E.W. Storey

As is common practice in all Colleges of Education, our students have to spend thirteen weeks in schools during their three year course, engaged either in observation or on actual teaching practice. We have our students with us in the department for the first two terms before they spend their first month in schools. They have a further nine week practice in term eight – this being the time when we expect them to show, in their teaching, that they have not only a sound philosophy of their own, but are able to interpret this and work with pupils producing thought provoking, design based problems in a variety of materials.

It has never been our policy to segregate the preparation for teaching from the rest of the course or to produce a series of lectures on the topic. Rather, it is our aim to consider the problem throughout the student's time with us so that constant discussion ensures that the teaching situation is never very far from his mind. One task constantly facing us is to make sure that the course we have designed specifically for our students is not taken by them and used – even in an adapted form – in the school situation, for to do so would reveal a confusion of objectives.

How then, do we set out to ensure that our students go into the schools as people competent to tackle design problems that will involve solutions in one or several materials? We try from the start to emphasise the value of recording the various aspects of each problem that is set. They are encouraged to state the problem clearly, to analyse it fully, to make notes on the technology involved and finally, to set down the educational validity as they see it, of the whole process. In this section, also, we would hope to see comments on the possible application of some aspects of that work in the classroom situation. From these beginnings, topics emerge which are discussed at length between the student and his tutor as they arise. At the end of each project – and all projects are of short duration to ensure maximum exposure to design situations and experience of different materials and their specific techniques – a discussion on the validity of the exercise is held. At this time the more salient points concerning application of that work to the classroom situation which results from a student's recordings are dealt with more fully.

During the second year of our course, a weekly tutorial period is timetabled to give small groups the opportunity to discuss freely the many topics that arise from their own coursework and those which are relevant to their objectives as young teachers.

As an integral part of the course all students are required to produce a special study which they commence in the second term and submit at the beginning of the ninth term, following their final teaching practice. Owing to the length of time allowed for this work, fairly comprehensive research is expected and tutorial guidance is offered after a topic is agreed. As a general rule, the study is planned to have three aspects the first historical, the second technological and the third educational. We hope that during the historical section the work will be kept broad in concept but that during the technology section a particular area of interest will be isolated and studied in depth. By this means we try to

ensure that with a suitable topic, research is essential to give a faithful, historical perspective; a very sound background knowledge of the related technology is acquired and an awareness is fostered throughout the work whereby a student becomes conscious of a search for material that can be used in the educational field. If the topic is well planned, it provides valuable teaching material for the final teaching practice and recorded experiments in this respect together with responses from the children often form the major part of this section of the study. All work so produced should be original in that its origin is in the student's own writings and, because his involvement with the work should become deep over the three years, he should be able to give that extra dimension to his work in the classroom or workshop. Certain topics lend themselves more to the suggested format than others. For example, power, structure, steam, fabrication, transmission, abrasion, visual communication offer almost limitless scope for historical and technological investigation and from this work could stem a multitude of problems suitable for the school situation. Most students aim to complete the main bulk of their study prior to term eight when they go into schools for their long practice. They should, by then, have ample material on which to draw and, what is most important, from a sound understanding of their area of study should come a self confidence that is so necessary if one is to master the technique of teaching practical subjects.

Certain more mundane but highly essential requirements are covered in formal lectures. These deal with the day to day running of a department; the teaching of skills; the problems of requisitioning; the attendant problems of workshop organization and, of course, first aid. For the last item we tend to ask a member of the College medical staff to deal with the problems likely to be met but, throughout their time with us, all students are made aware of the necessity for adequate safety precautions, especially where newer ideas are being tried out, as these might, on occasions, call for improvised techniques.