

English

CHARLES SUHOR

New Guidelines Call for Better College-Level Teaching

Some predictable new emphases in course content and some surprisingly strong charges for college teachers appear in the new *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts*, formulated by the National Council of Teachers of English Standing Committee on Teacher Preparation and Certification. As anticipated, the revision of the 1976 NCTE guidelines reflects recent theory, research, and practice in calling for process-based instruction in English language arts; and consistent with views expressed by the Holmes Group and in the Carnegie Report, the guidelines stress rigorous academic programs in literature and language for prospective English teachers.

But the second section of the guidelines confronts one of the worst-kept secrets in American education—the one-dimensional pedagogy of college teachers in all disciplines. "College faculty in education and other disciplines can't just tell future teachers, 'Do as I say,' and expect good results," comments Denny Wolfe, chair of the committee that developed the guidelines. "University professors must demonstrate effective classroom practices. We're talking about human models: 'Do as I do.' Teachers need to be taught in effective and diverse ways, whether in methods courses, English, history, or other disciplines."

The guidelines state that college-level instruction should engage the preservice teacher "as an active learner" rather than as a notetaker in a four-year lecture series. College teachers should be "models of enthusiasm for their disciplines" as well as experts in their fields. Additionally, university faculty attitudes should "model concern for the individual student. These experiences will serve as a ground for the choices which students will make when they become teachers."

The guidelines hold that preservice students should be expected to become "analysts of effective teaching" both on and off the campus. They

should "be encouraged to analyze the instruction they receive and observe, asking themselves such questions as 'Why is it being done?' 'Did it work?' 'Why did it work?' 'How does it work?'"

While supporting the nationwide emphasis on better subject-area training for prospective teachers, the guidelines give equal emphasis to instruction in methodology. They place heavy responsibility for good teaching on the community of university teachers and prescribe that potential teachers become critical thinkers—not only in examining ideas in the various subject areas but also in considering the effectiveness of the instruction they receive. The message appears to be that academic rigor is no guarantee against rigor mortis in the classroom.

Copies of *Guidelines for Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* are available for \$2.50 from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801. □

Center for the Study of Writing to Stress Research Links with Practitioners

The new Center for the Study of Writing based at the University of California at Berkeley (UCB) will link closely with the National Writing Project (NWP) in an effort to make research more relevant to classroom instruction. During the next five years, the Center, led by Wallace Chafe and Sarah Freedman at Berkeley, will collaborate with James Gray and others at NWP to connect the worlds of research and practice.

The Center will focus on three program areas. In the area of Writing and the Writer, UCB researcher Anne Haas Dyson will study emerging literacy and the transition from home to school. Linda Flower and J. R. Hayes of Carnegie-Mellon University will study academic literacy and the transition to the university. In the second area, Writing and Instruction, two topics will be the effects of writing instruction on performance in science, which Mary Sue Ammon and Paul Ammon will examine, and the effects of testing on performance and instruction, to be studied by Charles Cooper. In the third area, How Writing is Best Linked with Reading, Speaking, and Computers, the University of Illinois Center for the Study of Reading will work with UCB on a synthesis of research in writing and reading, and several researchers from UCB will study authoring systems and collaborative writing on the computer.

Dissemination of findings will involve a series of experimental approaches, including a major paper geared toward tracing the implications of research for classroom teachers and a series of seminars for teachers stressing relationships between research and practice.

For additional information, write Sarah Washauer Freedman, director, Center for the Study of Writing, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Charles Suhor is director, ERIC Clearinghouse for Reading and Communication Skills, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

Call for Manuscripts

Deadline
October 1

Improving Learning Conditions for Students At Risk

Minority achievement, dropout prevention, bilingual education, learning disabilities. Research, exemplary programs.

Deadline
November 1

Appraisal for Professional Improvement

Research and exemplary practices in evaluation of teachers, administrators, and other educators. Relationships between appraisal, supervision, and staff development.

Deadline
December 1

Education in the Arts

Place of the visual and performing arts in general education for all students. Recent curriculum trends, descriptions of exemplary programs.

Copyright © 1986 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.