

# FROM A CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

## Briefings on Educational Research From The Education Consumers Consultants Network

[www.education-consumers.com](http://www.education-consumers.com)

Phone & Fax - (423) 282-6832

July 2001

Volume 1, Number 7

Charles Arthur, M.S.Ed.  
President and Executive Director /  
Mastery Learning Institute / Portland,  
OR

Virginia P. Baxt, Ed.D.  
President / Education Agenda, Inc.

Wayne Bishop, Ph.D.  
Professor of Mathematics /  
Department of Mathematics and  
Computer Science / California State  
University-Los Angeles

William L. Brown, Ph.D.  
Senior Researcher / Lansing (MI)  
Community College

Guy Bruce, Ed.D.  
President / A.P.E. Consulting

Louis Chandler, Ph.D.  
Professor & Chairman / Department  
of Psychology in Education / School  
of Education / University of Pittsburgh

Andrea Clements, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor / College of  
Education / East Tennessee State  
University

Donald Crawford, Ph.D.  
Professor / College of Education /  
Western Washington University

Nathan Crow, B.A.  
Founder & Principal / Littleton  
Preparatory Charter School

George K. Cunningham, Ph.D.  
Professor / School of Education /  
University of Louisville

Mary Damer, M.Ed.  
Instructor & Student Teaching  
Supervisor / Northern Illinois  
University

Edwin J. Delattre, Ph.D.  
Professor & Dean / School of  
Education / Boston University

Benjamin F. Eller, Ed.D.  
Professor / School of Education /  
Western Carolina University

Lucien Ellington, Ed. D.  
Professor / College of Education and  
Applied Professional Services /  
University of Tennessee at  
Chattanooga

John Eshleman, Ed.D.  
President / EasyLearn Systems

David R. Feeney, Ed.D.  
Director of Digital Education / Fox  
School of Business & Management /  
Temple University

Lawrence Fraley, Ed.D.  
Professor / Department of Advanced  
Educational Studies / West Virginia  
University

Carol C. Gambill, M.Ed.  
Head - Lower School / Beaufort  
Academy / Beaufort, SC

Patrick Groff, Ed.D.  
Professor of Education Emeritus / San  
Diego State University

Bonnie Grossen, Ph.D.  
Professor / College of Education /  
University of Oregon

### Featured Research:

#### [Professionalism and the Public Good A Brief History of Teacher Certification](#)

[\(click here for full article\)](#)

By David L. Angus  
Edited by Jeffrey Mirel

Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2001

### Briefing:

Good teaching really makes a difference. Studies of teacher effectiveness show that students who get the best teachers have a significantly greater chance of succeeding in school.

But does publicly regulated teacher training and licensure assure that teachers are well prepared and effective?

As evidenced by history, public regulation of teaching mostly ensures educator control of the teaching profession, not teacher quality.

Studies have found that substantial numbers of practicing teachers are unable to pass high school-level exams. And contrary to the public's belief that teachers are trained in proven pedagogy, it turns out that many of the practices taught to teachers have no proven effect on student achievement

*A Brief History of Teacher Certification* examines how today's system of teacher quality control came about and why its ability to ensure safe and effective teaching is in question. Written by the eminent educational historian David L. Angus and edited posthumously by the University of Michigan's Jeffery Mirel, it shows that many of today's criticisms of teacher training have been around for decades, yet continue to go unheeded. It also suggests that the education profession's ever tightening control over training and licensure has not necessarily strengthened teacher quality.

Teacher training and certification throughout the 19th century was decentralized and controlled at the local level. Teachers received little specialized training, and certification was generally based on an exam given by local or state authorities. The lay public, not the teaching profession controlled certification and hiring of teachers.

In the first 30 years of the 20th century, urbanization and the emergence of large school systems triggered a major transformation. The modern-day education bureaucracy emerged and state departments of education expanded their authority over rural schools. Hiring controlled by bureaucratic specialists became the model of modern practice. Examination by lay school board members-standard practice in rural schools--came to be thought of as provincial. Teacher colleges were established; admission requirements were raised; specialized certificates were created; and college and university "chairs of pedagogy" expanded into departments and schools of education. Local control of teacher certification all but vanished.

