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Student Teaching in the United States

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AUTHORS:
Julie Greenberg, Laura Pomerance and Kate Walsh

OUR THANKS TO:
Research Analysts: Rachel Brody, Veronica Brooks, Stephen Condon, Megan Lebow, Brianna Lennon, David Powell, Karissa Schafer, Derek Wu

Database Design and Technical Support: Jeff Hale

Graphic Design: Colleen Hale

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Additional detail for Student Teaching in the United States can be retrieved at: **www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/studentteaching**. This webpage provides access to a variety of materials, including more information on the review process, student teaching program exemplar documents and comments from institutions.

Student Teaching in the United States

Introduction

Though few would dispute its value, the job of providing apprenticeships for some 200,000 teacher candidates each year in real classrooms is a massive and complex undertaking. About 1,400 higher education institutions work with many thousands of school districts across the United States to place, mentor and supervise teacher candidates in what is popularly known as "student teaching."[1]

Even as the profession pushes for more and earlier field work opportunities, student teaching is the final clinical experience.[2] During the typical semester-long experience, student teaching candidates must synthesize everything they have learned about planning instruction: collecting or developing instructional materials, teaching lessons, guiding small group activities, and establishing and maintaining order—not to mention meetings with faculty and parents and, in some districts still, taking on lunchroom and playground duties. Passing (or failing) student teaching determines whether an individual will be recommended for certification as a licensed teacher.

Because few dispute the tremendous potential value of student teaching, even alternate pathways to profession, often criticized for taking too many shortcuts, generally try to provide their teaching candidates with some kind of student teaching experience, however abbreviated. Surveys of new teachers suggest that student teaching is the most important part of their teaching training experience.[3]

Why this review?

The stakes in student teaching are high: Teacher candidates have only one chance to experience the best possible placement. Student teaching will shape their expectations for their own performance as teachers and help determine the type of school in which they will choose to teach. A mediocre student teaching experience, let alone a disastrous one, can never be undone.

Even more importantly, the stakes are high for future students. A uniformly strong student teaching experience has the power to dramatically improve the vision of teaching excellence. The exceptional classroom teacher

1 Aggregate production figures taken from all states' 2010 Title II reports indicate that traditional teacher preparation programs produced 186,000 teachers in 2008-2009.

2 "Clinical practice" is defined by NCATE as "student teaching or internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing." It is distinguished from field experiences, defined as "a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research." In traditional teacher preparation programs, several hundred hours of field experiences typically precede student teaching.

3 Levine, A. (September 2006). *Educating school teachers* (p. 39). Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project.

under whose supervision the student teacher ideally works can transmit effective instructional techniques as well as critical lessons: the expectation that all children can learn, that great schools need not be restricted to wealthy suburbs and that perseverance pays off in student performance gains.

Nearly three years ago, in an effort to understand just how to get student teaching "right," the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) entered into a comprehensive review of the student teaching experience. For this work, we focused on its delivery at the undergraduate level for future elementary teachers, but we can identify no reason why our findings and recommendations would not generally extend to both undergraduate and graduate preparation of all classroom teachers.

Nearly three years ago, in an effort to understand just how to get student teaching "right," the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) entered into a comprehensive review of the student teaching experience.

The implications of this review stretch beyond student teaching. NCATE, the organization from which half of the nation's teacher preparation programs receive national accreditation, recently announced a restructuring of its accreditation process to encourage institutions to make clinical practice—that is, exposing teacher candidates to real classrooms—the centerpiece of the curriculum from the beginning of education coursework through student teaching. Given the many similarities among all forms of clinical practice, the findings and recommendations of this report have important implications for improving the full range of field work opportunities, as NCATE intends.

The student teaching standards developed and applied for this report are also significant for NCTQ's national review of teacher preparation programs, currently being conducted in partnership with *U.S. News & World Report*. This report offers an in-depth preview of the aspects of student teaching that will be included in our national review.

How this review was conducted

This review looks at 134 higher education institutions offering an undergraduate student teaching program to elementary teacher candidates, approved by their states to prepare public school teachers.[4] In all they comprise nearly 10 percent of the nation's institutions offering traditional teacher preparation. We selected the institutions using a stratified random sampling that was designed to include approximately three teacher preparation programs in every state and the District of Columbia.

4 All references to "program" in this report pertain to the "student teaching program," not the teacher preparation program as a whole. The term "institution" refers to the teacher preparation program or the larger education school in which it may be housed. A list of all institutions reviewed can be found in Section C of the Appendix.

Of the 134 institutions, 93 are public (69 percent) and 41 are private (31 percent); 15 of the 41 are nonsectarian private and 26 are sectarian private.[5]

As with all of NCTQ's reviews of teacher preparation programs, institutions were not asked if they wished to participate. After learning that they had been selected for the review, 12 of the included programs explicitly asked not to participate,[6] a request we did not honor for two reasons. First, it is the responsibility of any publicly approved teacher preparation program, whether located in a public or a private institution, to be transparent and responsive. It is, after all, producing public school teachers. Second, allowing participation to be only voluntary would introduce an unacceptable level of bias into this review. A review comprising only willing participants would likely end up reflecting the practices of those institutions confident of meeting our standards, excluding those institutions that either rejected our standards out of hand or suspected they would not perform well.

Because of the large number of standards we developed for this evaluation and the burden of document collection and analysis that would have been required to evaluate all programs on all standards, we employed an initial screen using the five most critical standards. These five standards are as follows:

STANDARD 1. The student teaching experience, which should last no less than 10 weeks, should require no less than five weeks at a single local school site and represent a full-time commitment.

STANDARD 2. The teacher preparation program must select the cooperating teacher[7] for each student teacher placement.[8]

STANDARD 3. The cooperating teacher candidate must have at least three years of teaching experience.

STANDARD 4. The cooperating teacher candidate must have the capacity to have a positive impact on student learning.

STANDARD 5. The cooperating teacher candidate must have the capacity to mentor an adult, with skills in observation, providing feedback, holding professional conversations and working collaboratively.

After evaluating all 134 institutions against these five standards, we selected a subsample of 32 institutions to evaluate on the remaining 14 less critical standards.[9] (See page 13 for a full list of standards.)

5 More demographic information is found in Section C of the Appendix. While this proportion of public and private institutions does not match the distribution in the population of all institutions offering teacher preparation (which is approximately 48 percent public and 52 percent private), it does not appear to bias results since the average ratings for public and private programs on the five critical standards—the standards used for classification of institutions into design categories—do not differ.

In the few institutions with post-baccalaureate programs where teacher candidates are given the choice to either student teach or teach as an intern, we evaluated only the student teaching program.

6 Augusta College, Black Hills State University, the College of William and Mary, Drexel University, Mississippi College, Missouri Western State University, Oral Roberts University, Purdue University Calumet, SUNY Cortland, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, the University of Nevada - Las Vegas and Wake Forest University all asked not to participate.

7 The term "cooperating teacher" refers to the classroom teacher in whose classroom the student teacher is placed and who guides the student teacher throughout the placement. A variety of other labels are also given to this role, most commonly "mentor teacher."

8 We note that in our evaluation of an institution against Standard 2, we considered whether it plays an *active* and *informed* role in the selection of every cooperating teacher, basing its selection decision on *substantive information* on the qualifications of teachers.

9 See Section C of the Appendix for a list of institutions in the subsample.

Although the existence of these documents does not provide fail-safe evidence that a program is in fact well run, the absence of such documents certainly suggests that it is poorly run…

To evaluate an institution's performance against the standards, there were four steps in our methodology:

1. We collected and evaluated a large number of documents related to an institution's student teaching program.
   - **From institutions**, we asked for documents such as those that address the selection and responsibilities of the cooperating teachers and the responsibilities of those on the institution's staff who coordinate field placements for student teachers, as well as any student teaching handbook or student teaching manual that provides guidance to student teachers in the elementary teacher preparation program.[10] Our review was not limited to these documents because over the course of analysis, institutions were given the opportunity to provide as much additional material as they thought necessary to show how their programs worked.
   - **From school districts**, we obtained any contracts between institutions and school districts that govern their student teaching arrangements. For example, any teacher preparation programs placing student teachers in Chicago's public schools must adhere to a contract whose terms are established by the school district.

     Although the existence of these documents does not provide fail-safe evidence that a program is in fact well run, the absence of such documents certainly suggests that it is poorly run—with the exception perhaps of the smallest of programs, which can rely on more informal protocols to manage only a few student teachers. If institutions did not choose to provide us with such documents (and in the case of public institutions, this refusal was in the face of open records requests), we pulled them from institutions' websites or obtained them from state departments of education, which generally review such documents in the course of approving programs. In all cases, we cited the materials we had obtained as sources for our analysis in order to give institutions the opportunity to comment or provide substitute materials.
2. After we collected these documents, we offered each institution multiple opportunities to provide additional documents pertinent to preliminary and final reviews of its program. We communicated with any institution that chose to do so between one and a dozen times. The magnitude of the interaction is attested to by the 1,600 documents supplied to us by the institutions and the more than 1,000 e-mails exchanged over the course of the review.[11]
3. We then surveyed local school principals whose elementary schools were identified by institutions as sites for student teaching placements. These surveys gave us the opportunity to triangulate the findings from our document collection and discussions with institutions. These surveys were either conducted by telephone or were taken online.

10 A complete list of documents requested is found in Section A of the Appendix.

11 Only about a dozen institutions did not respond in any way to our preliminary or final ratings reports.

4. Finally, we conducted five site visits (one involving an innovative student teaching program not included in the sample) to interview student teachers, supervisors,[12] cooperating teachers and field-placement coordinators. There was significant range in the institutions visited in terms of the number of elementary teachers they produced and their locales. These site visits proved very useful to ascertain whether our document collection and survey work aligned with what we observed to be happening on the ground, to inform our general understanding of the complex arrangements necessary for student teaching and to expand our thinking about improvements. These institutions graciously hosted our site visits: Cardinal Stritch University (Milwaukee, WI), Chicago State University (Chicago, IL), Delaware State University (Dover, DE), the Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative (Phoenix, AZ) and the University of Arizona (Tucson, AZ).

Some of the finer points of our methodology are worth noting.

Relevance of the documents we collected

These documents are at least some of the same documents collected by states for program approval or by accrediting bodies such as NCATE. In fact, we collected more types of documents on student teaching than NCATE. Both our collection and NCATE's include 1) memoranda of understanding to document partnerships, 2) a list of criteria for selection of cooperating teachers and supervisors, 3) descriptions of clinical practice, and 4) student teaching handbooks. Beyond documents typically collected by NCATE, we also collected any documents addressing 1) the selection process for the cooperating teacher, 2) the responsibilities of field-placement coordinators, 3) the location of programs not overseen by the institution (such as international placements), 4) the criteria for selection of elementary schools for placements,[13] and 5) the process by which the institution evaluates placements to see if any aspect of the school or cooperating teacher's performance merits discontinuation.[14]

Impact of noncooperation by institutions

If we could not evaluate an institution relative to any standard because no document had been provided and we could not obtain the necessary information from other sources, we indicated that a rating could not be determined.

Impact of state regulations on a program's performance

In all of our reviews we are cognizant of state regulations to ensure that we do not end up "marking down" programs for a design that is restricted by state policies or practices. For example, in our review of Illinois teacher preparation programs, we provided a rating for institutions on their use of output data, but we did not include the rating when calculating overall grades for any program because the state has not yet developed the systems allowing them to readily capture such data.

