

Reflection - EDUC 876
Teacher Development and Educational Policy
Dr. Penelope Earley
Summer 2008

This course was my first foray into a policy class and although neither my primary concentration nor my secondary concentration is educational policy, I thought it would be an important class for me to take for my secondary concentration of teacher education. Because the United States has a constitutional policy of allowing each state to develop and run their own educational system and then a federal Department of Education oversees those same state systems, every teacher is trained and abides by state rules and regulations. It also means that every teacher's license may not have been obtained according to the same standards as another teacher in another state. As teachers often move between states and I, myself did this by moving at one time from New Jersey to Virginia, licensure often becomes an issue.

What this course discussed was not only how various states had different systems of licensure for teachers but how teacher education programs could be vastly different for different disciplines, critical needs areas, and as a result of federal policy. In addition, I learned about accreditation on the higher education level, particularly for schools of education, and some of the reasons why schools need to maintain their accreditation. In addition, the course looked at the federal government's role in educational policy, specifically through two major pieces of legislation – No Child Left Behind and the Higher Education Act. We were asked to review a piece of congressional legislation concerning education which was valuable in that it familiarized me with THOMAS, the Library of Congress' site for Legislative Information, something I had been unaware of at that time. In addition, a field trip day to Washington during which we visited offices of accrediting bodies and legislative officials reinforced ideas and readings from the course.

One of the most important things I got out of this class was the ability to write in a focused manner without the use of personal pronouns. Through two article analyses and a final opinion paper on the future of teacher education, Dr. Earley stressed the importance of focused, concise, and direct writing. In terms of artifacts for this course, I am submitting two items – my Second Article Analysis from the *Journal of Teacher Education* and the final Opinion Paper that we were asked to complete concerning teacher education. These artifacts are also marked electronically – the first ones I received back in this manner since entering the doctoral program.