

Remarks of William J. During

ELL Teacher

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Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education concerning
proposed changes to certification in Special Education

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Good afternoon. My name is William During and I am a Bilingual/ELL teacher at Turn of River Middle School in Stamford. I taught special education resource students for six years. For five of those years I worked with Bilingual Special Education students in Arizona. Although I was matriculated at The University of Arizona, I never completed a master's degree in Learning disabilities. My experience in the classroom allowed me to become an effective Special Ed. teacher, because I was able to implement specific reading, and reading comprehension strategies with my students. We were able to make progress, because the students realized they could trust me, and also knew that I was concerned about their progress, despite their handicapping condition. My masters program was not a prerequisite for this success. Although I learned new methods, and techniques from my classes, and they were reinforced by my supervisor, none of this allowed me to establish a consistent pattern of interaction with my students. I am writing this letter in behalf of all the Special Ed. teachers in Connecticut who are now faced with the possibility of having to

return to school after many years of working with handicapped children. First, who would pay for their education, and second, would a Masters Degree guarantee their success in the classroom? Neither can we afford No Child Left Behind, nor the cost of advanced degrees that do very little to enhance the success of our Special Educators. Thank you.