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Qualifications of College Teachers: 1918-1962

by

Phillip D. Vairo

It is the purpose of this article to review and to comment upon the research which has been reported in professional literature dealing with the qualifications of college teachers during the past fifty years. Particular attention has been given to teachers in two-year institutions. The qualifications of college teachers have been reviewed under the following headings: (1) academic preparation, (2) teaching experience, (3) publications, and (4) membership in professional organizations. Practical considerations have limited the number of studies included in this investigation.

Academic Preparation

McDowell, in 1919, compared the qualifications of teachers in private and public junior colleges with those of teachers instructing in the lower-division of four-year colleges and universities. The study included 523 teachers from 66 junior colleges, 58 teachers from 3 four-year colleges, and 233 teachers from 3 universities.¹

The investigation revealed that 8.2 per cent of the private junior college teachers held doctor's degrees, 27 per cent held master's degrees, 52 per cent held bachelor's degrees, 11.7 per cent did not hold degrees, and 1.1 per cent were unclassified. The sample included a total number of 343 teachers from private junior colleges. In investigating the qualifications of 180 public junior college teachers McDowell found that only 2.8 per cent held doctor's degrees, 39.5 per cent held master's degrees, 45 per cent held bachelor's degrees, 11.6 per cent did not hold degrees, and 1.1 per cent were unclassified. Of the four-year college teachers, 26 per cent held doctor's degrees, 41 per cent held master's degrees, 26 per cent held bachelor's degrees, 1.8 per cent held no degrees, and 5.2 per cent were unclassified. Of the university teachers, 60 per cent held doctor's degrees, 25.6 per cent held master's degrees, 12.7 per cent held bachelor's degrees, 0.4 per cent held no degrees, and 1.3 per cent were unclassified. In summary, the study showed that the median teacher of the university held a doctor's degree, the median four-year college teacher held a master's degree, and the median junior college teacher held a bachelor's degree.²

¹Floyd M. McDowell, "The Junior College," *United States Bureau of Education Bulletin*, No. 35 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1919), p. 54.

²*Ibid.*, p. 56.

Koos, in 1924, also compared the qualifications of junior college teachers with those of teachers giving instruction in the lower-division level of four-year colleges and universities. Koos' study included 129 teachers from private junior colleges and 163 teachers from public junior colleges. He reported that 1 per cent of the teachers in the private junior colleges held doctor's degrees, 34 per cent held master's degrees, 60 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 5 per cent did not hold degrees. Three per cent of the teachers in the public junior colleges held doctor's degrees while 47 per cent held master's degrees, 47 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 3 per cent did not hold degrees.³

Koos found that of the four-year college teachers instructing on the freshman and sophomore levels, 18.2 per cent held doctor's degrees, 40.9 per cent held master's degrees, and 40.9 per cent held bachelor's degrees. Of the university teachers instructing in the lower-division, 10.8 per cent held doctor's degrees, 55.4 per cent held master's degrees, and 33.8 per cent held bachelor's degrees.⁴

Additionally, Koos pointed out that preparation for teaching is not solely one of academic degrees. It is also a question of preparation in the subject fields in which the teacher is giving instruction. He found that three-fourths of the public junior college teachers and Northern private junior college teachers he investigated and 86 per cent of the four-year college teachers had an undergraduate major in the subject they taught.⁵

Koos showed in his study that the public junior college and Northern private junior college teachers both surpassed the four-year college and university teachers in the preparation of semester-hours of work in education. The study revealed that teachers in the Northern private junior colleges had completed an average of 21 semester-hours in education and the public junior college teachers had completed an average of 16 semester-hours of work in education. The four-year college teachers averaged 5 semester-hours of work in education while the university teachers averaged only 2 semester-hours of work in education.⁶

In 1927, Morris found that 7 per cent of the teachers in California junior colleges held doctor's degrees, 40 per cent held master's degrees, 36 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 17 per cent held no degrees.⁷

³Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior College Movement* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1925), p. 67.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁷Charles S. Morris, "The Junior College Faculty," *The Junior College Its Organization and Administration*, (ed.) William Martin Proctor (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1927), p. 47.

