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SCHOOL OF TEACHER EDUCATION FIRST  
INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE TEACHING  
PROJECT 1983 Series 575

NEPEAN COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF TEACHER EDUCATION

FIRST INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE TEACHING PROJECT, 1983

*Project*

PROJECT TEAM

(from left)

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

To translate an idea as exciting as an International Practice Teaching venture into a practical success depends upon the inspiration, co-operation, plain hard work and attention to detail by many people. All involved in the recently completed Practice Teaching/Field Studies visit to the United States owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Max Gillett for his inspiration, hard work and attention to detail in bringing a bright idea into reality.

On behalf of the School of Teacher Education, I would like to thank the many people who co-operated with Max in making the program a success. The hospitality of the families who hosted our students and the friendliness and professionalism of teachers and School Supervisors in schools where our students practised were greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank the Nepean students who undertook this 'pioneering' venture. I am sure that their professionalism and commitment to teaching was a splendid advertisement for Australian teachers and Nepean College in particular.

Congratulations to all involved on the success of an excellent program.

(Dr) C. J. Field  
ACTING DEAN  
SCHOOL OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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Fred Puhl	..	..	..	..	(Phil Lewis)
Bob Kochis	..	..	..	..	(White Salmon)
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John Sundquist	..	..	..	..	(Minter Bridge)
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MAX GILLETT



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### THE NEPEAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Bachelor of Education degree offers a course of study for the preparation of professional educators with qualifications as generalist teachers in the primary school. The program aims to provide a sound development of practical and professional skills for teachers, together with a rigorous course of academic study worthy of award at degree level.

The first three years provide a sound professional preparation and a strong educational foundation necessary to ensure that advanced studies in the fourth year of the program can be pursued with competence, interest and rigor. At the conclusion of three years, a Diploma in Teaching, General Primary, is awarded. After at least one year of successful teaching, a fourth year of study leads to the award of Bachelor of Education. This fourth year provides a culmination of the total professional and educational development, and thus ensures the application of theory and knowledge acquisition to classroom needs, experience and commitment.

The first three years must therefore provide for the development of competencies in the academic disciplines which are related to the profession of teaching, the understanding of child development, the acquisition of knowledge of the teaching/learning process, the development of teaching skills and the inculcation of those qualities of character and personality which will enable graduates to deal with the exigencies of the school. In addition, the first three years must lay the rigorous foundation for those who would pursue the outcomes of degree level disciplinary study.

The fourth year is designed as an integral part of the total course and concentrates on a rigorous understanding in the advanced lobes of educational, professional, curriculum and liberal studies. Studies will be presented at a level of conceptualisation appropriate to the final year of a degree course in education, drawing upon the experiences of the earlier section of the course and the minimum of one years' teaching experience. Thus the fourth year will provide a culmination of both academic and professional development and provide a meaningful extension of the students' total experience in the first three years.

The above philosophical framework has been translated, in the Bachelor of Education Primary program, into aims which are best discussed in relation to the five component lobes of the course. These program lobes are :

- i) Educational Studies
- ii) Professional Studies
- iii) Introductory Studies
- iv) Curriculum Studies
- v) Liberal Studies

Although separately listed, these lobes fit together and provide a meaningful structure wherein inter-relatedness occurs among the various units within the program.

i) Educational Studies

While providing students with the fundamental, theoretical framework for understanding their role as professional educators and in developing appropriate pedagogical strategies, this lobe will form the major academic disciplinary study. Upon graduation students will have achieved the philosophical level of understanding expected of degree level graduands through the critical evaluation and application of knowledge provided by the contributing disciplines of psychology, sociology, history and philosophy.

ii) Professional Studies

This lobe of the program concentrates on the application of knowledge and skills by providing students with an opportunity to relate and test theory by application in real life situations. Various components of this lobe will include practice teaching, demonstrations, field studies, in-school experiences and lectures and seminars with experienced practitioners within the profession. In order to ensure the appropriateness of experience, this lobe involves course work relating to teaching procedures, competencies and skills which permit the integration of course work and classroom experience as an on-going inter-related experience within the profession of education.

