

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.

1939-40—Drab Beginnings

First visit to classroom—I found a dismal, unpainted school, with insufficient window space or other lighting facilities. The children were as drab as the classroom. Their parents were workers in the nearby chair factory or tenant farmers. The children often stayed out of school to “bottom” chairs at ten cents each. The classroom was furnished with sturdy, unpainted chairs and tables, torn window shades, an unpainted book cabinet, and the teacher’s desk and chair.

In spite of crowded conditions, the teacher was trying to have a reading table and story hours. As I examined the books on this table, I realized that one of my first jobs was to cull unsuitable books from the circulating library. The teacher was trying to read a story to all of the children, and when they showed lack of interest she raised her voice and tried to read that much harder. The lessons were very formal and out of textbooks which had almost no point of contact with children of this background.

My suggestions dealt with: helping her select books for the library table; working with only five or six in the reading groups; and exploring the experiences of the children as a basis for writing lessons. We talked about visiting in the homes whenever possible. Later, in talking with the principal I tried to show her the values in these changes. She soon found a way for the teachers to do some visiting in the homes—using her car.

Other visits this year were concerned with similar suggestions, but there was not much visible change in the classroom.

a workshop is set up

Feeling that one of the reasons teachers were not letting children do practical building of articles for school and home was their own lack of ability in handling tools, I had set up a simple workshop at headquarters. It was opened with the idea of making games which children could make for Christmas presents. Ann was among those present. It took her most of the evening to learn to use the counter-sink properly and make one of the games. Ann also made a simple shoe rack and learned to do simple block-printing with a potato to decorate short curtains in her room.

During the year her questions concerning classroom work had to do with what books children should read in class, what words to spell, which words in reading to be most concerned about for recognition, and how to drill on them. Since there was to be a new state adoption of textbooks, and teachers had been asked to make recommendations, she got interested in our shelves of sample books. She and another first-grade teacher decided it would be worth their while to make a rather exhaustive study of the vocabulary in these pre-primers, primers, and first readers. They knew that there were scientific word lists but thought that regionalism played a significant part in what they wished to know. A great many hours were spent in this work in the shop adjoining my office.

building with minds and hands

Just before the seven-month school term was over, Ann came in and told me she wished to spend time in the workshop as soon as school was out. She thought there would be value in children making furniture, toys, etc., but she did not dare try it with them before she had made something herself. Her objective was to make something which would:

- serve as a nucleus for a playhouse
- be very substantial
- be within the experience of the children and yet be conducive to further growth of experiences
- cost practically nothing and be within her ability to construct.

A stove was decided on. It was to be an oil-burning stove. The Sears Roebuck catalogue was used in drawing up the “blue-print.” A search of the lumber yards brought forth very good material in the way of window-pane boxes. It took two weeks to complete the job. The result was an unbelievably substantial and attractive piece of work and Ann became greatly respected by other teachers, lay people, and student-teachers from the local college.

I knew that a noted author would be around for several days during the summer to work with groups on children’s literature. The day I went by to tell Ann about this, she came around the corner of the house apologizing for being so dirty. She was helping her mother, sister, and former supervisor

salvage old furniture and make new pieces for an outdoor living room for their apartment house. They also made a satisfactory out-of-door fireplace.

1940-41—Desire For Improvement

Sept. 5—Ten days before schools open. Ann came in to know what I thought of her enameling some wood blocks she salvaged during the summer, thinking they would be good for children to play with. I suggested that she might smooth them some and then let the children paint them.

Sept. 11—Ann has worked twice this week on vocabulary study with M.M. I gave them Betzner's study, "Content and Form of Original Compositions Dictated by Children From Five to Eight Years of Age"; cited vocabulary studies; and told them of a book by Eaton.

First classroom visit—She has also begun to use children's experiences to some extent. A typical story-chart:

We are making our playhouse.

We finished our bed.

We finished our table.

We painted our bed.

