

# Alternative teacher certification programs do not meet expectations

March 25 2009

---

What began in the 1980s as a possible way to relieve teacher shortages and improve instructional quality in areas such as mathematics and science, alternative teacher certification programs (ATCP) have become a widespread strategy used in almost every state. In a new study, University of Missouri researchers have found that ATCPs, which are designed to allow industry professionals to become certified teachers, may not be meeting initial expectations and some experience in a learning profession seems to predict better teaching in schools.

"We found that career length, number of prior careers and career relevance to the subject area are not necessarily related to [instructional quality](#)," said Jay Scribner, associate professor of educational leadership and policy analysis in the MU College of Education. "However, we found that ATCP [teachers](#) whose prior career was related to education demonstrated a higher level of instruction."

Scribner found that most teachers in the study were unable to draw on their prior experience in ways that positively and substantively influenced their teaching practices. This disconnect appears to be attributed primarily to teachers' lack of understanding on how to translate their knowledge into the curriculum they are teaching. The researchers also found that teachers with prior education-related experience express more empathy for their students as learners and understand the importance of students' active engagement in the learning process.

"ATCP teachers with some kind of prior education experience were more focused on the importance of the teacher-student relationship as a foundation for an excellent teaching practice, not solely their content area," Scribner said. "Understanding the learner and the learning process were the overarching themes that emerged from our data that best described the difference between teachers with and without a prior educational-relevant career."

As more ATCPs develop around the country, Scribner suggests that policymakers strengthen ATCPs in ways that focus standards-based instruction and encourages school districts to do a better job supporting ATCP teachers once in the classroom. ATCP directors should focus on the types of past experience and education prospective teachers possess, not just that they have past experience.

More information: The study, "Exploring the relationship between prior career experience and instructional quality among mathematics and science teachers in alternative [teacher certification](#) programs," was co-authored by Scribner and Motoko Akiba, assistant professor of educational leadership and policy analysis and will be published in *Educational Policy*.

Source: University of Missouri-Columbia ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Alternative teacher certification programs do not meet expectations (2009, March 25) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-alternative-teacher-certification.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.