



DOI: 10.1515/rpp-2015-0062

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, **NATALIA PAZYURA**
National Aviation University, Ukraine
Address: 1 Kosmonavta Komarova Ave, Kyiv, 03680, Ukraine
E-mail: npazyura@ukr.net

DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS' ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION IN THE USA

ABSTRACT

The article reveals the prerequisites of appearance of alternative ways to train teachers in the USA at the end of the XX century as main mechanisms to increase qualitative and quantitative characteristics of teaching staff. The author concentrates the attention on the advantages and disadvantages of non-traditional ways to acquire teaching profession. The peculiarities of the development in different states of the country, main characteristics of the training with the help of alternative programs have been found as well as the target groups have been described. Such research is clearly needed, both by policymakers and by practitioners, to determine the appropriateness of alternative certification training models in training educators to deliver quality educational programming to students, as well as their effectiveness in addressing the critical teacher shortages by increasing the pool of available teachers and reducing the turnover and retention problems. Proponents of alternative certification have asserted that such models encourage talented people from other fields to enter teaching and increase the potential supply of teachers available to reduce shortages, and that traditional teacher education programs have little substance or value in training teachers while alternative models provide intensive training and supervision focused on critical skills needed for successful teaching.

Key words: *alternative ways, certification of teachers, professional development, teachers' training, teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

The modern processes of economy reformation in Ukraine, attempts to integrate into the civilized educational society are accompanied by dynamic changes in all industries. Education upgrading, as a necessary prerequisite of socio-cultural and economic advancement of the society, the search for innovative ways of teachers' training have turned into the main issues in the modernization of education in Ukraine. There is no doubt that reformation of the national education system and the introduction of the world innovative ideas in Ukraine must be carried out after the study and adaptation of foreign experience to national realities. In this connection the experience of some countries in the development of alternative ways of teachers' certification attracts certain interest. Thus, we appealed to the experience of the USA – one of the leading and highly developed countries in the world with well-adjusted system of higher education.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the article is to define the prerequisites of appearance of alternative pedagogical education in the USA and main features of its development in the different states of the country; to analyze the peculiarities of future teachers' training in an unconventional way and characterize the target audience.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

Our study of Ukrainian researchers' works showed that the wide spectrum of theoretical and practical issues of American pedagogy were elected by scientists for an analysis, in particular, the advanced studies of N. Lavrychenko were devoted to the problem of foreign education and forming of educational system in the USA. O. Pershukova, L. Puhovska, A. Sbruyeva and others rose the important questions of specialists' professional training in the USA, peculiarities of the professional education structure, main trends in reformation of educational sphere. Progressive ideas in American education system are reflected in theses and monographs of N. Bidyuk, A. Jourinskyi, N. Nychkalo, B. Woulfson, V. Zhukovskyi and others. N. Mukan directed her scientific search to the study of standards of teachers' professional development in the USA.

So, as our study showed, Ukrainian researchers have been analyzing the wide spectrum of theoretical and practical questions of American pedagogy. However, the question of the development of alternative ways of teachers' certification has not been a subject of study yet.

For our research we used general scientific methods which are main ways of studying scientific sources, and comparative-historical method for synchronic comparison of events in the same region.

RESULTS

Pedagogical activity is closely connected with the life of society, comes forward as one of dominant forces in the process of its development. On this stage pedagogical activity must be oriented on result, quality of education services, provide motivation of all-round development of personality, adapt itself to the global challenges of the modern world. Necessity of bringing in the most well-educated, talented people to the pedagogical profession and providing motivation to effective performance makes topical the question about diversification of ways to acquire pedagogical profession.

