

Dr. Broady Tells of University Service to Small High Schools

Speaking over radio station KFAB during the University of Nebraska broadcast period Tuesday afternoon, Dr. K. O. Broady, professor of school administration in Teachers college, described the services of the university to the small high schools of the state.

He pointed out five assumed weaknesses of the small high school which make up most of Nebraska's secondary school system as follows: Inadequate building, inadequate teaching force, too heavy teaching load on principal or superintendent and too low salaries to attract good men, two few students for satisfactory social life and that it can offer too few subjects to constitute a satisfactory teaching program.

He then continued to show what the university is doing to help small schools overcome these obstacles. He said in part:

"Let us consider the last mentioned difficulty first, that of providing a curriculum broad enough to suit the needs of all who attend high school. An endeavor is being made first of all, to provide better built schedules for small high schools. Until recently schedule building has been a sort of hit and run offer. Each schedule was a problem to be worked out by the local high school administrator in the best way possible. Plans have now been devised for making schedule building a truly scientific procedure. A plan has been developed by which it has been possible to bring regularity and efficiency into any high school schedule. The principles of schedule making used often lead to a better sequence of courses and a better distribution of the work throughout the school day. Best of all economy is effected. An analysis of fifty schedules by Superintendent French of Mead, using the plan of schedule building that has been developed by the university, has shown that if the state as a whole avails itself of the information now available, a saving of approximately a half million dollars a year will be made. The saving is determined on the basis of additional subjects possible with the same teaching force or saving in teachers salaries possible while offering the same subjects as heretofore. It may be said in passing that skillful alternation of subjects is the one technique that has been of most value. Alternation has long been used, tho never as efficiently as it should have been.

Does Not Stop Here.

"The university has not stopped with schedule revision. It is proceeding now to discover some means by which subjects may be made available that cannot be taught by the local instructor. Instructors are developing courses in a great variety of subjects which may be offered either as extension work in the various high schools or may be returned over to regular instructors for use as they see fit. If the material is used as extension work the plan is called supervised correspondence study. The extension division builds the lessons, sends them to someone in the local high school, grades the lessons after they have been prepared by the pupil, and returns them to the pupil. The high school gives the pupil a place to work and sees that the proper guidance and conditions for study are maintained.

"At first supervisor correspondence study was promoted principally as a means of making available to high school pupils a wider variety of subjects than would otherwise be possible. The possibility of providing courses by extension for adults who might be induced to attend high school for a limited time has also interested those of us who were working with supervised correspondence study. Similarly, the feasibility of making available courses on the college level by supervised study to students who for financial or other reasons could not go on a regularly organized college attracted us. We have had no reason to change our mind regarding these advantages and possibilities in the supervised correspondence

study. We know that we have by the use of this technique a procedure by which we may add almost indefinitely to the number of high school subjects available in the high school program. This value alone will warrant us in directing every effort toward the improvement and expansion of our program.

Sees Opportunity.

"However, other advantages of supervised correspondence study make the continuance of our work even more worthwhile. First of all, there is the opportunity for the introduction of sound teaching methods. Teaching practice usually lags seriously behind advance in pedagogical theory. By seeing the best qualified extension teachers obtainable and by insisting that all approved pedagogical techniques be embodied in the units, tests and instructions to local supervisors, we feel that we are eliminating much of this lag. We hope, as we improve our organization, to be able to transmit almost immediately to all co-operating schools new pedagogical findings.

"Then there is the opportunity for constantly improving the subject matter employed. At present, except for the diligent efforts of exceedingly enterprising individual teachers, the improvement of subject matter must await the revision of the course of study used by the school or the adoption of better textbooks or both. While we are making constant progress in the use of these agencies improvements are slow in reaching the classroom. The University of Nebraska is attempting to bring about improvement thru revision from time to time of the instructional material provided.

Provides Curriculum Reform.

"Another closely related advantage of supervised correspondence study comes from the fact that it provides a vehicle for curriculum reform. The best agency which we have at present for bringing desirable curriculum changes on a state-wide basis is a state department which has a division of curriculum research. The products of this division appear in the form of courses of study, suggestive, it is true, but put up in such form that a teacher must be trained in the course of study if it is to be effective. This requires time and the overcoming of considerable inertia. Moreover, the material, once developed, becomes a static thing, unchanged until the division of curriculum research once again revises it. Our own setup overcomes both these handicaps. In the first place, the material is in such complete form that it may be used at once—without the necessity of establishing first an accompanying teacher training program. True we must train our teachers for the approximate situation which they will find in the schools in which they do their work but changes within these broad lines can be brought about without revamping the training program. The static element is eliminated in that our material is put in the form of units, each more or less apparent (this will be particularly valuable in the social and natural sciences) the unit can be revised or replaced entirely.

