



Schools of Education

Education majors are woefully lacking in academic skills. Here are some sample test questions for you to answer. Question 1: Which of the following is equal to a quarter-million? a) 40,000, b) 250,000, c) 2,500,000, d) 1/4,000,000 or e) 4/1,000,000. Question 2: Martin Luther King Jr. (insert the correct choice) for the poor of all races. a) spoke out passionately, b) spoke out passionate, c) did spoke out passionately, d) has spoke out passionately or e) had spoken out passionate. Question 3: What would you do if your student sprained an ankle? a) Put a Band-Aid on it, b) Ice it or c) Rinse it with water.



Guess whether these questions were on a sixth-grade, ninth-grade or 12th-grade test. I bet the average reader would guess that it's a sixth-grade test. Wrong. How about ninth-grade? Wrong again. You say, "OK, Williams, so they're 12th-grade test questions!" Still wrong. According to a Heartland Institute-published *School Reform News* (September 2001) article titled "Who Tells Teachers They Can Teach?", those test questions came from prospective teacher tests. The first two questions are samples from the Praxis I test for teachers, and the third is from the 1999 teacher certification test in Illinois. According to the *Chicago Sun-Times* (9/6/01), 5,243 Illinois teachers failed their teacher certification tests. The *Chicago Sun-Times* also reported, "One teacher failed 24 of 25 teacher tests — including 11 of 12 Basic Skills tests and all 12 tests on teaching learning-disabled children." Yet that teacher was assigned to teach learning-disabled children in Chicago. Departments of education have solved the problem of teacher test failure. According to a *New York Post* story (11/14/11) titled "City teacher tests turn into E-ZPass," more than 99 percent of teachers pass.

Textbooks used in schools of education advocate sheer nonsense. A passage in Enid Lee et al.'s *Beyond Heroes and Holidays* reads: "We cannot afford to become so bogged down in grammar and spelling that we forget the whole story.... The onslaught of antihuman practices that this nation and other nations are facing today: racism, and sexism, and the greed for money and human labor that disguises itself as 'globalization.'" Marilyn Burns' text *About Teaching Mathematics* reads, "There is no place for requiring students to practice tedious calculations that are more efficiently and accurately done by using calculators." *New Designs for Teaching and Learning*, by Dennis Adams and Mary Hamm, says: "Content knowledge is not seen to be as important as possessing teaching skills and knowledge about the students being taught.... Successful teachers understand the outside context of community, personal abilities, and feelings, while they establish an inside context or environment conducive to learning." That means it's no problem if a teacher can't figure out that a quarter-million is the same as 250,000. Harvey Daniels and Marilyn Bizar's text *Methods that Matter* reads, "Students can no longer be viewed as cognitive living rooms into which the furniture of knowledge is moved in and arranged by teachers, and teachers cannot invariably act as subject-matter experts." The authors add, "The main use of standardized tests in America is to justify the distribution of certain goodies to certain people."



Written by [Walter E. Williams](#) on January 25, 2012

Schools of education represent the academic slums of most any college. American education can benefit from slum removal.

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