Furthermore, in this lobe the student is brought to an awareness of the teacher as more than the sum total of his disciplinary parts. The segment aims to develop in students the necessary awareness and competencies for effective classroom instruction, planning, competency in the skills of diagnostic testing and evaluation and sensitivity to the needs of the exceptional child, both gifted and impaired.

iii) Introductory Studies

As stated, students from this program will, at the end of three years, become generalist teachers in the primary school. It is therefore essential that such students have a sound conceptual understanding of the essential framework underpinning each of the disciplines they will teach. To achieve this, each of the Introductory Studies focuses its aims on the philosophical foundation of each of the disciplines.

Each Introductory Study will present students with a rigorous, theoretical and meaningful course of study which will act as a fundamental conceptual basis to future curriculum and liberal studies.

iv) Curriculum Studies

This segment of the program will provide students with fundamental knowledge of the curricula and associated pedagogy for each of the component disciplines of the New South Wales Primary Curriculum. Each study is essentially vocationally orientated and will provide students, for each teaching area, with the understanding, knowledge and skills necessary for sound educational planning and effective teaching. Strong links are established between this lobe and the Educational and Professional Studies lobe.

v) Liberal Studies

This segment of the program is committed to the evaluation of knowledge through the application of critical, analytical thought. Course units are offered at two levels. Level I provides students with disciplinary study of depth and rigor usually encountered in the first year of degree level studies. Level II aims to extend such disciplinary studies.

## BACKGROUND TO THE 1983 PROJECT

In December, 1981 a number of students who had just completed their first session of practice teaching requested an opportunity to practise outside Australia. In particular, probably as a result of a series of lectures presented by Dr. Marcia Slater, a school principal from Medford, Oregon, these students suggested the west coast of America as a possible location.

The College Principal, Dr. E. Swinbourne, and the Dean of the School of Teacher Education, Dr. K. Kennett agreed that the idea had merit. Consequently negotiations with school administrators in Oregon and Washington began early in 1982. At this stage the Tigard, Hillsboro and Riverdale districts in Oregon and the Kelso and White Salmon districts in Washington offered to join the project. Unfortunately the Kelso offer had to be refused for logistic reasons. Within the other districts, then, the student teachers were placed in Mooberry, Minter Bridge, Brookwood and W. Verne McKinney Elementary Schools in Hillsboro, Phil Lewis, Byrom, Durham and Metzger schools in Tigard, Whitson Elementary and the Middle School in White Salmon and the Riverdale School in Multnomah County.

The project required that students complete twenty days of teaching practice and participate in an extended field studies tour. These activities were to satisfy requirements of the School of Teacher Education in these two areas. Practice Teaching was to be supervised by one member of College staff in association with the co-operating teachers in their schools.

Accommodation during the field studies tour was arranged through a travel agent, with each student meeting personal costs. However, during the practice teaching session members of the schools' communities provided accommodation for the students. This generosity was greatly appreciated by the students and placed the venture within the financial reach of most, if not all of them.

EVALUATION

An evaluation of the Nepean practice teaching session was conducted in two ways. First, each student was invited to complete an evaluative questionnaire (Appendix A). Eleven of the thirteen members did this. Second, each was requested to submit a written statement regarding the experience. All thirteen wrote evaluative comments which are presented herein.

The Questionnaire

Questions regarding the performance of the supervising teacher are related to the role definition provided by the College (Appendix B). Student responses to these questions are provided in Table I. They indicate that the supervising teachers were accessible and very helpful. They were very supportive of the students, were interested and encouraging, and made the students feel very welcome and comfortable in their classrooms. Students felt that the supervising teachers observed enough lessons to be able to formulate opinions and to make suggestions about future teaching. There were some divisions of opinion, however, on matters relating to written feedback and the demonstration of teaching techniques and strategies.

