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EXAMINATIONS AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING.

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FUNCTIONS OF PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED, OBJECTIVE, STANDARDIZED TESTS FOR TEACHERS AND PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS, FOR NATIONWIDE USE, ARE DESCRIBED. THESE ARE (1) ADVANCING THE PRESERVICE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS BY DEMONSTRATING SIGNIFICANT TEST-SCORE DIFFERENCES AMONG STUDENTS FROM VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS, (2) IMPROVING CERTIFICATION OR LICENSING POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE COMPETENCIES OF EACH PROSPECTIVE TEACHER ON BASES APART FROM MERE COMPLETION OF COURSE WORK, (3) SELECTION OF TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL AT THE LOCAL DISTRICT LEVEL ON A BASIS BEYOND THAT FURNISHED BY STATE CERTIFICATION, (4) IMPROVING THE INSERVICE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS BY IDENTIFYING THE EXPERIENCED TEACHERS THE STATE WISHES TO ENCOURAGE TO REMAIN IN THE PROFESSION AND TO INCREASE THEIR JOB COMPETENCIES, AND (5) REALIZING TEACHERS' ASPIRATIONS FOR TRUE PROFESSIONAL STATUS THROUGH PROFESSIONAL CONTROL OVER TEACHER EXAMINATIONS. THIS PAPER WAS READ AT THE EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TESTING PROBLEMS (1964). (RF)

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■ CHAIRMAN LARSON: Our next speaker is Arthur Benson. I have known Art Benson for a good many years, and I was delighted when I learned that he was on the program. He's had almost a life time experience with teacher examinations. Art received his baccalaureate degree at Lehigh University. He has been a teacher and a counselor. He was a Psychological Research Assistant with the Army Air Force. He was an Assistant Supervisor of Guidance Services for the Maryland State Department of Education—maybe this is why I like him. He's sort of sympathetic when he talks with me. He was a Guidance Specialist with the United States Office of Education. He was awarded a Masters Degree from George Washington University. Presently, he is Director of Teacher Examinations with the Educational Testing Service, working out of the Princeton office.

He has authored a number of publications. He was a co-author with the late Cliff Froehlich of *Guidance, Testing*, a publication which a lot of counselors in California Public Schools really cut their teeth on. While with the Maryland State Department of Education, he was in charge of the State High Schools Equivalence Certificate Program. He was co-author of a manual on the IBM test scoring machine, published by the Air Force.

He now devotes his full time to the direction of examination services for evaluating qualifications of candidates for teaching, administrative, and supervisory positions in school systems. It is a real pleasure to present to you, Mr. Art Benson.

Examinations and the Advancement of Teaching

ARTHUR L. BENSON

Sandwiched as I am between two California educators on your morning program, it is comforting to me to look forward to the afternoon session when you will be addressed by two gentlemen, both of whom you will probably regard as coming from the eastern section of the country, although Bob Stake may remind you that Illinois is seldom ravaged by high tides. This is small comfort though, because I am still wondering if the Western Office had mislaid its marbles when it decided to invite me as the only speaker who has not, at one time or another, been engaged in what one of my worst friends refers to as "the dismal business of training teachers."

In choosing, several months ago, the topic "Examinations and the Advancement of Teaching" for my remarks at this conference, I was

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prompted by two considerations. The title had to be sufficiently ambiguous to encompass anything the spirit might move me to say today. Further, it had to be amenable to such delimiting as might enable me logically to avoid discussing matters which I would prefer to leave unsaid. Having made this confession of original duplicity, let me proceed now to the necessary, and comparatively straight-forward, hedging.

Without any intention of deprecating teacher-made tests, essay tests, or any other techniques for measuring student behavior, I shall confine my remarks to examinations which are *not* locally-prepared, which can be objectively scored, and which have been standardized so as to yield normative data of wider significance than the distribution of scores obtained in a single college or school system. In short, I shall discuss only examinations which are published for use by many colleges and school systems and are commonly described as objective, standardized tests.

