

# Workshops in Washington

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During the past two summers, inservice education in the state of Washington has included experimentation with workshops for teachers. In two city areas these workshops have resulted from the cooperative efforts of city and county professional groups, the state department of public instruction, and consultants from one of the state teachers colleges. Figuring prominently in the total experience have been opportunities for joint planning and careful evaluation by workshoppers themselves. In the accounts which follow, Laura N. Minkler, assistant elementary director, Vancouver Public Schools, Wash., and Barbara Elise Kohler, supervisor, Bremerton Public Schools, Wash., who are cooperating in the workshops, give brief summaries of the workshop organization in each county and participating teachers evaluate the quality of the experience.

## Work and Play in Vancouver

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Laura N. Minkler and Teachers<sup>1</sup>

THE OFT-EXPRESSED sentiment of this anonymous statement extracted from a set of student evaluations seems to characterize the ten-day Vancouver-Clark County Workshop program of last July 29-August 10:

I have never attended a school where I gained so much in so short a time. I think the workshop is a wonderful idea, and would like to have it repeated again next year.

Competition in the form of warm weather and thoughts of interrupted vacations caused more than one person to experience feelings of reluctance as summer progressed and July 29th approached. Possibly others shared the thinking of one teacher who com-

mented that she was willing to attend a day or two for a trial period, but she might not complete the program because she was not interested in the three hours of college credit offered. It is noteworthy that no withdrawals ensued, participation was of a very active nature, and nearly all the students were eager to accept credit for the work accomplished.

Although the impetus for the workshop originated with the Vancouver Classroom Teachers' Association, it was supported in a very substantial manner by the city and county school administrations who were co-sponsors with the State Department of Education and Western Washington College of Education.

Preliminary planning was done by a committee composed of ten represen-

<sup>1</sup> Teachers who contributed statements for this article include Amy Farrall, Mrs. Hoeft, Flora M. Stinar, Carol Jean Tooley, Sarah Melson, Elizabeth Williams, and Audrey Cox.

tatives from the various sponsoring agencies. The larger committee had as its purpose the completion of the general plans such as selecting staff members, working out financial details, locations, and time schedules. A core committee of three members, selected from the larger group, were assigned the problems of receiving and approving applications for membership, determining by survey the areas of study to be provided, and assisting in the problem of amassing materials and equipment.

An elementary school was selected for a meeting place because it provided a more suitable environment for working out classroom problems and because groups of children could be used more advantageously for observation and demonstration purposes. It was also decided that cafeteria service should be included so as to eliminate the necessity of leaving the building during the day.

In order to facilitate planning, classroom teacher building representatives were asked to make the survey using definite application blanks on which teachers indicated first and second choices of problems or areas. A "Recruitment Week" was scheduled during which teachers and principals discussed the program. In some buildings common problems were set up for group research and discussion in workshop.

Since the workshop was a voluntary inservice provision planned primarily for teachers who could not avail themselves of the opportunity for study on a college campus, preference was given to persons who planned to continue in teaching and had a sincere desire to learn more effective ways of

working with everyday problems of teaching and learning.

Salaries of staff members and all other expenses of the program were absorbed by city and county school districts with the exception of a five dollar charge to each teacher to defray the cost of ten noon luncheons provided as part of the program.

The program was planned with individual growth and satisfaction as the desired product but with a well-rounded program as the means. This included individual conferences, study and research, small and large group activities determined by teacher interests, relaxation, nourishment, and play. Staff leaders were specialists in the field of education from Western Washington College of Education, the State Department of Education, and from Portland, Oregon.

Two sets of evaluations were requested. The first occurred at the close of the session and was written on an unsigned sheet of paper headed with the following two introductory paragraphs:

The staff and our sponsors hope you will write your reactions to this workshop. Your comments will be helpful in future planning for similar programs.

Rather than give you too much guidance for your comments you are asked to write what you wish, but we would like to have you think of the following headings: *Time of Year, Hours of Work, Place, Facilities, Cafeteria* and other similar factors as well as any suggestions for help other than those provided.

The following suggestions were made which are being considered in planning for next summer:

Art room open all day. (It operated on a half-day basis last year.)

Materials duplicated for use by other groups

More visual aids

Include more secondary level work.

Study of community resources

Daily announcements about plans or discussions of each group

Laboratory equipment for science

The functional organization of the program and its effectiveness can best be understood through the following evaluations written by teachers five months after the close of the workshop session:

¶ When I found I had only a short time for summer study I was confident the summer workshop would be a most valuable project in which to participate. The facilities were offered to Vancouver and Clark County teachers, and a busy ten-day session ensued.

At the first general session, coffee was served and assignments were made. Ten or twelve people were assigned to each consultant. One person from each group served with the faculty as a steering committee.

The really significant thing about the workshop was the fact that one received specific help on a specific problem. I felt a definite need for help on a year's program for social studies. With this to work on, I started my planning.

From materials available, from the Bellingham and local school libraries, I gathered facts, knowledge, reference materials for children, visual aids, and musical materials which dealt with each phase of study that I would use during the school year. Through the consultant I was lead into a large field of helps on each problem. Added to this was an extremely important factor, a period of general discussion within the group. Everyone contributed to the general field of primary work, through his experience.

¶ The outstanding thing about our workshop was the democratic way in which it was conducted. Each person there was given an opportunity to select her own field of interest, and was supplied ample materials with which to work. There was an outstanding feeling of good fellowship with varied types of activity available at all times.

The library provided a quiet place for reading, research, and meditation. There were art activities being conducted in the art room and lectures and workshop projects being carried on in the various classrooms. Discussion groups were in evidence too, where people with like interests were congregating.

Supervisors were available at all times for consultation regarding "My Problem," which, regardless of how trivial, was given tactful consideration.

