Head Start Observations For Teacher Education

BY IRA L. GIBBONS
D.S.W., A.C.S.W.

There is a significant link between education and social services in the Head Star program. It has implications for teacher education as well as education for social work practice.

Both professional groups have reapsonsibility for providing opportunities for children to exercise their human potentialities.

The teacher can do this through what happens in the classroom and the social worker through what happens in the use of community resources and services to families at the poverty level or near it.

The teacher has the tasks of building belief in children that they can succeed and to create the environment that will lead out of each child from within himself the human potentialities that are there.

The self-concept in learning is powerful insturments that can be used in the education of children — all children.

Head Start as a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, community action program has provided opportunities for observations that could very well be seriously considered as essential for teacher education and training.

In the first place, the Head Start program was planned in such a way as to integrate the developmental needs of each child into an operational program.

The program consists of provisions which are basic for growth and development and could be described as supportive services for child development.

These services are nutrition, medical dental, education, psychology, parent activities, social welfare and volunteer contributions.

Every Head Start program must provide these services and utilize these and other community resources on behalf of children.

In the second place, there are involved persons with different professional backgrounds working as a team to produce a program for enhancement of the growth of each child.

The picture, which is for people would seem to make sense, is that of a wheel in which the child and family are represented in the center of the wheel and around the center is Head start classroom with a teacher, assistant teacher, Volunteer and professional associate (community aide).

Available to the teacher and her staff, for the classroom supportive service, are nutrition, medical, dental, volunteers, psychologist, parent activities, op- American history in which opportunities for education for young children have been offered to families with income of $3,500 or less.

The children of low income families are now included in a program in which education is considered as a process for living rather than learning specific subject matter.

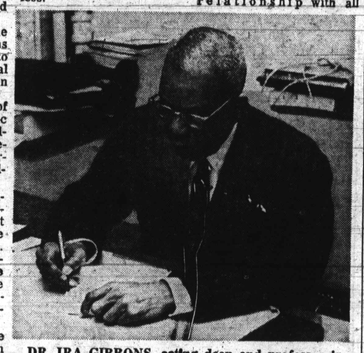
Under the circumstances, the education of teachers even for those who teach in elementary and secondary schools must take into account this frame-work of child development — that is development of the whole child rather than partial enlightment of the intellec- — development of the child.

This requires a working relationship with all disciplines involved in helping to prepare children for living in this complex world. No one discipline should be considered more important than the other.

Teaching children in the 70s and beyond will require the teaching of ideas rather than words.

It will require the teaching of ideas about racial and cultural minorities and must take into account the multi-lingual society in which children live.

There is much to be introduced into education and training of teachers, relevant ideas from the black, red, brown and poor white experiences that will enable the teacher to, not only appreciate, but identify with the living conditions of children.



DR. IRA GIBBONS, acting dean and professor in the School of Social Work at Howard University, is an authority in his field. He has been working with children since 1945 and has written extensively on the subject.

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The support available in the program for the children and their families should be described as the social services. This idea is important and should be emphasized because all too often the term social services is used interchangeably with public assistance and social welfare.

It should be pointed out, however, that the term social services really identifies the availabilities of community services such as hospitals and clinics, police, courts and other legal services, employment services, recreation, housing and other welfare services.

The church and other voluntary agencies also make available to all children and their families additional resources. All these should be used for child development. The teacher should know about the agencies for social services and in fact, work in cooperation with community persons other than professional disciplines to increase the availability and to fill the gaps in meeting the integrated needs of children.

The teachers of children in today's world recognize that this is the first time in

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Challenges that face a dedicated teacher

By DAISY HICKS

NEW YORK — Today it is the vogue for young college graduates who are seeking a challenge to apply for a teaching position in the inner city.

Many of these seekers of challenge have been labeled dedicated teachers. And, many of them are. But, administrators and parents are beginning to pose questions over the label dedication.

I am sure no one who has the slightest interest in the educational system would question their right to ask questions about the nature of this dedication.

This is especially true, since, so many valuable young minds will be at the mercy of educators in all stages of dedication.

The concern now being shown by persons vested with the responsibility for carrying out the educational goals in many instances, stem from an awareness that many teachers seek teaching positions in the inner city for reasons not always beneficial to the child they will be teaching.

DAISY HICKS

For example, the teacher with the attitude of being a martyr, would benefit our educational system if he stayed out of the life of a child who is forced to function in the inner city.

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For the motivation which has led this teacher with the martyr attitude to seek a position working with deprived youngsters is far too often mixed with a desire to escape from the true rigors of teaching.

This teacher is dangerous in the educational system because he is, often very willing to use the damaging theories as an excuse for not helping each child develop to his fullest potential.

Dedication, in a ture sense, has to be viewed from an individual stand point.

Regardless of the form of dedication exemplified by a teacher, the real test of such is whether the teacher can bring to his classroom a genuine desire and wish to teach each child the skills, moral values, and social attitudes which will make the child not only feel that he has something to contribute but is capable of doing so.

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