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TEACHER PREPARATION--RATIONALE AND PRACTICE.

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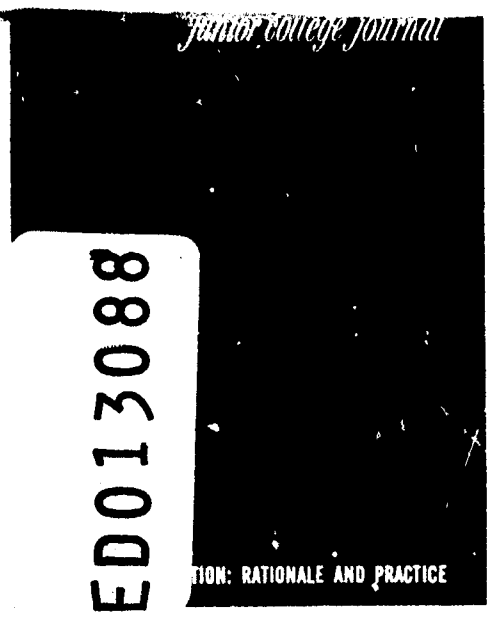
SIX PREMISES PROVIDE A RATIONALE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS--1) TEACHING IS THE PRIME FUNCTION OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE, 2) TEACHING IS THE PROCESS OF INFLUENCING LEARNING, 3) LEARNING IS CHANGING ABILITY OR TENDENCY TO ACT IN PARTICULAR WAYS, 4) BOTH TEACHING AND LEARNING MAY BE ASSUMED TO HAVE OCCURRED ONLY WHEN OBSERVABLE CHANGES ARE DEMONSTRATED BY THE LEARNER, 5) CHANGE MAY BE OBSERVED ONLY IF THERE HAS BEEN DETERMINATION OF STUDENTS' ABILITIES PRIOR TO INSTRUCTION, 6) SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES MUST BE SET SO THAT LEARNING MAY BE APPROPRIATELY GUIDED. JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS WHO ARE TAUGHT TO BUILD THEIR COURSES TOWARD MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES WILL BE BEST PREPARED TO FULFILL THEIR FUNCTIONS AS TEACHERS. THEY WILL BE LEARNING SPECIALISTS WHOSE PRIMARY GOAL IS TO TEACH, NOT TO SORT OUT. (THE STUDENT TEACHER, CLINICAL PROFESSOR, AND INTERNSHIP TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS ARE DESCRIBED AND EVALUATED.) THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN JUNIOR COLLEGE JOURNAL, 37(8)/21-25, MAY 1967. (AD)



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By Arthur M. Cohen

TEACHER PREPARATION: RATIONALE AND PRACTICE

"To Say That Junior College Teachers Teach Because They Do Not Conduct Research, as Do Their Counterparts in the University, Is To Beg the Question."

Who teaches in these junior colleges with their broad aims, their diverse functions? Source, preparation, and quality of faculty must be of prime concern to people interested in furthering the movement for, more than any other institution of higher education, the junior college has accepted instruction as its mission. Other responsibilities—guidance and research, for example—are often designed particularly to enhance the instructional process.[1] The junior college, above all, is a teaching institution.

This article is devoted to developing a rationale for junior college teacher preparation and to showing how it may be applied in practice. Several factors mitigate against generalized programs that will fit all potential instructors in all fields. Among these limitations are the diverse goals and functions of junior colleges, the variety of people who enter preparation programs, differing state requirements, and peculiarities among junior colleges even in the same locality. Nevertheless, procedures for preparing faculty from a number of sources to teach in any field in any college may be applied if a clear and consistent rationale is followed.

Diversity of Demands

Junior college functions are many, both general and specific. Some functions apply to junior colleges in all areas, merely because such institutions are generically geared to education beyond high school or beyond a particular age baseline. Others are specific in that they apply to particular types of schools. Some two-year colleges, for example, function as private institutes, basing their offerings upon a charge which they alone determine to be essential for the population they serve. Others, public or private, may be oriented toward particular vocational fields. Many, especially those dependent upon local school systems—upon administrators, supervisors, and taxpayers who represent the community at large—tend to be comprehensive and offer programs in many fields.