A few basic assumptions underlie the remainder of my remarks. I believe that one of the many roles a teacher is called on to perform is that of a director of learning, and, consequently, that the teacher should know something about the direction of learning. Perhaps you will permit me to define this very broadly to include knowledge of the learner as well as of the teaching-learning process. Hence, it is my conviction that teachers should possess a body of knowledge not possessed by non-teachers and that the acquisition of this knowledge requires a relatively long period of study and preparation. I have deliberately avoided the assertion that this preparation must all be formally pursued in college. On the other hand, I would insist that in no profession worthy of that name can the specialized knowledge of the profession be learned during a relatively short period of on-the-job training.

I believe also that while the teacher must direct many kinds of learning, the learnings to which our culture expects the school to devote its primary attention encompass intellectual, as contrasted with emotional or social, development. Moreover, I would contend that the teacher himself must, within reasonable limits, exhibit the behaviors he attempts to teach, or at least be capable of learning these behaviors, and I see no necessary contradiction between this position and Margaret Mead's assertion that teachers must be able to teach what they don't know.

Finally, as a staff member of the Educational Testing Service, it
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may be important for me to confess where my primary allegiance lies in the variegated educational enterprise to which all of us here are devoting a major portion of our energies. When I am not in my own country, that is when I am more than forty miles from Princeton, New Jersey, two things commonly happen to me. I am often awarded a traveling Doctor's Degree, and, I am usually perceived as a measurement specialist. Both counts are wrong, but only on the latter do I consider it worth the while to set the record straight. In my own eyes, I am a teacher first and foremost. If I am a measurement specialist at all, it is only to the extent that I know enough of the psychometric lingo to translate educators' requests for testing services into terms which ETS measurement specialists can understand. In brief, my day-to-day job is to talk with teachers, school administrators, and professors of education on the one hand, and to statisticians, item-writers, and computer programmers on the other hand. If you have ever had to communicate with such diverse groups, you realize that I need to speak several languages, none of which, I sometimes think, is English.

So much for basic assumptions and personal idiosyncracies! Let me plunge ahead into a brief summary of the five major points which I wish to discuss, as well as acknowledge that one point which may be uppermost in the minds of a few of you is not, in my humble opinion, worth discussing. In summary, I would like to comment in much too brief and over-simplified terms on what I perceive to be five proper roles of examinations in the advancement of:

1. The pre-service preparation of teachers,
2. certification or licensing policies and practices,
3. the selection of professional personnel at the local district level,
4. the in-service education of teachers, and
5. the aspirations of teachers toward true professional status.

Some of you may have noted with scarcely-concealed glee that I have carefully avoided any mention of the role of teacher examinations in improving the classroom performance of teachers. It may be wearisome, but if this issue is broached in the discussion period, I can be persuaded to deal with it. Let me warn you, however, that anyone who asks for validity coefficients relating scores on teacher examinations to "teaching success," or "teaching effectiveness," will be asked to define these elusive constructs, to describe his criteria of teaching success in behavioral terms, and to cite validity coefficients between these criteria and the particular course he teaches or the

kind of pre-service teacher education program he espouses. Until educational research provides us with better constructs for describing the teaching-learning process, and until the profession itself makes the essential value judgments with respect to "good" and "bad" teaching, debates about the statistical validity of different teacher education programs, certification standards, and selection procedures, are, in my judgment, exercises of less than fascinating futility.

The multiple roles which examinations can perform in *advancing the pre-service preparation of teachers*, I dealt with systematically, and at some length, in an article published nearly five years ago. Since time will not permit me to review the details of that paper, I will be flattered if a permit of you note that it appeared in the December, 1959, issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education*. In this article, I proposed two primary functions which appropriate tests can serve with respect to pre-service preparation: namely, the development of individual students, and the development of individual institutions. Members of this conference do not need to be reminded that both of these notions evolve from the concept of individual differences—the recognition that individual students are different and that individual institutions are different. All of us here are well aware of the wide range of individual differences among students. But on the assumption that many of us have had limited opportunities during our professional careers to gain perspective on the range of institutional differences, I should like to discuss this matter more fully.

