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THE PREPARATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF JUNIOR COLLEGE  
TEACHERS.

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THE IDEAL JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHER WOULD HAVE STRONG ACADEMIC AND TEACHING BACKGROUND, STRONG GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING ABILITY, AND PROFICIENCY IN TEACHING BOTH GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED COURSES, WITH DEPTH IN ONE OR MORE SUBJECT FIELDS. A SOUND PATTERN OF PREPARATION WOULD BE A STRONG BACCALAUREATE FOLLOWED BY A BROADLY-BASED, ACADEMICALLY-ORIENTED MASTER'S DEGREE, WITH SOME SUPERVISED JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHING, AND WITH PROFESSIONAL COURSEWORK EXPLICITLY RELATED TO THE NATURE OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE AND ITS STUDENTS. THIS KIND OF PREPARATION REQUIRES THE COOPERATION OF UNIVERSITIES AS ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CENTERS, WITH THE JUNIOR COLLEGES THEMSELVES AS THE LABORATORIES. SINCE CLASSROOM TEACHING, RATHER THAN RESEARCH, IS THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR, THE SPECIALIZATION OF THE PH.D. IS NOT NECESSARILY APPROPRIATE. SOMEHOW THE GAP BETWEEN SUBJECT-MATTER PROFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION MUST BE CLARIFIED AND ELIMINATED, POSSIBLY BY MORE CAREFUL DEFINITION OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE COMPETENT TEACHER WHO UNDERSTANDS THE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THE EARLY COLLEGE YEARS. RESEARCH COULD BE DONE, FOR INSTANCE, ON THE TEACHER'S ABILITY TO APPLY LEARNING PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON THE LOGIC THAT THE TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES FOLLOW. THIS DOCUMENT IS VOLUME 2, NUMBER 6 OF THE "JUNIOR COLLEGE RESEARCH REVIEW," FEBRUARY 1968. (HH)

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## THE PREPARATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

Much has been written in recent years about the importance of teaching in the community college; however, little research has been completed on those who actually teach in the junior college. This issue of *Junior College Research Review* examines research on the characteristics and educational backgrounds of junior college teachers. Documents reviewed here were selected from materials received and processed at the Clearinghouse for Junior College Information. Through the ERIC publication, *Research in Education*, the Clearinghouse announces research documents relevant to all aspects of the junior college. Other Clearinghouses in the ERIC system process research documents in different subject areas.

### Review

The task of preparing superior teachers for junior colleges is described by Gleazer as "formidable, but not insurmountable" (JC 660 468). It is a task, he says, "which must be shared alike by the universities and the junior colleges.... The immense academic and research resources of the universities must be pooled with the 'laboratory' resources of the junior college. And this 'mix' is possible only if the junior college administrator pays more than lip service to providing a viable 'climate for teaching,' and only if the university displays more than a fainthearted approach toward developing programs which are rigorous and realistic."

The kind of teacher that hopefully would be produced by such a coalition is a teacher with strong academic and teaching ability combined with strong guidance ability, proficient in teaching general education courses as well as specialized fields. The importance of classroom teaching as the primary responsibility of the junior college instructor was reiterated.

To achieve maximum effectiveness with minimum frustration and disappointment, junior college faculties must be oriented and reoriented to the nature and diverse purposes of junior colleges as "open-door" institutions. Indeed, without the adequate development of such understanding, the faculties may steer the junior colleges on a course away from their stated goals.

Acting on the premise that "teaching is an organic process, an interchange between student and teacher that alters both partners in the relationship," Sarah Lawrence College (JC 670 598) has designed a graduate program to prepare teachers for junior colleges. This program is designed to create situations in which a

prospective teacher will examine his own learning values as integral aspects of his graduate education. The program seeks to achieve four objectives:

1. Competence in the discipline the student prepares to teach.
2. Mastery of significant relations between that field and others.
3. Understanding of the developmental needs of students in the early college years.
4. Consideration of ways in which the subject may serve this need.

From interviews with more than 650 teachers, deans, and other junior college personnel (JC 670 130), Garrison concluded that junior college teachers see themselves as student-centered rather than as subject-centered. They tend to accept the variations in ability and purpose, often extreme, among their students and work willingly with such heterogeneous groups.

Desirable teacher characteristics include articulateness, a capacity to explain and put across the point, and a willingness to work with all kinds and levels of student questions. The desirable junior college teacher was described as one who convinces the student not only that he knows what he is talking about but that he is eager to talk about it.

There was a tendency to see the Ph.D. as a respected research degree but representing a degree of narrow specialization not well suited to junior college teaching. Junior college teachers felt the need for more preparation to teach survey courses. A strong baccalaureate followed by a broadly based, academically oriented master's degree with some supervised junior college teaching experience and professional course work clearly related to the nature of junior college teaching and students was proposed as a pattern of junior college teacher preparation.

