

CHAPTER 15

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

15.1 Introduction

Throughout juvenile justice programs, as well as in public schools, the nation continues to struggle in the effort to hire more teachers who are qualified. Over the past several years, there has been an increase in teacher certification requirements and a simultaneous demand to employ additional certified teachers based upon the belief and experience that certified teachers are more qualified and effective in the classroom.

This chapter argues that teacher certification is essential for quality education. The chapter examines literature relevant to teacher quality and Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEEP) data on teacher certification trends in Florida's juvenile justice education programs.

The chapter is comprised of four subsequent sections. Section 15.2 briefly discusses the prior literature on teacher preparation in relation to working with at-risk and delinquent youths. Section 15.3 discusses Florida's Juvenile Justice Teacher of the Year award recipients' comments concerning appropriate teacher preparation for working with juvenile justice youths. Section 15.4 discusses teacher certification trends for Florida's juvenile justice education programs and discusses quality assurance (QA) teacher certification scores. Section 15.5 provides summary discussion of the importance of qualified teachers in the continuing search for juvenile justice education best practices.

15.2 Teacher Preparation

Research shows that there is a relationship between teacher knowledge and effective instructional practice. Teachers with more explicit and organized knowledge tend to provide instruction that has conceptual connections and appropriate and varied representations for active and meaningful student discussions. Stein, Baxter, and Leinhardt (1990) found that poorly organized teacher knowledge often leads to less effective instruction.

Preparation of qualified teachers should include education and training in specific curriculum areas as well as the study of actual teaching techniques and instructional strategies (Compston, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shanker, 1996). Effective teaching requires that instructors have a balance of knowledge of content, instructional strategies, and classroom management techniques (Shanker, 1996).

In a study conducted by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Ferguson (1991) found in Texas that a teacher's competency, as measured by his/her possession of a master's degree, experience, and scores on a licensing exam, accounted for 40% of measured variance in student achievement gains in math and reading. Ferguson repeated this study with Ladd (1996) and found that 31% of the predicted differences in achievement were explained by teacher qualifications, while only 29% were explained by home life. Similar to these results, a study in New York City conducted by Armour-Thomas, Clay, Domanico, Bruno, and Allen (1989) indicated that differences in teacher qualifications accounted for more than 90% of the variation in student achievement in reading and math across grade levels. Further, another study in Texas suggested that students do better on state exams when their instructors are certified in the subjects they teach. These researchers also reported that schools with the most needy students are more likely to employ teachers who are unqualified and ill prepared (Johnston, 1999). This study, like the Ferguson and Ladd study, further supported the finding that teacher quality matters more than family background.

Overall, Haberman and Dill (1994) found that successful teachers prepared to work with at-risk and delinquent youths:

- are not judgmental; as teachers interact with incarcerated youths, their first thought is not to decide the goodness or badness of things but to understand events and communication
- are not moralistic; teachers know and understand the difference between teaching and preaching
- are not easily shocked; teachers do not think on their own reactions to horrific events or unthinkable neglect
- listen, hear, and understand; teachers acquire useful information and they keep an ear to the ground for parent information
- do not see themselves as isolated; instead they network
- clearly enjoy interacting with all children and they do not shy away from children with problems
- include diverse cultural perspectives in their classrooms
- define their work as eliciting effort; effort and growth of effort define success both for themselves and their students
- do not see themselves as saviors but as individuals who may be able to affect changes in students' lives

The prior literature mentioned above can be summarized as providing consistent support for the conclusion that well-prepared and professionally certified teachers who teach in their areas of certification are the most effective classroom instructors for diverse learners. It is clear that the use of well-prepared and certified teachers is an emerging best practice in juvenile justice education.

15.3 Teacher of the Year Survey Results

Interviews conducted with the statewide winner of the Juvenile Justice Teacher of the Year award and the regional winners of the award shared common views on preparation techniques for working with at-risk and delinquent youths. Margaret Wilson, an experienced teacher at Miami Halfway House in Miami, stated that, “in working with young people at risk, you have to have tolerance, patience, respect and, above all, love for what you’re doing, and care about your students.” She further stated that imparting humanistic qualities, a sense of understanding, and helping students to build self-esteem are important factors a teacher must have to ensure that students are receiving a quality education.

Holley Griffin, an experienced teacher at Marion Intensive Residential Facility for Youths in Lowell stated, “teachers preparing to work with at-risk youths must have training on how to understand the negative and criminal thinking of youths. They should be prepared to know how to verbally calm student’s volatile emotions prior to a student’s reaction. Additionally, teachers must be able to recognize and understand the uniqueness, the different learning modalities of students, and how to assist them in increasing their self esteem.” Finally, she suggested that teachers use a variety of hands on activities and few lectures when working with at-risk or delinquent youths.

