FIFTH-YEAR PROGRAMS FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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My responsibility in this symposium is to report certain facts dealing with a new development in graduate programs in English education at the master's degree level: the so-called fifth-year program.

Graduate programs both in English and in education have for many years been designed for students who have completed undergraduate majors in English and certain education courses. More often than not the graduate student has already completely met both professional education and English requirements for a teaching certificate. Such a graduate program bearing the classification English education has probably had the student take about half his courses in English and about half in education with some degree of flexibility in this regard. For example, at my institution, the University of Virginia, we have had for about thirty years such a program leading to the Master of Arts degree. More recently we have had a similar program leading to the Master of Education degree.

Several years ago an innovation in master's work for teachers appeared in the form of a new degree, the Master of Arts in Teaching. This pattern, as is well known, is designed especially for graduates of liberal arts colleges who have not had education courses. Students in this program gain certification for teaching as well as further study in English while obtaining a graduate degree. In the last few years other programs similar to the Master of Arts in Teaching, but not attached to this particular degree, have appeared. Many are commonly referred to as "fifth-year" programs. A main characteristic of them is that the student is admitted without necessarily having completed any courses in his undergraduate days that were especially intended to prepare him for teaching. Another major distinction is that a "fifth-year" program of necessity includes classroom teaching practice, either in the form of traditional student teaching or the newer internship (although sometimes not for graduate course credit), unless this requirement is waived because of teaching experience in states that allow a person to teach without professional certification.

Last fall the Executive Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English decided to prepare a bulletin setting forth descriptions of both "fifth-year" and "five-year" programs of teacher preparation. The "five-year" program differs from the "fifth-year" program in that a prospective teacher enters it as early as the first college year, and usually no later than the third college year, with his work both in English and in education designed for teacher education. On the other hand, in the "fifth-year" program the student does not begin teacher preparation until his fifth college year, which comes as an appendix to regular baccalaureate work although the student on his own may indeed have elected certain courses to prepare him for teaching.

The National Council has asked me to prepare the bulletin just mentioned, and I have received information from many of you and others through ques-
tionnaires distributed last November. It is my purpose now to summarize some of this information about "fifth-year" programs, many of which result in the awarding of a degree although others are designed solely to provide certification for teaching. The facts presented here are about degree-awarding programs and come from reports on thirty-one programs in twenty-nine institutions (two schools having two such degree programs each). Although other programs were described in returned questionnaires, these thirty-one have been selected because (1) they do not require any work in education for admission and (2) they do not take appreciably longer than an academic year and a summer to complete. The term "fifth-year" program as used here refers to an initial teacher education program, and the lack of prior training in education attests to this fact, it is assumed.

Summary of Requirements

As to other admissions policies, 25 of the 31 programs require a major in English. In general, other programs ask the candidate to have the usual number of prerequisite credits for entrance to graduate English courses in the institution concerned. As to degrees awarded, 8 programs of the 31 give the Master of Education; 11, the Master of Arts; 4, the Master of Science; 6, the Master of Arts in Teaching; and 2, either the Master of Science or the Master of Arts.

In addition, 13 institutions specify a certain average grade as necessary for admission as follows: a B average, 5; a high C-plus average, 2; a C-plus average, 5; and a C average, 1. There are also certain more general requirements in many schools.

Of the 31 programs, 8 can be completed in one academic year; 18, in one academic year and one summer; 4, in an academic year and two summers; and 1, in three trimesters. Two programs that take two or more years are not included in this account because the questionnaire mentioned the equivalent of a single year as a minimum time limit.

The semester-hour requirement for the greatest number of programs, 12, is 30. One program requires only 26. Four require 32 semester-hours; 3 require 33; 4 require 36; 4 require 40; one, 46; and one, 46 and two-thirds. One respondent indicated a total of 87 hours including undergraduate requirements in both English and education.

