

Asking questions brings results. In the case of a questionnaire sent to many educators in reference to attitudes about their profession, the responses demonstrate that the expression "go to the source" is not without merit. Although much has been written by others about aiding the teacher in accomplishing a well-balanced way of life, it is interesting to obtain teachers' own viewpoints from Neva Caroline Hagaman, Supervisor, Long Beach Public Schools, in—

We Air Our Views

Neva Caroline Hagaman

"WE ARE SEEKING information concerning professional views about teachers' balanced living which is accepted as being closely related to desirable working relations with boys and girls."

The above was the opening paragraph in a questionnaire sent to 78 persons in order to get the reaction of educators to the problems of balanced living. The list included 6 new teachers in elementary education, 3 new teachers in secondary education, 29 teachers with 3 to 12 years of experience, 14 teachers with 20 to 24 years of experience, 6 teachers on leave to the service, 6 who had been in the service but had returned to teaching, and 8 individuals now in administrative positions with previous teaching experience.

It is generally accepted that a teacher has tremendous responsibilities while working with children. Like any professional worker, she becomes deeply interested in the persons with whom she works each day. Sometimes it seems that teachers give more generously of their patience, understanding, and time than do other people. This is often true to the extent that people forget that teachers are human beings and that their views concerning needs

for out-of-school interests play a major role in enabling them to be happier and better adjusted people in their work with children.

We Want to Know

The questionnaire continues: "In an attempt to make objective statements concerning this topic, the following questionnaire is being sent to many teachers, principals, supervisors, administrators, and other persons contributing directly to children's education.

"Will you kindly write me a brief statement as to what you think along this line. A few questions which might guide your thinking are:



I enjoy working on the land

NYA Photo



Courtesy West Georgia College, Carrollton, Ga.

Let's know other people

How much time do you spend on school work each day?

What is your attitude toward doing it?

What outside interests do you have?

Do you have time for outside interests?

Do you feel you need outside interests?

Do you feel you would like to continue as you are doing or what suggestions would you offer?

Do you think changes would make you better qualified to help children?

A general tabulation of responses indicated the following findings:

Forty-nine seemed interested and enthusiastic about teaching.

Seven thought more time for outside interests should be provided.

Seventeen thought some factors could be improved to help teachers become better adjusted.

Twenty-nine indicated that the teaching profession offers as much time for outside interests as do most professions.

Fourteen indicated that they did not have enough time for outside interests.

Forty-eight indicated that they spend much time beyond the required school day.

Fifty-three of the sixty-four persons who responded said that balanced living which would include outside interests is highly desirable and does affect the teacher-pupil relationships in the classroom.

They Speak Out

When responses were examined in detail other significant points of view were disclosed. Those responses relative to time spent on the job were interesting and revealed a variety of attitudes.

teacher

I spend from nine to ten hours a day either at school or on work associated with school. I feel this is no more than many professional people spend in their work. Although there are parts of the work which could be done by secretarial help, I feel most of the time is spent in doing things helpful to teachers or children and therefore worth the time spent.

supervisor

I spend on an average of ten hours a day on school work. My attitude toward working after hours is that it is easier to spend a little longer time on the job than to have the work accumulate so that it is confusing. I think it would be far better for me, as a person, not to have school work to do outside of school.

teacher

I try to organize my regular school work into a working day just as people do in the business world. This is most easily accomplished by sitting down after the children go home and carefully planning all of the things that must be ready for the next day. By this organization of necessary work, I save myself many precious minutes. After working at school from 8 to 4, I mentally and physically leave my work and worries in the school building.

supervisor

The amount of time spent on school work each day varies. Since I consider my work a profession, I never figure the amount of time. Sometimes it may be that every evening and the full weekend would be needed in my work, but I try to keep this cut down to a minimum. I believe it is the responsibility of

administrators to help the teacher keep her work organized so that she can usually complete it without taking too many evenings and weekends.