TABLE 1

<u>EVALUATION - SUPERVISING TEACHER</u>	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. <u>MY SUPERVISING TEACHER:</u> i) was available to discuss matters related to my teaching.	10	1			
ii) was very helpful in discussions about my teaching.	8	3			
iii) was a great help in the planning of lessons.	5	6			
iv) freely shared ideas on how lessons might be taught.	8	3			
v) observed my teaching regularly.	7	4			

vi) gave me adequate oral feedback on lessons observed.	2	4	2	3	
vii) gave me regular written feedback on lessons observed.	10	1			
viii) made me feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom.	10	1			
ix) was positive and supportive.	9	2			
x) clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses in my teaching.	5	6			
xi) made constructive suggestions for improvement.	5	6			
xii) clearly outlined expectations for my classroom work.	3	4	3	3	
xiii) observed my teaching sufficiently to form a clear impression of it.	6	4	0	1	
xiv) showed keen interest in my concerns and problems.	6	5			
xv) was very encouraging.	7	4			
xvi) demonstrated particular teaching techniques and strategies for me.	3	4	3	1	
xvii) helped me in my becoming acquainted with the pupils.	5	6			
xviii) gave me sufficient independence and responsibility within the classroom.	10	1			
xix) encouraged me to visit other teachers and classrooms.	7	4			
xx) made me feel that I was a valuable and capable teacher.	7	4			

Generally the data presented in Table 1 support the written comments of students regarding the warmth, support and assistance provided by the supervising teachers. Responses to the last item in this section of the questionnaire suggest that students were made to feel valuable and capable; a very significant outcome of the practice.

Responses to questions in Section 2 of the questionnaire clearly indicate that the Nepean students were made to feel very welcome in the schools and were treated as professional equals of the teachers. In addition they were encouraged to visit other classrooms, investigate the resources of their particular schools and visit other schools in their districts. These responses are summarised in Table 2. Again they might be considered in conjunction with the College's role definition for the school principal (Appendix C).

TABLE 2

<u>EVALUATION - THE SCHOOL</u>	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
2. <u>THE SCHOOL IN WHICH I WAS PLACED:</u>					
i) made me feel welcome.	9	2			
ii) allowed me to visit other teachers and resource personnel within the school.	9	2			
iii) allowed me to visit other schools in the district.	7	2	2		
iv) treated me as the professional equal of the teachers.	6	5			
v) provided a variety of resources to help my future teaching.	4	6	1		

Student responses to questions regarding the college supervisor present a different picture from those relating to the American schools and teachers. The data suggest that the supervisor visited schools regularly but often did not observe teaching nor provide written feedback on teaching performance. It seems, however, that the supervisor demonstrated interest in student progress and discussed this matter with the supervising teacher.

Students seem to agree that the liaison function was performed adequately but are divided on the matters of observation of and feedback on classroom performance. These responses are presented in Table 3. They may be compared with the appropriate role definition (Appendix D).

TABLE 3

<u>EVALUATION - COLLEGE SUPERVISOR</u>	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
3. <u>THE COLLEGE SUPERVISOR:</u>					
i) visited my school regularly.	3	4	1	3	
ii) assisted me in the planning of learning experiences.		7	1	2	1
iii) observed my teaching regularly.		2	2	5	2
iv) discussed my teaching with me after observing lessons.	5	3	0	0	3
v) presented written feedback for each observation.	2	3	2	0	4
vi) discussed my progress with my supervising teacher.	3	8			
vii) was interested in my progress.	5	6			
viii) wrote a final report on my practice teaching.	1	1	4	3	2
ix) worked co-operatively with my supervising teacher.	4	7			
x) provided a sound liaison between the college and the school.	8	3			



Inspection of the data provided through the questionnaire suggests that the Nepean College students practising in Oregon and Washington were provided with invaluable practical experiences. They were made very welcome in the schools and districts and were afforded every chance to maximise their professional development. The teachers were helpful and supportive, yet provided opportunities for responsible and independent decision making. They made the students feel valuable and capable. In addition, they extended hospitality and warmth. Their involvement and help are very much appreciated.

