

The "Why" of a Teacher Education Program

IN 1948 President Paul Dawson Eddy of Adelphi College invited Thomas Alexander and the contributor of this article to join his faculty, the former as educational consultant and the latter as chairman of the Department of Education. The invitation was due to President Eddy's interest in New College, an experimental program in teacher education, conducted between 1932 and 1939 at Teachers College, Columbia University, of which Thomas Alexander had been chairman and Agnes Snyder one of the original faculty. In the years intervening President Eddy had appointed several members of the faculty of New College to academic departments of Adelphi. He was now ready, with the two new appointments in 1948, to launch a teacher education program at Adelphi on the general design of New College.

The invitation was accepted and, after a year of planning, the program was started in the summer of 1949. Thus, the Adelphi New Teacher Education Program—ANTEP for short (the abbreviated form will be used)—may be considered the lineal descendant of New College. Thomas Alexander retired in 1954 and Agnes Snyder in 1957. Since then the Department of Education, including ANTEP, has been mainly under the direction of John C. Matthews.

Adelphi, located at Garden City, Long Island, is primarily a liberal arts college but offers certain professional and pre-professional programs. It has undergraduate, graduate and general studies divisions and recently has established a branch at Sayville to the east on Long Island. The total current enrollment approximates 6,500. Favorable to the development of ANTEP is the conviction of the administration that liberal arts and professional education should be coordinated.

The Department of Education offers both undergraduate and graduate work. Like most liberal arts colleges, the department offers a sequence of education courses leading to state certification for secondary teaching to majors in academic and special fields. The graduate division offers programs in early childhood, elementary and secondary education both for students taking their initial professional education and for those carrying advanced work required for the M.A. degree. These programs were in existence at the time ANTEP was initiated and all have been continued. Undergraduate students planning on teaching are given the choice between

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enrolling in ANTEP and majoring in an academic or special field with the privilege of carrying as electives the few professional courses required for state certification. Most of the students interested in secondary education choose the latter, leaving an overbalance of early childhood and elementary majors in ANTEP.

ANTEP has a definite design, one that is similar to that of New College but not identical with it. Also like New College, the design is the outgrowth of convictions regarding the significance of teacher education. These convictions, in turn, are based on certain fundamental values toward the development of which the design is directed. The convictions and these values furnish the "why" both for the existence of ANTEP and its design. It is the "why" of ANTEP that will be emphasized in the present statement.

Values, if sound, endure; a design, on the contrary, should be modified as conditions would seem to demand. ANTEP is in its twelfth year. In that period there have been some modifications in its original design. Probably there should have been more in view of both the extraordinary achievements and the cataclysmic events of the past decade. That the program has lived in spite of the obstacles any new and different venture is bound to encounter is evidence of the soundness of its values and the strength of the convictions of its loyal supporters both within and outside the Department of Education.

The Basic "Why" of ANTEP

The importance of the teacher and the need that he be educated in a manner commensurate with his importance are the convictions accounting for the existence of ANTEP. The importance

ascribed to the teacher and his education is the outgrowth of a further conviction that education bears a major responsibility for the shape of things to come, for the very character of our emerging civilization. This responsibility is greater today than it ever was. It has taken these critical times to bring to it a measure of consideration.

If teacher education is of such significance, then it must be guided in its course by a value so fundamental, so comprehensive and so universal that it must endure. This value is age-old, has been expressed in one way or another in the great philosophies and religions, and was the inspiration of our founding fathers in their daring to attempt to build a new nation. Stated simply, it is the value placed on human life, on each individual life.

Implicit in the worth of the individual as the basic value to which ANTEP subscribes are the assumptions that the individual is one with his culture; that there is no dichotomy of man and society; that it is the nature of the interaction of the individual with his environment that determines the result to each; and that among the interplay of forces on which life depends none are more potent than those exerted by individuals upon each other. These form an endless chain into the future. This is the reason why the teacher is so important. There is no measuring the extent of the influence of what and how he causes his pupils to learn.

How well the teacher carries out his responsibilities depends upon what he himself is—his knowledge, his beliefs, his aspirations, his image of himself. The whole self is involved in teaching. It is the atmosphere created by this self that pervades the classroom and gives it quality.

To educate a teacher in all of this wholeness and uniqueness so that he will be able to fulfill his high destiny requires far more than the usual sequence of education courses paralleling an academic major. A design is what is needed, a design made up of closely related parts, each of which is selected because of the specific values it can contribute toward the development of the over-all value of respect for the worth of the human being as such. This is the basic "why" of ANTEP, the reason for its existence. In this, ANTEP is one with all those efforts of persons who have dreamed of a better world through the power of education.

