

Certification of Curriculum Workers: Where Do We Stand?

A. W. STURGES*

ONE OF THE most confusing positions to describe in education today is that of the curriculum director. There is no common title or job description, and little is known of the specific ways in which the director should be prepared. There is also a dearth of information to indicate whether any national interest exists in the question of certification of the curriculum director.

To provide some answers to the question of certification, the director for certification in each State was contacted through a questionnaire.¹ This instrument asked about present and recommended certification and preparation procedures for curriculum directors. After the completed questionnaires

Both state certification officers and the educators preparing curriculum specialists give their views on the desirability of certifying today's curriculum workers.

were received, a brief summary of the responses to selected questions was returned to all respondents for their verification. Of the 50 respondents, 34 indicated that curriculum directors should be certificated; only two responded "no"; the remaining 14 did not respond to the question.

Certification Officers React

Thirty-two states indicated that certification is currently required for curriculum directors. Although the survey was concerned with the curriculum director, some respondents stated that certification is required but attached a footnote indicating the

¹ This study was sponsored by ASCD and is the first report of the ASCD Working Group on the Certification of Curriculum Workers. Committee members are: E. Bartoo, Case Western Reserve University; D. Christensen (Chairperson), Rosemount, Minnesota, Public Schools; M. Demsey, Georgia Department of Education; V. Kollar, Slippery Rock State College; and A. Sturges, University of Missouri. More complete reporting of this and other studies in progress will be presented during ASCD's Annual Conference in New Orleans, March 15-19, 1975.

* A. W. Sturges, Professor and Chairman, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Missouri-Columbia

response was to the position of "supervisor" or "coordinator."

Among the 32 states which indicated that certification is required, the level of preparation varies in almost every instance. The minimum required degree ranges from the Bachelor's degree to the Doctorate; one state requires a Bachelor's, 18 require the Master's, 8 require fifteen semester hours beyond the Master's, 4 require the Specialist's, and 1 requires the Doctorate.

All 32 states which indicate certification is currently required also indicate that classroom teaching experience is a necessary part of certification. Eleven states indicate between two and five years teaching experience is required; the range is from two to five years, 14 states require three years experience and three require five years experience.

Other types of experience are not as popular a requirement for certification. Only six of the 32 states require experience in administration, and five require experience in supervision. Twelve of the 32 states indicate an internship is required as part of the preparation program; eight of the 12 indicate the internship is for one semester.

Thirty-two respondents indicated that certification is administered through the State Department of Education, although eight of the states indicated there is no certification at the state level, but that school districts can certify the curriculum director.

The content of the programs varies in the number of hours required in curriculum (from 2 to 12 semester hours for the Master's and from 6 to 30 for the Specialist's), and in

administration (from 2 to 15 for the Master's and from 6 to 30 for the Specialist's). The range of content required outside Education varies from 4 percent to 30 percent in the Social Sciences, from 10 percent to 30 percent in the Behavioral Sciences, and from 4 percent to 30 percent in the Humanities.

Thirty-two respondents indicated specific courses that should be included in a curriculum director's program. The most frequently recommended courses are indicated in Table 1.

An additional 21 courses in curriculum, administration, media, guidance, and educational psychology received recommendations by less than 20 percent of the respondents.

Several certification officers submitted statements that described their personal opinions on the question of certification. Selected comments follow:

"Programs should be minimally stated but at the same time should provide for the development of identified skills and knowledge and the educational growth of the individual. Often programs which are stated in minimal requirements are approved and completed at the same level."

"Permit the college adviser plenty of leeway to 'tailor make' a program that best meets the needs of a particular applicant for admission to the program."

"Certification requirements (should be) minimally stated so that universities have flexibility in designing (the) program with collaboration from public schools, state departments, professionals in the field."

"A competency-based field-centered program for teacher education which requires that graduates of same demonstrate that they have/possess the desired and appropriate knowledges, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to enable children to learn is critical. The program should be primarily field-based and the program's objectives should be derived from the roles and responsibilities of the professional position for which the graduate is being prepared. The manner in which the individual gains the aforementioned competencies is not nearly so crucial as is the person's ability to utilize them."

Course	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Elementary Curriculum	15	45
Secondary Curriculum	14	42
Curriculum Construction	13	39
Curriculum Development	13	39
Curriculum Design	10	30
Theories of Curriculum	9	27
Theories of Instruction	7	21
Principles of Supervision	16	48
Elementary Supervision	10	30
Secondary Supervision	8	24
Human Relations	8	24
Principles of Administration	12	36
Leadership	7	21
Measurement and Evaluation	11	33
Research Design	10	30

Table 1. Courses That Are Required for Curriculum Directors as Reported by Certification Officers (32 Respondents)

"Methods are just as important as content. Formal courses usually contain lecture theory of principles; field work provides (the) opportunity to demonstrate competency in applying knowledge through performance in leadership and interaction."

Teacher Educators Respond

The survey instrument was sent to the 78 universities which are listed as having doctoral programs for curriculum directors approved by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Fifty professors from 50 different universities responded to the questions. Forty-six percent recommended that certification remain the responsibility of the State Department of Education, 20 percent recommended that universities should certify and 2 percent (one respondent), recommended that certification be the responsibility of the State ASCD. Thirty-two percent did not respond to the question.

Sixteen percent of the professors recommended the Master's degree as the minimum degree level for curriculum directors, 32 percent recommended the Specialist's certificate, and 6 percent recommended the doctorate. Fifty-two percent recommended from two to five years classroom teaching experience and 22 percent recommended that over five years teaching experience should be required. Eighty percent recommended that no administrative experience should be required and 76 percent recommended that no experience as a supervisor should be required.

The most frequently recommended courses that should be included in the preparatory program for curriculum directors are illustrated in Table 2.

An additional fifteen courses in administration, media, guidance, and educational psychology received recommendations by less than 20 percent of the respondents.

The professors indicated a wide range in the types of required content outside Education for curriculum directors. In the Social Sciences, the amount ranged from 10 percent to 40 percent of the total program; in the Behavioral Sciences and the Humanities the

Course	Number responding	Percent
Elementary Curriculum	24	48
Secondary Curriculum	22	44
Curriculum Development	20	40
Curriculum Construction	15	30
Curriculum Design	14	28
Theories of Curriculum	14	28
Theories of Instruction	12	24
Instructional Systems	9	18
Principles of Supervision	28	56
Principles of Administration	25	50
Educational Psychology	24	48
Learning Theories	13	26
Measurement and Evaluation	18	36
Statistics	11	22
Research and Design	11	22

Table 2. Courses That Are Required for Curriculum Directors as Reported by University Professors (50 Respondents)

range was from 5 percent to 30 percent. However, only 12 universities responded to these questions; several also indicated that the specific content is determined on an individual basis.

Forty-three of the 50 professors recommended certification for curriculum directors; only one professor specifically said "no," the other six professors did not respond.

Several professors submitted statements that describe personal opinions on the question of certification. Selected comments that are judged as typical are:

"I'm not convinced that certification as we know it, is effective."

"People in this position are expected to hold an administrator's certificate and a supervisor's certificate."

Four professors specified the concern for certification of curriculum directors, and indicated current studies and attempts to develop a blend of competency-based and traditional programs.

In summary, a majority of the certification officers and professors who responded to the questionnaire agreed that curriculum directors should be certificated. There is also general agreement that certification should remain the responsibility of the State Department of Education, although approved university programs for curriculum directors may be a viable route for certification. There is general agreement on both the content and appropriate experience.

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