

# School to fit child's needs - Aggett

By Carlin Lockee  
Giving children their childhood is the aim of Elizabeth Aggett, headmistress of the Evaline Lowe Primary School in London.

Aggett said the philosophy of the Evaline Lowe Primary School is to use a purpose-built school to fit the needs of the children.

Aggett attended a conference this summer sponsored by the Nebraska Council of School Administrators and the UNL Teachers College and participated in seminars and workshops during the summer.

The open-plan method of education uses open classrooms rather than the traditional corridors with closed classrooms on either side. Therefore, the schools have to be "purpose-built" to fit this method of education. She said that there was some disapproval to this method when the Evaline Lowe school opened in London in 1966.

The Evaline Lowe Primary School is state-supported and was the first urban open-plan primary school in London. The school works with children from deprived families and is geared to the needs of the children coming from high-rise "flats."

The open-plan school is innovative, Aggett said, because it uses open classrooms and team teaching to allow the student to 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.

The 350 to 400 children, ages 3 to 11, are taught by several teams of two teachers. The faculty includes 13 teachers who receive help from parents, nursery assistants, student teachers and other volunteers.

The structure for the school is flexible and pays more attention to how a particular subject is approached. She 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, she said.

Results obtained from this type of teaching indicate that the students leave the school with a high standard of academic work and individual bearing, she said.

Aggett added that British educators are acknowledging

the debt owed to nursery school education methods. 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.

More than 60% of British primary schools are based on nursery school programs and that influence is spreading into secondary schools as well, 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 prepare students for college, where again the influence of nursery school methods is felt."

A good example of open education in Nebraska is the country schools, she said. In these schools there is an open classroom even though it is one classroom. There also is vertical grouping of the students, grouping children of different ages together.

Aggett said she had problems explaining the British open-plan schools to Americans because of the terminology. Whereas open education here usually means education with freedom, it

actually means freedom with license, she said. 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.

In America as well as in Great Britain, she said there is a tendency to advocate teacher-oriented package deals for the students. This "chalk and talk" method is not used because the teachers don't know how children learn, but because the teachers themselves are slow to change, Aggett said.

Teachers must not give up hope about the effectiveness of any innovative teaching program, Aggett said. Administrators must not only give teachers 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."

The people she met and worked with in Lincoln expressed interest in open-plan schools, and she said that these people seem to have the capabilities to implement such a plan successfully. No special teaching techniques are required for the open-plan method, only a belief in what is being implemented, she added.

Wherever an open-plan method of education would be tried, the basic way of working with children would be the same, Aggett said. With this in mind, the desire to learn and to be creative would be supported and all approaches to learning would be interesting, she said.

## '73 summer enrollment record high

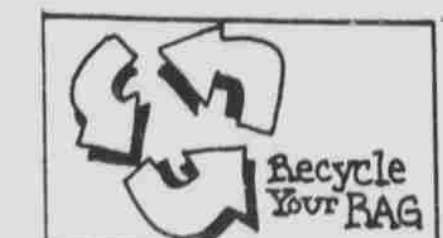
An enrollment of 5,333 students in UNL's second summer session made the 1973 summer program the largest in University history.

A total of 13,363 students enrolled in courses this summer. First session enrollment totalled 6,916, while 860 enrolled in a 3-week pre-session and 254 in an 8 week session.

The 1973 summer program exceeded the previous high of 13,120 students in 1971. Last year the summer enrollment was 12,806.

## Academic calendar

August	
27	First semester classes begin
September	
3	Labor Day holiday
4	Final day adds accepted
21	Last day to drop courses lab
October	
5	Mid-semester scholastic reports due
19	Last day to drop courses without labs
November	
21-5	Thanksgiving vacation
December	
15	Last day of first semester classes
17	First semester exams
21	First semester ends



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