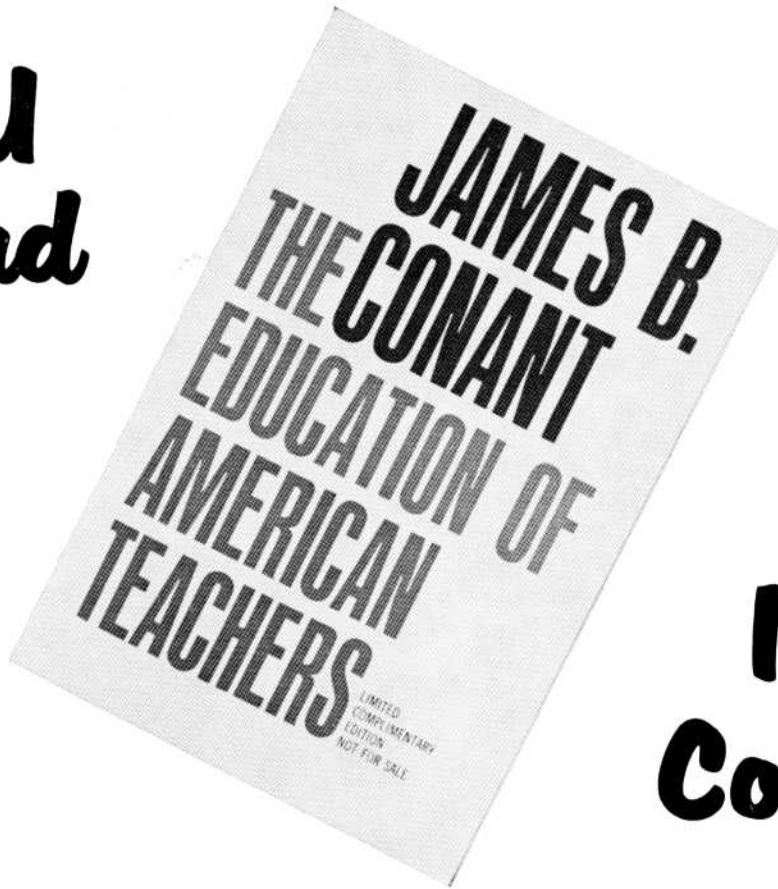


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**Mr.
Conant**

a review of the controversy in education and a look at O.U.'s teacher training

By DR. JAMES G. HARLOW
Photos by John Yack

AMONG the numerous evaluations of American education, none has been awaited with more interest than Conant's study and report on the education of American teachers. Mr. Conant is, after all, the only living example of the sub-sub-species *Homo sapiens expresidentium Harvardienseium*. As such, he presents unusual claim upon our attention, and in addition, a clear claim upon our reverence.

Conant's book, *The Education of American Teachers*, is a very good book. It beautifully presents the Olympic calm and detachment of its author—his intelligence, candor and honesty are nowhere in his writings better illuminated than here. He explicitly refuses to be involved in the perennial battle between the "educators" and the "academicians"; he tempers his outrages (numerous) with his patience and his compassion (pervasive). The book immediately was reviewed in all the major weekly news magazines and is currently

receiving a thorough going-over in the literature of professional education. All in all, the picture he paints is not pretty, but it is not a scene without hope, uplift or a clear vision, though that vision is distant.

The Education of American Teachers comes as a sort of period, or perhaps an exclamation point, following a series of remarkable major events in teacher education in the United States. During recent years, a new accrediting agency for teacher education has been born and has undertaken important responsibility in higher education. The National Council on Accreditation in Teacher Education (colloquially known as En-cate) has succeeded in inspecting numerous colleges and universities (and accrediting a substantial number), and has also enjoyed unusual success in offending large numbers of people and institutions. Highly critical commentaries on teacher education have rolled off the presses (notable: James Koerner's

The Mis-education of American Teachers). Conant's enormous personal prestige, plus the fact that his effort was sponsored by one of the most highly regarded eleemosynary organizations of the United States, the Carnegie Corporation, have given his comment unusual importance in current educational dialogue.

Twenty-seven recommendations for the improvement of teacher education in the United States feature Conant's extended report. (For those who wish to read more, the report is available from McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., New York, for \$5.00). Many of the recommendations deal with non-university responsibilities—for example, what state governments should use as bases for teacher certification, how teachers should be assigned by local boards, how teacher training should be subsidized, teacher salary schedules and the like.

