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ABSTRACT

In the past, people who taught in community colleges had been prepared in one of three ways: (1) a degree and experience in the secondary school; (2) master's degrees in typical academic programs; and (3) for vocational-technical programs, experience in a certain occupation and a little training in pedagogy. Forms of teacher preparation today are roughly the same. Few community college teacher preparation programs offer an adequate core of planned experiences, and too little attention is paid to the literature in post-secondary education. Internships, particularly paid ones, in junior/community college teaching, valuable training experiences, have suffered from the cutbacks prevalent today. But inservice programs and other teacher developmental programs are increasing. Credentialing is usually left to either universities or State boards of education and is often haphazard. The master's remains the most common degree for community college teaching personnel. The Doctor of Arts in Teaching has recently been introduced as an alternative to the ordinary doctorate. No radical change in teacher preparation or credentialing is anticipated. But it is hoped that greater selectivity and consideration of personality factors will mark future teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation courses will probably improve, due to more literature on the subject and better dissemination of same. Inservice programs will last only if participants find them effective. It is hoped teacher selection and preparation may someday emphasize development of the whole person as the best way to prepare good teachers. (KM)

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Community College Teacher Preparation: Past, Present, Future

by Florence B. Brawer

We live in a stream of time--past, present, future. When we are functioning well, we concentrate on the here and now, but it is impossible to completely divorce ourselves from the past. And the future looms soon.

So it is with teacher preparation. Previously, those people who taught in community colleges, either private or public, had been prepared through one of three channels. The teacher who moved up the ladder from the secondary school to the two-year college had typically earned his degree earlier in the course of his educational preparation. In some states, his experience was sufficient to ensure his credentialing as a junior college instructor. Other teachers received master's degrees in typical academic programs in liberal arts colleges or universities. And still others, those in so-called vocational-technical programs, had worked in certain occupational fields and thus were ostensibly equipped to pass on their knowledge. In some states, additional training was required in pedagogy for members of these groups.

Whether or not this type of teacher preparation was adequate is a problem outside the scope of this paper. Suffice to say that many community college students were exposed to the best type of education then available while many others were short-shifted; whether this was due to the teachers' personalities, their training, the curriculum, or the students themselves, we do not know. We do know, however, that because of the junior college, many people were able to extend their

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education beyond the 12th grade. At the same time, many others entered programs that they did not complete. Do such things as attrition or satisfaction have anything directly to do with the teacher's preparation? How does one ever assess cause and effect? Condition and result?

The older forms of teacher preparation that I have just sketched do not differ too markedly from those in practice today. Although normal schools have become a thing of the past, community college instructors are still being prepared in universities and liberal arts colleges. They are still receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in some major discipline, still taking a smattering of how-to-do-it courses that are sprinkled with educationese and are often bemoaned as irrelevant, boring, time wasters, or whatever choice words one reserves for necessary evils.

For the would-be classroom teacher who is about to face a variety of students with a variety of interests in the 1100 community and junior colleges throughout the country, some preparation sequences do differ from those of the past. A growing number of universities (at least 200) have special courses in higher education and/or community college education. Some offer core courses covering all forms of post-secondary education and encourage their students to specialize in a particular segment of the field--whether this be junior college, curriculum, adult education, or the like. The person who is preparing to teach technical courses still comes from the ranks--having earned his position by virtue of his experience on the job. The tendency is to encourage this instructor to gain a Bachelor's Degree and with a few specialized courses in educational techniques or the political history of the United States, he is presumed ready to train others in the things he knows and does best.

Essentially though, people who plan junior college teaching careers spend most of their time majoring in some field or other and take only a minimum of education courses. Very few colleges or universities offer anything like a course in the discipline of instruction. People like Art Cohen might preach the necessity of such a discipline but they still stand alone--advanced thinkers who may or may not get a chance to see their theories tried out in practice. True, many of those now involved in education are talking about things like objectives and accountability and the open-door concept, issues that were seldom expressed in previous times. But the organizing discipline is still inchoate.

