

PRE-SERVICE/IN-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION: THE PLACE OF THE COMMUNITY IN LEARNING/TEACHING

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Throughout the two years of the University of Hawaii—Jarrett Teacher Corps Project, observers in the school often remarked about the atmosphere of experimentation and cooperation present at all levels of the school. From the start, the project emphasized experimentation, testing and trying: what works is good, but what does not must be rethought, revised or replaced. Because of this atmosphere, new ideas could be looked at objectively, and older ones scrutinized.

Experimental in nature and outlook, the project was strongly guided by the principle that theory and practice can be brought together; that in effective teaching and teacher training they should be closely linked. The project held to the idea that the field classroom and the teacher-training classroom can mutually inform each other about needs in education and effective teaching practices: an untested theory is not too valuable, and practice without theory is often misguided.

If there is a universal characteristic of teachers, it must be that they are almost always examining the needs of their students—on improving their desire to learn. Teacher educators, too, are concerned with providing teachers—both in-service and pre-service—with the knowledge, skills and understanding of the teaching/learning process necessary for effectiveness in the classroom. These characteristics were evident, to a large degree, in the exchanges between the University and the field school in the Teacher Corps Project.

Too often there seems to be a split between what is studied in a university education methods class and what is practiced in a field classroom. The arguments run that college educators are out of touch with the real situations in elementary, intermediate and high school classrooms; that their ideas concerning teachers are often impractical and, conversely, that teachers do not follow in the field what they are taught at the university in teacher training—for if they did they would have far fewer problems in teaching than they do now. This

view is, of course, simplistic, though popular. In a field-based project, such as ours, arguments lose their force and appeal; the two sides, for the better, become one side.

The Problem

An aspect of the Teacher Corps Project which presented the greatest challenge to the project participants was the community component. Teacher Corps is mandated "to encourage, support, and develop programs and activities beyond the regular school programs," to utilize community resources to enhance learning in the school. This aspect of education is one rarely touched upon in teacher education programs, and even less often developed in schools in the absence of such preparation.

Description of Current Teacher-Training (Non-Field Based)

Without attempting a critical review, a close look at the current University teacher-training program shows some serious shortcomings. The pre-service teacher needs to fulfill certain University and College of Education academic requirements which correspond closely to the requirements for professional certification with the Hawaii State Department of Education.

The number of credits needed for graduation in all of the colleges in the university is about the same, with a few exceptions. A Bachelor of Arts degree requires 124 semester hours; a Bachelor of Business degree requires 124 semester hours, and a Bachelor of Education degree requires 127 semester hours. The difference among these programs is, of course, the distribution of the credits in various subject areas.

A quick survey of the distribution of subjects in a typical B.Ed. program will indicate that while they are somewhat liberal, they are still very classroom- and content-oriented. For an undergraduate in the College of Education selecting Secondary Education English Language Arts as his field major, fully



1/3 of his total credit hours must be gotten through study in English language and literature and related coursework. For an undergraduate selecting Social Studies as a field major, about 1/3 of the credits must be earned in the social sciences. Additional credits are required from the professional education core group: social, psychological, and curriculum foundations. Appropriate methods courses, dealing with teaching strategies, materials, and thirty hours of student teaching usually round out the major. Any balance is made up of liberal arts classes and general university academic requirements. Students are urged, however, to continue in the college for a fifth year to obtain a Professional Certificate, bringing the credit total to 156 credit hours. These fifth-year courses are generally graduate level seminars in the various foundations of education and advanced study in the student's field major.

The point in presenting this brief summary is to show that although education majors are rather thoroughly schooled in content (subject matter), classroom methodology, the general foundations of



education, and do receive a rather comprehensive course of study by most standards, still the program is lacking in some ways.

What is missing is due as much to a philosophical as a methodological problem. It is reflected in college course offerings, in indices to professional texts, in student text materials, as well as in the Hawaii State Department of Education teacher certification requirements. The role of the community in learning/teaching whether as a place for application of learning or exploration, as a way of joining academic with social growth, as an often-pervasive influence on the school, is almost completely ignored. Wurman¹ writes that "education has been thought of taking place mainly within the confines of the classroom, and the school buildings have been regarded as the citadels of knowledge." This view has shaped not only teacher-training programs, but the resulting instruction on the part of teachers in the regular field classroom. It is a difficult view to overcome, but one that the University of Hawaii-Manoa and the Jarrett Teacher Corps Project had to confront.