JoAnna Scaglione, the 2000 Juvenile Justice Teacher of the Year statewide winner, teaches at the Orient Road Jail in Tampa. She stated that, “teacher preparedness for working with at-risk delinquent youths requires individuals to have compassion, understanding, a sense of fairness and firmness and most of all, total alertness and awareness of their surroundings.”

These comments are generally consistent with the prior research concerning teacher preparedness. While it is essential for teachers to be organized, knowledgeable, and certified in the subject areas they teach, they must also be sensitive and flexible when working with at-risk or delinquent youths.

15.4 Teacher Certification Trends in Florida

To evaluate the relationship between the quality of education in juvenile justice programs and the qualification of teachers employed by them, JJEEP gathered certification information during its 2000 and 2001 QA reviews. The information was obtained from an educational staff information form, which is completed each time a reviewer conducts a quality assurance (QA) review. The educational staff information form (Appendix E) provides data on teachers and on-site educational support/administration, such as the lead educator, principal/assistant principal, exceptional student education (ESE) coordinators, and guidance personnel to assist the reviewer in rating priority indicators E3.02 Instructional Personnel Qualifications and indicator E3.06 Funding and Support. The educational staff information form also identifies the number of teacher aides that are full-time and part-time, the number of school district consultative services, such as ESE, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and guidance. Additionally, JJEEP has collected information including teacher name, credit-bearing courses taught, and the percentage of time spent in each area

(teaching, administrative, ESE, guidance). It is important to note that the percentage of time in each area will not necessarily add up to 100% because many educational staff work beyond regular hours to complete their job duties. The form also identifies the area of certification; type of certification, such as professional, temporary, SOE; non-certified or school district-approved; whether or not the teacher is in-field, out-of-field, or both; and if the teacher is full-time or part-time. Table 15.4-1 identifies and describes the variables in the teacher certification database.

Table 15.4-1: Variable Descriptions

| Field | Description |
|---|--|
| Descriptives | program name, program school number, year of review, number of teacher aides full-time, number of teacher aides part-time, number of teacher aides total, number of district consultative ESE services, number of school district consultative ESOL services, number of school district consultative guidance services, and teacher name |
| Courses Taught | math, English, social studies, science, physical education, life skills, career employability skills, vocation, General Education Development (GED) prep, technology, type of vocational course, and other |
| Time Spent in Each Area | time spent teaching, time spent administrative, time spent in ESE, and time spent in guidance |
| Area of Certification | certified math, certified English, certified social studies, certified science, certified physical education, certified elementary education, certified business education, certified health, certified ESE, certified ESOL, certified psychology, certified adult education/vocational teaching certificate, certified guidance, certified administrative, certified-other, and area of vocational teaching certificate |
| Type of Certification | type of certification (i.e. professional, temporary, statement of eligibility, non-certified district approved, non-certified, adult education or vocational district/state certified, vocational license, and area of vocational license) |
| Teaching and Administrative/Support Personnel In-Field Variables | teaching in-field, teaching in-field, teaching both in- and out-of-field, administrative in-field, administrative non-certified, ESE in-field, ESE non-certified, guidance in-field, guidance non-certified |
| Employment Status | employment status-full-time and employment status-part-time |

As shown in Table 15.4-2, there were 901 juvenile justice teachers teaching in the State of Florida in 2001. Of those, 308 were teaching math, 347 were teaching English, 288 were teaching social studies, and 263 were teaching science. Further, there were 464 teachers teaching in non-core academic areas, including 75 teaching physical education, 156 teaching life skills, 100 teaching career employability skills, 23 teaching GED preparation, 33 teaching technology courses, and 77 teaching vocational courses. It is important to note that the total number of persons teaching exceeds 901 because it is possible for a teacher to be teaching in more than one subject area.

Table 15.4-2: Total Number of Teachers and Number of Certified Teachers Teaching in Area for 2001

| Course Taught | Number and Percent Teaching | | Number Teaching and Certified in Area | Percentage of Teachers in Field |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Number | Percent | | |
| English | 347 | 39% | 65 | 19% |
| Math | 308 | 34% | 34 | 11% |
| Science | 263 | 29% | 36 | 14% |
| Social Studies | 288 | 32% | 81 | 28% |
| Non Core Academic Teachers | 464 | 51% | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Total Teachers | 901 | | 216 | 18% |

Note: includes teachers who teach for any portion of time, in any subject area from 5% or more of the time.

