

nel for their supervisory responsibilities in connection with a program of direct experiences is a problem which has rarely received adequate attention. If the public schools are to be used effectively in expanding programs of laboratory experiences, the teacher preparing institutions must assume leadership in providing comprehensive and systematic preparation for those who are cooperating in the supervision of the program. Failure to cope successfully with this problem will limit materially the benefits of the entire program.

When the public school shares with

the college the responsibility for providing direct experiences for prospective teachers, there are important advantages for all concerned. In the process of attempting to solve common problems cooperatively, a continuing relationship of great value is built. When lines of communication are kept open between classroom teachers and college instructors, each learns from the other and becomes a better teacher in his own field because of the contact. But most important of all, new teachers are better prepared to meet successfully the problems of their profession.

Open Doors and Open Hearts

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This article treats an experiment in international in-service education. Many individuals, organizations and agencies cooperate in welcoming in our homes and schools exchange teachers who come to America under the German Teacher Education Program.

“**W**E WON'T hang a curtain before any American scene.” These words were spoken by an Office of Education staff member during the orientation program for the second group of German teachers, who had come to participate in the German Teacher Education Program.¹ Reports from the visiting educators, program coordinators at the college and univer-

sity centers, state departments of education, and local community sponsors indicate that not only are there no curtains before any American scene but all doors are open to the visitors.

Some of these doors did not open automatically. Many hundreds of teachers, supervisors, school administrators and other citizens in over 550 communities throughout the United States

¹ The third group of teachers participating in the German Teacher Education Program arrived in the United States in September 1953. This project is a part of the total Educational Exchange Program carried on by the United States Department of State under the authority of Public Laws 402 and 584 of the 80th and

79th Congresses, respectively. The Office of Education serves as primary sponsor of the professional program through a contractual agreement between the Department of State and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. A total of 408 German teachers will have participated in this program by April of 1954.

helped the visitors to open doors to schools, factories, farms, cultural institutions, social agencies, churches, governmental bodies, and the homes of citizens of all professions and all social and economic levels.

According to statements of the participants, the doors of the amazing total of 4,933 American homes were opened to the 111 members of the German teacher group last year. Each of these young teachers had an average of 47 extended social visits with American families; each of them lived for all or part of his stay in typical American homes. Such hospitality would not have been possible without the assistance of college and university coordinators, school people and their other friends throughout the United States.

The doors to over 140 different organizations, institutions, activities and events were also opened to the visitors. Besides schools of all kinds, they visited courts and legislative bodies in session, industrial plants, farms, hospitals, public welfare institutions, churches, community centers, community councils, Indian reservations, museums, art galleries, irrigation projects, and a host of others. A few had the privilege of hearing whistle-stop campaign speeches and seeing the inauguration of President Eisenhower. Other events like the Tournament of Roses, an old-fashioned quilting party, and Indian ceremonial dances will be retained among the vivid impressions of some of the visitors.

They did not hesitate to make a contribution whenever called upon to do so. Each individual in the group made an average of thirty talks to groups, assemblies and clubs during his or her seven months in the United States, ex-

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clusive of talks made to school classes. Over 100 types of clubs and organizations had an opportunity to hear talks delivered by the visitors. In addition to speaking before these groups, 61 of the visitors made from 1 to 6 radio or television appearances.

Careful readiness programs were worked out for and with the visitors to prepare them for each phase of the program. Along each step of the way, volunteers helped the visitors solve personal and professional problems. The general program is a four-phase program. It consists of a two- to three-week orientation period in Washington, D. C., a period of planned observation, participation and interpretation with a group assigned for four months to a teachers college or university school of education, a period of individualized observation in two selected communities in geographically different parts of the United States,² and a final evaluation conference in Washington, D. C.

Nomination of candidates from among hundreds of applicants who are young but experienced German teachers is made by staff members of the several American Consulates General in Germany and the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany. Final selection is made by the International Educational Exchange Service of the U. S.

²Visits to local communities are arranged with the help of State Departments of Education in the participating states. The State Departments provide a two-day orientation program for the visitors before they are assigned to local communities.



Courtesy of Public Schools, Silver City, N. M.

Mrs. Christel Zuck, an exchange teacher from Germany, examines project materials with a committee of children in an elementary school in Silver City, New Mexico.

Department of State. Screening committees composed of German educators and other German leaders interview the candidates to determine whether they have sufficient language ability, are mentally alert, emotionally stable and professionally qualified for participation in a program of international in-service teacher education. Teachers who are selected range from approximately twenty-four to thirty-five years of age and have had from one to twelve years of teaching experience. The Office of

Education reviews all applications of candidates who have been nominated in Germany and makes recommendations concerning the candidates' fitness in terms of program activities and program balance.