Today's prospective teacher is aware that he will face a different breed of students than his older counterparts faced. If he knows anything at all about the community college, he knows that many of his eventual students will fit better into so-called remedial courses than the more conventional college transfer sequences. And if he is especially sensitive and conscious of his role as teacher, he may even know that he is as much responsible for his students' learning as are the students themselves. Indeed, he may even recognize the fact that unless his students learn, he will not have taught.

Like the college student of depression days, the individual who is now being trained for a community college teaching position is undoubtedly also more aware of the realities that will confront him than was the student of 5 or 10 years ago. He knows that the outlook for employment is grim--given the falling enrollments, the moratorium on new schools and new programs, the cutbacks in federal and state funding. He knows that for almost every teaching or administrative position open in almost any community college in the nation, there are several hundred applicants.

He also knows that if he does get a position, he will be faced with various evaluation hurdles that must be surpassed before tenure is awarded, and that declining enrollments make even a tenured position tenuous. Although this should, hopefully, help him face himself--self-encounter is, at best, a difficult task.

Among those universities that do have programs in community college teacher preparation, it is difficult to find a central core of planned experiences. Most offer a course in history of the junior/community college and attempt to familiarize the prospective instructor with the types of students he will eventually encounter--if he is lucky enough to attain a teaching position. However, much variation exists in the amount of time spent studying the community college, in the availability of practice-teaching experiences, in the amount of attention paid to the growing literature that deals with post-secondary education. Unfortunately, in most programs, minimum emphasis is placed on reading in the field and a tendency toward professional aliteracy is fostered accordingly.

There are further variations. About 100 institutions have offered internships in junior/community college teaching, programs that usually include a practice teaching position in some two-year college and concurrent enrollment in a course conducted in a proximate university. In some situations the internship provides a paid position for the neophyte teacher. However, this type of program, so meaningful for so many people making the transition from student to teacher, is one that has suffered noteceably from the cutbacks prevalent today. With teaching positions at a premium, many schools that formerly employed paid interns now prefer to hire credentialed instructors, often those who already have experienced community college teaching, and the impact of the internship on the person

moving into the teaching role thus has been lost.

At the same time, in-service programs at many community colleges offer assistance to both the new instructor and the older incumbent. These include orientation programs, usually held during the summer or the early fall; in-house courses built on a special focus (for example, building objectives);and retreats designed for any number of reasons--ranging from a "Let's get to know one another" thesis to a concentration on a special issue, perhaps the possibility of forming cooperative liaisons around a media form, or trying to effect a particular administrative change. Some schools (for example, Miami-Dade Junior College, North Campus) have designed teacher developmental programs that employ an in-house professional consultant; these also offer a stimulus to call in outside consultants when deemed helpful. The Danforth Foundation has instituted a series of in-service programs under the directorship of Gene Schwilck. Here faculty and administrator teams from various colleges get together to work on problems indigenous to their own campus.

In addition to orientation programs and an occasional workshop or retreat, other systems have been developed to work with teachers on a helping basis. A rather unusual program of in-service training at Golden West College in California uses evaluation as the crux of an individualized program to assist faculty members. At the beginning of the school year, the Dean of Instruction, Bill Shawl, or his designate meets with those instructors who have elected an evaluation form called Assessment of Student Learning or ASL. This represents about half of the college's total faculty. Instead of opting for class visitations as a form of evaluation--and evaluation, incidentally, has been instituted by recent California state legislation as necessary for all faculties