Teacher Corps' Initial Effort

Part of knowing how the community may be used to enhance learning/teaching comes from finding out about the school and its immediate environment, discovering: (1) whom the school serves (or fails to serve), (2) who serves in the school, (3) what social/business/cultural/religious/political/governmental agencies and organizations surround and influence the school, and (4) the range of curricula maintained in the school.

Participants in the Teacher Corps Project, primarily pre-service teachers, began their work at Jarrett, the field school, by analyzing the school and community on various dimensions which contribute to the school's functioning. It was found, quite early, that no single source, or limited group of sources, was sufficient to acquire a true understanding of the school and its special needs. Although teachers usually have spent a minimum of 16 years in school prior to becoming a teacher, the school—how it is organized, managed and influenced by outside sources—is very much a mystery to the

new teacher. This was true for most pre-service teachers in the project.

When the project began, mixed and vague opinions about the school, its role in the community, the community's role in it, its population's cultural and socio-economic make-up were frequently encountered. It was decided, therefore, that an attempt would be made to gather information on the school, to gain as clear and as comprehensive a picture of the school and its clients as possible. This was no easy task for the untrained.

The survey started by locating informational sources. Leads were offered by the school principal, vice-principal, faculty and staff. Lists of sources were eventually drawn up containing organizations, agencies and individuals who might supply information pertinent to the community and the functioning of the school (see Figure 1).

Once information was obtained, a picture of the community and school emerged which was not apparent before. The next step involved looking at the general characteristics of the school itself and, in particular, the needs of the students. Needs were

examined in four areas: academic, social, cultural and recreational. Specifically, answers to several questions were sought: (1) what are the needs, interests and concerns of the students, (2) how can we strike a better balance between academic and social education, (3) in what ways can we extend and broaden existing curriculum, and (4) how can community resources be used?

Participants in the Project examined Hawaii State Department of Education curriculum guides in various content areas, and made carefully-planned and extensive classroom observations to help determine curriculum needs. Interviews with students and teachers, student/teacher questionnaires, discussions with principals, school counselors and others helped to answer the above questions.

It would be difficult, in the space of this article, to survey or summarize the information gathered or the school programs generated from the undertaking—it is too numerous. The programs, however, included optional exploratory classes in areas ranging from leather crafts to games of antiquity; student/teacher discussion groups; English language tutoring for immigrants; intramural sports; on-location study of ancient Hawaiian house-sites, heiaus and petroglyphs; ethnobotany, and many others. A brief look at one such program, which was conducted over a year-and-a-half period and was strongly focused on social studies and language learning, will suggest the kind of approach taken.

A Model: The Community in Social Studies and Language Learning

While by no means a scientifically-controlled study of the effectiveness of a teaching model, what follows is an attempt to show the value of and to assist others in taking advantage of the tremendous resources for learning which the world outside the classroom offers—especially in social studies and language learning.

Some 15 pre-service and in-service teachers and 134 students from several public schools took part in the activities at various times. Jarrett students numbering approximately 100 were drawn from a group targeted for extra help with academics, social/cultural adjustment, or who were achieving below apparent ability due to lack of motivation. Students included local, mainland, and immigrant

children. Improvement of students' language skills, and attitudes toward themselves, school, and others were major objectives of the program, and significant goals of the Teacher Corps Project itself.

It should be noted that this model was not a substitute for, but an extension of the regular 7th-grade social studies curriculum which consists of Hawaiiana and Pacific area studies. The model emphasized students discovering for themselves aspects of their shared cultural heritage through cooperative group learning and collaborative decisionmaking. It could have been entitled "A Look at Myself and Others Through Social Studies."

