Can Teacher Education Use the "Self as Instrument" Concept?

WALTER A. BUSBY,* ARTHUR W. COMBS, ROBERT BLUME, DONALD AVILA, LYNN OBERLIN

Most efforts at changing teacher education programs have been pre-occupied with reshuffling of old courses, heavier loads of content, and changes in certification. Yet teacher education obviously needs more than a tinkering job. What is called for is a reexamination of the problem in light of our changing concepts of behavior and learning.

As a step in this direction a committee in the College of Education at the University of Florida developed a new program for the training of elementary teachers in the winter of 1969 and placed it in operation side by side with the more traditional existing program. The New Elementary Program (NEP) is an especially unique experiment in that it began from basic research, was expanded to a theoretical position, placed in operation, and is now in process of research evaluation:

1. Its basic position was derived from ten years of research on the nature of effective workers in the helping professions. (See: A. W. Combs et al. Florida Studies in the Helping Professions. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1969.)

An experimental program has studied whether teachers can be helped toward becoming more flexible and self-confident than others not part of the program. Some early results are detailed here.

2. These findings were combined with modern humanistic thought in psychology to produce a consistent theory of teacher education. (See: A. W. Combs. The Professional Education of Teachers: A Perceptual View of Teacher Preparation. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965.)

3. This theory was modified to meet local conditions and placed in operation alongside the existing program in the College.

4. A program of research was instituted to determine what effects this program might produce. This research will seek to follow the NEP students for some years after grad-

* Walter A. Busby, Assistant Professor, Arthur W. Combs, Professor, Robert Blume, Assistant Professor, Donald Avila, Professor, and Lynn Oberlin, Associate Professor; all of the College of Education, University of Florida, Gainesville.
A grant from the American Federation of Teachers served to get the first phase of this research under way. This research is reported in this article.

**The Program Design**

Out of extended discussion of helping relationship research, perceptual-humanistic psychology, and pooled faculty experiences, the NEP program was designed around five basic assumptions:

1. The "Self as Instrument Concept" of professional education sees the production of effective professional workers as a problem in becoming. That is, an effective teacher is one who has learned how to use himself and his knowledge of children and subject matter to accomplish the purposes of schooling. The task of the college is not to teach right ways to teach; rather, it is to help the student discover his own best ways of operating in whatever school setting he may find himself.

2. Student responsibility and self direction. Such a program requires that students be given maximum responsibility for their own learning and the greatest possible opportunities for self direction.

3. Maximum flexibility. Since students come with varying backgrounds, experience, and widely divergent needs, teacher education programs must contain maximum flexibility to adjust to such needs, and permit wide variations in instructional programs and in rate of progress.

4. Close relationship of didactic instruction and practical experience. An effective program of teacher education calls for the closest possible relationship between the student's practical experience on the one hand and didactic instruction on the other. Participation in actual teaching should begin as early as possible in the student's experience and, thereafter, should provide for continually increasing responsibility and time in the classroom.

5. Relation of learning to need. Learning is likely to be effective only in the degree to which material is related to the need of the learner. A teacher education program, therefore, must provide maximum adaptation to student needs on the one hand and the creative discovery of new needs to know on the other. Substantive work should therefore be offered in response to students' needs to know.

To achieve these objectives, traditional "courses" were replaced with seminars, field experience, and substantive panel.

**The Seminar**

The seminar is considered the heart of the program. There are presently four seminars in operation, each consisting of one faculty member and 30 students. As students leave the program, they are replaced by new students entering the College for the first time. Since a thirty-to-one ratio is too great to accomplish the purposes of the seminar, the group of 30 is again divided into two groups of 15, and the seminar leader meets two hours a week with each group of 15 students. A community session, which includes all 120 students, meets once a week for one hour. At this session announcements are made, films are shown, and group cohesiveness is maintained.

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**Manuscripts Needed for "Research in Review"**

Manuscripts for the "Research In Review" column are being solicited by the coordinator. The column is devoted to providing a summary of research completed in an area of interest. The column is not designed to report on one particular research study (such manuscripts are best sent to the "Research Supplement"). Manuscripts should be 1,400 words in length (approximately five typewritten double-spaced pages), including references. Submit manuscripts in duplicate and with return envelope and postage. Decisions on materials will be made as promptly as possible.

Manuscripts for "Research in Review" should be addressed to: Dr. Marcella L. Kysilka, Associate Professor, College of Education, Florida Technological University, P.O. Box 25000, Orlando, Florida 32816.
The seminar serves many important functions. It is the place where the students’ educational experience becomes personal and humanistic through interaction with a faculty member who is easily approachable and obviously committed to them. Also important is the interaction with 29 other friendly cohorts who here share their joys, fears, successes, and failures.

The seminar is also the place where, through discussion and exploration, the students discover the personal meaning of the didactic and experiential aspects of the program, and begin to realize the meaning of their entire educational experience. It is the place where they begin to see themselves more clearly as teacher and person, where they receive personal counseling and guidance and where they plan for the future. In the seminar the student is engaged in a dynamic personal relationship with other human beings and, if he or she remains open to new experiences, the student’s humanness expands and matures.

Individual records are maintained on each student in the seminar. These are progress records which include all evaluations and diaries of all the activities that they have engaged in. The diaries are maintained by the students and are filed with the seminar records quarterly. These records provide a continual picture of the staff’s evaluation of the student, the student’s growth, and his or her reaction to the experience.

A final aspect of the seminar is the “Newsletter.” This is a dittoed note that is distributed to the students each week in the seminar. It includes an announcement of the forthcoming program activities as well as a calendar of university and community activities which would be of special interest to the students.