The increase in pedagogical personnel in a certain region based on the efficiency of their activities explained the needs for new ways of employment, training and support. The lack of teachers is especially noticeable at rural locality among teachers of special subjects (Innovation in Education, 2004). For the achievement of this aim it is necessary to depend not only upon the traditional programs of training, but on the new ways for the acquisition of the teacher's certificate. Thus, it is essential to give access to greater number of candidates to the alternative programs of high quality. The alternative programs were designed to bring in unconventional candidates, such as people of senior age, specialists from other spheres but well-informed in the subject that they want to teach. Instead of traditional academic course, the alternative programs offer the short-term period of studies and further practical activity during which candidates continue to study in the evenings and at the weekends, get the structured mentor's consultations and psychological support. Since candidates can get a job and salary of a teacher quickly enough, such programs are attractive for people who can not financially study at universities (Innovation in Education, 2004; Transition to Teaching Grant Program, 2004).

Quality of teaching is another question that is urgent in connection with the creation of the alternative programs. The main idea pronounced in this context is that specialists at the industry can become good teachers of the special subjects. In addition, the lack of talented teachers at state schools and sometimes the absence of possibilities for their encouragement also make the questions of alternative training crucial for education.



The analyzed information allows us to refer the beginning of alternative ways of teachers' certification in the USA to the 1980s of the last century. A difficult situation with pedagogical personnel characterized by a great number of those, who retired on a background of the increase in students, became pre-condition of teachers' certification creation by means of the alternative programs. However, the main task on this stage of the development was not in the simple increase in teachers' number, but in reaching high academic standards in the training. As it was noted in the programs of education development "No Child Left Behind", every teacher of academic discipline must be highly skilled, armed with knowledge and capacity for studies in accordance with high standards, to be effective in the conditions of growing students' diversification.

Researches on pedagogical education development in 1990s testified the necessity for more intensive teacher training, as it was admitted on all levels (Ludlow, Wienke, 1994). In 1986 the secretary of education William Bennet asked legislators to abolish requirements for the diploma of pedagogical establishments for getting the certificate for teachers. He named them "thoughtless papers" that are an obstacle in education, marking that a teacher must only demonstrate knowledge of a subject, good character and ability to communicate with young people (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994). According to his opinion pedagogical education has very little to offer to the future teachers that have good knowledge in the subject.

The alternative programs allow those who have changed job, have been out of labour market for a long time (for example, on a maternity leave), or who graduated from a college to begin pedagogical activity. As practical realization shows the new programs have potential to encourage talented people who wish to remain in certain municipal or agricultural districts, and those who consider the traditional programs of teacher training to be short of practical training for the real work in a classroom. They meet the requirements of the special local conditions, give possibility to get training near a house, or place, where they wish to remain (Innovation in Education, 2004).

In the middle of 1980s the initiative in the development of competences and improvement of quality of teacher training programs was supported. Quality of training was in the center of attention in the searches for alternative ways for the teachers' certification. Those, who support the traditional certification of teachers, insist on the fact that the improvement of education quality depends on professional knowledge and competences, on the basis of institutional pedagogical education. On the other hand, those, who support an alternative certification, insist that education quality can be improved by encouragement of talented people competent in some spheres of industry and in education (Bell, Roach, 1989).

At the beginning of the 1980s only a few states had the programs for a certification of those, who had a desire to work as teachers but did not graduate from traditional pedagogical establishments. At first, 15 states of the South regional educational council studied the terms of teachers' training, considered the lack in certain regions and gave out recommendations for changes in pedagogical education. The state is Virginia in 1982, and later 12 other states introduced the alternative program of certification in reply to the problem of employment of teachers in small cities and villages, teachers for specialized schools and for bilingual education (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994).

Another reason for the introduction of alternative certification in the 1980s was a necessity to shorten the number of part-time teachers. As the analyzed materials show, a question of alternative training was debatable, and discussions were round the fact that when certificated teacher could not be found, it would be better to have the regular



programs of employment, training and supervision, than to use the certification of “emergency conditions” for filling the vacancies. Arguments in support of an alternative certification were expressed taking into consideration the fact that sometimes traditional programs of teachers’ training were not always considered as aim-oriented and those to meet the requirements of society and time (Oliver, McKibbin, 1985).

