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Real Professionalism

College faculty members, like teachers in public elementary and secondary schools, should be required to hold state licenses. They should also be required to study the theory and practice of education in the course of their professional preparation. Such are two of the recommendations offered in "New Horizons," a preliminary report by the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards. The commission is a unit of the National Education Association, whose nearly three quarters of a million members are drawn principally from the ranks of school teachers and school administrators. The commission plans to publish a detailed analysis of its recommendations early next year, but in the meantime it invites discussion of its efforts to achieve what the preliminary report calls "real professionalism."

The recommendations for enlarging the licensing responsibilities of the states actually go beyond the inclusion of just college faculty members. Details are not fully spelled out, but apparently just about everyone in education but the students is to be included. At the school level, the report recommends the licensing of teachers in private and parochial schools as well as teachers in tax-supported schools. Attention is paid not only to those in front of blackboards, but also to those behind the scenes. The report recommends the licensing of all of what it calls "leadership personnel"—school principals, supervisors, and guidance officers. At the college level things get more hazy, but we may assume that in the interests of consistency, not only are all instructors in private and state institutions to be licensed, but also admissions officers, deans, and presidents. No specific mention is made of instructors at graduate faculties or professional schools, or of *their* leadership personnel, and perhaps the commission draws the line at this point.

The logic behind the push for equal treatment for all educational personnel is the belief that the whole of education will benefit if the parts are united. The idea of closing educational ranks is not new, and some of the present efforts in which those experienced in education at the school level are cooperating with those experienced at the university level are producing valuable results. The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, in conjunction with the AAAS, is conducting one such program. Its work even bears on the licensing of teachers, although instead of seeking to extend the present system, the program is seeking to correct present operating deficiencies. This cooperative effort is attempting to establish a national system of reciprocity among the states, based on national standards that include a specified minimum of subject-matter preparation, so that a teacher licensed in one state can move to another state and still be permitted to teach in public schools.

Although bringing together school and college educators may produce good results, it will not necessarily do so. The commission's interest in educational unity is commendable, but the report itself is an illustration of one kind of difficulty the search for unity presents: the groups brought together may hope for different things from such cooperation. Licenses might well change the composition of college faculties, but our guess is that the academic community as it is now composed would not regard the change as an improvement. At one point, the report offers a list of criteria in terms of which prospective teachers should be selected, and heading the list is "emotional maturity." If candidates for academic careers, not to mention present faculty members, are to face with equanimity the consequences of a closing of educational ranks as conceived in the report—assuming such circumstances ever could come to pass—then emotional maturity is something they will surely need in abundance.—J.T.