In 1928, Martens reported the academic preparation of 554 teachers from 26 junior colleges in California. The study showed that 6.5 per cent held doctor's degrees, 46.4 per cent held master's degrees, 37.4 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 9.7 per cent held no degrees.⁸

An investigation of the Stanford University faculty revealed that 72 per cent of all lower-division instruction at the university was given by teachers of professorial rank. The study also pointed out that 58 per cent of the teachers instructing on freshman and sophomore levels held doctor's degrees.⁹

Wahlquist investigated the highest degree held by 1,236 teachers from 222 junior colleges in 39 states. He found that 5 per cent held doctor's degrees, 59 per cent held master's degrees, 29 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 7 per cent had no degree.¹⁰

Garrison obtained responses from 716 teachers in 51 public junior colleges. His study revealed that the majority of teachers had undergraduate majors or minors in the subject field which they were teaching; however, there was a minority of teachers instructing in subjects in which they had no preparation. Garrison also reported that the master's degree was held almost universally among the junior college teachers in his study.¹¹

Approximately two decades after his first study, Koos again gathered data from 48 public junior colleges in California and 8 states in the Midwest and South. The number of teachers involved in the second study was 1,458.¹²

Koos found that 6.3 per cent of the teachers held doctor's degrees, 63.6 per cent held master's degrees, 26.8 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 3.3 per cent held no degrees.¹³

He found that 38.2 per cent of the respondents had a graduate and undergraduate major in the subject they taught, 26.4 per cent had a graduate or undergraduate major in the subject taught, 18.5 per cent had a graduate or undergraduate minor in the subject taught,

⁸E. H. Martens, "Training and Experience of Teachers in the Junior Colleges of California," *California Quarterly of Secondary Education*, IV (1928-29), 51.

⁹Walter Crosby Eells, *The Junior College* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), p. 402, quoting from an unpublished study by Miss Maxine Whitney, at Stanford University.

¹⁰J. H. Wahlquist, "The Status of the Junior College Teacher," *Junior College Journal*, I (November, 1930), 130.

¹¹L. A. Garrison, "Preparation of Junior College Instructors," *Junior College Journal*, XII (November, 1941), 135-136.

¹²L. V. Koos, "Junior College Teachers: Degrees and Graduate Residence," *Junior College Journal*, XVIII (October, 1947), 78.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 79.

and 16.3 per cent had no graduate or undergraduate major or minor in the subject taught. No answer was received from .6 per cent of the respondents.¹⁴

In his first study, Koos reported that the average number of semester-hours of work completed in education was 16 for the public junior college teacher. In 1941, the average number of semester-hours of work completed in education by the junior college teacher was increased to 29.¹⁵

The preparation of academic and special subject teachers such as art, music, physical education, and home economics was of special interest to Koos in his investigation. He found that 83.8 per cent of the academic teachers held advanced degrees while only 43.8 per cent of the teachers in special subjects held such degrees. The percentage of academic teachers without degrees was reported to be negligible. On the other hand, 9.1 per cent of the special subject teachers did not hold degrees.¹⁶

Reynolds, in 1953, compared the qualifications of 124 social studies teachers in 45 junior colleges with 173 social studies teachers giving instruction in the lower-division of liberal arts colleges, teachers colleges, and universities. He found that 82.3 per cent of the teachers in the two-year colleges possessed the master's degree as the highest academic degree, and 13.7 per cent held the doctor's degree. Of the teachers instructing in the lower-division of the four-year colleges, it was reported that more than half of the teachers held the doctor's degree as the highest academic degree. Approximately 3 per cent of all the teachers, on all levels, held only the bachelor's degree as the highest degree.¹⁷

Pattillo and Pfinster obtained data from 330 member institutions of the North Central Association in 1952-53. The number of teachers involved in the study was approximately 30,000 from universities, four-year colleges, and public and private junior colleges.¹⁸

Of the teachers in the four-year colleges and universities 36.1 per cent held doctor's degrees, 47.5 per cent held master's degrees, 9.4 per cent held bachelor's degrees, 1.2 per cent held no degrees, and 5.8 per cent were unclassified.¹⁹ In public junior colleges 6 per cent of the teachers held doctor's degrees, 82 per cent held master's degrees, 10 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 2 per cent were un-

¹⁴ L. V. Koos, "Junior College Teachers: Subjects Taught and Specialized Programs," *Junior College Journal*, XVIII (December, 1947), 207.

¹⁵ L. V. Koos, "Junior College Teachers: Preparation in Education," *Junior College Journal*, XVIII (February, 1948), 334.

¹⁶ L. V. Koos "The Junior College Teachers: Degrees and Graduate Residence," *Junior College Journal*, XVIII (October, 1947), 79.

¹⁷ J. W. Reynolds, "The Social Studies Instructor in the Junior College and the Lower Division Level," *Social Studies in College*, National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Series No. 8 (January, 1953), 88-90.