In this review, our evaluation took into account that Connecticut institutions cannot meet our second standard (i.e., programs must actively participate in the selection of cooperating teachers) because Connecticut explicitly requires (in our view, unfortunately so) that school principals have the sole responsibility for selecting the cooperating teacher.

The necessity of institutional review board approval

The issue of whether our review requires approval by an institutional review board was raised by several institutions on the occasion of our site visits. Although we believed the nature of our effort did not warrant such

12 The term "supervisor" refers to the individual hired by the institution to periodically observe and evaluate the student teacher's performance. Supervisors may be faculty, but are usually former teachers or principals hired on a contract basis.

13 NCATE requires that applicants for accreditation provide information on the demographics on sites for clinical practice, but does not require any specific information relating to criteria for selection of sites other than what is included in an institution's conceptual framework.

14 NCATE also requires a few documents that we did not seek, including assessments' scoring rubrics/criteria, professional development opportunities provided to school district staff, and agendas for meetings with both cooperating teachers and supervisors.

approval, we decided to err on the side of caution and took the matter up with an institutional review board (IRB). The IRB responded that our review was exempt from this process, both because our focus was on programs rather than individuals and because information provided cannot be identified with an individual subject.

A full discussion of this review's sample, methodology, data collection, analysis and production of ratings is found in Section C of the Appendix. Comments on the review were solicited from every institution; all responses are included in Section H of the Appendix.

Other research

The student teaching experience of today bears similarities to student experiences dating back to the mid-1800s, when teachers were first trained in "normal" schools.[15] Since then, the time spent in preceding field work, the level of supervision by the preparation program and the length of the experience have all increased,[16] but the fundamentals have remained relatively unchanged.

Very little of the research on student teaching addresses this fundamental question: What features of the experience will make a teacher more effective?

While published scholarly articles about student teaching abound, the proportion of studies providing quantitative or qualitative evidence and meeting generally accepted standards for academic publication in peer-reviewed journals is small.[17] In turn, very few of that small number address the fundamental purpose of teacher education, namely: What features of the student teaching experience will make a teacher more effective in the classroom?

The table on page 7 summarizes the focus of research by teacher educators on student teaching in peer-reviewed education journals published since 1997.[18] Only three studies out of 34 explore the relationship of student teaching with future teacher effectiveness. Of these three studies, only one steers clear of relying on

15 Guyton, E., & McIntyre, D.J. (1990). Student teaching and school experiences. In W. R. Houston (Ed.). *Handbook of research on teacher education* (p. 515). New York: Macmillan. Student teaching arrangements for secondary candidates are a relatively new feature of teacher preparation, dating back only to the beginning of the 20th century.

16 Judging from the fact that the predecessor organization of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education required member institutions to set 90 clock hours as a minimum requirement in 1928, prior to that year the minimum number of hours may have been fewer than 90 clock hours (about three weeks in the classroom). Guyton & McIntyre, p. 515.

17 The proportion of all articles on teacher education meeting such standards has been estimated to be about one-fifth of those published. Levine, A., p. 52.

18 Articles published between 1997 and 2011 from *American Educational Research Journal*, *Curriculum Inquiry*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Educational Researcher*, *International Journal of Science Education*, *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education*, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Review of Educational Research*, *Review of Research in Education*, *School Science and Mathematics*, *Science Education*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *The Teacher Educator*; articles published between 1997 and 2001 from *Action in Teacher Education*, *Journal of Computers in Mathematics and Science Teaching*, *Journal of Research and Development in Education and Theory and Research in Social Education*. Section D of the Appendix lists these studies.

a case study approach to perform a rigorous statistical analysis of the effects of common features of all student teaching experiences on future teacher effectiveness, as measured by student learning gains in a large sample.[19] This lone study by Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2009), whose findings are expressed in the standards used in this review, found that student achievement was improved for first-year teachers prepared in institutions that had mandatory student teaching, picked the cooperating teacher (as opposed to allowing the K-12 school or student teacher to select that teacher) and required the following:

- A minimum of three years of teaching experience for cooperating teachers,
- A minimum of five supervisor observations, and
- A capstone project, at the conclusion of student teaching.

What are the issues surrounding student teaching addressed in research?

Primary issue	Number of studies	Number of studies addressing effects on student performance
Student teaching programs in general	2	**1***
Nature of relationship between preparation programs and partner K-12 schools	13	**2****
Student teachers' perceptions of their experiences	6	0
Supervision of student teachers	13	0
Totals	**34**	**3**

* Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (December 2009). Teacher preparation and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31, 416-440.

** See Appendix D for Knight (2000), assessing the impact on student performance of preservice teachers who were trained in a particular approach to teaching writing, and Brink (2001), addressing the benefits to K-8 pupils from having more student teachers available in the classroom.

In fact, the dominant perspective on student teaching taken by the field of teacher education seems to militate *against* what we view as a rather logical and compelling academic pursuit: first identifying discrete features of student teaching (such as the ones chosen in the Boyd study), and second, conducting research to ascertain the value of such features in terms of their impact on the immediate effectiveness of a new teacher. How else to explain the utter dearth of research with this perspective?

It is safe to conclude that at least some portion of the field of teacher education does not perceive the purpose of the student teaching experience as a unique and critical opportunity to produce the most effective first-year teachers possible. Rather, clinical practice is perceived as an experience "where pre-service teachers can, through trial and error, embark on a lifelong career of reflection and insight that will eventually make them into good teachers (if they have the right dispositions)."[20] As summarized by the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) 2006 report on research and teacher education, the majority of studies that touched on student teaching "looked at how new teachers are socialized into the profession and how beliefs and actions changed (or resisted change) while engaged in methods courses and field experiences."[21]

19 Boyd et al. (2009).

20 Snider, V. (2006). *Myths and misconceptions about teaching: What really happens in the classroom* (p. 168). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Education.

21 Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.) (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education* (p. 325). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

States' regulatory role

State regulations do provide some sensible, albeit limited, guidance on student teaching experiences, but no state has what could be termed a comprehensive set of regulations or even guidelines for student teaching programs.

While most states (39) set a minimum length for student teaching,[22] as indicated in the table on page 9, only about half require that student teaching last at least 10 weeks, widely accepted by the field of teacher education to be the minimum acceptable duration. Just over one-third of the states require that student teaching be "full-time," though the term appears to mean different things in different states.[23]

In terms of addressing perhaps the most important aspect of student teaching —the quality of the cooperating teacher assigned to mentor the student teacher—state regulations are particularly weak. Numerous states require the cooperating teacher to be an "accomplished professional," but most fail to define that term. For example, Iowa requires that cooperating teachers "demonstrate skills, knowledge, and dispositions of highly accomplished practitioners," but there is no articulation of these skills, knowledge or dispositions. Only one out of five states addresses the need for the cooperating teacher to have at least three years of experience[24] or the need of the cooperating teacher to have mentoring skills or mentoring training. Florida is the only state that explicitly requires that the cooperating teacher perform in a way that consistently results in improved student performance.[25]

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Judging from practices of institutions in our sample, institutions generally comply only with those state requirements that are easily measured, such as the requirement that the cooperating teacher have a specific number of years of teaching experience. We noted a tendency by institutions to ignore regulations for which compliance is harder to determine and which are presumably not monitored all that well by the state. The table on page 10 documents a significant deviation from what state regulations required and what student teaching programs required—in just the few institutions we examined in each state.

22 Education Week *Quality Counts 2010*: http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/qc/2010/17sos.h29.teaching.pdf

23 The intention of some states appears to be that students need to devote themselves full time to student teaching and not take other coursework. Other states appear to use the term "full-time" to indicate that the student teacher must be present for the full elementary school day.

24 Several more states have a requirement related to experience but require only *two* years of experience.

25 Strangely, this impact on student performance is connected by Florida regulations to classroom management skills rather than instructional skills. Tennessee indirectly requires that cooperating teachers be effective by reference to their performance on local or state evaluation instruments.

What states require on student teaching

	Placements of at least **10 weeks** required	Student teaching represents a full-time commitment at least 12 semester credit hours	Cooperating teacher required to have at least 3 years of experience	Requirement that at least half of student teaching placement must be in state	Requirement that cooperating teacher be effective as demonstrated by a positive impact on student learning	Requirement that cooperating teacher have skills mentoring and/or takes mentoring training
AL	■	■	■	□	□	□
AK	□	□	□	□	□	□
AZ	□	□	□	□	□	□
AR	■	□	□	□	□	□
CA	□	□	□	□	□	□
CO	□	□	□	□	□	□
CT	■	■[1]	□	□	□	■
DE	□	□	□	□	□	□
DC	□	□	□	□	□	□
FL	■	□	□	□	■	■
GA	□	□	□	□	□	□
HI	■	■	□	□	□	□
ID	□	□	□	□	□	□
IL	□	□	□	□	□	□
IN	□	□[2]	□	□	□	□
IA	■	□	□	□	□	□[3]
KS	■	□	□	□	□	□
KY	■	■	■	□	□	■
LA	□[4]	□	□	□	□	■
ME	□	□	□	□	□	□
MD	□	□	□	□	□	■
MA	□	□	■	■	□	□
MI	□	□	□	□	□	□
MN	■	■	□	□	□	□
MS	■	■	□	□	□	□
MO	□	□	□	□	□	□
MT	□	□	□	□	□	□
NE	■	■	■	□	□	□
NV	□	□	□	□	□	□
NH	■	■	□	□	□	□
NJ	■	■	■	□	□	■
NM	■	□	□	□	□	□
NY	□	□	□	□	□	□
NC	■	■	□	□	□	□
ND	■	■	■	□	□	■
OH	■	■	□	□	□	□
OK	■	■	□	□	□	□
OR	■	□[5]	□	□	□	□
PA	■	■	■	□	□	□
RI	■	□	□	□	□	□
SC	■	■	■	□	□	□
SD	■	□	□	□	□	□
TN	■	■	■	□	■	■
TX	■	■	□	□	□	■
UT	□	□	□	□	□	□
VT	■	■	□	□	□	□
VA	□	□	□	□	□	□
WA	■[6]	□	■	□	□	■
WV	□	□	□	□	□	□
WI	□	□	■	□	□	■
WY	□	□	□	□	□	□

1 At least 6 but not more than 12 semester hours.
2 Full time for 9 weeks.
3 Annual one-day workshops.
4 270 hours, with 180 in actual teaching.
5 Only 9 weeks have to be full time.
6 Clinical practice must consist of at least 450 hours in classroom settings.

Institutional compliance with selected state regulations is at best sporadic

What Florida requires	What Florida institutions in our sample require
A. "Clinical educator" training B. Must successfully demonstrate effective classroom management strategies that consistently result in improved student performance.	Two Florida institutions we reviewed (**Florida Southern College** and **Florida Gulf Coast University**) require "clinical educator" training (A) — but only the **University of Central Florida** requires both clinical educator training and effective classroom management skills (A, B).

What Kentucky requires	What Kentucky institutions in our sample require
A. Certification in appropriate areas B. Rank II certification C. Three years of experience D. Programs are also encouraged to consider: ■ Classroom management skills ■ Ability to model Best Practices in instruction ■ Content knowledge ■ Willingness to mentor and mentorship skills ■ Ability to use assessment to inform instruction ■ Appreciation of diversity	Neither of the two Kentucky institutions in our review (**Kentucky State** and **Murray State Universities**) mentions any state-mandated criteria for becoming a cooperating teacher other than type of certification (A, B) and years of experience (C).

