

In-Service Training in Social Studies

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The use of an inquiry-conceptual approach in social studies instruction presents a challenge and a threat to most teachers who are unfamiliar with the approach. Teachers need not only a firm understanding of the theoretic background of this approach and knowledge in the various social studies disciplines but, more importantly, they must be able to apply these skills and knowledges to classroom instruction. The demands of an inquiry-conceptual approach require, therefore, in-service training that is focused and specific to the problems teachers will encounter in the use of this approach.

Weaknesses of Workshops

Teacher in-service training in the past has often been ineffective because few workshops provided for teacher involvement in decisionmaking and in workshop activities. As shown by the Chester and Delaware study, lectures took up 45 percent of the workshop time while laboratory workshops constituted only 15 percent of the meetings. Since teachers are expected to return to the classroom to apply new ideas and skills, they need to be active participants in in-service training sessions.

Another weakness of workshops has been in the use of demonstration classes. Too often they have been poorly conducted so that it was difficult to follow the lessons and to hear the children. The latter, in many instances, have found it difficult to be themselves in such circumstances. Too, the double task of trying to teach teachers and children at the same time poses a problem to the workshop leader.

Micro-teaching is also not very effective because it is more of a detachment from the classroom and should not necessarily be valued as a micro-class according to Joseph Grannis. What teachers need is to actually utilize their planned lessons or units in their classrooms in addition to workshop activities.

Another weakness of workshops is the time allotted for the period of the training sessions. Condensed workshops allow little time for teachers to internalize and utilize the newly acquired skills and information. Workshops, such as that carried out in Maryland, which utilized the "seed" concept have been successful because the teachers were in session throughout the year. During this time they wrote units, collected resources and evaluated progress. As a consequence more teachers became involved in this project during the following years.

Need for Focus in Workshops

Perhaps one of the clearest statements made concerning the focus of in-service training in an inquiry-conceptual approach in social studies instruction was made by John Jarolimek. He stated that the focus of such training should be to provide teachers with

... a strong background not to pass the information on to the pupils he teaches but to be able to know what possibilities for investigation inhere in a topic, to know what questions to ask, to know enough about a topic to be able to plan an extended and soundly based investigation of it with today's informed and sophisticated pupils.

What would an in-service workshop look like if it incorporated Jarolimek's ideas?

A Workshop Plan

A limited study of teacher problems in applying an inquiry-conceptual approach in social studies instruction was conducted by the writer with eleven interested teachers. Both the writer and the teachers taught in the same elementary school located in the Leeward School District on the island of Oahu.

The study took the form of an in-service workshop beginning in November 1971 and ending in April 1972. All participating teachers taught at the upper elementary grade levels. With the exception of one participant their

teaching experiences ranged from four to six years. The former was a non-certificated teacher with twenty years of experience in a private school system. The teachers' background in the social sciences included a course in history at the University of Hawaii and for some a methods course in social studies.

The plan for the workshop began with the writer's conception of the knowledges and skills needed by teachers in order to be able to use the inquiry-conceptual approach in social studies as defined by the Hawaii State Social Studies Guide. The plan was modified as a result of an informal conversation with four concerned teachers and the stated needs of the other participants.

In general, the workshop plan concentrated upon activities that involved "doing" and "applying" what was acquired. The activities were focused, therefore, upon the rationale and methods of concept development: questioning strategies, data collection techniques, simulation games and role-playing, lesson and unit planning and evaluation of plans. Because the workshop was held in the school where the writer and the participants taught, it was possible to modify, add or delete activities in the course of the training program. One such addition was the provision for some teachers to observe classes using the *Man, A Course of Study* program and other conceptual approaches. A very important modification was the decision to concentrate upon discussion and questioning strategies and to delete all other activities. This point will be touched upon in a subsequent paragraph.

Workshop Activities

The workshop sessions began with demonstrations of actual lessons by the writer. These were followed by the participants' own concept development lessons. Sessions on questioning strategies were held with teachers identifying levels asked by the writer in the context of actual lessons as well as during analyses of taped classroom discussions. These activities led to the teachers' formulation of questions for particular topics followed by the development of lessons to be used in their classrooms. Another major activity was the use of data retrieval charts as a basis for the formulation of hypotheses, making predictions and generalizations. Simulation games and role-playing were introduced as specific techniques with teachers participating then using them in their own classrooms.

