

changed behavior that it is hoped will result from conferences. This in many instances will be inherent in the process of discovering needs for further conferring.

Keep a Log

For a number of reasons it is helpful for all those participating in conferences to keep adequate and accurate records. Such records serve as instruments to be used in checking the completeness of past experiences and in planning future experiences with students.

In all cases, records of conferences should become a part of a larger project. For the student, his record of a conference can well become a part of a "professional diary" in which he keeps a full account of all of his experiences related to working with a group of children. For the staff member, the con-

ference record should be part of an accumulated file on the student. It is important in all conference situations that necessary records be available for immediate use and that they be used freely.

Where conferences have been used liberally by those working with prospective teachers the results have been satisfying. The need now is for more and better conferences of all kinds with many staff members and all students. Toward this end programs of staff people will have to be planned so that each member has free time to devote to personal and small group conferences; staff members will have to take personal interest in students; and all college personnel will need to develop better techniques of conferring and to work for a more wholesome emotional tone in all staff-student relationships.

The Individual—or the Masses?

IRWIN A. HAMMER

That general education is an integral part of a good professional program if teachers are to be community citizens and competent human beings, as well as specialists in their particular vocations, is stressed by Irwin A. Hammer, chairman, Department of Education and Psychology, Western College of Education at Bellingham, Wash. and formerly coordinator of instruction, and head, Department of Education, State Teachers College, Troy, Ala. Mr. Hammer describes some aspects of the Troy program which contributed to the general education emphasis in the Freshman year.

THE AMERICAN schools and colleges have begun to feel the heart-throbs of a movement that is revolutionary and yet peculiarly American. This movement is directed toward a larger recognition of

the individual and the social realities of his efforts to cope with his immediate problems of living. The college freshman comes to grips, in a very real way, with these problems but he usually finds

little in the general and introductory courses, commonly provided for him, that is functional in dealing with the problems of HIS WORLD. A growing concept of education at the college level, especially for the freshman and sophomore years, requires the acceptance of a principle of organization and instructional procedure that is based on the "needs of our society for the education of youth for constructive participation in the common activities of living".¹ This must be integrated with the concept of individual differences and the functional relationship of the organized subject areas of knowledge.

Regimenting Voids Initiative

The major concern of this article is with those courses that fail to reach the individual in an effective way, that fail to capitalize on those interests and enthusiasms of the individual youth which are born of real experiences in a world of challenging and important problems. We have been so concerned with educating the masses and the development of organizations and procedures for mass instruction that we have too often overlooked the student as a person with individual needs, capacities, and attitudes. Unfortunately this is also related to our system of courses, marks, and credits which helps in regimenting students in a way similar to that found in the military, in dictatorships, and on the assembly line. The proposals that follow are not an attack upon the present system of education any more than the idea that the world was round was an attack upon the idea that it was flat. Rather, it is a positive concept that should open the way to new conceptions and op-

portunities for attacking the ever-changing problems of education. These are, it seems, basic and fundamental in providing an "Education for Our Times."

Unify "Yesterday" and "Tomorrow"

Today, as never before in our history, the colleges are being forced to provide "education for the masses." Traditional methods and content are to be evaluated critically as a direct result of the practices that are being followed in many of our larger institutions of higher learning. The many GI's who entered college in September will be the "sounding board" for a re-evaluation of the purposes, procedures, and structure of the period spent in the American college. Individualism must be brought back into a dominant place in our educational thought and practice at whatever the cost, or the ideals and goals of a FREE AMERICA will perish. The "Education of All American Youth" must be so conceived and so organized as to make for larger and more positive participation in the affairs of the present. Otherwise the widening gap between the "yesterday" and the "tomorrow" will be so large that fear and confusion will destroy our American way of life. This was not so true a century or more ago, but with the ever-increasing rate of change so much can happen in a decade that we are apt to lose our bearings altogether. Our schools can no longer ignore or give just a casual notice to the great issues and principles argued and formulated today in the conference halls of the "One World."

It was such concerns as those expressed above that led the faculty of the State Teachers College at Troy, Alabama to set about the problem of re-

¹ EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, May, 1946; p. 347.

constructing programs of teacher education as far as could be accomplished in one institution. It is significant that this movement was connected with the nationwide study sponsored by the Commission on Teacher Education. It is also significant that the state department and the administration of the college gave support to the effort through vigorous leadership and positive cooperation. The faculty is also due much credit for its willingness to attack a problem involving such fundamental changes in philosophy, organization, and instructional procedures. The publications of the Commission on Teacher Education² recount some of the difficulties and outcomes of this effort but only the students and faculty who shared in the program can bear witness to the significance and challenges to real learning.

Space does not permit more than a brief description of the Bio-Social Core for the freshmen, which characterizes the major effort of the College in the development of a program of *General Education*. The instructional team for this core represented the fields of Biology, Sociology, Psychology, and Health and Physical Education. These four members worked together through conferences and were all present at most of the regular class periods. It was not conceived how such a core program could be conducted except that all staff members participated cooperatively most of the time in the classroom instruction. From the beginning the core content was drawn from the organized

fields of biology, sociology, psychology, and health and physical development. Each section met from one to three hours daily or from nine to twelve hours each week throughout the year for a total of twenty-one quarter-hours credit.

A survey of these fields of knowledge was considered undesirable, not only because of the scope of such an undertaking but rather, because such a survey would be contrary to the principles of "constructive participation in the common activities of living" and "individual differences." As a result several large problem areas were selected for careful and concentrated study. Further selection was necessary in order to concentrate upon those problems that seemed most important to the development of the student as a person. There was much student participation in this selection and the values to students and faculty from this process can only be estimated.