(2)

(2)

Evaluation submitted by Elizabeth Jones

In my month spent at Riverdale School, many similarities to and differences from schools in New South Wales became apparent. The principal of the school was Dr. Claude Offenbacher and my supervising teacher was Nancy Langdon from the Mathematics Department. I was involved with children from grades three to six teaching mathematics, and with grade eight, teaching some physical education. In my evaluation, reference will be made to school administration and organisation; the curriculum; teaching procedures and teacher training; staff relationships; my supervising teacher; and the pupils of the school. The variety of experiences I had made the teaching period really worthwhile.

Riverdale School has approximately 200 pupils and 20 teachers, and is situated in Multnomah County, an upper middle class area outside Portland. Schools in Oregon are organised into districts, and the District School Board makes the decisions concerning issues of school organisation, finance allocation, teacher roles etc., for their particular schools. Riverdale is unusual in that it is a one-school district and representatives from the parents in the community are the actual school administrators. The principal of the school is the only staff member on the School Board. It seemed that if several teachers from various faculties were on the School Board, the school staff could become more involved with administrative decisions. From a practical viewpoint, this may be an advantage, with the actual teachers participating in discussions about issues that would ultimately be affecting themselves and their pupils. However, I only had a limited contact with Board members and was not involved in any meetings held during the period of practice teaching.

Riverdale directly serves pupils from kindergarten through to eighth grade. The school is divided into three instructional teams. They are the Primary team from kindergarten to second grade; the Middle Grades team from third to sixth grade; and the Upper Grades team from seventh to eighth grade. In addition to the three teams, there are subject area specialists who teach French, Physical Education, Music, Art, and Developmental Learning. These teachers work across all instructional levels.

The school organisation at Riverdale is very similar to New South Wales High Schools (grades seven to twelve). During the day, the teachers remain in their own classrooms, and the pupils move to various subject rooms according to their timetable. Each morning, the pupils would go to their 'homeroom', where each teacher is responsible for about 16 pupils. They have to monitor the overall progress of each pupil and conduct parent-teacher interviews. There is a 30 minute 'homeroom' period each day which is used for values clarification and group building activities. The creativity of the pupils is encouraged in these groups and various social values are discussed.

The staff of the Middle Grades in which I was situated, is made up of 7 teachers (2 maths specialists; 2 language specialists; 1 reading specialist; 1 science specialist, 1 social studies specialist) and 3 teachers' aides. There is a teacher-pupil ratio of 1-15 which results in an emphasis on individualised instruction. The pupil program involves direct instruction and individualised independent skills periods. In 'core' periods (direct instruction), pupils have lessons in language arts/reading and mathematics, for 80 minutes and 50 minutes respectively each day. There are 50 minutes of either science or social studies daily, which alternates every 6 weeks. There are three 40 minute periods a day in which pupils attend special classes (Art, P.E., Music, French, Math Lab) or work on a weekly 'skills contract' in Language Arts, e.g., book reviews, research projects. Pupils meet once a week with their teacher to discuss their work and plan for their individualised assignment for the following week. Pupils receive mathematics assignments daily too, and may use the skills periods to work on these.

The pupils are encouraged to do a lot of independent work early in school (Middle Grades), and both parents and teachers have high expectations of them. Individual projects and assignments are more common here than in New South Wales primary schools (grades three to six). The pupils are able to cope with these because of the periods in the day they are given to complete them, and because of the amount of teacher help they receive. This is due to the low pupil-teacher ratio, which is one of the school's advantages. The pupils seem to have more freedom than pupils in New South Wales, as the school situation in Riverdale is less heavily structured. I experienced a fairly casual atmosphere in the classroom. However, the teachers had standards set and pupils apparently gave acceptable results. It was a challenge for me to step into a teaching situation like this. If pupils in N.S.W. displayed behaviour that Riverdale pupils displayed, the teacher would use stringent disciplinary strategies to manage and control them. Yet when I began teaching at Riverdale, the management

and control strategies I used had to be very different and I found myself becoming more accepting of this atmosphere as I adjusted to the new situation. There was a more informal approach to learning from both pupils and teachers.

