

Experimentation in Elementary Education

A new project is underway at the University of Texas. Those participating believe that it holds much promise for improvement of the elementary school programs. For your evaluation and reaction, a brief account of this project is given here.

IN MAY, 1946, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas and the Board of Trustees of the Austin Independent School District entered into an agreement establishing a cooperative research and demonstration project in elementary education. The program started September 1, 1946.

The purposes of the project are (a) to promote and to facilitate the cooperative study of various types of problems arising in the elementary school program in Austin; (b) to encourage and aid various types of research studies in elementary education which may or may not have direct implications for the Austin public schools; and (c) to provide an elementary laboratory school which, in addition to serving as an Austin public school, shall have the following special functions: serve as a special center for demonstration of and experimentation with innovations in curriculum, methods of teaching, school organization, and administrative practices; serve as a special center for observation by University students and other interested persons; and provide for some of the supervised teaching by University students.

All staff appointments to the laboratory school are made by the Austin Board of Education upon the *joint* recommendation of the Superintendent of the Austin Public Schools and a specially designated University representative. For the initial group of appointees to the laboratory school staff, every effort was made to secure persons who had the following qualifications: (1) a Master's degree with a major in elementary education, (2) approximately one-half of the teachers shall be men, (3) age, preferably under thirty-five, (4) genuine interest in demonstration teaching, research, and the supervision of student teaching, and (5) ability to teach all the

subjects offered in whatever grade the person is assigned to teach. Staff members will be paid an additional stipend equal to fifteen per cent of their salary according to the Austin salary schedule.

The new arrangement has several potentialities which deserve special mention. The Austin Public Schools have a continuing agreement with the University whereby problems of elementary education in the Austin schools may be designated for special study by faculty members and graduate students from the University. This is equivalent to a research service to the Austin schools, and is provided by the University without cost to the Austin schools. In turn, it provides the University with a research laboratory for faculty and graduate students.

The University expects to use the laboratory school primarily for demonstration and research in connection with its expanding graduate program in elementary education. The laboratory school will provide a special center for faculty and student research.

Appointment to the staff of the laboratory school will enable persons to take part-time graduate work at the University during the school year and full-time graduate work during summer sessions. A person can thus complete his doctorate during a period of three to five years. This offers a real opportunity for persons interested in continuing their graduate studies toward a doctorate in elementary education.

Over a period of years, the project as a whole, and the laboratory school in particular, should make a major contribution to elementary education in Texas and elsewhere.—HENRY J. OTTO, *The University of Texas*.

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