What Maryland requires	What Maryland institutions in our sample require
A. Hold an advanced professional certificate B. Demonstrate knowledge of or training in adult learning theory and peer coaching techniques C. Demonstrate a knowledge base and skills to address the performance evaluation criteria and outcomes to be met by each mentee D. Possess a positive reference from a current or recent building principal or supervisor that addresses the instruction, management, human relations, and communication skills of the mentor applicant	The **University of Maryland, Baltimore County**, requires advanced certification (A). **Salisbury University** adds the requirement of mentoring skills (A, B); **Mount St. Mary's University** includes both those requirements and a principal reference (A, B, D).*

What Tennessee requires	What Tennessee institutions in our sample require
A. At least four years of full-time teaching experience B. Appropriate certification (licensure) C. Evaluation as a highly competent teacher through either local assessment and/or state evaluation procedures D. Willingness to assume the roles expected of a mentor (i.e., confidant, advocate, coach, and critic) E. Ability to work as a team member and facilitate learning experiences, including pedagogical instruction	**Tennessee Technological University** requires at least four years of experience and appropriate licensure (A, B). **Peabody College of Vanderbilt University** also requires a willingness to mentor (A, B, D).

* All student teaching placements in Maryland must be in "professional development schools," but faculty in these schools are not screened at hiring and therefore do not differ in their characteristics from faculty at any other school. http://www.ate1.org/pubs/uploads/nfdfstds.pdf

International comparisons

Much can be learned about how to improve teacher preparation from other countries, especially those whose students outperform our own. However, beyond indicating that the length of student teaching varies considerably in other countries, from as few as three up to as many as 80 weeks, international studies of student teaching in particular[26] shed little light on how the experiences are governed, supervised or evaluated. The one common feature appears to be some involvement of an experienced classroom teacher and university supervisor. Moreover, it is difficult to learn much from international examples of student teaching arrangements without considering the full continuum of pre-service coursework, fieldwork and in-service development. For example, Japan has a long and intensive induction experience for new teachers that makes it difficult to compare in isolation the average 10-week student teaching experience in the United States to the average 3-week experience in Japan.

In Finland, whose educational system is popularly compared to that of the United States, teacher candidates (all of whom are graduate students) engage in a full year of clinical experiences in training schools associated with a university (whose staffs have proved themselves competent to work with student teachers) serving hundreds of teacher candidates at any one time.[27] For example, a total of about 800 teacher candidates are trained annually in the 990-pupil Norssi School, affiliated with the University of Jyväskylä's teacher preparation program. Again, with the clear caveats that it is difficult to assess clinical experience in isolation and that the United States does not have much in common either with Finland's elite teacher preparation programs or its K-12 education system, this concentrated form of clinical experience may recommend itself as a means to afford significant assurance of standardization and quality control.

Why new standards for student teaching are needed

Teacher education's largest national accrediting organization, NCATE, along with one professional association for teacher education, the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE), each have a set of standards for clinical experiences, including

26 Wang, A. H., Coleman, A. B., Coley, R. J., & Phelps, R. P. (May 2003). *Preparing teachers around the world*. Princeton, NJ: Policy Information Report, Educational Testing Service.

27 Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Steady work: How Finland is building a strong teaching and learning system. In L. Darling-Hammond, *The flat world and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University. http://www.annenberginstitute.org/vue/pdf/VUE24_Darling.pdf. Gamerman, E. (2008, February 29). What makes Finnish kids so smart? *The Wall Street Journal*. http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=58880. Sahlberg, P. (Summer 2011). Lessons from Finland. *American Educator*, 35(2), 34-38.

NCTQ developed a set of standards that would be sufficiently specific and objectively measurable, allowing institutions to be assessed on the quality of the design of their student teaching programs.

student teaching.[28] Two problems undermine the intent of both sets of these standards to define and identify quality.

First, neither NCATE nor ATE standards provides sufficient guidance to ensure that programs that meet their standards are actually delivering strong student teaching programs. In nearly all respects, they suffer from imprecision, meaning that it is possible for almost any program to find that its efforts—however minimal—meet the standard and nearly impossible to judge objectively if a program does not. The table that begins on page 13 illustrates the problems, standard by standard.

Second, both sets of standards from NCATE and ATE encompass not only student teaching but all the field experiences and clinical practice that an institution provides. The scope of NCATE's standards is so broad it encompasses all types of teachers (those seeking initial and advanced certification) and school professionals. While there may be some merit in addressing student teaching as a part of a continuum of clinical practice, the approach fails to accommodate the unique features of student teaching itself, with the result that the guidance is inadequate.

As a consequence, NCTQ developed a set of standards that would be sufficiently specific and objectively measurable, allowing institutions to be assessed on the quality of the design of their student teaching programs.

NCTQ advisory group

In December 2008, NCTQ assembled an advisory group comprising exemplary teachers and administrators, teacher trainers, researchers and academics. (Members are listed in Section E of the Appendix.) They reviewed research on student teaching, case studies of a variety of clinical experiences offered by traditional and alternative preparation programs, state regulations on student teaching, existing standards for field experiences, information contained in student teaching course syllabi and handbooks and the nature of teacher candidate performance assessments. They met in person and then via electronic forum for two months to develop and refine what ended up being a set of 19 standards for student teaching that would accomplish two goals: 1) focus on the critical characteristics of the cooperating teacher and 2) clearly identify policies and procedures that can maximize the potential for the achievement of the goals of the student teaching experience. The standards reflect the findings of the Boyd et al. (2009)study on the features of student teaching that bear on teacher effectiveness, findings that were entirely in accord with the experiences of the advisory group members.[29]

28 NCATE's standard can be found at http://www.ncate.org/Standards/NCATEUnitStandards/UnitStandardsinEffect2008/tabid/476/Default.aspx#stnd3. ATE's standard can be found at http://www.ate1.org/pubs/uploads/nfdfstds.pdf. The ATE standards are only advisory but were approved at the February 1999 Delegate Assembly.

29 Boyd et al. (2009).

The complete set of 19 standards are listed below and contrasted with current teacher education associations' standards for student teaching. (The indicators used to evaluate each standard are laid out in Section F of the Appendix.) Note that the first five standards (highlighted in the table) constitute the critical standards on which all 134 institutions in the review were evaluated.

Comparison of standards for student teaching: NCTQ, NCATE and ATE

Areas	**NCTQ** Standards for Student Teaching	**NCATE** – The largest accrediting body for teacher education. Standards 3 and 5*	**Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)** Standards/Indicators**
Length of placement; nature of commitment	1. The student teaching experience, which should last no fewer than 10 weeks, should require at least five weeks at a single local school site and represent a full-time commitment.	No standard	No standard
Role of teacher preparation program in selection of cooperating teacher	2. The teacher preparation program must select the cooperating teacher for each student teacher placement.	The institution and school partners "jointly determine the specific placements of student teachers."	School-based teacher educators are collaboratively chosen by campus-based educators and school administrators.
Qualifications of cooperating teacher	3. The cooperating teacher candidate must have at least three years of teaching experience. 4. The cooperating teacher candidate must have the capacity to have a positive impact on student learning. 5. The cooperating teacher candidate must have the capacity to mentor an adult, with skills in observation, providing feedback, holding professional conversations and working collaboratively.	Clinical faculty (higher education and school faculty) are licensed in the fields that they teach or supervise and are master teachers or well recognized for their competence in their field.	Each teacher candidate works under the direct guidance of a school-based teacher educator who is able to serve as a professional role model, mentor and coach. School-based teacher educators are selected based on experience, quality of instruction and other relevant criteria developed by campus-based and school-based educators.
Qualifications of teacher candidates for student teaching	6. Student teaching is part of a rational sequence of coursework that ensures that all methods coursework and practica precede student teaching.	No standard	The program has systematic procedures for assessing the readiness of teacher candidates to progress in the program and to enter the teaching profession.
Expectations for student teaching experience	7. Written expectations for competencies on which student teachers will be evaluated are clearly communicated to student teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors. 8. Written expectations for competencies include the student teacher's analysis of student achievement using informal and formal assessments.	Candidates develop and demonstrate proficiencies that support learning by all students as shown in their work with students with exceptionalities and those from diverse ethnic/ and socioeconomic groups in classrooms and schools.	No standard

* Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice; Standard 5: Faculty Qualifications, Performance and Development.

** Standards/Indicators for Field Experiences in Teacher Education.

Schedule for observations by supervisor	9. The university supervisor should observe the student teacher's delivery of instruction at least five times at regular intervals throughout a semester-long experience. 10. Each observation should be followed by time for conferencing with written feedback aligned with identified competencies.	No standard	Teacher candidates receive verbal and written feedback on a continuous formative and summative basis regarding progress in demonstrating professional learning in relation to explicitly stated program and course outcomes. The experience is designed with regularly scheduled times for conferences among the teacher candidate, school-based teacher educator and campus-based teacher educator. Performance-based feedback and assessment procedures incorporate multiple procedures such as professional portfolios, self assessment and peer assessment. Teacher candidates, school-based teacher educators and campus-based teacher educators communicate with one another in some way at least once a week.
Culminating projects	11. The student teaching experience should include a graded, culminating project that explicitly documents the student teacher's gains on the performance expectations that were communicated at the onset of the experience.	No standard	No standard
Alignment of student teaching placement with elementary school calendar	12. Particularly for student teaching during the fall academic term, the schedule for student teaching should align with the elementary school calendar, not the calendar of the teacher preparation program.	No standard	No standard
Activities during student teaching placement	13. The student teaching experience should include a gradual increase of student teacher responsibilities, with the student teacher first closely shadowing the cooperating teacher in all professional activities and then transitioning to a more independent instructional role with daily monitoring and feedback. This expectation should be laid out explicitly in guidelines provided to the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the supervisor. 14. The student teacher should be involved in a full range of instructional and professional activities.	Candidates are members of instructional teams in the school and are active participants in professional decisions. They are involved in a variety of school-based activities directed at the improvement of teaching and learning, such as collaborative projects with peers, using information technology and engaging in-service learning.	Field experiences incorporate opportunities for ongoing reflection on and analysis of teaching and learning, conditions of schooling and student development.

Selection of supervisors	15. The process for selection of the university supervisor should consider the supervisor's instructional knowledge. 16. The university supervisor candidate must have the capacity to mentor an adult, with skills in observation, providing feedback, holding professional conversations and working collaboratively.	No standard	Campus-based educators are well versed in knowledge and skills regarding teacher development, supervision, conferencing and assessment.
Evaluation for continuous improvement of cooperating teacher selection process	17. Cooperating teachers' adequacy should be evaluated by student teachers and university supervisors at the end of each semester. Data from these evaluations should be part of an established and regular review process to ensure that multiple perspectives on the student teaching experience are used to refine it and discontinue placements, if necessary.	No standard	Field experiences are assessed using a model that addresses realistic goals and objectives and promotes high expectations. Assessment is ongoing and used for program involvement. The model includes input from those involved in field experiences.
Evaluation for continuous improvement of school selection process	18. Schools in which student teachers are placed should be evaluated by student teachers and university supervisors at the end of each semester to determine their functionality—that is, whether the school is high-performing, safe, stable, supportive and collegial. Data from this evaluation should be part of an established and regular review process to ensure that multiple perspectives on the student teaching experience are used to refine it and discontinue placements, if necessary.	No standard	No standard
Selection of placements	19. Recognizing possible geographical constraints, the teacher preparation program should have criteria favoring placement of student teachers in elementary schools in which 1) they have an opportunity to teach children from low-income families and 2) there is an orderly learning environment.	Candidates develop and demonstrate proficiencies…in their work with students… from diverse ethnic/ racial, linguistic, gender, and socioeconomic groups in classrooms and schools.	Field experiences occur in sites characterized by school/campus collaboration. Field experiences occur with diverse student populations and in diverse settings.

