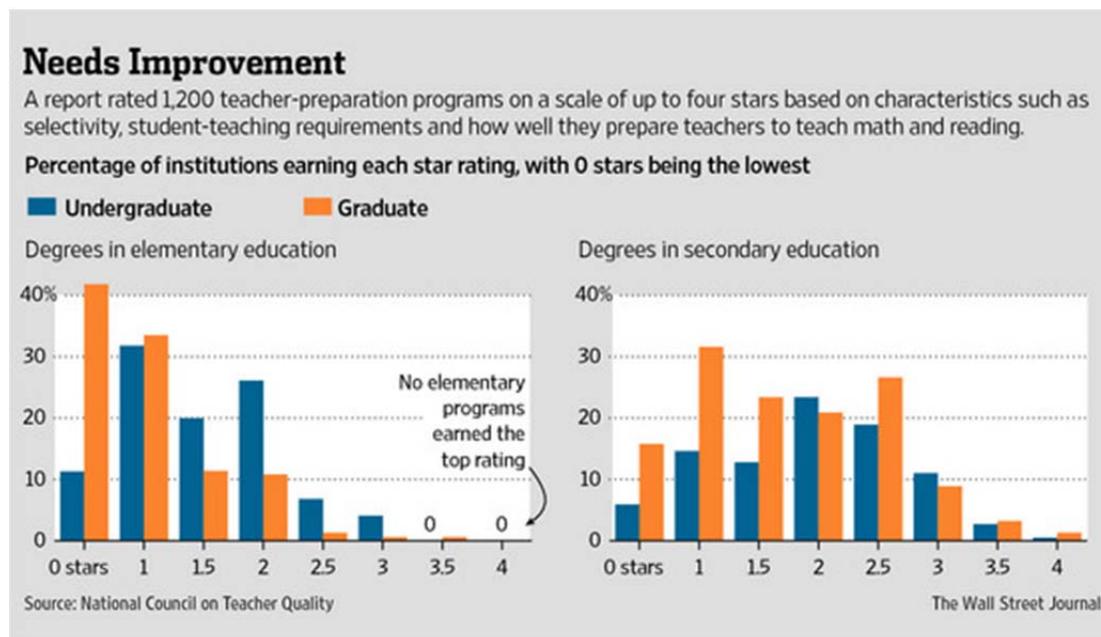


# Teacher Training Fails Grade

WSJ, June 18, 2013, page A2, by Stephanie Banchero

U.S. colleges of education are an "industry of mediocrity" that churns out teachers ill-prepared to work in elementary and high-school classrooms, according to a report by a nonprofit advocacy group that represents the first comprehensive review of such programs.

The study, by the National Council on Teacher Quality, which has long promoted overhauling U.S. teacher preparation, assigned ratings of up to four stars to 1,200 programs at 608 institutions that collectively account for 72% of the graduates of all such programs in the nation. U.S. News & World Report will publish the results Tuesday. They are similar to the magazine's rankings of top colleges, undergraduate engineering programs and business and law schools—which are widely followed but whose methodology some education officials have criticized.



The council included criteria such as the selectivity of the teacher programs, as well as an evaluation of their syllabi, textbooks and other teaching materials. It said fewer than 10% of the programs earned three or more stars. Only four, all for future high-school teachers, received four stars. About 14% got zero stars, and graduate-level programs fared particularly poorly.

Kate Walsh, president of the National Council on Teacher Quality, said it is vital that aspiring teachers—and school districts that hire them—have information about quality. "Knowledgeable consumers can have a big impact on these programs by driving customers away from bad ones and toward good ones," she said.

The National Council on Teacher Quality, a nonprofit group that pushes to overhaul teacher prep programs, has released its first rating of the nation's colleges of education. Select column headers to sort the table, or search for keywords. Here is the link to complete list:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323836504578551904167354358.html?KEYWORDS=Teacher+Training+Fails+Grade#project%3DEDUCOLLEGE0617%26articleTabs%3Dinteractive>

But the effort to rate programs has prompted controversy. Officials from 35 education schools sent a letter to Ms. Walsh's group last year claiming the evaluation tool is flawed because it relies heavily on written materials and doesn't consider teachers' performance in their classrooms after they graduate.

