

## THE NEED FOR A PERIOD OF INTERNSHIP FOLLOWING GRADUATION FROM A TEACHER-TRAINING INSTITUTION

*The Concern of the State for the Training  
of Teachers*

OUR democratic social state is charged with promoting growth and evolutionary processes in individuals and the social body as a whole. Such processes are controlled in part, by certain fixed factors, as, natural resources and natural law, and by a variable factor, i. e., human behavior.

We cannot change natural law. Neither can we add to our natural resources. Our sole instrument of growth and development is, therefore, found in the play of a varying human behavior upon these fixed factors.

Education changes human behavior. The basic processes through which the state can function as an instrument of progress is, therefore, the process of education. That is why we recognize education as a state function. That is why the general effectiveness of social groups within the state is invariably a reflection of the educational program affecting those groups.

The state achieves its educational purposes primarily through its teachers. It can, therefore, have no greater concern than for the philosophy of purpose and process and the skill of performance of its teachers as they operate in the schools of the state. We approach the problem of teacher training, then, from the point of view that it is a state concern and inevitably conditioned by state educational purposes and the peculiar local settings in which these purposes must be achieved.

### *How is a Good Teacher Produced?*

Reduced to essentials, a good teacher is one who has those understandings, atti-

tudes, and skills of performance which make possible the manipulation of concrete situations so that desired outcomes are secured. As in other professions this requires an extended training designed to give mastery of a comprehensive theory of purpose and related process. It requires, also, an extended period of practice in applying specific theories to variable situations so that adaptive skills are developed. This period of practice not only serves to produce specific skills of performance but to give, also, enriched meaning and real mastery of the significant principles making up the body of theory. Under good conditions our general experience prompts the conclusion that several years of practice and study under guidance after entering upon teaching, are necessary to bring teachers up to the standard of performance of which they are inherently capable.

### *Some Shortcomings of Present Teacher Training Practices*

Our present practice in the state in the training of teachers is not adequate for the production of teachers who are capable of really professional work. Those of us who supervise the work of practice teachers know that we succeed in doing little to develop real skills of performance in the short period of practice available. We know, too, I think, in a way not realized by teachers of theoretical courses that few student teachers have real and usable understanding of the basic principles which govern the teaching and learning process. In many cases these principles are meaningless verbalizations so that specific situations are not seen as calling for or involving known governing principles.

Our present practice is wasteful in that there is little relation between the training of new teachers and the replacement requirements of the state. We are now turning out many certificated teachers who cannot find employment after certification. Lit-

the selection from among those who enter teacher training institutions is practiced. The primary requisite for certification is the ability to repeat the academic content of theoretical courses. An appreciable number of individuals are certificated who are not suited to teaching and who expect to use teaching as a stepping stone to another profession.

The spread between entrance salary and maximum salary in teaching is too narrow. Relatively high entrance salaries contribute to the tendency to use teaching as an aid to another profession and use up funds which might be used to raise maximum salaries.

Practice teaching, as now conducted, does not provide for training, situations that are truly representative of the conditions under which teachers must work. After the short period of practice, under supervision of a training institution, young teachers go into service in situations where little or no in-service training is provided. The teacher training institution regards itself as having completed its task and the public school prevalently treats the beginning teacher as a finished product. Many teachers in courses of educational theory do not have proper contact with public schools as they operate. They tend to advocate practices that fail to recognize field working conditions. We need a complementary theory and practice with mutual understanding between public school administrative officers and those engaged in teacher training.

#### *A State Program Providing for Internship*

These are some shortcomings which a properly organized state program for teacher training involving a year of internship as a requisite for certification can remedy. Some provisions for such a program should be:

1. The state should require all teachers, whether trained in or out of the state, to spend a year as an interne in a school under supervision of a teach-

er training institution. Certification should be based on the recommendation of supervisory officers.

2. An effective co-ordination of local school divisions, teacher training institutions and state Department of Education, so that an adequate instructional supervision and in-service teacher training program could be developed. Each agency can and should contribute unique values to such an articulated program.

This might well involve:

- A. Agreement of local school division in the service area of a teacher training institution with the teacher training institution to use a stated minimum number of teaching internes each year, these internes to be paid approximately one-half of the average salary of newly certificated teachers.
- B. Use of funds saved by local divisions through the use of internes to contract with the state, working through the local teacher training institution, for adequate instructional supervision for the local system as a whole and for intensive supervision of internes employed.
- C. A state organization for articulated instructional supervision and in-service teacher training which would utilize the personnel and facilities of teacher training institutions normally devoted to practice teaching as regional agents of the State Department of Education.

Such a set-up would provide a sufficiently extended period of practice under actual working conditions that would insure for those certificated a relatively high order of performance. Many who are unfit for teaching would never be certificated. It

would be possible to adjust training of teachers to the replacement needs of the state. The state could go far on funds now being expended towards setting up an adequate supervisory program. Both special and general instructional supervision on a regional basis could be provided to an extent that is an impossibility for many local divisions. The present situation that shows a wide gap and lack of understanding between public schools and teacher training institutions would be corrected.

In closing, I wish to make two comments:

- (1) The present state program of curriculum revision cannot realize its purpose in full, unless intensive supervision of teaching is provided after the new curriculum is adopted. I think no one who knows the present situation will take issue with that statement.
- (2) I would not extend the time required for graduation from a teacher training institution. I *would* extend the time for certification to require a year of intensely supervised practice under actual working conditions.

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TEACHERS have struggled through generations to obtain what little recognition they now have. The very nature of their positions as exponents of idealism, altruism, and service without stint, has placed inhibitions upon their efforts to better their own lot in life. Handicapped by the idealism that has grown up about them, and that really belongs about them, they have had a hard time indeed in even partially coming into their own.—*Durango Herald Democrat, Colorado.*

There are 130,000 independent school systems in the United States. There are 247,000 schoolhouses. Of these, 29,930 are partially or entirely devoted to high schools. There are 1,450 colleges and universities.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE AIMS OF EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA FOR TEACHER TRAINING

MUCH of the confusion that exists in education is due to lack of direction. The State Department of Education has provided Virginia with a way out of educational uncertainty by initiating and carrying on the present state-wide curriculum program. This program was initiated and is proceeding under the conviction that education in Virginia should have a charter for its direction in the form of an adequate set of aims. John Dewey supports this position in the concluding statement of his Inglis lecture at Harvard in 1931:

"For confusion is due ultimately to aimlessness, as much of the conflict is due to the attempt to follow tradition and yet introduce radically new material and interests into it—the attempt to superimpose the new on the old. The simile of new wines in old bottles is trite. Yet no other is so apt. We use leathern bottles in an age of steel and glass. The bottles leak and sag. The new wine spills and sours. No prohibitory holds against the attempt to make a new wine of culture and to provide new containers. Only new aims can inspire educational effort for clarity and unity. They alone can reduce confusion; if they do not terminate conflict they will, at least, render it intelligent and profitable."<sup>1</sup>

The task of formulating new aims of education for Virginia, that, in the language of Dewey, "can inspire educational effort for clarity and unity" was assigned to the Chairman of the Aims Committee of the

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, John: *The Inglis Lecture, 1931: "The Way Out of Educational Confusion."* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.