

# *Emergency Programs of Teacher Preparation . . .*

Under skilled professional guidance, liberal arts graduates in Massachusetts and in Connecticut are prepared for teaching positions in the emergency programs described in these articles.

## *. . . In Massachusetts*

ALLAN ACOMB

**I**N AN effort to ease the existing shortage of qualified elementary school teachers, the Boston University School of Education has provided a special course. In conjunction with the Newton Public School system, this institution has set up a six-week summer workshop in elementary education for liberal-arts college graduates who are planning to enter the teaching profession. For the past three years this program of instruction and supervised practice-teaching has been conducted at the Underwood School in Newton, Massachusetts. Since 1951, this program has prepared 240 graduate students for elementary school teaching positions in our public schools.

Plans for the workshop were developed during the summer of 1950. A number of liberal-arts college graduates, seeking to qualify themselves for teaching positions in elementary schools, applied and were accepted for admission to the summer session of the Boston University School of Education. Every

effort was made to help the individual student select those educational courses which would be most useful to him. For many of these students, however, final approval of their appointment to a teaching position by a school superintendent was contingent upon successful completion of specified educational courses.

As the number of applicants of this type increased, the School of Education faculty, under the guidance of Donald D. Durrell, who was then dean, recognized that here was a new and potential source of recruitment for the teaching profession. At the same time, they realized that it was unwise to attempt to train prospective teachers without teaching experience, in courses designed for experienced teachers. Consequently, they decided to establish a graduate workshop in elementary education to serve the specific needs of these students. The Newton Public School Department gladly cooperated in this new venture, and in 1951 the Underwood School was designated as a training center for prospective teachers. The purpose of the program is to provide students with intensive training in elementary teaching. The program

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itself is under the direction of highly qualified elementary school teachers and members of the staff of the Boston University School of Education.

Enrollment is limited to: (1) college graduates who have a contract for public school teaching in the approaching school year, but who do not have special preparation for elementary teaching; (2) college graduates with superior records who present satisfactory recommendations for elementary school teaching and endorsements as to character, personality, speech, written English, versatility, leadership, and evidence of successful experience with children; (3) teachers with one year of experience but no record of student teaching in college, who can present recommendations from superintendents and evidence of employment for the next school year.

The workshop program coincides with the Boston University summer session. For six weeks, graduate students observe and work with pupils under the supervision of Newton Public School teachers. These teachers have been selected on the basis of their ability to teach children successfully and to instruct prospective teachers in the fundamentals of elementary education.

The cost of the entire program, including materials, teachers' salaries, health services, custodial services, police protection for children going to and from school, secretarial help and incidental expenses, is borne by Boston University.

### **All Children Are Invited**

Children attending public, private and parochial schools in Newton and surrounding communities are invited

to enroll in the grades they are scheduled to enter in September of the approaching school year. Approximately 175-200 pupils take advantage of this opportunity to receive instruction. Size of the classes averages 25-30 students on each grade level from the kindergarten through grade six. The morning session is devoted to instruction in all elementary school subjects. The unit method of instruction is employed in the teaching of the social sciences. Planning and participation in a field trip to a museum or industrial plant for the children on each grade level is a part of this program. Classroom materials and methods are adapted to the individual needs of pupils. Small group work is evident in all classrooms. Extra-curricular activities in which children participate include organization of a safety patrol, distribution of milk for the mid-morning luncheon, and publication of a school newspaper. The entire school takes part in a fire drill and a safety drill in case of an "A-Bomb" attack. Pupil instruction closes at noon each day.

Graduate students are encouraged to observe and do their practice teaching on the grade level which they have been specifically assigned to teach in September. Students still seeking teaching positions are urged to select the grade which they feel seems most suitable for them to teach successfully. Experience in instruction begins with the individual pupil and later proceeds to the technique of teaching small groups within the classroom. Before the six-week term closes, each graduate student assumes the full responsibility of planning and teaching the entire class in all subjects for a full morning session.

Each afternoon the graduate students meet with the Underwood School staff and faculty members of the School of Education for group discussion and lectures on methods of instruction for each subject matter area. University professors deliver a series of lectures on methods of teaching reading, social studies, language arts, arithmetic, science, physical education, and music. One lecture is devoted to consideration of a testing program and the evaluation and reporting of pupil progress. An art workshop is set up for the students to experiment with the different types of media used in the classroom. Students also have access to a professional library for outside reading assignments. Throughout the course, Underwood School staff members help graduate students in the development of lesson plans, demonstrate daily program planning emphasizing pupil-teacher participation, discuss the use of curriculum guides, instruct in the operation of audio-visual aids to teaching, and guide students in selection and adaptation of classroom materials to fit the needs of individual pupils. Graduate students are also taught how to perform the clerical duties required of a classroom teacher such as the keeping of the classroom register, recording information on the health and cumulative record cards, and filling out office record and transfer cards. Much time is spent upon evaluating pupil progress and organizing small groups for instruction.

During the final week of the course, a special evening session, or "Open House for Parents," is held in order that the student may gain experience in teacher-parent relationships through conferences with parents.

At the close of the program each student has prepared in detail the lesson plans for the first two weeks of school, written a teaching unit in one subject matter field or prepared a kit of remedial teaching devices, and has submitted to the parents a written report of progress for two or more children attending the summer school.

Throughout the training period there is ample opportunity for students seeking teaching positions to interview school superintendents. These superintendents frequently visit the school to observe and interview the graduate students. As a result of this service, most of the students are able to secure teaching positions before the opening of the new school year.