Three states, the two Carolinas and West Virginia, currently require all college seniors preparing to teach in their states to take teacher examinations. This requirement enables these three State Departments of Education to conduct continuing research studies on the test performance of graduates from each of the institutions which they approve for teacher preparation, and to analyze the achievement in professional education, general education, and subject-matter specialization demonstrated by seniors completing preparation for each of the various teaching fields or levels for which the State authorizes professional certification. Outside of these three states, approximately 150 institutions in the country require all seniors to take either the National Teacher Examinations or the tests offered in the Teacher Education Examination Program. The test performance of graduates from each of these institutions is highly confidential. It is not, however, a secret that on any one of the many tests

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offered in these two testing programs, we at ETS can identify each year several institutions where the highest-scoring seniors score below the lowest-scoring seniors at several other institutions. This phenomenon can occur within a single state, with all institutions, both high-scoring and low-scoring, approved by the State Department of Education, by the appropriate Regional Association, and in a few lamentable instances, which I trust are the result of inheritance rather than evaluative studies, by the National Council on Accreditation for Teacher Education.

I do not know whether such wide institutional differences exist in the 13 States represented at this conference. Neither the National Teacher Examinations nor the Teacher Education Examination Program has excited much interest in this region. Nevertheless, some not wholly irrelevant data are available for 58 of the 146 institutions preparing teachers in your states.

You may be aware that just about a year ago ETS invited all 1150 of the teacher education institutions in the country to participate in a nationwide survey of teacher education. Each institution accepting this invitation administered to its seniors preparing to teach a 50-item, 40-minute objective test sampling the students' knowledge of professional education and general education, plus a ten-minute questionnaire. Fifty-eight institutions in the Western Region gave the Teacher Education Survey test to all seniors preparing to teach, or to a large, and presumably representative, sample of this group, testing a total of nearly 3500 students in the process. For the 58 self-selected Western colleges, the mean raw score on the 50-item Survey test was 25.8. This may be mildly gratifying in comparison with the mean of 25.3 for the 582 institutions in the nation which tested 20 or more seniors.

Since the standard deviation of institutional means was 4.5, it may be more satisfying to note that not a single one of the 58 Western colleges achieved a mean more than two sigmas below the national mean. There were 36 such colleges in the national sample, and it is to such institutions one of my colleagues refers when he rails against "degree-granting junior high schools."

On the other hand, none of the 58 Western colleges earned mean scores more than two sigmas above the national mean. This shouldn't be disturbing as only three colleges in the rest of the country achieved such excellence. Perhaps my colleague will designate these institutions as ones which award Bachelor's Degrees for Master's work.

It was not entirely idle curiosity which prompted me last week to identify the dozen highest-scoring and the dozen lowest-scoring colleges among the 58 administering the Survey test in your region. From each of these two groups of institutions, I selected four, all of which are accredited by a Regional Association. My four high-scoring institutions are located in four different states, and include one private college, one church-related college, and two state-controlled colleges; one offers work only at the Bachelor's level, one at the Master's level, and two at the Doctoral level. The four low-scoring colleges are located in three different states; one is church-related and three are state controlled; one offers work only at the Bachelor's level, and the other three at the Master's level. As to NCATE accreditation, two of the four high-scoring institutions are approved by NCATE, as are three of the low-scoring institutions.

Now I shall not draw any conclusions from the data presented thus far, and I sincerely hope you don't because they would be unjustified. My whole purpose in citing the test performance of the 320 seniors at the four high-scoring colleges and the 284 seniors at the four low-scoring colleges is to demonstrate that institutional differences are not insignificant in a region of the country which is generally considered, and properly so, well-favored in the educational opportunities it affords its youth. The mean score of the four high-scoring colleges is 30.2, and of the four low-scoring colleges 21.7, not quite two full standard deviations apart. Perhaps easier to understand is the fact that less than 17% of the students at the low-scoring colleges achieved the median score earned at the four high-scoring colleges. In other words, more than 83 percent of the seniors at the low-scoring colleges demonstrated less professional and general cultural knowledge, as sampled by the test, than the average senior at the four high-scoring colleges.

At the risk of over-emphasizing this matter of institutional differences, let me cite two more bits of data. Fifty-nine percent of the relatively poor scores achieved by seniors at the four low-scoring colleges were matched by equally low scores at the high-scoring colleges. On the other hand, 41% of the relatively good scores obtained by seniors at the high-scoring colleges were not matched by equally high scores at the four low-scoring colleges. I doubt that I would be indulging in particularly censurable speculation in suggesting the possibility that even in this region, for whose teacher education institutions I have the greatest respect, whether a student graduates

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with a straight "B" average or a straight "D" average may depend to a significant degree on the institution which he attends.