Riverdale School has its own curriculum, stating general aims for the school district and specific aims for each grade and each subject. The types of subjects taught are comparable to those here in New South Wales, but there are slight differences within them so that content is relevant and applicable to their situation in Oregon. The pupils have the opportunity of learning a variety of subjects and are taught by teachers who have some proficiency in that area. They are assured of a certain amount of time in each subject each week, which allows for the total development of the pupils. In New South Wales primary schools, teachers need to have some proficiency in not one, but all subject areas, and time allocation becomes more of a problem.

The teachers of the Middle Grades at Riverdale, don't have to hand in their program every five or seven weeks as is common here. There are set texts to follow, at least in mathematics, and the units being taught are usually found within these. Instructional teams meet and decide on texts most suitable for the pupils. Teachers in New South Wales have to do extensive planning, and here again, the approach to programming in New South Wales seems to be more formal. My supervising teacher had made up a day book for herself and shared the layout with me, but this practice was not used by all teachers. Instead, there was a reliance on textbooks for lesson outlines.

The teaching methods I observed at Riverdale were very similar to those I have seen in New South Wales primary schools, but there was a greater emphasis on some particular strategies. Small group teaching was very common and was good for both pupils and teachers. The teacher had constant close contact with the individuals in her group, and progress of both pupils and their program could be evaluated in much more detail. The teachers used both formal and informal techniques in their evaluation and a common teaching practice was to pre-test, teach and test.

Occasionally, subject teams would team-teach, but the pupils almost always would complete assignments in smaller groups. The teachers would supervise this with the help of a teacher's aide. As a result of this emphasis on small group teaching, the teachers developed strategies specifically suited for this method. As my experience has been with whole classes of about thirty pupils or classes with several groups in them and only one teacher, the strategies I normally would use in the classroom, had to be adjusted. I found that I was able to develop a more personal relationship with the pupils I taught.

Teacher training in America is quite different from that which we know at Nepean College of Advanced Education, in which students undertake a three year full-time Education course, then have a year's experience in the schools before completing their degree with another two years of part-time study. The American teachers complete a general College course for two years. There is a practice teaching session of about three months in their final year. Some colleges have programs in which students have contact with the schools for half a day a week

in their first year of Education, although one can't generalise. There is an advantage in having experiences in a variety of schools, as we do in New South Wales, at different stages in our development at College, as there is contact with many styles of teaching, different staffs and organisations, and ranges of pupils.

At Riverdale, there was a good relationship evident between members of each instructional team. In the Middle Grades, team meetings were held regularly and there was constant communication between subject teachers. There wasn't much contact between the three instructional teams, but this is comparable to the situation often found in New South Wales, where Primary and Infant teams often have separate staff rooms, but there is still an awareness of the organisation, activities and pupils in other departments. Dr. Offenbacher had an excellent relationship with the pupils at Riverdale and it was not often that he missed a day mixing with pupils in different classrooms. He made announcements each morning and in these he personally congratulated pupils on successes, achievements and even birthdays. It was good to see this type of interaction which is sometimes difficult to achieve to a high degree because of large numbers of pupils and staff in schools.

The teaching staff showed a real concern for their pupils and there was a positive teacher-pupil rapport, especially with my supervising teacher. Nancy showed that she was willing to spend time, both in and out of class, with pupils. This type of interpersonal interaction with pupils formed the basis of a successful working relationship for Nancy. The facilities within the classroom and school as a whole were very good. The classrooms have quite an open plan and there is easy access from one room to the next. The tables and chairs are moved when necessary, to suit the needs of the class. Most rooms have a bathroom, sink, and storage space for bags and coats.