Other Advantages.

"Other advantages of supervised correspondence study are, that it relieves the teaching load of the superintendent by making it possible to offer by extension classes that would otherwise have to be taught by local instructors and that it relieves teachers from certain of the routine aspects of teaching. The latter objective is attained particularly thru the units and direction sheets sent to the schools which offer the subjects by means of local instructors. The units, thus used, relieve the teacher of the necessity of formulating each day's assignment, preparing the assignment sheets, if such are used, and building tests. Since the tests furnished the teacher are objective for the most part, much of the paper work that would otherwise be necessary is eliminated. Not only is a great deal of the work done for the teacher but

what is done is performed in superior fashion for the simple reason that the extension teacher is in a position to devote as much time to the preparation of instructional materials as is needed.

"At present more than sixty schools are using supervised correspondence study lessons and more than 200 pupils are enrolled.

Extension Division Aid.

"The material prepared by the extension division may also be used by the regular teacher. For example, the instructor in a two year high school must give half her time to the 7th and 8th grades and the other half of her time to the 9th and 10th grades could use this lesson material to advantage. With so many preparations teachers in these small high schools are very much handicapped. They obviously would be benefitted by being able to secure lesson materials already prepared and arranged in such a way that the pupils could work with little direction.

"I have spoken so far of the attempt of the extension division and the department of school administration to overcome the disadvantage the small high school has suffered in comparison with the large high school because of the fact that it has been able to offer only a limited curriculum. The university is also assisting the small schools to overcome the other disadvantages I have previously mentioned. You will remember reference was made to the handicap the small high school is supposed to suffer because it must carry on its work in such a small building. Investigation is showing that there need not be a room for each separate activity. Equipment can be devised which will serve several purposes. Moreover, we are learning that equipment need not be as expensive and elaborate as we had at one time thought necessary. It may almost be said that the amount of space a high school needs depends on the number of pupils enrolled and not upon the number of subjects taught. Altho we have not progressed as far with our study of school buildings as we have with some other aspects of small high school administration, I think we feel satisfied that practically every community, no matter how small, has the financial resources to provide an entirely satisfactory high school building for its work.

Secures Able Force.

"As soon as we develop a satisfactory curriculum and a satisfactory building for the small high school, we should be able to secure the teaching force and the administration for these schools that we really need. In fact, I feel that we have outstanding teachers and administrators in our small schools. What they need is appreciation and encouragement. Sometimes they do feel that the community appreciates them, but not often enough. Teachers and administrators should be made to see that they are a vital part of community life. They should be encouraged to improve their work constantly and to secure more adequate preparation. All of us must work with the facilities we have. That holds as well for a teaching force as for anything else.

"I have said earlier that high schools are supposed to be weak in that there are too few students for satisfactory social life. I do not believe this is true. In a small high school every student has the opportunity to participate in any number of activities. A student is sure to know well and be intimate with all of his classmates and all of his teachers. In the large high school he can know only the few pupils who are his companions and the few teachers under whom he takes work. Even those teachers he does not know well since he oftentimes spends only a semester with them.

"In summary, we feel that the

small high school is an institution which can offer a superior type of secondary education. We feel on the other hand, that greatest effectiveness will not be attained unless there is a degree of co-operative effort. The university has a legitimate place in secondary education in this state. For a long time it has been training secondary school teachers and inspecting and approving individual schools. The university is now assuming the role of actual helper in planning better buildings and developing more adequate curriculum. No element of centralized control is involved in this program. The small high school may or may not avail itself of the services of the university as it sees fit. The university stands in the role of helper, not as an official enforcing agency.

H. S. FLUNKERS FEW IN SUMMER SESSION

Only Eight Percent of Secondary Pupils Are Failers.

"Contrary to what might be expected," Dr. W. H. S. Morton, principal of Teachers college high school, declared Thursday, "summer high school students are not a bunch of flunkers making up courses in which they have failed during the regular school year." Summer students in Teachers

college high school, he said, are made up largely of three classes. First, there are those who for some reason wish to finish their high school course in less than four years. Second are those who are making up work missed because of illness during the regular school year. Third are those who are going to summer school because they have nothing else to do.

A careful survey made both at Nebraska and Iowa State Teachers colleges a few summers ago showed that of the high school students in summer school, only about 8 percent were taking courses which they had taken previously and failed in, Dr. Morton said.

Registration begins today for a nine weeks session of summer school in Teachers college high school which will provide practice teaching for summer students in the university.

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