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## Study: New teachers lack skills needed today

Jill Tucker, Chronicle Staff Writer  
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Fewer college graduates are becoming teachers in California, and those who do often lack the increasingly demanding skills needed when they get to the classroom, according to the newest research out of the Center on the Future of Teaching and Learning.

About 52,000 people were enrolled in teacher education programs in 2007, down by a third from 77,000 in 2001, according to the Status of the Teaching Profession 2009 report released today. Those who do become teachers are well versed in their subject matter, but often lack other critical skills to succeed, the researchers said.

"The job of the high school teacher has changed," said Margaret Gaston, president and executive director of the Santa Cruz-based Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning. "They're having to deliver instruction in a new way."

Yet teaching programs and teacher training haven't kept pace with those new demands on teachers, according to SRI International researchers who conducted the study.

To reduce the dropout rate and increase the number of students heading to college or the workforce, state reforms have pushed high schools to increase academic requirements, personalize and individualize the high school experience, and connect learning to the real world, according to the researchers.

For some high schools, that has meant adding career and technical academies or converting to small-school models with project-based learning - instruction requiring teachers to do more than stand in front of a class to explain the Industrial Revolution or Newton's laws of motion.

Almost 90 percent of the 247 public school principals surveyed for the study think most of their teachers know the content they need to teach - something that has greatly improved in the past several years, according to the study. But only half of those principals believe the teachers have the ability to incorporate real-world examples in those lessons - a number that drops to a third of principals in high-poverty schools.

In short, it's not enough for these teachers to simply know their stuff.

The report calls on the state to better align teacher education programs and support with the reality of a high school classroom in the 21st century. It also urges the state to invest in recruiting, retaining and training teachers to meet future workforce needs.

"In many high schools, teachers are expected to know and be able to communicate the real-world and career applications of their subject matter, either through direct industry experience or through some understanding of the industry area being emphasized," according to the report.

In other words: "It's about being able to reach the students," said Patricia Gray, former principal at San Francisco's Balboa High School and now the district's executive director of the Leadership and Equity Initiative.

The saying used to be: "Those who can't do, teach," Gray added. "It's not that way anymore."

For the full report, go to [www.cftl.org/whatsnew.php](http://www.cftl.org/whatsnew.php).