In reply to the decline of trust to teachers’ competence and quality of pedagogical education in society, G. Bush initiated educational reform. The central element of its strategy was an improvement of quality of pedagogical education and, as a result, status of America. G. Bush in his “Program 2000” defined 6 national aims for education. He supported the idea of giving a federal help to private unprofitable organizations which conducted the certification of the most talented teachers at national level. In addition, the president supported the bill for founding of national model of New Jersey state for the alternative certification of teachers (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994).

In 1990s in Arkansas pedagogical education and process of teachers’ certification were not of high quality. The plan of alternative certification was initiated by the State department of education in 1988–1989. Statistical data testify the lack of the certificated teachers that equaled 80 % in school districts. A declining tendency in the enrollment for teachers’ training courses and aging of working teachers caused the necessity to introduce innovative methods for encouragement of a wider circle of experienced people that have a desire to begin pedagogical activity (Innovation in Education, 2004).

The program of teachers in New Jersey is the most well-known model of alternative certification. According to it a person with baccalaureate in the subject that he (she) is going to teach, takes an exam in the subject, and on condition of a vacancy in educational establishment and suggestion from the authority of the establishment taking part in the program, can apply a request getting the certificate. Before the start of professional activity in a classroom, the candidate takes intensive 80-hours’ training. Then during his/her first-year of teaching, the teacher must have 120 hours’ instructions. Total amount of training hours in a training center affiliated to the programs equals 200. The candidate has a group of support that consists of a mentor and director of the school. After the first-year of studies the head master expounds his recommendations as for expediency of certification of the candidate.

The program of alternative certification in Texas is similar to the program in New Jersey, but in this state a candidate must pass exams in fields (mathematics, reading, writing) or, in other words, the State test of base skills, and must have a necessary amount of credit hours in the sphere of industry, in which he gets a certificate. The candidates must complete an additional course paper necessary for a certification and for employment. In addition, every candidate must pay his/her mentor for a “release time”. Due to such programs in 1992 almost 2000 interns were employed at schools of Texas (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994).

In California Law on educational reforms stipulated the introduction of the Program of Teachers’ Certification for filling vacancies for teachers in 6–12 grades. This program was a part of the plan according to which teachers’ training shifted from establishments of higher education under jurisdiction of districts. Candidates must have baccalaureate in the subject they plan to teach, pass an exam of basic skills and State test on the subject they want to teach. Schools in the state, in their turn, must give proofs as for the vacancies that it is impossible to fill by the certificated teachers. Schools work out the plan of professional development of a teacher with the list of courses that must be learned. Then a mentor is appointed for every candidate. A committee on certification offers the list of



spheres for training for the plan of the candidate's professional development. According to the analyzed materials these spheres are development of child, structure of curriculum in high school, theory and practice of diagnosis and instructional strategies, theory and practice of the instructional planning, theory and practice of the use of media and curriculum material, achievement of motivation, theory and practice of class management, mutual relations. Namely, student-teacher, school organization and administration. In spite of denials from the supporters of the traditional programs of teachers' training, an alternative certification grew rapidly in all states except two (Alaska and North Dakota). Alabama and Wisconsin introduced an alternative certification according to the diversified standards in order to meet the requirements of the different states. Other states introduced the programs that offer temporal licenses and that can be renewed if there is further employment in education. During the temporal licensing "alternative teachers" have the 80 % loading and their activity is coordinated by their mentors. The states California, Main, Arizona, Tennessee have schools, in which there are programs of alternative employment, under the auspice of the State councils of education, local educational agencies or establishments of higher education (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994).

