

The author calls attention to the relationship between all fields of learning and life, and to the way in which experiences may vitalize learning. It is apparent that in a very real sense understanding of experience and of its function in learning will come from what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., calls "the quiet immersion in the flood of experience." To call for a rejection of stereotyped devices, such as drill without meaning, is not to call for abandonment of subject matter, as some have presumed. It is simply to strengthen the demand for proper use of experience, which involves both subject matter and means of learning. Through experience we strengthen rather than abandon the word.

Dr. Zirbes presents a hopeful picture of the possibilities of improvement in professional pre-service education. Re-examination of prevalent programs and practice is badly needed if we are to prepare prospective teachers for the dynamic roles they must perform in today's schools.

"Teacher education," says the author, "is stirring. Some catalytic influence may be needed to rouse it to fuller recognition of the urgent need for its own reorientation in the light of the changing conception of the role of the teacher in today's schools." It seems quite likely that Dr. Zirbes' provocative statement, *Teachers for Today's Schools*, may be in itself such a catalytic influence.

. . . Understand and Apply the Values Approach

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EVERY human being must respond to a new factor or force in his living situation in terms of his own orientation to life. Thus our response to the ideas presented by Dr. Zirbes in *Teachers for Today's Schools* is out of our past experiences and present teaching situation. The first reading of this compact package of powerful and exciting ideas resulted in two copies of the pamphlet marked with such marginal notes as: "We are trying this!" "A help for this or that course." "A good idea to try!" "We are weak in this area!" and other comments relating to our own needs. Then we began to ask ourselves what focus our response might take that would communicate to others our in-

terpretation of the challenge presented.

The heart of the message presented is the values approach to solving the problems of education and living. Each individual develops a value frame of reference of his own out of which he seeks and interprets experiences, makes decisions, passes judgments, solves his problems and relates to other individuals. An individual's value frame of reference may or may not be consciously recognized by him. It evolves from his experiences and their resultant satisfactions, dissatisfactions and frustrations, and it may be limited by narrowness of experience, miseducation, prejudice and the conflicting problems of our culture and society. One's value

frame of reference may also be limited by the failure to reflect upon and critically examine experience.

Those concerned with teacher education should accept the challenge to help prospective teachers learn to recognize the values on which they make choices and act, to gain some understanding of how they have developed their values and to examine continuously the inter-relatedness of the values in the situations in which they function. Prospective teachers need help, too, to understand better the importance of harmonizing "individual drives and values with concern for group values and common good." As Dr. Zirbes points out it is these considered value judgments that guide teachers to the self-reliant, responsible action which is essential to "field adjustment and growth in experience."

Acting on Value Judgments

Young students who are inexperienced "in making value judgments the basis for action" are in great need of guidance in discovering and drawing on the resource areas of human growth and development, the social sciences, the physical sciences and the arts from which may come strength for establishing values. Those responsible for both general and professional education must continuously work toward developing learnings, understandings and insights in these areas in terms of meeting individual and social needs. Again in the words of Dr. Zirbes, "... students need to be challenged to use their education for developing the kind of thinking that takes situational needs and developmental and social needs and resources into account in making inte-

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grative value judgments and in carrying out evaluative action." (p. 56.)

The suggestive illustrations for practice included in the pamphlet, though few because of space limitations, provide clarification and stimulation to those seeking to implement a program in teacher education based on an integrative approach to learning. However, the reader is left with the responsibility to examine his own leadership role in education, to explore the situation in which he functions, and to find ways to extend into practice the concepts presented. It was this approach that called forth the following organization of thinking about our own work with prospective teachers. As we read *Teachers for Today's Schools* we found it gave us support for practices we are trying; it gave us encouragement to work on still unsolved problems; it gave us stimulation for new practices.

We Are Trying—

—A sequence of courses planned cooperatively by staff members drawn from the areas of human growth and development, social and philosophical foundations, the arts and the elementary and secondary curriculum.

—Some large block courses taught by staffs drawn from interdepartmental and intercollege groups.

—Use of large blocks of time for courses.

—A full semester of intern teaching in the public schools with students living in the immediate community.

—Carefully planned laboratory type experiences with children, with community organizations, with materials and resources within each course of the professional sequence.

—To provide students, through these laboratory experiences, with opportunities for identifying problems, locating appropriate resources, planning for action in their own peer groups as well as with children, making decisions and choices and evaluating experiences.

—Seminars and conferences where experiences are shared and students are helped to search for the multiple and interrelated values inherent in the situations which they have met. (The pamphlet has a meaningful list of suggestions for the projective use of situations on p. 53-54.)

—“More active types of class and course procedure, and the cooperative participation of students in the projection and evaluation of activities.” (p. 72-73.)

Even though educators in the pre-service program give their best to help young teachers understand and rely on the values approach in their teaching and to strengthen them with wide and deep resources, beginning teachers need continuing guidance in their first placement. Could we use the workshop approach in beginning to solve this problem?

“There is no inevitable conflict between scholarship and the good life,” challenges Dr. Zirbes. But staff as well as students frequently find their days too filled with tightly scheduled professional activities to permit a balance of enriching personal, social activities. Can we find ways to integrate more of

the social activities and cultural opportunities into the over-all guidance of students’ experiences? (Illustrations from practice included in *Teachers for Today’s Schools* present some ideas for exploring and sampling activities and later maturing of preferred interests. p. 42-46.) Can we, as college instructors, apply to ourselves the values we accept for the good life for others? Can we integrate into our lives a balance of personal, social and cultural activities and interests?

We are faced with the problem of developing courses in which the integration is considered in terms of opening up resource areas from which young people may draw to better solve their problems and understand their world rather than in terms of subject matter. Can we find more creative ways of communicating and working so that the faculties in both professional and general education may focus their contributions on developing young people who do situational thinking and acting?

Can we plan and carry out some action research—recording and evaluating experiences over a long enough span of time to have some evidence of the results of the new practice? (The suggestions in the pamphlet may help. p. 43-44, 49-52, 60-66, 74-76.)

We would suggest that one way to examine the message in this pamphlet is to read it with a personalized, questioning attitude that is searching for the relationships to our own problems, achievements and aspirations. Are we able “to accept with zest and zeal the challenge of new problems and new adjustments as opportunities for growth?” (p. 32.)

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