in elementary and secondary schools as well as two-year colleges--these faculty members have chosen to work with the dean on defining their objectives for the school year. This includes their actual classroom objectives for their students as well as statements regarding plans for community service, professional upgrading, and development of instructional media. At some time during the year, each faculty member again meets individually with the same administrator to assess the extent to which these objectives have been met. Evaluation in this case is less for the sake of retention or dismissal than for purposes of working directly with the instructor on a one-to-one basis so that he, in turn, can more effectively deal with his students. Actually, there are positive extra results stemming from this procedure. Not only do the dean and faculty members get to know each other in a working relationship but the faculty member is given directed guidance that he might not obtain in any other meeting or orientation session. This school also makes independent study contracts available in which faculty members are granted professional improvement credit for salary advancement. Although there are a variety of in-house programs throughout the country, this one at Golden West continues to be an outstanding example of the way dedicated administrators can work with equally dedicated faculty. Incidentally, these practices have encouraged a number of faculty members to return to the university for their doctorates and, in general, have made a decided impact on a faculty that is truly a professional body of unique individuals.

Before speculating about future training activities, a word about contemporary credentialing and degree requirements is in order. Credentialing, rather than being under the control of community college

instructors as a professional group, is usually left to either universities or state boards of education. In some states the individual who has received a master's degree in a subject-matter field and has fulfilled a few minor obligations can merely write to the state chancellor's office and in time, receive his credential to teach in any one of the state's community colleges. Some states do not require credentials at all but leave the matter of faculty qualification to the employing college districts and to the universities that train their would-be teachers.

As for degrees--in general, the master's still remains the most popular degree for community college teaching personnel. In the past few years especially, when certain positions have been at a premium, a number of people who had earned their doctorates and who had earlier planned to teach in universities or work in specialized industries, have turned to junior college teaching. Even so, the number of doctorates is small (7 per cent) compared to the masters (70 per cent) among community college instructors.

Quite recently, the Doctor of Arts in Teaching has been introduced as an alternate degree. Dan Fader at the University of Michigan, for example, has developed a program leading to the D.A.T. and others appear throughout the country. Whether this specialized degree, stressing actual teaching expertise rather than research abilities, will eventually become the most popular degree for community college instructors remains to be seen. In the final analysis, I would hope that it will be what the degree represents in terms of effective teaching rather than its actual nomenclature that is emphasized.

So much, then, for past and present. What about training future teachers for future community college positions? How will tomorrow's

training experiences compare to today's? Will they be left to individual universities or will the community colleges themselves take a more active role? It is hard to separate speculation from wishful thinking, but let me quickly sketch the fairly immediate future as I see it and at the same time, indulge in things I'd like to see happen.

Unfortunately, in teacher preparation programs, as in much of education, change crawls rather than leaps in giant steps. Teacher training in universities will probably continue to go along pretty much as it is now. In fact, for awhile, university programs might actually become a bit less challenging because, hard pressed for students, they may open their doors to a number of students who should be educated, who have the right to as much schooling as they want, but really would not make good teachers. This sounds pessimistic, but I am making a plea for continued selection for a field that should pride itself on its faculty and its faculty commitment to teaching. Personality factors rather than intellectual ones seem to play the major role in determining who can be the most effective teacher--the person who is flexible rather than authoritarian or rigid, the one who is open to new ideas, who bases his professional life on concepts of maturity that he holds and evidences in his everyday living. Therefore, selection for teaching should be based on the whole person, not just his ability to pass certain entrance requirements or construct a working syllabus. At the same time, if hordes of would-be teachers appear at the doors of hungry universities with empty classrooms, there will inevitably be a decided temptation to admit all who would enter. In this case, then selection would become even more difficult for college administrators than it is at present.

Regarding the credentialing of potential instructors: Here, too,

we shall probably see a repetition of what is and has been rather than what could be. State agencies, whether knowledgeable or not about the subtleties of the community college, will probably continue to award credentials in those states where they are required. Wouldn't it be nice, though, if junior college faculties were really cohesive professional groups that could police their entrants and their pre-service programs--much as the medical profession does? Again, there is often a wide gap between what could be and what is.