¹⁸ M. M. Pattillo and A. O. Pfinster, "Faculty Training and Salaries in Institutions of Higher Education," *North Central Association Quarterly*, XXIX (April, 1955), 374.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

classified. In private junior colleges 12.9 per cent of the teachers held doctor's degrees, 67.1 per cent held master's degrees, 16 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 4 per cent were unclassified.²⁰

Colvert and Baker reported the highest degree held by 6,985 public junior college teachers for the year 1954-55. The percentage of teachers holding doctor's degrees was 7.2 while 68.5 per cent held master's degrees, 17.9 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 6.4 per cent held no degree.²¹

Kinerson studied the academic background of 186 junior college teachers of physical science teaching in 124 junior colleges in 37 different states. The study revealed that 13 per cent held doctor's degrees, more than three-fourths held master's degrees, and about one-third of these had work completed beyond the master's degree. A small percentage held less than the master's degree.²²

Kinerson also reported that nearly two-thirds of the teachers studied had completed approximately 15 semester-hours of work in education on the undergraduate level. He went on to state that the same number of teachers had graduate work in education with about 16 semester-hours in education completed.²³

Rainey compared the academic preparation of accounting teachers in junior colleges, four-year colleges, and universities in Oklahoma in 1958-59. The investigation disclosed that there was not one doctorate in the ranks of the junior college teachers, whereas 13.8 per cent of the teachers in four-year colleges and universities held doctor's degrees. Of the junior college teachers 76.6 per cent held master's degrees as compared to 67.2 per cent of the teachers in four-year colleges and universities. The bachelor's degree was held by 23.4 per cent of the junior college teachers as compared to 19 per cent for the four-year college and university teachers.²⁴ It was also reported that junior college teachers had completed an average of 20 semester-hours of work in accounting while the four-year college and university teachers had completed an average of 40 semester-hours of work in accounting.²⁵

During the period 1954-58 it was found that 70 per cent of the new teachers on the faculty of the University of California held doctor's degrees, and 40.2 per cent of the new appointees at the

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 382.

²¹C. C. Colvert, "Professional Development of Junior College Instructors," *Junior College Journal*, XXV (April, 1955), 476.

²²Kendall Scott Kinerson, "A Study of the Academic and Professional Preparation of Junior College Teachers of Physical Science," (unpublished Ph.D.) dissertation, Dept. of Education, Michigan State University, 1957), p. 115.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 114.

²⁴B. G. Rainey, "An Analysis of Criticisms of Junior College Teachers by University and Senior College Staffs," *Junior College Journal*, XXX (December, 1959), 209.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 211.

state colleges held doctor's degrees. Comparable data for the junior colleges for this period were not available. For the year 1959-60 it was reported that only 7 per cent of the new faculty members in the 59 junior colleges in California held doctor's degrees.²⁶

Medsker gathered data from 3,895 teachers in 74 two-year colleges. He reported that three-fourths of the teachers held graduate degrees, 64.6 per cent held master's degrees, and 9.6 per cent held doctor's degrees. Furthermore, 17 per cent of the teachers held bachelor's degrees, 6.7 per cent held no degrees, and 2.1 per cent were unclassified.²⁷

The Research Office of the State University of New York compiled a report on the instructional staff of the public community colleges in the fall of 1959. The study revealed that of the 661 teachers in the community colleges, 9.7 per cent held doctor's degrees, 52.2 per cent held master's degrees, 27.5 per cent held bachelor's degrees, and 10.6 per cent were unclassified.²⁸

Since the year 1953-54 the Research Division of the National Education Association has studied the academic preparation of teachers in two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. In 1953-54, the Division reported that among 58,719 teachers in four-year colleges and universities 40.5 per cent held doctor's degrees, 20.9 per cent held master's degrees plus one year of additional graduate study, 28.2 per cent held master's degrees, and 10.4 per cent held less than master's degrees.²⁹ It was also reported that of all new teachers in four-year colleges and universities in 1953-54, 31.4 per cent held doctor's degrees, 51.4 per cent held master's degrees, and 18.2 per cent held less than master's degrees.³⁰

In 1960-61, of all new teachers in four-year colleges and universities it was reported that 25.8 per cent held doctor's degrees, but 17.4 per cent held less than master's degrees.³¹ Of the new teachers in public junior colleges, 6 per cent held doctor's degrees as compared to 7.4 per cent of the new teachers in private junior colleges. Of the new public junior college teachers, 18.3 per cent held master's degrees plus one year of graduate study as compared to 14.2 per cent for the new teachers in private junior colleges. Master's degrees were

²⁶*A Master Plan for Higher Education in California 1960-75* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1960), p. 123.

