Implementing the *Ways of Knowing Through the Realms of Meaning* to Assist Leaders in Retaining Alternatively Certified Teachers: Six National Recommendations for Improving Education in the United States of America

Jennifer Butcher
PhD Student in Educational Leadership
The Whitlowe College of Education
Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, Texas
Assistant Principal
Aldine Independent School District
Houston, Texas

William Allan Kritsonis, PhD
Professor and Faculty Mentor
PhD Program in Educational Leadership
The Whitlowe College of Education
Prairie View A&M University
Member of the Texas A&M University System
Prairie View, Texas
Visiting Lecturer
Oxford Round Table
University of Oxford, Oxford, England
Distinguished Alumnus
Central Washington University
College of Education and Professional Studies
Ellensburg, Washington

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ABSTRACT

With both high retirement and high attrition rates among educators and a nationwide increasing student population, more teachers are needed. With the impact of a teacher shortage, educational systems began to examine the alternative certification methods. Alternative routes to teacher education profoundly impact the teaching force. *The Ways of Knowing Through the Realms of Meaning* by William Allan Kritsonis, PhD (2007) provides insight in identifying strategies which focus on the retention of alternatively certified teachers.

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Introduction

The six realms of meaning cover the range of possible meanings and comprise the basic competencies that general education should develop in every person. A complete person should be skilled in the use of speech, symbol, and gesture (symbolics), factually

well informed (empirics), capable of creating and appreciating objects of esthetic significance (esthetics), endowed with a rich and disciplined life in relation to self and others (synnoetics), able to make wise decisions and to judge between right and wrong (ethics), and possessed of an integral outlook (synoptics). These are the aims of general education for the development of complete persons.

Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this article is to discuss six philosophical strategies for implementing the realms of meaning as a process for selecting curriculum for the development of the complete person. It is important to recognize the factors that lead to the retention of alternatively certified teachers. Research has shown that alternatively certified teachers have not been prepared as traditional trained teachers. Therefore, it is imperative to help in the completion process of these individuals and attribute to their development. There is a necessity to recruit, train, and retain alternatively certified teachers to address the rapidly growing teacher shortage.

Symbolics
Operational and Human Capital Costs

According to Kritsonis, "the realm designated 'symbolics' is characterized by arbitrary symbolic structures exhibiting certain customary rules of construction and interpretation" (2007, p.111). The three subdivisions of this realm are ordinary language, mathematics, and nondiscursive symbolic forms.

> Mathematics is a language of complete abstraction. To recapitulate, mathematics is a discipline in which formal symbolic systems are constructed by positing certain undefined terms (elements, sets, rules of combination), elaborating further concepts by definitions (conventions), adopting certain postulates (concerning both the undefined and the defined terms), and then, using the principles of logic, drawing necessary deductive inferences, resulting in an aggregate of propositions called "theorems" (Kritsonis, 2007, p.150).

Operational and humans costs are mathematically related when discussing funding for Alternative Certification Programs. Effective budgeting is tied to supporting the program for long-term success. Federal and state support help reduce the tuition costs for s tudents. Direct and indirect grant funding for Alternative Teacher Certification from

federal Perkins and PT3 funds help offset student and institutional costs significantly. Although grant funding may prove a viable option, ongoing operational costs must be supported by long-term commitments from the community college (May, Katsinas, and Moore, 2003).

Policymakers should scrutinize carefully the money dedicated by state legislatures to the preparation of teachers to be sure it is reaching the intended programs, and that the tuition and fees students pay for their preparation to teach are going to the program in which they are enrolled (Greiner & Smith, 2004). The people who dispense federal, state, and local funds to education will be hard-pressed to determine which programs raise the quality of teaching in the most cost-effective manner (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). Conditions in the United States are causing some states to cut back on public education funding.

Empirics
Supply and Demand

Science is a systematic empirical inquiry that is concerned with matters of fact. Facts are the particular data of observations, and hypotheses are generalizations in need of testing by further observations (Kritsonis, 2007). Conceptual structure that provide explanations for laws are theories. According to Kristonis (2007), the social sciences, chief among which are social psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science, are clearly in the domain of the sciences of man. Every person needs many kinds of goods and services. The division of labor requires some system of exchange by which each workers production may be distributed to others in return for a share in their products. The most influential social invention devised for affecting this exchange of the market system. In this system the distribution of goods and services is determined by factors of supply and demand.

A theory that can be applied to the growth of alternatively certified teachers is derived from the economic labor market theory of supply and demand. The supply for teachers is related to the number of qualified individuals willing to teach at a given level or overall compensation. The demand can be defined as the number of teaching positions offered at given level of overall compensation. Overall compensation includes salaries, bonuses, and other means of monetary compensation. This economic theory argues that individuals find work by choosing among alternative employment opportunities instead of attempting to maximize their own abilities.