The question about degrees has already been asked--and unanswered. In areas with well-developed community college and university systems--California, Florida, Illinois, Texas, for example--the Ph.D. and/or Ed.D. may become more popular, especially if salary schedules use degrees as incentives. Where there are fewer universities and community colleges, however, the master's degree will probably continue as most typical. The Doctor of Arts in Teaching has accrued some popularity but will almost assuredly not spread rapidly. Slow diffusion at best seems a good guess.

University courses for the prospective community college instructor undoubtedly will not change a great deal in type or format, although eventually they may well be upgraded. At least there is finally a respectable body of literature of ideas that they can address. Research reports, once elusive and generally parochial in nature, now are both more accessible through the ERIC system and more related to situations occurring in schools across the country. Three new journals have recently been announced for junior college personnel, faculty as well as administrators and concerned board members. And new books appear on the market more and more frequently. While only a handful, two or three, of these are now addressed to the junior college instructor, we should

expect that here,too, growing concern will stimulate growing production. And sometimes, we do learn from the written word.

At the same time, in-service faculty programs will probably increase in number and scope, at least for awhile. In fact, O'Banion, writing in the first issue of New Directions for Community Colleges, maintains that priority in the 1970's should be given to in-service over pre-service programs. For a short time, I believe there will be a flurry of interest in such things as orientation sessions and cooperative workshops, with a number of schools participating. Unless these workshops also build in evaluation schemes that will provide directions for the faculty and serve as guides for future meetings, however, I believe that before too long, these will be doomed to failure. The attraction of an off-campus speaker or an out of town meeting may continue for a while but unless something important evolves from these sessions, people will choose to put their energies elsewhere.

The picture doesn't look too promising or too exciting, does it? What, then, might we dream about? What would appear to be the best type of training situation? I can only reply with what I see as ideal for a variety of people being trained in a variety of types of institutions. In the first place, I believe that some kind of selection procedure built on specific criteria must precede training. The junior college instructor of tomorrow would, hopefully, gear himself early to the profession, as the physician usually does, rather than look on it as a last-minute possibility.

Like teachers in any type of school, the community college instructor should be a well integrated individual. While he may still be undergoing some problems in making transitions, may still be far from the

actualized person we may see as the ideal, he is aware of himself and striving. He knows that the true professional wants to be judged on his effectiveness, rather than on his ability to perform in a role, as an actor or actress on stage or as an omnipotent priest or healer. He knows that the purpose of teaching is to cause learning in his students; that since learning comes about in a variety of ways, he must be flexible in his approach; that neither he, nor, indeed, any one person, has all the answers. In fact, it may well be that one kind of ideal teacher sees teaching as an exploratory process in which both he and his students learn together through common concerns. He may or may not be interested in research, but if he is, he will address himself to research on instructional processes and effects. He knows he will not be able to do all things equally well--that omniscience is not given to any person. He is also well aware that he must continue to grow--both as a professional and as a human being, that he must be happy in his work to be effective. In the final analysis, perhaps the only differential effect of educational institutions is, as Jencks argues, the relative satisfaction achieved by their enrollees. In short, the good teacher is a good person. All the research, all the Chi squares and defined parameters that attempt to isolate singular factors --all point to this simple truism. This is where we came in and this is where we still are.

Selection, then, is a prerequisite. It is a two-way process. Hopefully, once candidates have selected themselves and have been selected to join the profession, what can training institutions do to better prepare the prospective instructor? For one thing, both universities and in-service training programs can concern themselves with the development of the whole person rather than the training of various skills. No

individual can be trained to be a functioning human being, but he can be encouraged to develop, to express himself openly, to be aware of both self and others. He can learn certain techniques, certain ways of handling multi-media, building objectives so that he can measure student achievement. He can become more sensitive to different types of students. But basically, he must be his own teacher when it comes to understanding himself, open to experiences, and always striving toward personal development. These are the earmarks of a real teacher--and incidentally, of a real person. Perhaps training institutions will someday gear themselves to helping and developing integrated human beings.

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