Of these 901 teachers, 216 were teaching in their area of certification for the core curriculum areas of math, English, social studies, or science. Of these, 34 were certified math teachers teaching math, 65 were certified English teachers teaching English, 81 were certified social studies teachers teaching social studies, and 36 were certified science teachers teaching science. The highest percentage of certified teachers teaching in their subject areas of certification is in social studies with 28%, while the lowest percentage of certified teachers teaching in their area of certification was in math, with only 11%.

JJEEP also examined the relationship between certified administrative, ESE, and guidance services in relation to certification for 2001. JJEEP included any person who had any amount of administrative, ESE, or guidance duties in the data. Theoretically, a person may teach 95% of the time but is engaged in guidance duties five percent of the time. Therefore, if a teacher teaches a majority of the time but is involved with any of the above functions, JJEEP has included them in these data. A person's major responsibility need not be in either administrative, ESE, or guidance, but rather, must be involved in those duties part of the time. The majority of programs also receive ESE consultative services provided by the school district on a regular basis. The data shown in Table 15.4-3 indicate that there were 177 people with some amount of administrative responsibilities. Only 10 (5.6%) of those 177 were certified in administration. Of the 69 people with ESE responsibilities, 20 (28.9%) were certified in ESE. Guidance had the lowest number of certified people with three qualified certifications out of 234 personnel (1.2%).

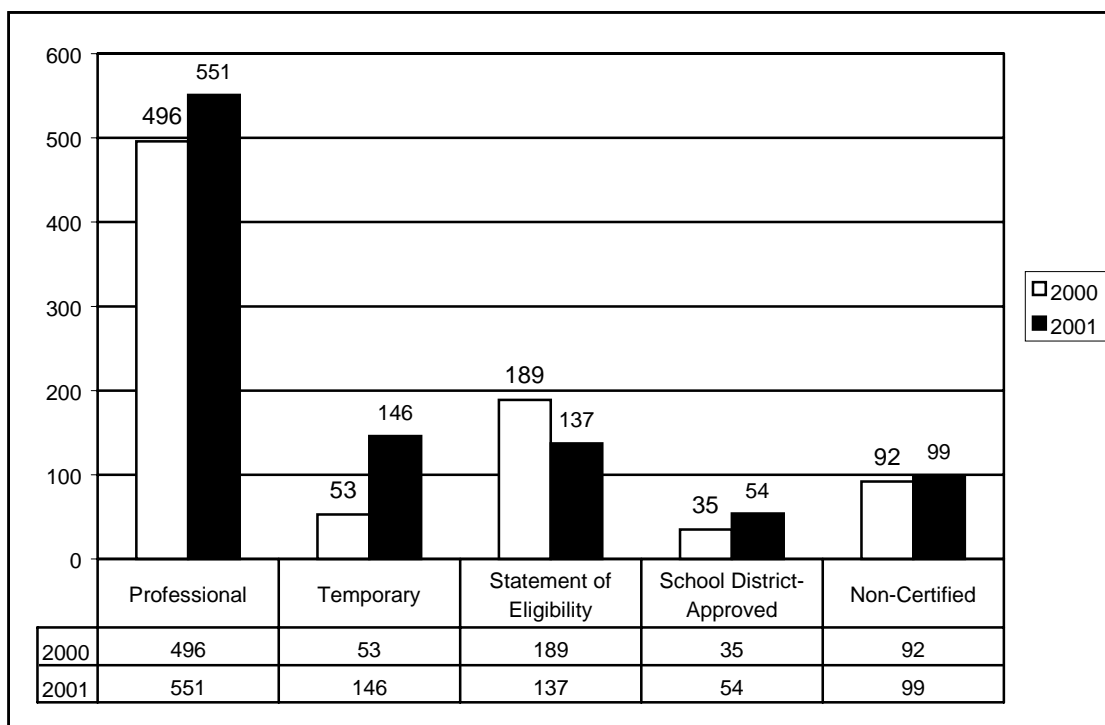
Table 15.4-3: Number of Certified Administrative and Support Personnel in 2001

| Administrative and Support Duties | Number of Personnel | Number of Personnel Certified in Area | Percentage in Field |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Administration | 177 | 10 | 5.6% |
| Guidance | 234 | 3 | 1.2% |
| ESE | 69 | 20 | 28.9% |
| Total | 480 | 33 | 6.9% |

Note: includes administrators and support personnel who perform these duties for any portion of time including 5% or more of the time.