From my viewpoint, the use of test results to demonstrate significant differences between institutions and their products is like, if I may be pardoned for conforming to the current craze, using a foot-rule to prove that adult Indian elephants are larger than adult pygmy elephants. But this difference in size may not be apparent unless both are viewed from the same distance. If you agree that the range of differences among teacher education institutions is probably wider than either the institutions themselves, or the consumers of their products, ought to tolerate, then you may be persuaded to explore the proper functions of examinations in advancing the pre-service preparation of teachers. The December, 1959, article referred to earlier was designed as a rough map to guide explorers of this almost taboo territory.

In discussing the role of examinations in *improving certification or licensing policies and practices*, I will not make any distinction between certification and licensure, although I find myself in substantial agreement with the views expressed by Professor Lucien Kinney in his excellent and timely book entitled *Certification in Education*. For the present, I am going to assume that most of us have not recognized the importance of distinguishing between a certificate issued by the state and a license issued by the profession, although on this distinction may hang the future status of teaching.

Regardless of how that issue is finally settled, I am convinced that the teacher education institutions of this country will not be free to determine the specifics of their own teacher education programs until such time as either the state, or the profession, and possibly both, accept their responsibility to evaluate the competencies of each prospective teacher as an individual, and *not* assume that he possesses the desired competencies simply because he has completed a process which is generally approved. Let me hasten to add that I recognize the enormity of individually evaluating each petitioner for a seal of approval to teach. But because such a task would be difficult, expensive, and perhaps completely beyond the resources of existing agencies does not mean that it is the wrong approach.

The city of Chicago certifies more professional personnel each year than do some states, and the Board of Examiners for that city finds it feasible to require each applicant not only to meet fairly broad requirements with respect to pre-service preparation, but also

to meet its standards on written examinations, and to satisfy a professional interviewing committee of his personal fitness to teach. Three states, Florida and the two Carolinas, currently require all applicants for regular certification to meet minimum examination score-standards regardless of the amount and nature of the college preparation shown on their transcripts. In addition, Delaware, Georgia, South Carolina, and West Virginia permit experienced fully-certificated teachers to add new teaching fields to their certificates if they are able to demonstrate by examinations that they are as well informed on content and methods of teaching in these fields as the average candidate who has completed a regularly-approved program.

West Virginia actually goes one step further. It offers provisional certificates to college graduates who have *not* completed an approved program of teacher preparation if they can demonstrate by examination that they are as knowledgeable in professional education, general education, and subject-matter specialization as the average graduate of an approved program in West Virginia; after three years of successful teaching on a provisional certificate, such a teacher may be awarded a standard professional certificate if he is recommended by his employing superintendent and by the supervisor in charge of his three-year internship period. The West Virginia program was adopted in 1958, and it has not proved to be a popular means for circumventing normal pre-service preparation. On the contrary, it appears to have served mainly to take the wind out of the sails of nautical critics, and their disciples, who are appalled by the fact that Albert Einstein could not have been certificated to teach physics in Princeton High School or Charles Laughton to teach drama in Hollywood High. Finally, Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania use the results of the MLA Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students as a basis for certificating teachers who speak a language as their native tongue, but can not meet course requirements in the language.

I will mention only briefly the roles of examinations in *selecting professional personnel at the local district level*. To the best of my knowledge, Los Angeles and San Francisco are the only two districts in your region which are using test results to provide assurance of teacher competence beyond that furnished by state certification. However, in the selection of promotional personnel (administrators, supervisors, and to a lesser extent, counselors) the use of examination results by local districts in the initial screening of promotional applicants is becoming quite widespread. Again, I would not defend this

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practice by attempting to cite validity coefficients because of the criteria problem. But the research reported by Hemphill, Griffiths, and Frederiksen in their book on *Administrative Performance and Personality* yielded encouraging statistical evidence that objective tests can make constructive contributions to administrator selection, as well as reduce non-professional influence on appointments to leadership positions. Of the nearly 100 local districts in the country which use examinations as a factor in selecting some promotional personnel, at least 20% are located in your region.

