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Dated August 13, 1971

A STUDY OF MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY'S ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PARA-PROFESSIONAL QUARTER, 1970-1971

by

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Approved:

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ABSTRACT

Problem: The problem of this study was to investigate the attitudes and opinions of participating students and teachers regarding Montana State University's Elementary Education Para-professional Quarter in its first full year of operation, the academic year 1970-1971.

Sample: This was a parameter study involving 103 university students and 62 teachers who participated in the Para-professional Quarter during 1970-1971.

The students were, for the most part, juniors in Elementary Education at M. S. U. A few were graduate students seeking to receive certification in elementary education.

The teachers were employees of School District No. 7, Bozeman, Montana, who conducted classrooms in grades K-6.

Procedures: Two questionnaires, one for the students and one for the teachers, were prepared and presented to the population. The questionnaires sought to ascertain the population's opinions regarding the basic purposes of the Para-professional Quarter: (1) The Quarter should provide the students with valuable first-hand knowledge of and experience with elementary children in conjunction with their university studies of educational theories and techniques. (2) The Quarter should furnish real and sub-stantial assistance to the teacher in her elementary classroom.

The questionnaires also asked the participants to cite what they considered strengths and/or weaknesses of the program and make suggestions for its future implementation.

Conclusions: Study findings indicated that the Para-professional Quarter succeeded in accomplishing its major objectives.

The major areas cited for improvement in the program were: (1) university course offerings, (2) the bi-weekly seminar sessions at the university level, (3) communication among the university staff, students and classroom teachers, and (4) need for more concise and explicit definition of the roles of the various participants in the program.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the academic year 1970-1971, Montana State University (M. S. U.) initiated what was for this institution a new program in the area of preparation of elementary teachers. This program, termed a Para-professional Quarter, consisted of placing junior students in Elementary Education in the elementary classrooms of the Bozeman Public Schools to work under the supervision of elementary classroom teachers while concurrently enrolled in professional preparation courses at the University. This experience was planned to preceed the full quarter of student teaching, usually taken in the senior year.

As a preliminary to the present program, from two to six students per quarter worked in the Bozeman Public Schools as para-professionals during the academic years of 1968-1969 and 1969-1970, under the course classification of Education 470-Individual Problems. The experiences met by these students aided in the planning of the present program.

The goals and procedures for the Para-professional Quarter were worked out by a joint committee of representatives of Bozeman Public School teachers and administrators, all members of the M. S. U. Department of Elementary

Education and one Montana State University student who had had previous experience as a para-professional worker.

There were two purposes for this program. First, it should provide the university student with valuable, practical experience with and knowledge about children and the teaching profession which could not be gained through purely academic coursework. Second, it was planned to provide substantial and valuable help to the classroom teacher.

An Elementary Education Department Memorandum dated January 27, 1970, from Dr. Willis Vandiver, then Head of the Department of Elementary Education, further delineated the experiences and knowledge to be gained by the students as follows:

1. To learn as much as possible concerning conditions under which children learn best and how to organize and create a good learning atmosphere with a minimum amount of coercion.

2. To learn how children act and react under different stimuli.

3. To observe teachers' methods and techniques as they work with children.

4. To have an opportunity to practice teaching lessons to a small group of children in the subject fields

of (1) reading, (2) science, (3) social studies, and (4) art.

5. To have direction from the University staff in terms of how to plan and teach the above lessons.

6. To have an opportunity to learn many things about children and school operation from first hand observation.

The program was structured in such a way that each student would be assigned to two different classrooms at different grade levels, with the time equally divided between the first and second halves of the quarter. Each teacher involved for a particular quarter would thus have a different student working with her for each half-quarter. This enabled each para-professional to observe and work with children of different age and grade levels, as well as providing them with the opportunity to see the various methods and techniques utilized by two different teachers. While this was the basic structure of the program, various scheduling problems created a few exceptional situations where a para-professional worked a full quarter at one grade level.

The time schedule for the para-professionals included work in the public schools from 8:15 A.M. until

11:30 A.M., Monday through Thursday. They returned to the University campus for professional methods courses and seminars in the afternoon, Monday through Friday.

The coursework which was taken in conjunction with the work experience included:

Educ. 305 The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School.

Educ. 313 The Teaching of Social Studies in the Elementary School.

Educ. 325 The Teaching of Elementary School Science.

Educ. 332 The Teaching of Art in the Elementary School.

Educ. 400 Seminar.

The para-professionals' responsibilities in the elementary classrooms included any duties in line with their development and training assigned by the classroom teachers or building administrators. In addition, they were encouraged to become sensitive to the needs of individual children and seek opportunities to enhance the over-all teaching climate. At sometime during his Para-professional Quarter, each student was expected to teach a minimum of four lessons in each of the subject fields in which his afternoon professional coursework was preparing him. At least two of these

presentations were to be observed and evaluated by a member of Montana State University's Department of Elementary Education.

A pamphlet was prepared for distribution to participants which outlined the general goals and procedures of the Quarter. (Appendix A)

During this first year of full operation, 103 university students and 62 Bozeman elementary teachers participated in the program.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to investigate the attitudes of the involved students and cooperating teachers regarding Montana State University's Elementary Education Para-professional Quarter in its first year. Of special interest were the opinions of the participants regarding the major goals of the program. These goals were: to provide the university students with practical experience and first-hand knowledge of children in addition to the academic coursework and to provide the teacher with real and valuable assistance in her elementary classroom. The study was also designed to identify what the participants regarded as the

main strengths and/or weaknesses of the program and their suggestions for improvement.

NEED OR PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was suggested to the writer by members of the Elementary Education Department who felt that prompt feedback from this first year's experience could give vital and beneficial direction to the future of the program.

The study was attempted to delineate areas of special strengths and benefits which the students and the classroom teachers felt were derived from the project. It also considered criticism and/or suggestions for improving the program in the future.

GENERAL PROCEDURE

The general procedure for this investigation was to contact all available students and teachers who were involved in the para-professional program during the 1970-1971 academic year. Questionnaires covering more specific items (See Appendix B & C) relating to the general questions were presented...one for the students and one for cooperating teachers.

The major portion of these questionnaires was objective, involving simple check-list items on an ordinal scale, but provision was made for free-will critique, suggestions and other comments pertinent to the program.

The raw data obtained from these questionnaires was converted into percentages of total returns for more facile comparison and recorded in tables, which are presented in Chapter IV. Those supplementary comments most often submitted by university students and Bozeman teachers were noted and are also reported in Chapter IV.

LIMITATIONS

This investigation was limited to the Montana State University Elementary Education Para-professional Quarter Program carried out in the academic year 1970-1971.

Inasmuch as it was possible, this was a parameter study. The only exceptions were a few university students for whom current addresses were unavailable.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic year - An academic year as referred to in this paper includes those days, weeks, and months commencing with the beginning of M. S. U.'s Fall Quarter

in September and ending with the close of Spring Quarter in June of the following calendar year.

Individual Problems (Educ. 470) - This course consists of directed research and study on an individual basis. (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1971:224)

Para-professional - A para-professional is a worker who is partially, but not fully, trained to perform in a given profession. In this paper, the term para-professional refers to students who, while not yet fully trained as teachers, can and do perform many duties assigned to an elementary teacher.

Practicum - A practicum as referred to in this paper is a unit of work done by a university student involving practical application of previously and/or currently studied theory.

Seminar (Educ. 400) - The seminar referred to in this paper involves a discussion of teaching problems and teaching strategies to be employed in the classroom. (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1972:225)

Teacher-Aide or Teaching-Aide - A teacher or teaching-aide is an individual who works in a classroom assisting, and under the supervision of, a regular classroom teacher. The aide performs a variety of assigned tasks which do

not require the direct service of afully trained teacher.

Teaching of Art in the Elementary School(Educ.332)- This course involves backgrounds and investigations of principles of teaching art from kindergarten through sixth grade. (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1972:225)

Teaching of Elementary School Science (Educ. 325)- This course covers important general fundamentals of biological and geological sciences and their application in elementary schools. Attention is given to objectives, materials, methods and experiences needed in teaching science in elementary schools, helping children to understand and appreciate their natural environment and to develop habits of objective thinking and some understanding of certain concepts of science (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1972:225)

Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School (Educ. 305 - This course covers current theory and techniques of the teaching of reading. Special emphasis is on different approaches to word analysis and reading as thinking. Laboratory work is devoted to examination and use of different textbooks in conjunction with teaching children in small groups. Attention will be given to recreational reading and work study skills. (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1972:225)

Teaching of Social Studies in the Elementary School (Educ. 313) - This course deals with teacher-pupil planning of objectives, of appropriate learning experiences to achieve the objectives. (M. S. U. Bulletin, 1970-1972:225)

SUMMARY

This study -- a survey of the attitudes of students and classroom teachers who participated in Montana State University's Elementary Education Para-professional Quarter program in 1970-1971 -- was suggested to the writer by members of the M. S. U. Elementary Education Department who desired an early report of the program in its first full year of operation.

