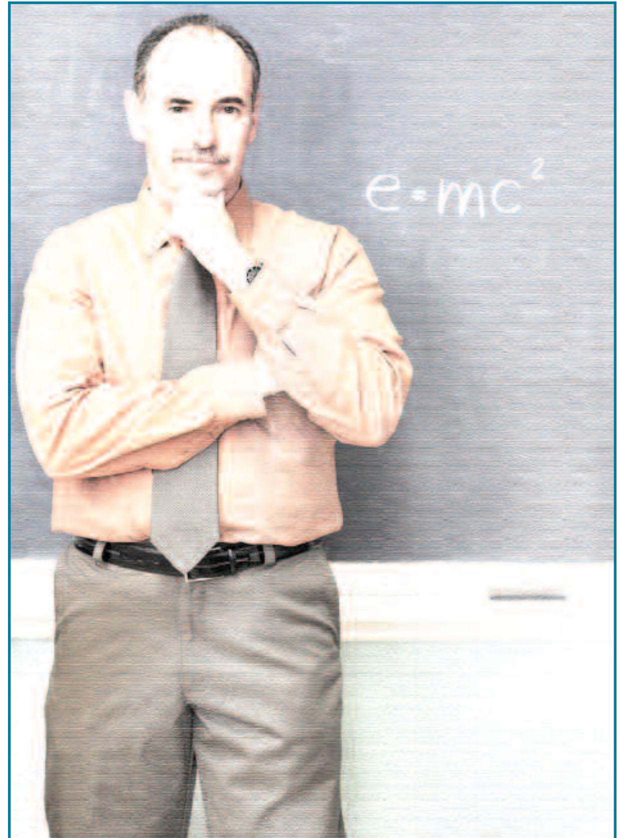
Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of alternate route teachers surveyed reported they were 30 years of age or older at the time they entered an alternate route program. Thirty-nine percent entered a program at age 40 or older and 11 percent began an alternate route program when they were 50 years or older.

The data further indicate that the older one is, the less inclined one is to enter teaching without using an alternate route. Nearly six out of 10 (59 percent)

of those surveyed who were in their 50s or older when they entered an alternate route said they would not have become a teacher if an alternate route had not been available. One half of those in their 40s responded similarly.

Few could seriously suggest that the teaching force could not be more ethnically diverse, that more men are not needed in school classrooms, and that mobility of teachers is not important. All of these areas and more are enhanced by alternate route programs and the participants in the programs.

The alternative routes to teacher certification movement is not just producing more teachers, but more teachers who come from many walks of life, who make a deliberate choice to teach and, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education in its Highly Qualified Teacher Guide, are "highly qualified" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 5).



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Blurring the Lines Between Traditional and Alternative Programs

While the lines between alternative and traditional teacher education programs as viewed through the program delivery lens may be disappearing, there is no question that the alternative teacher certification movement of the last 25 years has had a major impact on who enters teaching, what individuals have to do in order to become teachers, when they enter teaching, where they teach, and how long they stay in teaching.

Alternate routes have also demonstrated that targeting programs to fit the needs of individuals who want to transition into teaching are highly effective in doing just that. There are scores of thousands of career switchers, recent liberal arts graduates, retirees, and late-in-life career choosers who want to teach. Some of them want to go back to college and get a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree in order to obtain certification. Some of them want to obtain a MAT through an online teacher training degree program. Others want to demonstrate competency to teach through testing or actual

teaching experience. Most of them want to go through an orientation-to-teaching program to learn the basics of what it means to be a teaching professional and the basics of how to manage learning and a classroom, while teaching with experienced, competent teachers. What alternative routes to teacher certification have done is make all these alternatives and combinations of them available to people who already have at least a bachelor's degree and want to teach, as well as to school districts that need teachers.

