School should excite the preschool child

JACKSON, Miss. — "Education should be an exciting adventure for all ages, but especially so for the preschool child," says Mrs. Lottie W. Thornton, assistant professor of elementary education and coordinator of the Early Childhood Center at Jackson State College.

Mrs. Mamie B. Crockett, assistant professor of early childhood education, is primarily responsible for the instructional program of the center.

She is assisted by three graduate students, three undergraduate work-aid students, and student teachers who do their internship in Early Childhood for an eight-week period each quarter.

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The instructional aspect of the program begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m.; however someone is available to supervise a few children of parents who may have to bring them as early as 7:30 a.m. and stay as late as 5 p.m.

Children are provided a midmorning and midafternoon snack, a hot lunch at noon, and a nap on cots.

The 29 children enrolled this year, ages 3 to 5, like all children this age, enjoy learning through first-hand experiences.

The center, therefore, attempts to make learning "fun" and exciting for all the children it serves.

Though not learned as separate subjects, curricular areas are grouped in the fields of science, language arts (including French) mathematics, health, art, music and social science.

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Thirty-eight per cent of the children enrolled are from homes of faculty and staff, and the remaining 62 per cent are from the surrounding community. A smaller percentage of the latter represent children from low-income families for which Jackson State provides tuition scholarships, $120 per quarter.

The staff believes that children learn in different ways, and have varied orientations to life.

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This is accentuated in a cross-cultural setting as this one, where children are enrolled from both the middle and low income levels.

It is for this reason that the Jackson State College Early Childhood Center, in its third year, does not select one prescribed methodology; the eclectic approach is adopted instead.

Savannah State gets accreditation

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Savannah State College has been granted initial accreditation for programs to prepare elementary and secondary teachers at a B.A. degree level to teach music, art, and physical education.

The accreditation was effective Sept. 1, 1970.

This makes it possible for students who graduated during that academic year to get all of the privileges of reciprocity and transfer of credits accrued toward a degree.

Savannah State College is the eighth of the thirty-one colleges and universities having approved programs for teacher education in Georgia to receive national accreditation for its programs. Three private college and universities and four State institutions had previously earned this distinction.

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) attests to the quality of preparation programs at a college or university and signifies that persons recommended by the institution can be expected to perform satisfactorily in typical teaching and other professional school positions throughout the United States.

Dr. Thelma M. Harmond is chairman of teacher education at Savannah State College where Dr. Prince A. Jackson Jr. is president.

Since 1966 the 12 baccalaureate programs and the three supplemental certification programs offered in teacher education at Savannah State College have held the highest form of Georgia State Department of Education endorsement which is termed Five-Year Approval.

Performance contracting experiment ends in failure

WASHINGTON — The answer to the $5 million question is: private enterprise cannot teach poor kids to keep up in school any better than teachers can.

That conclusion was drawn by the office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) from its year-long "performance contracting" experiment involving about 19,000 students in 18 school districts across the country.

Six private "learning companies" signed OEO contracts guaranteeing to raise the reading and mathematics grade levels of children in poverty area schools during the 1970-71 scholastic year.

The companies agreed to be paid on a performance basis — no money if they failed, but up to a total of $5.6 million if they surpassed their guarantees.

OEO Director Phillip Sanchez said last Monday the hope behind the experiment was that performance contracting would provide a breakthrough in remedial education, which thus far has failed to provide a surefire system for bringing the grade level achievement of disadvantaged children up to par.

"We did not find a panacea," he said. "We are back at the drawing board."

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In tables showing the gains of children receiving the special instruction and those in traditional classroom settings, the OEO reported:

Slight reading gains for third and seventh grade performance contracting students; slight losses (compared to the other pupils) for first and eighth graders; no difference in ninth graders.

A small mathmatics loss for eighth graders; no difference in students in the other four grades.

Significant reading gains of a half grade level or more for students in 15 performance contracting classes; significant losses in 8 classes; no difference in 83 classes.

An equal number of significant gains and losses in math classes and no difference in 84 other classes.

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Jailed Newark Teachers Vow To Keep Fighting

NEWARK, N.J. — Mrs. Carole A. Graves, a teacher in the Newark public schools, did not spend her Christmas vacation with her family.

Along with nearly 200 of her fellow classroom teachers here, she was locked up behind bars in the county penitentiary at Caldwell. Unless Gov. William Cahill grants clemency, she was not to be freed until Feb. 11.

Mrs. Graves is the president of the Newark Teachers Union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. The other teachers are union officers or members of the union.

The jailings here are the first time in U.S. history that there has been a mass imprisonment of rank-and-file teachers. They grew out of a strike by teachers in early 1970. As in most other states, it is illegal for public employees to strike in the face of a court injunction in New Jersey.

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A judge here issued an antistrike injunction, then found Mrs. Graves and the others guilty of violating it, and sentenced them to terms ranging from 10 days to three months.

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal, and on Nov. 29, the first eight of the 200 or so were taken by police van to prison.

Mrs. Graves and the others said they were not sorry for striking. They pointed out that as a result of the 1970 strike, and another in 1971 (for which they face more jail terms), educational opportunities in Newark are improving.

One of the issues they struck for, now in their contract with the school board, was the establishment of a More Effective Schools program which will cut class size and put more reading and other specialists onto school staffs.

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They also won a commitment by the school board to provide mandatory testing of students for lead poisoning and sickle-cell anemia, and draft counseling.

