

The Curriculum Commentator

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Curriculum Improvement in Teacher Education

Each month this column, written by a member of the Association, will be concerned with curriculum development: recent trends, issues, conferences, publications, experimental studies, and learning materials. This month's contributor to "The Curriculum Commentator" is William H. Burton, Director of Apprenticeship at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

THE PERIOD of the early 1920's contained signs that the long, peaceful slumber of the teacher training institutions was about to end. These institutions, during the last thirty years, have emerged from the century-long isolation from the stream of American life and from the schools they were to serve. The area of teacher education has become one of the dynamic and provocative aspects of the educational scene. A quick survey this year shows that projects looking toward fundamental reorganization and improvement, started in the past, are being pursued with undiminished vigor. A number of new proposals and activities are emerging.

The Association for Student Teaching last year formed a committee with the most intriguing name, "Committee on Ways of Working within the College Staff to Bring about Change"! The name was later changed to the somewhat less exciting "Committee on Methods of Curriculum Improvement in Teacher Education," but it is to be hoped that the several implications of the first title are retained. The committee has undertaken to describe specifically new approaches to curriculum improvement in teacher education now in operation; to discover and encourage proposals for still other experimental programs. A summary of what is being done and of what is not being done will appear in due time.

A second and important aspect will be a study of the dynamics of change, with particular reference to changes in persons, their concepts, attitudes, motiva-

tions; an analysis of obstacles to change in teacher education will be included. The formation of regional groups to carry on intensive research and analysis may eventuate. Finally, published reports will appear. The chairman of this committee is Erwin H. Sasman of the Willimantic, Connecticut, State Teachers College.

GENERAL TRENDS

A number of general trends may be noted first before turning to brief accounts of specific programs.

1. Critical attention is being given to certification laws in a few states which will have definite repercussions within teacher education.

2. The single curriculum for the preparation of teachers of both elementary and secondary level is growing.

3. The program of separate course offerings is being abandoned in favor of integrated or fused courses covering a longer period of time than a separate course. The area of integration may cover all professional materials, or may consist of one large core segment with many electives available.

4. A number of different bases are being tried for the integrated courses. The old orientation of teacher education around principles of teaching or general methods is giving way to organization around the study of the child and his behavior.

5. The student teaching experiences, observation, participation, and teaching are being integrated into one unified sequence. A notable feature is the earlier initiation of

these experiences. Student teaching in several instances is being tried before the end of the training period. New departures in developing extended internships were not found in this survey, though considerable comment upon carrying on previously initiated efforts was noted. One of the new certification proposals (state of Washington) seems definitely to encourage something like an internship or trial year.

6. A few proposals relating to the general and non-professional education of teachers were found. Evidently earlier proposals in this area and now under way are being further developed.

7. Distinct interest was found in lengthening the period of student teaching and in extending its scope.

SINGLE CURRICULUM

The single curriculum for dual certification in elementary and secondary schools has had considerable development in Ohio. Tryouts are either started or are about to start in Michigan and Georgia. Others may also be developing which did not appear in this brief inquiry. The impetus has been the need for large numbers of elementary teachers plus the fact that the supply of secondary teachers is becoming normal again.

Ohio State University at Columbus has inaugurated an experimental program with about fifty students admitted a year ago. The plan is so far invitational, not "just anyone" may enter. Students who have completed three or four quarters with good grades, better than average score on a psychological examination, with desirable personality qualities including an interest in children, and who are already preparing for secondary teaching are invited to consider the dual program.

A strong feature is the continuous advisory service. Check points occur at admission to the junior year and at admission to student teaching. An orientation course is basic to the entire program. The student discovers the place of the school in our democratic society, gets an idea of what teaching actually is, of the

competencies needed, and of the opportunities. Continuous self-appraisal in the light of competencies goes on. Educational Psychology, Philosophy of Education, the Core Program, courses in Special Methods, Health, Recreation for Children, and professionalized subject matter courses are included. Students take parallel courses designed to meet the purposes of the elementary and secondary schools. Students thus observe children of different age levels, participate in various school and community activities.

A filmstrip and recording entitled "An Experiment in Teacher Education," taking fifteen minutes for showing, has been prepared. A program is also available through which students already holding a high school provisional certificate may meet requirements for a provisional elementary certificate.

Ohio University at Athens does not have separate courses in tests and measurements, nor in philosophy, believing that evaluation should be taught at appropriate places in the principles of teaching course. The entire undergraduate program is designed to help students see the necessity for a philosophy. Substantial offerings in this field are given on the graduate level.

Students in the dual program take student teaching in the junior year, with accompanying course work dealing directly with elementary teaching. One half-day every day is given to classroom teaching, the other half to systematic discussion of problems met in teaching. The supervisors of student teaching at this level carry most of this instruction.

