

Teacher Education Changes in New York State: 1998-Present

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One of the critical "hot topics" in education today is the improvement of preservice teacher preparation. A trend both on the national and state-wide levels, the past few years have brought significant change to the field of teacher education in New York State. These recent changes have emanated from a variety of external sources, and each has substantially impacted four-year institutions that offer teacher preparation programs in this state.

On July 20, 1998, following a period of blue-ribbon committee research and discussion, the New York State Education Department Regents Task Force on Teaching published their recommendations in "Teaching to Higher Standards: New York's Commitment."¹ Signaling a call for the first major certification changes since 1993, the document provides an extensive study of the current issues and gaps in teacher education and continuing development in New York State. Critical areas identified in the study include the following: increasing the quality of teacher education programs to produce more effective teachers; enhancing recruitment and retention of the best certified teachers in areas and disciplines where they are most needed; increasing the pool of qualified teachers in all content areas; requiring ongoing professional development; promoting diversity in the teacher candidate pool; improving school environments to enhance teaching and learning. The Regents Task Force recommendations also support the establishment of a Standards and Practices Board to advise the Regents and the Commissioner on topics related to the maintenance of quality teacher education in New York State. Action was taken to establish this board in 1999, thereby replacing the Teacher Education Certification Practices Board (TECAP.) Membership is composed of classroom teachers, higher education representatives, the public, and others who are committed to quality teacher education. NYS AFLT's Dawn Santiago-Marullo serves as a member of this important body.

In September 1999, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) published the format for mandated reregistration changes to Subdivision 52.21 (b) of the Commissioner's Regulations, which govern teacher certification programs. The changes are scheduled for implementation on February 2, 2004, thereby affecting all teacher candidates seeking certification on or after that date. All freshmen enrolling in teacher education programs in Fall 2000 are subject to the new changes. Mandates include the following²:

- 100 hours of field experience related to course work prior to the student teaching experience, with experiences in diverse learning environments and with diverse populations, including age span of developmental levels within the certificate; varying socioeconomic groups; work with inclusion students; work with students whose native language is other than English; experience in a high need school
- Increased standards for all programs, including six college credits of literacy and language development training for all prospective teachers
- Drugs and alcohol instruction
- Safety education and child abuse reporting
- Formal and informal assessment
- Technology component infused in all teacher education programs, including instruction in assistive technology
- A minimum of 40 days of student teaching in two separate placements
- Student teaching accompanied by seminars
- Increased collaboration with colleges and schools
- Increased collaboration among teacher education faculty and liberal arts faculty
- Increased recruitment and retention of minority candidates in teacher education programs
- Increased recruitment and retention of minority faculty in teacher education programs
- New certificate titles and age levels, beginning

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February 2, 2004: (Early Childhood Education-Birth-Grade 2; Childhood Education-Grades 1-6; Middle Childhood Education-Grades 5-9; Adolescence Education-Grades 7-12.)

- Movement from awarding of current “provisional” and “permanent” certification to “initial” and “professional” certificates, effective February 2, 2004
- Change from five years to three years to complete a masters degree for the professional certificate, effective February 2, 2004; possibility of only one one- year extension
- Majority of credit-bearing courses to be taught by full-time faculty
- Experienced faculty hired as student teaching supervisors
- Limitations on the workload of teacher education faculty (12 undergraduate credits/semester or 9 graduate credits/semester or a combination of 21 credits/academic year)
- Minimum of 80% pass rate on New York State Teacher Certification Examinations (NYSTCE) required for teacher education programs
- Three NYSTCE examinations required for initial certificate: LAST, ATS-W and Content Specialty Test, effective February 2, 2004
- 175 hours of professional development every five years required of all new teachers, effective February 2, 2004
- Institutional publication of data related to labor market and job availability
- Accreditation of all teacher education programs by an outside agency by December 31, 2004

All NYSED mandates were unfunded; therefore, institutions have needed to be innovative in their approach to meeting the new requirements.