Brief Resumé

In a short article, such as this, no adequate description and account of the content, organization and instructional procedures involved in this core course can be related. Perhaps the best interpretation can be obtained from short excerpts taken from a mimeographed lecture and introductory statement prepared for and delivered to all entering freshmen during "Orientation Week."³

You have already taken the initial steps of being introduced to the ways of college life at Troy and now we are ready to begin what is usually referred to as "getting a college education." You

² Bulletin of the Troy State Teachers College, October, 1941, and Publications of the Commission on Teacher Education; Armstrong, Hollis, and Davis, *The College and Teacher Education*, pp. 66-78. Troyer and Pace, *Evaluation of Teacher Education*.

³ Hammer, Irwin A., *The Bio-Social Core: Introduction and Orientation*, (Mimeographed).

will be wise to remember that this "getting an education" is not confined to the classroom, nor to lesson assignments, nor does it all come from textbooks and instructors. You are to be the workman, the builder of your own future and much will depend on how well you use the textbooks, instructors, library, campus life, laboratories and other provisions for your development and education made available by your state. . . .

First of all there are problems of individual development; such as, getting started right in college, understanding yourself and others, developing an attractive and positive personality, developing a well-balanced viewpoint and routine of living, choosing a life mate and planning for future family life, meeting the needs of the human organism, personal and group health responsibilities, sex and reproduction, keeping intelligently informed on national and international affairs. These and many other problems crowd in for attention and study. Even in a study of these we must make certain limitations for they all contribute to your development as a person of distinction, culture and understanding. Each of you will find for your own development certain aspects of these large problems areas of greater interest and worth than others. You will be expected to exercise initiative in helping to make these selections, and then to make a thorough study of the particular problem.

Fall Quarter

You will notice that we have selected as our first big question, the most common of all questions, namely, why do we behave as we do. . . . We then try to get at a common understanding of what we mean by behavior and how and why the human individual learns to behave in accordance with certain approved patterns. Of course we will want to learn something about the origin and history of these approved ways of behaving. . . . Next we introduce the problem that usually confronts every

serious-minded college student, namely, *how can I best learn what is expected of me?* In America we are continually seeking ways of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of getting from here to there; of acquiring certain skills, knowledge, understandings, and meanings. . . . As we have previously stated, this course has to do with people and with the members of this class in particular. We are living organisms. It is our belief that if an individual understands this human organism, something of its biological and physiological make-up, something of the how and why of its behavior, and something of the environment in which it lives, he will behave more intelligently and desirably. We believe that an understanding of the relationship between and the interdependence of the human organism and its environment will result in a continuously improving level of living. . . . We now come to the examination and study of that difficult to define term, "personality", a something about which we all are deeply concerned. We all want to impress others in a particular way and we all want to feel good about ourselves.

Winter Quarter

During the winter quarter we will attack a number of problems falling under the general heading of: Major Problems of the Individual in Twentieth-century America. For the first twelve weeks, as has already been pointed out, you will study about how the individual develops in a personal way and something of why and how the organism grows and functions. For the next twelve-week period we shall want to see how that personal self reacts and behaves in a wider environment and with much more attention given to those self-other relationships. The following large problem areas seem to be paramount in the daily living of youth and of men and women in present-day America. From these and others, certain ones will be selected for special study. We will also expect to

find much that we can do in a very real and constructive way about these problems. Some of the problem areas suggested are: Personal health and physical fitness; The individual as a consumer of goods and services; Earning a living; Public welfare and relief; The formation of public opinion; Recreation and leisure-time activities; Religion, ethics and morals.

Spring Quarter

Marriage and family life are the most universal of all concerns of the individual. The last twelve-week period will be given to a study of this significant problem. . . . Marriage is normal for all peoples and in fact for all living things. This problem is the concern of the biologist, the psychologist, the physiologist and the sociologist. The study of this problem presents and introduces one to other problems pertinent to human welfare and happiness, and deeply challenges everyone interested in making the most of his own life and in contributing to the greatest possible happiness of others. . . .

Throughout the year you will be dealing with the major problems of human relationships but this is especially so during this last quarter of your freshman year.

Other sections of the introductory statement suggest and describe phases of the work that are in keeping with the philosophy and goals that have been briefly stated. Among these are: Individual and Group Procedures; Activities and Projects; General and Specific Requirements; Textbooks and Other

Instructional Materials; Student-Staff Relationships and Responsibilities; Evaluating the Outcomes.

Students and faculty working in the program observed various developments in the program as it was carried forward at Troy.

"One marked trend in the cooperative study was in the direction of combining the elements of professional education into a few relatively large and inclusive units. . . . The purpose was to assure greater continuity of experience and closer attention to interrelationships of various kinds, and at the same time to make possible more flexibility and variety. The development was closely tied up with the tendency to provide more direct experience, which was, indeed, facilitated by the arrangement in large blocks of time."⁴

This statement and the following one sum up in a most desirable way some of the efforts sought for in the Bio-Social Core at the Troy State Teachers College.

"Greater institutional unity is a prime need in programs of higher education. This implies a more effective integration within and between the various parts of each college and university, and also greater ability among faculty members to work together groupwise."⁵

⁴ Bigelow, Karl W.: *The Improvement of Teacher Education*. pp. 94-95.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

Prices Going Up!

BECAUSE OF INCREASED costs in production, it is necessary to announce a price rise of our two new publications. The *Bibliography on Secondary Education*, which has just come from the press, will be priced at 50 cents per copy. *Laymen Help Plan the Curriculum*, ready in December, will sell for \$1. Our usual discount on quantity orders, however, will still prevail.

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