
NEW STRATEGIES

for Training Teachers

A Look at the Five-Year Teacher Education Programs

By Gerald F. Colvin

After reviewing the transcripts of more than 6000 students from 17 southern universities who earned baccalaureate degrees in 1982-1983, a commission of the Southern Regional Educational Board concluded that many education majors finished college without any exposure to the "important disciplines."¹

The commission recommended that colleges and universities prescribe acceptable general-education courses that *all* students must take. They also urged that institutions consider alternative approaches to teacher training, such as the master of arts in teaching for arts and science graduates.

A report of the National Commission on Excellence in Teacher Education (NCETE) and the Holmes Group Consortium of Deans, representing 26 major research universities, calls for extended teacher-preparation programs.² NCETE has proposed a stronger liberal-arts focus, subject area specialization, professional training, and an induction year.

A number of colleges and universities have already implemented extended teacher-prepara-

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tion programs. This article presents brief descriptions of four such programs, with follow-up reports and conclusions as they are available.

Allegheny College (Meadville, Pennsylvania)

Overview. The Allegheny College Extended Teacher Education Program is competency-based and field oriented, with students completing their bachelor's degree in a liberal-arts major.³ Professional training begins at the undergraduate level. It extends through the first year of teaching, when students receive continued supervision, and culminates in a Master of Arts in education.

The general-education requirements ensure the completion of a minimum of three courses each in humanities, social science, and natural science. Education prerequisites are met through such courses as general psychology, principles of sociology, developmental psychology, and a methods course in elementary or secondary education.

Fifth year. During the summer after graduation, each student takes three graduate courses—

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foundations, research practicum, and a preteaching workshop—toward certification and master's degree requirements. English majors usually complete the required course in developmental and remedial reading at this time. Other students elect a fourth course as part of their program.

Most master's degree candidates complete six courses, including fifth-year teaching, plus those required for certification. Electives are approved by the candidate's program committee. Students usually finish their work in the summer following the conclusion of fifth-year teaching.

The University of Kansas

Overview. The general-education requirement at the University of

Kansas Extended Teacher Education Program includes 60-plus hours of language arts, humanities, behavioral science, social science, natural science, and mathematics.⁴ Both secondary and elementary education majors must complete a minimum of 40 semester hours in one teaching major or two teaching minors.

Freshmen take a career-awareness course on the role of the teacher. Sophomores explore multicultural education and child study. No more than five semester hours of professional educational education are assigned to the lower division. Slightly less than half of the credits at the junior and senior levels fall in the category of pedagogy.

Fifth year. At the end of the senior year, students have earned approximately 132 semester hours. At this time they receive a bachelor's degree. Full admission to the fifth year, however, requires a grade-point average of 3.00 (2.75 for probationary admission).

The program is divided into three parts: student teaching during the first half of the fall semester; a school practicum during the final two-thirds of the second semester; and a period of graduate-level study sandwiched in between. At the end of the year students have earned 15 to 25 hours toward a graduate degree and generally are recommended for certification.

The University of Florida

Overview. Future teachers at the University of Florida earn both bachelor's and master's degrees before certification. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences awards a bachelor's degree in a specific discipline to students wishing to become secondary teachers. The College of Education awards a bachelor's degree in education to students training for elementary or special education.⁵

Students take four hours in social, philosophical, and historical foundations of education; two hours in mainstreaming; two hours in educational diagnosis and evaluation; two hours in learning and

cognitive processes; three hours (including one hour of clinical experience) in human development; and a noncredit course in educational media.

Those pursuing programs in elementary, early childhood, or special education also take three hours in interpersonal relationships/parenting and two hours in instructional computing. Elementary education majors complete two 12-hour areas of specialization, with at least one outside education.

Fifth year. Secondary education majors spend their fifth year in intensive, institute-like experience, with topics introduced in large groups, reemphasized in smaller subject-specific groups, applied in small-group practica, and refined in teaching teams. Elementary education majors earn 166 credits, while secondary and special-education teachers earn 160 credits.

The University of New Hampshire

Overview. Students in the five-year program at the University of New Hampshire normally begin professional courses in education as undergraduates. However, the school does not offer an undergraduate major in education.⁶

The first phase of the program—Exploring Teaching—places the student in a school as a teaching assistant. Professors evaluate this experience, plus seminar work, to determine the candidate's suitability for and interest in teaching.

The second phase (open only to juniors, seniors, and graduate students successfully completing Phase One) requires four credits in each of four areas: Educational Structure and Change, Human Development and Learning, Alternative Teaching Models, and Alternative Perspectives on the Nature of Education. Minicourses and experiences in local schools are available in these areas.

Fifth year. The third phase—or fifth year—usually includes a full school-year internship plus a summer or two of graduate work. Interns are placed in schools, with priority given to team arrangements. Resident supervisors receive assistance in supervision

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from intern coordinators. The graduate program involves a 12-credit concentration and electives from a variety of university programs. The university's department of education offers two master's programs specifically designed for the preservice teacher.

Admission to Phase Three depends on formal application to both the department of education and the graduate school. Acceptance by the education department depends heavily upon field work recommendations from Phase One and the candidate's assessed potential for graduate study.

Graduate school admission is based upon departmental recommendations plus an independent evaluation of recommendations, undergraduate record, and Graduate Record Examinations.