Most notably, NCATE does not indicate any specific qualifications that the cooperating teacher should possess; the ATE standards do, but shy away from specifics. They state, for example, that the individual should be selected on the basis of "experience" but do not indicate how much experience should be required; they also state that the individual should be selected on "quality of instruction" but do not indicate how that should be determined.

Revealing other differences, neither NCATE nor ATE addresses how long the student teaching experience should last, whether it is appropriate or not for institutions to require student teachers to take coursework concurrent to the experience, or when student teaching should begin—that is, should it conform to the calendar of the institution or to the elementary school in which placements are made.

NCATE's standards do not draw a line in any area that would distinguish by some measure programs of high quality from programs of low quality. ATE does set one quantitative measure of quality on the subject of how often supervisors should be visiting their student teachers, stating that all of the relevant parties in student teaching should be in contact "in some way at least once a week."

NCATE's standards do not draw a line in any area that would distinguish by some measure programs of high quality from programs of low quality.

Findings

Finding 1: Institutions are routinely exceeding the capacity of school districts to provide a high-quality student teaching experience—and exceeding the demand for new hires.

Of the 186,000 new teachers graduating from traditional teacher preparation programs each year, 80,000 are elementary teachers, and presumably all successfully completed their student teaching requirement at a local elementary school.[30]

Two questions arise that challenge the wisdom of producing this number of new elementary teachers. The first is whether institutions are factoring in issues of supply and demand when deciding how many new elementary teachers to prepare, and the second concerns the capacity of the nation's elementary schools to adequately prepare the number of student teachers produced.

How many new elementary teachers are needed on average each year?

National data on teacher production indicates that *institutions routinely produce more new teachers each year than elementary schools need*. In other words, institutions are overproducing the number of elementary teachers that are needed, at the risk—we argue—of harming the quality of the preparation provided to their student teachers.

Looking at production and hiring data for teachers of all types, not just elementary, of the approximately 186,000 teachers produced by traditional programs each year, only about 77,000 are hired immediately after graduation, meaning that production is about 2.4 times the level of hiring for all teachers.[31]

186,000

new teachers graduate each year

77,000

new teachers actually take a teaching job

30 Calculated from 2010 Title II reports on 2008-2009 production from elementary gradespan traditional teacher preparation programs.

31 The 2010 Title II reports indicate that about 235,000 teachers were produced in 2008-2009 by both traditional and alternative programs, with 186,000 produced in traditional programs. Of the 235,000 produced, only 97,500 were hired immediately, from both traditional and alternative programs. We estimate hiring from traditional programs to be proportional to production from such programs. (Hiring data from *The Condition of Education 2010, Indicator 28: Newly Hired Teachers*, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/pdf/28_2010.pdf)

Given the popularity of elementary teaching tracks, the overproduction of elementary teachers is likely greater than 2.4, but we conservatively approach this problem as if ratios of overproduction are the same in all types of programs. While over-recruitment of new teachers has its place so that school districts can be selective about whom to hire, this ratio seems excessive and unhealthy for the profession—for example, training individuals for whom there is no likelihood of a job and/or training individuals who are allowed to fulfill all the requirements of a teacher's license but who have no intention of teaching. A healthy professional preparation program would be more sensitive to both laws of supply and demand and the integrity of the field.

Further, current overproduction does not seem to be ensuring against district shortages. For example, even in states such as Illinois in which there is a no statewide shortage of elementary teachers, some districts routinely experience difficulty finding new teachers. The origin of this problem lies not in the *availability* of certified professionals, but in the *relative undesirability* of some districts as places to work because they are in remote areas or serve a large number of disadvantaged students. Solving this sort of shortage problem requires a district-level solution. Preparing several times more teachers than the market needs—with the hope that it will yield one teacher willing to go to work in an undesirable location—is not the answer.

How many elementary teachers are qualified to serve as a cooperating teacher?

For classroom teachers to serve as cooperating teachers, three qualifications are indisputable:

a. They must have been in the job long enough that they, too, would not be considered novices;

b. They must be worthy of emulation, meaning that they must be instructionally effective teachers;

c. They must have the insight and ability to mentor another adult about the job of teaching.

Factoring in these three essential qualifications, we estimate the number of teachers in a typical elementary school of 25 teachers who are likely to qualify:

- **Experience**. Nationally, about 17 percent of teachers have 0 to 3 years of experience[32] and another 8 percent of all teachers in any given school taught in another district the previous year.[33] Putting this information together means that there are likely no more than 80 percent with the three or more years of experience necessary who are "known quantities" to the principal.

  In our hypothetical school, that means 20 of the 25 teachers pass the first screen.

- **Effectiveness**. For this criterion, there is a question of how effective is effective enough to entrust a classroom teacher with this important duty. It is easy to agree that teachers who are below average (<50th percentile) should not qualify, eliminating at least 10 more teachers. However, we assert that it is indeed imperative that teacher candidates see a professional of not just average but of *high* caliber in action to know the true limits of what is possible in the classroom.

  This sensible standard allowing only teachers who are clearly better than average (>75th percentile) eliminates 15 of the remaining 20 teachers qualifying, leaving only five teachers in the pool.[34]

32 Keigher, A., & Cross, R. (August 2010). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2008-09 teacher follow-up survey* (Table 2). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Department of Education.

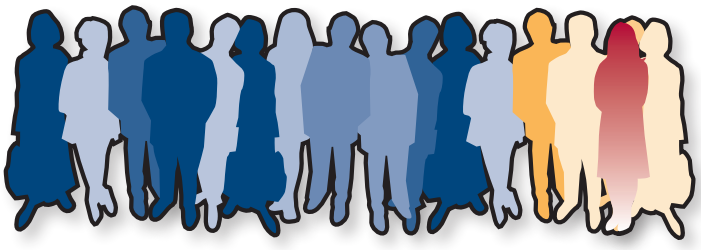
33 Keigher, p. 3.

34 We know from many studies of teachers using value-added measures that only 15 percent of all teachers clearly stand out among their peers, producing as much as 1.5 years' grade level equivalent growth in a single year. Setting the bar this high for a cooperating teacher's performance is likely unrealistic if institutions are to meet the demand for new elementary teachers.

How many classroom teachers does it take to yield ONE qualified and willing cooperating teacher?

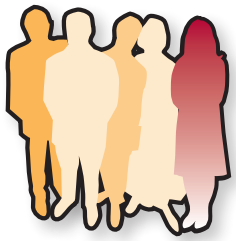
A FACULTY OF 25 TEACHERS

5 teachers with insufficient experience



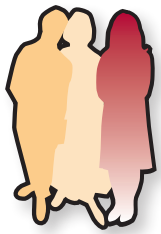
20 sufficiently experienced teachers

15 instructors who are not sufficiently effective



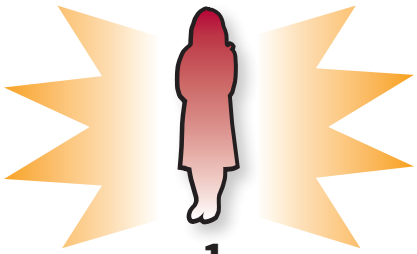
5 effective instructors

2 teachers who are not capable adult mentors



3 effective *and* capable adult mentors

2 qualified but unavailable or unwilling teachers



1
qualified and willing cooperating teacher

Teachers who agree to take a student teacher are matched with whomever. We are close to the university so we get saturated with requests.

– Principal comment

- **Mentoring ability**. Not all effective teachers will also be good adult mentors. On this measure, no research indicates how many teachers have the necessary skills in observation, providing feedback, holding professional conversations and working collaboratively. Though there is no real data that lets us know how many teachers might make good mentors, we can look to the experience of the New Teacher Center, which has trained over 5,000 mentor teachers since 1998.[35] The center estimates that somewhat over half of all effective teachers have the potential to be good adult mentors. Going to the outer limits of that estimate, let's assume that 60 percent of effective teachers might be good mentors.

  A liberal application of the New Teacher Center guidance means that only three of the five remaining teachers would likely make good mentors.

In sum, a reasonable (and optimistic) estimate of the average number of qualified cooperating teachers in a school of 25 teachers is three qualified teachers, approximately 12 percent in any given school.

That estimate is a far cry from the current reality of the number of teachers in schools we typically encountered serving as cooperating teachers. Our survey of principals in schools that accepted student teachers found a much higher rate of six cooperating teachers, double the number likely to be well qualified.[36]

There is yet another important fact or to consider, one that has as dramatic an impact on the number of teachers who are available as do the necessary qualifications: Are the teachers who are most qualified to be cooperating teachers also *willing* to take on this role?

- **Willingness**. No one *has* to become a cooperating teacher. In fact there is little incentive to do so, certainly not for the nominal stipend of $250 (and frequently less) that is typically provided. Many teachers are reluctant to be cooperating teachers because it is not only a challenging job when done well, but it also means by definition handing over valuable instructional time to an amateur. The very teachers with whom one would want student teachers placed can be more reticent than the average teacher to become a cooperating teacher. Even with increased public recognition and/or remuneration, it is probably overly optimistic to assume that the typical qualified teacher would volunteer to take on a student teacher for one semester every year or even every other year. It is more credible that in any given year there might only be one out of three qualified teachers who would be available to mentor a student teacher, a rather daunting ratio of total classroom teachers to a qualified and willing cooperating teacher of 25:1.

$250

Average stipend given to a cooperating teacher

35 http://www.newteachercenter.org/index.php

36 This average represents reports from 127 principals in whose schools student teachers from institutions in this review and other institutions in the area placed student teachers.

It is likely that only one teacher in a school of 25 teachers is qualified and willing to serve as a cooperating teacher at any one time, about 4 percent.

While cooperating teachers deserve to be paid more, non-monetary rewards are also important. For example, many universities offer tuition credits to cooperating teachers. The **University of Texas at Austin** found that two strategies pay off: 1) providing mentorship training for cooperating teachers; 2) inviting their best cooperating teachers to join committees that design field experiences.

National estimates

Using the same estimates that we just used at our hypothetical elementary school, but with a national perspective, the nation's 1.5 million elementary teachers would yield about 200,000 who are *qualified* to serve as cooperating teachers. But assuming that each qualified teacher will not volunteer to be a cooperating teacher for a semester every year or every other year, and instead will do so every third year, the pool would need to be greater by at least 40,000 to place appropriately 80,000 student teachers in any given year—without considering the simple fact that neither higher education institutions nor elementary schools are evenly distributed around the country. Many institutions are located in rural areas where there are too few elementary schools, and there are also many located in highly congested areas, all having to compete for limited spots.