The study gathered information from the students and teachers relating to their feelings about the program, and summarized recommendations they made for its future implementation.

A questionnaire was the instrument used for gathering information. Concerted effort was made to obtain replies from all individuals who participated in the Para-professional Quarter during the 1970-1971 academic year.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look at two main aspects of the use of a para-professional quarter as part of the program for preparing students to be teachers in an elementary school. These major categories are (1) benefits to the student teacher and (2) benefits to the classroom teacher and her elementary students. In conjunction with these major topics, attention will be paid to programs which have been proposed or are being used by various teacher-educators in recent years. It should be noted at the outset that, in reviewing the related literature, material referring to para-professionals by that nomenclature was scarce, while somewhat more frequently occurring was the term "aide" or "teaching aide". As regards the services performed in the classroom, little or no distinction was noted by the writer. Hence, some references may be made to aides where the word is congruent with "para-professional" for the purpose of this paper and in terms of the services performed by the individual involved.

BENEFITS TO THE STUDENT TEACHER

The benefits which preparatory teachers may derive from a program such as Montana State University's Para-professional Quarter are disclosed by a review of literature related to other programs which, though not a complete parallel, have elements in common with the M. S. U. program. These beneficial aspects will be reviewed in three parts: (1) the advantage to the student of a start in his chosen profession before his senior year, (2) the advantages of working with children in small groups before assuming responsibility for an entire class and (3) the advantage of combining professional courses and seminars with practical experience in the field.

The advantage of an early start

One issue which has drawn attention in recent years is the common practice of having the education major do his practical work experience sometime during his senior year in college. Today a growing number of educators at both the college and public school levels, as well as many education students themselves, would agree with Talmadge and Monroe (1968:330-333) when they express the opinion that this

traditional concept of the student teaching practicum is a case of too little arriving too late.

The teaching field is one which demands a great deal of preparation, continual self-searching and self-improvement, as well as untold hours of dedicated work, work seemingly unrelated to the excitement of meeting young minds in a learning environment. Davis (1966:153-155) reports that many first-year teachers find themselves unrealistically prepared for the complexity of the teaching role. He observes that a prospective teacher needs to be acquainted early with the realities of the school situation in order to appreciate the enormity, significance and challenge of the job that a teacher faces.

Meeting this complex role face-on may well be overwhelming for a young man or woman who, having spent three years preparing for a career in education, discovers that he is unable or unwilling to devote the time and energy required to do a competent job. To help prevent just such a "rude awakening", Allen and Ryan recommend that "something akin to the observation seminar come as early as possible after the student has decided to go into teaching." (Allen and Ryan, 1969:98)

The time during his undergraduate years at which a

prospective teacher can best be introduced to his future career is a moot point among educational leaders and teacher-training institutions. Davis (1966:153-155) proposes a carefully planned level program in which the teacher-to-be goes into a regular classroom in his first year of college to work as a teaching aide for a four to six week period. This gives him an opportunity to see a school situation in total and gain an early conception of the diverse challenges faced by a teacher on a day to day basis. In his sophomore year the preparing teacher would have a full six weeks of carefully planned observation and subsequent guided discussion of objectives, methods, materials and evaluative measures to which he is being exposed. By the third undergraduate year the student is expected to be ready to do some teaching, first with small groups, then the entire class, one lesson at a time. In his senior year the student teacher would be ready to take full responsibility for a class (Davis, 1966:153-155)

Other authors propose plans for providing practical experiences at various times in the undergraduate program. Though there is no sign of universal agreement, most teacher-educators would prefer to see their students getting some participatory experience before the senior year. Ort (1966:

263-266) describes a series of pre-student teaching activities at Indiana State University in which the university and the local public schools pre-plan observation and work experiences for the sophomore or junior in education. In a new program at Northwestern University, students go into classrooms as teaching aids beginning in their sophomore years, continuing into the junior and senior years. The latter years are spent, whenever possible, in the same building so as to give the student a sense of the ongoing work of one school. (Hazard, Chandler, and Stiles:1967:269-276) Yet another proposal is that by Mulhern (1967:200-207) who advocates a teacher-aide program which puts prospective teachers into classrooms for part days in a three-part program. The first part would entail laboratory work (using video tapes to be analyzed in university coursework), next clinical work (involving teaching of small groups and finally, the student teaching internship.

The major advantages to be gained from these "early-start" programs and proposals would seem to be (1) an early opportunity for the prospective teacher to view at first hand the complexities and responsibilities of his chosen profession and (2) a longer period during which he is able to practice the skills of his craft.

The advantage of working with small groups

A beginning student teacher, despite the fact that he has observed teachers in action before his actual work with the children begins, faces a tremendous challenge, amounting at times to trauma, when he suddenly finds himself with 25-35 youngsters in his charge. Not only must he try to recall the material content for this course, he must also bring into use the methods, techniques and principles of psychology which he has learned in his professional preparation. This would seem enough of a challenge, but the neophyte teacher probably, until this moment occurs, has no realistic concept of the personal interactions which will begin as soon as he commences his presentation.

Many of the same researchers who advocated an early undergraduate program in practical work also suggest that a student teacher benefits if this early work is with small groups. Their suggestions range from individual tutoring to work with groups of four to five children to begin. Allen and Ryan (1969:61-65) discuss the fact that student teachers may be overwhelmed by the complexities of dealing with many children at once in a role which is new and rather fearsome. In their work with micro-teaching they found evidence that short term lessons with small groups help

bridge the gap as a preparatory teacher moves from the role of student to that of teacher.

Other research also shows advantages of short lessons with small groups, gradually increasing both the length of the lesson and the number of children taught. Such gradual exposure in a less threatening situation increases the beginning teacher's sense of achievement and self-confidence. (Davis, 1966;Hazard et al, 1967; Tanruther 1968) With a number of successful experiences in such graduated exposures behind him, the student is far less overwhelmed by facing a larger group.

The advantage of coursework concurrent with practicum

Traditionally, teachers-to-be have undertaken the professional preparation, or methods, courses in their junior or senior years at the university, prior to the student teaching experience. This is a quite natural sequence, growing from the need for the young teacher to have as much knowledge as possible in his field before he begins actual practice in it.

However, many university students question the value of the methods courses, arguing that they are repetitious and irrelevant. The writer feels that Hazard, Chandler and

Stiles (1967:219-271) make an excellent point when they suggest that such criticism may be due in part to the students' inexperience in classroom practice. Allen and Ryan (1969) throughout their book used examples from the elementary classroom to point out how varied must be a teacher's methods and techniques. Their students discovered, in actual practice, that there was much need, not only for academic knowledge, but for a grasp of the principles of learning and child development. It would seem that combining professional coursework with practical experience in the classroom would clarify the purpose and necessity of such courses. It provides the opportunity for the student to observe a professional teacher using various methods and techniques to which he is being exposed, as well as giving him personal experience in their use.

M. S. U.'s Para-professional Quarter makes use of afternoon seminars, during which students and their university supervisors discuss problems which have arisen, as well as successes which have been enjoyed. There is time for evaluation of observations, suggestions for improvement, new ideas to be shared, etc. Research has shown that student interns have found one or two seminars weekly to be one of the most helpful features of the teacher-preparation program.

One reported that such seminars "provide a unique opportunity to share successes and to obtain help...serve as a channel for the exchange of ideas." (Tanruther, 1968:62) Another study describes vital tasks which it was felt the seminars accomplished. They provide opportunities for students to analyze their experiences and examine their own reactions to the experiences, encourage students to reflect on their changing perceptions and provide formal and informal evaluation opportunities...all under adequate professional supervision and guidance. (Ort, 1966:267-268)

ADVANTAGES TO TEACHERS AND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

While the benefits to the future teacher might seem sufficient cause to include some type of para-professional program in a teacher-preparation continuum, Montana State University included as its second major goal the concept that the para-professional would provide a real service to the classroom teacher and her elementary students.

Fewer studies or commentaries on this aspect of a para-professional program were available, though some authors made passing reference to the benefits a para-professional might provide. Some educators express the opinion that teacher training should be on a continuum in the form of

in-service training. One author went on to suggest that the young college student's coming into a classroom for observation and participation experiences might bring to the classroom teacher fresh ideas and approaches which she would find enriching. (Olsen, 1966:229-234)

One in-depth study was done by Carl H. Rittenhouse for the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1969. He surveyed programs throughout the United States to determine the advantages derived from the use of teaching aides. He found aides throughout the country serving three basic purposes: (1) community and social services, (2) administrative and clerical work and (3) instructional services. The latter of these is the area of concern to this review since these instructional aides served in a capacity which parallels the work done by para-professionals in the M. S. U. program.

It is generally assumed that if teachers can be given more time "to perform their professional instructional tasks and to give more individual instruction, the students will benefit." (Rittenhouse, 1969:14) The instructional aides do assist the teacher by performing such tasks as role-taking, preparing audio-visual materials, correcting objective tests, drilling pupils as individuals or in small groups, etc.