My next point refers to the roles of examinations in *improving the in-service education of teachers*. It would be exciting for me, and perhaps not unduly tiresome for you, if I could describe programs involving diagnostic use of teacher examination results as a basis for individualizing in-service education programs under the auspices of local districts. Unfortunately, this is not the case. So far as I can discover, effective communications along these lines between school personnel officers in local districts and those charged with conducting the districts' in-service programs are tenuous if not non-existent in most school systems of the country.

However, I can outline the main features of a state-wide program in which test scores are used as a major factor in identifying experienced teachers the state wishes to encourage to remain in the profession and to increase their competencies on the job. Four years ago, Georgia inaugurated a Professional Advancement Fellowship Program in which scores on tests of professional education, general education, and subject-field knowledge are used by the State Department of Education as an important factor in awarding to tenure teachers fellowships to complete, through summer school attendance, planned fifth-year programs, or sixth-year programs if the fifth year has already been completed. On the successful completion of these programs, higher certificate ranks are awarded, along with accompanying salary increases. The State Department of Education, in conjunction with its Council on Teacher Education, has developed guidelines for fifth-year and sixth-year programs which specify a minimum amount of preparation in the teacher's subject field rather than in Education courses. The Professional Advancement Fellowship Program is operated under regulations designed to assist experienced teachers to achieve such diverse objectives as: strengthening their subject matter competence, preparing themselves for teaching fields in short supply, developing the abilities needed for advancement to

leadership posts, and demonstrating their qualifications for salaries at a truly professional level. While the salary increment earned by successful completion of a fifth-year program is modest, Georgia awards a \$1,000 salary increment to teachers completing a sixth-year of study through summer school attendance subsidized by grants to those able to achieve the State's examination standards and other requirements.

Georgia laymen and legislators seem genuinely satisfied with the program since it assures that substantial tax monies have not been dissipated on "across the board" salary increases, but have been selectively distributed to teachers able to achieve specified performance on comprehensive objective tests. Teachers generally applaud the fact that the program implements the traditional principle that higher salaries should accompany advanced college preparation. Colleges are enjoying larger numbers of well-qualified graduate students in their summer schools. And last, but by no means least, the press has backed the program as a major breakthrough in the impasse between the public and the profession which has characterized teacher salary negotiations throughout the country during the past few years.

Finally, what contributions can examinations make in *realizing teachers' aspirations for true professional status*? Well, to be honest, I am not sure that teachers over the country understand what being a member of a profession entails, or that they are willing to take advantage of professional privileges with due restraint, or to assume professional obligations with mature responsibility. I am reminded that several thousand years ago the Israelite slaves of Egypt wanted to be free, but if I read the record right, there is little evidence they wanted to enter the promised land or to accept their role as a chosen people. Perhaps those who would take up Moses' staff today and lead us toward a true profession might review with profit the sobering history of those 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.

Furthermore, professionalization of teaching inevitably involves a relocation of power. A professional controls himself, or is controlled only by his peers, and admission to the peerage is controlled by the peers. I suggest that it may be a good deal easier for teacher associations to gain control over national testing programs for those seeking membership in the associations than it will be for them to win control of institutions whose unique function in society resides in their right to teach what they damned well please.

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Control of teacher examinations by the profession is already well under way. The national advisory committee which Educational Testing Service appoints to guide it in the development of teacher examinations is composed entirely of professional educators—state and local school officials, faculty members of teacher institutions, officers of national professional associations, and the like.

The two major teacher examination programs which ETS sponsors are currently being revised in accordance with recommendations made by committees nominated by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and by the National Commission for Teacher Education and Professional Standards. Each of the NTE options in the various teaching fields is being re-designed by a test review committee named by the professional association representing teachers in that field. In short, control over the major instruments available in this country for measuring academic preparation for teaching is now largely in the hands of the profession itself. If it uses these instruments wisely, they may be made sharp enough to hew a path through the wilderness in less than 40 years.

Can examinations make a significant contribution to the advancement of teaching? I think they can, and I believe that the nature of this contribution may depend very largely on the imagination and wit we, as teachers, exercise in the use of these tools.

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