We painted our bed blue.

We like our bed.

We like our table.

We like to play with Peggy Ann.

Evident from the above is the place the playhouse began to assume in group living.

suggested changes

During this year Ann became more concerned about the amount of word-calling done by children. Just before Christmas the sentence, "Christmas is coming" was written on the blackboard for the children to copy a number of times. It was easy to show her how little this was worth when we observed them copying one letter all of the way down the page and then doing the same thing with the next letter.

Ann was quite sensitive to the effect of the heavy work done by the children at home on the program she was building at school. Because of this, a rest period was provided early in the morning. She was also sensitive to the effect of inadequate diet on the children. She saw how the playhouse and block-building showed much of the children's environment. Although they could not find a way to have a lunchroom, the principal and

teachers worked out an interesting health program.

During this year she joined a group of primary teachers visiting in one of the classrooms of the county, and later visited in the Laboratory School at the college. She also joined a small group of teachers who had asked me to arrange for some help in science from the college (field trips, pictures, talks).

The principal and Ann had taken advantage of a conference with Dr. _____ on child development. They also went to attend a conference on curriculum planning.

1941-42—Objectives Are Sighted

Ann was transferred to a nine-grade school with eight teachers. Before school opened, Ann came into the office to obtain information concerning community background of the children and to discuss possibilities in her program. She wished music for the children, but could not teach it, so she enlisted the aid of high school girls. The room was outfitted with traditional desks and she found table space for the children.

In March several primary teachers in the county felt that there were better ways of achieving the results they wished with children and they asked that I arrange a visiting day for them. After I had described several classroom situations to them, they asked to visit in Ann's room because of the experimental nature of her work. They met with her an hour the week before the visit, asked her questions and discussed her objectives. She pointed out that some of her procedures were still in the experimental stage and asked that they help her evaluate them. These are some of the objectives as she outlined them:

Development of independent thinking and acting.

Development of a feeling of security in the classroom—knowing where things are, how to get them, and how to put them away. Increasing the experiences of the children—has done this only through books, materials in the classroom, and the sharing of outside experiences.

Make each child a part of the group.

All children to accept responsibility for things which need to be done in the classroom.

Development of emotional balance—tries to know enough about what happens at

home to try to offset emotional stresses. Learning how in play to follow rules and get along with others.

A balance of rest and activity in the school day.

Development of a variety of ways of expressing themselves.

After the days of visiting, the principal joined the group and there was another discussion period.

Ann was very much interested in the school lunchroom and was active in getting it started. She was able to work out classroom procedures in such a way that she could help with the preparation and serving of the meals when needed.

increased learning activities

Small reading groups came about naturally in the classroom this year. There was no indication of word-calling on the part of the children and they were liking books. She found many ways to contribute to the number experiences of the children, but there was no formal arithmetic. When Cheree Nell came in from a city school system and demanded spelling lessons, she had enough support that some spelling groups were formed.

At the end of the school year Ann joined a workshop group of county teachers, working two mornings each week for six weeks. The framework of thinking of the entire group was: What are children like when we get them in our schools at six years of age, and what would we like for them to be like when they leave us at twelve years of age? There were a variety of problems worked on by individuals and small groups, but there was one hour of sharing each week. Ann was one of the people who was obtaining college credit for this by also attending certain class sessions out at the college.

1942-43—Ann Shares in Group Action

The newly organized branch of the Association for Childhood Education elected her as program chairman, stipulating that the program be one of action instead of discussion. She organized the programs as a series of work groups for the exploration of various media of expression usable in the elementary school. These programs have been so successful that up until the very last meeting of the year there was usually someone coming in to ask if it was too late for them

to join the group. Ann's main shortcoming has been that she would go out and buy whatever supplies she thought to be needed, paying for all of this herself.

organizing brings results

A group of people interested in a study of the relation of aviation to the postwar world has enlisted the aid of college personnel. Ann joined the group. She finds a way of attending almost every discussion group sponsored by this office, as well as other professional meetings. She attended the state education association in March. She was an active participant in the recreation workshop sponsored by the Steering Committee of the county, of which she is a member.

