

## Teamwork in TEACHER EDUCATION

Will pre-service experience at *both* elementary and secondary school levels improve the quality of teacher preparation? One state features this plan in its required five-year college program.

**T**EAMWORK is a must in the new program of teacher education in Washington. The state requirements now include laboratory experiences with both elementary and secondary children and a fifth college year after teaching experience. Planning together between each teacher education institution and the cooperating public schools in carrying out the new requirements has developed in a mutually beneficial way. The close relationship of colleges and school districts is helping to develop better college programs, better aid for new teachers and better planning for further college study.

Each prospective teacher is offered, throughout his professional preparation, a wide range of direct experiences with children of various ages. Much exploring and creative planning help provide for each prospective teacher interesting laboratory experiences at both elementary and secondary levels. To achieve this, each of the fourteen teacher education institutions has worked out a plan with the public

schools and communities. The many opportunities offered are the result of the enthusiasm of college and public school people in helping to discover, for prospective teachers, learning opportunities in the schools and communities.

Most colleges offer student teaching in both elementary and secondary schools to meet the requirement of laboratory experiences on both levels. The two teaching experiences differ according to level of emphasis in length of time, amount and nature of responsibility taken, and credit earned. Through intensive experiences with two different groups, students gain increased understanding of developmental levels and needs of pupils, a better understanding of the whole school system, and increased understanding of the work of administrators and special teachers on different levels.

Inexperienced students sometimes doubt the value of intensive participation (which may or may not be student teaching) on a level on which they do not expect to teach. Often, however, students have asked to change their level of emphasis after teaching experiences. Since many college students have had limited contacts with young children, some who express a desire to teach in high school change

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their minds after teaching in the lower grades.

College and public school personnel plan together for wide experiences for students. The young people take responsibility in many ways in the schools and with children's groups in the community and participate in teacher groups in all kinds of professional activities. Student teachers attend school board meetings, PTA study groups, staff meetings and teacher committee meetings. They are present at parent-teacher conferences. They take responsibility along with teachers for various student activities in the classroom and in the school, and with boys and girls in community groups. Effort is made for the student teachers to have an opportunity to participate insofar as is possible in the program of a regular teacher.

A pre-student-teaching activity proving most successful is the September experience by college juniors and seniors in classrooms in their own home communities. The cooperation of a large number of school districts has given college students an opportunity to develop a better understanding of the preparation for the opening of school, the methods of getting to know a new group of children and organizing a class for work. Many teachers are appreciative of the help they have from an assistant during the taxing weeks at the beginning of school.

The programs of Outdoor Education which are steadily developing in the schools of Washington offer a range in experience for pre-service and in-service teachers. The wide participation in the development of these pro-

grams has included college instructors from several departments, county superintendents, district administrators and teachers, resource people from many agencies and staff members from the Office of the State Superintendent.

There has been flexibility in planning on the part of schools and colleges. Some student teachers serve as counselors in a summer camp where all sixth grades of the county come for a week with their regular teachers. The student-teacher seminar is held each night with their college supervisor and with such resource people as are present at that time. Some students have interesting experiences in camps for handicapped children. Some college students work in programs for high school students, where service to the community is a strong emphasis. In the pilot program of Outdoor Education in 1949 there were student-teachers from the five public colleges.

Some of the benefits for prospective teachers are shown by one young man in an article in his college paper:

"The student teachers who are camp counselors here are receiving invaluable experience that can hardly be paralleled by teaching in a classroom five hours a day. The children's problems seem much more magnified for them because they are away from home and parents, and are dependent on the counselors for help. And if you think that these problems are easily met, you have another think coming, for it takes a lot of insight into children's problems and ways of doing things that are not ordinarily met in the traditional classroom."

## Improved Follow-Up Programs

The General Certificate requirement for a fifth college year after teaching experience has accelerated and broadened the colleges' program of follow-up of their students in the public schools. College faculty members usually visit their beginning teachers at least once during the first year. Teams often consist of a person from the education department and a person from an academic department. They see former students in actual situations and talk through problems of teaching with the teacher and his principal.

An important action taken to help make the first year of teaching experience truly a part of the program of teacher preparation has been the organization each year of a series of meetings planned particularly to help beginning teachers during their first year and to help them in planning for their fifth year of college study. Last year fourteen such meetings were held during March. These meetings were attended by beginning teachers, their school administrators and other supervisors and faculty representatives from teacher education institutions, county superintendents of schools and staff members from the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Regional meetings were planned by local committees led by county superintendents of schools. These committees included beginning teachers, school administrators and a faculty member from a teacher institution in the area. Meetings were planned so the beginning teachers had an opportunity to discuss the most impor-

tant helps they need during the first year of teaching. Young teachers discussed with their principals and superintendents and representatives of the colleges their pre-service education and the experiences they needed to be better prepared for their second year of teaching. Finally an opportunity was provided for beginning teachers to confer with college representatives on individual plans for further study.