In 1989 the American Association of Pedagogical Colleges and Association of Educators for Teachers supported an alternative certification and gave out necessary documents for its functioning. In 1989 the national educational association established a committee on the questions dedicated to unconventional ways of teachers' certification. The committee worked out the special regulations and pointed out the directions of development of the alternative programs. The main provisions of which can be formulated to the following: the programs must be developed by the stakeholders; candidates must have baccalaureate in the subject he/she wants to teach; before the beginning of teaching activity a candidate must get sound theoretical pedagogical training; a candidate is to get a help and support of a mentor.

"Teach for America" is another alternative way for the teachers' certification, created by W. Kipp in 1989, a 24 year graduating student of university of Princeton. According to it, a recent graduating student of non-pedagogical college can enter the program "Teach for America", and it provides 6-week intensive summer courses. The two-year program includes 6 weeks of lectures, 2 weeks of "orientation" lessons with an appointed mentor at the school a candidate is planning to work.

The program "Troops to Teacher" was created for the employment of the demobilized personnel because of the reductions in military structures according to the decision of Congress in 1992. This program was aimed at creating conditions for employment of the demobilized military officers. As a result former officers were given grants for further obtaining teacher certificates as well as schools that employ them (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994). However, we should pay attention to the fact that although the number of the states that introduces alternative ways increased, there is an obvious disparity in the programs. Two factors explain this disparity: rapid growing of the states that acknowledge an alternative certification as a way to solve the problem on lack of teachers, and different definitions in these states. The difference in determination resulted in deepening disparity in a certification among the states. In its turn, it resulted in reduction of teachers' mobility and misbalance between demand and supply at national level.

Analyzing the basic problems of alternative certification we can distinguish two questions that appeared in connection with acquisition of pedagogical profession by an unconventional way: how conscious the choice of pedagogical activity was and how effective such teachers are. The research conducted in 1988–1989 showed that 3/4 teachers



did a conscious choice in the changes of their career, and only 4 % were unemployed, and 52 % such teachers belonged to the national minorities (in California and New Jersey – 16–20 % minorities). J. Shulman writes that more men and representatives of national minorities began to work as teachers due to the alternative programs (Rubino, Soltys, Wright, 1994). As a result, in 2003 there were only 8 % of the uncertificated teachers (Transition to Teaching Grant Program, 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

The alternative ways of getting teacher's profession give possibility of encouragement and training of skilled specialists with the aim of increase in pedagogical personnel and providing effective education in the state. We want to stress that the use of alternative certification for organizational development and continuous professional development is extraordinarily perspective. An alternative certification aims at satisfaction of individual and national needs for the development of human capitals, and besides positively influences quality of professional activity of future teachers. No doubt that alternative certification must be considered as a way of professional development in accordance with the holistic models and rules of human resource development.

Our further researches we should direct to the analysis of forms, methods and peculiarities of teachers' training with the help of programs for alternative certification in the USA.

REFERENCES

1. Bell, D., Roach, P. (1989). *Alternative Certification: Pathway to Success or Blind Alley to the Teacher Shortage*. Paper presented at the American Teacher Educators Mid-America Conference (Kingston/Durant, OK, October 4-6), 12 p.
2. Department of Education. Federal Register (2004). *Transition to Teaching Grant Program. Notice of Final Priorities and Requirements and Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY)*, Vol. 69, No 84, 8 p.
3. Ludlow, B., Wienke, W. (1994). Alternative Certification in Special Education: A Qualitative Study of Two Models. In : Montgomery, D. (Ed.). *Rural Partnerships: Working Together. Proceedings of the Annual National Conference of the American Council on Rural Special Education (ACRES)* (14th, Austin, Texas, March 23–26), 9 p.
4. Oliver, B., McKibbin, M. (1985). Teacher Trainees: Alternative Credentialing of California. *Journal of Teacher Education*, No 36, pp. 20–23.
5. Rubino, N., Soltys, M., Wright, G. (1994). *Alternative Teacher Certification: An Avenue for Quality and Diversity in Public Education*. Delaware : Wilmington College, 35 p.
6. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. (2004). *Innovation in Education: Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification*. Washington, D.C., 70 p.