²⁷Leland L. Medsker, *The Junior College: Progress and Prospect* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), p. 172.

²⁸New York State University Research Office, *Professional Personnel* (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1960), p. 6.

²⁹National Education Research Division, "Instructing Staff Practices and Policies in Degree Granting Institutions," *National Education Association Research Bulletin*, XXXII (December, 1954), 164.

³⁰National Education Research Division, *Teacher Supply and Demand in Universities, Colleges, and Junior Colleges, 1959-60 and 1960-61* Research Report No. 12 (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1961), pp. 12-13.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 14.

held by 49.8 per cent of the new teachers in public junior colleges and 43 per cent of the new teachers in private junior colleges. Twenty-five and nine-tenths per cent of the new teachers in public junior colleges and 35.4 per cent of the new teachers in private junior colleges held less than master's degrees.³²

Chapin and Vairo compiled a report on the instructional staff of the public two-year and four-year colleges in North Carolina for the school year 1961-62. The study revealed that of the 135 teachers in the two-year colleges, 9.6 per cent held doctor's degrees, 68.1 per cent held master's degrees, and 23.3 per cent held less than master's degrees. From the data gathered from 1,231 four-year college teachers, it was found that 39.1 per cent held doctor's degrees, 53 per cent held master's degrees, and 7.9 per cent held less than master's degrees.³³

Teaching Experience

McDowell found the median years of teaching experience for 516 junior college teachers to be 8.6 years compared to 10 years for 218 university teachers and 12.5 years for 58 four-year college teachers.³⁴

Koos in his 1924 study of the qualifications of junior college, four-year college, and university teachers reported that teachers in public junior colleges had a median of 9.1 years of teaching experience compared to 5.0 years for teachers in private junior colleges. Teachers in four-year colleges had a median of 8.9 years of teaching experience, whereas the university teachers had a median of 4.2 years of teaching experience. Koos did not include teaching experience below the high school level in computing his statistics.³⁵

Martens found that teaching experience among the 554 public junior college teachers in California varied from 2 to 40 years. Only 5 per cent of the teachers had fewer than 2 years of experience, and 5 per cent had more than 25 years of experience. The median number of years teaching experience for the public junior college teacher was 10. The study also showed that 80 per cent of the teachers had high school teaching experience, 34 per cent had college teaching experience, 4 per cent had junior high school teaching experience, and 17 per cent had elementary school teaching experience.³⁶

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

³³F. Stuart Chapin and Philip D. Vairo, "Statistical Summary of the Recognitions Received from Outside Organizations by the Faculties of Public Two-Year and Four-year Colleges in North Carolina for the School Year 1961-62" (Raleigh: Board of Higher Education, 1962), p. 8. (In the files of the Board of Higher Education of North Carolina.)

³⁴McDowell, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³⁵Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior College Movement* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1925), p. 75.

³⁶Martens, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

Koos, in 1941, reported that only a small minority of the 1,458 public junior college teachers he studied were without high school teaching experience. The number of years of teaching experience on the junior college level varied from 1-2 years for 6.1 per cent of the teachers to over 25 years experience for 17.1 per cent of the teachers.³⁷

Kinerson pointed out that two-thirds of the 186 junior college teachers of physical science he studied had high school teaching experience. The median number of years of teaching experience for the entire group Kinerson studied was 8 years.³⁸

Medsker in his study of 3,895 teachers from 74 two-year colleges found that 64 per cent of the teachers had taught in secondary or elementary schools, mostly in secondary schools.³⁹

Chares and Summerer reported that in the academic year 1957-58 the faculty of Flint Junior College consisted of 54 teachers who had less than 6 years of teaching experience, 57 who had from 6-15 years, 14 who had from 16-25 years, and 19 who had 26 years or more of teaching experience.⁴⁰

Rainey found that four-year college and university accounting teachers averaged 1 year of teaching experience in public elementary or junior high school, 2.4 years in public high schools, and 11 years in four-year colleges and universities. Junior college teachers averaged 1.3 years experience in public elementary or junior high school, 7.4 years experience in secondary schools, and 9.9 years experience in junior colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. The median number of years of teaching experience for the four-year college and university accounting teacher was 14.7 compared to 19.5 for the junior college accounting teacher.⁴¹

The Research Division of the National Education Association reported that junior colleges obtained more new teachers from high school faculties than did four-year colleges in 1960-61. Approximately, 30 per cent of all new teachers in junior colleges came from high school teaching positions.⁴² The four-year colleges drew 12 per cent of their new teachers from high school faculties.⁴³

³⁷L. V. Koos, "Junior College Teachers: Background of Experience," *Junior College Journal*, XVIII (April, 1958), 469.

