

# Training more effective teachers through alternative pathways

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In "Licensure and Worker Quality: A Comparison of Alternative Routes to Teaching," published in *The Journal of Law and Economics*, Tim R. Sass compares the characteristics and performance of Florida teachers who graduate from traditional university-based teacher preparation programs with those who enter teaching from alternative pathways where a bachelor's degree in education is not required. In general, alternatively certified teachers have stronger SAT scores, come from more competitive colleges and are more likely to pass teacher certification exams on the first try.

Of the three alternative certification pathways studied, [teachers](#) who enter through the path requiring no coursework in education have the greatest effect on student achievement, substantially larger than that of traditionally prepared teachers. In contrast, the alternative pathway that requires prospective teachers to take courses that are not transferable to other fields yields teachers who are less effective at boosting student test scores than either traditional-route teachers or teachers who entered the profession through other alternative pathways.

These results suggest that any benefits from required coursework in education are overwhelmed by self-selection away from programs that require non-transferable investments in training. The findings provide a cautionary note to those who seek to improve educational outcomes by tightening the standards to become a teacher.

Adding course requirements to existing teacher preparation programs

may be counterproductive by causing the most talented individuals (and those with the highest time cost) to eschew the teaching profession.

Provided by University of Chicago

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