

Teacher Education: Whose Responsibility?

THE PARENT sending a child to meet a new teacher at school hopes fervently that his offspring will find a warm, understanding person who will give this young individual the chances he in particular needs to continue a healthy growth. Those at work in the school hope just as strongly that each new person added to the staff will be a team member who is competent to do his job, fair, and pleasant to have as a colleague. All of us know there just are not enough teachers to go around regardless of caliber. We know we have a real problem on our hands.

Many people realize that to prepare any teacher for his first job calls for a considerable investment by society. Those who care about good education feel that it would be worth an even larger outlay to ensure an increased number of really capable and humane teachers.

It is certain that new concepts of an adequate preparation for teaching will cost much more in dollars. Just to meet the minimum standard of four years of college preparation for all teachers as advocated by the Commission on Teacher Education of our National Education Association would require vast amounts. To provide for such improvements in the pre-service programs as better guidance of the individual future teacher and extended opportunities for student teaching and other firsthand experiences with children and youth in a community setting would call for increased budgets in our teacher-preparing institutions.

Increased costs naturally do not stop here. To follow the graduate of a teachers college into the first year or

so on the job, a step that makes very good sense, also represents a budget item for additional staff time. Then too, it is now widely recognized that teacher education cannot end with graduation from an institution of higher learning. Much remains to be learned on the job, for teaching is too complicated a process to be mastered in four or five or even more years of preparation in advance. Furthermore, a teacher must be a student of human development in our society all his teaching life in order to keep abreast of a continuous stream of new developments. Therefore, budgets of the public schools must include such items for in-service education as consultant services and supervision, local workshops and conferences, time released for group curriculum planning, and attendance at state, regional and national conventions.

Interest and Effort Needed

While large amounts of funds are essential for financing pre-service and in-service teacher education of high quality, money alone will not suffice. The intelligent interest and efforts of many persons are needed to help our nation fill its classrooms with enough able teachers.

Fortunately interest in teacher education is appearing on all sides and much good work is going forward. Examples of recent or continued development are:

- 1) Increased state appropriations. Not only are budgets of state institutions being enlarged to provide higher salaries for the instructional staff and better physical facilities, but, in addi-

tion, a substantial number of scholarships are being awarded to students preparing for teaching. All of these efforts need to be continued and enlarged.

2) Liberal arts colleges are channeling more of their funds into teacher education. Many states are having to decide whether or not to give tax support to these institutions for their programs of teacher education.

3) Foundations are showing an interest in the recruitment of youth for teaching and in the support of teacher education programs. Much more support of research in pre-service and in-service teacher education could be used to test the efficacy of many new developments in these fields.

4) The National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools, working nationally and through state and local groups, has been striving to increase the prestige of the teaching profession and to gather more moral and financial support of schools in local communities in the hope of attracting more persons into teaching. In this effort the Commission has been helped by such groups as the Advertising Council of America, and many lay periodicals.

5) State departments of education have been seeking to give leadership in the coordination of pre-service and in-service teacher education in many states. Such coordination is badly needed and the role of the state department at this point needs much further study.

6) Organizations of the teaching profession have been assuming more and more responsibility for recruitment and for improving pre-service teacher education as well as contributing to in-service education through the conferences and publications they sponsor. One promising trend has been for these organizations to join forces so that the gap between pre-service and in-service

education is constantly being reduced. An example of joint effort is the Council on Cooperation in Teacher Education, in which our own Association has been active from the beginning. This Council operates nationally and also has sparked a number of state councils on teacher education. The NEA Commission on Teacher Education already referred to has taken the initiative in bringing together representatives of lay and professional groups to consider the selection and preparation of teachers. The NEA through its sponsorship of the Future Teachers of America has made a further contribution. The Association for Childhood Education International has student branches on many college campuses. This gives opportunity for those getting ready to teach to learn some of the teacher's responsibilities to children and to the profession. Many other professional groups, our own Association among them, provide for college student participation in state and national conferences and offer reduced rates for membership in the organization while these young people are studying to be teachers.

7) Colleges and universities engaged in teacher preparation and the schools in their service areas are working together ever more closely on the process of the education of the teacher from the time of his recruitment from among high school students to the day when the young person is out in his own classroom. The schools more and more frequently are offering their facilities in order that the teacher in preparation may have desirable laboratory experiences in typical schools and communities. This means that local teachers often are volunteering to take on extra duties in order that they may help to induct more young people into their profession. Not only are the colleges

doing more follow-up work with recent graduates but their staff members are serving as consultants in local programs of curriculum improvement and are thus having a hand in the continuing in-service education of teachers.

All of these developments are encouraging for they provide the only sound answer to the question of who should assume responsibility for teacher education. In order to have any persons to educate for teaching in the first place, in order to provide realistic advance preparation for these persons, and then to help them continue to learn on the job as long as they go on teaching, we must have the help of many persons. Fathers and mothers and teachers must help by urging promising young people who seem suited to the teaching profession to investigate its merits. Community members in general must help by giving generous tax support for the education of young persons choosing teaching. They must help also by giving these teachers-to-be the feeling that they have chosen work of great worth to society. College personnel who have a chance to share in teacher education must want broadly educated persons and they must find the best ways they can to contribute from their own area of specialization to a cooperatively planned program for each student. Teachers, supervisors and administrators on the

job must continue to assume group and individual responsibility for growth on the job through making careful studies of the teaching function and sharing findings widely.

Whenever a great and difficult responsibility is shared among many persons, the problems of meeting the responsibility are manifold. Some of these problems are dealt with in various articles in this issue of *Educational Leadership* and detailed descriptions of promising developments are reported. It is hoped that those who are already at work on the problem will thus be encouraged to continue or even intensify their efforts.

Years ago a familiar recruiting poster for the United States Army showed a figure wearing stars and stripes pointing a finger and saying, "Uncle Sam Wants You!" No matter how much you shifted about, the finger still pointed at YOU. So with the responsibility for teacher education—it belongs to *you* and *you* and *you*. Yes, there are many things someone else should be doing about the problem. But what are YOU doing about it?

—ALICE MIEL, president, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, and professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City; and MARGARET LINDSEY, associate professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City.

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