### **Evaluation of the Program**

The real test of the effectiveness of this program can only be determined by the impact it has had upon those who have experienced it. Over the past three years we have asked the graduate students, the pupils and the parents to evaluate our program in terms of their personal reactions. In addition to evaluating the total program on a four point scale—excellent, good, fair or poor—we ask each person responding to the questionnaire to enumerate the specific strengths and weaknesses of the project and to offer his suggestions for changes and improvements which he feels are necessary to make it more effective. Signature on the questionnaire is optional. The response to date has been overwhelmingly favorable. Graduate students, pupils and parents indicate almost complete satisfaction with the program. Suggestions for changes, improvements and additional services have

been carefully considered and implemented before the succeeding session.

In order to obtain more objective data on the performance of our graduate students now serving in the field, a master's thesis<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of securing this evidence was undertaken and completed during 1952-53. A questionnaire in the form of a rating scale was submitted to the principals of the schools in which our graduate students were teaching. They were asked to evaluate the degree of success in teaching which members of the 1951 and 1952 workshop had attained. Principals were asked to rate these beginning teachers for dependability, teacher-administrator relations, planning and organization, knowledge of subject matter, discipline, ability to adjust instruction to individual needs of children, pupil achievement, and promise of continued success. Ratings for each of the above qualities

were recorded on a five point scale—superior, good, average, poor, and no opportunity to observe. In addition, they were asked to react to the following questions: (1) Has this teacher's performance been satisfactory? (2) In your opinion, how does this teacher compare with other beginning teachers who are graduates of teachers colleges and schools of education? Is he or she better, the same as, or not as good?

There were 160 members enrolled in the 1951 and 1952 workshops. We were able to locate, through postal inquiry, the teaching addresses of 134 of these people. Of this number, 115 were actively teaching and the remaining nineteen, for several reasons, were not teaching. Some had not been able to find jobs, some had decided not to teach, some had married and retired from teaching, and others were working toward higher educational degrees. Questionnaires were sent out concerning the 115 known to be teaching. A total of 107 questionnaires or 93% of the number sent out were returned for

<sup>1</sup>Cravatts, W. J. and Weldon, G., *A Study of the Performance of the 1951 and 1952 Graduates of the Boston University Graduate Workshop in Elementary Education*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Boston University, 1953.

Table 1  
Percentage of Responses to Questions 1-10 Based on 107 Replies

	Superior	Good	Average	Poor	No Opportunity to Observe	No Answer
Dependability.....	55.1	29.9	13.1	1.9	0	0
Teacher-administrator relations.....	54.2	38.3	7.5	0	0	0
Planning and organization.....	29.0	38.3	26.2	5.5	0	1.0
Knowledge and application of teaching methods.....	20.4	43.0	25.1	9.6	0	1.9
Knowledge of subject matter.....	30.8	45.8	20.4	1.9	0	1.0
Success in working with children.....	32.7	40.2	23.2	2.9	0	1.0
Discipline.....	22.4	43.0	29.9	4.7	0	0
Ability to adjust instruction to individual needs of children.....	24.3	39.2	22.4	11.2	2.7	0
Pupil achievement.....	10.7	48.6	24.3	3.8	7.5	6.5
Promise of continued success and improvement.....	37.6	46.6	9.6	0	1.0	5.6
Average.....	31.7	41.3	20.2	4.1	1.0	1.7

tabulation of the findings (see Table I for summary).

On the whole, our graduate students have proved themselves to be capable beginning teachers. Only 5.6% have failed to come up to expectations. Does this mean that all liberal-arts graduates could readily adapt themselves to a career of teaching after a short intensive training period? I do not think so. This group of prospective teachers is a highly selective one. Its members are imbued with a desire to teach and have dedicated themselves to the attainment of this objective. In spite of their sincerity of purpose, there are still some weaknesses which can only be remedied by further preparation. Better knowledge

of planning and organization, knowledge and application of teaching methods, and ability to adjust instruction to the individual needs of children will require specialized course work at a teacher-training institution. Greater understanding of child development will undoubtedly help to solve discipline problems beginning teachers may face in the classroom.

The graduate workshop in elementary education appears to have been a worth-while experiment and has made a valuable contribution toward alleviating the present teacher shortage. A word of commendation and a warm welcome is extended to these new recruits to the teaching profession.

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### *. . . In Connecticut*

**CHRISTINE S. HUGERTH**

**F**OR SEVERAL years Connecticut has had a shortage of fully qualified teachers in the elementary school. By 1941 many teachers had left the schools, either for war industry or the armed forces, and recruitment had lagged far behind the need. To meet this situation, the State Board of Education adopted a policy of issuing War-Emergency Permits. This temporary measure made it possible for appointing authorities in the public schools to fill existing vacancies with individuals who did not meet the requirements for regular state certification.

At the end of World War II the picture had not greatly improved. Teachers college classes were still small, many older teachers had become eligible for retirement, War-Emergency Permittees were leaving the jobs they had held for

patriotic reasons, and a tremendous group of wartime babies was about to enter kindergarten in 1947. In 1945-46, therefore, the State Department of Education took action on several fronts. Graduates of liberal arts colleges were encouraged to enter a "fifth year program" to prepare them for elementary school teaching. Since four years of preparation are now required in Connecticut for full certification, graduates of two- and three-year normal schools who had left teaching because of marriage or in order to raise a family were urged to return to teaching and to complete their study. In time it became evident, however, that none of the existing measures would solve the problem. By early 1949 schools were beginning to face the prospect of classrooms without teachers.

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