Similarly, junior college goals are both broad and narrow. Many colleges attempt to affect their students' entire lives through general education. They want students to gain attitudes and abilities requisite to their becoming self-fulfilling, effective citizens of the world. Yet, goals may be as narrow as requiring that the student learn a particular task in a specific work situation. Such restrictive aims are typically found in specialized occupational programs. Diversity of institutional functions and goals, then, represent the first consideration in teacher preparation.

The people who enter preparation programs represent another concern. Preparing a person to become a teacher is a multifaceted task. Perhaps it has its earliest roots in the home situation where the child's relationships with his earliest teachers, his parents, represent his first exposure to a teaching-learning situation. From there the embryonic teacher picks up experiences from other sources—early faculty, school environmental impressions, the general setting of the maturing child. The personality traits which define the teacher's life are very likely firmly embedded in him long before he decides to enter the profession.[2]

When finally a potential teacher goes to the college or university to "learn" the ways of "teaching," he already has an armament of impressions and a mass of apperceptions. Several teachers-to-be in the same classroom with the same professor, similar in all measurable respects (age, sex, previous academic achievement, etc.) will still learn in different ways and will still communicate different impressions to others. Teachers are people—variable, unique, and dependent upon past experiences as well as contemporary exposures.

In addition to the variables inherent in different personalities and diverse institutional functions, there is a third factor that makes a generalized program of teacher preparation, a program that will fit all students who wish to teach in junior colleges, an improbable task. Although the master's degree is most often recognized as a desired criterion for the junior college teacher, requirements vary in the different states. Some state agencies demand certification with specified patterns of courses or college

credits.[3] Others suggest differential preparation depending on the nature of the teaching tasks (academic, vocational, technical, etc.) to be performed. In the absence of generalized standards throughout the United States, it follows that preparation programs will be as varied as their number suggests.

Differences among purposes, people, and regional requirements are accentuated by at least one more dimension—peculiarities among junior colleges operating in the same locality. Criteria for the "effective teacher" have never been stabilized. Some junior colleges demand that teachers continue to be professionally involved in their academic disciplines—that they frequently take courses or attend meetings and seminars. Others stress committee service and reward instructors who participate in school and community activities. In many schools teachers are expected to participate in student guidance, while in others that function is not emphasized as part of their charge. Other variations in the field could be mentioned but all point to the difficulty in designing a teacher preparation program which might meet all possible requirements.

A set, specific program to do everything is, then, unlikely. There is no one "right way" to prepare teachers any more than there is one "right way" to teach. Instead of attempting to formulate a single program which would bring all people to the ability to perform all possible tasks in all institutions, it is necessary to develop a rationale for teacher preparation which is basic and universally applicable to any program. This must be a rationale by means of which definite guidelines can be established in all teacher preparation institutions, a rationale so consistent that any kind of person who wishes to join the ranks of junior college instructors in any institution may be appropriately guided.

Premises

The various functions and goals of junior colleges are, in actuality, inseparable from teaching, from the instructional process itself. Instruction is the single purpose which, more than any other, guides two-year colleges. Junior college involvement in, and commitment to, teaching and learning overrides all supplementary goals and functions, broad and narrow.[4] Whatever else the instructor is expected to do, whoever he may be, he must, above all, teach.

The first step in developing a rationale is definition of terms. What is teaching? It is certainly the most important aspect of the teacher's many duties, but what does the concept mean? Teaching has been characterized in many ways but, actually or by extension, all the definitions are concerned with affecting people. Gustad calls it "creat(ing) a situation in which maximum learning can and will take place."[5] Gage describes it as "any interpersonal influence aimed at changing the ways in which other persons can or will behave."[6] Both these definitions and many others can be brought together in one simple statement: teaching is causing learning. The word "causing" may here be modified by substituting "allowing," "stimulating," "facilitating," even "getting out of the way of." But there can be no operationally satisfactory definition of teaching which fails to include the term "learning."