To attempt to ascertain the most profitable use of teaching aides, an experiment in Minneapolis used nine kindergarten classes involving six teachers. Each class was composed of approximately 30 pupils, half of whom met in the morning, half in the afternoon. Aides were used in alternate classes in such a way that each teacher had aides for one of her sections, no aides for another. Some classes had one aide, others used as many as five. The Metropolitan Reading Readiness Tests were used as a measure of the children's development during their kindergarten experience. Results of this study showed "the greatest mean gains in reading readiness and in over-all readiness were in classes where the teacher had one aide, the least gain in classes with no aides." (Rittenhouse, 1969:55-56) Since the primary purpose of all schools is the development of their children, the use of aides or para-professionals would seem a decided advantage to any school system.

The Rittenhouse study went on to state that "almost without exception school districts having aides would be very reluctant to give them up." (Rittenhouse, 1969:15) Teachers, administrators and parents all indicated approval of the concept. Teachers saw the most benefit to themselves and their

students as being a result of "added instructional time for teaching". (Rittenhouse, 1969:53)

SUMMARY

In this chapter the writer has attempted to review the literature relating to the use of para-professional work in the preparation of elementary school teachers. The review was divided into two main parts: (1) the advantages to a preparatory teacher of some practicum before his senior year in college and (2) the advantages to the elementary teacher and her students of having the assistance of a para-professional aide in the classroom.

In conjunction with the two main categories, references were made to some operational programs and some proposed programs for teacher preparation commencing before the traditional student-teaching in the senior year of university.

Mention was also made of one detailed study which pointed up the advantages to the teacher and her pupils of having a para-professional helper in the classroom.

While none of the programs or proposals discussed was a complete parallel of the M. S. U. Para-professional Quarter, the concepts involved were sufficient to point up

similarities and draw some comparisons regarding teacher-education innovations in the United States in recent years.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

This study is a survey of the attitudes of the participating university students and Bozeman classroom teachers in M. S. U.'s Para-professional Quarter in Elementary Education for the academic year 1970-1971. In this chapter procedures for obtaining, organizing and presenting the information obtained in the investigation are discussed.

POPULATION DESCRIPTION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Most of the students involved in this study were juniors in elementary education at M. S. U., a few were graduate students returning to the university to receive teacher certification in the elementary area. The teachers' group is composed of those Bozeman teachers who were involved in the Para-professional Quarter during the 1970-71 school year. These teachers work in grades K-6. For the most part those in K-4 conduct self-contained classrooms; grades five and six are combined in one Middle School, which is departmentalized.

This was a parameter study with the exception of 8 university students for whom no current addresses were

available. Questionnaires were sent to all university students and all classroom teachers who worked in the Para-professional Quarter during the 1970-71 academic year.

CATEGORIES OF THE INVESTIGATION

The areas examined in this study were the attitudes of the participating college students and classroom teachers regarding the structure and operation of M. S. U.'s Para-professional Quarter during the 1970-1971 school year. The participants were asked to comment on the work performed by the para-professionals in the classroom, the coursework taken in conjunction with it, the organization of the academic and experimental parts of the program and, primarily, their personal reactions to various aspects of the para-professional experience.

METHOD OF COLLECTING DATA

The data in the study was collected by means of questionnaires, one directed to the university students and the other to the classroom teachers. (See Appendix B & C) These instruments were designed to collect information applicable to the basic questions of the study, as outlined in Chapter I, and were evaluated by members of M. S. U.'s

Elementary Education Department and by administrators of School District #7, Bozeman, Montana, before being presented to the research population. This was to help establish validity and to increase the worth and value of the information obtained to the future of the program.

The questionnaires were hand-scored and results were tabulated by the writer.

METHOD OF ORGANIZING DATA

Due to the nature of this research -- an investigation of the opinions of individuals, with no experimental nor evaluative aspects being involved -- much of the data obtained has been presented in a discussion-type summary.

Tables have been included which show the responses to each item on each of the two questionnaires. Many participants, both students and teachers, added comments supplementing their responses or contributing ideas or suggestions related to the program. Comments which were purely positive in nature have been reported in Appendix D. These, and additional comments which are noted in Chapter IV, were considered in the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter V.

STATISTICAL HYPOTHESIS

Since this is primarily an opinion-finding piece of research, limited to a specific institution, no hypothesis will be advanced.

However, answers to the following questions were sought:

(1) Did the participating students feel the experience was generally beneficial to them?

(2) Did the classroom teachers feel the para-professional workers were, over-all, an asset to the class learning situation?

(3) What specific strengths and/or weaknesses were noted by students and teachers?

(4) What other suggestions for change of or addition to the program were most often made by the students and/or the teachers?

(5) Did this experience in any way alter the students' plans to enter the field of education?

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In the absence of statistical hypothesis, the data are not analyzed with the exception of retaining or

rejecting a particular point of view. In lieu of formal statistical analysis, the preceding questions are answered on the basis of the questionnaire results.

SUMMARY

In this chapter the writer has discussed procedures used for obtaining, organizing and reporting information obtained in this study of opinions of participants in M. S. U.'s Para-professional Quarter in Elementary Education during the academic year of 1970-1971.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports the findings of a study of the opinions of participants in M. S. U.'s Para-professional Quarter for Elementary Education students during the academic year of 1970-1971. In collecting data for this parameter study, questionnaires were sent to the 103 university students who studied and worked as para-professionals during the year and to the 62 Bozeman public elementary school teachers who participated in the program.

Of the 103 student questionnaires distributed, 77 were returned, representing 74.25%. Fifty-six teachers, or 96.77% returned questionnaires.

This chapter will report the data obtained from the questionnaires in table form, with comments discussing or comparing some of the items. A brief summary is made of the comments and/or suggestions made by the students and teachers supplementing their more objective responses.

REPORT OF STUDENT-QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table I (following p. 30) indicates the student responses to the first nineteen items presented to them.

Table 1

Results of Para-Professional Questionnaire

Items 1-12 below were scaled as follows:

1	2	3	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Questionnaire Item	Response Category 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. In general I feel the Para-professional Quarter helped prepare me for a career in education.	-	-	-	-	3.89	29.87	66.23
2. I feel that I was an asset to the learning climate in the rooms in which I served.	-	-	1.29	-	18.18	59.74	20.78
3. I feel I was adequately supervised by my college instructors.	2.63	11.84	7.90	-	13.17	47.42	17.10
4. The assignments given me by my classroom supervisor helped me to grow as a future teacher.	1.33	5.42	6.65	-	21.33	42.66	22.66
5. I found the over-all teaching situation a more complex and challenging relationship than I had anticipated.	1.44	10.64	11.84	-	27.34	21.05	27.34
6. I feel that this observation and practice in conjunction with the methods courses made the course work more meaningful and beneficial to me.	2.59	2.59	2.59	-	10.36	37.67	44.15
7. This experience has made me less eager to enter the teaching profession.	55.84	38.96	2.59	-	-	-	2.59
8. I feel that the rapport with my classroom supervisors was good.	1.28	3.84	3.84	-	12.84	42.30	35.89
9. I feel that rapport with my university supervisors was generally good.	-	1.35	1.35	-	22.97	51.35	22.97
10. The assignments given me by my classroom supervisors seemed to be mainly "busywork".	11.53	25.68	15.38	-	35.89	10.25	1.28

This numerical data reported on this questionnaire represents the percent of the total number of responses to each item which fell within each category.

Table 1 continued - Results of Para-Professional Questionnaires

		1	2	3	5	6	7
11.	I feel there is little or no advantage to being exposed to two classrooms per quarter.	52.00	24.00	6.65	6.65	6.65	4.00
12.	If there is advantage to serving in two classrooms, I feel it is:						
	a. in seeing how two different teachers work	32.00					
	b. in seeing the differences in groups of children		68.00				

Note: For items 13-17 the response categories were:
1 - most of the time 2 - occasionally 3 - seldom 4 - not at all

		1	2	3	4
13.	I worked with individual students (tutoring, reading to them, assisting them with work or supplies, etc.)	31.57	38.15	26.31	3.94
14.	I worked with small groups (tutoring, reading, etc.	37.66	42.85	18.18	1.30
15.	I worked with the entire class.	16.88	37.66	38.96	6.49
16.	I worked at non-teaching duties (bulletin boards, clerical work, etc.	11,84	42.45	33.15	11.84
17.	I found the seminars helpful	35.05	37.37	14.57	12.97

Note: For items 18 and 19 the response categories were:
1 - too few 2 - too many 3 - about right 4 - just right

		1	2	3	4
18.	I felt the number of seminars was	9.21	23.68	63.15	3.94

19. I feel I helped the learning atmosphere of the classrooms most by:
1. non-teaching duties (clerical, bulletin boards, etc. 5.33
2. working with individual children 37.33
3. working with small groups 42.67
4. working with the whole class 14.67

This numerical data reported on this questionnaire represents the percent of the total number of responses to each item which fell within each category.

As indicated, the figures represent the percentage of the total responses which fell within each response category.