Esthetics
Zone of Proximal Development

Esthetic understanding is most directly and deliberately cultivated through the arts. Music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, dance, and drama comprise the fine arts. "The successful artist in any given field is a person who thinks well with the characteristic materials of that field" (Kritsonis, 2007, p.309). To comprehend works in a given field, one must cultivate and immediate feeling for the qualities, possibilities, problems, and limitations of the material from which objects in that field are made. This feeling is best gained by actual practice.

Due to the accelerated nature of many programs, alternative certification interns are immediately assigned a classroom, students, and a mentor. Instead of being gradually handed teaching responsibilities, they begin the first day of their contract with the full responsibilities and expectations of a classroom teacher. Because they assume a full teaching load immediately, questions and struggles with such unfamiliar issues as classroom management, planning, assessment, human development, diversity, and learning styles assume a palpable sense of urgency (Steadman and Simmons, 2007). Mentors provide needed support for alternatively certified teacher. This support should be given until the mentor feels that the new teacher has reached the Zone of Proximal Development. This is when the mentee follows the mentor's example and gradually develops the ability to do certain tasks without help or assistance. The difference between what a person can do with help and what he or she can do without guidance is the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD).

Synnoetics
Mentoring Opportunity

Synnoetic meaning requires engagement. "The term 'personal knowledge' includes not only relations with other persons, but also relations with oneself" (Kritsonis, 2007, p.418). According to Feistritzer & Chester (2003), effective alternative teacher certification programs should have strong academic course work component, field based learning the classroom, and support from qualified mentors. Research has shown that continuous support from mentors is essential in alternative certification programs. Alternatively certified teachers indicated that daily contact with a mentor is needed to provide the emotional and technical support to develop competence and professional skills.

Ethics
Ethical Theory

"The essence of ethical meaning, or of moral knowledge, is right deliberate action, that is, what a person ought voluntarily to do" (Kritsonis, 2007, p. 443). The foundation of culture and civilization is the belief about what is right or wrong. The development of ethical theory dates back to Plato and Aristotle. The word ethic has its roots in the Greek word ethos. Ethos is the perceived degree of character or credibility that a person believes exists in another person or object (Haskins, 2000). The amount of trust and belief one has in another will have an important impact in how persuasive one will be.

According to Kritsonis (2007), the value of ethical theory is in guiding teaching and learning. In the ethical realm, emphasis should be on ethical understanding and how it may be improved. A person who has knowledge of ethical theory is as moral as a person who lacks such knowledge. Moral conduct pertains to one's actions in certain situations. To solve a problem, one should be clear of the choices for the given situation. Kritsonis (2007) states that before a person can know where to go, he needs to understand where he is starting from. There must be a mission in order to fulfill a vision. Moral decisions require a set of values to serve as a form of reference inn evaluating the consequences.

The values and morals an individual finds appropriate are called ethics. Ethical theory supplies rules.   These rules are guidelines used in making decisions about a particular situation. Ethics in leadership deal with what leaders do and who they are. How leaders respond to a given situation and the choices they make are led by ethics. The concerns of ethical leaders are issues of justice and fairness. One cannot be a leader without involving values. One must be sensitive to the needs of others, care for others, and treat them in ways that are just in order to be an ethical leader.

Synoptics
No Child Left Behind

The disciplines of synoptics are history, religion, and philosophy.   The main category in the filed of history is time. The concern is not with time in general, but with past time. According to Kristonis, "economic and geo-graphic influences may also be of great importance in the formation of the events the historian endeavors to recapture" (2007, p. 494).

No Child Left Behind has a significant impact on our present educational system. No Child Left Behind has set qualifications for teachers. It mandated that only "highly qualified teachers' be retained in schools by the end of 2005-06 (Hill & Barth, 2004). Considering that NCLB is calling for a qualified teacher in every classroom, a concern with non-traditional teachers is that they are actually the teacher of record who may not yet have a high degree of confidence in their teaching ability (Desjean-Perrotta, Flores,

and Steinmetz, 2004). Leaders should design plans to assist in retaining highly qualified teachers. If we're going to leave no child behind in America's schools, then we must leave no teacher behind either (Gray & Smith, 2005).

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, a complete person should be skilled in the used of speech, symbol, and gesture (symbolics), factually well informed (empirics), capable of creating and appreciating objects of esthetic significance (esthetics), endowed with a rich and disciplined life in relation to self and others (synnoetics), able to make wise decisions and to judge between right and wrong (ethics), and possessed of an integral outlook (synoptics). These are the aims of general education for the development of complete persons. The six philosophical strategies for implementing the realms of meaning as a process for selecting curriculum for the development of the complete person mentioned in the essay can be beneficial for leaders in the retention of alternatively certified teachers.

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