The jailings, Mrs. Graves said, were the "last gasp of Newark's old political-economic establishment." She explained, "They can't stand to see teachers and the community working together to topple the old, corrupt system, and so they have to resort to putting us in prison."

Mrs. Graves said that the strikes helped to build a new coalition of diverse community groups, ranging from many religious and church organizations to the AFL-CIO to the Black Panther Party, all of whom supported the strike.

"The Newark teachers, supported by organized labor and working people," she said, "will not be broken by harsh fines, by intimidation, by beatings, or by imprisonment."

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Her references were to the fact that some striking teachers were attacked by thugs and beaten up, and their automobiles (including hers) firebombed.

Frank Fiorito, president of the New Jersey Federation of Teachers, and another of those jailed, said, "The day is not long in the distance when public employees — not only teachers — can stand up as free men and women with dignity and ability to fight for their own economic ends and for the betterment of school systems."

In addition to the jail sentences, teachers and their union were fined more than $350,000, and paycheck deductions for union dues have been impounded by the courts to help pay the fines. The national AFT, through its Militancy Fund to which teachers from throughout the U.S. contribute, is bearing a large share of the fines.

In the weeks since the jailings, the teachers union has been conducting a clemency petition drive to urge Gov. Cahill to pardon the teachers.

The AFL-CIO, at its convention last November, passed by acclamation a resolution urging their freedom, and another demanding for public employees the same rights as workers in the private sector for collective bargaining and striking.

There are now two states — Pennsylvania and Hawaii — which have public-employee collective-bargaining laws that permit strikes in some cases.

The AFT and the National Committee for Equal Justice for Public Employees are leading campaigns to win passage of similar laws in all states so that teachers and other public workers will not have to spend time in jail for withdrawing their services in a labor dispute.

NIH Aids Colleges In Research Field

PETERSBURG, Va. — Virginia State College is a typical U.S. minority college. Over 90 per cent of its 3,248 student enrollment is black. The college, in existence since 1882, originally concentrated on liberal arts programs, but has now started to strengthen its curriculum to focus on science and technology.

Accredited for conferring baccalaurate and master's degrees, the state-supported college with its recently formulated School of Science and Technology, is looking forward to the day when it will achieve doctorate-degree conferring status. In the meantime, many of the science faculty staff are frustrated because of their lack of time to do research.

According to Dr. Bernard R. Woodson, chairman of the Biology Department of the School of Science and Technology, the main thrust of Virginia State has been to develop teachers.

"However, the biomedical research activity at Virginia State has been stunted," said Dr. Woodson who has been associated with the college for 20 years.

"The concentration of research activity in our School of Science and Technology would solve a lot of our recruitment problems. We need science-oriented students to work with our faculty scientists in biomedical research."

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Recognizing the plight of minority colleges throughout the nation, the National Institutes of Health, through its Division of Research Resources, has this week implemented the Minority Schools Biomedical Support program to supply institutional grants for biomedical research activity.

Approximately 125 minority colleges and universities or health professional schools wil be eigible to apply.

Institutions with over 50 per cent enrollment from ethnic groups, such as blacks, browns (Chicanos and Puerto Ricans), red (American Indian), and orientals are considered in the minority category.

The sum of $2 million has been appropriated for the first year to help bolster biomedical research in minority institutions of higher learning.

The new program, administered by the General Research Support Branch of NIH's Division of Research Resources, is geared for institutional support rather than individual project grants.

A school may use its grant to provide salary support for "release time," supplemental research equipment support, summer research programs, support of departmental research development, recuitment of professional staff with biomedical research strengths, and support of long-range research programs in one or more major departments of the institution.

The announcement of the forthcoming program was received by the science and technology faculty of Virginia State with loud hurrahs.

They feel that this biomedical research program might provide the key toward building up the bioscience capabilities of the college, thereby attracing more science-oriented students.

The provision for faculty "release time" appears to be one of the major attractions of the programs as far as the Virginia State faculty is concerned.

"Now I don't have time to do anything on my own research," said Marvin L. Powell, teacher of human physiology and biology. "I'm up right doing paper work, teaching in class, preparing tests and lab experiments — that's it — that's the whole day.

"This sort of pin-pointed biomedical research support would be heartily welcomed by me." Mr. Powell is working in developmental biology and in control of growth of chromosomes, and hopes to attain his Ph.D. shortly.

Dr. Ernest Wilson, associate professor in botany, believes that student involvement in research is extremely important. "I fully appreciate the intent of the Minority Schools Biomedical Support Program. Teaching and science are necessarily bound together," he observed.

"We want to conduct a major research project in our institution laboratory but we don't have time enough for this right now. The content of our courses would be strengthened as a result of the new program.

"We will be able to offer science-oriented high school grads a lot more. Black scientists are in high demand — so perhaps the program will provide incentive for coming to Virginia State."

The sentiment voiced at Virginia State regarding the new federally-supported biomedical research program could probably be echoed throughout the country in minority colleges.

Dr. Nathaniel Boggs, cytologist at the Virginia State Biology Department, believes the timing of the new program is appropriate. "In the past few years, we have noticed that science-type freshmen seem to be better prepared. They are conditioned more, and this makes our job easier.

ON THE STEPS of the Newark Courthouse (L-R) David Graves; Carole Graves, president of the Newark Teachers Union; Frank Florito, president of the New Jersey Federation of Teachers; Mrs. Florito; and Don Nicholas, vice president of the union. Mrs. Graves, Florito and Nicholas were among the 200 striking teachers in the county penitentiary recently.