



Editor's Note: Wake-Up Call?



This month, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a scathing review of the quality of U.S. universities' teacher preparation programs and their admission standards, training and value. The study sifted through syllabi, textbooks and other material to analyze the design of education programs at more than 1,100 schools.

A four-star rating system was used to evaluate programs. Less than 10% received three or more stars, and only [four schools received four stars](#). The vast majority of schools received C's and D's.

The report, which referred to the U.S. education system as an "industry of mediocrity," was designed to urge institutions to reevaluate the skills and competencies that today's and tomorrow's educators need. The study's methods drew immediate, widespread criticism from universities, education associations and even some politicians.

My take is this: While the study's methods may be flawed, its findings should not be completely dismissed. The report has placed needed attention on an education system that needs significant reform—and dwindling dollars and cents may not be the only barrier in the way of reaching higher levels of achievement. The same week the NCTQ report dropped, a less-publicized report found that even though the [United States spends more](#) than other developed countries, its students still trail in international comparisons.

Time will only tell if NCTQ's report will be a watershed moment for the education sector. In the quality world, teacher preparedness is already on the radar and there's outstanding work underway. In this month's issue of the *ASQ Education Brief*, we'll hear from educators who took the stage at the [ASQ Advancing the STEM Agenda Conference](#) earlier this month at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. This issue highlights a number of papers presented at the STEM conference and showcases educators and schools tackling the issue of teacher preparedness head on:

- [“Using Assessments to Determine the Quality and Effectiveness of a Collaborative Internship.”](#)
- [“Intel Math Connections: A Three-year Study of the Impact of a Math-based Program on Elementary Teachers.”](#)
- [“Learning by Doing: A Case Study of a Clinical Model for STEM Teacher Preparation.”](#)
- [“Teachers 'n Training: Building Formal STEM Teaching, Efficacy Through Informal Science Teaching Experience.”](#)
- [“The Pedagogy of Science Teaching Test.”](#)

If you missed the conference, you're in luck: ASQ Education Division Immediate Past Chair Cindy Veenstra provided a [recap of the event.](#)

I hope you'll be inspired by what you read and will consider attending the STEM conference next year or join fellow education quality improvement professionals at ASQ's [National Quality Education Conference](#) this November.

What do you think about the NCTQ report or the quality of U.S. teacher preparation programs? Sound off in the recently renovated [ASQ Education Division online community](#) or email mschmidt@asq.org.