

On the other hand, the administrative concept that student teachers *must* be visited a certain number of times is untenable. The coordinator might better devote his efforts to arranging seminars intended to improve instruc-

tion throughout the off-campus centers. For in the final analysis, the success of the off-campus program is directly related to the selection, competencies and growth of the supervising teachers who participate in the program.

A Program for Pre-Service Training of Core Teachers

HARRIS HARVILL

Harris Harvill, director of secondary education, State Teachers College, Troy, Alabama, states that "the one central purpose of the core is education for the democratic common life (citizenship)."

EXCEPT AT Troy State Teachers College (where even now only the broad outlines of such a program are emerging) pre-service programs for the training of core teachers are presently nonexistent in Alabama teacher training institutions. This is an incongruous situation, credible only in light of a disruptive decade of worldwide upheaval. For Alabama, under the leadership of state-wide consultants Doak S. Campbell, Hollis L. Caswell and Henry Harap, early became interested in the core idea and, following a six-year state-wide Curriculum Development Program, committed itself in its 1941 Course of Study to the core curriculum organization as the preferred organization for Alabama high schools. The 1950 Course of Study bulletin (the first issued since 1941) again gives prominence to the core idea.

Need for pre-service programs for the training of core teachers in Alabama is made further evident by the two-year study recently made by the writer which shows forty-three Alabama secondary schools in twenty-two counties now experimenting with the core curriculum. In these forty-three secondary schools there are one hundred forty core teachers who teach one hundred ninety-eight homeroom core sections enrolling six thousand thirty-two Alabama pupils.¹ More experimentation with the core curriculum is now going on in Alabama secondary schools than ever before. Add to this the endorsement of the core idea by both the Educational Policies Commission and the National Association of Secondary

¹ Harris Harvill, "Development of the Core Curriculum in Alabama Secondary Schools," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1951.), p. 143.

School Principals, plus the 1950 survey made by the U. S. Office of Education, which shows a definite trend toward the core curriculum organization in the secondary schools of the country, and the need for pre-service programs for the training of core teachers in Alabama teacher training institutions is clearly evident.²

FOLLOW-THROUGH ON A STATE PROGRAM

To say that no well-defined pre-service programs for the training of core teachers now exist in Alabama teacher training institutions does not mean that Alabama educators have never given thought to the matter. In a Teachers Colleges Curriculum Revision Program which paralleled the last four years of the state-wide Alabama Curriculum Development Program (ending in 1941), the four white Alabama teachers colleges, working in conjunction with the Commission on Teacher Education of the American Council on Education, not only proposed to reorganize their own freshman and sophomore programs around "cores" but laid down, on paper at least, a comprehensive plan for the pre-service training of core teachers.³

² Educational Policies Commission, *Education for All American Youth* (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1941), p. 234. National Association of Secondary School Principals, *Planning for American Youth* (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1944), p. 44.

Grace S. Wright, *Core Curriculum in Public High Schools*, Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, Bulletin No. 5, 1950.

³ *Proposed Program for Secondary Teacher Education in Alabama State Teachers Colleges*, submitted by D. H. Eikenberry, Consultant of the Commission on Teacher Education, in cooperation with the State Teachers Colleges and the State Department of Education (Revised) (Montgomery, Alabama: May 24, 1940).

The Alabama teachers colleges agreed that the first two years of the proposed experimental four-year teacher training program would be given over to the general education of the teacher. They further agreed that the professional teacher training courses would come in the junior-senior years, and that the proposed four-year experimental program would be introduced at the time beginning with the freshman year of 1940-'41. The impact of the Second World War, resulting in rapid turnover of college leadership and faculty personnel, halted in three of the four white Alabama teachers colleges all experimentation with the "core" programs in the freshman-sophomore years. The proposed experimental program for the training of core teachers was never implemented in any of the Alabama teachers colleges.

Despite the difficulties of the war years, however, Troy State Teachers College, fortunate in the fourteen year leadership of President C. B. Smith, has pushed forward with development of the core areas of the freshman-sophomore general education program as well as with the development of the professional teacher training program of the junior-senior years. As one phase of the developing teacher training program at Troy State, the broad outlines of a pre-service program for the training of core teachers are emerging.