It was felt that because of the diversity of language and cultural backgrounds found in typical Hawaii classrooms, especially Jarrett classrooms, that teacher has a real task of creating an environment conducive to learning, an environment wherein communication skills may be acquired and sharing of feelings and ideas can take place. Many different languages are spoken in Hawaii schools, and each student, regardless of his cultural or linguistic background, is foreign to some of them. Moreover, school work much too infrequently asks children to work together to assist one another in making discoveries in learning. School tends sometimes to be a rather unrealistic place.

The model, then, began by looking at the community as a way to provide some unifying framework for learning, as a way to encompass cultural concepts, language learning, and to facilitate mutual cooperation and identification amongst students. As much as possible resources from the community were used in the school, and students were put into the community.

If one looks at the community as including all that is "out there" beyond the classroom, and all that each child brings with him to school, the opportunities for social studies and language learning seem to multiply. The program looked at the community in that way. Resources which were considered useful in enhancing school learning were categorized thusly:

- People—old-timers, family, mom-and-pop grocery stores, ministers, policemen, mailmen, politicians, bus drivers, doctors, artists, construction workers, secretaries, University professors, archaeologists.
- Institutions—Hawaii State Archives, churches,

Figure 1
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

INFORMATION SOUGHT

- A. Role Descriptions of Community Members
 - Teachers
 - Businesses
 - Social/Service Organizations
 - Governmental Agencies
 - Recreational Programs
- B. General Community Population Characteristics
 - Distributed By
 - Income/Kind of Employment
 - Education Levels
 - Home Ownership/Rentals
 - Government-assisted Housing
 - Age/School Enrollment
 - Religion
 - Ethnic Background
 - Voter Behavior
 - Language
- C. History of Community
 - Legends
 - Oral History
 - Changes in Physical Geography
 - Economic Development
- D. Prospects for Future of Community
 - (Envisioned changes in all of the above)

INFORMATION SOURCES

- A. Publications
 - Census Tract—U.S. Department of Commerce publication
 - Data Book-State of Hawaii 1975: a statistical abstract
 - Public and Private School Enrollment in Hawaii
 - Approved for 1970 Census: Approved Tracts
 - Racial Characteristics of Welfare Recipients by Census Tracts
 - Hawaii Health Surveillance Survey 1973
 - H.U.P.I.C. Community Profiles: Oahu
- B. Agencies, Organizations and Individuals
 - Library Division, State of Hawaii Department of Budget, Finance and Planning
 - Office of the Lieutenant Governor
 - State of Hawaii Department of Economic Planning
 - Personnel Office, State of Hawaii Department of Education
 - Curriculum Specialists (in various content areas), State of Hawaii Department of Education
 - Hawaii State Archives
 - Bishop Museum
 - Department of Parks and Recreation, City and County of Honolulu
 - Area churches
 - Feeder schools
 - Personal interview with teachers and long-time residents

museums, community organizations, clubs, hospitals, old-folks homes, schools, libraries, governmental agencies.

- Places—banks, supermarkets, hotels, employment agencies, places of historical and natural interest, industries, rural areas, zoo, airport.
- Artifacts—all the material artifacts the community has produced from museum pieces to washing machines, houses, spoons, junk cars, clothing, anything man-made.