Our estimates also do not factor in the importance of student teachers working in high-performing schools serving students in poverty.[37] Roughly one-third of the nation's teachers work in schools with poverty rates of 50 percent and higher.[38] With the very optimistic assumption that one-quarter of such high-poverty schools are high performing and that half (rather than one-quarter) of the teachers in these high-performing schools are highly effective instructors, only 34,000 qualified cooperating teachers work in such schools. Again, if each of those 34,000 teachers were willing to serve as a cooperating teacher for a semester only once every third year, their number falls about 200,000 short to provide the 80,000 student teaching placements needed each year.

40,000

estimated annual shortage of qualified cooperating teachers

37 Ronfeldt, M. (April 30, 2010). *Where should student teachers learn to teach? Effects of field placement school characteristics on teacher retention & effectiveness* [online abstract] (http://www.stanford.edu/group/irepp/uploads/WhereLearnToTeach 30Apr2010.pdf) provides some evidence that student teaching in high-needs, high-performing schools was most effective in producing student achievement gains after student teachers became teachers of record.

38 U.S. General Accounting Office (June 2000). *Title I Program: Stronger accountability needed for performance of disadvantaged students* (p. 15). Washington, DC: Author.

Finding 2: While the basic structure of many student teaching programs is in place, too many elements are left to chance.

Student teaching is an intellectually and physically taxing apprenticeship. It requires that candidates are adequately prepared to even take on the apprenticeship, that their gradual initiation into the classroom is carefully managed and monitored, and that there are no other competing academic demands on candidates' time and attention.

Student teaching is also perhaps the most complex undertaking of any aspect of the institution's teacher preparation program. On the program side, it involves teacher candidates, staff to administer the program, faculty, and part-time supervisors under contract who agree to visit the student teacher. On the school district side, school principals are involved, and there is a need for a cooperating teacher for every student teacher. The endeavor is made all the more complex for the institution because its student teachers may be assigned to many different schools, often in multiple school districts.

A number of our standards address the structural soundness of the student teaching program, the logistics, so to speak. Assessing institutions against these measures, we found that the majority of institutions attend to the logistics of their programs, but not uniformly.

In our sample of institutions:

99%

require full-time student teaching

91%

prohibit extra coursework

Virtually all student teachers are on site for the full school day.

All but one of the 134 institutions ensures that students have a full-time rather than a part-time student teaching experience.

Most institutions require that student teachers are not distracted by other obligations.

While being on site the full day is one hallmark of a well-structured program, another is that the student teachers focus only on the experience at hand, without having to take additional coursework. All but a small number of programs appear to prohibit student teachers from taking any other coursework while student teaching.[39]

39 In a closer look at 32 institutions in the sample, 91 percent prohibit such coursework. Whether placement is for the full school day was used as one of the indicators for assessing an institution's performance on the first standard's requirement that student teaching is a "full-time commitment." The issue of whether coursework was taken concurrently was dealt with in evaluation of Standard 6, which requires that all coursework be completed before student teaching begins. In NCTQ's national review standard on student teaching, "full time" is construed to mean that the student teacher is not allowed to take any concurrent coursework with the exception of a complementary seminar.

Student teachers spend a sufficient time in the classroom.

All of the institutions reviewed require at least 10 weeks of student teaching.

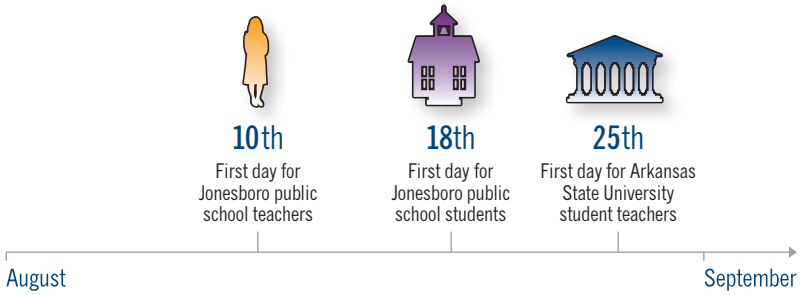
Most student teaching experiences are generally comprehensive and are aligned with the elementary school's calendar.

To the extent possible, student teachers need to experience a full range of professional responsibilities and the rhythm of the school year, particularly the start of the school year when the student teacher can observe how critical routines and procedures are established. Most (75 percent) of the institutions evaluated on all standards require that their student teachers participate in the full range of responsibilities expected of a teacher.

> Institutions should require, as the **University of Central Florida** does, that student teachers participate in staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences, student support meetings, lunch duty and every other part of a teacher's day.

However, about a third align the student teaching experience to their own institutional calendars, not the school district's, so that the student teacher may arrive well after the start of each semester of the school year. The figure below illustrates the time lag for fall placements for one institution's student teachers.

Student teachers often miss the first critical days of elementary school



As is true for one-third of the institutions evaluated on all standards, student teachers at Arkansas State University begin their student teaching placements well after the school opens its doors to its teachers and students.

Commendably, there were a number of programs that require student teachers completing their experience in the spring (when the majority of teacher candidates do student teaching) to experience the start of the school year, spending at least a few days in an elementary school during its fall opening. We noted this requirement at **Indiana University-Purdue University**, the **University of North Carolina-Charlotte** and the **University of Alaska-Anchorage**.

In our sample of institutions:

100%

require 10 weeks of student teaching

75%

ensure that their student teachers share all of their cooperating teachers' responsibilites

68%

require their student teachers to be present on the first day of school

In our sample of institutions:

75%

require student teaching to take place near their campus

A significant number of student teachers are not supervised by their own institution.

Some student teachers are not adequately supervised because they are allowed to complete their student teaching elsewhere. A quarter of the 134 institutions reviewed allow teacher candidates to complete their student teaching abroad or in distant urban areas. Valuable as foreign or urban teaching experiences may be (and there appears to be considerable variation in the nature and merit of these experiences),[40] they should complement, not supplant, "local" student teaching. Even if these placements are supervised by institution faculty in a satellite arrangement, they may prevent teacher candidates from practice teaching within the instructional frameworks used by the state in which they will be licensed.

We were able to obtain more detailed information about student-teaching-abroad programs at only a few of the institutions at which it is an option. It appears that many such institutions have only a few teacher candidates choosing to student teach abroad, but we did find significant numbers at several of the institutions. For example, the **University of Northern Iowa** has about 60 teacher candidates (of 260), and **Western Washington University** has about 20 (of 70) who study abroad each year.

Mansfield University of Pennsylvania permits international student teaching only after half a semester of local student teaching and the **University of Alaska-Anchorage** offers a rural placement in addition to two months of student teaching near Anchorage. Other universities arrange international student teaching during summer or other breaks.

To ensure that even distant student teaching placements that complement "local" student teaching placements have the same high quality as placements closer to home, some institutions have partnered with remote schools and districts or created their own satellite programs. **Northwestern State University of Louisiana** has partnered with Chungnam Province, South Korea, to create an international student teaching experience supervised by the university that complements an in-state program.

40 The most commonly used commercial program appears to be Educators Abroad Ltd. (http://www.educatorsabroad.org), which places 200 student teachers annually in 791 host schools around the world. The organization specifies that it assigns the participant to classrooms and cooperating teachers "consistent with program requirements" and provides a supervisor who will visit the candidate for as little as one full day in a 10-week placement.

Finding 3: Institutions lack clear, rigorous criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers—either on paper or in practice.

While nearly all of the 134 institutions set some criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers, most often these criteria do not address either the need for these teachers to be effective instructors or to be good at mentoring.

- Four out of five institutions establish that a cooperating teacher must have some number of years of experience, usually defined as three.
- Even under a generous interpretation of the language used by institutions to describe the qualities of an "effective" teacher, only 28 percent of institutions require cooperating teachers to be effective instructors.
- Even under a generous interpretation of the language used by institutions to describe mentoring skills, only 38 percent of institutions require cooperating teachers to possess the qualities of a good mentor.

Oklahoma State University asks for cooperating teachers who demonstrate "effective teaching as evidenced by student achievement," **Western Washington University** requires that cooperating teachers "[e]xemplify excellence in teaching by demonstrating a positive impact on student learning" and **Southern Connecticut State University** requires that a cooperating teacher must be "an excellent teacher who has a positive impact on student learning." In contrast, many other institutions only ask for "successful teaching." Institutions that are less explicit may have a clear picture of what "successful teaching" looks like, but, our surveys reveal that school administrators who read this phrase may think differently.

In terms of specificity with regard to mentoring skills, **South Carolina State University** provides a good example: Its "Criteria for Selection of Cooperating Teacher" requires that cooperating teachers have "the ability to accurately evaluate and communicate with teacher candidates" and have taken a course in supervision.

In our sample of institutions:

82%

require cooperating teachers to be experienced

28%

require cooperating teachers to be effective

Q: How do you screen new cooperating teachers?

Field placement coordinator response:

We take them on the basis of good faith effort.

Since the school and the university are 80 miles apart, they don't really know the staff well. I just gave them the name of the cooperating teacher I had selected and that was it.

– Principal comment

54%

of principals we surveyed report that the institution they partner with has no criteria for the quality of the cooperating teacher

Institutions' criteria for selection of cooperating teachers

Only 14 percent of the institutions in the study select cooperating teachers who satisfy three important criteria related to experience, mentoring skill and positive impact on student learning.

Communication with schools

In addition to setting criteria, institutions must also ensure that their criteria are clearly communicated to principals and that principals understand them.

There was a clear correlation between principals' understanding of the institution's criteria and the institution having communicated those criteria in writing. As part of our interviews, we asked principals to explain what they understood to be the minimum requirements that prospective cooperating teachers must meet. Principals were most likely to be able to describe institutions' criteria when they had received letters addressed directly to them that described these criteria.

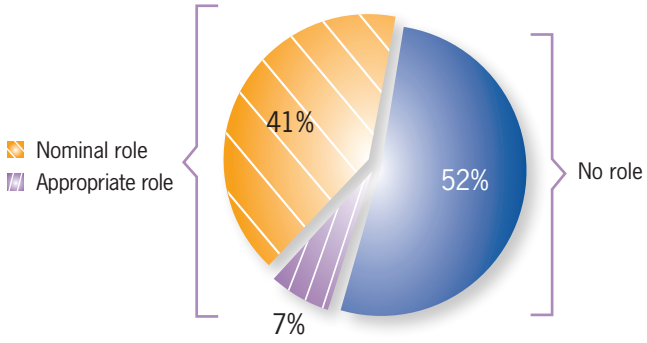
Largely because so few institutions appear to use written communications to convey their expectations,[41] our surveys of school principals showed that slightly more than half of principals have no idea if the institutions from which they receive student teachers have any specific standards for cooperating teachers other than a specific number of years of experience. A large percent of principals (41 percent) felt that the majority of their teachers were qualified to serve as cooperating teachers.

41 "Key Ingredients for Strong Student Teaching" at www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/studentteaching gives examples of letters to principals and potential cooperating teachers and contracts with school districts that clearly lay out minimum requirements.

Finding 4: Institutions convey a strong sense of powerlessness in their dealings with school districts.

The dependence of institutions on school districts to provide student teaching placements creates an imbalance of power between school districts and institutions. Nowhere is the sense of institutions' powerlessness more apparent than in the fact that more than half of the 134 institutions have relinquished any role in the selection of the cooperating teacher.

The role of teacher preparation programs in choosing cooperating teachers



Only 7 percent of the institutions play an appropriate role, requiring the cooperating teacher to have at least three years experience, mentoring skills and a positive impact on student learning.

