



College of Education

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Research Highlights of Current Faculty Projects

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Policy Brief: Transforming the Way Teachers Are Taught

Improving the quality of education has been a lifelong concern for Stanley Ikenberry. The former president of the University of Illinois and president of the American Council of Education (ACE) until June 2001, Ikenberry has now returned to the University as President Emeritus and Regent Professor in the College of Education. In 1998, he led the ACE President's Task Force on Teacher Education. Composed of college and university presidents and school leaders, Ikenberry's team studied how these institutions can lead the way in improving the quality of education. They collected information on teacher performance, best practices, the quality of students entering education programs, and teacher demand. This policy brief excerpts some key issues and Task Force recommendations, to which Ikenberry continues to devote time and energy.

What this report tells us:

The quality of teachers is determined by the quality of education colleges and universities provide. Six percent of public school teachers leave teaching annually. Teachers just beginning their careers and those who are at retirement age are more likely to leave the profession than those in mid-career. At least 275,000 currently employed teachers have not received adequate preparation in content, do not have state licenses, and have not graduated from a teacher education program. Through 2009, schools will need to hire at least 2.5 million new teachers. Although the academic capacity of prospective secondary school teachers compares to that of college graduates overall, that of prospective elementary school teachers is below average. Another dimension of concern is inadequate preparation for understanding and applying technology in teaching. Most institutions have insufficient facilities to prepare teachers in the use of computers for learning.

In order to attract, retain, and empower productive teachers, the professional environments in which they work need to change. Universities and colleges must take keener interest in preparing teachers—especially what and how they teach—and provide visionary leadership that can promote academic excellence from preschool to graduate school.

Recommendations to improve teacher education:

- ⇒ Review the quality of teacher education campus- and nation-wide;
- ⇒ Coordinate faculty and courses in education with those of arts and sciences programs;
- ⇒ Provide teacher education programs with adequate equipment, facilities, and personnel necessary to educate teachers in the use of technology;
- ⇒ Strengthen the inter-institutional transfer and recruitment process, especially for minorities;
- ⇒ Enroll more minority students in colleges and universities and recruit them into the teaching profession;
- ⇒ Make the profession a more attractive career choice by developing teachers' talents and providing incentives designed to retain high-performing teachers, especially in high-poverty schools; and
- ⇒ Create partnerships between schools, colleges, and universities to provide graduates with continuing support, mentoring, and monitoring.

For a complete version of the ACE report:

American Council on Education (1999). *To touch the future: Transforming the way teachers are taught*. Washington DC: Author.

We invite your response...

Lizanne DeStefano
Director
Bureau of Educational Research
217-333-8520
destefan@uiuc.edu

Elizabeth Grosshandler
Director
Research Opportunities Office
217-244-3564
bethgros@uiuc.edu

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