

Kentucky Teacher Certification: An Onsite Investigation into Kentucky Teacher Standards and their Correlations with New Zealand Teaching Standards to Develop High Quality Literacy Teachers

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Overview

The purpose this project was to investigate crucial areas of literacy as identified by the CCLD 2009 Think Tank. The focus of the study and subsequent two week research visit to four teacher preparation programs in New Zealand evolved into an enquiry into two areas:

1. How closely do initial teacher certification programs in Kentucky align with New Zealand standards and recommendations for developing high quality classroom teachers in literacy?
2. What components should a quality initial certification program include to prepare educators to facilitate literacy learning in Kentucky classrooms and communities?

Observations, interviews and documents from three areas were analyzed.

1. Teaching criteria/standards
 - New Zealand Registered Teacher Criteria.
 - Kentucky Certified Teaching Standards
2. Program information, with a focus on required literacy courses
 - Program information from four NZ universities: Massey University, the University of Auckland, the University of Waikato, and Victoria University
 - Program information from four Kentucky universities: Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, the University of Kentucky, and Western Kentucky University
3. Literacy course syllabi
 - Syllabi from literacy courses required at the same four NZ universities
 - Syllabi from literacy courses required at the same four KY universities

Results and Implications

Question 1. Teaching criteria/standards

An in-depth analysis of the language utilized in both documents revealed interesting differences in foci which should be addressed in the future. For the purposes of this study, literacy is not addressed in either the NZ teacher criteria or the KY teaching standards.

Question 2

With one exception (Victoria), New Zealand teacher preparation programs require twice as many courses in the teaching of literacy than do Kentucky programs. In general, literacy foundational courses offered at KY universities emphasize many of the same pedagogy and strategies as those in NZ. Specifically, practices such as phonics instruction, read alouds, re-reading, Big Books, DEAR, SSR, graphic organizers, and running records assessment are common throughout all eight teacher education programs. However, NZ overall by requiring more formal literacy coursework provides more intensive instruction in these areas and in the added areas of grouping, differentiated instruction, and journals/writing in the content areas.

Due to differential structures of the two higher education systems, specifically the general education requirements in KY and the limitations on required credit hours, the two preservice teacher literacy education requirements can never be equated. Kentucky universities are using proven pedagogies and strategies to educate their preservice teachers. However, it may be possible to provide further literacy education preparation through integrated instruction in other preservice courses or via professional development opportunities.