All Work and No Play

In the responses relevant to outside interests, the statements made by educators present a variety of opinions and provide further insight concerning their problems.

supervisor

I have outside interests in my home and garden. I do not have the time that I would like to spend pursuing those interests because there are so many interruptions due to school matters. I would like to feel that my time was my own after I had devoted a full day to the problems of teachers, children, and school. I would particularly like to have my Saturday afternoons and Sundays free from telephone calls and teachers dropping in to discuss their problems. I feel that I would be better qualified to help children if I could lead a normal life outside of working hours.

a teacher

I belong to church and to a religious club and spend some time sewing, reading, and doing other things for my own enjoyment. I regularly attend shows, programs, and social affairs which have no connection with my work. I feel I have interests enough outside my work. I do not always have as much time to follow outside interests as I would like. However, I am aware that I have as much or more time for them than many girls working in other occupations.

a supervisor

My outside interests never rob a teacher of any help that she needs, but I do find time to do a fair share of the work on my ranch, see a few good shows, and read. I try to have enough time to accomplish my work without dashing and rushing which would bother those with whom I work.

supervisor

I have many outside interests, the limit being established in accordance with available time—church and civic interests, club activities, concerts, lectures, and simple social functions, to say nothing of an occasional game of

golf. Like every normal human being, I find these outside interests essential.

teacher

My chief outside interests are my twelve-year-old daughter, my home, and orange grove. I don't have much time for other outside interests during the school year. I do not have time to see my friends very often as my time is taken with collecting materials, attending meetings, and visiting my family. I would be very unhappy without outside interests.

teacher

I feel that outside interests and contacts with others not in the teaching field are most important to the maintenance of a well-rounded personality. In my own case I consider my teaching an important job which I enjoy while doing it. I literally throw myself into my work during the school day, but try to do other things when I'm away from school.

teacher

Most of my hours away from school are spent with people who have no connection with school activities. I feel that I need the change and stimulation of individuals who have different outlooks and interests, so that I cannot think and talk too continuously about my school problems. I do enjoy being with people, so I spend much time with friends, and with church organizations. I also travel as much as possible during vacation periods.

supervisor

Every person has to decide how much outside interest he needs in order to be able to feel that he is an individual as well as an important part of the organization in which he works. Some people seem to get along with less activity than others. I feel certain that my agricultural interests on weekends make me a better person to live with, and I am also sure that many things I have learned on the land have provided a background for classroom work. I feel very fortunate in being able to claim a few hours as my own which can be used in doing anything or nothing. I only wish that more teachers were as satisfied with their arrangements.

teacher

If we know something about sports and have some interest in them, we will certainly

seem more human to the children we contact. Nearly all children are interested in sports and think everyone should like to play.

Variety Fosters Growth

Certainly the extent to which an individual has a breadth of experience will condition his ability to live happily in a varied environment. Many teachers recognize that experiences outside the classroom are necessary to balanced living and affect the quality of relationships they have with children. This need is exemplified in the following answers to the questionnaire.

teacher

My attitude toward teaching has changed considerably since my two years' experience in other fields. I still enjoy the actual teaching and contacts with the children, but dislike the attitude of some teachers. The only word I can think of to describe it is "stuffy." They put themselves on pedestals, or are put there by the public, and feel that they must act accordingly. Teachers should not have to play a role, but should act as the normal people they are if they don't want themselves to be molded into a pattern. I realize that different school systems have different policies, but more democracy in planning is highly desirable.

teacher

Occasionally I find that I have to limit my interests so that I have the physical energy to work with the children. In striving to preserve a normal and healthy mental attitude, I sometimes do more than I should and get too tired.

supervisor

Two things I would like to mention are, first, that I do not believe long hours, heavy schedules, and educational problems bother the teacher nearly as much as personality conflicts and, second, that for too long we have rewarded good work with more work.

teacher

If I were starting my teaching career over again, I would take a sabbatical leave every time I was entitled to one. Each time I would do something different. During the summer vacations I would plan varied activities. I have

had some experiences other than teaching and feel that they have been of great benefit to me as a teacher. Some have helped to give me better understanding and appreciation of human nature. Others have given me a better understanding and appreciation of the work other people do.

teacher

I worked five years in different types of jobs. I probably expend more energy in the classroom than in any other job I've done. Yet, I receive great satisfaction from the children at school. Teachers should have to earn their living from other sources for a few years and they would be happier about their own situations. I am grateful to be a teacher. My only great concern is the attitude of the public, such as evidenced in newspapers, magazines, on the air, and among some parents. I feel they are the factors that cause teacher tensions.