Examination of these results indicate a positive attitude by the students regarding the para-professional program. The first item indicates that the reporting students, without exception, felt the Quarter was beneficial to them. Over 66% "strongly" agreed, with nearly 30% more agreeing, that they benefited. Less than 4% replied in the "slightly agree" category. When asked what benefit they derived from the program, over 92% of the students indicated on item six that they felt the observation and practice in conjunction with the methods courses made their course work more meaningful. Of the approximately 8% who did not agree, that the course work was more meaningful, comments were noted to the effect that the students were unable to use some of the college work due to those elementary subjects being scheduled in the afternoons in the buildings in which they worked.

Item two indicates that the students also felt that they were an asset to the classrooms in which they worked. Though the responses to this item were slightly less positive than the replies to item one, only 1% felt even "slight" disagreement with this.

Items three and nine, relating to student opinions concerning supervision by and rapport with university supervisors, indicate that over 77% felt that supervision by the university staff was adequate. Of the under 23% who disagreed, two stated in added comments that they were never supervised at the college level and several others reported only one supervisory visit. However, item nine indicated that 98% of the students reporting felt rapport with the university staff was good.

Items four and ten were designed to learn the paraprofessionals' opinions of the specific assignments they were given by the classroom supervisors as part of the classroom experience. Here some contradiction seems to arise, for, though 86% replied to item four that they felt the assignments helped them grow as future teachers, on item ten, 52% indicated that these assignments "seemed to be mainly 'busy-work'". Written comments did nothing to clarify this apparent contradiction.

For most of the university students this was their first experience in seeing an elementary classroom from the teacher's viewpoint. The responses to item five were of particular interest. Here the answers were less closely clustered than on any other single item. Over 75% agreed

that the teaching situation was more complex and challenging than they had anticipated, and these were spread almost evenly among the three "levels" of agreement. Roughly 24% indicated that teaching was not more complex than they had expected. Only 1% of these felt strongly about the statement, with the remaining 23% nearly evenly divided between "disagree" and "slightly disagree" that teaching was unexpectedly complex and challenging.

One of the major aims of a program such as this, involving coursework more meaningful to the student by combining the factor of classroom practice with the theories and concepts being introduced and studied at the college level. Item six, shows that over 92% of the students responding felt that this goal had been achieved, with 44% strongly agreeing.

Item eight was designed to determine the para-professionals' attitude regarding their rapport with classroom supervisors. They reported slightly less favorable relationships with the classroom supervisor than with university supervisors, still 91% felt it was good; less than 13% of the 91% responded with the weaker "slightly agree" choice.

Items 11 and 12 indicate that the university students felt quite strongly that the practice of changing

classrooms at mid-quarter was worthwhile. Over 2/3 gave as their reason the opportunity to observe and work with different groups of children.

Items 13 through 16 related to the types of work done by the para-professionals in the elementary classrooms. It would appear that the para-professionals felt they worked most frequently with individual students or small groups, somewhat less frequently with the whole class. Though the percentages are small, tabulated findings as well as comments added by the students indicated that some para-professionals never had the opportunity to work with individuals or with small groups or with the whole class. Nearly 12% of the students responding reported that they never performed non-teaching duties such as clerical work, bulletin boards, etc.

Item 19 indicated that, of the various types of work performed, the students felt that they contributed most to the learning atmosphere of the classroom by working with small groups (37%) and working with the whole class (43%). Fifteen per cent felt their non-teaching duties contributed most; several added the comment that they felt this was true because they freed the teacher to do more work with the elementary pupils.

Items 17 and 18 relating to the bi-weekly college

seminar sessions drew several added comments from the students. It will be noted that slightly over 72% of the respondents found the seminars to be helpful, while 63% thought the number of seminars "about right". However, nearly a quarter of the students (24%) felt there were too many seminars and many of these suggested that seminars be weekly rather than bi-weekly. Other comments from those who indicated that they were not totally satisfied included the following suggestions:

> Assign a specific educational topic, theory or situation for each seminar in advance so the para-professionals can be especially aware and observant of its occurrence in the elementary classrooms. Subsequent discussions will be more meaningful.
>
> Provide more concrete teaching ideas at seminars.
>
> In one seminar weekly discuss real situations faced by the para-professionals in the classrooms; in the other discuss potential situations and possible ways of dealing with them.
>
> Seminars should be more structured, or the university leaders should have plans ready in the event the students have little to contribute on a given day.
>
> Seminars could be eliminated and their content handled in the methods courses.

Item seven from Table I is presented here as a finale to the para-professional-questionnaire findings, because it seems that, from the viewpoint of the student, it may represent a summary statement of his/her practicum

experience. When asked if the Para-professional Quarter had made the student "less eager" to enter the teaching profession, the responses were clearly and strongly negative. Over 97% denied being less eager to become teachers and nearly 56% of these reported "strong" disagreement. It is of interest to note that of the 2.6% who felt they were less eager, all responded that they felt strongly on this issue.

REPORT OF TEACHER-QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

As Table II (following, page 38) indicates, the teachers also replied in a strongly positive vein regarding the value of the Para-professional Quarter, both to the preparatory teachers and to the elementary school rooms in which they gained their para-professional experience. To item one, regarding the general helpfulness of the program, 35% of the teachers agreed that it was beneficial and all the remaining 65% strongly agreed.

Table 2

Results of the Teacher-Questionnaires

Items 1-13 below were scaled as follows:

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Disagree	5 Slightly Agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree

Questionnaire Item	Response Category					
	1	2	3	5	6	7
1. In general, I feel that the Para-professional Quarter will be helpful in preparing students for a career in teaching.	-	-	-	-	35.09	64.91
2. I feel that the para-professionals were an asset to the learning climate of my classroom.	-	1.67	6.67	13.33	63.33	15.00
3. I feel there was inadequate supervision by the university supervisors	7.27	36.36	9.09	27.27	20.00	-
4. I feel there was little or no advantage to having the para-professionals change rooms at mid-quarter	18.51	31.48	14.81	12.96	12.96	9.25
5. The assignments I gave my para-professionals were designed to allow me more time for instructional activities.	-	10.91	9.09	23.63	47.26	9.09
6. I feel that the rapport with my para-professionals was good.	-	1.90	2.85	8.55	60.00	26.67
7. I feel that my rapport with the university supervisors was generally good.	1.81	-	-	12.71	60.00	25.42
8. The assignments I gave my para-professionals were designed to help them grow as future teachers.	-	-	1.69	3.38	72.88	22.03
9. I noticed growth in the students' ability to sense the needs and interests of the children.	-	1.75	3.50	14.03	66.67	14.03

This numerical data reported on this questionnaire represents the percent of the total number of responses to each item which fell within each category.

Table 2 continued - Results of the Teacher-Questionnaires

		1	2	3	5	6	7
10.	I believe the para-professionals developed a better understanding of the objectives of instruction.	1.72	-	-	17.24	44.82	36.20
11.	I believe the para-professionals developed in their ability to relate to children	1.72	-	-	6.88	58.60	32.75
12.	I believe that my students developed more skills and knowledge as a result of having para-professional help.	3.38	6.77	8.47	25.42	45.76	10.15
13.	I feel it would be advantageous to have some acquaintance with the para-professional before (s)he is assigned to my classroom in order to establish rapport.	-	20.00	14.54	23.63	20.00	21.81

Note: Items 14-17 below were scaled as follows:
1 - most of the time 2 - occasionally 3 - seldom 4 - not at all

		1	2	3	4
14.	My paraprofessionals worked with individuals (tutoring, reading to them, etc.)	26.31	54.38	15.78	3.50
15.	My para-professionals worked with small groups (tutoring, reading, etc.)	32.75	56.89	6.88	3.48
16.	My para-professionals worked with the entire class.	10.32	63.79	18.98	6.88
17.	My para-professionals performed non-teaching duties (clerical, bulletin boards, etc.)	5.35	71.42	16.06	7.14

The numerical data reported on this questionnaire represent the percent of the total number of responses to each item which fell within each category.

These figures were reinforced by the teachers' replies to item 9, 10, and 11, all of which related to growth and development of the para-professionals in the skills and abilities requisite to a successful teacher. Over 94% noticed growth in the students' ability to sense the needs and interests of the children, over 98% believed the para-professionals developed a better understanding of the objectives of instruction and 98% felt the students developed in their ability to relate to elementary children.

Regarding the value of the university students in the elementary classes with which they worked, only 8% of the teachers indicated on item two that they did not feel the para-professionals were an asset to the learning climate in their classrooms. There was less agreement on item twelve which stated that the elementary pupils developed more skills and knowledge as a result of the university students' work, but still over 81% of the responses were on the "agree" side. Comments added to the scaled responses indicated that, in some cases, a teacher's negative replies were prompted by one unsatisfactory experience. One teacher, while noting that her first para-professional was "great, a pleasure to work with", went on to say that the second was "disastrous" and that she would "never again consent" to

having a para-professional in her classroom. Another teacher, who had six para-professionals during the year, reported five were "good to excellent", but that one was "extremely poor, unprepared, totally unsatisfactory".