The coming together throughout the State of so many of the groups primarily interested in teacher education, together with those who are in the process of completing their basic education has emphasized the importance of teamwork. All of the groups are becoming more conscious of their responsibilities and opportunities.

As a result of the follow-up visits, the regional meetings and other contacts among the persons concerned with teacher education, there has been an increased effort by many school districts to improve their effectiveness. Much attention has been given to placement, to introduction to the community and school, and to help during the first year of teaching. Beginning teachers report that the guidance provided by experienced teachers is invaluable. The friendly welcome at the first of the year, the practical help when problems arise—all give the beginner confidence and show him the teaching profession at its best.

As faculty members have become better acquainted with the schools, the colleges have been able to make changes in pre-service education as well as in summer courses for experienced teachers.

## Meeting the Teacher Shortage

Teacher education programs are not unaffected by teacher demand and supply. Washington's attempt to overcome the teacher shortage has emphasized quality in teacher education and in public education generally. In the midst of a period of growth, the State is developing improved programs of teacher education, has increased teachers' salaries, and has maintained standards for emergency certification at three years of college preparation. These policies are proving the belief that good teaching conditions and professional standards of education attract young people to teaching and lead to greater stability in the teaching profession. This in turn will make possible continued improvement in the education of children and youth.

All of Washington's teacher education institutions began in 1949 to prepare teachers for both elementary and secondary school teaching. All teacher education graduates receive some preparation for both of these teaching levels, although one level of preparation is emphasized. The result is that Washington's new teachers are familiar with the school program as a whole. After some experience and further preparation, they are better equipped to meet the demands of different teaching positions in the schools than if their preparation were on a narrower basis.

Many young teachers who are inclined to prepare for teaching in the secondary schools have prepared for and begun their teaching in elementary schools. As the demand for

teachers in the secondary schools increases in the coming years, some of these teachers may desire to change their teaching level. The fifth college year of study gives the new teacher an opportunity for increased specialization or an opportunity to prepare for teaching at a different level. Flexibility which facilitates a change in level of emphasis after basic preparation and initial experience is, we believe, a factor which helps Washington to meet its teacher need with well prepared teachers.

What has been the role of the State Board of Education and of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and her staff in Washington in promoting increased teamwork in teacher education? Most important, perhaps, is the fact that the State Board of Education has adopted a broad program pattern and standards for approval of the teacher education programs of Washington. It has recognized that the institutions and the public schools of the State have important responsibilities for the pre-service and in-service preparation of teachers that are inter-related.

The first year of experience is considered a basic part of the teacher education program, and is a prerequisite for continuation of the teacher's preparation in his fifth college year. The success of this first year of teaching as a learning experience in teacher education is dependent upon the genuine interest and participation of local school district administrators and faculties in the guidance of beginning teachers, in their cooperation with the colleges in their follow-up of the

graduates, and in helping beginning teachers to plan wisely for their further college study.

Of great importance, also, is the cooperative relationship between teacher education institutions and local school districts in the four-college-years pre-service program. The importance of this cooperation has been increased because of much greater emphasis in the teacher education program in recent years on a wide range of intensive professional laboratory experiences for all students.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has taken the lead in setting up the general organization for the regional meetings for the guidance of beginning teachers. She has directly sponsored a number of meetings each year of representatives of teacher education institutions and school district personnel. These meetings are usually concerned with specific phases of the teacher education program.

Working with the State Advisory Committee on Teacher Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction develops plans for improvement of the teacher education program as a whole. Working with the professional associations of school administrators and teachers in subject-matter fields, both in meetings and through written communications, the State Superintendent endeavors to promote close working relationships between all professional groups con-

cerned with pre-service and in-service teacher education.

The staff of the State Superintendent works directly with county superintendents of schools and local school district personnel, and with the faculties of the local colleges in a continuous effort to improve the professional education of teachers. These activities, of course, take many forms, but perhaps among the most important are study committees concerned with evaluation and planning for improvement of different phases of the program. One such committee that has been working for several years is concerned with the preparation of school administrators. It is expected that other committees will be formed during the coming school year.

Continuous study and development of plans in the field of teacher education need participation by many groups. A vital role of the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and their representatives is taking initiative to bring these groups together and encouraging and assisting their study and planning efforts. The State education agency's role is not a narrow regulatory one. Rather, its role is to help in a creative way in the development of all phases of education. As an important member of the teacher education team, it has a prime responsibility to promote the closest possible working relationships among all members of the team.



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