A Two-Way Bridge Is Built

Not many of you who gave so generously of your time and effort to provide rich experiences for visitors from other countries have had the opportunity that we have had to see the

visitors as they come into our country and as they leave it. Few of you get to read their final reports or to visit them in all phases of their program activities. Many of you have, however, met individual visitors and come to know them very well. They have been in your homes and in your classrooms or have been your guests at cultural or social events.

The teacher education program has among its objectives that of creating mutual understanding between the citizens of the United States and the citizens of Germany. Although we cannot speak for all of the people in the United States, comments from a few of the people who have opened the doors of their homes, their schools or their community may illustrate how they feel about the visitors and the program.

A superintendent of schools wrote:

"Mr. has been an inspiration to our entire teaching staff and every child who has come in contact with him. I know that we have profited much by this experience and hope that Mr. will have secured a better understanding of our American way of life and the democratic principles of teaching. In addition to his fine educational philosophy, I have found him delightful company and through him have gained an appreciation of Germany's problems today."

In commenting about the visit of two teachers to her community an elementary supervisor wrote:

"Their activities and their spirit made them a credit to their country, to themselves and certainly to the cause of better world fellowship. They participated in many community activities

—talks, discussion groups, recreational and social activities and investigated our school program thoroughly, fairly and helpfully. In fact, we feel we gained far more than we could give these splendid people."

An elementary school principal said in a letter to me:

"In our pre-planning I agreed to offer Miss the hospitality of my home and family. During the three weeks she was with us she won her way into the hearts of our entire family. Last Thursday morning my wife, Leona, daughter Connie, son Phillip and I took her to the station to board the California Zephyr for the East. As the train pulled out we all felt as if a member of the family was leaving.

"I am confident that her presence in our community has done much more than we realize towards cementing better relations between America and Germany. I am equally sure that Miss has also gained a new and better concept of America and our real way of life than she held previously."

The bridge which has been built does not carry only one-way traffic. In his report a German teacher wrote:

"I should like to express how grateful and indebted I feel towards the U. S. Government for having organized this program, and for every help, generosity, and hospitality offered in this country. I shall return to Germany with the feeling that my experiences are worth more than five years of intensive book studying, and am besides convinced that I have a mission to do in Germany for America and for human understanding."

Another German teacher wrote:

"Through this program we have certainly discovered America. But at the same time I discovered Europe through discovering the U. S. The outlines of European Culture and conceptions became clearer against the setting of the scene in America. I felt what I owe to Europe. It is no use trying to wipe out the differences between the two cultures by just not mentioning them. It would be the biggest setback to true understanding. Understanding requires effort and sacrifice, and we are ready to take upon us both, not only during our stay in this country, but, and that is more important, for the rest of our lives. Education is one of the basic and indispensable tasks of mankind, and the spirit prevailing in education is decisive.

"This program has once more unveiled the role of education and brought fresh stimulus to our ideas and conceptions. It has shown us the educational vigour and zest of a great people and thereby laid responsibilities upon us which we shall try to fulfill for the benefit of our two peoples, of America and Europe, and of mankind."

A Sound Investment

Many letters have been received by persons who have had something to do with sponsoring the programs in the past few years. All of these indicate that a bridge of goodwill has been built between the citizens of Germany and of the United States through this program and through the persons who contributed time and effort to it.

It is difficult to measure changes in

attitude, emotional ties, new-found determination to do a better professional job, broadened insights and readjustment of personal and social values. It is difficult to weigh the value of personal friendship between the peoples of two great nations. It is impossible to place a monetary value upon the exchange of professional ideas and the voluntary contributions of time and effort which the citizens of the United States gave to their guests participating in the German Teacher Program and the contributions which the visitors made to citizens of the United States through their private conversations and public speeches before school and community groups.

The fact that we opened our doors and our hearts to these visitors and that they in turn opened new vistas for us through the word pictures they painted for us and through their efforts to adjust to our sometimes confusing social patterns has resulted in the development of mutual understanding between these teacher citizens of Germany and the citizens of the United States. Our investment in this program of international in-service teacher education is worth every penny it has cost us. Your kindness, your patience, your interest in things cultural, your sincere belief in the worth of every individual human being and your firm belief in the value of education for all citizens will be included in the picture of the United States which will be painted in hundreds of German classrooms before thousands of German children in the years to come.

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