The pre-service program for the training of core teachers at Troy must of necessity be fitted into the college's four-year pattern of teacher training. The college leadership recognizes the limitations of any four-year program of teacher training. It rejects, however, the philosophy that core teachers must

necessarily be innately brighter, be trained better or for a longer period of time than other teachers. Why should not a teacher of special interest courses in the high school be innately as capable, as well trained and as efficient as a core teacher? The idea that a core teacher must be some omniscient superhuman has too long been a hindrance to the building of a sound pre-service program for the training of core teachers. With even fair training almost any capable teacher can do acceptable core teaching. The core teaching which the writer considers the best seen in his tour of Alabama core classrooms was being done by a young teacher two years out of college. This young teacher was the only Alabama core teacher observed who could be said to have had a little pre-service training for core work.

Outside of skill in the field of guidance (a principal responsibility of the core teacher) and skill in the functional teaching of tool subjects, the Troy leadership sees few special competencies needed by the core teacher which are not needed by all teachers. Primary faculty effort at Troy, therefore, is not at present aimed at isolation of and training for special competencies needed by the core teacher. Rather, faculty effort is concentrated on the more basic task of giving the prospective core teacher a clear understanding of the purpose and place of the core in the total school curriculum. Without such clear understanding the effort of the young core teacher is certain to reflect indecision and confusion. But with a sound theoretical understanding of his task (based, of course, on as much pre-service direct experience as possible)

the young core teacher can achieve satisfactory initial success and can through experience and further professional study increase his teaching competencies.

Education for Citizenship Is a Primary Responsibility of the Core Program

Above all else, the young core teacher needs to see clearly that *the one central purpose* of the core is *education for the democratic common life (citizenship)*. True, the whole school program aims at education for citizenship. It is the core, however, which assumes *primary responsibility* for this important task—just as the Health and Physical Education Department of the high school must assume primary responsibility for health education. Considerable evidence convinces the writer that many core teachers are not clear about this one great central objective of the core, in spite of the clarity of the professional literature on this point.

The core is *not* that part of the total school program in which some distraught teacher is engaged in aimless effort to “fuse” or “correlate” subject matter. The “social-living” core is that *limited part* of the total school program in which young American citizens, through tackling real personal or social problems of concern to themselves and to society, learn the democratic techniques and skills of cooperative problem solving and learn also the minimum essential *subject matter* necessary for successful life in twentieth century American democratic society. A clear understanding of this one central purpose of the core is absolutely essential to the successful core teacher.

At Troy the young pre-service core teacher is told repeatedly that problems selected for study in the high school core are to be real *personal-social problems*; the core is not to be the tasteless and watered-down program inevitably resulting when a teacher's only aim is to correlate subject matter. Though the young core teacher at Troy is acquainted with the historical effort (from Herbart to organismic psychology) to achieve unity in teaching-learning situations, the young teacher is told to forget the words "fuse," "integrate" and "correlate," as he attempts to conceive a high school core program. Instead, he is urged to select real personal-social problems for study in the core and to draw on any and all subject matter

which will promote his aim of citizenship education.

Aspects of Core Program Are Studied

The pre-service core teacher is taught the difference between "core period" and "core unit." He is told that the fact that the core is a "unified course" does not mean that every activity which takes place during the two or three hour core period must necessarily be related to the core unit. Many activities (class meetings, devotionals, special projects) may be worth carrying on in the core period even though they are in no way related to the core unit. Everything which goes on during the core period, however, must be related to the one central purpose of the core



Problems selected for study in the high school core program are to be real personal-social problems.

Courtesy, NEA Journal

(education for citizenship). The core unit is not the most significant unifying factor in the varied activities carried on during the core period. It is the one central and compelling objective of the core (education for citizenship) which gives unity to core activities.