The social part wasn't neglected either as the noon lunch was a regular part of our full, friendly, and interesting day.

¶ Workshop, to me, was like taking an inventory of my teaching experiences. This informal meeting gave us all a chance to express ourselves, to discuss our problems, and to listen to the ideas and suggestions of others. Then, with the help of capable and understanding leaders, we selected and appraised the materials and methods we studied. This chance for participation helped me to sift out old stale methods and to insert the new decisions arrived at by the group's thinking. I'm sure we all enjoyed the democratic situation at workshop socially as well as professionally, and we now understand better the things that we had a hand in planning. Each day as I teach, I make use of some trend of thought obtained at last summer's workshop.

¶ As a teacher new to the Vancouver system, as well as new at teaching, I feel that the 1946 Summer Workshop filled a definite need for me.

First, it gave me an opportunity to meet and work with other teachers of the Van-

couver system. Some in my own discussion group I later found in my own building. Secondly, I gained more knowledge of the educational policies of the Vancouver district. Last, but not least, was the work I did as my own "problem." At the workshop I found resource materials from which to work out plans for the social studies units for the second grade which I was to teach. When one is new to the field, it seems very important to know what areas are covered in a given grade, and to gather ideas for activities in those areas. Since then I have used this material in the classroom.

Aside from this project of my own I benefited from our group discussion of various classroom problems. Our group was fortunate in having a leader who brought every theoretical question down to the practical situation and worked it out from there. One cannot help but profit from a workshop experience with leaders like that!

¶ One might say that the theme of summer workshop held in Vancouver was given by the leader of an arithmetic discussion group when she said, "Keep the total picture in mind including rest, play, satisfaction, and an opportunity to improve."

When we entered the Lincoln School we immediately felt an atmosphere of friendliness, ease, and informality. It was good to be with teachers from the same city and county with community interests rather than state or possibly nationwide views. The friendships started there have ripened further during the year. Institute is no longer just a time to see many strange teachers, instead this is a time to greet old friends.

We felt from the first day that our time had been well planned and adequate preparation made for our needs. The first meeting was held in the library. This was quite like any first day at school, but not for long—our master of ceremonies introduced in his own inimitable way each leader. We decided that this workshop

certainly was going to be a lot of fun.

Classes passed—we were soon acquainted in our smaller group and our leader had a good idea of what her problems were to be.

Ten-thirty and we weren't bored a bit, and time out for relaxation. "Did we have a nickel?" Our friends had a dime and if the coke machine refused to deliver, the coffee was always faithful.

Back again for another round-table discussion of the problems of the child just beginning school. Noon came before we half knew that the first day of school in September would come nearer being the thrill the children expected.

Lunch time meant food and fellowship for everyone. The slim ones became more rounded and the plump ones had worries! Seriously, though, we know of no place where we would be served food of such quality at such a reasonable price, not the first day, nor the second, but every day. The cooks set a precedent that may be difficult to repeat in the future. Some people may not sing well on a full stomach but we certainly did.

One feature appealed to us especially. During the afternoon we were free to attend any discussion group which might be developing a problem of special interest to us. In the library we could read the newest and finest books dealing with modern education. We discovered much hidden talent in the art room. Some of it would be difficult for our children to understand but we did learn the use of many new media for expression.

We often had general meetings with specialists from the Washington State Department of Education. These took the form of lecture and question sessions, with the willing ones acting as guinea pigs for the experiments.

The last week of the workshop was enriched by a trip to the reduction plant of the Aluminum Company of America. Many of the teachers, even in Vancouver, had never before had the opportunity to visit the plant because during the war it was under security regulations.

The two weeks flew by, and when on the last day we were asked for our reactions to the workshop, we were unanimous in agreeing that it had been worthwhile and recommended that it be repeated in the future.

¶ I liked the Summer Workshop and found it of value in quite a number of ways. The atmosphere was pleasant and there was such a feeling of friendliness among the staff and the members that I am sure people asked questions and solved problems that they had hesitated to mention in the past. The general discussions within each group were of great value because you got not only the supervisors' views on the subject but those of the other members, and they were interested in the same type of work or they would not have been in the same group. Then there were also private consultations. At the same time one had the liberty of visiting any other group in which he became interested or visiting the art workshop or the visual aids department. The library was always open and the staff had brought and secured a lot of good interesting books. One could go in there any

time and read or check out books to read at home.

I think the workshop was of particular value to me in the special helps field. I have always been interested in this type of work but didn't feel that my views on the subject were much more than personal opinions. After reading numerous books on the subject and discussing each book and all my various questions with the staff, I felt more secure and better able to handle any cases I might have.

Needless to say, so far as the librarians' work was concerned I listened and copied down the names of all books—children's or professional—mentioned as outstanding works in their field. I also browsed through every room there to see what each supervisor had brought with her, again copying names and authors.

In conclusion I can only say that I feel I got a lot done at Workshop, but there was even more there I wanted to do when the two weeks were up. I think the workshop should continue and teachers be encouraged to go.

P.S. The noon meal was excellent and the luncheon time thoroughly enjoyed—gastronomically and socially.

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## Bremerton Teachers Plan and Judge—

BARBARA ELISE KOHLER AND TEACHERS

KITSAP COUNTY WORKSHOP was started the summer of 1945 at Bremerton City High School, Bremerton, Washington. County and city school officials together with representatives from the state department of education did the early planning for the project. Representatives from all three groups as well as faculty members from Western Washington College of Education were members of the

staff which worked during the summer.

These sessions were originally planned to meet the special needs of married teachers who could not attend summer school because of home responsibilities. In 1946 the workshop included other teachers who had heard about the enriched program offered the previous summer. This unique professional program has enabled enterprising teachers to develop new and better

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