Learning is, then, by definition, a necessary condition of teaching. No learning means that no teaching has taken place. But what is learning? Again, the literature in the field points the way. Hilgard suggests that learning is "the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation . . ."[7] Gagné identifies it as "a change in human disposition or capability which can be retained . . ."[8] Both definitions characterize learning as human change, one adding the condition of retention. Gagné modifies his definition further by saying, "It exhibits itself as a change in behavior and the inference of learning is made by comparing what behavior was possible before and what after treatment."[9]

Learning may thus be characterized as a changed capability for, or tendency toward, acting in particular ways. It is retainable and not ascribable merely to normal growth, maturation, or to temporary states caused by drugs or fatigue. We don't know *how* it occurs. Exactly what happens in the mind to allow change is still a challenging but undetermined question. But we know that it occurs.

Inferences of learning are made by observing changes in learner actions or the products of such actions. In teaching situations, by gathering evidence of the different forms of response available to learners after instruction, of the altered manner in which they conduct their activities, we infer that learning has taken place. Unknown though the process itself may be, when we observe people doing something they could not do previously, we say they have learned.

As learning can be inferred by observing changed learner actions or products of actions, teaching can be inferred by determining what learning has occurred as a result of certain exposures. And though learning may occur without teaching, teaching cannot take place without learning. If no evidence of learning can be produced, no inference of teaching can be made.

Teacher education programs should not be built on definitions of teaching which characterize it merely as lecturing, preparing exams, interacting with students, or performing similar activities in which teachers commonly engage. Skills in such

endeavors are certainly valuable for teachers to hold, but teacher activities must be recognized for what they are—they are the *media* by means of which instruction is most often conducted. They are not, in actuality, "teaching." Teaching occurs only to the extent that learning takes place. Failure to accept that premise often leads teacher preparation to focus on matters peripheral to teaching or on indefensible drill in "methods."

Similarly, learning must not be considered reading, listening, studying, and other activities in which students typically engage. These are necessary, of course, as input or stimuli for the learner but the activities are not, themselves, "learning." Actual learning can only be inferred by attending to the activities, behaviors, or products of action of the learner, after he has taken part in the situations arranged for him by the intructor. In this context, reading, listening, studying are the *media* of learning. As such, they stimulate the process of mind by means of which learning (changed capability) occurs. No other significance may be attached to the students' activities in themselves.

Other conditions which are essential to an encompassing rationale for junior college teacher preparation are suggested by this focus on the teaching-learning process. It is important, for example, that there be assessment of students' abilities before an instructor attempts to "teach" them and after he has "taught" them. Both premeasures and postmeasures must be made in order that an estimate of the extent of learning, hence teaching, can be made. Necessary, too, is advance specification of precise learning objectives. The instructor who establishes definite goals and sets minimal standards can more properly guide his students.[10] All these activities are essential to the instructional process.

Rationale

My rationale for junior college teacher preparation is based upon these premises:

1. Teaching is the prime function of the junior college.
2. Teaching is, itself, the process of influencing learning.
3. Learning is changed ability or tendency to act in particular ways.
4. Operationally, both teaching and learning may be assumed to have occurred only when observable changes are demonstrated by the learner.
5. Change may be observed only if there has been determination of students' abilities prior to instruction.
6. Specific, measurable objectives must be set so that learning may be appropriately guided.

When teacher education rests upon this rationale, it gains perspective. Substantive programs for preparing junior college instructors may be constructed within the framework of existing patterns of university and college teacher education. The usual prerequisites—subject area degrees for academic instructors and equivalent experience for teachers in vocational-technical fields—may be maintained. Selection procedures commonly employed need not be altered. The difference between programs based on defined learning and those based on other, perhaps less definitive, philosophical orientations, comes in the "education" or "professional" portion of the preparation sequence.

