

People in education are advised to think in terms of each child in planning learning experiences. "Take the child where he is," we say. This same point of view is not always applied in the case of the beginning teacher. She is forced to jump from the student category right into the field of teaching. Consequently, she has to undergo a period of vast, and sometimes difficult, adjustment in her work with both the older teacher and the pupil. To make this adjustment even more difficult, too often she is expected to meet all situations with the poise of a veteran. The following statements from beginning teachers reveal their need of personal guidance and understanding.

Newcomers Speak

¶ Many people cling to the old idea that teachers should appear dignified and older than they really are. My problem was to convince some people that I was old enough to accept the responsibilities that a teacher has. The fact that I looked younger than many of the high school students made it more difficult. Proving that I could handle responsibilities in school and community projects finally convinced them that I was no longer a "bobby soxer." Tales told by my students in their homes helped immensely in gradually persuading parents that youth has a definite place in the teaching profession.

¶ I had to learn to be tolerant of disgusting conditions such as children smoking and roaming the streets *with* parental consent. I waged an unfinished campaign for cleanliness of body and cleanliness of conversation. I had to be tolerant of useless tradition—a vivid example—a belt-line initiation for freshmen and teachers.

¶ This was almost humorous but it was to learn to adjust myself to being on the same professional plane as older, more experienced teachers, who sometimes try to be didactic and superior minded in both social and professional attitudes. It was in establishing common grounds of such friendship that the biggest adjustment had to be made, in which such overtures had to be made by younger, newer teachers, to be accepted at will by the older teachers. The whole problem was more of an adjustment on their part than on mine, or so I felt. The whole teaching setup has a little too much of professional jealousy. After all, for a group of teachers to be a united front in modern education, they must surely work together in a unified manner. I am

sorry to say this of a profession which otherwise I have found satisfying and otherwise proud to be a part of.

¶ I gained from friendship and contact with fellow teachers. Their maturity and alertness were influential.

¶ Learning what association to have with high school boys and girls who were two or three years younger than I was, but yet I was really much older than they were, as I was a teacher! I felt I was able to do something about it as I can assume responsibility as well as fellow teachers who are several years older than I.

¶ I grew socially—I met all the parents and I enjoyed the association so much because then I understood the children better. I learned to *appreciate* the fellowship at community functions. I'd never thought I could sing a duet with the head of the produce company or imitate a "Bicycle Built for Two" with the church janitor.

¶ I did have to do some adjusting as far as patience, tolerance, etc. are concerned.

¶ Living in a small town with practically no recreational opportunities offered was a problem of personal adjustment. Accepting a position in the community which is given respect and responsibility helped me to "grow up" to meet the expectations. I learned to enjoy myself doing things out of school such as knitting, reading, and becoming acquainted with people in the community—thus not being solely dependent on commercial means of entertainment.

¶ There is a lack of people to have as friends when a teacher and we need some, but we have to keep pretty much secluded.

¶ During my second year of teaching, I

found it necessary to learn to enjoy the company of somewhat older teachers. It could quite easily be done, but was a contrast with my first year of teaching even though in the same school. All there was to it was to learn to enjoy some different types of entertainment.

☛ At first, I had little confidence in myself—but that couldn't last long. I find it much easier to meet and converse with older people now—thanks to teaching!

☛ I feel one grows most markedly in learning to take full reins of responsibility for a group of children's education in a given stage of their school experience. I felt almost overwhelmed at first on what all depended on me—but it was replaced by a deep sense of satisfaction and profundity at what could be done by intelligent common sense teaching, and in feeling almost maternally responsible for each pupil.

☛ I definitely learned to be more patient, more tolerant, more diplomatic, and to ex-

ercise more self-control. I believe I developed an understanding, to a certain extent, of what is expected of a teacher by her pupils, the other teachers, and the community.—I also grew older.

When the question was asked, "As you think over your first year (or two years) of teaching, what particular kinds of *professional* help or guidance did you feel you needed most?"

☛ One student answered, "First how an elementary grade schoolroom should be conducted to secure the most benefit for the majority of the group, and second, how a teacher herself can develop a *more professional* relationship to the school and the community."

☛ Another replied, "Many times I wished I had someone to consult about projects and types of lessons advisable for the levels of ability—and then how to present them. We were always told about problems, but *never* how to cope with them.

Many of the problems of beginning teachers are similar to those which face any teacher. But others are separate and distinct—problems of youth, of adjustment to a new and different environment, or of playing a new role in a somewhat familiar environment. That young teachers recognize these factors of adjustment is shown in the statements in the preceding article. To gain insight into some of the things that may be done to help these young people make better adjustments, a five-year record of achievement is presented here. It is part of a supervisor's report received by the Central Committee of the Five-Year Study on In-Service Education of ASCD and edited by Maurice E. Troyer, director of the Evaluation Service Center, Syracuse University. Many ways of working with beginning teachers are suggested in the story of how—

Ann Grows Up

Maurice E. Troyer

ANN HAD TWO YEARS of college training with practice teaching on the fifth-grade level. She had taught one year and was considered a failure. Her home was in a neighboring county seat where she lived with her mother, a single sister, and a married sister, whose child was idolized by the oldsters. The family had a very difficult time economically. Ann appeared fat, careless in dress, and had much trouble with her complexion.

The following year when Ann applied for a position in her home county the superintendent assigned her to the primary grade in a four-room school. Ann and her principal drove the forty-mile round trip to school daily. The principal had great understanding, was growing herself, and was capable of seeing growth in others. She had had experience as a W.P.A. instructor of adults and was interested in better living for all.

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