Preparation of teachers for guiding core programs is in some areas regarded as a responsibility shared jointly by the teachers college and the school system. In one Maryland county, such preparation is also looked upon as a responsibility which continues from the pre-service to the in-service stages of the teacher's development.

Preparation of core teachers is primarily influenced by two factors, i.e., (a) the concept of core held in the situation; and (b) the teacher competencies needed in putting this concept into practice. The pre-service and in-service programs described in this article are in a formative state. We believe, however, that the following concept of core is being evolved: "Core" consists of broad pre-planned areas of living defined by the faculty in terms of the common personal-social problems of youth in this society. From this basic curricular structure learning units are developed cooperatively through teacher-pupil planning. All the major fields of knowledge are drawn upon in the solution of problems. Core is required of all pupils. It occupies a rela-
tively large block of time in the school day (2-3 periods).

Since this program requires a rather comprehensive move away from the subject-centered approach, certain teacher competencies need to be highly developed. In analyzing the pre-service program at State Teachers College, Towson, Maryland and the in-service program, Prince Georges County, Maryland the writers have concluded that in terms of competencies core teachers should:

1) Know the research in core program development and be able to use this to improve the local situation and to interpret the program to the public.

2) Be able to draw upon the major fields of knowledge to help youth solve their problems and extend their interests.

3) Be able to work with others (core and special interest teachers, consultants and administrators) in defining problem areas representative of the common personal-social needs of youth. They should be able to use these areas as a basis for resource guide development.

4) Be able to draw upon resource guides to develop learning units through teacher-pupil planning.

5) Have a functional knowledge of a wide variety of resources in places, people, materials and techniques.

6) Understand how adolescents grow and develop and be able to use this knowledge in bridging the gap between curriculum and guidance.

7) Be able to evaluate individual and group progress toward clearly defined and cooperatively set goals in the core classroom.

8) Be able to organize the core block of time to provide for the varied activities taking place, e.g., homeroom experiences, individual guidance, the core unit, creative writing, free reading, school-community projects.

9) Be skilled in using the problem-solving approach to help youth explore their common, personal-social concerns.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of competencies for core teachers. The experience of the writers leads them to believe, however, that emphasis upon these competencies at the pre-service and the in-service levels will assist greatly in the development of an adequate core program.

A Pre-Service Program

In recent years Maryland educators have given much thought and effort to the preparation of core teachers at both the pre-service and in-service levels. This emphasis is part of a state-wide attempt to build a junior high school curriculum tailored specifically for adolescent boys and girls. It was agreed by a workshop group in 1946 that such a curriculum might best be attained by use of the core method for organizing learning experiences. This group, which was made up of representatives from all counties of the state, suggested that their school systems should move

The competencies listed are an adaptation of those developed by a graduate seminar at the Ohio State University under the direction of Harold Alberty. For further reference see: Alberty and others, Preparing Core Teachers for the Secondary Schools. Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1949.

James A. Fickes is professor of education, State Teachers College, Towson, Maryland. Lucile L. Lurry is supervisor of secondary education, Prince Georges County, Maryland.
their educational efforts in this direction. As few teachers were then prepared to do core work, extensive in-service training programs were undertaken in the various counties of the state, and pre-service programs were set up at the state teachers colleges.

The junior high school teacher training program was introduced at Towson State Teachers College in 1949. Since that time there have been some changes in the course of study and organization of learning experiences.

Today the "general education" phase of the training consists of a series of courses broad in nature and designed to produce a competent, well-informed citizen. Approximately two thirds of the credits required for graduation are in this area. For the most part general education courses are taught with the subject-centered approach and are intended to give the prospective core teacher those knowledges, skills and understandings available through the general education programs of most colleges.

However, several of the general education courses contribute directly to the development of effective core teachers. For example, the physical education work stresses the building of a repertory of physical education activities which can be used by the classroom teacher, and the biological science and health work offers experiences designed to help students better understand human growth and development, especially in relation to the maturing process.

The student preparing to teach core has a wide range of subject and professional courses from which to choose his elective hours. Many of the elective courses offer opportunity for study that relates to core teaching. Of special value are a number of courses in which subject-matter lines are cut across in gaining information needed for understanding contemporary problems. If the student wishes to qualify for teaching a subject area as well as core, he must take most of his elective hours in the area selected. The elective hours constitute about one-twelfth of the entire course offerings.

Work with Children

Some professional work is a part of each year's study in the junior high school program. In the freshman year a seminar type experience is offered to give the student an over-all view of public education and to assist him in selecting his field of major educational interest. In this work he has many opportunities to observe and to work with children in public schools.

