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Several factors have caused many universities to review and revise their graduate teacher education programs.

Innovative masters degree programs in teacher education

by Pat Haas, Judith Redwine and L. James Walter



Judith Redwine is the author of another article in this issue. Her biography and photo appear on page 6.

Pat Haas has been a research assistant at Indiana University at South Bend and worked extensively on program revision projects. She has also worked on career education projects and developed a booklet entitled, "Alternative Careers for Teachers." During her tenure as a secondary English teacher, she taught in Indiana and California. In California she designed a series of English programs for Spanish speaking adults.

Program development in higher education and individualized instruction are two major interest areas of L. James Walter, an assistant professor of education at Indiana University at South Bend. He has also taught at the University of Nebraska and served as an assistant research professor at the Teaching Research Division of the Oregon State Systems of Higher Education. Author of several articles, he also writes on performance objectives, computer-based testing, teaching centers and performance-based in-service programs.

Teacher education programs in institutions of higher education are in a period of transition. Numerous factors such as: reduced teacher turnover rate, revised certification standards, influence from humanistic and behavioristic psychologies, salary plans which provide additional compensation for teachers with advanced training, and rising expectations for schools, have stimulated the design of new models for the professional preparation of teachers.

In the past five years these innovations have taken place primarily in undergraduate teacher education programs. Among these innovations are: performance-based programs, earlier and more extensive use of field experience, micro-teaching, individualized programs and specialization in areas such as urban education, humanistic education and multi-cultural education.

Until recently, graduate teacher education programs have remained relatively traditional. Several factors have caused many universities to review and revise their graduate teacher education programs. Enrollments at the undergraduate level have declined in recent years while enrollments in graduate teacher education programs have been increasing. Continued large graduate enrollments are motivated by state certification requirements, teachers' felt inadequacy as new models of instruction are developed, additional compensation for advanced degrees and the limited job market for teachers at the present time.

An increasing proportion of the graduate student population has had innovative undergraduate training. These students expect something worthwhile from a costly (in terms of time and money) graduate program. Faculty members have been encouraged by large enrollments to devote time to graduate program development. Graduate faculties are beginning to recognize that a traditional "master's degree" with its heavy emphasis on research and theoretical foundations may not be very appropriate for a practicing teacher. The resulting willingness to compromise with a far more practical "fifth year of study" approach stands a much better chance of actually increasing teacher effectiveness for elementary and secondary teachers. As enrollments swell, institutions of teacher education must expend their time, energy and resources redesigning the too long neglected graduate programs.

The literature found in journals, publications, ERIC documents, monographs and other information received from graduate teacher education programs throughout the country has been perused in search of innovative master's degree programs and the current status of existing programs. Programs evolve and the literature does not always accurately reflect the changes. Written materials cannot completely illustrate the nuances of a program. Also, one report or article is not enough to give a total picture of a school's program; usually some aspect of a program is highlighted. Nevertheless, a few programs can be chosen to show the diversity and range of new and existing programs; no attempt has been made to provide an exhaustive review. An examination of innovative graduate level teacher education programs reveals four major trends which influence graduate teacher education programs in the colleges and universities in the United States.

Multiple Programs

The first trend is that of single institutions offering multiple programs in teacher education. A student can select the program which best suits his/her interests, present career needs or anticipated career needs.

An institution which is characterized by an array of at least 20 programs is the University of Massachusetts. There a student can choose from a range extending from a performance-based program to one with a philosophical belief that teaching is an art. One can elect an off-campus or an on-campus program; one can choose courses in urban education or more traditional courses. Another program sends students into the community. Students can specialize in terms of grade levels, subject curriculum areas, instructional process or a combination of areas. (Allen:44-45). Although the University of Massachusetts and Dwight Allen have been severely criticized of late, the concept of multiple programs has had its influence on teacher education programs throughout the country.

Other institutions offering multiple programs in teacher education include Indiana University and the University of California. The larger universities are able to offer multiple programs more easily at present than the smaller universities due to larger more diversified faculties and more financial resources. The movement to offer multiple programs appears to be growing despite inherent administrative problems. Finding and keeping qualified professors so that programs can continue to be offered and evaluation problems certainly are to be considered before instituting multiple programs.

Performance-Based Teacher Education

The second trend is that of performance-based teacher education (PBTE) also called competency-based teacher education (CBTE). This movement is having a profound influence on undergraduate teacher education throughout the United States. It is now beginning to impact on graduate teacher education programs. Although there are variations, most programs are characterized by preassessment to place students within the program, the absence of strict time constraints (grades are often deferred until work is completed at a satisfactory level) and micro-teaching.

There are several indications of the influence PBTE has had on education at many different levels. Twenty states have introduced performance-based education into their credentialing systems and at least 14 other states are

considering such a move. (Schmeider:19). Many universities throughout the country have comprehensive performance-based undergraduate programs (the University of Houston, Kansas State University, the University of Nebraska and the University of Toledo to name some of the first to institute such programs). Graduate teacher education programs are now feeling the influence of PBTE.

Many universities have graduate performance-based courses in their programs, and other universities have the learning of competencies as an essential part of more comprehensive graduate programs. Illinois State University, the State University of New York at Stony Brook, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Bridgeport are just a few of the universities that can be cited. In fact, the University of Bridgeport is a competency-based, individualized graduate program called ModMAP (Modular Multiple Alternatives Program) for the training of elementary teachers who are, for the most part, presently employed and planning to remain in their present job for some time. A student in this program experiences a comprehensive needs analysis in order to determine the competencies which would improve the student's teaching effectiveness. After this analysis the student's individual program is planned around clinical activities, workshops, and independent study modules. All the activities are oriented toward competency achievement and an ongoing evaluation of competency achievement is conducted. (Kranzyk and Keilty:26-29)

To the dismay of PBTE advocates, an "inhumane" image clings to the use of goals and systematic instructional procedures. PBTE advocates feel that the real emphasis in their programs is on people and not objectives. Although it is a controversial subject, PBTE is not incompatible with the humane treatment of students.