Conant's "Recommendations Requiring Action by the Faculties, Administrative Officers and Trustees of an Institution Engaged in Educating Teachers for the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools" (his Group D) are presented in the box on this page. In view of the current furor, O.U. alums are properly interested in what goes on in teacher education at Norman. What are O.U.'s interests and responsibilities in this crucial field, and how are they met and discharged? How would O.U. fare under Conant's checklist?

O.U. is really a substantial teacher-training institution. During this semester (Fall, 1963) for example, nearly 1,800 students are enrolled in curricula which will qualify them for recommendation for certification as a teacher, counselor or administrator in the public schools.

Contrary to popularly-held opinion, these students are not all counselees of the staff of the College of Education. Only 836 are enrolled for Education baccalaureates; 389 are enrolled in the Graduate College, and the others are matriculated in Fine Arts, Arts and Sciences, Engineering and Business Administration.

This healthy situation is the result of O.U.'s special history in teacher education, plus a deliberate effort begun nearly ten years ago under the specific interest and authorization of President George L. Cross.

For many years—probably throughout its life—recommendation for certification of teachers for secondary schools at O.U. has been carried on primarily through the high

Continued

Recommendations for an Institution Engaged in Educating Teachers

(*The Education of American Teachers* by James B. Conant, McGraw-Hill 1963, \$5.00.)

The all-university approach to teacher training

If the institution is engaged in educating teachers, the lay board trustees should ask the faculty or faculties whether in fact there is a continuing and effective all-university (or interdepartmental) approach to the education of teachers; and if not, why not?

Requirements for collegiate or university teacher-education programs

The board of trustees should ask the faculty to justify the present requirements for a bachelor's degree for future teachers with particular reference to the breadth of the requirements and to spell out what in fact are the total educational exposures (school and college) demanded now in the fields of (a) mathematics, (b) physical science, (c) biological science, (d) social science, (e) English literature, (f) English composition, (g) history, (h) philosophy.

Foreign language preparation

If courses are required in a foreign language, evidence of the degree of mastery obtained by fulfilling the minimum requirement for a degree should be presented to the board of trustees.

The establishment of "clinical professors"

The professor from the college or university who is to supervise and assess the practice teaching should have had much practical experience. His status should be analogous to that of a clinical professor in certain medical schools.

Basic preparation of elementary teachers

(a) The program for teachers of kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3 should prepare them in the content and methodology of all subjects taught in these early school years. Depth in a single subject or cluster of subjects is not necessary.

(b) The program for teachers of grades 4, 5 and 6 should provide depth of content and methods of teaching in a specific subject or cluster of subjects normally taught in these grades, with only an introduction to the remaining elementary school subjects.

Practice teaching for elementary teachers

All future elementary teachers should engage in practice teaching for a period of at least 8 weeks, spending a minimum of 3 hours a day in the classroom; the period must include at least 3 weeks of full responsibility for the classroom under the direction of a co-operating teacher and the supervision of a clinical professor.

Adequate staffing of small colleges training elementary teachers

Those responsible for financing and administering small colleges should consider whether they can afford to maintain an adequate staff for the preparation of elementary school teachers. Unless they are able to employ the equivalent of three or four professors devoting their time to elementary education, they should cease attempting to prepare teachers for the elementary schools.

Collegiate or university responsibility

Each college or university should be permitted to develop in detail whatever program of teacher education it considers most

desirable, subject only to two conditions: first, the president of the institution in behalf of the entire faculty involved—academic as well as professional—certifies that the candidate is adequately prepared to teach on a specific level or in specific fields, and second, the institution establishes in conjunction with a public school system a state-approved practice-teaching arrangement.

Single field diploma for secondary school teachers

An institution should award a teaching certificate for teachers in grades 7 to 12 in one field only.

Clinical professors in institutions educating secondary teachers

Every institution awarding a special teaching certificate for secondary school teachers should have on the staff a clinical professor for each field or combination of closely related fields.

Teaching diploma for art, music and physical education teachers

An institution offering programs in art or music or physical education should be prepared to award a teaching diploma in each of these fields without grade designation; institutional programs should not attempt to develop competency in more than one field in four years.

Masters degree programs

The graduate schools of education or their equivalent (in universities organized without such separate degree-granting schools) should devise a program for increasing the competence of teachers as teachers with the following characteristics:

(1) It should be open to any graduate of the same institution in the same field of endeavor (e.g., elementary education, secondary school social studies, etc.).

