

objective standards of accuracy and excellence? • For an observational trip, have adequate plans been made for its preparation, execution, and for individual reporting and analysis of the new materials afterwards? • Is there a sufficient number of students participating for stimulating comparison of observations or too many for independent contact with the situation? • Will some other medium serve the educational purpose better than a field work project? • Does the project motivate the student toward new undertakings?

Field work as a method of study is no simple panacea for the ills that beset education in this chaotic postwar world. But, in the words of Helen Merrell Lynd, “. . . by its directness, its freshness, and the nature of its materials it can become at the present time a particularly valuable means of helping free the individual to make full use of his power.”⁴

⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 160, 161.

Preparation for Leadership

WILLIAM T. GRUHN

In planning teachers-college curriculums, a variety of ways have been used in accomplishing the purpose of acquainting students with the school as only one part of the total community in which it exists. William T. Gruhn, associate professor of education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, describes the way in which the University of Connecticut plans for community experience as a part of student teaching.

TODAY'S TEACHER numbers among daily responsibilities, tasks that carry him far beyond classroom walls. He supervises clubs, assemblies, social functions, and other extraclass activities; he assumes responsibility for certain administrative activities; he participates in professional-improvement activities, such as local faculty meetings, curriculum planning and revision, and meetings of local, state, and national professional organizations; and he is active in various civic interests of the local community. Teacher-education institutions must, as an integral part of the pre-service program, provide contacts with these various duties and responsibilities of the teacher in service. Such is the intention in the observation and student-teaching activities which constitute a major part

of the teacher-education program at the University of Connecticut. Designed to give students an all-round experience in the duties and responsibilities of a teacher, the program includes opportunities to extend participation beyond campus boundaries.

The State as the Laboratory

There is no demonstration or training school at this university. All observation and student teaching is carried on in selected junior and senior high schools throughout the state. Each school is selected in terms of the contribution which it is believed can be made by that school to the particular student concerned. The first consideration is, of necessity, the type of teachers available in the student's teaching fields. Other

considerations are the philosophy of the school as a whole, its guidance program, its extraclass activities, and its professional-improvement activities. Finally, the nature of the community itself is given careful consideration.

Since not more than two students are, as a rule, placed in any one school, it is not particularly difficult to locate a school to meet the needs of the individual student teacher. It means, however, that most of the schools in the state must be used by the University for student teaching, rather than confining this work to a few student-teaching centers. Because Connecticut is not a large state and is quite heavily populated, it is possible to use almost all the schools and still provide adequate supervision by University faculty members.

Priorities on Student Teaching

When the schools for student teachers are located some distance from the campus, students must temporarily discontinue all campus activities. This is a great advantage in that the student is able to devote all his interest and attention to his student-teaching responsibilities. He can become in every sense a staff member of the school to which he is assigned.

Students leave the campus eight weeks for observation and practice-teaching in the schools to which they are assigned. Although only six weeks are required, almost all the students take the full eight-weeks period. In September, before classes begin at the University, the students spend two weeks in the cooperating schools doing observation. The two-weeks period is used primarily for exploratory purposes. Students ordinarily observe several teachers in both

their major and minor subjects at various grade levels. Although they may assist the regular teachers, they do no practice-teaching during this initial two-weeks period.

The last six weeks of student teaching is given in the second semester of the senior year or in the fifth year. For this period, students must be away from campus activities, including classes. By careful planning it is possible to arrange a schedule for this semester which enables a student to be away from campus classes for six weeks without finding himself at serious disadvantage.

Operations Classroom

The student spends the entire day during the student-teaching period in the school to which he is assigned. Usually he is assigned to one teacher in his major field, although he may spend some time with other teachers also. He works with that teacher in his classes, home room, study hall, and after-school activities.

He devotes the first week or two of the six-weeks period to observation, getting acquainted with the pupils, and the preparation of various types of materials. Then he begins to teach, at first only a class or two, but eventually a full teaching load.

He is supervised in all his work by the cooperating teacher who assists him in all planning and in evaluating actual performance in teaching. Once a week, a supervisor from the University comes to work with the cooperating teacher in supervising and assisting the student with his classroom activities.

