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ABSTRACT

An alternative to the traditional Ph.D. program in English is a master's degree program designed specifically for junior college English instructors. The existing master's program at Illinois State University, which includes courses in psychology, speech, sociology, education, and a teaching internship of at least one semester in a community college, is presented as an example of such a program. Additional courses that would further increase the competence of junior college English teachers are also suggested. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (RC)

Fifth Annual Southeast Regional Conference
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A Ph. D. In English For Community College Teachers?

The question I have been asked to answer is "Do I believe in the traditional English Ph.D. program as training for the junior college teacher?"

My answer is an emphatic. "No!" I would add that I do not believe the traditional English masters is any good, and most of the masters degrees in the teaching of English are of little value. On the other hand, I can conceive of certain Ph.D. programs that would produce a valuable man for junior college English departments, and I can see a strong possibility for an Ed.D. or Doctor of Arts program being developed which would be helpful for those who wish to do good work in a community college. More of that in a moment.

More to the point is the question, "What can we do right now that will get people into the field one or two years from now?" The course offered at Illinois State will produce not only a competent, but an imaginative community college English teacher in two years, and it can be offered right now at any school that gives a masters in English. It is based on several presuppositions, however, and it is the belief that these ideas are true which will allow a school to accept such a course. The first belief is that a broad and solid English masters degree will supply enough course content for the informed teaching of any English course taught in the transfer area of a junior college. We also believe that certain courses taught by the departments of psychology, speech, sociology and education provide prerequisite or highly desirable information which the future teacher can use whether he teaches in the transfer area or out of it. Finally, we believe that an internship of at least one semester in a community college is necessary.

The Illinois State course of study appended here reflects these preconceptions. If I were asked to criticize it, I would say that the department should offer graduate courses in the genre of poetry, fiction, and drama, and more linguistics courses should be available. In the area of linguistics the present staff is not adequate, and in the other areas not willing to offer these courses. Courses in world literature are available and are not in the course

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description, only because Illinois junior college teachers are not required to teach this area very often.

When a student has completed this broad and strong 2 semester hours he has the self confidence about his subject matter which will allow him to hold his head up as a genuine college teacher. If he needs respect from his peers in colleges and universities, he does not have to demand it. He has earned it. If a university offers such a masters degree it can begin now to produce trained junior college teachers of English.

It can begin now, because the additional prerequisite courses are either offered now in the other academic departments or can be quickly developed. Finally, it can begin now, because with two year's lead, time and some good will, internships can be created in nearby community colleges.

With this course we will have produced a community college teacher with from 47 to 50 semester hours of graduate credit. Should he go on for a Ph.D.? Here, as I said before, my answer would be "Yes," if there were a Ph.D. program to train a person to teach remedial writing, remedial reading, or to study the linguistic variations in American dialects so that proper procedures for teaching writing in standard English could be developed. Yet, even if this were the course the teacher wished to pursue, if the college or the teacher felt he needed the prestige which goes with the appellation Doctor, we should question the system which produces such a need. I find myself agreeing with very few reservations with the proposals reported by Ian McNett in his article "Graduate Deans Seek Doctorate for Teaching" in the December 8, 1969 Chronicle of Higher Education. Two new Ph.D. programs have been suggested, and I would not object too much to this degree. However, I think that a Doctor of Arts or an Ed.D. might be awarded in its place. According to McNett, the gist of the proposal made by Michael J. Brennan, Graduate Dean at Brown University is

a new teaching doctorate designed specifically for the education of prospective junior and four-year college teachers.

A one-year, supervised teaching internship should be an integral part of the degree program, In place of the research dissertation, Mr. Brennan proposed an "expository dissertation" of relatively modest length. The student would be expected to display in writing a "clear and well-organized presentation of a problem, theme, or idea--drawing not only upon his major discipline but also upon his knowledge of other relevant disciplines."

Herbert Weisinger, Graduate Dean at the State University of New York at Stony Brook would alter this by requiring the Ph.D. candidate to teach two years in a community or four-year college, after which the candidate would be awarded the degree if he had successfully done this work "as attested by the department in which the teaching has been done" (p.8).

But, these programs are in the future, and the course I have proposed can be begun now. In addition, departments which do not offer the doctorate might well consider this for the future. Why not create a masters degree for people who propose to teach English in the community college which would be awarded upon the completion of a course of study which would begin in the candidate's junior year. We ask students to declare that they wish to be primary or secondary school teachers as early as their freshman year so that they may be prepared by the time they receive their B.A. degree. Why would it be unreasonable to ask a student to declare his intention to get a masters degree to teach in a community college when he begins his junior year? Nearly every course or experience in the program offered at Illinois State could be reproduced in a three-year course of study beginning with the junior year. The bachelors degree and the masters degree might have to be awarded at the same time, but how could this cause anyone any difficulty? Again, let me say that such a course could be initiated almost at once in any university using existing faculty and course offerings.

