

The Honolulu Project In The Schools

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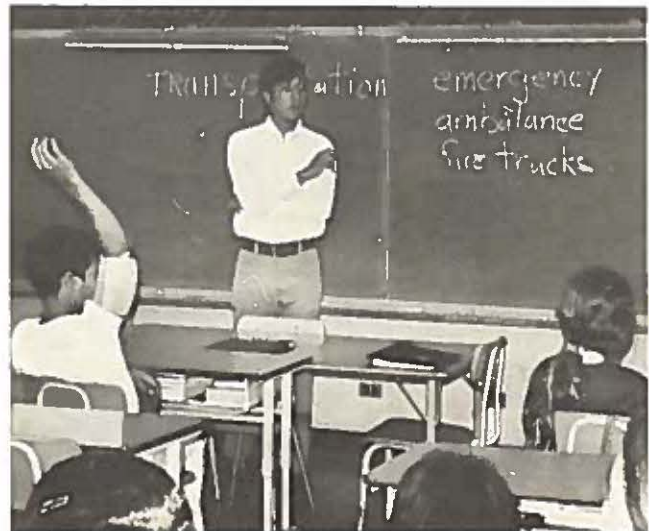
A question that is extremely significant in the instructional component of the Project relates to the various kinds and quality of experiences that it can offer the students and the participating teachers. As an alternative approach to the regular pre-service education provided on campus, the Project attempts to involve students in a continuous dialogue with children in the elementary school setting. For this reason, the students are placed in schools for longer periods of time in each semester. Their schedules change from one semester to the next, depending on a particular school's request or student's class load. In the fall of 1972, the students were in the schools every weekday morning; in the afternoon, university classes were held on-site.

Because of the extended period of time in O/P classrooms, the students are able not only to tutor children, but also to follow the children's various efforts in other related areas of study through most of the day. O/P students in the Project generally express an earlier readiness to assist small discussion groups and, on occasion, manage a roomful to get the "feel" and tune-in to the class' wave length. The time allotment has also allowed teachers and students to provide for continuity and sequence in their team-teaching efforts and in planning for instruction.

Undoubtedly, a key figure in this kind of project is the classroom teacher. In every classroom, the social and intellectual barometer is influenced by the teacher's notions about children and learning and of how she perceives her role in relation to these—for instance, to the extent that she believes and accepts that children have different learning styles, she will demonstrate different teaching styles and, in turn, will invite, encourage and challenge O/P students to do likewise. To the extent that the teacher sees the value of allowing pre-service students to test their com-



Long before mid-semester, the O.P. student takes the responsibility for the routine tasks in the classroom.





Science activities are centered around pupil interests.



Teachers at Pauoa School examine math problems in a workshop.



Pupil in Fern Elementary School wonders if he has made the right choice.

petencies in designing instructional material, trying them out with the children, and testing theoretical constructs they have encountered through lectures, in their readings or through their interactions with school personnel, one can say that the O/P student's participation in the Project has been rewarding. To the extent that classroom teachers (who have the more practical orientation toward school and children) and university instructors (who have the more theoretical orientation) learn from one another through meaningful exchanges of ideas and experiences—communication which gives birth to deeper insights into learning and human nature, and dialogue which generates alternative teaching strategies—one can say that a major goal of the Project has been realized.

It is, perhaps, at the final phase of the pre-service program that we can assess some of the outstandingly weak or strong features of the Project. Assessment might take the form of questions, one of which might be: how much clearer is it to the prospective teacher, her sense of commitment to children, school and her profession? On one end of the continuum, we've had students who felt strongly that after three semesters of acting as teacher assists and partners on an instructional team, they have found their "places in the sun."

There have been a few who discovered, in the first or second term, that although they liked children there were professions other than education in the classroom which would allow them to work with children (often, indirectly) and, in leaving, some are grateful that they found out early enough to be able to do something about it. Fewer still realize that at this time in their life, an all-consuming involvement in the world of children, school and books that the Project demands crowds their lives and withdraw to reconsider their commitments. For the most part, the O/P student has had time to assess her skills, examine her attitudes and look to her cumulative experiences for cues to assess her growth.

Explaining, listening, referee-ing, reprimanding, reinforcing, clarifying and learning from children—all spell ways of relating to children that O/P students in the Project experience, and all too soon, that by the time they wind up their apprenticeship, they demonstrate a confidence that is founded on a belief that they can teach others to learn because they have learned to teach themselves along the way.



Pupils construct materials to supplement their curriculum.



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