

SECTION 7

THE CURRICULUM OF TEACHER EDUCATION

In every corner of the Commonwealth much thought is being given to a re-examination and re-organisation of the curriculum of teacher education: indeed, together with the possibilities of in-service teacher education, the curriculum of teacher education is a predominant topic in conferences and journals.

In general terms the line of argument is as follows: Most education in developing countries is firmly based on rote-learning and memorization, and this is the consequence of the kind of teaching commonly practised. M. Storm in 'Teacher Training in Cyprus' (92) asserts that "the basic insecurity of the teacher who is acutely aware of his own very slender stock of knowledge" leads to "the generally ritualistic flavour of education in the developing countries"; this point of view is developed in greater detail and more universally in Dr. C.E. Beeby's The Quality of Education in Developing Countries. Therefore, it is argued, the need for the future is to prepare teachers in the colleges of education rather than classroom taskmasters who would merely perpetuate the accepted patterns of rote learning. This is the theme of John W. Hanson's article 'On General Education for the African Teacher' (42); Hanson concludes that the introduction of the desired kind of education in schools depends upon the construction of more appropriate curricula for teacher education. For India, the same conclusion is to be found in the Report of the Education Commission 1964-66 - Education and National Development (142), which recommends that the curriculum of teacher education should be modernized, revitalized and made relevant if the quality of teaching is to be improved. But it is generally recognised that the reform of the curriculum in colleges of education will be of little avail unless steps are also taken to ensure that what goes on in the colleges "has a real and vital effect on professional procedure" - Report of the Conference on Teacher Training (Trinidad, 1964) (154).

Views as to the precise nature of any reform of the curricula of colleges of education vary considerably, but four themes recur most often: the need to reduce the overcrowded content; the need to modernize the material and the approach; the need to base the curriculum on practical experience; and the need to relate education of teachers to the requirements of the society in which they will work.

The overcrowded nature of the present curricula is the subject of frequent complaint. Shukla refers to it in 'Education and Training of Teachers in India' (86); A. Gradusson in 'Problems of Teacher Training in Jamaica' (36) says "there are too many subjects to be taught in too short a time"; N.M.E. Joachim makes the same point in 'Some Problems of Teacher Training in Basutoland, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland' (47); and the Report of the Committee in New Directions in Teacher Education (128) does likewise. However, there is also a feeling that even when the overcrowded curriculum is pruned one subject should be studied in depth by the student teacher in order that he may acquire professional confidence: this view is expressed by Professor John Turner in his paper 'Academic Studies in Colleges of Education' in the Report of the Sixth Annual Conference of the

Afro-Anglo-American Programme (132), and, amongst others, by J.W. Dunhill in 'The Education of a Teacher in Malaya' in the Journal of Education of the University of Hong Kong (124) .

Although the need to modernize both the material and the approach in teacher education is commonly voiced, the meaning given to 'modernize' varies considerably. J.W. Lieber, in writing on the 'Need for an Integrative Framework in Teacher Training Curricula' (57), stands squarely in favour of a 'child-centred' approach: "to compensate for and redirect traditional authoritarian educational practice, this governing methodological discipline must be based on child-centred, activist, heuristic principles" and, subsequently, "a curriculum revision based on child-centred as well as academically-oriented studies is an urgent priority". A similar meaning is attributed to 'modernize' in Oscar Ferron's 'A Comparative Study of the attitudes of West African Students and Teachers towards the modern approach in teaching' (29): "we are not as seriously restricted by present cultural conditions in West Africa as has been suggested" "the educated African has a definite orientation towards . . the assimilation of Western cultural values and procedures". In the Report of the University of East Africa Conference on The Role of the Institutes of Education in Curriculum Development (138), Arthur J. Lewis adapts current trends in the United States, and in particular the theories of Bruner, to the East African scene, while G.P. Oluoch and Dr. G.D. Bishop, both concerned with the teaching of science, advocate the adoption of the new courses based on 'discovery' methods. Others, however, are less sure about the universal adoption of 'modern', western methods. W. Senteza Kajubi at the same conference voiced his reservations about the application of 'child-centred' methods in East Africa until more is known about the psychology of the East African child. And Ruth Wong in 'Teacher Education and its Problems in Some Developing Countries in South East Asia' (110) stresses the great importance of teacher education based on local case studies rather than unadulterated Rousseau and Dewey.

There is more unanimity about the view that the curriculum of teacher education should have a more practical bias, should be more firmly based on the students' experience, and should be more realistic in what it sets out to achieve. H.J. Rousseau stresses the importance of the practical and of actual experience in an article entitled 'Training College Life and Learning' (82), and the same emphases are to be found in S. Vivian's article on 'The Early Stages of Professional Training' (102). Vivian, like many others, advocates the guided study of individual children as the core of teacher education; W. Senteza Kajubi does likewise in his paper in the Report of the University of East Africa Conference on New Directions in East African Teacher Education (139) , and also in his paper on 'Child Study and Curriculum Development in E. Africa' in the Report of the University of East Africa Conference on The Role of the Institutes of Education in Curriculum Development (138): child study, he claims, is "an activity in which . . . all those concerned with the education of children should engage"; Elsa H. Walters in Teacher Training Colleges in the West Indies (104) suggests that "the core of this (teacher education) course should be continuous, guided observation of individual children, and of small groups of children"; and a similar emphasis on the case study of individuals and groups is placed by E.A. Pires in Primary Teacher Training in Asia (76) and in 'An Experiment in Teacher Education' (75).