(2) Courses should be allowed for credit toward the 30 semester hours whether or not the courses are of an elementary nature, provided they are clearly courses needed to increase the competence of the teacher.

(3) No credit toward the degree should be given for extension courses or courses taken on campus while the teacher is engaged on a full-time teaching job.

(4) Passing of a comprehensive examination should be required for the master's degree, as is now the case in some institutions.

(5) The summer-school sessions should be arranged so that four summer residences will complete the degree requirements, or two summers plus one full-time semester residence.

(6) If the offering in the arts and sciences is not wide enough to provide meaningful work in the summer session (as it would not be in some state colleges), arrangements should be made for the transfer of credit from a university summer school with a good offering of courses in subject-matter fields.

(7) For elementary teachers, the degree should be master of education in elementary education; for secondary teachers, master education in English (or science or social science or modern languages or mathematics).

almost 500 prospective teachers assist in schools in the Norman area each year



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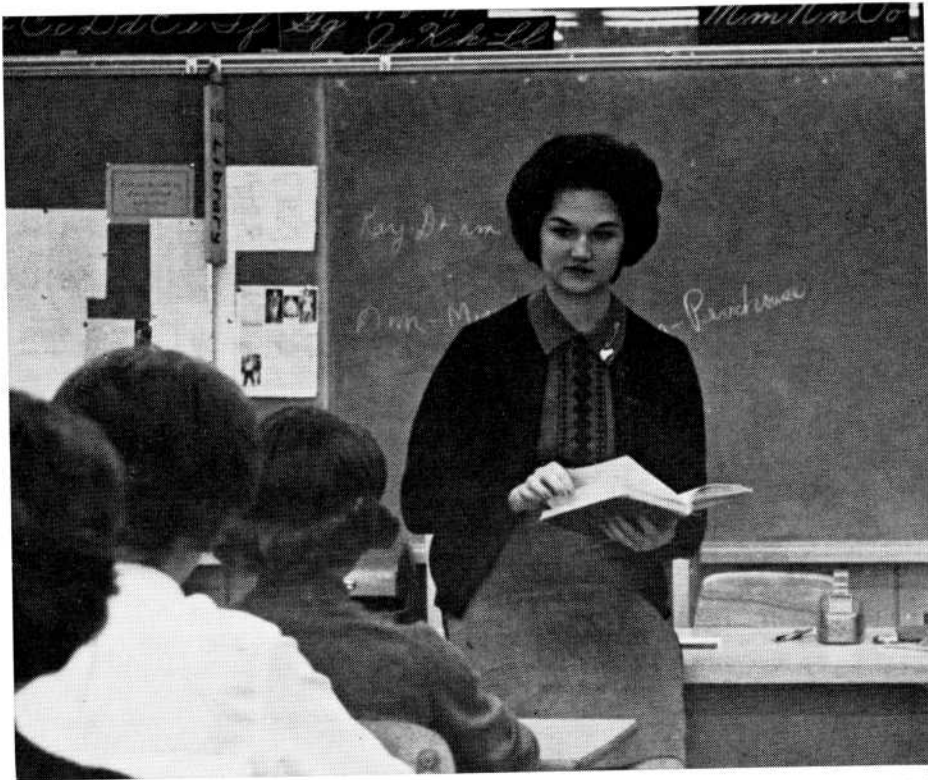
school teaching-field departments of the University, notably the departments of the College of Arts and Sciences. It must be remembered that the University does not certify teachers—only the various state departments of education can do that—but that the University does have an important, if not transcendent responsibility in recommending for such certification. Until March, 1954, the responsibility for such recommendation was lodged in the Office of Admissions and Records. Following that date, this important responsibility was lodged in a director of teacher education, a position of University-wide scope, roughly compared to the positions of the dean of the Graduate College, the dean of the University College and the dean of the Extension Division. This administrative decision made teacher education a University-wide function and a University-wide responsibility; it also located in one administrative officer the authority and responsibility for seeing that O.U.'s concerns for the development of professional school personnel were effectively filled.

Since the appointment of the director of teacher education, policy-making responsibilities for teacher education at O.U. have been vested in a specially designed council, the University Council for Teacher Education. This 50-man group, drawn from

all colleges of the University, is formally charged with the development and approval of all curricula, admission criteria, retention requirements and program completion requirements for students aspiring to formal certification for teaching, school administration and school counseling at the University of Oklahoma. In view of the current and developing hullabaloo, it is worthy of note that the majority vote of this group does not reside in any college faculty of the University.