To assess trends within certification types, a comparison was completed between 2000 and 2001 data. As Figure 15.4-1 illustrates, the number of professional certification, temporary certification, non-certified school district-approved, and non-certified teachers increased between 2000 and 2001. The number of teachers with statements of eligibility (SOEs) decreased from 189 in 2000 to 137 in 2001. It is important to keep in mind while evaluating these data that if a teacher was in the application process, it was entered as SOE, and out-of-state certifications were also entered as SOE. Nevertheless, the decline in SOE certification from 2000 to 2001 can be interpreted as being positive since many SOE certifications may have been replaced with professional certification or temporary certificate by the next year.

Figure 15.4-1: Comparison of Certification Types in 2000 and 2001



To evaluate teacher certification in relation to QA scores for residential commitment and day treatment programs, deemed programs and detention centers were excluded. JJEEP also excluded teachers who teach only vocational classes because they may not be required to have a professional teaching certificate. Teachers that were teaching any amount of time were included, and all administrative, ESE, and guidance personnel who did not teach were removed. Analyses were then conducted using the percentage of certified teachers in each program, the overall QA score, and the overall service delivery for the 130 programs with 527 teachers. Results of these analyses can be found in Table 15.4-4.

Table 15.4-4: 2001 QA Scores Related to Teacher Certification

| | Mean Program Score by % of Certified Teachers | Standard Two Mean Score: Service Delivery by % of Certified Teachers | E3.02: Instructional Personnel Qualifications by % of Certified Teachers | E2.01: Academic Curriculum by % of Certified Teachers | E2.03: Instructional Delivery by % of Certified Teachers | E2.04: Classroom Management by % of Certified Teachers |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Two-tailed p-value of the Correlation Coefficient | .034* | .041* | .000* | .146 | .001* | .037* |

*Statistically significant at the .05 alpha level.

As seen in Table 15.3-5, all indicators except for E2.01 Academic Curriculum were significantly correlated with the percentage of professionally certified teachers. Although we anticipated a correlation for this indicator, one explanation may be that programs are able to provide teachers with a packaged curriculum. Therefore, professional certification may not affect this indicator. As expected, the strongest correlation, however, is between indicator E3.02 Instructional Personnel Qualifications and the program percentage of professionally certified teachers, with a .000 level of significance. It is also interesting to note that the program percentage of professionally certified teachers had a strong correlation with indicator E2.03 Instructional Delivery, with a .001 level of significance.

A comparison of teacher certification and QA scores could not be conducted on deemed programs, because deemed programs do not receive numerical scores, but rather a pass/fail score on each of six priority indicators. Certification data were collected on the 36 deemed programs for 2001. There were 134 teachers in the 36 deemed programs. Of those 134 teachers, 56% were professionally certified, 17% were temporarily certified, and 16% had SOEs.

15.5 Summary Discussion

Studies have found that teachers who are fully prepared and certified in their teaching area are more successful with students than teachers without full preparation. Furthermore, teachers who have received more education in techniques of teaching are considerably better at meeting the needs of diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

When examining data on teachers in Florida's juvenile justice education system, it is clear that Florida is not meeting the best practice of hiring professionally certified teachers to teach in their area of certification. While core academic areas are most important for teachers to be teaching in field, only 11% of Florida's juvenile justice math teachers are professionally certified in math, 14% of science teachers are professionally certified in science, 19% of English teachers are professionally certified in English, and 28% of social studies teachers are professionally certified in social studies. This is especially problematic as juvenile justice students are often deficient in core subject areas. Additionally, only 1.2% of guidance personnel are certified to be delivering guidance services to students. Although ESE services are crucial to providing students with special educational services, only 28.9% of Florida's ESE personnel in DJJ programs are certified in ESE. With the prevalence of students in need of special education services, it is imperative that Florida's juvenile justice facilities continue to hire ESE-certified teachers to accommodate the educational needs of all students.

Between 2000 and 2001, all juvenile justice programs in Florida increased the number of certified teachers teaching in educational programs. Specifically, the number of teachers with professional and temporary certification increased in 2001, and there was a slight decrease in the number of teachers with statements of eligibility. As mentioned previously, the decline in SOE certification from 2000 to 2001 can be attributed to teachers obtaining either professional certification or a temporary certificate by the next year. Although there was an increase in the number of non-certified but school district-approved teachers and non-certified teachers, the increase was minor.

After reviewing the prior literature, Teacher of the Year award recipients' comments, and Florida's teacher certification trends, it is evident that teacher quality substantially contributes to the effectiveness of a program's educational services. Until teacher certification becomes a priority in juvenile justice education, the most effective educational services will not be available to incarcerated students.