³⁸Kinerson, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

³⁹Medsker, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁴⁰S. F. Chares and K. H. Summerer, "Building a Junior College Faculty," *Junior College Journal*, XXIX (March, 1959), 423.

⁴¹Rainey, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁴²National Education Research Division, *Teacher Supply and Demand in Universities, Colleges, and Junior Colleges, 1959-60 and 1960-61*, Research Report No. 12 (Washington, D.C.: National Educational Association, 1961, p. 36.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 18.

Publications and Research

Garrison found of the 716 public junior college teachers who replied to his questionnaire only 10 per cent had done research or published materials during the academic year 1938-39.⁴⁴

Kinerson reported that about one-half of the 186 physical science teachers in public junior colleges he studied had done research at the master's level; however, only a small minority did research on the doctoral level.⁴⁵

Rainey's investigation of accounting teachers in Oklahoma revealed that 9 per cent of the four-year college and university accounting teachers conducted research, but no research was being carried on by junior college accounting teachers. The four-year college and university teachers completed 3 books, 25 articles, and 4 research projects compared to no book, 3 articles, and no research project for the junior college accounting teachers.⁴⁶

Pessen's study revealed that 11 members of his social studies department at Staten Island Community College, New York, during a four-year period published 33 articles, 3 books, 2 research projects, and completed 3 short stories. Additionally, four members of the staff were engaged in work on their doctoral dissertations.⁴⁷

Chapin and Vairo reported that during the past five years the 1,231 teachers in public four-year colleges in North Carolina have published a total of 1,374 articles, books, and textbooks, an average of 1.1 publications per teacher. The 135 teachers in public two-year colleges have published 24 articles, books, and textbooks, making an average of 0.2 publications per teacher.⁴⁸

Professional Organizations

Rainey found that only 11 per cent of the junior college accounting teachers in Oklahoma belonged to the American Accounting Association compared to 35 per cent of the four-year college and university accounting teachers. He also reported that 11 per cent of the junior college accounting teachers belonged to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants by contrast with 39.5 per cent of the four-year college and university teachers.⁴⁹

⁴⁴Garrison, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁴⁵Kinerson, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁴⁶Rainey, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-211.

⁴⁷Pessen, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

⁴⁸Chapin and Vairo, *op. cit.*

⁴⁹Rainey, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

Chapin and Vairo found that the 135 teachers in public two-year colleges studied belonged to a total of 232 professional organizations for an average of 1.7 organizations per teacher. The 1,231 teachers in four-year colleges belonged to a total of 3,710 professional organizations for an average of 3 organizations per teacher.⁵⁰

Summary

The percentage of teachers in two-year colleges holding graduate degrees shows a steady increase since 1918. The median degree held by two-year college teachers is the master's degree, while approximately 10 per cent held doctor's degrees. There has been an overall decrease in the percentage of teachers having no degree.

Of the four-year college and university teachers approximately 40 per cent held doctor's degrees; however, according to the Research Division of the National Education Association, only about 25 per cent of the new teachers entering four-year colleges and universities held doctor's degrees in 1960-61.

In five different studies, McDowell, Koos, Martens, Kinerson, Summerer and Chares found that the number of years of experience for teachers in two-year and four-year colleges varied from 1-2 years to over 25 years experience. Medsker in his study reported that 64 per cent of the teachers in the two-year colleges had taught in secondary or elementary school, however, most of them on the secondary school level.

Koos reported that teachers in the two-year colleges completed more semester hours in professional courses in education than did teachers in the four-year colleges and universities.

According to the results disclosed in the investigations conducted by Garrison, Kinerson, Rainey, Chapin and Vairo the number of books and articles published by two-year and four-year college teachers was small; however, the four-year college teachers published in greater proportion. Furthermore, four-year college teachers were found to hold membership in more professional organizations than two-year college teachers.*

⁵⁰Chapin and Vairo, *op. cit.*

*The article is based on a doctoral dissertation completed at Duke University (1963), Durham, North Carolina.