The beginning teacher frequently complains of the inadequate preparation he receives in his teacher-education pro-

gram for such responsibilities as the home room, guidance, clubs, social functions, and administrative activities. Since most beginning teachers take their first positions in small schools where they are expected to assume immediate responsibility for these activities, this criticism is a just one. It is true, indeed, that both professional courses and the student-teaching activities in most teacher-education institutions tend to neglect extraclass responsibilities of the teacher.

In the Connecticut program a definite effort is made to give some attention to these extraclass activities. The student teacher spends the full day in the school and is available also for after-school and evening activities. He assists the teacher with his home room, his club, after-school help for pupils, and administrative routine. If the cooperating teacher is sponsor of the school paper, a class play, or a social function, the student teacher may help with those activities.

It should not be assumed, however, that the student teacher has a complete and thorough experience in the discharge of each one of these responsibilities. That would, of course, be impossible in a period of six to eight weeks. Usually the student teacher is given responsibility for one or more of these activities, and observes the others in actual operation. For instance, one student teacher recently assisted with the direction of the junior class plays; another worked with a pupil committee in planning and presenting an assembly program for Pan-American Day; and a third assumed considerable responsibility in cooperation with one of the regular teachers for the freshman party.

With the emphasis that is being given

today on cooperation between the school and the community, this aspect of a teacher's responsibility should not be overlooked in the teacher-education institutions. It is difficult, admittedly, to provide adequate experience in school-community relationships. But it is a phase of pre-service education for which colleges and universities must make careful and adequate plans if they intend to prepare teachers who feel at home in modern schools.

Contacts With the Community

If the student does his observation and student teaching in a demonstration school or in the same community as his college, there is, too often, little or no opportunity for developing an understanding of the relationship between the school and the community. If a student teacher is sent to a new community and if he *lives* in that community during his student-teaching period, there is more encouragement and opportunity for studying the community and its bearing on the program of the school.

In the Connecticut program, the student teachers in home economics and vocational agriculture have a much better opportunity than students in other subjects to study school-community relationships. In these subjects, student teachers are sent only to those schools which have home projects as a part of their program. The student teachers observe, participate in, and supervise these home projects. Field trips are also the usual practice in these subjects, especially in vocational agriculture. These trips give further opportunity to see the relationship between school and community in the education of a child.

In other subject areas it is not so easy

to develop activities for helping the student teacher understand school-community relationships. Much of it must be brought about by the indirect method. Student teachers are urged to study the home backgrounds of children. They are given opportunities to discuss the nature of the community and the home backgrounds of the pupils with the cooperating teacher. It is suggested to student teachers that they make use of community resources in their teaching activities by sending pupil committees into the community to prepare reports on community matters, by having pupils interview local people to obtain information for class work, and by inviting local people to address classes or clubs on topics related to units being studied. The student himself is encouraged to learn to know the community firsthand as he plans these learning experiences. Finally, student teachers are urged to become a part of the community in so far as is possible in a period of six weeks by attending PTA meetings, attending local churches, and in other ways that may present themselves.

It should be obvious that in six to

eight weeks in a community comparatively little can be done by the student teacher to study that community and to become a part of it. However, if proper background is given in the professional courses that precede student teaching, some progress can be made to give the students a better understanding of school-community relationships. At least, the students can gain an awareness of the problem and some ideas about employing the community as a means of improving the educational opportunities of the children.

The plan of having students leave the university campus and go into typical schools and communities for their observation and student teaching is by no means without its disadvantages. These include the difficulty of arranging the campus schedule of the student teachers, the problem of supervising students who are distributed among many schools, and the training of cooperating teachers who may not have student teachers very often. But these are overshadowed by the opportunity for a student to have experiences which parallel closely the responsibilities he must eventually assume as a teacher.

Intergroup Experiences for Future Teachers

BERTHA LAWRENCE AND MARY V. GAVER

If teachers are to help children achieve better intergroup relationships, they must, first of all, understand the problem and have done something about it at their own personal level. Experiences which add to an understanding of intergroup relationships and give guidance for possible solution of problems are a part of the program at New Jersey State Teachers College in Trenton. Bertha Lawrence, dean of instruction, and Mary V. Gaver, librarian, discuss salient points of the program as it has developed during the past year.

NEW JERSEY STATE Teachers College at Trenton, New Jersey is located

in the center of a state whose vast industrial enterprises have attracted immi-

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