Belief in the transcendent worth of the individual implies contributing values to his well-being. Certain values have been selected in determining the design of ANTEP because they are universal and enduring and because they are regarded as being of particular relevance in the education of teachers. Some are primarily personal and may or may not involve others directly; some can exist only in relation with others. The brief phrases given with each in the lists which follow are considered as indicative of their main functions in ANTEP:

Values Primarily Concerning Self

Knowing—as much of the social sciences, the natural sciences, the humanities, and professional education as possible to the end of intelligent, constructive living and teaching

Thinking—mastery of scientific method and applying this to the problems of living and teaching

Creating—finding constructive expression for the uniqueness of one's personality

Enjoying—finding intrinsic pleasure in nature, the arts, people.

Values Directly Involving Others

Cooperating—sharing one's abilities with

others in working toward common purposes

Loving—learning to love disinterestedly increasing numbers and kinds of people

Sympathizing—identifying with the interests and problems of others; feeling compassion for those who are troubled.

It is from the preceding values that the details of the design of ANTEP have been developed.

The Design

Treating the design chronologically, the student typically begins the program living on campus in a six-week pre-freshman orientation session. In the freshman year he carries liberal arts courses in classes with students in other departments, spends a morning a week in school-community observation, and coordinates the whole in a seminar. During the second summer he works in industry and attends a weekly seminar in which the experiences of the group are projected against a study of the problems of industrial America. The second academic year is similar to the first with liberal arts courses continued, the morning a week devoted to classroom observation concentrating on the study of human growth and development, and a seminar to coordinate the experiences. In the third summer the student engages in some form of community or social service work. This time individual conferences with an advisor take the place of the seminar since most of the activities require living-in, too far afield for weekly return to the campus. The third year is a heavy one, in that the student begins concentration on an academic field, spends five mornings a week in exploratory student teaching, makes plans for foreign study, and attends a seminar emphasizing the curriculum. The fourth summer and the first semester of the

senior year are spent in foreign study and travel. The second semester of the senior year is spent in student teaching, professional study, and the rounding out of academic requirements.

Upon the successful completion of the fourth year the student is awarded the B.S. degree, but the ANTEP program is not regarded as completed until the following year is spent in an internship and until other academic and professional requirements for the M.A. have been met.

While the design as outlined here is typical, modifications are made according to the background and needs of the students. Students may transfer to the program at the end of either the freshman or the sophomore year, and for them some of the experiences are telescoped. Some students bring with them an abundance of work experience but need strengthening in cultural background and, for them, further study may be substituted for the industrial period. Thus far, however, because the foreign travel and study experience is regarded of such great importance today, it is required of every student.

There are two binding forces in the design of ANTEP without which the program could not be. These are the qualitative, cumulative records kept of each student and the coordinating seminars. The records give continuity to the growth progress of each individual student; the seminars give continuity to the entire program, coordinate its parts—hold it together.

Those values mentioned as primarily concerned with self—knowing, thinking, creating, enjoying—are all related one with the other. It is difficult to assign any one of these preeminently to one part or another of ANTEP. There are certain emphases regarding the function

of each that may properly be indicated.

If there is one qualification of a teacher on which there is general agreement it is *knowing*—a teacher must know something. But what must he know? A hundred years ago Spencer challenged the thinking world with his question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" It would be far more difficult for him to answer his question today than it was then. Certainly no other century as this since Spencer's day has seen such burgeoning of knowledge and of such revolutionary character. Nor has any other century seen so many and such complex problems hurtling one upon another. Will man be able to use his vast resources quickly and skilfully enough to cope successfully with his overwhelming problems? The knowledge aspect of ANTEP is based on a conviction that he can. But whether or not he will is largely dependent on the willingness of the academic world to face as staggering a revolution in its thinking as that of the social-political revolution out of which a new and different world is being born.

There is really no time for trivia, for the deadwood cluttering most college curricula because of its supposed traditional respectability. Conditions today demand something very different from the hodgepodge of courses most students are now taking. If education is to assume its share of responsibility for the survival of a world worth living in, it must seek out the knowledge best adapted to meeting today's problems. This knowledge is the true liberal arts of today, the knowledge that will make and keep man free.

The problems are many and baffling: At least one-third of the world is starving while population continues to boom; some labor unions with a proud history behind them are apparently infested with racketeers; such gross inequalities of

wealth exist among the states that where one happens to be born geographically largely determines the kind of educational and other opportunities he will have; recreational and rehabilitation centers are multiplying and doing good work, but the tide of alcoholism, drug addiction, crime and juvenile delinquency continues to mount; all over the world underdeveloped countries are achieving freedom, often seriously unprepared for political responsibilities, and, therefore, battling with bloodshed and chaos. These are illustrative, but over all is the problem of the struggle of ideologies, the outcome of which will determine the world of the future.