The first round of state reregistration involved undergraduate teacher education programs. In Fall Semester 1999, all of the undergraduate teacher education programs offered throughout the State underwent significant change and intensive curricular review at numerous institutional levels prior to submission to the New York State Education Department. In teacher certification circles, the massive initiative was referred to as “2000 in 2000.” On April 1, 2000, colleges and universities across the state submitted their revised teacher education programs for NYSED review and reregistration. To provide a concrete example, State University of New York College at Cortland submitted twenty-six undergraduate programs and one new graduate program for NYSED reregistration. All programs were approved for state reregistration in July 2000 and became effective for freshmen entering in Fall Semester 2000.

A similar round of state reregistration of the graduate teacher education programs took place in the academic year 2000-2001. On April 1, 2001, for example, State University of New York College at Cortland submitted twenty-three graduate programs for state reregistration. All programs were approved for state reregistration in July 2001, along with one new graduate program, an M.S.Ed. in Second Language Education; and a Bilingual Extension. All newly reregistered programs became effective for graduate candidates entering in Fall Semester 2001. Institutions of higher education are currently awaiting draft guidelines from the state for a third round of reregistration for the Educational Administrative programs.

Effective February 2001, an additional certification requirement was implemented which resulted from New York State Schools Against Violence in Education (S.A.V.E.) Legislation. All teacher candidates are required to attend a two-clock hour workshop on school violence prevention. The new requirement necessitated arranging for faculty training at the expense of the institution, developing workshops, and organizing multiple offerings of the S.A.V.E. workshops for all candidates graduating in May and August 2001. During Spring Semester 2001, approximately 1000 teacher candidates took the S.A.V.E. workshops at State University of New York College at Cortland alone. The offerings have been expanded since that time, with payment to trained faculty instructors made by each institution.

SUNY Chancellor’s Action Plan

Institutional accountability to the New York State Education Department for compliance with changes is but one aspect of the required changes in teacher education programming. In addition, institutional members of the state-wide system of public institutions in New York State, the State University of New York, must meet the mandates of SUNY System Administration. In June 2001, the Chancellor’s Action Plan, “A New Vision in Teacher Education³,” was adopted by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Mandates for teacher education programs include the following, some of which reflect the mandates of NYSED, and others of which are more rigorous:

- Assurance that candidates are thoroughly grounded in the subjects they teach; this includes a major in the discipline for adolescence education candidates, as well as significant upper-level course work in the majors in elementary education
- 100 hours of fieldwork prior to the student teaching experience
- A minimum of 75 days of student teaching, in two separate placements, one of which is in a high need school

- Experienced clinical faculty required to supervise all field experiences
- Creation of integrated five-year teacher education programs
- Formation of collaborative partnerships with schools
- Increase of stipend for cooperating teachers of student teachers
- Collaborative discussion with schools re: evaluation of contributions of classroom teachers to educating new teachers
- Promotion of designing jointly registered two year-college/four-year college articulation agreements and programs in the area of teacher education
- Strong encouragement of designing alternative certification programs by four-year institutions
- Crafting of formal agreements by campuses with school districts to provide joint mentoring of new teachers
- Advocacy of expansion of government incentive programs, e.g., New York's Teachers of Tomorrow, to encourage teacher candidates to pursue teaching in high-need subjects and geographical areas
- Aggressive recruitment by campuses to increase the number of teacher candidates in high need subjects (e.g., sciences, mathematics, languages other than English)
- Campuses required to pursue private scholarship funding to address teacher shortages in high need areas
- Establishment of a SUNY Urban Teacher Education Center (SUTEC) in New York City, to assist with student teacher placements
- Possible establishment of teacher centers by SUNY System Administration in other urban areas in New York State, including Rochester, Buffalo and Syracuse
- Accreditation of all teacher education programs by an outside agency, by December 2004
- Ongoing research to be conducted by SUNY System Administration on best teaching practices
- "SUNY Guarantee" of the quality of each teacher candidate who graduates from its programs; further education in a SUNY institution guaranteed for two years following candidate's graduation if specific deficiencies are identified

As in the case of the mandates of the New York State Education Department, the SUNY Chancellor's Action Plan mandates are unfunded. In most cases, the timeframe for implementation of each mandate is 2001-2002.

