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# Degrees in Education

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No phase of education from the nursery school to the graduate school has been immune to criticism in recent years; but unfortunately, the critics, each imbued with his own value system, cannot agree on what is wrong, so they naturally cannot agree on what should be done to improve the situation. Teacher education has been given the full treatment by critics who, if they do not advocate its abolition, give varied ratings to different courses and to practice teaching. The latter is usually considered as of greatest importance, even though the underlying assumption is that traditional class procedures will continue indefinitely, untouched by the new media and the new designs for learning. Other recommendations usually do little more than propose a reshuffling of required courses or a minor change in the number of required credit hours.

School or college of education offerings, like Gaul, are divided somewhat loosely into three parts: the undergraduate, precertification program leading to a B.A. or B.S., an intermediate miscellaneous period lead-

ing to the M.A. or M.S., and top-level graduate study capped by the Ph.D. or Ed.D. The levels are not always sharply defined; students from all three are occasionally enrolled in the same course, and the textbooks for the first level often contain erudite discussions that might be more appropriate at the upper level.

As to the first level, there is no discoverable consensus among education professors as to what psychology, sociology, or history and philosophy of education a newly certified teacher should really know, yet these are often referred to as foundation courses and make up the generally required core of certificate training. Furthermore, an instructor rarely shows the student why these subjects are required or how they apply to educational practice. And there is no indication as to what content can well be left for graduate work later.

Supposedly, the intermediate level is largely for upgrading purposes, but it is often coupled with one or another kind of specialization. That it enhances the teacher's value is presumed, since an increment in salary is often provided. But little or no effort is made to discover whether the plus or minus 24 hours of added credit actually increase the teacher's competence.

In some schools it is little more than a

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fifth undergraduate year; in others, where the master's in the art of teaching (MAT) degree is in vogue, together with practice teaching, it is merely the equivalent of undergraduate professional training for those who already hold a baccalaureate degree. Such variation, aimed to adapt to the various needs of the students, is of course highly commendable, but it implies considerable uncertainty as to what the needs really are.

The demands of the doctorate range along a continuum from research on a highly restricted problem to the consideration of a number of practical and theoretical educational problems. Presumably the professional doctor of education degree should be the one awarded by schools of education just as the doctor of medicine is awarded by medical schools. This would leave the doctor of philosophy, with its research emphasis, for work in one of the related disciplines, psychology for example. For various practical reasons, however, the Ph.D. is also given in education, but the distinction between the two is far from clear, though the Ph.D. seems to be preferred. The question therefore arises as to where along the continuum the doctorate in education, whatever its name, should lie.

The answer should be discernible in the definition of its purposes. In the February *Teachers College Record*, Kerlinger analyzes the situation and asserts that the basic nature of the doctorate, and specifically

of the dissertation, is "critical inquiry." Originally, however, it was introduced to provide practice for the student in what he would be expected to do professionally, whether it was to engage in theological disputation or to practice law or medicine.

Perhaps what is now called for at all three levels is a careful job analysis of the role expectations in the various educational positions to discover the knowledge and the motor and intellectual skills they require. Following this would be an effort to discover the best ways to teach the candidate the requirements of the employment for which he is preparing.

Fears that this would result only in technical training would be groundless, for if the analysis found that additional competencies involving various kinds of judgment or critical thinking would be needed, these competencies would be taught. Then, instead of an argument about what should be the character of the dissertation for either degree or the nature of the instructional program at any level, there would be a search for ways to teach the needed abilities.

It is presumed that the same research procedures, if followed at the other levels, would be equally fruitful; the results would define the character of the preparation required. It is not likely that the basic content of the resultant programs of training would vary widely, but selections could be more wisely made, and applications could be more pointed and effective.