Emphasis in the sophomore year is on psychology and child study. Here the work is designed to assist the student in understanding and working with children. Also, some experimental study with community experiences is being undertaken to discover whether or not such work should become a required part of the training program. In this study a selected group of sophomores has been given an opportunity to examine the functions and scope of institutions and agencies (other than the school) serving the surrounding community through a seminar type experience. Work experiences in agencies serving children are a part of the experiment. During his junior year the student takes some special education courses such as history of education and juvenile literature. He also takes most
of his elective hours which means that he is emphasizing some area of specialization. Electives can be taken to strengthen his core competency or to qualify him to teach some subject such as mathematics or science.

The senior year is made up of functional professional work in the art and science of teaching and of extensive laboratory experience in the junior high school. Much integration between theory and the practical experiences of observation and student teaching is gained by having one instructor work with a group of students throughout the school year. This instructor is responsible for the coordination of the student's professional work on campus and for working closely with the junior high school teachers who are responsible for guiding the student teaching experiences.

The year's work is divided into four periods of nine weeks each. The first nine weeks' period is devoted to a study of methods and to extensive observation, the second to student teaching, the third to methods and observation, and the final period to student teaching and a post-practice seminar on education problems.

Campus work during the senior year consists of methods work in reading, language arts, science, arithmetic and social studies. Work in tests and measurement, study of the adolescent, and an audio-visual workshop are also included. All are tied together by a seminar dealing with the junior high school curriculum.

Student teaching offers trainees varied opportunities to observe teachers, to participate in work with children, to teach in one core class, to teach in another core or subject class, and to engage in all other activities for which regular teachers are employed. These supervised activities are carried on in two different schools.

A County Program for Core Teachers

Junior high schools in Prince Georges County embarked upon the core program in 1947. At that time no teachers were prepared for this work other than those few who attended workshops sponsored the previous summer by the State Department of Education. Because of this, it was thought wise to begin with an English-social studies fusion concept of core. A junior high school supervisor devoted part of her time to in-service education of core teachers. Groups of teachers were brought into the Board of Education from time to time to develop resource units and several art workshops for core teachers were directed by the art supervisor.

In 1951 the county employed a person to devote the major portion of her time to the development of the core curriculum. An in-service program was launched to help teachers develop competencies needed in guiding young people in a continuous attack upon the contemporary problems of junior high school youth. The group faced at least three concerns: (a) how to get a better understanding of the core in theory and practice; (b) how to go about reorganizing the basic structure of the program to bring it more in line with the needs of youth; and (c) how to develop materials to give teachers help and security in this changing process. Naturally, the added problem of interpreting this pro-

102

Educational Leadership
gram to parents and other citizens loomed large.

During the 1951-52 school term efforts were made to acquaint faculty groups with research in core program development through discussion groups and reading. Several teachers enrolled in a course offered at the University of Maryland dealing with teaching in a core program. Useful publications in core program development and bibliographies of the same nature were made available to teachers and principals. A sizable group of core teachers and several principals were sent to various out-of-state conferences and to observe in laboratory schools to further their insights into the problems facing them. The mid-winter conference for all secondary school teachers emphasized the need for reorganizing general education in the high schools. Substitutes were made available for inter-school visitation.

In June 1952 a county-wide workshop for core teachers was held. The purpose of this enterprise was to clarify further a concept of the core program in action. During the year, teachers' suggestions were taken by a planning committee for small and large group activities, consultant services and materials needed in the workshop. Principals, guidance workers, teachers of special subjects and their supervisors were invited to participate. Each of the 15 schools asked at least two parents to work with the teachers. Large group sessions were organized around such problems as: (a) reorganizing the basic structure of the core program; (b) understanding the common personal-social needs of youth; (c) interpreting the core program to the public; (d) using the scientific method and understanding its implications for developing an adequate core program; and (e) evaluating the core program. Small group sessions dealt with analyzing and selecting materials of instruction, organizing for best use of the core block of time, and improving reading through the core program. All kinds of audio-visual equipment were provided for demonstration and use.

While there were many intangible outcomes of this experience, several concrete evidences of change and helpfulness can be identified. First, the basic structure was reorganized in terms of the common personal-social problems of youth. Parents made most constructive suggestions at this point. Second, though no publication was attempted, suggestions were made for the organization and content of a handbook for core teachers. This publication was developed during the summer and in the fall was circulated to each core teacher, principal and librarian. Third, a plan for quarterly meetings of core teachers on a professional and recreational basis during 1952-53 was promoted. Needless to say, the large-scale exchange of ideas among core teachers and the recognition, on their part, that others were faced with similar problems helped to make the results of the workshop more fruitful.

New Teachers Join the Program

Due to increased enrollments and replacements, twenty-five new teachers came to the program in 1952-53. Few of these had attended a teacher education institution which prepares core teachers.