Regarding the adequacy of supervision at the university level (item three), the teachers displayed less consensus than on any other item. Slightly over 52% of the teachers felt it was adequate, but 47% disagreed. One teacher added, in contributed comments, that she "never saw" a university supervisor, and three reported having visits only once during a quarter. This is in line with remarks from the students. Two reported they were never supervised, with several claiming only one visit. Had the supervision followed the schedule set up, some member of M. S. U.'s Elementary Education Department would have observed each para-professional at least twice. Thus every teacher should have "seen" a university staff member at least two times during each quarter that (s)he was involved in the program.

However, with remarkable similarity to the students' responses (Table I, item nine), over 98% of the teachers felt rapport with the university staff was good. All of the 1.8% who disagreed were in "strong" disagreement.

Though the students favored changing room assignments at mid-quarter (Table I, item 11), the teachers were less positive (Table II, item 4). Thirty-five per cent felt there was little or no advantage to this practice. Added comments indicated that several teachers felt that, while the para-professional students gained from the experience, the elementary pupils sometimes had difficulty adjusting to the frequent changes. One teacher explained that in her school the children changed rooms for reading and math and that, when there was a para-professional in more than one of the rooms, the children had to adjust to up to 9 "teachers" (six para-professionals and 3 regular teachers) during a quarter. Another classroom supervisor suggested that if the university students are to teach a total of 16 lessons, it might be better for them to stay in one room where they could get better acquainted and thus work more easily with the elementary pupils. The consensus of the comments was that the advantage of the classroom change at mid-quarter, if any, was to the para-professional and not to the elementary children.

Items 13 through 16 on the para-professional questionnaire and 14 through 17 on the teachers were designed to determine the types of duties the students performed in the

elementary classrooms. The responses to these items indicate that what the para-professionals saw themselves as doing does not always compare with what the teachers felt was done in their rooms. However, in a number of cases, a teacher who had had more than one para-professional during the year made the notation that she had summarized their activities on one questionnaire, adding that some individuals had worked with the whole class where others had not, etc. Since each of the students reported individually, some differences here would obviously occur.

RATING OF THE METHODS COURSES

Table III (page 44) records the rating by para-professionals and by teachers of the methods courses offered during the Para-professional Quarter. The students were asked to rate each course on the basis of the benefit they felt they derived from it. The teachers were asked to look at each course from the viewpoint of how well they felt the students were prepared in that area.

These figures indicate that the students felt they benefited most from Ed. 305 - Teaching of Reading and from Ed. 332 - Teaching of Art. The course reported to be least beneficial was Ed. 325 - Teaching of Elementary Science.

Table 3

Rating of Methods Courses

Percentage of Respondents Who Ranked Each Course in Specified Category

		Ed 305 Reading	Ed 313 Soc. Studies	Ed 332 Art	Ed 325 Science
Student Responses 1 of little benefit to 5 of great benefit.	1	2.67	13.33	4.10	26.67
	2	10.67	17.33	-	34.67
	3	12.00	22.67	16.44	26.67
	4	29.33	29.33	21.92	10.67
	5	45.33	17.33	57.53	1.33
Teacher Responses 1 Students poorly prepared to 5 Students well prepared	1	2.22	-	-	-
	2	20.00	9.52	7.31	14.63
	3	33.33	38.09	34.14	36.58
	4	17.17	38.09	34.14	26.82
	5	26.67	14.28	24.39	21.95

The data also indicates that the teachers tended to give fewer low rankings, with more in the more-or-less neutral "3" position and very few in the lower "1" or "2" ranks.

The largest variances appeared in reading, which 74% of the pupils scored as 4 or 5 against the teachers' 33%, and science, which only 12% of the students marked as 4 or 5 compared with 48% of the teachers.

Both students and teachers scored art quite high: 79% of the students and 58% of the teachers rated it as 4 or 5. This occurred despite the fact that art was one of the subjects usually taught in the afternoon and the para-professionals had less opportunity to utilize their methods instruction in the classroom.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS MADE BY PARA-PROFESSIONALS AND TEACHERS

Of the 77 para-professionals who returned questionnaires, 57 contributed supplemental comments regarding various aspects of the program or simply expressed their opinion of it. Thirty-five of the 56 teachers offered opinions or ideas.

The largest number of comments made by both the university students and the Bozeman classroom teachers were

in praise of the program. In the interest of brevity, some of these comments are recorded on page 75 of the Appendix D to this paper.

The most frequent recommendations from the para-professionals were regarding the coursework offered in conjunction with the Para-professional Quarter. Twenty-four suggested that changes be made. Of these, sixteen advocated the inclusion of mathematics, ten asked for language arts, nine suggested omitting art and seven would replace science. Others designated no specific curriculum, but recommended that the coursework coincide with the elementary classroom schedules. The subjects most often taught in the morning in Bozeman schools were reported to be reading, arithmetic, language arts and social studies. Though fewer teachers wrote to this point, those who did made similar suggestions.

Thirteen students felt that there was too much time involved in completing assignments at the college level while spending mornings "on the job". Ten students reported that they felt the extra work load justified offering more college credits for the quarter. Some suggestions aimed directly at alleviating the work load were:

> Require the para-professionals to work only three mornings weekly in the schools.

Leave one afternoon weekly free from college classes.

Allow the para-professionals to terminate work in the elementary classrooms one week before finals to complete course requirements and prepare for examinations.

Reduce the number and/or length of assignments at the university level; try to make sure assignments more directly applicable to the elementary-class work, i.e., of more practical and less theoretical nature.

It was noted that three of the classroom teachers also indicated the belief that the university student had too much to do.

Other remarks by para-professionals regarding the organization of the quarter included four suggestions that the university coursework be offered the first half of the quarter to provide a background, followed by a half-quarter in which all day would be spent in the elementary classrooms, with seminars on Friday or one evening a week. It was mentioned that this could circumvent the problem of coordinating university courses with classroom schedules, as well as providing para-professionals with the opportunity to observe and participate in a full teaching day.

Two students reported their belief that Ed. 305 - Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School - should be a two quarter course due to the importance and the magnitude of this subject.

Another comment encountered involved an occasionally-felt lack of communication among the M. S. U. staff, the Bozeman teachers and the para-professional students. Some individuals from each respondent group reported that they were unclear as to the duties, responsibilities and limitations placed on both the para-professionals and the classrooms teachers. Students were especially concerned that some of them were given very little to do in the classrooms while others worked extremly hard. Coincidentally, one teacher reported that the only para-professional she had came in prepared "to observe only" and would not take any other assignments. Both groups felt there were inadequate guidelines in this area.

Another indication that communication weaknesses existed was the fact that some of the para-professionals proved unsatisfactory to their classroom supervisors. Despite some strong expressions of dissatisfaction from the teachers, none of them reported making contact with either the school administrators nor university supervisors to attempt to alleviate the problems.

Related to the role of the para-professional, both students and teachers suggested that the para-professional should not be asked to work with remedial students,

especially in reading, unless they have been specifically trained in remedial techniques.

Students asked for more concrete teaching suggestions from their university courses. One girl remarked that she was uncertain how to "teach creatively" at this point; she needed some specific ideas to handle specific situations.

Five para-professionals felt that more supervision from university instructors would be beneficial, especially if it included feedback soon after each supervisory visit.

Two university students, both of whom felt the Quarter was very beneficial, said they would like to see something similar, i.e., classroom practicum utilizing educational theories courses, as early as the freshman year for students in the educational field.

Two of the teachers' comments recommended that the para-professionals get more direction in lesson planning in their coursework.

Two other teachers felt that the para-professionals needed help from the university with control situations which might be encountered in the classroom.

Only two of the teachers who offered additional comments felt there was too much guidance from the university. One stated that she "didn't like getting help, then

being told what the help must do". The second said she desired no supervision by the university staff; she preferred to do the supervision of the students herself.

SUMMARY

This chapter has reported the findings of a study relating to the opinions of participants in M. S. U.'s Elementary Education Para-professional Quarter regarding various aspects of that quarter.

Responses to questionnaires sent to both student and teacher participants were displayed in table form, followed by brief discussion of some of the items and reports of some of the comments regarding the items which were submitted by the respondents. In addition, a summary was included of comments and suggestions submitted by the para-professionals and the teachers which, though not related directly to a specific item on the questionnaire, were pertinent to the purposes of this study and suggested possible areas of investigation by future directors of the program.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION - BACKGROUND

This study was initiated by the writer at the suggestion of members of the Elementary Education Department of Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana. The over-all goal of this investigation was to obtain the opinions of participants in M. S. U.'s first full year of a Para-professional Quarter in Elementary Education, operated in conjunction with School District No. 7, Bozeman, Montana.

The program was the result of a cooperative effort by M. S. U. and the Bozeman Schools. It has two main goals: (1) to provide the university student in elementary education with knowledge of children and the teaching profession which could not be gained through purely academic coursework and (2) to provide substantial and valuable help to the classroom teacher.

RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to secure the opinions of the participating university students and Bozeman teachers regarding the two major goals of the program as stated above.

It also gathered criticisms, comments and/or suggestions from the participants for future implementation of the program.

Five general questions were also considered in the study:

(1) Did the participating students feel the experience was generally beneficial to them?

