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Teachers College Laboratory Schools

By W. P. MORGAN

ALMOST immediately after the founding of the first state normal school in 1839, those who were interested in such schools or colleges felt that there should be combined with them laboratory schools or model schools or training schools or practice schools, as they were called according to the whim of the ones who desired to speak of them.

Such adjuncts to institutions organized to educate teachers were continued as the institutions became normal universities, normal colleges, teachers colleges, state colleges whose primary function was teacher education, and even in many colleges of education operating as definite units in the larger universities of our nation.

More recently these laboratory schools have expanded, first, to include public rural schools so as to get the actual conditions in a rural school in which some students educated to become rural teachers must finally find positions. Then followed the expansion which made village or town public schools into parts of the laboratory schools, to give students preparing to teach in such schools an opportunity to meet the experiences which they might expect as teachers in such schools later.

Rather early in the present century some more ambitious institutions educating students to become teachers branched out into the secondary field and expanded their laboratory schools on their campuses so that they offered work in the secondary field. Following the former procedure on the elementary level, they expanded their laboratory schools on the secondary level until they included public high schools. Now students preparing to teach in high schools have an opportunity to participate in secondary education as they will meet it when they become high school teachers.

From the beginning, the administrators of laboratory schools have recognized that they have two purposes. These purposes are revealed in the names which they have been called—practice schools and model schools. A practice school has been looked upon as a school, either on or off

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campus, in which a student who is preparing to teach may have a chance to try himself out at teaching. In other words, he may practice teaching.

The model school has been thought of as a school where the student who desires to become a teacher may see the expert teacher teach a class as a model procedure which the student may try to imitate. It is a school in which model lessons are taught.

These two purposes are to be commended, for a student who plans to teach ought to have a chance to try himself out under expert supervision after he has carefully planned the lesson which he will teach and has conferred with an expert teacher as to his plans, and has revised them in keeping with the best suggestions which may come from one who is familiar with the most modern and highly acceptable procedures in teaching.

It is also important that a student who is preparing to teach should observe lessons taught by a highly skilled teacher who is familiar with the subject-matter and who knows the better ways in which to meet the exigencies of the recitation as they may arise.

But there is a third purpose of the laboratory school which is indicated by this name for it. It should be the purpose of the laboratory school to enter the field of experimentation with children involving the various ways of teaching them and the many types of subject-matter which may be used. This purpose may be looked upon as the research field or the experimental field for the laboratory school.

It is important that a teachers college should enter this third field for this type of work can readily become the inspiration to create or discover something new in the all-important teaching program which can be introduced to and shared with teachers at work at all levels. The laboratory

school in the teachers college that has no interest in finding new teaching devices or practices, that is content to have teaching done as it has always been done, is already suffering from professional dry rot. The laboratory school in the teachers college that is satisfied to use the same old material it has been using for the past twenty-five years is already beginning to show signs of senility.

Likewise, there are some laboratory schools in teachers colleges that seem to indicate, by their inactivity in such directions, that they think there is nothing new to learn about children and their reactions to the presentation of learning materials. They also show that they think there is nothing to discover about the behavior of children when the fundamental problems of judgment and choice confront them, when cases arise in which these judgments and choices mean so much to them and so vitally affect those with whom they are thrown in contact. Such laboratory schools have become stereotyped professionally and they need the invigorating power which research and experimentation generate.

The teachers colleges with which I have been associated as president or otherwise, most of those which I have inspected or visited, and possibly many others, have largely neglected this third purpose of their laboratory schools. Apparently they have preferred to leave most, if not all, experimentation and research to the colleges of education or to the schools of education in the larger universities. But some of these are too far removed from the real conditions which exist in the public schools to reach the heart of the most difficult problems which they face.

It is my sincere hope that, ere long, some teachers college will be able to inspire its laboratory school to pioneer in the field of experimentation and research to discover ways of more interesting and more effective teaching on the elementary and secondary levels. I know it will be difficult for I have tried to do it. Such pioneering should involve every staff member on the campus and off of it.

Schools of education and colleges of education or departments of education in the large universities may well continue their research and experimentation as to better ways of teaching on the college level for the teaching that is done there needs someone's attention, although it is being

much improved by the present-day agitation in this field. Some such institutions have contributed much to elementary and secondary teaching by their research work. But the teachers colleges may put their own houses in better order by developing strong programs of experimentation and research in the fields of elementary and secondary education.

Our Constitutional Rights

By T. E. WILLIAMS

Through the constitution of the United States, which prescribes the means for putting into practice the eternal principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity embodied in the Declaration of Independence, our forefathers established a new political system, the first and only one of its kind in the world, whose three great fundamentals and ideals are:

1. The government exists for the benefit of all the people.
2. The powers come from and abide in the people.
3. All members of the social group are equal in the eyes of the law and are entitled to the same opportunities of life.

Under all previous governments in the world, the state was considered a sovereign that could grant to individuals, or classes, various privileges and exemptions. Under the constitution of the United States, every man, by his inherent and God-given dignity as a human soul has certain inalienable rights, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and equality of opportunity, which can not be taken from him without amending the constitution. To make sure that no American citizen should be deprived of these God-given rights, soon after the adoption of the constitution ten amendments safeguarding these rights were submitted to the people and adopted as promptly as possible.

Our people have enjoyed freedoms not mentioned in the Constitution, such as freedom to find employment, to change or quit positions when desired. These and many other privileges he gladly relinquished to aid the war effort, but expecting that when peace is restored these rights would return to the people from whom they came.