The training of people to teach English in the community college need not be such a great problem. It is, perhaps, because the solution is so simple that it has not been attempted. Does the community college teacher need the doctorate? Yes, if as a result of his pursuit of more information relevant to his teaching commitment he is awarded one. No, he does not if he needs it to provide him or his institution with prestige. His education should have provided him with the assurance that a doctorate artificially would provide. He should carry himself with the confidence that a doctorate is supposed to insure. His success in the classroom should allow him to look at those with the doctorate without feeling inferior. For with proper preparation, he might be highly competent with only a masters degree, or a masters degree plus 15 to 18 semester hours.

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CURRICULUM FOR TWO YEAR COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS

A. Academic Requirements

This program is designed to meet four requirements of a well trained junior college English Teacher. (1) He must have a well-rounded, solid, subject matter master's degree in English with special courses in the teaching of reading, (2) He must have a knowledge of the nature and function of the junior college, (3) He must have a knowledge of the psychology and socio-economic background of his students, (4) Under close supervision, he must have practice teaching junior college students.

The master's degree program has been designed so that while the student will have some flexibility in the selection of his course, he will be required to take certain courses which experienced, practicing junior college English teachers have suggested should be in his program.

It is strongly recommended that the fellow choose to take a comprehensive examination rather than write a thesis to fulfill the English master's degree requirements.

The fellow will be expected to take this program over a period of two years. Consequently, it is expected that at the end of his first academic year, he will take in his second semester or summer session those courses specifically related to teaching English in the two-year college. He will take his internship and teaching seminar in the fall of his second year. The spring and summer sessions following will be devoted to completing whatever requirements are needed to finish the program as outlined.

B. Course of Study*

1. Courses in three historical periods 9 hours

Eng 416 Studies in 18th Century English Literature
Eng 452 Studies in the Renaissance
Eng 453 Studies in the Enlightenment
Eng 414 Studies in 16th Century English Literature
Eng 415 Studies in 17th Century English Literature

2. Course in two major authors 6 hours

Eng 420 Studies in Chaucer
Eng 422 Studies in Shakespeare
Eng 424 Studies in Milton

* The selection and order of these courses is subject to English Department modification to meet the needs of the fellows.

3. Courses in two genres 6 hours

- Eng 327 Restoration and 18th Century English Drama
- Eng 328 Modern British and American Drama
- Eng 386 The 18th Century English Novel
- Eng 387 The 19th Century English Novel
- Eng 388 The 20th Century English Novel
- Eng 418 Studies in 19th Century English Poetry
- Eng 487 Studies in the American Novel
- Eng 382 Literary Criticism

4. One course in linguistics 3 hours

- Eng 310 History and Development of the English Language
- Eng 493 Topics in English -- An Introduction to Linguistics
A introduction to linguistics approaches to the description of American English grammar, with emphasis on generative grammar and its application to writing.

5. Speech 370 Psycholinguistics 3 hours

6. One course in American Literature

- Eng 332 Studies in American Literature
- Eng 434 Studies in Contemporary American Literature

7. Eng 493 Topics in English -- Rhetoric 3 hours

An intensive review of the principles of the new rhetoric, principles of grading, and criticizing student papers, including practice in the writing of all forms taught.

8. Eng 497 Research Seminar 2 hours

Courses Designed for Training English Teachers in the Two-Year College

Ed 472, 498, 491, and Soc 369 are required, and Ed 303 and/or Psych 360

1. Sociology 369 The Psychology and Sociology of the Community College Student 3 hours
2. Psychology 360 Learning 3 hours

3. Ed 472 The Community (Junior) College 3 hours

A study of the history of the American Community College movement and the development of its philosophies. Includes an introduction to faculty government, constitutions, committees, state certification laws, accrediting, financing, administrative organization, the bargaining agent, curriculum development, and recent experiments and innovations.

4. Ed 303 Practicum in University Reading Study Center 3 hours
5. Ed 474 Seminar in College Teaching 3 hours
6. Ed 470 Teaching in the Community (Junior) College 2 hours
7. Ed 498 Internship 3-8 hours
8. Ed 491 Internship--Seminar in College Teaching 3 hours

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