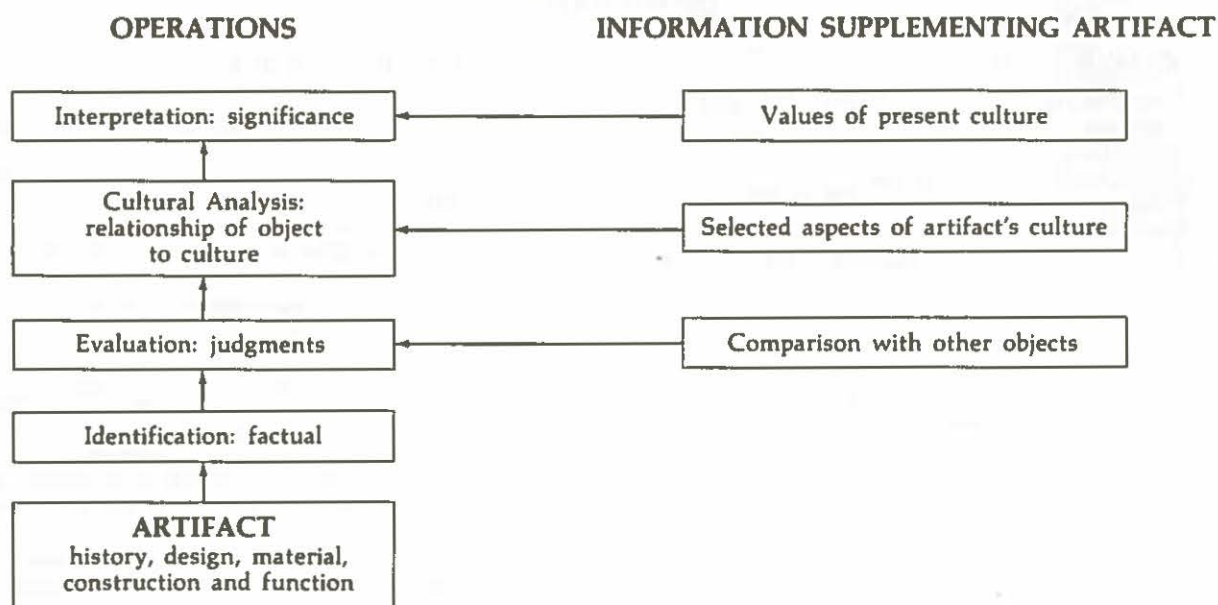
Fleming² has proposed a set of operations for artifact study which was found to be quite valuable in this program (see Figure 2). It is a procedure which is applicable to the study of things other than artifacts. It was found helpful, in work of this type,

to start the students with the study of "common objects" or artifacts, and then gradually move on to other aspects of the community: its people, institutions, places and practices. The thinking and investigative skills involved in the study of artifacts are applicable to the study of other things in the community.

Students in this program were required not only to ask the questions, but also to record the data collected and interpretations made; thus, language skills, thinking skills, and the things studied became so closely connected as to be inseparable.

In addition to the artifact study, the program involved such activities as community walks, mapping, researching legends of the area, student

Figure 2



interviews of senior family and elder community members, lectures on Hawaiiana by visiting speakers, and outings to places of historical and natural interest.

Three times during the program, major outdoor education weekends were conducted at the Episcopal Church Camp at Mokuleia, on Oahu's north shore. Students assisted in the planning of these excursions and were responsible for implementing learning, social and recreational activities. Students participated in arts and crafts such as Hawaiian tapa dye making, lei making, and Hawaiian games, and shared their special knowledge with their campmates.

On one three-day excursion, students from the Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind were included. While the study of Hawaiiana in an outdoor setting remained the theme, communication skills were emphasized. Under the guidance of a trained volunteer instructor, students managed to acquire a basic understanding of the sign language for the deaf. For students from both schools, the

excursion proved to a most challenging and meaningful experience.

Evaluation and Conclusions

This approach tended to be interesting and motivating for students and teachers alike. It did not eliminate or lessen the need for text or library study on the part of the students, however. If anything, it became more important since it did expand what was studied in the classroom—pointing out the many interrelationships among subjects, presenting students with a clear need and reason for learning. In order to take part in the activities, students had to perform a good deal of self-directed study and preparation.

In evaluating the program, some students mentioned that there was quite a lot of work involved. Several admitted there was "too much" work expected of them, although the majority felt that the program was "different from the usual," "fun," and worth continuing in the future. For many,



the chance to be included in the planning and implementing of the activities was of highest value.

The community is a valuable aid in education. For a teacher to use it effectively, however, in-the-field training is necessary. Training teachers in this way not only will provide in-service teachers with the chance to obtain skills which they can apply to future teaching assignment areas, but will also permit in-servicing for experienced teachers unfamiliar with using the community as a teaching/learning resource, and will provide—in the process—a very real and immediate aid to school curricular areas.

Footnotes

¹Richard S. Wurman, ed. *Yellow Pages of Learning Resources*, Philadelphia: Group for Environmental Education, Inc., introduction, p. 1, 1973.

²E. McClung Fleming. "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," in *Winterthur Portfolio* #9, Winterthur Museum, p. 154.

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