Constructive Influence Is Vital

Teachers are just normal human beings with normal desires. They do need recognition, recreation and associations with others so as to enjoy freedom from tensions. Also teachers' attitudes and adjustments are closely related to helping boys and girls. It is important to the future of America that these teachers be given every opportunity to become well-balanced persons in every sense of the word.

The support of all institutions and agencies in a community is needed to help the classroom teacher, who really is the key person in a school program. Administrators and supervisors, parents, newspapers, churches, and recreational leaders are important auxiliary helps. The influence of each of these groups needs to be constructive in order to help release the teacher from undue pressure and emotions.

Certainly the teachers of America had great tests during World War II. The types of activity demanded of them again called for people able to operate in many different fields. Think only of a few of the outside activities requiring adaptability—selling bonds and stamps, assisting with rationing, working with millions of children who had one parent in the service, and dealing with the increase of migratory children.

That teachers need time for social and recreational activities is clearly emphasized in *School and Society*.¹ Arthur Gould brings out the facts that the teachers who become maladjusted are the ones who engage in few of these activities. Similar studies reveal this for all persons regardless of their profession.

Desirable teacher-pupil relationship as a powerful influence upon both teaching and learning is brought out in a study by Robert N. Bush.² In 1940-41, under the auspices of the Stanford Social Education Investigation, the relationships between nine social studies teachers and their pupils in a small private junior college were studied. The particular teacher-pupil relationships checked were aspects of the general question of personal rapport and its relation to effective teaching. Various rating scales, questionnaires, tests, and other devices were used. After obtaining the information the investigator discussed the findings with the teacher; together they analyzed and interpreted strengths and weaknesses in the teachers' relationships with pupils.

Book Learning Is Not Enough

The Study of Mr. Brown, the teacher, and his 28 pupils revealed that: "Every teacher

is highly effective with some pupils, and every teacher is quite ineffective with some pupils. However, there are some teachers who have effective relationships with a larger proportion of their pupils while others are effective with relatively few. *In general, the teachers who know most about their pupils and are aware of and sympathize with their individual needs and interests have effective relationships with a larger number than do the teachers whose concern is pretty exclusively with knowledge of subject matter.* Teachers of the latter sort usually develop very effective relations with students who have marked academic talent and interest; but students generally tend to experience more success and satisfaction in work with teachers sensitive to broader needs and interests (italics ours)."¹

The teacher who is to have this understanding of the needs and interest of children and youth must herself have experiences that make these needs and interests real to her. Certainly the teacher who makes the following statement is aware of rapport between out-of-school experiences and classroom relationship. "If a teacher has achieved a balanced living, the activities and interests outside her profession should be numerous and varied, and should bring stimulation to her teaching activities and to her children. Likewise, if her teaching is wholehearted and adequate, it should reflect in her enthusiasm for and choice of outside interests and activities."

¹ *Ibid.*

¹ Arthur Gould, "The Mental and Physical Health of Teachers," *School and Society*, May 31, 1945, v, 53, pp. 706-11.

² Maurice E. Troyer and C. Robert Pace, *Evaluation in Teacher Education*. American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., 1944, pp. 255-275.



LAST MONTH we wrote of the appointment of a committee headed by B. Othanel Smith, which will collect and review articles concerning supervision and curriculum development.

We now announce a second Research Committee, which will be responsible for one issue of the *Journal of Educational Research* during the publication year 1946-47, under the sponsorship of this Association.

C. V. Millard, Director, Division of Education, Michigan State College, in East Lansing is chairman of this committee. Assisting him are Roland Faunce, Department of Public Instruction, Lansing, Michigan, J. Cecil Parker, Director of Curriculum, San Francisco, California, and Ted Rice, Coordinator of Instruction in the Oklahoma City Public Schools.

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