Follow Up

Allegheny College. About 300 students have completed the extended program at Allegheny College since 1964. Surveys conducted in 1978 and 1982 provided information regarding Allegheny's extended education program graduates in teaching from 1977 to 1981.

Public school administrators rated the classroom performance of the graduates as above average to outstanding. Blass and Dunbar emphasize the importance of commitment and cooperation in the program's success.

The educational administrators and faculty facilitate program changes, reinforce positive relationships with public school personnel, make field visits, and assist in program revisions and evaluations.

The liberal-arts faculty not only develops courses to support specific certification areas, but also encourages academically capable students to select teaching as a career. Public school personnel serve as adjunct faculty, supervis-

ing teaching experiences and assisting in program reviews and evaluations.

"The program's design has proven effective," claim Blass and Dunbar.⁷ They advise colleges and universities considering the transition to follow the Allegheny example in first defining basic philosophy, program goals, teaching standards, and existing resources, supporting an induction year.

The University of Kansas. Although the first class of students admitted under the new program was only in its fourth year in 1984-1985, Scannell felt that he could already report some tentative trends. Enrollment in the new program was encouraging. The students had better academic qualifications—both by grade-point average and ACT scores—than their counterparts in the four-year program. Administrators expect higher enrollments in the graduate-level courses than in similar courses in the past.

But abstract changes are always much easier to make than specific ones. Scannell says that

very little faculty opposition to the new program emerged from the early planning sessions. However, when the decisions began to infringe on established territories, when courses were to be deleted or modified, the resistance to change stiffened. . . . some faculty members are extremely reluctant to change anything at all.⁸

The University of Florida. No follow-up report yet exists on the PROTEACH development at the University of Florida. However, Smith et al., stress that the program has produced a more reliable, consistent, and useful knowledge base, associated with teaching and learning, than ever existed before. They argue that this knowledge must be included in preservice training in order for it to affect the performance of beginning teachers.

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We must recognize that teacher preparation programs *must* change. Neither the time allotted to teacher education nor its content is fixed. And we must also recognize that, if teacher educators do not see to the reform of teacher education themselves, external forces will surely do so.⁹

The University of New Hampshire. To study career decisions, researchers took a stratified random sample of 248 over a five-year period (1976-1981). The most important factor for choosing the five-year program was social-service motivation (Helping/Human Growth). The second most frequently cited factor in support of a teaching career by the same group was enjoyment of children. (However, this rating is nearly entirely the result of women's priorities.)

Love of subject was the third most important factor for those choosing the five-year program. "The subject major requirement . . . attracts students who love their subject field and would not leave it to major in education if that were required to become a teacher."¹⁰

Conclusions

In order to reform teacher education we must first define what constitutes a quality teacher training program. Changes should not be made without first clarifying the goals of teacher education. A unity of theory and practice can be achieved only by attention to goals and behavioral objectives.

Murray's major criticism of the University of Kansas program centers on the process by which the crucial issues were identified. "In my opinion," he said, "an error was made in defining the central issue, and as a consequence, the wrong list of problems was drawn up."¹¹ Murray argues that the university's response had little relevance to the real problem.

The correct issue would have been whether teachers are currently performing competently and adequately in the classroom; and if not, why not? When the issue is stated in that way, the specific areas for analysis become the actual experiences of teachers in the schools and, of course, the

reciprocal learning achievement of their students. Only after this analysis is made can possible alternatives be noted which might alleviate the problems found at the school level.¹²

Program reform is also hindered by the need to involve a wide number of faculty in planning. Some faculty members refuse to spend the large amounts of time necessary in program design meetings. Since the best way to insure tenure and promotion has usually been for faculty members to build a specialized area of expertise in a narrow research area, professors are often not experientially ready for the give-and-take inherent in program development.

Colleges should reject across-the-board orders to add a fifth year to the education baccalaureate. Adding a fifth floor to a four-story house offers few benefits if the foundation is shaky.

Before increasing the length of teacher preparation programs, the four-year sequence must be strengthened so that it truly represents college-level work. Simultaneous with this increased rigor, departments and schools of education must clarify their goals to determine whether these will be better achieved through an extended program. □

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⁷ Blass and Dunbar, p. 135.

⁸ Scannell, p. 133.

⁹ Smith, Carroll, and Fry, p. 135.

¹⁰ Andrew, p. 23.

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minority students are being eliminated from teacher preparation programs because of failure to perform well on the mandated tests. Hansen reported in 1983 in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that only 34 percent of the black candidates passed the first mandated test in Georgia compared with 87 percent of whites.³

In Louisiana, 15 percent of black applicants passed the National Teacher's Exam (NTE), compared with 78 percent of whites. In Texas, projections based on data from 61 colleges suggest that if the current rate of test failure continues, by the year 1988, 96 percent of black candidates and 85 percent of Hispanic candidates will not be admitted into teacher preparation programs unless effective intervention and instructional programs can be developed to help all candidates achieve their educational goals.

Andrews projected that by 1990 minority teachers may represent only five percent of the teaching population as a result of the mandated tests, retirements, teacher burnout, and other reasons.⁴

Possible Teacher Shortages

Competency testing will eliminate many would-be teachers, making the teacher shortage more critical. States may be forced to revise criteria for teaching, issue emergency permits to unqualified teachers, or provide alternative types of certification—which in the long run could weaken the educational process and defeat current efforts to improve the quality of education.

Teacher preparation institutions are feeling increased pressure to maintain a high percentage of pass