

SECTION 8

TEACHING PRACTICE

If considerable thought is being given to the revision of the curriculum of teacher education so also is attention being directed in all quarters to the purposes and organisation of teaching practice. This was the subject of A. Babs Fafunwa's paper in the Report of the Sixth Conference of the Afro-Anglo-American Programme (132), while E.A. Pires in Student Teacher Practices in Primary Teacher Training Institutions in Asia (78) covers every aspect from the objectives and scope to the planning, from the administration to evaluation. Similar comprehensive coverage is to be found in S.A. Adejumo's 'Student Teachers and Practical Teaching' (1), but in this instance the background is West African. In the context of practice in the West Indies there are E.H. Walters' Teacher Training Colleges in the West Indies (104), her 'Freedom and Responsibility in Teaching Training - a Development in Jamaica' (105), and the Report of the Conference on Teacher Training (Trinidad, 1964) (154), all of which make reference to the importance and organisation of teaching practice.

There are also a number of detailed accounts of experiments in introducing students to practical teaching activities. S. Vivian's 'The Early Stages of Professional Training' (102) describes the programme in the first year at a college of education for primary school teachers, with guided observation and demonstration lessons in the first term, carefully supervised practice in the second term, and further teaching in the third. John Bowles' 'Teacher Training through Team Teaching (Uganda)' (12) describes an experiment at Kyambogo College in which team teaching was used at the crucial point when the student assumes responsibility for the education of children: "this turning point is so important that it is worth a lot of trouble to give the student a limited, but real, responsibility as early as possible in the course". Another kind of experiment is the subject of 'Description of Teaching Practice using Small Groups: Bornu Teachers College' (83) by Rowe and Anderson; in the pattern pupils were divided into "smaller groups in which each student would ... be responsible for a group of seven or eight children". Yet another approach is described by Dr. David R. Evans' 'Micro-Teaching: An Innovation in Teacher Education' (23) the essence of which is peer group teaching amongst students. All these experiments relate to teaching practice in the initial course of professional education, but C.R. Gray in 'A Suggestion for a Crash Teaching Improvement Project for Developing Countries'* (39) discusses the relevance of teaching practice in courses for serving teachers, describes a pattern of 'Group Practice Teaching', and gives detailed examples of actual lessons.

In many of these accounts reference is made to the value, and utilization, of a 'demonstration' or 'practising school' attached to a college of education. Vivian (102) bases his suggestions on its utilization; Bowles (12) refers to the need "to create a school which is completely integrated with a college, on the same campus and having the same staff"; Pires (78) refers to each college having under its wing "a laboratory school"; and the

* An abbreviated version of this article is to be found in Teaching, Vol. XL No.4, of June 1968 (38)

Report of the Committee of Investigation into the Working of Teacher Training Colleges (140) recommends to the Government of Ceylon that every college should have its own practising school and should administer it. But the fullest description of such schools is to be found in H. Creaser's 'The Demonstration School in Teacher Training' (21) where it is suggested that the basic needs are "an average quality school with pupils of average intelligence, an acceptance by the pupils of the comings and goings about them, and complete sympathy between the teacher and the tutor".

Teaching practice of a somewhat different order is involved in the various kinds of 'sandwich courses' for the initial training of teachers; these courses are the subject of Section 12.