

WWC Quick Review of the Report “An Evaluation of Teachers Trained through Different Routes to Certification”^{†*}

What is this study about?

This study examined whether having a teacher who chose an alternate route to certification (AC) rather than a teacher who chose a traditional certification route (TC) affects the reading and math achievement of elementary school students.

The study included about 2,600 kindergarten-through-fifth-grade students and their 174 teachers. These students were enrolled in 63 schools across seven states.

Pairs of regular classroom teachers—one an AC teacher and the other a TC teacher—who both had five or fewer years experience were identified within each grade level in each school. Students were randomly assigned to one of the two paired teachers.

The study compared students’ standardized reading and math scores from the California Achievement Test (CAT-5), which were collected at both the beginning and the end of the school year.

What Groups of Students Were Contrasted?

Students taught by teachers certified through AC programs that do not require an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher for admission and place teachers in classrooms prior to completing all certification requirements.

Students taught by teachers certified through TC programs that place teachers in classrooms only after they have completed all their certification requirements.

WWC Rating

The research described in this report is consistent with WWC evidence standards

Strengths: This is a well-implemented randomized controlled trial.

Cautions: This study is not designed to answer the question of whether a teacher would be more effective if he or she attended a TC program or an AC program. Instead, it examines whether teachers who choose to attend AC programs are generally more or less effective than teachers who choose to attend a TC program.

What did the study authors report?

The authors found that elementary school students whose teachers chose an alternate route to certification scored no differently on standardized math and reading tests from students whose teachers chose a traditional route to certification.

Similarly, the authors found no statistically significant test score differences between the students of AC and TC teachers when they restricted their analysis to high-coursework AC programs (averaging 432 hours of instruction) or to low-coursework AC programs (averaging 179 hours of instruction).

[†]Constantine, J., Player, D., Silva, T., Hallgren, K., Grider, M., & Deke, J. (2009). *An evaluation of teachers trained through different routes to certification: Final report* (NCEE 2009-4043). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

*Absence of conflict of interest: This study was prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), which also operates the WWC. For this reason, the study was reviewed by staff from RAND Corporation, ICF International, and Concentric Research & Evaluation.

WWC quick reviews are based on the evidence published in the report cited and rely on effect sizes and significance levels as reported by study authors. WWC does not confirm study authors’ findings or contact authors for additional information about the study. The WWC rating refers only to the results summarized above and not necessarily to all results presented in the study.