Teacher Education Programs

Many patterns and preparation sequences may be employed to fulfill the conditions posed by a program which would put instructors of demonstrated competence in junior colleges. Just as instructors must be prepared to reveal learning achieved on the part of their students, programs in which they are trained must require that they demonstrate their ability to do so.

In general, a preparation program may best be conducted as a joint enterprise between a college or university and one or more junior colleges similar to, if not, in fact, the ones in which the instructors eventually will be employed. The participation of both types of institutions makes it possible for each to emphasize those parts of the preparation sequence which it may most appropriately conduct. Matters peculiar to each junior college—campus and community relations, internal organization, and structure—as well as aspects of the teachers' responsibilities peripheral to the instructional process itself, are best learned in the setting in which the instructor will work. Responsibility for the teacher's current subject area knowledge and awareness must be charged to the senior institution's departments of academic studies. The portion of the program in which the teacher is to demonstrate his ability to cause learning can be conducted jointly by a university department of education and the junior college or by the junior college and the various academic departments directly.

Any of several preparation sequences currently in vogue in teacher preparation institutions may be utilized to bring prospective instructors to desired levels of abilities. Although none may be considered definitive, three of the more popular ones will be examined here—student teaching, the clinical professor plan, and the internship plan.

In describing each type of program, certain assumptions will be made. First, it will be assumed that the candidate has expressed a desire to enter the profession. (Although recruiting may be con-

ducted under the auspices of a program, that phase will not be discussed here.) Second, the candidate's subject matter preparation will be accepted. It will be assumed that he is so competent in a discipline that he can teach in one or more specific fields. Nothing in the rationale presented here should be construed to minimize the value of subject area expertise.

Each preparation sequence begins with a core course built on the teaching-learning paradigm. The course, taken at the senior institution, requires that each prospective instructor build one or more complete junior college courses, or sections of several courses, in his field. Included in his course outline must be valid reasons why his course is offered in the junior college, a statement of the nature and types of junior college students who are likely to enroll, copies of the examinations or other assessment devices which the teacher anticipates using, and plans for course evaluation and revision.

As the heart of his course, the trainee lays out specific, measurable objectives toward which his students will be led. Each objective includes a specific task to be performed, the conditions under which performance will occur, and a minimum acceptable achievement standard or criterion.[11] Objectives specified vary greatly, depending on subject matter, student population, level of the course, and the instructor's own orientation. Some objectives might ask that learning be demonstrated by answering particular test items; others, by students' attending cultural events. Some might suggest lengthy written projects; others, voluntary work in the community. The overriding consideration is that there be complete sets of specified course outcomes—objectives written in terms of student performance.

It should here be emphasized that each course constructed by a trainee is not a set of "lesson plans" or "activities." It is a complete listing of the way actual learning will be demonstrated by junior college students whom the instructor will teach.

Student Teaching

The student teaching sequence begins with a candidate's enrollment in the core course during the time he is completing his subject area preparation. He builds one complete course with the guidance of a practicing junior college instructor in his field.

In the following semester, the student teacher actually tests his course in a junior college class. Although his class is under the nominal direction of the teacher who helped the candidate construct the course outline, the objectives and tests used, and the strategies employed are primarily the candidate's own. The supervising teacher gives counsel and direction and helps with classroom management chores. The candidate is responsible for submitting evidence to him that students learned under his direction. At the end of the semester, the student teacher leaves the class with his own tested course revised to incorporate different objectives, altered criteria, and new media. He is ready to begin on his own.

Student teaching places the candidate in close association with an experienced instructor. His course will likely include many objectives and features which derive from his supervisor's thinking. This form of preparation can be extremely helpful if the master teacher is wise in the ways of causing learning; of little value if he does not accept the rationale.

Clinical Professor

The clinical professor plan again begins with the core course taken in the university while the student is completing his subject area preparation. Here, the candidate builds several units to be taught in different junior college classes within a general disciplinary field (science, social science, humanities, communications). Each unit is complete with its own set of specific, measurable objectives, media, and assessment procedures.