Even when institutions claimed that they played a role in the selection of cooperating teachers, review of documents and surveys of principals in the schools where they place student teachers told another story. While most institutions (75 percent) stated that they played a role in the selection process, our review indicates that for 52 percent, their role does not go beyond occasionally rejecting a cooperating teacher who had previously received negative feedback.

This problem is, of course, aggravated by insufficient quality control measures for who is allowed to enter a teacher preparation program in general and student teaching in particular, as well as the routine overproduction of elementary teachers. Both feed a vicious cycle: Institutions fear that asserting their critical role will only make it that much harder to get schools to agree to accept student teachers. Some institutions had clearly articulated protocols but told us in interviews that they do not use them consistently—enforcing certain criteria in one school district, for example, but not in another—for fear of putting pressure on the school districts that supply much needed cooperating teachers. Other institutions have said that they would like to

Q: What criteria are used to select cooperating teachers?

Responses from four principals:

- *They let me chose who I want.*
- *Teacher candidates come to the building and request placements… Sometimes it is like they are begging for a placement.*
- *I don't select. Our central office personnel keep track of who has taken the required coursework for this and they assign on the basis of grade level requests by student teachers and availability of supervising teachers.*
- *We really run the show. The university doesn't give us any information beyond what placement they are looking for.*

strengthen their requirements for cooperating teachers, but have chosen not to because stronger requirements would drive away potential cooperating teachers. One teacher educator commented that he had to take every cooperating teacher he could get, no questions asked.

Both **West Virginia Wesleyan College** and **Vanderbilt University** identify good cooperating teachers and suggest them to principals, who generally approve them, accommodating districts' requirements that principals approve cooperating teachers. Other examples: Starting this year, **Northwestern State University of Louisiana** requires that principals' letters of recommendation address the cooperating teacher's effectiveness in promoting student achievement. The **College of William and Mary** asks cooperating teacher candidates to fill out an application in which they answer a series of questions about their strengths and also requires principals to rank potential cooperating teachers' skills on a scale of one to five. **Delaware State University** asks principals to fill out a recommendation form that rates potential cooperating teachers on a number of criteria, including mentorship skills and ability to produce student learning.

A dean's response to NCTQ standards:

We're supposed to demand that the districts give us their [teacher] evaluations so that we can make the right choices of where we're going to place people.

I've got to tell you, we're all having a dog of a time finding placement sites now …We're really struggling. So perhaps we're setting standards, even well intended ones…that are impossible for anyone to meet.

– Rick Ginsberg
Dean, School of Education,
University of Kansas

Comments made at the February 25, 2011, AACTE Annual Meeting

Whether or not they have various selection criteria, institutions most often appear to rely only on one quality control measure: refusing to enlist a particular cooperating teacher again who proved unsatisfactory. The percentage of cooperating teachers whom institutions newly vet by trial and error each year appears to range from as low as 10 to as high as 80 percent. Many institutions wait until the end of the semester to receive feedback on whether new cooperating teachers were deemed satisfactory—a practice that would appear to indicate that programs are willing to "sacrifice" some student teachers to a bad experience as the only real measure of quality control.[42]

Regrettable as this *ex post facto* selection method may be, it could be at least partially redeemed by a comprehensive method for gathering feedback from both supervisors and student teachers on the quality of the cooperating teacher. However, we found that systematic evaluation of the cooperating teacher by both is seldom conducted.[43]

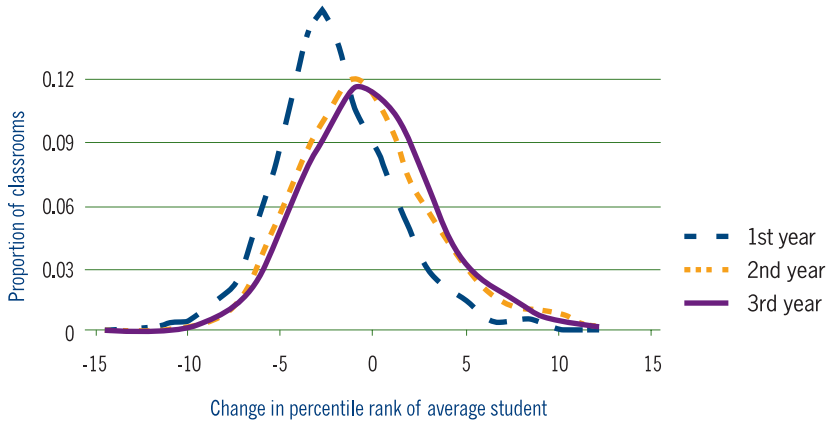
42 When we pressed programs on the wisdom of this practice, they often asserted that they would not hesitate to remove a student teacher from a classroom midway during the semester in the case of an irredeemably bad placement, presumably meaning that they are usually able to find another cooperating teacher. That practice, while occasionally necessary even in the best managed programs, is akin to making a silk's purse out of a sow's ear. It may at times be a necessary recourse, but mid-semester correction should never serve as the front line on quality control, given the impact it has on the student teaching experience.

43 Evaluations by both student teachers and supervisors of cooperating teachers were only conducted by one-third of the 32 institutions evaluated on the relevant standards.

Finding 5: Institutions do not take advantage of important opportunities to provide guidance and feedback to student teachers.

Because teaching is so difficult and novices are not well prepared for its challenges, first-year teachers are notoriously and almost uniformly weak. As the findings from a study below depict (consistently replicated in many studies), the majority of a novice teacher's students lose ground, making less than a year's worth of progress in the teacher's first year in the classroom.

Teacher impacts on math performance by year of experience



Source: Gordon, R., Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (April 2006). Identifying effective teachers using performance on the Job (Hamilton Project Discussion Paper). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

As shown in the figure, most first-year teachers actually negatively affect students, with second- and third-year teachers almost identical in their effectiveness.

The primary aim of teacher preparation programs should be to improve upon the overall performance of novices through better preparation. A study of New York City teachers found a correlation between the teachers who were most effective in the classroom and the degree to which their preparation program had focused on overcoming obstacles to success in the first year of teaching.[44] Our own analysis found little evidence that institutions provide student teachers with sufficient guidance and feedback to improve first-year performance.

Furman University holds orientations before the start of student teaching in which student teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors receive a comprehensive guide to the evaluation system.

Lake Superior State University provides a list of goals in the student teaching handbook that includes all of the objectives against which students are measured on formal evaluations. The same goals are used in the observation form, although individual objectives are omitted.

A study of New York City teachers found a correlation between the teachers who were most effective in the classroom and the degree to which their preparation program had focused on overcoming obstacles to success in the first year of teaching.

44 Boyd et al. (2009)

In our sample of institutions:

48%

require the supervisor to visit at least 5 times

26%

have the components necessary to adequately assess the student teacher

43%

require supervisors to be both effective teachers and mentors

Supervisors were not expected to visit and evaluate student teachers frequently.

We sought evidence that programs required supervisors to visit their assigned student teachers at least five times, translating into approximately one visit every two to three weeks, the rate the Boyd et al. (2009) study found to be effective. We also looked to see if supervisors were responsible for discussing with the student teacher what was observed, along with providing written feedback.

Slightly less than half of the institutions require that supervisors conduct visits at least five times, with some requiring as few as two observations over the course of an entire semester.

A significant proportion of institutions (30 percent) fail to require that the supervisor conduct a conference with the student teacher after each visit and provide written feedback.

When evaluations did occur, the quality of the instruments used was inadequate.

We looked for a collection of summative and formative evaluation forms used by cooperating teachers and supervisors that showed clear organizing principles and a degree of consistency and that also provided adequate feedback. Based on examination of a randomly selected set of such forms, clarity and consistency are quite rare. The table on page 31 illustrates the inconsistencies in one institution's set of instruments.

As is more fully described in Section G of the Appendix, evaluators, whether supervisors or cooperating teachers, use a variety of observation and evaluation forms that lack coherence as to what the student teacher is supposed to achieve. Even if they focus on the same broad goals, the indicators used in these forms tend to vary considerably in ways for which there is no apparent rationale and that prevent them from being used together to create a meaningful overall picture.[45]

Rubrics for evaluation of culminating projects required of student teachers did not provide feedback that is consistent with goals used for other parts of the experience.

Although virtually all of institutions require a final project, such as a teacher work sample, project guidelines and rubrics we reviewed routinely (74 percent) fell short. Instead of being designed to serve as assessments of the student teacher's progress against overall student teaching goals, final projects were more frequently graded on completion of each part of the project, or on a set of goals created just for the project. For example,

45 The results described in this section of the appendix reflect an in-depth analysis of instruments from a random sample of 15 programs chosen from the group of 32 evaluated on all standards.

the elements of **New Mexico State University**'s portfolio are graded primarily on their completeness, each part of **SUNY Courtland**'s portfolio is graded on a separate rubric whose goals are different from those used in student teaching assessments and **Florida Gulf Coast University**'s portfolio is focused on content knowledge.

Institutions fail to require the most relevant qualifications of prospective supervisors.

Just like cooperating teachers, university supervisors should have teaching and mentoring skills. However, despite their important role in evaluating student teachers and providing feedback, it does not appear that these skills are the primary focus for the selection of university supervisors. Most institutions list the qualifications for supervisors in terms of their number of years of teaching, regardless of actual performance.

Example of how student teachers are not evaluated on consistent sets of goals

		Goals laid out in the syllabus	Indicators used in the cooperating teacher's evaluation	Indicators used in the supervisor's observations	Indicator applied in the final evaluation
Lesson planning	Developmentally appropriate	X	X	X	X
	Variety of instructional strategies	X	X	X	X
	Meets needs of diverse learners	X	X	X	X
	Differentiates				X
Content	Accurate	X	X	X	X
	Broad			X	X
	Developmentally appropriate			X	X
	Engaging		X	X	
	Included in discussion				X
Assessment	Uses assessment				X
	Checks for understanding				X
Instruction	Pacing		X	X	X
	Logical sequence		X	X	
	Closure			X	X
	Effective questions			X	X
	Students know goals			X	
	Gains student attention				X
	Approachability				X

In this illustrative example from one institution, the topics on which student teachers receive feedback and evaluation simply do not track from the beginning to the end of student teaching.

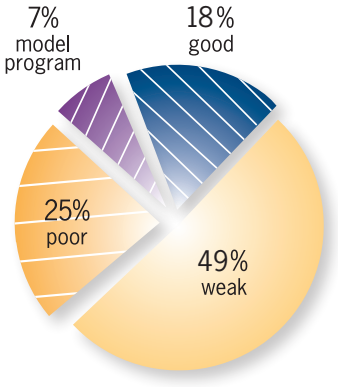
Institutional Ratings

As discussed earlier, all institutions in this review were rated on the first five and most important standards. Those five standards define the intensity and supervision of the experience, the required characteristics of the cooperating teacher and the means by which the institution selects the cooperating teacher.

We categorized the institutions as having "model design," "good design," "weak design" or "poor design" based on whether they passed or failed each of the first five standards.[46]

Most institutions we reviewed did poorly in the aggregate, with 25 percent falling into the most deficient category and 49 percent into the "weak design" category. Too many of the 134 institutions in the sample simply do not sufficiently define the roles and responsibilities of all parties or the coherent design necessary for this complex undertaking. Institutions having earned national accreditation were no more apt to offer high quality programs.[47]

Performance of all institutions on five critical standards



There were ten institutions (7 percent of the total) that stand out, particularly because they are categorized as having "model design." They constitute the small number that require that cooperating teachers are fully qualified and also actively participate in the selection of cooperating teachers.