The fact that so many states have introduced competency-based education into their credentialing systems and the vast number of competency-based undergraduate programs makes PBTE a very important trend for graduate teacher education.

Humanistic Program

A third trend which exerts influence on many programs is best exemplified by the humanistic program at the University of Florida and the philosophy of Arthur Combs. The promotion of the self development of the individual teacher is the basis for this program.

The humanistic program at the University of Florida is based on several principles. A few principles central to the movement can be identified:

1. Acquisition of new information and the discovery of the personal meaning of that information are the two aspects of learning.
2. Efficient learning takes place when the learner feels the need to know that which is to be learned.
3. If students help make important decisions about their learning, they learn with more ease and alacrity.
4. Too much pressure on students results in negative behaviors such as fearfulness, cheating, and avoidance which are detrimental.
5. Improvement of a teacher's mental health frees creativity, self-motivation and a concern for others which increases the teacher's effectiveness. (Atkin and Rath:18-19)

Although many universities have not adopted humanistic programs, certain of their ideas are appealing and no doubt will have influence as programs are developed.

Field-Centered Approaches

The fourth trend to be seen is the wide-spread use of field experiences. The theories that people develop most of their competence on the job and that teachers teach as they have been taught are popular ones. Providing earlier field experiences is an important trend in undergraduate education, and its influence can surely be felt at the graduate level. Even experienced teachers need help with their own particular teaching situations or anticipated ones to become master teachers.

Many universities have field experience as a basic component in their programs. In some universities it is possible for both undergraduate and graduate students to take part in the same field experience project. The University of Chicago and its Ford Training and Placement Program in Chicago area schools is one example. (Schwartz: 1-29) Student teaching experiences are common to all in undergraduate teacher education programs. A similar component can be seen in master's programs. The University of Houston requires six hours of supervised classroom internship in their master's program as well.

In addition to cooperating on field experiences for individual students, some universities and school districts share a responsibility for all phases of the program. Project MERGE and Project OUTCRIE provide examples. Shared responsibility is evidenced by a merging of a school system's and a university's physical facilities, personnel and fiscal resources. Project MERGE combined the talents and resources of the Toledo Public Schools and Bowling Green State University to improve the quality of education. (Project MERGE:1)

In Project OUTCRIE Ohio University and the Meigs Local School District combined resources to improve the poor reading achievement and lack of academic stimulation of the children in Appalachian schools. In Project OUTCRIE 20 graduates of teacher education programs received professional training in a competency-based and field-based teacher education program. They received a Master of Education degree with a specialization in reading at the completion of the program. The university offered graduate courses in other cooperative public schools, and tuition was waived for those teachers in the Meigs Local School District. One other important aspect of Project OUTCRIE is the revising of the reading program and curriculum of Meigs Local School District so it is more conducive to the needs and interests of the Appalachian students. (Project OUTCRIE:1).

With federal support a tripartite (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont) graduate program for the preparation of early childhood specialists was set up at the University of New Hampshire. In this program both experienced and beginning teachers may earn a master's degree while they demonstrate theory in the classroom. The graduate students spend a summer of child study at the University of New Hampshire. At the end of the summer the graduate students form teams of two and depart to design, create and staff a multi-age learning center in a cooperating school district. Each graduate student, returns to campus approximately one week a month for independent study, related course work and seminars. The students have also

taken international field trips to a school in Toronto, Ontario, and to British schools.

In order to operate such a program it takes the cooperation of many. Local school districts provide the school children, classroom space for the learning centers, instructional materials and a paid aide. Resource visits to the learning center sites are provided by the State Department of Education personnel. They also help to identify new learning center sites, meet with the advisory committee and take part in the international field trips. The time, effort and coordination needed to offer a program of this nature represents a great commitment on the part of all involved. (Stone:1).

Rural education in Minnesota provides inservice education through a consortium of school districts and the cooperation of Bemidji State College's Education Department. Programs range from a face-to-face relationship in the teacher's setting with a college instructor to computer-assisted instruction through a mobile van. Bemidji State College also offers inservice workshops in various schools following the IGE model. The federation of school's request specific types of inservice workshops and teachers are granted graduate credit through college extension. (Askov:1).

Countless other examples of field experience at other universities could be cited. Field-oriented activity is a well established and accepted component of every program described in the literature no matter whether the program is a traditional one, competency-based, humanistic or included in multiple programs.

Conclusion

Graduate teacher education programs are gradually beginning to change. The relatively few institutions which have made changes have not had time to conduct evaluation studies to determine the impact of their modifications. The impression that the focus on innovation in teacher education has been at the undergraduate level is an accurate one. Several trends in graduate program modification can be found, however; among these are: single institutions offering multiple programs, performance based programs, programs which center on a humanistic approach to teacher education, and a dramatic increase in the use of field experiences in graduate teacher education programs.

If teacher educators desire to have impact on K-12 education by providing teachers with better preparation, one has to wonder about investing resources to modify undergraduate teacher education programs and seemingly making few changes in graduate teacher education. Too few teachers with initial training obtain teaching positions to effect needed impact. It would seem that in the not so distant future that graduate teacher education programs have great potential for influencing the quality of teaching in K-12 education. If this is true, colleges of teacher education need to begin systematic development of graduate teacher education programs.

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