Panel Reports On Academic Training Of Teachers

What does the future school teacher need to know about the subject he will teach?

To guide college students planning careers in education, four panels were drawn from the Twenty-nine College Cooperative Plan. This group of liberal arts colleges cooperates with the Harvard Graduate School of Education in attracting undergraduates into careers in education.

In their report, "The Academic Preparation of Secondary School Teachers," the panelists stressed three requirements for all teachers:

1. The ability to communicate orally and in writing.
2. The "particular tool of analysis and communication," provided by mathematics.
3. An acquaintance with each of the central scholarly fields: "All should be sensitive both to the rigor of statistical analysis and to the intuition of artistic appreciation."

Mathematics

The Mathematics Committee offers a five-point course of study:

1. A three-semester sequence in analytic geometry and calculus.
2. Two semesters in abstract algebra.
3. Two semesters of probability and statistics.
4. Two semesters beyond analytic geometry.
5. Two semesters of elective courses.

This program, the committee says, differs from the usual undergraduate math major in two ways: The stress on analysis is reduced, and no course in advanced calculus or differential equations is suggested.

Natural Sciences

The committee suggests that the student take from one-third to one-half of his course in the science he plans to teach. Course in the history and philosophy of science should be included. Mathematics, work on an independent laboratory problem, and attending a summer institute are also recommended.

For adequate preparation to teach the earth sciences - astronomy, geology, meteorology, and oceanography - at least a year's work in these sciences is suggested.

The Biology teacher will need a background in biology and practical help in the use of simple apparatus, the making of solutions, and the performance of chemical tests" according to the report.

The future physics teacher will probably have to teach another science course as well. His training, therefore, should include two years of math and chemistry, and a year of biology or geology.

The students who plans to teach chemistry will take approximately the same undergraduate courses as a chemistry major.

"The Biology teacher will need to study physics and organic chemistry, not only for their theoretical value but also for their practical help in the use of simple apparatus, the making of solutions, and the performance of chemical tests," according to the report.

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