During the same semester, the candidate teaches his units in the various classes for which they were designed. A junior college instructor, serving as clinical professor for his division, coordinates activities of all trainees in his area. Candidates are given charge of junior college classes for just the time necessary to develop each single unit. They are responsible for submitting evidence to the clinical professor that their students have achieved the unit objectives.

The clinical professor plan adds breadth to the candidate's experience. It helps the prospective instructor become a generalist in his field and may be a valuable lead-in to the practice of team teaching. The clinical professor, himself a learning specialist, can help the candidate build objectives, media, and examination items in the several fields represented in his interdisciplinary area. In addition, each unit may be, in practice, treated as a "micro-teaching" unit, thus adding the several advantages accruing to that plan.[12]

Internship

The internship plan differs from the others in one main respect—the intern does not "practice" under the direct supervision of a junior college instructor; instead he enters into a contractual arrangement with a junior college and is paid for the course he teaches. The candidate must have a position as a full or part-time instructor open to him in advance of his enrollment in the program. A prospective

teacher, nearing completion of his subject area preparation, may apply for a position in a junior college. If successful, he enrolls in the internship program and takes the core course, usually in the summer prior to his beginning teaching. In the class, he builds all the courses which he will teach. Each is complete with specific objectives and assessment procedures spelled out.

At the beginning of the fall semester, the intern agrees, in association with a college dean, a division or department chairman, and a university program representative, to bring stated per cents of his students to minimum levels of achievement. During the year, he attends bi-weekly seminars along with his fellow interns from all area colleges. At the meetings, he reports gain achieved by his students and is helped with usual problems of the beginning teacher. He submits rebuilt courses twice—once at the end of the fall semester and again at the end of the intern year.

An internship plan can be the most flexible of the three. Candidates are often attracted by the fact that it demands but a summer session of preparation prior to their beginning paid teaching. Junior college supervisory responsibilities need be no more than that usually given first-time faculty members. The intern selects and revises his own objectives and media all through the year. By the end of the internship, he is an experienced teacher who has spent his first year of teaching under the remote supervision of a program which demanded that he teach—that he stimulate learning. Most important the intern has been free to find his own best way of causing students to learn—and there are likely as many ways as there are combinations of teachers and students in junior colleges.[13]

Any plan, or combined features of more than one, may well be employed to prepare junior college instructors but only if it is built on a definitive teaching-learning paradigm. Otherwise, a risk of failure to prepare *teachers* for *teaching* is always present.

There are many reasons for constructing programs upon the described rationale.

Reasons

1. The junior college instructor must be recognized for what he is, not what he is not. To say that junior college teachers teach because they do not conduct research as do their counterparts in the university, is to beg the issue. Teaching is causing learning and junior college teachers must be prepared to show evidence that they do so.

2. Teacher preparation programs with substantive content can be built on the clearly defined teaching-learning rationale. "Methods" of untested value and "philosophy" with no apparent relevance to the classroom must become subordinate to courses in which instructors learn to move students toward precise goals. The instructor who leaves a preparation program with sets of specific objectives and knowledge of how to move students toward achievement is, in reality, a teacher.

3. There is short range value in focusing prospective instructors' attentions exclusively on forms of teaching currently employed in junior colleges. New media are begging to be introduced. A teacher education program which has as its emphasis the instructional process itself, is more likely to produce instructors who will tend to evaluate all media, new and old, on its demonstrated ability to bring students closer to achievement of their specific objectives.

4. The junior college cannot long abide instructors who delight in failure. Instructors who must supply evidence that their students have learned, in effect, acknowledge accountability for that learning. They will strive to make it come about and make all effort to reduce waste in human resources. A teacher teaches; he does not sort out.

5. Teacher education programs must serve as change agents for junior colleges. It is not enough to prepare instructors to fit into the mold, to adopt the mores, of teachers who might be inclined to see their roles as being other than learning specialists. New instructors must advance the stature of their colleges as teaching institutions.

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