The newly formed university programs granted degrees in education and the leadership of the profession increasingly became restricted to credential-holders. What came to be known as the "education trust"--college faculty, district superintendents, state education officials, state association leaders, and U. S. Bureau of Education staff--controlled and shaped teaching with little regard for the wishes of parents and the public.

Following World War II, liberal arts faculty and the National Education Association pressed for greater influence over teacher training and certification. And in the 1950s--after Sputnik--colleges of education came under fire from both groups. They were charged with

Mark Herring, Ed. D.  
Professor & Dean of Libraries /  
Winthrop University

Daniel Hursh, Ph.D.  
Professor of Educational Psychology  
/ College of Human Resources &  
Education / West Virginia University

Carol Jago, M.A.  
English Teacher / Santa Monica High  
School / Director, California Reading  
& Literature Project / UCLA

Daniel Konieczko, M.Ed.  
Science Teacher / King Middle  
School / Portland, ME

Martin Kozloff, Ph.D.  
Watson Distinguished Professor /  
School of Education / University of  
North Carolina at Wilmington

Rob Kremer, M.B.A.  
President / Oregon Education  
Coalition

Elaine McEwan-Adkins, Ed.D.  
President / McEwan-Adkins Group

Richard P. Phelps, Ph.D.  
Senior Study Director / WESTAT /  
Rockville, MD

Michael Podgursky, Ph.D.  
Professor and Chairman / Department  
of Economics / University of Missouri

Linda Ross, Ph.D.  
Director and Instructional Design  
Specialist / Archimedia eLearning  
Solutions

Valerie Rutledge, Ed.D.  
Assistant Professor / College of  
Education / University of Tennessee  
at Chattanooga / Member, TN Board  
of Education

Mark C. Schug, Ph.D.  
Professor & Director / Center for  
Economic Education / University of  
Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Lewis Solmon, Ph.D.  
Dean Emeritus / UCLA Graduate  
School of Education / Senior Vice  
President / Milken Family Foundation

Robert Spangler, Ed.D.  
President / Spangler & Associates,  
LLC

J. E. Stone, Ed.D.  
Professor / Department of Human  
Development & Learning / College of  
Education / East Tennessee State  
University

Sara Tarver, Ph.D.  
Professor College of Education  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

John Towner, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus / Woodring  
College of Education / Western  
Washington University

Herbert Walberg, Ph.D.  
University Professor of Education &  
Psychology / College of Education /  
University of Illinois-Chicago

Richard Western, Ph.D.  
Professor (ret) / School of Education /  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

offering "Mickey Mouse courses" and an emphasis on theory instead of proven teaching practices and subject mastery.

Commissions, committees, and councils were formed to reshape teacher training and certification but the reforms succeeded more in shifting power arrangements, than in improving teacher quality. Sadly, although American teachers have the highest levels of formal education in the world, their degrees are mostly in education and their subject matter mastery remains mediocre.

Teacher organizations and the education trust have continued attempting to improve teacher quality by asserting control over training and licensure. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the National Education Association formed the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Its mission is to set national standards for teacher training.

For the most part, the education establishment's "capture" of the public regulatory mechanisms have failed to ensure safe and effective teaching. Teacher subject matter mastery remains weak, and scientifically dubious pedagogy is the norm. Teacher educators and unions effectively control teacher quality, but neither group experiences any economic consequences if the public is not satisfied. To the contrary, public schooling is a regulated monopoly and failure almost always results in calls for more teachers and more training--a situation that neither teacher educators nor teacher unions find disagreeable.

---

*The Education Consumers Consultants Network is an alliance of experienced and credentialed educators dedicated to serving the needs of parents, policymakers, and taxpayers for independent and consumer-friendly consulting. For more information, contact J. E. Stone, Ed.D., at (423) 282-6832, or write: [professor@education-consumers.com](mailto:professor@education-consumers.com)*