O.U. currently trains teachers and school administrators in 23 different fields. Candidates for certification in each field are controlled in two ways: first, through supervision by a teacher education counselor, appointed by President Cross for this function; and second, through a published curriculum specified by one of the University's 19 certificate committees. The teacher education counselors correspond closely to Conant's "clinical professors"; each is a person richly experienced and deeply committed to teaching. Each is nominated by the dean of his college and by the director of teacher education and is appointed by President Cross.

Each of the 19 faculty certificate committees is specially designed for its particular task. In science, for example, the certification committee is made up of one elected



Student teachers at O.U. like Mrs. Carolyn Taylor, shown as she addresses a class at Norman High School, are given extensive training and supervision in accordance with Conant's recommendations.

member from each of the departments of botany, physics, zoology, geography, geology and chemistry. An additional member is appointed from the staff of the College of Education, and still another is appointed from the staff of the University School. In this particular committee, botany has unusual representation, for it elects one representative and one of the two counselors (all counselors are *ex-officio* members of their certification committees). One of the counselors is Frank A. Rinehart, assistant professor of botany; the other is David Ross Boyd Professor Kenneth Crook of chemistry. Again it is of interest to note that only in the committees governing the curricula for elementary teachers and those for school service personnel (counselors, principals, superintendents) do members of the faculty of the College of Education hold a majority of the votes. In these fields it can hardly be questioned that Education people are the most competent University staff members for their assignments.

Curricula for the education of teachers at O.U. normally require at least 50 semester hours distributed among six of these fields: English, social studies, health and physical education, science, mathematics, psychology, foreign languages, fine arts, practical arts and humanities. Twenty-one hours in professional education are nor-

mally required, including eight hours of student teaching, though some programs (e.g., elementary education and special education) require more. At least 30 hours are required in the prospective teacher's teaching field, and this minimum requirement is expressed in most fields with course specifications which range upward to some 50 hours of specialization.

Every fall term, O.U. fields some 150 student teachers. Each spring semester, this total swells to more than 300. These aspiring, perspiring, attractive and hopeful young people fan out over the public school systems of Oklahoma City, Del City, Midwest City, Moore and Norman. Each spends half-days for an entire semester or full-time for eight weeks in the company of an experienced teacher, learning the tools of his trade under the guidance of an old-timer. During his student teaching assignment each student is visited by his counselor, normally each two weeks, though frequency of visit is affected by the effectiveness of the public school teacher and by the load of the teacher education counselor. At the end of his student teaching, if his other work is completed, if he has stayed out of trouble, and if he has satisfied his public school mentor and his University counselor, O.U. is ready to recommend him for a teachers certificate in one of the 50 states.

Academically, O.U.'s prospective teachers are more than a cut above the average: each must post a 2.25 grade average on the 4.0 scale and pass the University-wide English proficiency examination before he can enter student teaching. (2.0 is the usual requirement for a bachelor's degree.) Emotionally and morally he must be above reproach too. His professors and his counselor must have reported no observable inadequacy for a teaching career, and he must have no record of disciplinary trouble within or without the University during his stay at O.U. In addition, he must present a certificate of good physical health.

Probably the only point at which O.U. practice differs sharply from the practices recommended by Dr. Conant is the point at which Conant advocates no degree-credit for courses taken while the teacher is on a full-time teaching job. O.U. frankly offers credit to people so employed—not only those employed in teaching, but through its area study centers and its College of Continuing Education it offers college credit to people in virtually all walks of life, regardless of their current employment status. This offering is not accidental. It is the consequence of the conviction that the University must do whatever is necessary to bring educational opportunity to ambitious and striving people. After all, the only people who can be taught are those who present themselves for instruction. It is sheer folly to seek to provide educational service for those who are not present, uninterested or unable to find the means. The ambitious, energetic and striving people of our population are the yeast in Oklahoma's social dough; they are the people upon whose shoulders Oklahoma will be lifted. These are the people O.U. seeks to serve in its advanced teacher education programs; these are the people who often must gain their advanced training at the end of the work day or the work week. Serving and supporting them does not require relaxation of academic standards or reward for inferior performance.

The hue and cry over teacher education is probably only in its early stages. No doubt, many Oklahoma institutions of higher education will find their practices and policies called into question during the months ahead. But, members of the O.U. family can feel secure in the structure built during the past ten years at their alma mater. It will take a lot of huffing and puffing to blow this house down.