The student then gets in the senior year a systematic course in principles of teaching with reference to secondary schools, accompanied by a semester of observation. Student teaching in high schools then follows. The dual program students also get some observation and discussion of teaching in the sophomore year. Course offerings are those typical of teacher education institutions.

One of the early proposals for a dual program was made by Earl E. Mosier of the *Michigan* State Department of Edu-

cation. An experimental program has been started at Michigan State College.

In *Georgia*, the State Board of Education has established the issuance of professional certificates in any field upon completion of a planned professional program. The state institutions are at present developing the details of such a program.

Emphasis in the *Georgia* institutions, apart from development of the new program, includes efforts to develop and extend cooperative arrangements with public schools for demonstration and student teaching. Coordinators of student teaching are employed by the state. Teachers who are to be supervising teachers are carefully selected. They are paid small supplements to the regular salary and should take graduate work dealing with the problems of student teaching.

A course in "Individual Analysis" has been developed by Charles F. Hudgins and associates at the *University of Georgia*, which is used with freshmen. Students are given an opportunity to participate in the analysis of their needs, capacities, and ambitions. Tests, group discussion, and interviews are widely used. Leadership for these groups is carefully chosen. When sufficient evidence has been accumulated and when the student is clearly aware of what is going on, further scrutiny of ambitions and selection of vocation or profession are then possible. Freshmen looking toward educational careers are thus given early introduction to the factors which affect choice of life work.

CERTIFICATION LAWS

Revision of certification laws with accompanying effect on preparation of teachers is appearing here and there. A new program has been proposed in the state of *Washington* leading to a general certificate. A basic core is suggested with considerable flexibility allowed the several institutions in implementing the program. A transition period of several years is under way during which group effort and varied experimentation with pre-service programs are to be emphasized.

Features of the *Washington* plan are worthy of note. Broad general education is regarded as essential to a scheme which will certify teachers for service on several levels. Professional education is also extensive. Concentration in one or more of the basic areas common to public schools is provided. The most important provision requires an initial teaching period of four years before a permanent certificate is granted. Initial teaching experience is to be supervised by the pre-service institution and by the employing district.

A one-year certificate is issued on graduation, renewable annually up to four years. One year's continuous teaching experience follows the pre-service program. A fifth year at graduate level is required for issuance of a permanent general certificate. This fifth year, furthermore, must begin during the first year after initial teaching, either as a full year or as summer school. The new type certificates will be issued after July 1, 1951.

A number of other states reported scrutiny of certificate requirements but had no details to report at this time.

INTEGRATED COURSES

Efforts to integrate offerings or to reduce the number of separate courses appear quite frequently. *Farmington, Maine*, is trying to decrease the number of "subjects" carried at one time. The curriculum is being reorganized under six broad fields: Child Growth and Development, Healthful Living, Communication Arts, Living in a Social World, Living in a Scientific World, and Quantitative Aspects of Living. One experimental step has been taken looking toward eventual organization of "courses" into more functional integrations. The student in first semester of his third year takes but two subjects: Child and His Curriculum, and World Literature. Fifteen class meetings a week in the former and eight in the latter give the customary sixteen units semester credit. Children at work and their curriculums are studied, together with materials on child growth and development. The programs at other *Maine*

institutions, Gorham, Presque Isle, and Machias, are under similar development.

Experimental programs of the core or integrated type are also under development at *Drake University* and the *University of Oklahoma*.

The *University of Connecticut* is in the third year of study of the character of secondary education and the needs of adolescent youth as a basis for reorganizing the teacher education program. Integrated series of courses for junior and senior years are now emerging. Much additional emphasis is placed on laboratory experiences in school and community. The entire education staff serves as resource personnel for any phase of the undergraduate program. The "course taking" pattern is disappearing, replaced by a series of functional experiences.

The *Fitchburg, Massachusetts*, Teachers College has been engaged in scrutiny of offerings for some time. One of the steps toward integration of materials and vitalization of experiences is the "Curriculum Materials" courses, one for grades 1-4, the other grades 5-9. The course includes much of what used to be in general and special principles and methods. Specialists in typical subjects participate after a general core of principle has been developed. The course requires 192 clock hours for ten semester hours credit. Observation accompanies the work in principles and methods. A professional clinic in reading is incorporated into the Curriculum Materials course.

The *New Britain, Connecticut*, Teachers College is completing a three-year program of self-evaluation of all offerings. Faculty committees are at work on ten or twelve major areas into some or all of which new organizations may be placed. A feature to date is the organization of an Advisory Council made up of selected superintendents of schools, principals of secondary schools, guidance officers, and laymen who meet with departmental chairmen and administrative officers of the college to evaluate the teacher education program from the viewpoint of the consumer. The council is expected in

the future to assist also in studying problems of selective admissions, personnel and guidance services, extra-curricular activities, or any others that may interest the group.