(2) Did the classroom teachers feel the paraprofessional workers were, over-all, contributors to the class learning situation?

(3) What specific strengths and/or weaknesses were noted by the students and the teachers?

(4) What other suggestions for changes of, or additions to the program were most often made by the students and/or the teachers?

(5) Did this experience in any way alter the students' plans to enter the field of education?

SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The responses of the university students and the Bozeman teachers regarding the two major goals of the Paraprofessional Quarter, indicate that both students and teachers

felt the program was a definite advantage to both the elementary teachers and the university teachers-in-training.

Benefit to the para-professionals

There were no disagreements by either group regarding the value of the program to the para-professional. Well over 60% of each group was in "strong" agreement that the para-professionals profited from their experience. The teachers noted growth in the para-professionals' ability to sense the needs and interests of elementary children. The teachers felt that the para-professionals developed a better understanding of the objectives of instruction. They also felt the university students developed in their ability to relate to children.

The students felt without exception that they benefited from the program. With very few exceptions, they maintained and/or increased their desire to enter education as their career field.

Benefits to the classroom teachers and their pupils

The students felt they had contributed to the learning climate of the classrooms. Working with individuals and small groups were the most frequently mentioned activities when they were asked how they felt they contributed most.

There were few teachers who did not feel the para-professionals were an asset to their classrooms. Supplementary comments submitted by the teachers indicated that one bad experience was frequently a powerful factor in contributing to a negative reply.

Specific strengths and/or weaknesses in the program noted by students and teachers

As noted previously, most of the participants in the Para-professional Quarter felt it was an excellent experience, of benefit to all concerned. Both para-professionals and teachers felt rapport among all persons involved was a strength of the program. Students also mentioned the fact that the methods courses were made much more meaningful by having the opportunity to observe and utilize the theories and techniques in the real-life elementary setting.

As was noted in Chapter IV, the most frequent weakness in the program noted by students was the fact that the methods courses offered did not always coincide with the subjects being taught during the morning hours in the elementary schools.

Other areas for improvement suggested by respondents were: 1) supervision by university instructors, 2) communication between the university and local school system and, by students, 3) seminar sessions.

What other suggestions for change of, or addition to the program made by the students and/or teachers

Some teachers expressed concern that the practice of para-professionals changing rooms at mid-quarter might be detrimental to elementary pupils who could, under certain circumstances, be confused by exposure to up to nine instructors per quarter.

A number of the university students, and a few of the teachers, felt that the para-professionals' work load was too great during the Quarter.

Four students made the suggestion that the quarter be divided so that methods courses would be taken the first half and the practicum the latter half.

Two students felt that Ed. 305-Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School was of such scope and importance that it should be a two-quarter course.

A few respondents in each group mentioned the belief that para-professionals should not be expected to work with remedial elementary pupils without special training in remedial techniques.

Many university students asked for more concrete suggestions for actual teaching, as well as more supervision and feedback from the university instructors.

Two para-professionals suggested some sort of practicum experience be offered earlier than the junior year for education students.

Some teachers asked that the university help the students with more suggestions for both lesson planning and classroom control situations.

Two teachers felt there was too much guidance from the university staff and recommended more autonomy for the classroom teachers.

Did this experience in any way alter the students' plans to enter the field of education?

The responses from this group of students made it quite clear that the Para-professional Quarter, if it altered their plans in any way, made them even more eager to become teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

The writer has drawn the following conclusions concerning some of the data, ideas and issues reported by participants in the 1970-1971 Para-professional Quarter.

1. The program as a whole was of real and substantial benefit to both the university students and the

public school system and, thus, fulfilled both of the major goals of the program.

2. The fact that the university methods courses did not always coincide with the elementary schedules presented a double problem to the para-professional students: 1) that of the difficulty of scheduling practice with the university assignments and 2) that of working with elementary subjects for which they were not being currently prepared.

3. The percentage of respondents who felt supervision at the university level was inadequate was not overwhelming, but it was sufficient (47% teachers, 22% students) to justify attention being given it.

4. Communication problems did exist among the individuals and groups participating in the Para-professional Quarter. It appears that there is need for clear-cut channels of communication which can be utilized without creating personal or professional threat to any participant.

5. There is also need for more concise direction to all participants regarding the specific roles which they play in the Quarter.

6. The bi-weekly seminars were not fully satisfactory to the para-professional students. The sessions could best be improved by more structured assistance from the university seminar leaders.

7. Some elementary students might be confused by having too many instructors in one quarter. Such a situation could be psychologically and/or educationally detrimental to pupils who are in need of a more stable, less frequently changing environment.

8. The work load for the students was heavy during this experience. This appeared to be the result of two factors. First, a teacher does have a great deal of responsibility and plain hard work (a fact of which the para-professional appear to have become cognizant). Secondly, part of the extra work was caused, as has been mentioned previously, by the fact that the para-professionals were working with one set of subjects on the college level and another in the grade school.

This latter problem has already been considered by the university, and the decision has been made to change the course offerings for next year (1971-1972) to include reading, arithmetic, language arts and social studies. This change will serve two purposes toward improving the quality of the Para-professional Quarter: (1) it will provide college instruction in courses which will, indeed, be of immediate value to the students in their work with the elementary children and (2) it will decrease the work load for the university students.

9. The planned curriculum change at the university level negates the main rationale for a split-quarter organization of the para-professional program, and obviates any such change at this time.

10. It appears that the para-professionals are not qualified to work with unusually different, difficult, or remedial students.

11. The students would benefit from more explicit and concrete teaching ideas, as well as from more help in lesson-planning and control problems.

12. Practical experience for university students in education is successful in the junior year and could probably be utilized profitably even earlier in the college continuum.

13. While over 97% of the students finished the program feeling satisfied that they had chosen their futures wisely, the few who developed misgivings apparently felt quite strongly about it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the proceeding findings and conclusions, the following recommendations for the future of the Para-professional Quarter are offered.

1. The program should be maintained as a vital, integral part of the education of future elementary teachers.

2. The university has already made plans to change their curriculum to coordinate better with the elementary school schedules. However, if in individual elementary buildings the schedules vary somewhat from the norm on which the changes were based, it is recommended that the particular buildings involved make every effort possible to reschedule their daily program in order to provide more meaningful experiences to the para-professionals and more substantial assistance to the classroom teacher and the elementary students.

3. University staff members should be diligent with respect to their supervisory responsibilities and carry out those duties. It is also suggested that university supervisors make a point of contacting the classroom teacher should (s)he chance to be out of the room when the supervisory visit occurs.

4. The roles of the para-professionals, classroom teachers and university staff members are clearly defined in the Para-professional pamphlet. It is, therefore, recommended that a thorough program of education be conducted to inform the various participants of these roles.

M. S. U.'s Elementary Education Department should be responsible for each of its members being fully aware of his/her teaching and supervisory obligations. The university must also acquaint all para-professionals with their duties and responsibilities and the limitations thereof. Administrators of School District No. 7, or their representatives, should take responsibility for the surety that each teacher involved understands the goals and aims of the program, and the specific roles of the various participants. Direct, personal contact with the teachers would appear to be indicated as written memoranda alone may at times be overlooked or read too hurriedly for full assimilation.

5. It would also be beneficial to educate all participants to the existing chain of communication, wherein a student or teacher can discuss any problem or confusion regarding expectations with university staff members and/or Bozeman administrators.

For example, if either a classroom teacher or student feels his/her situation is untenable, there is recourse to conferring with the building principal and/or university advisors to request assistance with the problem, and possibly to request a change of assignment.

The determination might be made by the classroom teacher, building principal and university supervisor(s) that a particular student is in actuality performing unsatisfactorily.

If this occurs, it might be best for all concerned, especially for the elementary children who may be exposed to an unsatisfactory quality of work and/or attitude, to alter considerably the duties performed by that paraprofessional. The duties involving actual work with the children should be greatly reduced or eliminated, and those concerned with observation and other non-teaching tasks increased. In a very extreme case, the teacher, administrator(s) and university staff member might have to ask a student to drop out of the program temporarily. Such a student could be advised to take more background work, with the recommendation that (s)he look very carefully into his/her motives and degree of desire for pursuing a career in education. Without being arbitrary or dogmatic on this point, the supervisors might do well to suggest other lines of endeavor for which the student might be better fitted and in which (s)he would be more happy and successful.

6. Considering the students' comments regarding the seminar sessions, it is recommended that the university

seminar leaders at least have specific plans for each session. If it should happen that the students come in excited over their own observation, experiences, successes or problems, the leader should be flexible and allow the seminar to follow its own natural course. However, no session should be allowed to become tedious or to prove unprofitable for lack of adequate planning at the university level.

7. Consideration should be given to encouraging para-professionals in buildings which have an exchange-of-rooms program to remain in one room for the entire quarter. This could prevent potential problems for the elementary pupils and still allow the university students to observe and work with different groups of children.

8. No recommendation is made to alleviate the work load for the university students. The writer feels that the planned curriculum change will take care of the situation.