We note in particular our findings regarding the two online institutions in our sample, the **University of Phoenix** and **Western Governor's University**. These universities performed below average on the first five standards of this review because they exercised very little control over the selection of cooperating teachers. Neither sets clear requirements for cooperating teachers beyond years of experience and appropriate certification, and both give principals full authority to select cooperating teachers. The University of Phoenix even encourages students to identify teachers with whom they would like to work. Western Governor's University reported to us that in the future, principals will be required to provide additional evidence of cooperating teachers' qualifications.

46 Standards 2, 4 or 5 are more heavily weighted. The process of weighting and categorization is described in Section C of the Appendix.

47 Of the 34 programs with poor design, we note that 26 have been awarded national accreditation by NCATE or TEAC.

The ten institutions categorized as having "model design" on the *first five standards* deserve commendation for specific strengths related to those and other standards: **Bridgewater College**, for being part of a consortium of universities that jointly set high standards and provide training for cooperating teachers, and also for placing almost a third of its student teachers in schools that are both high-needs and high-performing …**Cardinal Stritch University**, **Furman University**, the **University of Hawaii at Manoa** and **Wheelock College**, for playing a strong role in selection and requiring that cooperating teachers have strong instructional and mentorship skills.… **Colorado Christian University**, for offering an international student teaching program as a supplement to traditional student teaching requirements...**Lake Superior State University** and the **University of Minnesota at Morris**, for rigorous and very explicit selection criteria (e.g, cooperating teachers must "show high levels of instructional competence based on their positive impact on student learning for all students")…**Florida Gulf Coast University**, for both carefully screening cooperating teachers before selection and ensuring their post-placement evaluation by both student teachers and university supervisors…**Oklahoma State University**, for ensuring that its decisions about prospective cooperating teachers are fully informed by a detailed nomination by the principal.

Model Programs*

Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Cardinal Stritch University

Colorado Christian University

Florida Gulf Coast University

Furman

Lake Superior State University

Oklahoma State University

University of Hawai'i Mānoa

Wheelock College

* The University of Minnesota at Morris declined NCTQ's invitation to display its logo.

Performance of all institutions on five critical standards

State	Insitution	Rating
Alabama	Alabama A&M University	Weak
	Concordia College Selma	Weak
Alaska	Alaska Pacific University	Weak
	University of Alaska Anchorage	Weak
	University of Alaska-Southeast	Poor
Arizona	University of Arizona	Good
	Arizona State University West Campus	Weak
	University of Phoenix	Poor
Arkansas	Harding University	Good
	Southern Arkansas University	Weak
	Arkansas State University	Poor
California	California State University, Long Beach	Good
Colorado	**Colorado Christian University**	**Model**
	University of Northern Colorado	Poor
	Western State College of Colorado	Poor
Connecticut	Eastern Connecticut State University	Good
	Sacred Heart University	Weak
	Southern Connecticut State University	Weak
District of Columbia	University of the District of Columbia	Weak
Delaware	Delaware State University	Good
	University of Delaware	Weak
Florida	**Florida Gulf Coast University**	**Model**
	Florida Southern College	Good
	University of Central Florida	Good
Georgia	Brenau University	Good
	Georgia Southern University	Good
	Columbus State University	Poor
Hawaii	**University of Hawaii at Manoa**	**Model**
	Chaminade University	Weak
Idaho	Brigham Young University-Idaho	Weak
	Idaho State University	Weak
	Boise State University	Poor
Illinois	University of Illinois at Springfield	Good
	Northeastern Illinois University	Weak
	Chicago State University	Poor
	National-Louis University*	Poor
Indiana	Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis	Weak
	Purdue University Calumet	Weak
	Valparaiso University	Poor
Iowa	Luther College	Weak
	University of Northern Iowa	Weak
	Iowa State University	Poor
Kansas	Kansas State University	Weak
	Washburn University	Weak
	Tabor College	Poor
Kentucky	Midway College	Good
	Kentucky State University	Weak
	Murray State University	Weak
Louisiana	Louisiana State University	Weak
	Northwestern State University of Louisiana	Weak
Maine	Thomas College	Weak
	University of Maine at Machias	Weak
	University of Maine	Poor
Maryland	University of Maryland, Baltimore County*	Good
	Mount St. Mary's University	Weak
	Salisbury University	Weak
Massachusetts	**Wheelock College**	**Model**
	Bridgewater State University	Weak
Michigan	**Lake Superior State University**	**Model**
	Western Michigan University	Weak
	Hope College	Poor
Minnesota	**University of Minnesota at Morris**	**Model**
	St. Cloud State University	Weak
	Crown College*	Weak
Mississippi	Mississippi College	Good
	University of Southern Mississippi	Good
	Mississippi Valley State University	Poor
Missouri	College of the Ozarks	Good
	Missouri Western State University*	Weak
	Missouri State University	Poor
Montana	Rocky Mountain College	Weak
	Montana State University	Poor
	University of Montana Western	Poor
Nebraska	Creighton University	Poor
	University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Poor
	Wayne State College	Poor
Nevada	Great Basin College	Weak
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Poor
New Hampshire	Plymouth State University	Good
	Keene State College	Weak
New Jersey	Montclair State University*	Weak
	New Jersey City University	Weak
	Caldwell College	Poor
New Mexico	New Mexico State University	Weak
New York	CUNY Lehman	Weak
	New York University*	Weak
	SUNY Cortland	Weak
North Carolina	University of North Carolina-Charlotte	Good
	Wake Forest University	Good
North Dakota	Mayville State University	Good
	University of Mary	Weak
	University of North Dakota	Weak
Ohio	Youngstown State University	Weak
	Ohio University	Poor
Oklahoma	**Oklahoma State University**	**Model**
	Northwestern Oklahoma State University	Poor
	Oral Roberts University	Poor
Oregon	Linfield College	Weak
	Eastern Oregon University	Poor
Pennsylvania	Drexel University*	Weak
	Mansfield University of Pennsylvania	Poor
	West Chester University	Poor
Rhode Island	University of Rhode Island	Good
	Rhode Island College	Weak
	Roger Williams University	Weak
South Carolina	**Furman University**	**Model**
	South Carolina State University	Good
	Clemson University	Weak
South Dakota	Black Hills State University*	Weak
	Dakota State University	Weak
	Augustana College	Poor
Tennessee	Peabody College of Vanderbilt University	Weak
	Tennessee Technological University	Weak
Texas	University of Texas-Austin	Good
	LeTourneau University*	Weak
	Texas State University-San Marcos	Weak
Utah	Dixie State College of Utah	Weak
	Utah Valley University*	Weak
	Western Governors University	Poor
Vermont	Castleton State College	Weak
	Champlain College	Weak
	University of Vermont	Poor
Virginia	**Bridgewater College**	**Model**
	College of William and Mary	Weak
	Longwood University	Poor
Washington	Eastern Washington University	Good
	Western Washington University	Weak
West Virginia	West Virginia Wesleyan College	Good
	Marshall University	Weak
	Fairmont State University	Poor
Wisconsin	**Cardinal Stritch University**	**Model**
	University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	Weak
	University of Wisconsin-Green Bay	Weak
Wyoming	University of Wyoming	Weak

* We were unable to determine ratings for some standards for this institution.

Recommendations

The goals used in this study were chosen because they represent characteristics which are most important for a strong student teaching program. They synthesize advice gleaned from research, best practice, and the combined knowledge of our advisory group, and are themselves the most important recommendations we can offer.

In the course of this study, we've discovered that while many institutions nominally follow these goals, something is often missing in their execution. One university may check the qualifications of cooperating teachers from one school district, but not another. A second may set lofty goals for its student teachers, but not measure those goals in its evaluations. Student teaching programs that wish to improve their quality may find that consistency is their most important goal.

Many institutions have reported to us that the pressure of placing large numbers of student teacher candidates is one of their greatest obstacles to improvement. The additional recommendations which follow offer strategies to reduce this problem.

If a teacher candidate who is a poor prospect as a teacher gets as far as actually student teaching and nobody has said 'this isn't your bag,' it's the university's fault.

– Principal comment

Recommendation 1: Shrink the pipeline of elementary teachers into the profession.

We pay a heavy price for producing more than twice as many elementary teachers each year as the nation's public schools actually need.

Of greater consideration than the wasted resources is the impact this overproduction has on the ability to adequately train the next generation of teachers. With an estimated ratio of qualified and willing cooperating teachers of only 1 out of every 25, there are simply not enough high-quality classroom teachers available to serve as appropriate mentors to the next generation of teachers, particularly if we are serious about placing student teachers in high-performing schools serving children living in poverty.

While some students enter a teacher preparation program fully intending to become a teacher but then change their minds, there is another contributing factor in this overproduction that must be confronted: Education majors too frequently provide the least challenging major or the major of last resort for college students. The low to nonexistent academic bar for entry into all too

many teacher preparation programs means that students are accepted who have no serious interest in becoming a teacher and/or who meet no academic standard. Many institutions send mediocre teacher candidates into school districts for their student teaching experience, a practice that only aggravates tensions between school districts and institutions. School districts have a right to expect that the student teachers whom they are being asked to place in high-performing classrooms have demonstrated the potential themselves to one day be high performing.

State regulations and institutional policies should work in tandem to narrow the teacher candidate pipeline well before student teaching begins, primarily at the point of admission into a preparation program.

- Only applicants whose academic performance puts them in the top half of the college-going population should be admitted into a teacher preparation program.[48]
- To meet the new, more rigorous demands on content knowledge in the elementary grades due to the Common Core Standards, admission to teacher preparation programs should also be conditioned on content mastery. States should require that applicants pass all current content tests required for licensure, generally estimated to test content that is taught by 9th or 10th grade, as a condition for program admission, not program exit.[49]
- Evidence of the academic caliber of a teaching candidate should be necessary, but by no means is it sufficient. To ensure that teacher candidates have the ineffable qualities of a teacher, teacher preparation programs should condition admission on success in a lesson audition or performance assessment, adjusting appropriately to the young age and inexperience of the pool of candidates.[50]

The institution must guarantee a minimum level of quality of their student teachers, sending only those teacher candidates into the school district who are promising teachers.

A lot of institutions complained to us that they cannot be "pickier" about cooperating teachers because they have a hard enough time as it is recruiting these mentors. The problems they face may be reflecting schools' dissatisfaction with the general caliber of their student teachers. Institutions need to be able to convince schools that it is in their best interest to accept student teachers, as it means they will then be able to recruit them as capable teachers.

48 There is extensive research supporting higher admission standards based on correlations with student achievement of teacher verbal ability, the selectivity of the college the teacher attended, and whether the teacher passed licensing tests on the first attempt. Verbal ability has been measured many different ways, but it is most frequently measured on the SAT or ACT, performance on licensure tests and on simple vocabulary tests. See Ehrenberg, R., & Brewer, D. (1994). Do school and teacher characteristics matter? Evidence from high school and beyond. *Economics of Education Review*, 13(1): 1-17; Wayne, A., & Youngs, P. (2003). Teacher characteristics and student achievement gains: A review. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(1): 89-122; Winkler, D. (1975). Educational achievement and school peer composition. *Journal of Human Resources*, 10, 189-204; White, B. R., Presley, J. B., & DeAngelis, K. J. (2008). *Leveling up: Narrowing the teacher academic capital gap in Illinois* (IERC 2008-1). Edwardsville, IL: Illinois Education Research Council.

