

## The New York Times

September 19, 2006

Report Critical Of Training Of Teachers  
By ALAN FINDER

Most American teachers are trained in university programs with low admission and graduation standards, and with faculty members and courses that are often unimpressive and disconnected from what takes place in elementary and secondary schools, according to a study released yesterday.

Some education departments and schools should be shut down and others need vast improvement, said the report, "Educating School Teachers," released by the Education Schools Project, a research group.

"Teacher education right now is the Dodge City of education, unruly and chaotic," said the author of the report, Arthur Levine, the president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and the former president of Teachers College at Columbia University.

"There is a chasm between what goes on in the university and what goes on in the classroom," Dr. Levine said yesterday at a news conference in Washington.

Among other problems, he said, is that states and universities differ over how much education teachers need, what kinds of courses they should take and how much time they should spend as student teachers.

The report was based on surveys of alumni of education schools, deans and professors of education, and school principals, along with visits to 28 education schools.

Among its findings was that 54 percent of American teachers graduate from small universities that grant bachelor's and master's degrees, but not doctoral degrees. On average, students at these universities have lower high school grades and lower standardized test scores than students at research universities that award doctoral degrees.

The study determined that high school and grade school students taught by graduates of these less prestigious universities had smaller increases in their math and reading test scores than did students taught by graduates of more prestigious doctoral universities.

Arthur E. Wise, president of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, rejected what he called the elitism in the report and in Dr. Levine's

views. Most teachers graduate from regional state colleges and universities. They do not "spend over \$160,000 in four years, in order to prepare for a job that pays \$30,000 a year," Mr. Wise said.

Dr. Levine recommended that some teacher education programs at universities granting only bachelor's and master's degrees be dropped, and he proposed expansion of the teacher training programs at major research universities.

Dr. Levine's report also said teachers should be trained for five years, with four years in a traditional subject like English or chemistry and one year of learning how to teach. He suggested that education programs be refocused as professional schools.

Several critics said it would be impractical to shut down programs at less selective universities.

"We should not abandon the schools that produce the highest number of teachers," Sharon Robinson, president of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, said at the news conference. "Rather, we should focus on them."

Copyright © 2006 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted with permission.