Deborah Loewenberg Ball, dean of the School of Education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, cooperated with the study but said she doesn't think it will necessarily lead to vast improvements in the field. "We should look at teacher performance, rather than syllabi, which really just tells you about what instructors say they offer," she said. But Ms. Ball, whose teacher-training programs received two and 2½ stars, said she hopes the study will prod a national discussion on teacher training.

The council said it didn't measure programs based on the performance of students taught by their graduates, because not enough states gather such data. Many colleges also refused to provide course syllabi, limiting the number of schools the council could rank to fewer than half the roughly 1,450 institutions of higher education that have teacher-training programs.

Megan Stewart, who just finished her second year teaching, said she didn't feel fully prepared for her first months in the classroom in a low-income Chicago public school. She said she wasn't ready to deal with student behavior issues and didn't know how to use student testing data to alter her methods.

"What I really needed—what most new teachers need—is more hands-on experience working in classrooms during our college days," she said.

As evidence mounts that teacher quality is one of the biggest determinants of student achievement, critics have complained that teacher-training programs have lax admission standards, scattered curriculum, and fail to give aspiring teachers real-life classroom training. The report echoes the complaints, saying many graduates lack the necessary classroom-management skills and subject knowledge needed. The report contends that it is too easy to get into teacher-preparation programs, with only about a quarter of them restricting admissions to applicants in the top half of their class. The typical grade-point-average to get into undergraduate programs is about 2.5, it said.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who has criticized education colleges, praised the ratings. "Teachers deserve better support and better training than teachers' colleges today provide, and school districts should be able to make well-informed hiring choices," he said.

A study of teachers in Los Angeles finds that a majority of first-year teachers have a negative impact on learning. Few novice teachers are able to exceed the performance of teachers with more experience.

The report also said that fewer than one in nine programs for future elementary teachers, and just over one-third of high-school programs, properly prepare teachers to teach the Common Core standards, and about 75% aren't preparing graduates to teach reading to youngsters.

Teacher programs use 866 different reading textbooks, compared to only 13 math textbooks, which Ms. Walsh said indicates an "unwillingness to embrace" a single approach to reading instruction.

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School Name	St	Program	Number of Stars (out of 4)
Flagler College	FL	secondary, undergraduate	1.5
Flagler College	FL	elementary, undergraduate	2.5
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	FL	elementary, undergraduate	1.5
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Florida Atlantic University	FL	elementary, undergraduate	1.0
Florida Atlantic University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	1.5
Florida Atlantic University	FL	secondary, graduate	2.5
Florida Gulf Coast University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Florida Gulf Coast University	FL	elementary, undergraduate	2.0
Florida International University	FL	elementary, undergraduate	1.5
Florida International University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.0
Florida State College at Jacksonville	FL	elementary, undergraduate	0.0
Florida State University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Florida State University	FL	elementary, graduate	2.5
Florida State University	FL	elementary, undergraduate	2.5
Florida State University	FL	secondary, graduate	2.5
University of South Florida	FL	elementary, undergraduate	2.0
University of West Florida	FL	elementary, undergraduate	1.5
University of Central Florida	FL	elementary, graduate	1.5
University of Central Florida	FL	secondary, undergraduate	3.0
University of Central Florida	FL	special education, undergraduate	3.0
University of Florida	FL	elementary, graduate	2.5
St. Petersburg College	FL	secondary, graduate	2.5
Daytona State College	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Indian River State College	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Miami Dade College	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Nova Southeastern University	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.5
Edison State College	FL	secondary, undergraduate	2.0
University of North Florida	FL	Elementary, undergraduate	2.0
University of Florida	FL	special education, graduate	2.0