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# ASQ Higher Education Brief

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## Editor's Note: Ivory Tower Isolation

By Megan Schmidt, editor

As America's K-12 schools are busy implementing the Common Core standards to better prepare students for college, a new report found that a key stakeholder isn't ready for the changes to come: colleges and universities.

[The New America Foundation](#) found that “there is little evidence to suggest colleges are meaningfully aligning college instruction and teacher preparation programs with the Common Core standards.” Common Core is supposed to improve the college readiness of high school graduates. The report said, however, that “many [in higher education] are not even aware of the Common Core.”

One reason cited for the scant involvement of higher education is the huge variety of colleges and universities and the difficulty of defining what makes a student college ready. The report also said that “there is little or no pressure on colleges and universities to change their own academic practices to align with or incorporate these new standards ... even among educators who are genuinely invested in making these new standards and assessments work at the K-12 level.”



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This may not be surprise educators, especially those with a quality orientation. Higher education and K-12 are often viewed as—and operate as—separate entities, even though they function as part of a larger educational system. The roots of these silos run deep. Historically, educational change and standards-setting [is isolated within the K-12 or post-secondary education](#) environment.

Advocates of Common Core believe that national learning standards are mutually beneficial. They are a chance to eliminate costly and nonvalue-added remedial lessons by better preparing students to continue their education post-high school. Common Core is also an opportunity for K-12 and academia to evaluate and define what it really means to be college ready. More integration may ease the transition from classrooms to lecture halls.

This month, Mary Ellen Ledbetter, an award-winning educator, presenter and consultant for the Bureau of Education, in her article “Linked Learning,” said Common Core should be more far-reaching than its implementation in K-12.



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Considering the [college dropout rate is 53%](#) for the nation (only Hungary does worse) and there's a severe shortage of degreed workers in science, technology, engineering and math, it's time for K-12 and higher education to start working together.

## National Quality Education Conference (NQEC)

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Common Core is going to be one of the many topics examined at [NQEC Nov. 16-17 in Milwaukee](#). Are you attending NQEC this year? If so, email me at [mschmidt@asq.org](mailto:mschmidt@asq.org) and let's connect! If you can't attend or would like to learn more, [you can explore my coverage of last year's event](#). Watch for a summary of NQEC 2014 in the next issue of the ASQ *Education Brief*, as well as and videos released throughout the year highlighting education experts and practitioners that attended and presented.

November is also the month of another important event: World Quality Month. Access resources, a celebration guidebook and opportunities to share your quality story at [www.worldqualitymonth.org](http://www.worldqualitymonth.org).