The *University of Minnesota* has several programs under development. Of particular interest is one on "Common Learnings." Substantial offerings are made in five areas, with varying hour requirements to be selected from each area. These are: Humanities, Social Science, Science, Family Life, Music and Art Appreciation.

The *St. Cloud, Minnesota*, Teachers College is using a somewhat similar scheme in a program for the special training of junior high school teachers. This is somewhat in contrast to programs reported earlier in which the general phase of preparation was common to all types of teachers.

An interesting development in institutional cooperation has been inaugurated by the *Yale University* Department of Education and the *New Haven State Teachers College*. A Master of Arts program is developed by the two institutions, degrees being granted by the Connecticut State Board through the Teachers College. The program is on the graduate level, admissions are carefully screened, and great flexibility is maintained in the programs for individual students. The work is scheduled so that it can be taken on part-time basis by teachers in service or by resident students.

A seminar in "Contemporary Problems" is required and constitutes one fourth of the required year. An independent critical study of some aspect of school practice must also be made. The rest of the program is designed by student and advisor to meet individual needs. The program is now well into its trial period.

The preparation of teachers for the new core programs appearing in junior and senior high schools has been demanding attention for some time with but few responses in practice. A stimulating study, "Preparing Core Teachers for the Secondary Schools," has been made by a

graduate seminar at *Ohio State University* under leadership of Harold Alberty. Modestly called an "exploratory" study, and calling for further investigation, the forty-six page mimeographed report makes a penetrating and sensible analysis of the problem with specific recommendations. Institutions developing programs for preparation of core programs are invited to send materials to the writer of this column, with the assurance that such materials will be of real value to students.

A 1949 revision of the course "Human Development, Adjustment, and Learning," issued by the *Syracuse University School of Education*, illustrated the method of integrating materials on growth of children and youth with materials on how to understand them, plus materials on how to teach and evaluate.

FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMS

A follow-up program has been inaugurated at *Pennsylvania State College* through which graduates receive supervisory assistance during the first year of teaching. College supervisors operate in cooperation with local authorities. Another type of follow-up used at *Iowa State Teachers College*, Cedar Rapids, calls for evaluation of teachers by local supervisors at the end of the first year. Prediction of success has been significantly improved through use of these ratings. Changes in pre-service education are resulting. An excellent account of this project appears in *School and Society* for June 11, 1949. The *Western Maryland College*, Westminster, includes field work in child psychology for secondary school teachers on the theory that all types of teachers need to understand the beginning levels as well as the one on which they may be working.

IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS

The improvement of teacher education is not confined to the teachers colleges. *Portland, Oregon*, this summer operated its own program for retraining secondary teachers for positions on the elementary level. An eight-weeks' summer school,

with practice teaching, constituted the initial effort. Temporary elementary certificates will be granted, with regular certificates to follow a second summer's work.

The *Oregon State Teachers Association* has "started something" which may have far-flung repercussions, not only on teacher education but on the whole structure of teaching. Preliminary study is under way, looking toward policies and methods of eliminating incompetent teachers. The movement, if successful, might well be the most important event of the current period.

Be Sure to Read . . .

Professional literature on teacher education is extensive and growing rapidly. Any effort to list even the most striking references would run far beyond the limits of this summary. Materials from July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1949 are screened in one of William D. Gray's able listings. Four types of material are included, the most important possibly for our purposes are the objective analyses and statistical summaries. Valuable materials will be found summarizing practice and trends in the areas of: recruitment; prediction of success; laboratory experiences and internship; the training of teachers for college, for junior college, for general education, for rural schools, and for several special instructional areas. See the December, 1949, *Elementary School Journal*, pages 234-240.

The unpretentious publications of the *Association for Student Teaching* continue to be among the most valuable sources, the 1948 and 1949 Yearbooks on laboratory experiences and on the internship being particularly valuable.

A new magazine, *The Journal of Teacher Education*, announced for 1950 by the *Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards* should fill a need of long standing.

A source of materials which is rapidly becoming of major importance is the semi-monthly *Education Summary* published

by the Education Research Institute of Chicago. The references in the Professional Relations column, together with Gray's summary, will give the student in this field all the material available.

Among the most valuable references are three mimeographed summaries, forty to sixty pages each, prepared by a graduate seminar at Ohio State University under the stimulating leadership

of Harold Alberty. The much-neglected problem of preparing teachers for the core curriculum in secondary schools is summarized and an admirable program is suggested. The two accompanying handbooks are entitled, *The Core Curriculum in the High School*, and *How to Develop a Core Curriculum in the High School*. These should have widespread beneficial effects on teacher education.

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