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A Functional Approach to Instruction in Elementary Education Methods Courses.

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In the belief that teacher education can be strengthened by making it possible for the student to have more actual contact with school children than is usually afforded, an experiment is being conducted at Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C., through the cooperation of the elementary laboratory school and the college of education. Eight junior elementary education majors who volunteered for the program work for three or four hours a day with teachers to whom they are assigned as aides or interns. They perform housekeeping and clerical duties and receive special help as they observe and teach those subjects and activities for which they receive college credit: in the fall quarter handwriting and physical education, in the winter quarter reading and science, in the spring quarter health and arithmetic. Two university professors who direct the program visit each student in the classroom situation and hold weekly seminars with the entire group; specialists in science, reading, mathematics, and health work with them in both observations and seminars. Throughout the same year, students take regularly scheduled courses at the University: foundations in reading, introduction to education, child psychology, music for classroom teachers, educational psychology, and psychology of personality development. They will do fifteen quarter hours of student teaching in their senior year. It is too early to evaluate the program. (JS)

A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH
TO
INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION METHODS COURSES

W. G. Anderson and Lee F. Reynolds

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It is our belief that teacher education can be strengthened by making it possible for the student to have more actual contact with school children than is afforded through the present system of having twenty hours of student participation and forty other hours of observation and community experience during the junior year and one quarter of student teaching during the senior year.

With this belief in mind we are engaged in a cooperative program between the principal and teachers of our elementary laboratory school and the college of education at the university. Under this cooperative plan eight volunteers from the Junior class who are majoring in elementary education are working with the respective teachers to whom they are assigned as aides or interns from three to four hours a day. They receive special help from the supervising teachers and observe and teach those subjects and activities for which they are to receive university credit. Two university professors who are cooperating in the direction of the program visit each student in the classroom situation and hold weekly seminars with the entire group.

The initial plan called for ten participating third year students, but for various reasons two students were excused from the program. Only those who volunteered for the program were taken.

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This experiment is an attempt to:

- (1) Place major emphasis upon the functional and problem approach to teacher education.
- (2) Study those theories and methods that are needed in the "live" situation in which the student is located.
- (3) Provide more practical classroom situations and contacts with children.
- (4) Learn the "real" problems of a classroom teacher.
- (5) Determine the kind and nature of a cooperative program a university might be able to formulate with the cooperating schools to produce effective professional teachers.

During the fall quarter the students are taking regularly scheduled courses at the university in foundations in reading (3 q.h.) introduction to education (3 q.h.), child psychology (3 q.h.), and music for classroom teachers (2 q.h.), as well as work at the laboratory school for which they will receive credit in handwriting (3 q.h.) and physical education (1 q.h.).

To date, students participating in the program have performed housekeeping, clerical, and instructional duties. Housekeeping duties have consisted of such activities as straightening the room, arranging books and flowers, and planning and preparing bulletin boards. Clerical duties have included the following: taking attendance, correcting papers and recording grades, recording heights and weights, scoring and scaling diagnostic reading tests, and typing report cards, duty roster, and test stencils. The participants have taken part in individual, small group, and whole-class instruction. Whole-class instructional activities have been in the areas of handwriting, mathematics, social studies, and

spelling. Individual instruction has been given in all subject areas. Other duties have consisted of working with various committees, helping with daily planning, and giving vision tests.

During the winter quarter the students will be enrolled in regularly scheduled classes in music for classroom teachers (2 q.h.), elementary education (3 q.h.), educational psychology (3 q.h.), and receive university credit for reading methods (3 q.h.), science methods (3 q.h.), and physical education (1 q.h.) through the cooperative program.

During the spring quarter the participating students will be enrolled for regularly scheduled classes in music for classroom teachers (3 q.h.), elementary education (3 q.h.), psychology of personality development (3 q.h.), and receive credit for intern work in health education (3 q.h.), arithmetic methods (3 q.h.), and physical education (1 q.h.).

Throughout the program specialists in science, reading methods, mathematics, and health will work with the two directors of the program at appropriate times through observations of classroom situations and discussions in the seminar periods.

Students in the program are to take their student teaching the fall quarter of their senior year. The university program calls for a full-time student teaching experience of fifteen quarter hours. After the student teaching experience the students will return to the university for the completion of their programs.

Continuous evaluation is to be a part of this program during the junior and senior years. A follow-up program of visitation and

questionnaires is to be made during their first year of teaching.

It is too early to ascertain or predict the outcome of this experiment, but the writer envisions the time when those preparing to be elementary teachers will combine the basic methods courses with an extended intern or student teaching period in a center located in an off-campus situation. Such a program will, of necessity, call for a high degree of cooperation with the professional teachers in the area and the same fine sense of dedication, enthusiasm, and industry from those participating that these first volunteers are exemplifying every day.

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