---


**NOVEMBER 1953**
On the recommendation of experienced teachers, a program of in-service preparation was designed especially for newcomers. Attempts were made to acquaint them with the philosophy, methods and materials of instruction and the use of the community as a laboratory. Several means were used: classroom observation and conferences, audio-visual aids, small and large group conferences in which discussions were led by experienced teachers and the supervisor, field trips and demonstrations. A definite attempt was made to deal with the expressed problems of teachers. Inter-class visitation and inter-school visitation were found to be most helpful means for promoting understanding. Funds for substitutes in this program are allocated in the county school budget. Funds are also provided thus for consultant services and out-of-state conferences. A sum totaling $20 per core teacher is allocated for materials of instruction to be bought by the individual teacher. This is over and above the regular textbook allotment per pupil.

Only three quarterly meetings were held for this new group of teachers. These county-wide conferences had a very good effect in the further exploration of the core hypothesis. The fall meeting was a get-acquainted session planned by teacher committees. Several publishers were invited to set up exhibits of materials which they thought might be useful in a core program. At the winter meeting an effort was made, through a panel discussion, to improve articulation between the core program in the junior high schools and the elementary and the senior high schools of the county. Participants represented the three grade levels and the panel was moderated by a principal. A consultant was invited for the early spring meeting to help the group deal with how to teach for critical thinking. Planning for these meetings was done by the executive committee of the core teachers organization. A more representative group has been designated as a planning committee for 1953-54 and this group is already at work on plans to explore a major concern in next year's program — evaluation of the core in terms of present status and proposed next steps.

Perhaps the most promising experience in terms of the needs of the program in Prince Georges County was the mid-winter workshop, held once each week in 1953. Purpose of this workshop was to develop resource guides for use by teachers in planning learning units drawn from the basic structure proposed in the 1952 summer workshop. Participants were core teachers, supervisors from all areas, principals and vice-principals, librarians and teachers of physical education, homemaking, mathematics, music and art. An effort was made to develop resources consistent with what we know about the common developmental tasks of adolescents. To this end, we found the services of the Institute of Child Study, University of Maryland, most valuable. During and following this program we felt that some insight was being developed as to

---

2 The following audio-visual aids were found to be helpful: (a) A Core Curriculum Class in Action, Audio-Visual Material Consultation Bureau, College of Education, Wayne University, Detroit 1, Michigan; (b) Harold Alberty, The Core Program in the High School (a recording), Educational Recording Services, Los Angeles 45, California; (c) H. H. Giles, Techniques of Teacher-Pupil Planning (a recording), Educational Recording Services, Los Angeles 45, California.
the function of the core program in relation to the special subject areas and the contributions of each to the other's enrichment.

Periodically a newsletter to core teachers has been mimeographed and issued from the central office. It suggested useful new materials and included bits of human interest about as many core teachers as possible. The teachers seemed to enjoy this newsletter and to find it useful. They have suggested that the publication be taken over next year by a representative group of teachers from each school.

Extension of the core upward has met with success in Prince Georges County. Two of the smaller and one of the larger senior high schools have initiated the program since September 1952. In each case, very careful pre-planning went on which included the entire school staff, parents, pupils and supervisors. In each case very careful evaluation has taken place. Consultant services have been made available to these school groups for needs studies, interpreting to the public, materials of instruction and evaluation. Particularly in changing reporting practices have parents been brought into discussion of basic policies.

High on the list of in-service experiences being planned for 1953-54 are: (a) an advisory council to make recommendations for improving the program and to keep in closer touch with the 200 core classrooms where action takes place—a council which might include pupils, parents, teachers, principals and supervisors; (b) a course for those people who do substitute teaching in the core program to help them better to understand its philosophy and purposes; and (c) a workshop for core teachers in art and music so that they might provide for pupils more integrating experiences.

There are hundreds of ways not mentioned here which serve to make an in-service program meaningful. Perhaps the most to be said for the success of any in-service program is the degree to which all who are affected have a share in decision making. The worth of the individual, a high premium on the cooperative process and the method of intelligence are values to be held as dearly here as in the classroom with pupils. The untiring effort and support of a sympathetic superintendent make the task all the more worth the attempt.

From experiences of the writers in these two programs come several observations that appear to be significant in the task of preparing core teachers for the secondary schools.

1) The pre-service program cannot do the job alone. If more adequate core programs are to be developed careful attention must be given to teacher education at the in-service level.

2) The pre-service and in-service program should be a continuum. Each program should build upon and enrich the other as leaders at each level plan and work together.

3) Certain competencies are needed by teachers in the core program. These may be further defined and a program for developing them can be built upon cooperative research between people in teaching education institutions and those in the field.