Accreditation

Both NYSED and SUNY System Administration have mandated nationally recognized accreditation of all teacher education programs in New York State by December 31, 2004. At present two options exist: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the newly approved Regents Option Plan. A third proposal is the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) first must be approved by the United States Department of Education prior to being considered a viable option for accreditation in New York State. Discussion at the DOE is expected to take place at the May 2002 meeting or thereafter. The NYSED Office of College and University Evaluation reports that, as of November 28, 2001, 56 of the total teacher education institutions in New York State have committed to NCATE, 21 to the Regents Option Plan and 32 to TEAC. Four other institutions have elected to discontinue their teacher education programs.

The accreditation process, particularly for institutions like SUNY Cortland that have selected NCATE, takes approximately three years to complete. In the case of both NCATE and the Regents Option Plan, the entire teacher education unit, consisting of all the teacher education programs offered by a given institution, must be approved for accreditation. For NCATE accreditation assessments are performance-based, with substantial data and program reviews (consisting of 140 pages for each program with national standards approved by NCATE) required. (Note: ACTFL is currently in the process of developing program standards for foreign language teacher education programs.)

A site visit is required for accreditation, and for the NCATE process, this will be a five-day joint site visit, consisting of both NCATE and NYSED reviewers who will be assessing the teacher education unit, evaluating the exhibits and documentation in the exhibits room, and interviewing faculty, administrators, school district representatives, cooperating teachers and K-12 students of our graduates. Once accredited by NCATE, the institution is subject to a continuing review every five years. The Regents Option Plan currently proposes continuing review every seven years.

Challenges Facing Teacher Education Programs in New York State

Teacher Shortage

While there is little doubt that most of the required certification changes will eventually prove beneficial in updating and improving teacher education programs, the new requirements arrive at a time of great teacher need and even greater anticipated

teacher shortage. Consider the following disturbing NYSED statistics⁴:

- Approximately 15,000 uncertified teachers in all certification areas are teaching this year with temporary licenses. If one uses the 1997-1998 teacher shortage data, it is possible that by 2003, when the State stops issuing temporary licenses, the shortfall will be around 23,000.
- Only 50% of those who become certified in New York State teacher education programs actually seek employment in public schools in the State. In 1999-2000, the yield of new teachers in public schools was 9,000.
- In 1999-2000, approximately 10,000 teaching certificates were awarded via the alternate route through transcript evaluation. However, only 7,000 actually sought employment in public schools in New York State.
- About 32% of the new teachers in New York State leave public school teaching in the first six years; 42% of the new teachers New York City schools leave within the same timeframe.
- In 1999-2000, public schools reported 31,000 vacancies among all certification areas.
- Languages Other than English is a NYSED-identified shortage area in both New York City and around the State.

Raising the bar in teacher education is also causing some teacher candidates to explore their teaching options in other states as well as possible job opportunities outside of teaching.

SUNY Budget

For institutions in the SUNY System the late State budgets of the past several years, coupled with decreased funding at a time of greater demand on teacher education programs, have produced devastating results. In addition, the events of September 11 have had a deleterious effect on funding in New York State, the result of monies being diverted to help those in need and to cover astronomical state-wide costs of the catastrophic event. For the 2002-2003 academic year SUNY campuses have been asked to prepare to operate on a budget that is 5% below that of the 2001-2002 academic year. A hiring freeze currently exists in many SUNY agencies, but at this point it is unclear whether new faculty hiring in SUNY institutions will be affected. In addition, colleges and universities face difficulties in securing placements from some area schools, as they, too, face depleted budget resources and personnel.

Taking Action

In 2001, 75% of the school districts in New York State reported difficulty in the staffing of LOTE teachers (NYSED Office of Higher Education, 2001.) NYSED statistics cite projected shortages of LOTE teachers in excess of 25% in seven of the eight

regions in New York State, due to pending retirements and the number of public school teachers with temporary licenses. (NYSED Office of Higher Education, 2001.) We live in challenging times in New York State and, as with all other areas of our lives today, the teacher education unit is experiencing the impact.