However, child study and local case studies are not the only practical activities advocated. "There has been an increasing emphasis at the Institute on the practical aspects of teacher training", writes E.A. Pires in 'An Experiment in Teacher Education' (75) at the Central Institute of Education in Delhi: there the practical work includes the execution of 'activity methods', the preparation of visual aids, the analysis of school organisation, practical methods of testing and evaluation, and the preparation of syllabi. Professor R.C. Honeybone, Professor Andrew Taylor and A. Babs Fafunwa in their papers printed in the Report of the Six Annual Conference of the Afro-Anglo-American Programme (132) emphasize various aspects of the practical in teacher education. And Professor L.J. Lewis stresses the importance of "communication skills" and the "skills of learning" in his paper published in New Direction in Teacher Education (128).

But of all the aspects of the curriculum for teacher education it is that which relates to the social role of the future teacher which receives most attention. The view of the XXVIth International Conference on Public Education, Geneva, 1963 (121) that "in the majority of developing countries the task of primary teachers is to be in the forefront of those working for community development in rural areas" is repeated time and time again; R.N. Murray in 'Training the Teachers of Youth and Adults in an Expanding Educational System' (66) regards the teacher as "a sort of midwife bringing the new society into birth" and advocates placing "training centres for workers among adults side by side with centres for teachers of the young"; in India, the Report of the Committee to Evolve Model Syllabi for Elementary Teacher Education 1963-1965 (116) sees the role of the teacher as that of "the social architect . . . (who) needs a vision of the direction and destination of social change"; Teacher Education in West Pakistan (40) by Mussawir Ali Hamidi and others states that "our contemporary teacher can make himself felt as a social and regenerative force by throwing himself unreservedly into the service of mankind"; Professor S.H. Ominde addressed the Conference on Teacher Education for East Africa, 1965 (136) on 'the teacher in the community' and on the dual role of the teacher as the instrument of change and the custodian of the national heritage; Barrington Kaye makes a similar point in 'The Task of an Education Department in a Developing Area' (50) when he writes "not only is the teacher himself the agent of social change . . . but also he is the only person in a position to prevent it from widening at an accelerating rate and leading to a complete social breakdown"; and in Community Schools in Developing Countries (46) by Harold Houghton and Peter Tregear the need to prepare the teacher for his social and community role is considered against the wider background of rural transformation.

The emphasis on the social role of the teacher made by these writers and others has clear implications for the curriculum of teacher education. In fact the stress placed upon the importance of child study is equalled by that placed upon the study of the local community. J.W. Dunhill writes "we related the subject-matter studied to problems immediately associated with Malayan life and also insisted on each student's engaging himself on an original project within his specialist subject", in 'The Education of a Teacher in Malays' (22); H.J. Rousseau in 'Graduate Teacher Training in Central Africa' (81) suggests that students should assist in community work and discuss social and educational problems with those responsible in government; looking to the future of the University of the South Pacific Professor R.C. Honeybone describes The Functions and Future Development of the School of Education (45), emphasizing that the

"courses in education will be very practical ones" with teaching practice including a period of community development work; and from Guyana, M.K. Bacchus places similar emphasis on the community role of the teacher in 'Towards a Policy in Teacher Education' (7) where he quotes with approval from the local 'Daily Argosy' - "We are convinced that an important share of this work, that of creating a new and improved community, depends on the lead given by, and the active and enthusiastic co-operation of our teachers." There is frequent and important reference to the social aspects of teacher education in the papers published in the Report of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Afro-Anglo-American Programme (132); Dr. N.O. Anim's 'Rethinking Education in a Period of Political Revolution' looks at the role of the teacher in a period of moral and political revolution; W. Senteza Kajubi examines the relationship between education and its cultural environment in 'Cultural Values and Teacher Education in Africa'; in 'Relationship and Balance between Academic and Professional Courses', Professor R.C. Honeybone studies the role of the teacher as community leader, the use of vacations for community work and the incorporation of practical assignments in courses of teacher education; and Professor Andrew Taylor in 'The Professional Aspects of the Preparation of Primary School Teachers' stresses the importance of introducing the student to his professional role in relation to both society and its educational system. And the social role of the teacher is further examined in the Teacher Education for Socio-Economic Change: Report of the Conference of the Afro-Anglo-American Program (134) in which Professor Frederick Harbison, Dr. Arthur Porter, Professor L. Gray Cowan and others look at its implications for the actual preparation of teachers.

The papers presented to the sixth and eighth annual conferences of the Afro-Anglo-American Programme in fact sum up much of the current thinking about the curriculum of teacher education in developing countries when read in conjunction with Professor L.J. Lewis' paper on 'The Nature and Content of the Curriculum in Teachers Colleges' in New Directions in Teacher Education (128); it is this latter paper which brings many strands together with its emphasis on the "communication skills" and the "skills of learning".