



STUDENT-TEACHER

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teach. There are from one to 14 practice teachers at each school.

Alfrey said secondary education is working to centralize its program to the Lincoln-Omaha area only; students now go as far as Beatrice. He added that with jobs becoming scarcer, he encourages students to investigate inner-city student teaching. Statistics indicate this is where the jobs are.

Student teaching is a training process. But before the student can try teaching, he first must be trained.

Preparatory instruction for elementary education majors include nine "methods" classes on the subjects of mathematics, language arts, science, social studies and others. In some methods classes, students "mini-teach" a unit for about a week.

According to May, "There is an increased emphasis in Teachers College on more and earlier contact with the classroom."

In secondary education, the preparatory classes are quite different. The student takes only 23 total hours within Teachers College (elementary majors take 35-40 hours) and only one course, besides student teaching within the secondary education department.

This is a methods course in his major, which is taken the semester before student teaching. The course includes 60 hours of actual classroom work called "teacher assisting."

Sintek said she was satisfied with her training. Talking with other student teachers reveals differing opinions.

Anne Beer, who student taught sixth graders last semester, said she saw a lot of incongruity between the methods classes and the actual teaching experience. She said she would rather see all methods classes concentrated into the semester preceding student teaching and broken into three-week segments in each subject area.

Mary Ann Seuss, also a first semester elementary education student teacher, said there wasn't enough practical experience in her classes. Only one of her methods instructors used the "mini-teaching" idea.

At the semester's end, both elementary and secondary student teachers are evaluated jointly by their cooperating teacher (the regular instructor) and a University representative. A student's University representative visits the classroom periodically to observe the student teacher's performance.

Based on their report, Teachers College assigns the student a numerical grade.

According to Alfrey, however, evaluation in secondary education is becoming more "performance based." By this he means a cooperating teacher decides in the beginning on certain basic skills a student teacher should be able to master during the semester and the student teacher is evaluated on successful

fulfillment of these objectives.

He still is given a grade, but Alfrey said: "As we move toward a more objective evaluation, we have less of a need for something like a grade. What does a grade actually say?"

May said they try to determine by midsemester if a student is doing well enough to continue teaching. About five or six of 180 students either don't pass or drop out of elementary student teaching each semester. In secondary education, the figure is eight per cent.

Percentages and statistics and objective evaluations form a framework, but in the end, only the student can measure the value of his semester of student teaching. As Sintek said, looking around room 209 at McPhee, "This is where you learn it."

The usual image of a student teacher emphasizes "student"—a class visitor who spends most of his time observing the regular teacher or correcting papers.

Perhaps most prospective students expect this treatment themselves. Not so in Sintek's case, however.

"We think of it as a team effort," she said. "She (the cooperating teacher) helps me out and I help her out."

According to May, a good relationship with the cooperating teacher is essential. It should be one of "mutual confidence and respect to the point that they can reason together on their approaches to teaching . . . It is the cooperating teacher's responsibility to keep the



Cooperating teacher Mary Gilliland lends a hand in problem situations.

photos by
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