What can we do as a profession? As foreign language teachers, we must make an investment in the future of our profession. LOTE teachers can assist pre-service teachers in meeting the 100 hours of fieldwork by accepting them into their classrooms and modeling best practices in foreign language education. LOTE teachers can agree to take a student teacher. LOTE college faculty can engage in collaborative discussion with area LOTE teachers to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement in their teacher preparation programs. Colleges can invite LOTE teachers into their classrooms to speak with preservice teachers. Organizations like NYS AFLT can establish scholarships and other incentives for preservice LOTE teachers to promote entry into the teaching field. Collaborative activities between schools and institutions of higher education can be organized to encourage high school students to consider becoming foreign language teachers. Together we can mentor new teachers, providing the support and professional development they so greatly need during the first few critical years of teaching. While NYSED, SUNY and other mandated changes may address the concerns of teacher education as a whole, it is by working together that we as a profession will achieve the specific goals of preparing more effective LOTE teachers—and of keeping them in the classroom.

¹ <http://www.nysed.gov/facmtg/paper20.pdf>

² The BOCES alternate certification route via transcript evaluation is scheduled to be discontinued as of September 2004, according to the "Teaching to Higher Standards" document

³ <http://www.sysadm.suny.edu/provost>

⁴ Statistics from NYSED Office of Higher Education, Teacher Supply and Demand Data, 1997-1998 and 1999-2000

What the New Certification Standards Mean to LOTE Teacher Preparation

Mark K. Warford, Ph.D.
Buffalo State College

At first glance, the State's mandated changes in teacher certification would make any teacher educator's head spin. A deeper analysis reveals that many of the new requirements validate bandwagons the LOTE teaching profession has already jumped on and steered to success. At the same time, I would be misleading you if I didn't recognize several changes that require a dramatic metamorphosis in the way educators of future LOTE teachers or "LOTE teacher educators" lead their programs. I will try to analyze some of these new requirements, mainly in terms of their impact on the LOTE methods course, as well as in terms of how they will affect the field component of teacher prep: the field experience and the student teaching practicum.

As some of you reading this might have noticed, the complexion of the LOTE methods course has undergone some significant changes over the years. We've moved from an adherence to a dizzying variety of language teaching methods to a mindset that places active and reflective teacher decision-making at the center of language teaching. That is, we now know that memorizing and mimicking the steps you have to follow to do TPR/the Natural Approach/cognitive code methodology, etc. does not equal effectiveness in leading foreign language instruction. According to the experts, teaching language cannot be divorced from its social context, right? Speaking of social context, working with non-English Language Background (NELB) students, one of the topics raised by the new state requirements, is a social theme that our profession is already well prepared for. Shrum and Glisan's *Teacher's handbook* (1998), fast becoming the methods text of choice (Warford, 2000), deals with needs of such students as well as heritage language learners and other learner categories, quite extensively. Jean LeLoup (2000) has also developed an interactive on-line module on the topic of NELB students. With regard to social issues like drugs and alcohol, violence prevention, and such, however, the teacher educator would do best to leave such controversial topics to workshops led by qualified professionals. Additional topics raised among the new requirements include the age span within a certificate. The topic of language learning and age is fairly prominent in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and fairly difficult to avoid in any methods course curriculum. Okay, so that's covered...

Perhaps the greatest challenge to methods course instructors will be the new emphasis on tech-

nology and professional development, two topics that have traditionally been swept under the methods curriculum carpet. With regard to the former, this may be an awkward phase for those of us who are trying to decide what's more stressful: keeping on top of the latest technological innovations in LOTE pedagogy...or trying to figure out how to teach others how to use them in their own classrooms? Just how many hats are methods course instructors supposed to wear, anyhow?

If we lift the methods course curriculum carpet, next to technology we find the dust bunny called professional development. Sure, we all agree that the methods course instructor needs to be the first to thump the pulpit of participating in the local, state, regional, national language-teaching related organization. If, as the state suggests, new teachers will need to undergo 175 hours of professional development every five years, the methods instructor will need to make sure their students get religion. So how does one go about actually integrating professional development as a theme worthy of prominence in the syllabus between the Monitor Model and the Zone of Proximal Development? Some suggestions for topics include: a brief history of ACTFL, from its inception in the late '60's, to its weaning from MLA in the '70's, and that thing called the proficiency movement. More importantly, though, future teachers need to be encouraged, coerced, if necessary, into attending conferences and other meetings organized by and for LOTE professionals, and to reflect on insights they will have undoubtedly gained. They should also be encouraged to explore the websites for the various LOTE professional organizations—from local to national, and don't forget the language-specific ones.