She helped organize a group of professional women for night work at the local Red Cross rooms and soon became inspector for the group. Soon after this she set up a bandage workroom in the school in which she works for the women of the community, bearing the expense of equipment herself. This was so successful that another one was set up in a feeder community to this school.

She is learning to make very attractive clothes for herself.

1943-44—Personal and Professional Growth

She was one of a small group which asked me if I would meet with them to go through the entire process of making fist puppets, working up a play, making the stage, and staging the play. We met at my apartment and had a hilarious time but did not complete the process. Other things have crowded it out, but the materials are still in the workroom and from things which have been said, I believe the project will be continued. She was retained as chairman of the program committee for ACE, and was elected secretary of the State organization at its annual meeting.

attainments are varied

She is secretary of the County Teachers Association, a rapidly growing organization, and the president depends on her a great deal in thinking out procedures. She is good at analyzing group reactions and has an educational approach in all of her suggestions for procedure. In attending a district meeting of educational associations, she was much surprised at the difficulties expressed by mem-

bers of other groups. She is very active in explaining to the members of her own group the advantage which they enjoy and the responsibilities which they should share. She entertained the executive committee of the local association at a supper party in connection with its last business meeting, the first time this has ever been done.

Ann was active again this year in the requested workshops in music and recreation. The Steering Committee had felt that it could not ignore the great problem of juvenile delinquency this year, but thought that our approach should be much more fundamental than the general one. Since junior high school teachers were feeling need for help on the problems of the younger adolescents, the committee organized a panel for the discussion of the problems of this group, differentiating between those which are normal to growth and those which are aggravated or caused by faulty guidance somewhere along the line. Ann was asked to discuss the relationship of the program in the primary grades to these problems. Other classroom teachers also participated. Visiting educators who were members of the panel spoke highly of her insight into the problem.

Summing Up

Space does not permit the inclusion of Ann's own appraisal of the sources of her

professional help during the five year period. This summary is, therefore, limited to that portion of the account that has been reported by her supervisor. This summary is brief. It is hardly necessary. The conditions under which Ann developed can hardly be missed by one who has read the account. But, for those readers who look for the summary before reading the context, here it is.

1. This is the five year record of a teacher who moved from failure to leadership in the profession of teaching.
2. Ann wanted to improve. It is clear that at first she had few ideas as to what improvement was needed or how to improve. These emerged as part of her growth and with stimulation from many sources.
3. The relationship between Ann and her supervisor was one of mutual confidence and respect. They worked *with* each other—not *on* each other.
4. Resources for felt needs were readily, and richly provided—the material resources commensurate with the locale; the personal resources, i.e., administrators, teachers, college staff, nationally prominent educators right down to the earthly problems faced by Ann as she worked with her boys and girls.

IT IS SO VERY DIFFICULT to let children live fully in their own world at their own pace when all around are haste and anxiety; so difficult to remember that there must be time for children to play—that they learn through play. For example:

An adult asked a child at a workbench what he was doing.

"Making a box," he answered without stopping his work.

The adult persisted, "What kind of a box?"

"A radio box," he replied, still working.

And still the adult was undaunted. "But have you a radio to put into it?"

"No!" emphatically.

"But why don't you make a box that you can use? There are so many real things you can use boxes for."

The child stopped hammering. His face was a mixture of annoyance, amazement, incredulity as he shouted, "I can *play* I have a radio, can't I?"

Such misunderstanding of the child's world will continue to occur until there is far greater recognition of the principles of growth than there is today. There are not many, but they are very important. Of first concern is the recognition of the need of children for time: *A good program for children takes into account the pace at which children grow.*—"The Roots of Growth" by Agnes Snyder in *Childhood Education*, December 1945.

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