

THE ROLE OF A COORDINATOR OF PROFESSIONAL
LABORATORY EXPERIENCES IN THE STATE
TEACHERS' COLLEGE AT DOVILLE

A Report of a Type B Project

by

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This project is recommended for approval by
the Student's Project Committee whose individual
certificates of approval are on file in the
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CHAPTER I

DIRECT EXPERIENCE:

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Introduction and Statement of Purposes

"The aims of education and of mental hygiene should be the same, namely the development and training of the individual for effective living in his social environment."¹ From the pen of a specialist in psychological adjustment we thus obtain our cue for the direction of education. Sounding much like a proponent of Dewey's pragmatism,² Shaffer goes on to state his position regarding the adjustment and improvement of an individual through school guidance: "It is now certain that a general characteristic can be improved through school instruction, provided a deliberate effort is made to show the student real-life applications of the trait being practiced."³

¹Shaffer, L. F., The Psychology of Adjustment, Houghton, Mifflin Co., New York, 1936, p. 501.

²Dewey, John, Experience and Education, The Mac-Millan Co., New York, 1946, and others.

³Shaffer, L. F., op. cit., p. 506.

This study is undertaken to examine how teacher education can be improved through the expanded use of real-life experiences, called professional laboratory experiences, and by organizing a college staff and program to provide for coordination of these experiences. To insure concreteness the study is focused on a single teacher education institution whose staff and students are seeking means to expand their professional programs. In order both to designate the limits of the study and to provide a framework within which evaluations and judgments could be made, the writer has used Standard VI of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.⁴ Over a two-year period evidence has been collected through observations, discussions with faculty and students, work with college curriculum committees, and appraisals of opportunities for direct experience to outline and define a proposal for implementing professional laboratory experiences. The core of this proposal is the creation of a staff position -- the Coordinator of Professional Laboratory Experiences.

Evolution of the Direct Experience Concept

The early founders of teacher education institutions realized the necessity of preparing teachers by illustrating

⁴The AACTE is a national organization of colleges and universities whose major purpose is to improve teacher education programs. Standard VI, entitled "Professional Laboratory Experiences," is one of the organization's nine standards used to measure the quality of these programs.