The Substantive Panel

The program is based on the assumption that large classrooms with large numbers of students being lectured to, are not conducive to learning; therefore, a model called the Substantive Panel has been devised. It is made up of faculty members of varying specialties, such as foundations, math, curriculum, reading, and other areas in which elementary teachers need knowledge and skill.

Students are not expected to complete courses in the program, but to develop understanding and competence in areas corresponding to the specialties of panel members. Consequently, when they enter the program they are given “learning activity lists” which contain the activities they will be expected to engage in during their stay in the program and instructions as to how they may demonstrate completion. From that point forward they are on their own to determine how quickly or how slowly they will complete their learning activities. They receive guidance and counseling with program planning from their seminar leaders, but no one tells them where to go or what to do. Students make their own decisions about how to spend their time and in which aspects of the program they will engage. The substantive areas are art, curriculum, language arts, math, reading, science, social studies, human growth and development, social foundations, minority group studies, and research and evaluation. Four other areas which are now courses outside of the program are making plans to become part of the program: music, health, physical education, and children’s literature.

The panel members serve more of a consulting role than a traditional teaching one. Students begin their work in each substantive area with a required “orientation” which may consist of two to eight hours of lecture-discussion concerning the area of study and the expectations of the panel member with regard to study in that area. Thereafter, each panel member schedules three hours of group discussions and presentations per week related to student needs in his area, but much of his time is taken up with one-to-one interactions which have been requested by the students.

Field Experience

Immediately upon entrance to the program students become engaged in some aspect of teaching. In consultation with their
seminar leader who considers their previous experience, level of maturity, and other factors, the student is assigned to one of the levels of experience.

_Tutor:_ The first level consists of a combination of classroom observation and tutoring. Concurrently with his observations, the student tutors a single student from one of the local schools. He does this for four hours a week for a minimum of ten weeks.

_Teacher initiate:_ At this level the student assists a teacher in any way he can. This may involve such things as record keeping, individual work with children, and small group work for six hours a week.

_Teacher assistant:_ The third level is a progression from level two whereby the student takes on more responsibility for two hours a day, every day.

_Teacher associate:_ The fourth level is a further increase in responsibility, also for two hours a day.

_Intensive teaching:_ Finally the student spends five weeks in a full-time teaching experience. This comes either at the end of the next-to-last quarter in the program, or at the beginning of the final quarter.

The seminar leader remains aware of the student's progress each quarter. In addition the seminar leader and two substantive panel members review the student's work twice during the program. The mid-point review is held during the fourth quarter in the program. The same process occurs just before graduation, and is called the "final review."

**Research Results**

The program was placed in operation in the Winter Quarter of 1969 with two seminars of 30 students each. These 60 students were selected randomly from approximately 250 students entering Elementary Education. In Fall 1970 an additional seminar of 30 students was randomly selected. As students graduated or dropped out they
were randomly replaced so that the original size of each seminar was maintained.

The Experimental Group for this part of the research consisted of 51 out of 58 students who graduated from NEP in the Winter, Spring, or Summer Quarters of 1970. Seven students were not tested because they were not available or they refused to participate in the testing program.

The control group consisted of 64 out of 86 students randomly selected from the total of 206 enrolled in a “senior seminar” in the regular program. Twenty-two students were either not available or refused to participate.

Both groups of students had completed their field experience or internship and were in their “graduating” quarter when tested.

**Instruments**

The instruments used to measure the difference between the two groups consisted of the following scales:

- Personal Beliefs Inventory
- Teacher Practices Inventory
- Personal Opinion Questionnaire
- Florida Scale of Civic Beliefs
- Florida Educational Opinionnaire

All the preceding instruments were developed at the University of Florida by Bob Burton Brown (PBI, TPI, and POQ), Robert Curran (FEO), and Vynce Hines (FSCB).

- Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Counselor Recordings and Test, Box 6184, Acklen Station, Nashville, Tennessee).

- Personal Orientation Inventory (Educational Testing Service, San Diego, California).

**Results**

In the results of the mean differences between the experimental and control groups on the 29 measures used, three measures were significant at the .05 level. The scores on the Teacher Practices Inventory (TPI) suggest that the experimental group differs with the control group on how they view good teaching. A high score on the scale indicates that the individual believes in the following approaches to learning:

- Active involvement rather than passive acquisition
- Problem centered rather than rote memory
- Experimental rather than structured activities
- Direct rather than vicarious experience
- Intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation.

The experimental group also scored significantly higher on the Florida Educational Opinionnaire. This indicates the individual believes in the following approaches to education:

- Process rather than product orientation
- Flexible rather than rigid control
- Self direction rather than teacher direction
- Experience rather than content-centered.

The last significant measure was the Personal Self on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. This is a measure of how an individual feels about himself. A high score suggests that an individual has a clear image of who he is and a high degree of self acceptance. Hence, he would therefore have more self-confidence.

An additional indication of differences between the experimental and control groups is provided by analyzing the direction of the measures regardless of their significance. Of the 29 measures used, 26 were in favor of the experimental group and 3 in favor of the control. This yields a chi square of 18.2 which is significant at the .001 level (P = .001, 10.8).

In general, the experimental program appears to be successful in producing a different kind of teacher. This teacher seems more flexible and self-confident. He also appears to have different perceptions about the nature of the educational process. He believes in an active, problem-centered, experimental classroom. He also sees motivation as primarily intrinsic rather than extrinsic.

As a result of the success of the experimental program the faculty members of the Department of Elementary Education have recently decided to convert their entire program utilizing the NEP model.