On a final note, the methods course may have to make a very fundamental change—the time of meeting. With the new state emphasis on alternative avenues to licensure, it is certain that there will be more and more adult non-traditional students, many of them unlicensed, practicing teachers, who will be pursuing certification. Woe to the methods course instructor who can't stomach the three-hour Monday evening class!

Turning to the field experience component in the changes, foreign language teaching certification programs are faced with two expectations that appear to be in conflict. Notice that the field experience has jumped to 100 hours. That's a lot of hours. 100 hours of what? Field experiences—traditionally

loosely-defined so as not to tax P-12 colleagues who for the most part are not being compensated—will now have to be reigned in to make sure that time is well-spent, particularly since the state is also demanding better content preparation. Perhaps there might be a way to factor further scholarship in the target language and culture into these 100 hours?

Student teaching, with the exception of extended time in placements, remains pretty much the same, though LOTE teacher educators may have to really dig now to fulfill the requirements for settings that the state describes as “high need.” As the title suggests, such a school may have a hard time keeping and maintaining LOTE teachers long enough to get tenure. A qualifying cooperating teacher in such a setting is now worth his or her weight in gold, especially in a budget-crunch time such as the one we are in now.

With all these changes coming down the pike, LOTE teacher educators have every reason to feel prepared for what’s in store.

Why?

Because we are those magical kinds of people who can take chunks upon chunks of standards and sort them into coherent Lego-landscapes for our students to admire, and if we’re lucky, to re-create for themselves.

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Editor's Note

This issue of the NYSAFLT Bulletin offers a series of three articles written as a follow-up to a roundtable session on teacher preparation which took place at the 2001 NYSAFLT Annual meeting. The editor would like to thank the participants in the roundtable, particularly Bill Heller, for generating the idea for this issue of the NYSAFLT Bulletin.

LOTE teachers at all levels of K-16 instruction should be aware of the imminent implementation of sweeping changes in teacher certification regulations. In our efforts to promote the career of language teaching, all teachers should be able to give informed counsel to prospective teacher candidates. In addition, new opportunities will arise for professional growth and development as a result of this latest certification reforms.

In the first article, Dr. Virginia Levine of SUNY Cortland, presents a comprehensive summary of the certification changes and the new requirements in all SUNY teacher education programs. In his article, Dr. Mark Warford of SUNY College at Buffalo, will discuss the impact on LOTE teacher preparation programs. Finally, Bill Heller of Perry High School outlines some of the possible ramifications of the certification reforms for the K-12 LOTE teacher.

The challenges outlined in these three articles are many. They clearly demonstrate the need for all professionals in the field, K-12 teachers, college professors, BOCES specialists, school district coordinators, SED and many others, to work in consultation with one another and through professional organizations like NYSAFLT. Ultimately, our goal is to recruit, develop and retain high quality teachers of languages other than English who can motivate students to be successful language learners.

The Impact of Certification Changes for K-12 LOTE Instruction

Bill Heller

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The sweeping new certification requirements that will take effect in February 2004 will have increasingly visible impacts on the K-12 LOTE programs across New York State. In this article, several of the changes that may have the most significant impact on K-12 practitioners will be examined. The potential opportunities and drawbacks of these reforms will be discussed.

1. One-hundred hours of field experience prior to student teaching.

One of the first observable changes will begin shortly as teacher education programs will be seeking opportunities for classroom placements to meet the 100-hour clinical observation requirement prior to student teaching. Classroom teachers will be asked to welcome these students and help them complete their clinical experience. Because of this requirement, prospective teachers will be able to form a more realistic perception of the demands and rewards of their career choice, and LOTE teachers will have the opportunity to give guidance and encouragement to prospective colleagues. These early mentoring relationships can be beneficial in bolstering the dwindling ranks of LOTE teachers, offering positive role models of best practices, and of professional demeanor and fulfillment.