A Status Study on English Instruction in the Two-Year College by the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (JC 660 387) produced the following conclusions:

The report shows that beset as these junior college English teachers are by innumerable instructional problems, many of them nevertheless retain an aloofness and a disdain for professional studies, studies which could save them from being fumbling amateurs and convert them into proficient

teachers of the poorly prepared. The need for bridging the gap between subject matter respectability and professional training is evident. Too many of these teachers cannot realistically face the need to adjust their subject matter specialty to the conditions peculiar to the two-year college.

A Florida study of public junior college teachers pinpointed a number of facts about the faculty in that state (JC 660 455). Fifty percent of the Florida teachers stated that they had taught in four-year colleges; almost 70 percent indicated that they had one or more years of elementary or secondary school experience. Twelve percent held doctor's degrees. An additional 77 percent held master's degrees. The sources of recruitment in Florida are very similar to those found in national investigations, with approximately one-third of the teachers coming from high school teaching; approximately one-fifth coming from college and university teaching; almost an additional third coming from graduate schools; and smaller numbers coming from business occupations and other related areas.

A statewide survey of the training and work of California public junior college teaching of English (JC 660 020) produced the following data on 785 teachers assigned one or more English courses:

1. Approximately 73 percent of the teachers assigned one or more courses had an M.A. in English, approximately 4 percent had a Ph.D. in English, and approximately 4 percent had neither majored nor minored in English.
2. Approximately 44 percent had taken an advanced course in grammar, and 50 percent had taken an advanced course in composition.
3. Twenty-seven percent had published articles, stories, or books.
4. Seventeen percent had engaged in supervised teaching in junior college, and approximately 4 percent had held internships in junior college.
5. Almost 97 percent of these teachers were considered to be adequately prepared by their Deans of Instruction. However, this finding appears to be definitely contradicted by the fact that approximately 50 percent of these same Deans later indicated that English teachers were not adequately prepared to teach grammar and composition.

This California study concluded that the background and training of California public junior college teachers of English were inadequate. The report recommended that aside from broad experience and knowledge about his subject, the junior college English teacher should be knowledgeable about the junior college and the junior college student.

In support of the thesis that similarities between community college and university teachers outweigh real or imagined differences, data from a study (JC 670 259) of new faculty members in public and private two-year colleges by Siehr were compared with data from a study of new university faculty members by McCall, Jamrich, and Hereford. The two groups were found to be similar in age, marital status, previous professional experience, and in the matching of teaching assignments to the educational qualifications of faculty.

The similarity between the two groups was less marked in the area of educational preparation, where 27 percent of the colleges and university teachers held the doctorate, as compared to only 7.2 percent of the community college personnel.

The study concluded that community college faculties are adequately trained and competent to fulfill their community college roles. An ideal faculty would contain a proper balance of specialists, generalists and student-centered teachers. It was pointed out that there is no empirical evidence to show that junior colleges do not now have such facilities.

#### *Summary*

Adequate preparation of junior college teachers requires the cooperation of universities as academic and research centers with junior colleges as laboratories. Classroom teaching, not research, is the primary responsibility of the junior college teacher; hence the narrow specialization of the Ph.D. degree does not constitute the best preparation for him.

Junior college faculty members who have had a basic course in the nature and functions of junior colleges and who are frequently reoriented to junior college objectives are more receptive to the function and purposes of these colleges and probably experience less frustration with "open-door" policies than do other junior college teachers. They see themselves as responsible for students rather than for subjects.

Adequate preparation for junior college teaching includes depth in one or more substantive fields at the undergraduate and graduate levels, professional preparation carefully related to the nature of the junior college and the characteristics of its students, and an internship or other supervised junior college teaching experience.

There is a need to bridge the gap between subject-matter respectability and professional education in the junior college to a greater extent than in the four-year colleges. Junior college teachers have a particular need to be able to adjust their subject-matter specialty to junior college conditions—to reach a diverse body of students where they are.

Junior college teachers characteristically are assigned major responsibilities in fields in which they are qualified. The majority have had teaching experience in elementary or secondary schools and are generally considered to be competent as teachers in their fields. However, the general atmosphere that accompanies a review of teacher preparation and characteristics is one of avoidance. Seldom are attributes discussed that refer directly to classroom behavior. Even when the attribute appears to imply effective classroom behavior, that behavior is not defined. For example, how does a teacher behave who "understands the developmental needs of students in the early college years," or how does a "desirable or competent teacher" behave with students? Less vagueness and a greater demonstration of relatedness to influence on students is needed. For example, what is the teacher's ability in the application of learning principles and theories in the classroom, and what logic does the teacher's instructional procedures follow?

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