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The

ROLE

of
a
STUDENT
TEACHER**DELMA HARDING**
Iowa State University
Ames

The role of the student teacher has increased significantly during the past several years as the need for better trained and a greater number of teachers has increased. It appears that the need for more teachers will continue for some time.



Our student teachers are sent from Iowa State University to public schools where they do student teaching under realistic conditions. No attempt is made to provide them with the most progressive or the least progressive students.

It is assumed that the student teacher has a sufficiently broad background to teach his subject matter field by the time he is ready to do student teaching. However, during the first few days, he observes the regular classroom teacher and finds out what policies he pursues and what his philosophy is in teaching. When he takes over the class, the transition from regular teacher to student teacher must be a smooth one without any disrupting features. As the student teacher observes the class he learns the names of the students with whom

he will work. Teaching is much more effective when the instructor can call students by their names.

It is well for students in a class to become accustomed to seeing a student teacher in action, so they can accept him in the shortest time possible. Through helping students with problems, setting up demonstrations and experiments, speaking for short periods of time before the class and giving explanations to students, the student teacher can establish good rapport with the class. He sees classes in action, has aided in demonstrations, helped correct and evaluate student papers and tests, attended to the physical conditions of the room such as seeing that window blinds are at an angle where they do not distract students, has raised or lowered windows to an extent that conditions in the class room are pleasant and comfortable, and the student teacher may early feel he is ready to take over the responsibility of teaching the class.

Before actually presenting a lesson, however, the student teacher must plan his work carefully and thoroughly and discuss it with the regular classroom instructor. It is well for the student teacher to try out some methods and techniques which he wishes to present but these must be thoroughly discussed with the regular classroom instructor first. Some of these methods may be ones which the regular instructor has already tried and found to be not too desirable.

Frequent conferences between the student teacher and the regular class

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room teacher are extremely desirable. This helps to make for better understanding and cooperation between the two. Conferences between the student teacher, the high school supervising teacher and the University subject matter teacher who is also the methods instructor are found to be of great value to all concerned.

Many teachers find it a good policy to leave the room during part of the time the student teacher does his teaching. This gives the student teacher a feeling that he is really on his own, and the teacher a feeling that he can be of assistance if he is needed.

Techniques to be used, experiments and demonstrations to be set up and visual materials which are to be part of the teaching for the day, should all be assembled or discussed before the student teacher attempts to teach a lesson. By having everything which is to be used, assembled and in order, the lesson will proceed much more smoothly than if left to chance. If the class which is to follow is the same kind of class, the student teacher may wish to change some of the procedures if they are found to be not too effective.

Student teachers frequently ask, "How far should I go in being friendly with the students? I want them to like me yet I also want them to respect me." This isn't an easy question to answer even though one has been in the field of teaching for some time. One can say that a teacher should be well prepared for the lesson, should make the work so interesting that students want to learn, and to communicate with students in such a manner that commands respect. We can also add that teachers should speak with conviction, make their voice sound convincing, admit they don't know all the answers, and not be too familiar with students. But student teachers must experience these things for themselves before they mean a great deal to them. Even though they may not feel the confidence they assume, it helps when in

front of a group to act as though one were confident. This is of considerable help in building the poise needed in teaching.

If the student teacher is to be proficient in his teaching, he needs to develop techniques which will help him develop skill in teaching. If he observes other outstanding teachers in the school system, he can note the skills and techniques used by these teachers. During any "free" periods which he may have during the day, he should be encouraged to observe these teachers.

A part of every teacher's program includes participation in activities not strictly related to the classroom teaching. This may include sponsoring an activity club such as a science club, or science seminar, directing activities of the high school annual or the newspaper, sponsoring a photography club, or working at the football games. Student teachers should be aware of these extracurricular activities and be prepared to participate in them. They should exhibit a desire to assume some of these responsibilities.

The more closely the student can approximate the activities and participations of the regular classroom teacher, the better prepared he will be when he assumes the role of the regular teacher. If he finds that he neither enjoys nor appreciates the life of the teacher, it is best that he learns this early before he enters the teaching profession and before it is too late to prepare for some other profession.

Through his period of student teaching the student teacher learns whether or not he can communicate successfully with others. Since this is one of the most important requirements of a successful teacher, if he fails in this, he must either learn how to communicate or change his profession to one in which this does not play an important part.

Attendance at school activities, teachers' meetings, and community meetings give the student teacher a

better appreciation of the community in general and the school as a place in which to work.

Teaching classes of both low and high ability groups shows the student the wide range of students the teacher encounters in a teaching situation. Of my own student teachers, I have had several who said they gained greater depth of understanding when they worked with students of low ability and those who were definitely underprivileged. One student teacher remarked, "I thoroughly enjoyed my seventh grade science class of underprivileged. I learned how much they appreciate a little help and understanding. It was wonderful to see how they responded,, and how much they could do when given the incentive to do so."

Such things as learning how to prepare examinations which are

meaningful and stimulating to students, grading examinations and daily work, successfully using the chalkboard, learning not to "talk down" to students, finding out that new concepts must be explained carefully and accurately to be of value, and learning that proper attire is being part of a successful teacher, are all things which the student teacher becomes increasingly aware of.

During this student teaching period he very often decides whether or not he wants to enter the teaching profession. He needs help and guidance from those who have more maturity than he has and who have found the teaching profession to be challenging and worthwhile. If we are to have the kind of teachers we want for the future, we must help our student teachers find that same kind of satisfaction in and liking for the profession which we have found.

More Assistance Needed . . .

Although teachers are busy (and perhaps science teachers are even busier), we do need more staff members for ISTJ.

More persons are also needed for committees and special activities of the association. Don't wait to be asked; volunteer!

Join CASMT Now . . .

All Iowa science and mathematics teachers are invited to join the Central Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers. In addition to a fine monthly, professional publication, *School Science*

and Mathematics, CASMT has an annual convention with this year's being in Chicago, Illinois on November 25-27, 1965.

Fill out and mail in the form below. Don't forget the \$5.00 dues.

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