9. It is recommended that the present split-day organization for the Para-professional Quarter be maintained.

10. The para-professionals should not be expected to work with unusually difficult or remedial students unless the particular student has had preparation in this area and the classroom teacher is in full agreement.

11. It is recommended that university instructors give those students requesting them more concrete suggestions for lesson-planning, control situations and other specific teaching problems.

12. When administrative factors (staff, funds, etc.) allow, it is recommended that consideration to given to utilizing some form of "field-work" for university education students even before the junior Para-professional Quarter.

13. If it is possible to identify early the students who feel the para-professional experience has lessened their desire to become teachers, it is recommended that the university encourage these students to take advantage of counseling and/or guidance services to help them clarify their personal aims and goals for the future.

SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed the findings in a study of the attitudes and opinions of university students and elementary teachers who participated in the first full year of the operation of M. S. U.'s Elementary Education's Para-professional Quarter, and has attempted to draw some

conclusions and make recommendations for the future implementation of the program, drawn from results of questionnaires submitted to the participants.

The primary conclusion arrived at was that, relating to the major goals of the para-professional program, the Para-professional Quarter has shown commendable results in this first full year of operation. It has great potential to continue to serve as a powerful instrument in teacher preparation and in giving substantial and welcome aid to the local school system, its teachers and its pupils.

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APPENDIX A

A HANDBOOK FOR PARA-PROFESSIONALS

AND

THEIR SUPERVISING TEACHERS

1970 - 1971

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

. . . . . Kahlil Gibran

[redacted]

Professional Quarter Committee

Carolyn Billis

Rita Fish

Wallace Forsgren

Audelle Foust

Sybil Haugland

Robert Kaufmann

Barbara Moody

Beulah Stablein

Lola Swenson

Maurine Chilton - Student - M.S.U.

All Elementary Education Staff - M.S.U.

[redacted]

THE COOPERATIVE PROFESSIONAL OUARTER

This Program is a cooperative venture between the Department of Elementary Education and the Elementary Schools in Bozeman.

Juniors in Elementary Education would enroll for four courses to be taken in the afternoons concurrently with serving as para-professionals in classrooms in the elementary schools in Bozeman for one quarter. The four professional courses would be:

Educ. 305	The Teaching of Reading	4 crs.
Educ. 313	The Teaching of Social Studies	3 crs.
Educ. 332	The Teaching of Art	3 crs.
Educ. 325	The Teaching of Science	4 crs.
Educ. 400	Seminar	2 crs.
		16 crs.

This program has a two-fold purpose. First, it should provide the classroom teacher with valuable help. Second, it should provide the student with valuable experience. Unless the classroom teacher actually feels the student is more of an asset than a liability, the program cannot work effectively. The objectives of the Department of Elementary Education will not be met unless the para-professionals have an opportunity to learn more about children and teaching, in a practical sense, than could be learned without such an experience.

PROCEDURES OUTLINED BY THE PARA-PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEE

Para-professional assignments will be made with the consent of the classroom teacher.

1. No classroom teacher is to take a para-professional unless he wants one.

2. The para-professional will be assigned to the classrooms by the building principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

3. Each quarter the para-professional will be assigned in two different classrooms at different grade levels with the time equally divided between the first and second half of the quarter. (This would mean that a classroom teacher ususally would have two different para-professionals each quarter.)

4. Every effort will be made to place the student with the age group of his choice.

5. The para-professional is to teach a minimum of four lessons in each of these subject fields -- Science, Social Studies, Reading, and Art.

6. A college instructor will visit at least two lessons during each quarter. If the para-professional is having problems, then the college instructor may arrange with the classroom teacher for follow-up.

7. The para-professional will be expected to share in any and all chores and duties of the classroom teacher as they are assigned.

8. The classroom teacher will not assign homework to the para-professional. (The reason for this is the extremely heavy course work load at the University.)

9. In case of absence, the para-professional is to call the classroom teacher and the Department of Elementary Education in advance, the same as in student teaching.

Work Time of Para-Professionals

The work time for the para-professional will run from 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Thursday. The para-professional will not be expected to work during University holidays or Bozeman Elementary School Holidays.

Lines of Communication

In case of any misunderstandings or personality conflicts the classroom teacher is to work with his principal, and the para-professional through his advisor. It was the consensus of the committee that most of these problems could be resolved. However, in case of an impasse, the para-professional's advisor and the school principal shall function as a committee to make the decision to move the para-professional. In case of such a move, the Director of Elementary Education and the department head are to be kept informed.

What is Expected of the Teacher

The classroom teacher should feel free to use the para-professional as an aid for instructional purposes or to perform other classroom duties.

The para-professional should be of more help to the teacher than a hindrance. The classroom teacher should not feel obligated to always have the para-professional busy working with the children.

The classroom teacher need not feel obliged to plan hourly activities for the para-professional. Furthermore, the para-professional often should see tasks that need doing and do them. On the other hand, the teacher may want to give the para-professional rather careful and specific direction in doing some work with the children. In such an instance, this is fine too.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF PARA-PROFESSIONALS

They are expected to accept the responsibilities and duties assigned by the classroom teachers, and to become sensitive to the needs of the children. They should endeavor to be more of a help to the teacher and children than a hindrance. Consequently they will need to watch for opportunities to do those things which will enhance the teaching climate. The para-professional is expected to consider, in cooperation with the teacher, how he can build some child's self-esteem.

Some Ways Para-Professionals Have Been Used Successfully
(As Reported by Bozeman Teachers)

I have had girls work with individual students who needed special help in reading. They helped with make-up work for students who had been absent. One talked with individual students about library books they had read and helped them to select appropriate books. One girl typed stories the children dictated to her.

I used the para-professional to help with individualized work. It helped tremendously when she read the story to the class, because this left me free to help the children who had been absent with their make-up work. She also helped me to correct workbooks and prepare worksheets.

The most effective way is to have the para-professional work with students who need special help either enrichment or extra help. She also is helpful making learning devices etc.

Giving individual help to problem readers.

Giving individual help to students with arithmetic problems. (Gave special help working with money.)

Helping give tests as children were ready to take them.

Reading with the slowest (and smallest) reading group as they were in different books and series.

Had her read stories to the entire class. She also worked with small groups. This was done by using arithmetic and phonics games when I worked with reading groups.

Story-telling at rest time - the children enjoy a "new voice" and another personality. At workbook time it allows us to give more individual help. (Also any group activities, art projects, etc.)

I have had her work with or help individual children. Also, I had her give a listening test. At times I've had her ditto, correct papers, fix bulletin boards. But mostly, she had taught one child on an individual basis for reading.

They can be a great deal of help to the classroom teacher by doing the secretarial jobs such as correcting papers, recording grades, taking roll, making masters, and running them off, accompanying children to the library, gym, etc., and showing film strips.

Some Successful Activities as Reported by Para-Professionals

I had children make puppets as a follow-up of a story.

I showed a filmstrip on being alone and had the children make a booklet on loneliness.

I taught a math game.

I helped with workbooks, taught a lesson, made two bulletin boards, and administered individual oral reading tests to every student.

I taught a language arts lesson (color); a math lesson (vertical addition); aP.E. lesson (game); assisted the teacher in Math., P.E., Music and recess duty. I played my guitar for them in a music lesson.

I read for storytime; taught 2 dances; taught reading groups and corrected workbooks; taught an art lesson; prepared bulletin boards; taught cursive writing lessons; and read poems.

I helped administer a Frostig Test to a child, and since then have been working with him on the various exercises and training activities in the Frostig Program.

The classroom teacher will evaluate the para-professional on each of the following:

1. Ability to communicate with children
2. Cooperation
3. Willingness to try (effort)
4. Rapport with children

5. Punctuality

6. Finished Tasks Assigned

7. Participates in Teacher Assigned Duties

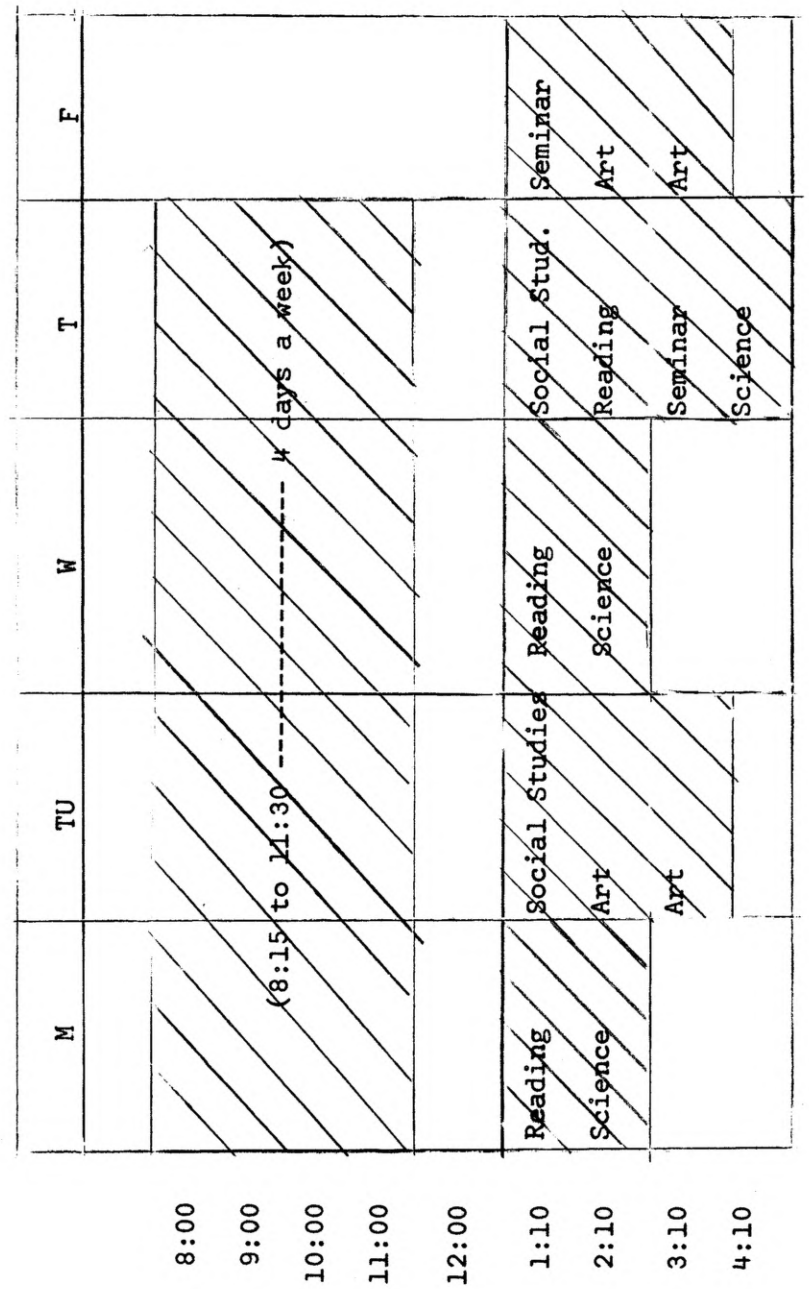
8. Demonstrates Initiative

9. Grooming

If a student has taken one or more of the four specified courses, special arrangements will be made.

A Sample of a

PARA-PROFESSIONAL'S DAILY SCHEDULE



APPENDIX B

PARA-PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the following statements carefully, then respond to each by circling the number which you feel best reflects your opinion. Refer to the following scale for the "meaning" of each number:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree		Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

If you wish, you may add comments regarding any item in the space below it or on the reverse of this sheet.

---

1. In general I feel the Paraprofessional Quarter helped prepare me for a career in education. 1 2 3 5 6 7

2. I feel that I was an asset to the learning climate in the rooms in which I served. 1 2 3 5 6 7

3. I feel I was adequately supervised by my college instructors. 1 2 3 5 6 7

4. The assignments given me by my classroom supervisor helped me to grow as a future teacher. 1 2 3 5 6 7

5. I found the over-all teaching situation a more complex and challenging relationship than I had anticipated. 1 2 3 5 6 7

6. I feel that this observation and practice in conjunction with the methods courses made the coursework more meaningful and beneficial to me. 1 2 3 5 6 7

7. This experience has made me less eager to enter the teaching profession. 1 2 3 5 6 7

8. I feel that the rapport with my classroom supervisors was good. 1 2 3 5 6 7

9. I feel that rapport with my university supervisors was generally good. 1 2 3 5 6 7

10. The assignments given me by my classroom supervisors seemed to be mainly "busywork". 1 2 3 5 6 7

11. I feel there is little or no advantage to being exposed to two classrooms per quarter. 1 2 3 5 6 7

12. If there is advantage to serving in two classrooms, I feel it is. (Please circle one.)

a. in seeing how two different teachers work
b. in seeing the differences in groups of children.

In replying to the next five statements, please refer to the following scale: 1 - most of the time 2 - occasionally 3 - seldom 4 - not at all

13. I worked with individual students (tutoring, reading to them, assisting them with work or supplies, etc.) 1 2 3 4

14. I worked with small groups (tutoring, reading, etc.) 1 2 3 4

15. I worked with the entire class. 1 2 3 4

16. I worked at non-teaching duties. (bulletin boards, clerical work, etc.) 1 2 3 4

17. I found the seminars helpful. 1 2 3 4

To indicate your responses to the next questions, please circle the answer thich you feel best expresses your opinion.

18. I felt the number of seminars was: too few too many about right just right

19. I feel I helped the learning atmosphere of the classrooms most by:
1. non-teaching duties (clerical, bulletin boards, etc.)
2. working with individual children
3. working with small groups
4. working with the whole class
5. other (Please mention briefly)

Please rank the methods courses you took according to the benefit you feel you gained from each (1 of little benefit to 5 of great benefit)

Ed. 305 Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 313 Soc. Stud.	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 332 Art	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 325 Science	1	2	3	4	5

Are there any further comments or suggestions which you would care to make for the future of the Para-professional Quarter? If so, please do so in the space below; you may use the reverse of this sheet if necessary. (Example: methods courses offered, content of seminar discussions, organization of the quarter, etc.)

During which quarter were you involved in the program?

F W S

At which grade level did you work? K 1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX C

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the following statements carefully, then respond to each by circling the number which you feel best reflects your opinion. Please refer to the following scale for the "meaning"of each number:

1	2	3	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

If you wish, you may add comments regarding any item in the space below it or on the reverse of this sheet.

---

1. In general, I feel that the Para-professional Quarter will be helpful in preparing the students for a career in teaching. 1 2 3 5 6 7

2. I feel that the para-professionals were an asset to the learning climate of my classroom. 1 2 3 5 6 7

3. I feel there was inadequate supervision by the university supervisors. 1 2 3 5 6 7

4. I feel there was little or no advantage to having the para-professionals change rooms at mid-quarter. 1 2 3 5 6 7

5. The assignments I gave my para-professionals were designed to allow me more time for instructional activities. 1 2 3 5 6 7

6. I feel that the rapport with my para-professionals was good. 1 2 3 5 6 7

7. I feel that my rapport with the university supervisors was generally good. 1 2 3 5 6 7

8. The assignments I gave my para-professionals were designed to help them grow as future teachers. 1 2 3 5 6 7

9. I noticed growth in the students' ability to sense the needs and interests of the children. 1 2 3 5 6 7

10. I believe the para-professionals developed a better understanding of the objectives of instruction. 1 2 3 5 6 7

11. I believe the para-professionals developed in their ability to relate to children. 1 2 3 5 6 7

12. I believe that my students developed more skills and knowledge as a result of having para-professional help.
1 2 3 5 6 7

13. I feel it would be advantageous to have some acquaintance with the para-professional before (s)he is assigned to my classroom in order to establish rapport.
1 2 3 5 6 7

In replying to the next four items, please refer to the following scale: 1-most of the time, 2-occasionally
3-seldom 4-not at all

14. My para-professionals worked with individuals (tutoring, reading, etc.) 1 2 3 4

15. My paraprofessionals worked with small groups (tutoring, reading, etc.) 1 2 3 4

16. My para-professionals worked with the entire class.
1 2 3 4

17. My para-professionals performed non-teaching duties (clerical, bulletin boards, etc.) 1 2 3 4

Please rank the following methods courses according to how well you felt your para-professionals were prepared in each area.
Rank from 1-poorly prepared to 5-well prepared.

Ed. 305	Reading	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 313	Social Studies	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 332	Art	1	2	3	4	5
Ed. 325	Science	1	2	3	4	5

Are there any further comments or suggestions which you would care to make for the future of the Paraprofessional Quarter? If so, please do so in the space below; you may go to the reverse of this sheet if necessary. (Examples: methods courses taken, number of hours the para-professional worked in the classrooms, organization of the quarter, etc

During which quarter(s) did you work with the program?

F W S

At which grade level did you work?

K 1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX D

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS FAVORING THE PARA-PROFESSIONAL QUARTER

Of the students and teachers who added supplementary comments to their questionnaire responses, 17 of the students and 13 of the teachers made comments which were favorable in nature, such as: "This is a fin program," "...a really great experience," etc.

Some of the other, more extensive comments are quoted below:

"The experience of working in the schools is the best learning activity I've had. Nothing can replace actual contact with children."

"Para-professional teaching was more worthwhile than all methods courses together."

"This has the greatest advantage for future teachers. It gives a broader view of the requirements for teaching."

"We must continue this program."

"A student <u>should</u> work with children while taking methods courses."

"When methods are taken in the junior and student teaching in the senior year, much valuable information is lost due to lapse of time."

"...The best thing yet in the elementary curriculum."

"...very beneficial...I can't wait for student teaching."

"... a tremendous step in teacher preparation."

"I found my para-professionals interested, concerned, cooperative and eager to learn--it was a pleasure to have them."

"I had much more time for preparing and individualizing with the para-professional help."

"...very worthwhile" "...excellent." "...the greatest ever."

"The elementary students really enjoyed the para-professionals." (This remark was made by 4 different teachers.)