49 Given the lack of rigor of current tests coupled with the relative weakness of teacher candidates, cut-scores on current tests should be set no lower than the 50th percentile. This is the level now used only by Massachusetts, the leading state in student performance. The rigor of these tests should also be raised and cut-scores for each of the subjects covered (English/language arts, elementary mathematics, science and social studies) established. Massachusetts also leads the nation in this regard, with a separate licensing test in elementary mathematics.

50 Admissions screens would ideally go beyond these auditions to include ones that assess problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills that help to establish relationships, and the capacity to persevere in the pursuit of improved student outcomes.

- Candidates should be assigned student teaching placements only if they have shown—through their strong performance in rigorously evaluated education classes and field experiences—that they possess the knowledge and skills required to succeed as an apprentice teacher.
- In addition, institutions would find it easier to recruit cooperating teachers if potential applicants felt confident that the student teachers entering their classrooms would be well prepared. Cooperating teachers should therefore be given a chance to meet and interview their student teachers before placements are finalized, and cooperating teachers should have confidence that their concerns will be taken into account if the student teacher's performance is unsatisfactory.

While many institutions require only that teacher candidates prepare resumes and other application materials for review by school district personnel, the **University of Arizona** requires that student teachers be interviewed by cooperating teachers before placement. It also increases cooperating teachers' comfort levels with teacher candidates through an arrangement with a local school district that allows the teacher candidates to serve as substitute teachers in the semester before student teaching.

I look at our classes and see which classes are strong enough to have a student teacher, because if the student teacher ends up being weak, I don't want it to hurt the class.

– Principal comment

The institution should recommend for certification only the very best candidates.

- Teacher candidates should pass student teaching and be recommended for certification only if they demonstrate true readiness for the classroom as documented by evaluation instruments for which inter-rater reliability has been established.
- Given the understandable reticence of programs to push weaker candidates off the certification track just before or during student teaching, institutions should structure preparation programs to include at least a subject matter concentration (if not a major). This fallback option ensures that a teacher candidate who is struggling in student teaching can gracefully exit the preparation program and complete another degree in short order because she has accumulated sufficient credits in another area.

School districts should calculate the number of student teachers they can reasonably prepare each year for consideration by state agencies approving teacher preparation programs.

Because teacher preparation programs are relatively inexpensive, they are too often "cash cows" for their colleges and universities. Consequently, efforts to raise standards and reduce enrollment may face significant resistance. One possible counter to this resistance is sensible limits

They used to just rotate the student teachers among teachers in a building without principal input. Now principals are required to recommend quality teachers. However, I don't think that change came from the university, but from the district.

– Principal comment

from surrounding school districts on the number of student teachers that the district can take on and reasonably train. These limits on the number of student teacher placements based on the "clinical capacity" of districts in their environs should be considered by state agencies in their approval of teacher preparation programs. Providing that school districts and state agencies take the limits seriously, they might provide impetus to raise and align teacher preparation standards from admission through coursework and early field work.

As an example, the table below illustrates the rough "clinical capacity" of Chicago Public Schools elementary schools and contrasts it with local "clinical demand" based on the production of elementary teachers in Chicago.[51]

Clinical demand vs. clinical capacity in Chicago, Illinois

School District	**Clinical Capacity:** Estimate of annual number of qualified and willing elementary cooperating teachers*	**Clinical Demand:** Estimate of annual number of elementary student teachers in Chicago teacher preparation programs**
Chicago Public Schools	**400**	**1,335**

* Calculated using the 25:1 ratio discussed in Finding 1. The Chicago Public Schools employs approximately 10,000 elementary teachers.

** Aggregate 2008 elementary production as noted in 2009 Title II reports from the following institutions: Chicago State University, Columbia College, Loyola University, National-Louis University, Northeastern Illinois University, Roosevelt University, St. Xavier University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Elementary production as noted in 2008 Title II report from DePaul University.

Suboptimal student teaching arrangements work against a district's own best interests, since good student teaching serves both training and recruitment functions. As the complement to institutions establishing higher standards for student teachers, districts should also establish the expectation that they will accept for placements only teacher candidates whose preparation record predicts competence in student teaching and then only the number they feel they can reasonably train. Similarly, as a complement to institutions establishing higher standards for cooperating teachers, school districts can establish similar policies to guide principals. In fact, our surveys revealed that some principals and districts are already acting on their own to increase the quality of cooperating teachers, establishing more rigorous requirements for cooperating teachers than the universities providing the student teachers.

51 We note that the Chicago Public Schools has begun to implement a workforce planning strategy that includes a fine-grained assessment of the means to change its role in preservice training from one in which the district serves as a training ground for teacher candidates who then take jobs in the suburbs to one in which preservice training is a district recruitment tool for high-quality teacher candidates.

As the executive director of Washington State's Professional Educator Standards Board put it, the presence of preservice interns should be "a powerful part of the district's workforce planning and school improvement strategy—not just a courtesy placement for a student teacher in an amendable building."[52]

Recommendation 2: Institutions must make the role of cooperating teacher a more attractive proposition to classroom teachers.

While some cooperating teachers may abuse the student teaching arrangement to reduce their responsibilities, hosting a student teacher undoubtedly adds to the responsibilities and workload of those committed to doing it well. Yet if they are compensated at all, it is with a tiny stipend, no more than $250 and generally much less.

It would be difficult to pay cooperating teachers what they are really worth, but institutions must direct both more resources and higher prestige to boost the quantity and quality of cooperating teachers.

Changes discussed in the first recommendation, including raising the bar for entry into student teaching and providing cooperating teachers with assurance of the quality of students entering their classrooms, would also make being a cooperating teacher more appealing.

Just as "Teachers of the Year" are touted, programs might also publicize those selected through a rigorous cooperating teacher screening process as the consummate professionals they are. The **Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative**, discussed in the textbox on the next page, demonstrates the power of this and similar approaches to rewarding cooperating teachers.

The stipend for being a mentor teacher has not risen since I have been here (17 years), despite inflation. It would be nice if the cooperating teacher got compensated better.... It is a lot of work to supervise and very little financial benefit.

– Principal comment

52 July 16, 2010, email from Jennifer Wallace.

The *Exemplary* Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative — A model for the nation

Imagine a scenario in which principals deem a program's student teachers more effective than other teachers in their building who already have a few years under their belt… or one in which 80 percent of a program's graduates choose to teach in high-poverty schools. Such is the case with the Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative in Arizona, perhaps the finest example of a model student teaching program in the nation.*

Established in 2004, the Rodel Exemplary Teacher Initiative works closely with teacher preparation programs to pair about 100 carefully selected student teachers annually from the **University of Arizona**, **Arizona State University**, **Northern Arizona University**, **Grand Canyon University**, and **Scottsdale Community College**'s post-baccalaureate program with even more carefully selected, highly effective cooperating teachers working in 72 high poverty schools in 27 different Arizona school districts. The intention is to create a pipeline of capable teacher candidates into those schools for whom their initiation into teaching has had a proselytizing effect, convincing them that they can be successful teaching in the most challenging classrooms.

Screening student teachers:
Rodel demonstrates that potential cooperating teachers who are reticent to take on a student teacher for fear of the impact on their students' performance are more comfortable accepting a student teacher into their classroom when they are assured by a rigorous selection process of the prospective student teacher's academic achievement and competence in earlier field placements.

Screening cooperating teachers:
Rodel also employs cooperating teacher screening tools that go beyond any we've found, but that could be replicated on a larger scale. First, it identifies functional high-poverty elementary schools by checking which schools with 70 percent or more students in a free or reduced price lunch program have the highest levels of achievement. It then identifies the teachers at those schools whose students perform at the highest levels. For teachers who are also independently recommended by their principals, it conducts interviews (to ensure adequate mentoring skills) and classroom observations.

Recognition and rewards:
Rodel does offer special recognition and financial rewards that set it apart. Rodel graduates who continue working in high-poverty schools for three years receive a $10,000 savings bond; cooperating teachers who mentor for three years (working with six Rodel student teachers in that time period) also receive a $10,000 savings bond. Cooperating teachers are also rewarded by being highlighted in statewide media and honored at a banquet attended by education, business and community leaders. The cost of these rewards comes to about $5,850 per new teacher—not a bad investment given the return.

* We were so impressed by this initiative upon first hearing about it that we asked its architect, Rodel Charitable Foundation of Arizona President and CEO Carol Peck, to join NCTQ's Board of Directors.

Copies of exemplar materials relevant to these recommendations as well as additional materials developed by NCTQ can be found in the "Key Ingredients for Strong Student Teaching," at www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/studentteaching.

Conclusion

Traditional teacher preparation, considered in the aggregate, appears to add far too little value. Research has not found measurable benefits of teachers who are traditionally trained over ones who are not. School district superintendents often express dissatisfaction with the caliber of teachers coming out of many institutions, opting instead to hire teachers with little or no training. Traditional teacher preparation programs are increasingly derided by reformers and policy makers.

While traditional teacher preparation may be generally ineffectual, there are still programs that offer tremendous value, but outsiders can rarely discern which programs those are. Unfortunately, blanket comments on teacher preparation paint these excellent programs with the same broad brush as the mediocre and the just plain bad. Without better information about high-performing programs, their strong instructional strategies are unlikely to be widely replicated—or even noticed. In response, this report, like NCTQ's other reports on teacher preparation, showcases many best practices currently in use in institutions.

NCTQ advocates for improvements in both coursework and clinical practice that will deliver competent and confident novice teachers and prove that traditional teacher preparation can indeed add value. However, simply doing more of the same, particularly in the area of clinical practice, is not a solution. For that reason, suggestions ranging from lengthening student teaching to making clinical practice the centerpiece of the entire teacher preparation curriculum are in themselves insufficient. Rather than leveraging real improvement in candidates' professional capacities, these suggested changes could simply mean that more preparation time is spent unproductively. Instead, institutions need to substantially improve student teaching within its current structure, primarily by ensuring that smaller cohorts of more qualified teacher candidates are mentored by higher-quality cooperating teachers.

Our review revealed that institutions understand the importance of student teaching, but that they feel powerless to make it better. We do not dispute that teacher preparation programs currently can be at a disadvantage because they have to entreat school district personnel to accept student teachers. Exercising more quality control over who is admitted into a teacher preparation program and who is allowed to student teach can help alter this dynamic, as well as reduce the pressure created by the sheer volume of placements required.

Elementary education is in a period of rapid change: Teachers are being held to increasingly rigorous standards in more highly organized evaluation systems. Teacher candidates deserve student teaching programs that better prepare them for the profession—programs in which, for example, no student teacher is the unwitting "test case" for whether a cooperating teacher is right for the role or takes away little more in the way of feedback than cursory checklists from a few observations by a supervisor. This review suggests that such circumstances occur all too often today; it offers both overall standards and examples of real nuts-and-bolts policies that could ensure that all teacher candidates are instead given the best possible preparation to, in turn, give our children the best possible education.

This report is available online at
www.nctq.org/edschoolreports/studentteaching/report.jsp

National Council on Teacher Quality

1420 New York Avenue, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel: 202 393-0020 Fax: 202 393-0095
Web: www.nctq.org

The National Council on Teacher Quality advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers.

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