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Physics Teachers

continue in science have had the opportunity to become intimately familiar with the many problems of public education in our free society. They have contributed through their presence in classrooms to making that education more meaningful. They have also had the opportunity to develop communication and teaching skills, and they are all familiar with modern concepts in activity-centered teaching.

The University of Iowa Teacher Education Program is strengthened by the involvement of UPSTEP students and other University and community leaders brought in as part of the UPSTEP program. Currently discussions are being held with representatives from the other twenty-eight colleges in Iowa with teacher education programs. One outcome of these discussions is a plan to establish cooperative centers in Iowa where in-service work with teachers, interaction among staff members from a variety of colleges, and a semester long internship for student teachers from several colleges can be implemented. Iowa-UPSTEP can then be a model for statewide improvement of teacher education.

We are striving for greater communication with ourselves as a staff, with our students, with teachers and administrators in the schools of Iowa, with other teacher educators. We operate from the premise that we are all limited by our past experiences and that we can only grow by trying the new and gaining insight from others. We certainly can not raise our sights and improve our society (and our schools as a microcosm of that society) if we are isolated from one another and if we are satisfied with the status quo.

PHYSICS TEACHERS: The spring meeting of the Iowa section of the American Association of Physics Teachers will be held at Grinnell College on the afternoon of April 28. William Azbell, Secretary-Treasurer, Waverly, Iowa.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

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Environmental education offers a unique opportunity for innovative teaching because no one is around to say, "But, I always did it this way." Thus new environmental programs do not have to overcome the educational inertia of tradition which has stopped many new instructional movements dead in their tracks. The science education center at the University of Iowa has seized this opportunity to promote the interdisciplinary study of environmental issues at all grade levels. Uninhibited by the educational folklore of yesteryear, environmental instruction can follow its natural course in a wide variety of academic disciplines. The fact is that only delightfully demented educational taxonomists would place environmental studies in a single subject area. With few people who like to be considered educational taxonomists and even fewer who like to be considered delightfully demented, things can move along at a rapid pace. And so they have, with the development at the University of Iowa of a summer institute and an in-service program, designed to aid teachers in developing instructional materials that will help their students understand the environment.

The summer and in-service programs have the same basic design with slightly different mechanics caused by time factors and the background of the teachers attending. The goal is to have teams of teachers from more than one academic area develop complete interdisciplinary instructional units appropriate to the needs of their students. Hence, the program begins by having the teachers experience a number of awareness activities that can be used to provide them an idea of the environmental knowledge, attitudes, and interests. This is a little like the traditional aptitude tests used to determine the background of students in a particular subject area. Awareness activities are not only concerned with knowledge but also interest levels and attitudes. They are conducted as a learning activity for the student to become sensitive to his environment and what he or she thinks about it. The idea is for teachers to use this information to build environmental instructional units based on the