While some teacher educators argue that alternative route programs are generally inferior to traditional college-based teacher education programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005), recent research is showing that there is not much difference in the learning of students whether teachers entered teaching through an "alternative" route or a "traditional" route (U.S. Department of Education, 2009b; Boyd et al., 2006; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). The U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences study, *An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through Different Routes to Certification*, released in February 2009, is particularly strong in its conclusions that on no variable studied was there any significant difference in teacher effectiveness whether a teacher went through an "alternative" or "traditional" teacher preparation program (U.S. Department of Education, 2009a, 2009b).

These are disconcerting findings to critics from both sides, so the debate goes on about which is a better route to teaching: traditional or alternative? But, looking closely at the myriad individual programs being implemented under these two headings—traditional and alternative routes to teaching—what shows up is that there are more differences among programs within each of these categories than between the two of them (Feistritzer & Haar, 2008; Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008).

The issue is no longer alternative route versus traditional route to teaching, as if each category represented programs within it that mirrored all the others and were distinct and different from those in the other category. There are now college campus-based teacher education programs that get students out in schools early in their programs and that offer long clinical teaching experiences that are classified as "traditional" teacher education programs. Likewise, there are programs classified by a state as "alternative" that require that candidates take a full cadre of education courses, sometimes leading to a Master of Arts degree, usually while they are teaching and obtaining full certification. And there is everything in between. What are needed are clear, accurate descriptions of all pathways to teaching with data and information useful to consumers all along the spectrum—individuals seeking to be teachers, school districts that hire teachers, providers of programs, researchers, and policy makers—so that all parties can make informed decisions that can result in producing the most effective teachers where and when needed.

The research cited elsewhere in this article is showing that the alternative or traditional pathway one takes to teaching is not a determining factor in a teacher's effectiveness in producing student learning or retention in the profession. It is also possible that we need to rethink the retention issue anyway. A press release issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) in June 2008 stated the average number of jobs held between the ages of 18 and 42 by people born in the years 1957 to 1964: 10.8. Data from this BLS longitudinal study also show that education level attained does not make much difference, but the older one is, the less likely one is to change jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008).

While there continues to be much handwringing about shortages of teachers, teacher attrition, and ways to keep teachers in the profession, evidence is mounting that such "the sky is falling" pronouncements may very well be misplaced concerns. New evidence is mounting that shows:

- There are far more talented, highly educated individuals who want to teach wherever the jobs are than there are jobs available.
- The less effective teachers are the ones leaving the profession.

- Some 1,500 pathways to teaching offer many options for entry into teaching—the most successful being those that are selective in the candidates they choose and that meet the needs of a diverse population of people with varying backgrounds who want to teach.
- Selection of teachers is probably the most important variable in ensuring every child in America is taught by an effective teacher.

It would be better to plan for getting effective teachers into classrooms through diverse pathways that meet not only the needs of schools that have demands for teachers but also the needs of the diverse population of candidates who choose to teach for productive periods of time, whether they choose to do so as a first job, a last job, or one somewhere in between.

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2010 Teacher Summer Conference

"How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies"

- **Experience** an interactive workshop focused on Strategies to Improve Academic Achievement of ALL Students.
- **Examine** cultural proficiency and cultural competence with an emphasis on students "who don't look like you".
- **Explore** how to create a classroom community that honors every voice.
- **Experience** brain-based instructional strategies.
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Course Objectives:

A. Participants will examine their cultural lens and come to understand the concepts of cultural awareness and cultural proficiency.
B. Participants will learn about causes for the achievement gap and learn strategies to address the needs of diverse learners.
C. Participants will learn the research behind brain-based instructional strategies and practice these strategies within the context of the course.
D. Participants will design an implementation plan to use in the context of their educational roles.

Schedule of Topics:

A. Cultural Awareness
B. Cultural Proficiency
C. The Achievement Gap
D. Diverse Learners
E. Brain-based Teaching Strategies
F. Improving Classroom Instruction

Keynote speaker Bonnie M. Davis, Ph.D. has more than 30 years of teaching experience and currently serves as a consultant on literacy coaching, writing across the content areas and culturally proficient instruction schools. She is the recipient of several awards including, The Teacher of the Year and The Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence. She has presented for the National Staff Development Council, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Education Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Association of Multicultural Education, among others.

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