If we are to retain these teacher candidates, teacher education programs would be wise to screen these classroom placements so that the internship experiences are positive ones. Also, students will require specific guidance from college supervisors regarding their behavior, dress, demeanor and attitude when they are entering a "real" classroom. Each observation and participation experience can be made positive and constructive if the students have specific and well defined tasks to complete during each phase of their pre-student teaching experiences and if mentor teachers are informed of the purpose and format of these tasks in advance.

Teacher education programs can encourage increased professional participation in internship programs by developing creative incentives. The cutback in the SUNY tuition waiver offered to cooperating teachers devalued the service that classroom teachers provide in mentoring student teachers. While these certification mandates are all unfunded, creative ways of encouraging involvement by classroom teachers can be developed by the colleges at minimal additional cost. These incentives might include complimentary access to college facilities or cultural events. Colleges can show their

appreciation by sponsoring teacher workshops, immersion opportunities and organizing professional networking opportunities for cooperating teachers.

2. Formation of collaborative partnerships with schools.

Other promising possibilities may emerge from the increased articulation between the teacher preparation programs and the secondary schools that is mandated in the new regulations. This dialogue can lead to meaningful linkages so that the teacher preparation programs can benefit from the participation of classroom teachers in the training of teacher candidates; and so that the classroom teachers might benefit from the expertise and resources of the college and university. SUNY has made a significant commitment to formalizing the relationships between school districts in sharing the mentoring of new teachers.

3. 175 hours of professional development every five years for all teachers after February 2, 2004.

With the 175 hour in-service requirement every five years in order to maintain the new Professional Certificate, new leadership will be necessary to pool the available resources at teacher centers, BOCES centers, SED, professional organizations, school districts and institutions of higher education to expand existing continuing education formats and to develop new and innovative delivery systems so that teachers in all parts of the state can participate and benefit from high-quality pedagogical and language/culture specific workshops. The need for accessible immersion opportunities and sessions on current instructional practices will only increase in the coming years. Meaningful and effective staff development opportunities require resources and coordination. It will be incumbent upon high school teachers to offer their input and expertise in developing these programs to make sure they are relevant to the needs of practitioners and in touch with current classroom realities. Hopefully, there will be increased participation in NYSAFLT sponsored scholarship programs and in statewide and regional conferences that NYSAFLT organizes and sponsors.

4. Content Specialty Test as a requirement for Initial Certificate.

Another encouraging aspect of the new requirements is that teachers who do complete the initial certification requirements should be better prepared

for their first teaching position. The requirement to take the content specialty examination as a prerequisite for initial certification will help to raise the language competency and cultural knowledge of beginning teachers.

Some concerns from the trenches.

Of course, the chief concern that is raised over making the certification process more difficult is that the scarce pool of LOTE teachers will decrease even further. The statistics that Dr. Levine cites in her article are cause for great concern. While the goal of these changes is to increase the pool of teachers and to promote diversity, they may, at least in the short term, have the opposite effect. The increases of salary and benefits to entice talented students into the field of education do not seem to be forthcoming at any time soon. Additionally, the nexus between jumping through more bureaucratic hoops, and increased teacher efficacy has not been clearly demonstrated. Will we end up excluding teacher candidates who cannot afford to complete an undergraduate study abroad experience? Will increasing

the number of different certificates to cover a variety of grades levels narrow the flexibility in staffing comprehensive LOTE programs? Will the requirement to do one student teaching experience in a "high needs" district backfire and instead be discouraging to novice teachers? By making it more difficult to join and remain in the teaching ranks, I fear that the acute shortage of LOTE teachers will become more severe and that enemies of full spectrum language programs will have additional excuses to cut back on program offerings.

Conclusion

Regardless of our reservations and concerns, the new certification regulations are presently being instituted. The impact of these requirements can be influenced positively by the active participation of K-12 educators in developing meaningful pre-service and in-service opportunities in collaboration with our colleagues in post-secondary institutions and utilizing the existing structures and resources of NYSAFLT and other professional organizations, BOCES programs, teacher centers and SED.

Reminder

The application deadline for Teacher Incentive Grants and Gertrude Rossin Cultural Grants is July 1. Application forms can be requested from Don King at:

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