Effects of Workshop Activities

Some direct results of the workshop began to show up during the sessions as teachers began to use aspects of

the inquiry-conceptual approach in their classrooms. Four teachers began with sample units developed for them which they modified and adapted for their classes. Later, they developed their own unit plans. Two teachers began using the inquiry-conceptual approach in science first, then transferred it to social studies. One participant adapted a unit from the third grade text of the *Concept and Values* series. Four participants wrote brief unit plans which they used in their teaching. Even some of the student teachers in the school became involved when they sought additional help in developing concepts.

Survey of Teacher Problems

A survey was given at the conclusion of the workshop in which teachers rated those problems which they considered of major difficulty in using this approach. Their ratings were as follows: (1) selecting and thinking of activities related to concept development, to the generalization(s) in question and in arriving at the generalization; (2) developing lessons and units; (3) obtaining necessary resources for each area of study; and (4) formulating questions that lead to a set purpose and involving students at higher levels in thinking.

As the survey indicated, the teachers felt that their major problem involved planning units and obtaining resources. That is, they appeared to be more concerned with planning per se than with instruction. From feedback throughout the workshop and subsequent classroom observations made by the writer at the invitation of eight teachers, she concluded that a major problem the teachers faced was in presenting a lesson or a unit effectively. This problem seemed to stem from the fact that teachers needed a deeper understanding of concept development and inquiry skills as they are applied to social studies.

Specifically the teachers observed by the writer displayed difficulty in being an adequate stimulus for higher levels of thinking with children. This problem was manifested during the conduct of discussions, the use of questions in focusing research work and in replying to students during discussions. In the writer's opinion these difficulties needed greater attention and recognition by teachers than the problem of unit planning. This is not to say that planning is not important because it is. But the acid test is the presentation of a lesson and that was the focus of the problem confronting the teachers. If the writer had not been able to observe the teachers in their classrooms, this problem identification would not have been possible. It was this identification that caused the

writer to shift the emphasis of the workshop for the remainder of the training sessions.

Residual Effects

The participating teachers have planned for further growth in this area. Two attended another workshop that dealt with the inquiry-conceptual approach. Two others were selected to attend a workshop to be trained to use the *Man, A Course of Study* program and eventually to help train other teachers for this program. Two teachers became members of a newly formed social studies curriculum committee to recommend and purchase social studies materials for the school. Results other than those mentioned here are less clear but a definite change has occurred in the attitude of the teachers and in the methods of teaching social studies.

Proposal for In-Service Training

In-service workshops will not be the answer to all of the problems in teacher education but they are a necessary aid because of a changing curriculum and, therefore, implications for instruction. According to Tyler, "... in-service training in the future will not be seen as 'shaping' teachers but rather will be viewed as aiding, supporting, and encouraging each teacher's development of teaching capabilities that he values and seeks to enhance."

The purpose of this study was to identify teachers' problems in using an inquiry-conceptual approach in social studies instruction. The second part of the study was to propose how these problems could be met through in-service programs. The suggestions were:

1. Teachers should be allowed to actively participate in decisionmaking in the planning and implementation of workshops. For example, they should take active leadership in conducting some of the workshops themselves.
2. Teachers should be actively involved in practical application of theory. They need to use the knowledge and skills gained during workshop sessions in their classrooms so that the experience can be fed back into the workshop sessions.
3. Teachers need to see a variety of examples of ways that they can use to develop particular concepts

and generalizations. It would be of considerable help to have teachers observe other classrooms using inquiry-conceptual approaches. Videotaped lessons if available would be valuable aids. Where such opportunities are not available, teacher demonstrations and analyses of their experiences with their classes might serve to pinpoint alternatives that are available in concept development.

4. Workshop sessions should not be condensed but be spread out throughout a semester or a year. Condensed workshops often result in too many misconceptions and too little use of new ideas or programs.
5. Teachers need to see and become familiar with a variety of resources that are applicable to their programs. They need help in seeing how these resources can be used.
6. Teachers need knowledge in the various social science disciplines. This knowledge must be active. Perhaps a scholar-consultant type of relationship during workshop sessions would serve this purpose more efficiently than a formal course would.
7. Teachers need continual aid in coping with frustrations and problems they encounter during the time they are using this approach. For this reason it is preferable to have the workshop leader in the school in order to be a resource to teachers as they analyze and evaluate their progress. There is no reason why teachers cannot be workshop leaders.

Since it would be highly unlikely that all of the above ideas can be included in a single workshop, priorities need to be established such that the most persistent needs of teachers attending the workshop be determined. The important point to be made is that teacher involvement be active. If the writer were asked to present one suggestion for effective teacher involvement in all areas of in-service education it is that workshops should aid teachers, not threaten them by a presentation of too much unfamiliar and difficult material in too short a period of time.

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