All programs, of course, divide the required hours between English and education. Twenty-three programs designate a minimum number of semester-hours in English, which ranges from 3 to 24 with an average stated minimum of 12.4 semester-hours. Eighteen programs state a maximum number of required hours in English with a range of from 12 to 28 with an average maximum requirement of 17 semester-hours.

As to requirements in education, 27 programs state a minimum, with a range of from 3 to 40 semester-hours, and an average requirement of 16.9 semester-hours. Twenty-four state a maximum, with a range of from 4 to 40, and an average requirement of 18.9 semester-hours.

About two-thirds of the programs mention no specific courses in English as required. Only four specify more than one course. Eight programs mention a
course in language; two cite advanced composition. Three mention courses that were usually classified as education by the persons filling in these questionnaires; that is, the Teaching of English and the Improvement of the Teaching of Reading in the Secondary School. It is clear that most of the programs determine the English courses by the individual student's background and interests with the intent of correcting whatever deficiencies, if any, may have existed in his undergraduate program for a prospective teacher of English.

On the other hand, all the programs except two specify required courses in education. The obvious reason for naming courses in education and not in English is that the student usually comes to the program with a major in English, but he generally comes without any credit in education. The titles mentioned most often are educational psychology, 16 times; philosophy of education, 13 times; the teaching of English, 12 times with 3 programs requiring a second course in addition to this subject; and principles of teaching (principles of learning, general methods), 9 times.

These figures may point to one distinct lack in some of these new programs in English education. Among the 29 institutions, only 12 require a course in the teaching of English. Nine more do require a course in general methods, or principles of teaching or learning, but it is difficult to think that this kind of course can really substitute for one in the teaching of English, although I should consider it appropriate in its own right—a course that might well precede or accompany one in the teaching of the subject. Ten institutions appear not to require either general or special methods. Can it be that the 17 institutions not requiring a course in English education do not offer one? I have long known that certain undergraduate programs do not include an English education course, but it seems that an institution sufficiently involved in teacher education to offer work at the graduate level certainly should provide this kind of study.

Status of Student Teaching

Twenty-three institutions give credit in semester-hours for student or intern teaching, the amount ranging from four to ten semester-hours, with six being the predominant figure. Programs with no semester-hours of credit for student or intern teaching usually require that the student have this kind of experience without attaching credit hours to it. Virtually all student teaching in fifth-year degree programs is the full-day type of experience ranging from six weeks in length to an entire year.

Fifteen institutions are willing to waive this practice requirement if one, two, or three years of regular teaching have been successfully completed. The carefully supervised internship in which the cadet teacher receives a regular salary, or some part of one, is apparently accepted today as satisfactory practice. One may wonder, however, whether regular teaching experience without any guarantee of real supervision accompanying it should be accepted in lieu of supervised student teaching or a supervised internship.

As a part of the fifth-year training program only three institutions require a thesis. Fourteen will allow a thesis to replace some other aspect of the program, usually six semester-hours of course work. Another question may be
raised at this point: Is a thesis a desirable part of a teacher training program that occupies only an academic year plus a summer?

Here we have a picture of 31 fifth-year programs that provide the prospective teacher with the opportunity (1) to become certified even if he has previously taken no courses for that purpose, and (2) to achieve a graduate degree at the same time. Also, 26 programs were reported that claim the purpose of providing certification through a fifth-year of work that is not planned to lead to a degree, but I shall not review facts about these. Fifth-year programs for teacher education, as well as five-year programs, indicate some movement in the direction of providing a longer time than the usual four-year undergraduate pattern for the preservice education of teachers.

The fifth-year program raises the question of whether the student will ever do real graduate work in the education component of his training. Although the courses in education in the fifth year may be labeled graduate, the fact remains that they are first courses. Graduate work, it seems to me, is nearly always a second look and a more mature look. When will the teacher take this kind of look at the content dealt with in educational psychology or in English education? It is too early in this fifth-year movement to see the answer to this question, but it seems to me pertinent to raise it.

Teacher education in a fifth college year constitutes one current type of graduate program in English education. It is in this context that I have offered these facts and observations today.