Fortunately for ANTEP, some of the Adelphi faculty were aware of the need for revision of the curriculum in terms of the "knowledge of most worth" in meeting today's problems. The effort thus far has resulted in four comprehensive courses:

- Man and His Universe
- Man and Society
- Introduction to the Arts
- Living Issues.

Each of the first three courses is taught by a team representing the several disciplines within its academic division; the fourth is taught by the English department with occasional guest lecturers. Much work has gone into these courses, and they are being revised continuously. It has not been easy and no one is more ready to recognize their limitations than those who are responsible for them. Because these courses are moving in the direction of selecting the most relevant materials in all fields of knowledge for understanding and coping with today's problems, all ANTEP students include them in their programs.

Because communication plays so important a role in human understanding,

all ANTEP students are required to give evidence of ability to read, speak and write English well and to have a working knowledge of at least one foreign language. ANTEP students preparing to teach in secondary schools meet and usually exceed the high Adelphi standards for majors, while students planning to teach in the elementary school are expected to have special competence in one major field of their choice.

One of the characteristics of education as a profession is its dependence on all other fields of knowledge. Unfortunately this has often led to the discount and even the disparagement of courses in professional education. While ANTEP is in complete accord as to the importance of a broad general education for all teachers it is equally insistent on the importance of the distinct body of professional knowledge included in such fields as Human Growth and Development, The Psychology of Learning, History and Philosophy of Education, Comparative Education.

The problem-based curriculum of ANTEP implies thinking as a major process of learning. While thinking is emphasized in all parts of the curriculum, the seminars provide the training ground for learning the techniques of scientific thinking and for developing scientific attitudes toward problem solution. Continuous throughout the program, the seminar is the medium for coordinating all the experiences of the student in focusing on problems to be studied. Sometimes it is a major world problem—e.g., the role of the citizen in helping the underprivileged nations; sometimes an educational problem—e.g., the responsibility of the federal government in the support of education. In either case, there is always some educational implication in the world problem

and some social implication in the educational problem. In this the seminar brings realization to the student that education bears a large share of the responsibility for the future of civilization.

Hard thinking and *creativity* go hand in hand. The self-direction characteristic of ANTEP promotes creativity in all fields. But it is in the creative arts particularly that ANTEP encourages full freedom of expression. Beginning with the course, Introduction to the Arts, in which there is exposure to all art media, the students are encouraged to engage in free artistic expression of their thought and feeling. Adelphi encourages this, too, through the offerings of many extracurricular activities in the major arts.

A symptom of the critical world situation today is the lack of ability of so many persons to find *joy* in living and their recourse, in its place, to excitement. A main cause of this lack of joyousness is the overemphasis on success. It is the exceptional person, the artist mainly, who engages in activities for their sheer intrinsic worth with no thought of something else to be gained thereby. Unfortunately our schools, to a great extent, follow the same pattern. "Learn this because you must pass it to go to the next grade; be sure to make a good record or you won't get into college."

ANTEP is trying to counteract the trend by placing emphasis upon the real joy of successful achievement, of doing something better today than the day before. But it is an uphill struggle with all the accepted trends of the times against it.

The values involving others, cooperating, loving, sympathizing—like those involving self primarily—are closely interrelated. They, too, characterize all aspects of ANTEP.

Cooperating is present in all relationships but certain experiences are of particular value in teaching the give and take in human relations. In the pre-freshman orientation period the students live together, working out all the problems of cooking, cleaning and housekeeping, in general. In foreign study and travel they are confronted with all the adjustments in human relations prevalent in new and strange surroundings. In the seminars they learn to pool their findings as they deal with world and educational problems. In working with their advisors they learn to cooperate with adults in goal setting, planning and evaluating.

The teacher's work is with people. He must learn to know them and to *love* them—all kinds of people, big and little, all colors, in all walks of life. One must learn to *love* if one would be a teacher. How does one learn this? By accepting one's self, one's strengths and one's limitations, learning to live with one's self peacefully, and doing the same with those with whom one's lot is cast. This means that one must extend himself to include more and more kinds of people until one's capacity for love has reached its fullest.

ANTEP tries to give a student a sense of being wanted. He must be loved if he is to come into that acceptance of self that gives him the power to love others. As he grows in love, he grows in sympathy. He learns to see with the eyes of others, to hear with their ears and, above all, to feel with their hearts. These are the qualities of the true teacher. It is these that can make education so powerful a factor in the realization of those ideals to which the best of men in all ages have given their allegiance. It is to the education of such teachers that ANTEP is dedicated—the fundamental "why" of ANTEP.

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