The pre-service core teacher at Troy is exposed to other basic concepts. The Troy philosophy denies any distinction between "subject matter unit" and "experience unit" in the core. Some Alabama core teachers attempt to make this distinction. It is difficult to conceive of any core study—any project or problem—which desirable reading material (subject matter) would not facilitate. It is probable that when a teacher speaks of an experience unit, he is referring to a study in which the reading material was more limited than he, the teacher, desired! The young teacher is told that core teachers must strive for freshness and variety in their teaching programs, since there is a danger that core teaching may become humdrum, cut-and-dried. The young core teacher is acquainted with the necessity for a strong faculty-planned scope and sequence framework for the total core program of the school. He learns of the desirability of teacher-prepared resource units for guidance of core work.

OUTLINE OF THE PRE-SERVICE PROGRAM

At Troy the pre-service program for the training of core teachers is not a "tacked-on" phase of the teacher training program. No separate department has been created to direct the training of core teachers, though the possibility of some such department in the future is not entirely disregarded. Each de-

partment of the college feels a responsibility for pointing out that portion of its subject matter which would naturally become a part of the high school core program and that part which might best be placed in special interest courses. Though each department of the college shares responsibility for the training of core teachers, it is the English and Social Studies Departments (along with the Education Department) which assume special responsibility for this task.

In the emerging pre-service program for the training of core teachers at Troy, the prospective core teacher actually experiences what a core program is like as he goes through the core courses which have been developed for the freshman-sophomore years of *general education* at Troy. These core areas include: Bio-Social Development of the Individual, The Arts in Individual Development, Man and His Physical Environment, Regional and National Socio-Economic Problems, and Developments in the Arts.

In the General Methods Course, taught in his junior year, the prospective core teacher gives considerable attention to the core curriculum. He goes through the process of selecting and organizing a large unit of instruction, a process which he will repeat in a classroom situation with children during his practice teaching. In selecting the topic around which he will develop a unit, the student must decide whether this unit is to fit into the core program of the high school or into the field of special interests. As a group, the methods class studies the nature of the core curriculum and its place in the total program of the school.

In the General Methods Course students are encouraged to write a unit for the core rather than write a unit for a high school special interest course. This emphasis is given for the following reasons: (a) Some subject matter from every specialized field will naturally go into the high school program of common studies (the core); (b) The unit will probably be easier to write because more varied activities can be planned for the core than for special interest courses and more teaching materials will be readily available in the Teaching Aids Laboratory at the college; (c) The Alabama Course of Study insists that even the special interest courses in most Alabama high schools should have many of the broad features of general education rather than be too narrowly specialized. Most students in the General Methods Course choose to write a unit for the high school core; this unit must be in line with the Alabama Course of Study.

Core Curriculum Is Studied

In the second course in Foundations of Education (there are three such courses), as he studies the development of the American public school system, the young teacher at Troy studies the historical development of the core curriculum in American education. He finds the major forces and emphases giving rise to the core to be: (a) Demand by twentieth century American society that the secondary school now assume responsibility along with the elementary school for providing education for the democratic common life; (b) Impact on American education of the biological concept of man as an integrated organism (the biological

basis for organismic psychology), impact of the psychological concepts of "wholeness in learning" and "education as experience," impact of the insistence of cultural anthropology that the goals of public education be stated in terms of the life processes (social functions) of the average American community; (c) The *organized* effort of educators since 1890 to bring the American secondary school to closer grips with the problems of contemporary life.

In the third Foundations Course, as he attempts to visualize the ideal Alabama secondary school which would adequately meet the Imperative Needs of Youth, the pre-service core teacher studies in detail the "common learnings" (core) programs outlined by the Educational Policies Commission and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He also studies intensively the splendid curriculum materials dealing with the core produced by the Alabama State Department of Education, including the Course of Study bulletin.

In the *Special Methods* Course offered by each major department at Troy, the young teacher looks closely at the relationship of his special interest field to the high school core curriculum. In particular do the English and Social Studies Departments investigate this relationship. A chief emphasis of the English Special Methods Course is the functional approach to the teaching of communication skills.

Prospective core teachers at Troy do their practice teaching in the Troy High School and the cooperating Pike County high schools. The Troy High School has operated under the core curriculum organization for a decade.

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