

Give children their childhood

By Carlin Locke
School of Journalism

Giving children their childhood is the aim of the Evaline Lowe Primary School in London. Headmistress Elizabeth Aggett defines the philosophy of her school as "a purpose-built school designed to fit the needs of the children."

Ms. Aggett arrived in Lincoln on July 21 and has since attended a conference concerning "emerging alternatives in education" sponsored by the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Teachers College. She will participate in seminars and workshops and speak on trends in British primary education until Aug. 14.

The Evaline Lowe Primary School, located in the heart of London, works with children from deprived families. Therefore, the school program is geared to the needs of the children coming from the area's high-rise "flats."

It is a state-supported, urban, open-plan school which opened in 1966. Ms. Aggett described the school as being "purpose-built" for the open-plan method of primary education.

Completely open

Instead of the traditional corridors with closed classrooms on either side, the purpose-built school is a completely open area with

different levels. No one can shut himself off in a room.

Sometimes, however, the purpose-built building tends to overtake education instead of education overtaking the building, Ms. Aggett said.

The school uses open classrooms and team teaching to allow the student to

disapproval has faded, she said.

Also, the results obtained from this type of teaching indicate that the students leave the school with a high standard of academic work and individual learning, Ms. Aggett added.

The structure for the school is flexible and tends to pay

based on nursery school programs, and that influence is spreading into secondary schools as well, Ms. Aggett said.

This eliminates the tendency to force 5 to 18-year-olds to conform to a different method of education, she said, and "Helps to better

schools there is an open classroom, even though it is only one classroom. There is also vertical grouping of the students, grouping children of different ages together.

The biggest problem with explaining the British open-plan schools to Americans is the terminology, Ms. Aggett said. Whereas open education here tends to mean education with freedom, it actually means freedom with license, she added. Also, what Americans might call "learning disabilities" would probably be referred to as "part of growing up" to a teacher in an open-plan school.

"A frightening aspect of teaching in America as well as Great Britain is that teachers know so much of how children learn, but the teachers themselves are slow to change," Ms. Aggett said. There is a tendency to advocate teacher-oriented package deals for the students. Ms. Aggett referred to it as the "chalk and talk" method.

Another problem in education is that teachers are giving up hope about the effectiveness of new teaching programs. Ms. Aggett said that no program imposed on a mass will work in one year. The administration must not give teachers only support, but also time, she said, and added that "We at the Evaline Lowe School are coming into our own now, but it's taken six to seven years."

education

progress along different schemes of instruction. There are no shut-off classrooms, but certain withdrawal areas for the teachers and the students, and home bases similar to a classroom, are provided. However, all the teaching is done in open areas with a team of two or more teachers.

There are 350 to 400 children from ages 3 to 11. The faculty includes 13 teachers who get help from parents, nursery assistants, student teachers and other volunteers.

At first there was parental disapproval to the school, Ms. Aggett said. Since it was described as an experimental school, the parents didn't want their children to be used as the experiment.

Flexibility

However, since the parents can help with the school programs and see the type of learning occurring, the

more attention to how a particular subject is approached. Ms. Aggett said, for instance, if a child didn't fit into one reading scheme, the scheme would be changed to fit the child. Since full records on each child constantly are kept up to date, there is no difficulty in assessing how far the child has progressed under one scheme.

"There isn't one British educator I can think of today that wouldn't acknowledge the debt we owe to nursery school methods of education," Ms. Aggett said.

Nursery schools have no set format for instruction, but focus on the children's needs and interests. The individual child, his creativity and capabilities, is the main consideration, she said.

Influence spreading

More than 60 per cent of British primary schools are

prepare students for college, where again the influence of nursery school methods is felt."

Therefore, with open education, "in primary schools the whole child matters, in secondary schools, the whole adolescent matters, and in college, the whole adult matters," she said.

Ms. Aggett said that her rough impression of Nebraska primary schools is that of a wealth of audio-visual aid material and a clinical approach to education. However, she added that she hasn't seen any schools in the area with children, because of summer vacation, and "nothing is more soul-destroying than seeing a school without children."

But, she said, a good example of a sort of open education in Nebraska is the country schools. In these

University committee searching for director of minority affairs

Positions wanted: director of minority affairs.

With seven applicants so far, the search committee for a new director of minority affairs is only in a "preliminary stage of looking at those who are acceptable and unacceptable with the applications we have," said David Williams, search committee chairman and elementary education and ethnic studies chairman.

Finding a new director may be difficult according to Williams because "many people have already accepted fall contracts" and "some applicants are over-qualified."

Advertisements in both the Lincoln and Omaha papers and The Chronicle of Education and through personal or direct mail contact have been the major means the committee has employed to find a replacement, according to Williams.

The position has been open since June 30 when Leroy Ramsey resigned to become chief of the Bureau of

Educational Integration for the New York State Education Department. "The committee projects the position will be filled by Sept. 1," Williams said. "But if we don't get the proper person then we are willing to extend the deadline."

The job is a 12-month appointment with a salary of up to \$20,000 depending on level of experience. The major job responsibility is to plan, develop and coordinate minority affairs, services and programs at UNL.

weekly calendar

Tuesday, August 7
"Taming of the Shrew", 8 p.m., Howell.
Wednesday, August 8
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.
Thursday, August 9
"Taming of the Shrew", 8 p.m., Howell.
Friday, August 10
Final date for oral examinations for advanced degree.
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.
Saturday, August 11
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.
Sunday, August 12
"Taming of the Shrew", 8 p.m., Howell.

Monday, August 13
No events scheduled.
Tuesday, August 14
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.
Wednesday, August 15
Final date for candidates for advanced degrees to deposit theses and file final report sheets.
"Taming of the Shrew", 8 p.m., Howell.
Thursday, August 16
"Company", 8 p.m., Howell.
Friday, August 17
Final examinations and end of session.
"What the Butler Saw", 8 p.m., Howell.

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