One aspect that was really outstanding to me was the positive approach to interpersonal interactions that existed generally amongst the school staff. The self concepts of pupils were constantly built up whenever the opportunity arose. This was possible because of the high teacher-pupil ratio. In one behaviour modification program, teachers had to positively reinforce all acceptable behaviour displayed by the child and ignore any unacceptable behaviour. The teachers I was involved with were more accepting of unusual and casual pupil behaviour than teachers I have been associated with here in New South Wales.

My supervising teacher, Nancy Langdon was really enthusiastic about the program we had undertaken and showed a constant interest and willingness to help. Evaluation of my teaching was done regularly by her and several lessons were analysed in detail. She was always available to provide any guidance I needed. The lesson plans I completed for teaching surprised both Nancy and other staff members as they were not accustomed to seeing lessons being formalised into such written detail. As my practice teaching period progressed, my lesson plans became less formal and I relied more on a day book for planning. A lot of importance is placed on lesson planning in practice teaching in New South Wales, but in the new situation I was in at Riverdale, lesson plans took second place to my interest in finding out about teaching styles, organisation, and about pupils in the school.

Nancy's role as a supervising teacher was fulfilled very well, as a result of her own ability as a teacher, and meetings with the College supervisor, Dr. Max Gillett. The number of students on practice teaching and the distances between schools in which they were situated, made it extremely difficult for the college supervisor to see students teach. However, he was available if problems arose, or if there was a special need for him to visit a particular school.

Nancy was very flexible in her program and allowed me to select learning experiences for the pupils and the methods with which to teach them. She was as interested in finding out about teaching in New South Wales as I was in finding out about teaching in Oregon.

I actually took over three of her regular mathematics classes - a third/fourth group and two fifth/sixth groups for three weeks, and was involved in the various other mathematical workshops that took place. The teaching of problem solving techniques is stressed and the computer in education has been implemented strongly. This was one of the best motivations for pupils in mathematics. One surprising factor was that pupils at Riverdale were just starting to learn about the metric system, which has already been implemented in Australia. During practice teaching, I was given the freedom to observe other teachers, and this resulted in my teaching some physical education to grade eight, along with Leanne Wilkinson and Jill McIlroy, two other students on practice teaching at Riverdale. I was able to see some Language Arts lessons, Science activities and Social Studies units, in which Marianne Sweeney really impressed me with her enthusiasm and creative ideas.

There was evidence of the staff at Riverdale catering for individual differences. In mathematics lessons, there was always three small groups being taught separately, and they were graded from low to high abilities. The teachers planned remediation or extension work for their respective groups and the teacher-pupil ratio, again, was a great advantage here. Pupils of lower ability were withdrawn from their regular classes at times too, and were taught by the Special Education teacher. However, there were doubts as to whether this program would continue, due to financial cut backs at the school, which was disappointing as it catered for the special needs of pupils at Riverdale.

For a part of the first week at Riverdale, I was fortunate enough to be involved in a school field studies trip to Beverly Beach on the Oregon coast. It was a science excursion in which the pupils dug for fossils and studied the natural environment around them. We camped in tents and cooked our own meals each day. The effort that staff and parents involved put into the trip was very commendable. It was a great experience for the children, and especially for me, as I was able to get to know those who went - all of the 5th grade (approximately 20 pupils), some staff members and several parents, in a situation outside the classroom.

The pupils at Riverdale came from quite a wealthy background and most of their needs were very well satisfied. No school uniform was required and teachers were surprised to find that standards were set in uniform in Australian schools. Initially, it was hard to adjust to the attitudes of some pupils at Riverdale, but I feel that during my stay I developed positive relationships with the pupils, and they were interested in hearing about Australia. My accent amused them at times, and just as I had to get used to their colloquialisms, they gradually became accustomed to mine. I took part in organising a school assembly with Leanne and Jill for the upper grades and it was really successful. We were glad of the opportunity to be able to communicate some facts about Australia to the children and staff.

Riverdale school is quite unique if compared to the schools I have experienced in New South Wales, and this fact alone made the period of teaching an interesting learning experience. I was welcomed into the school and community, and this along with the enthusiasm of my supervising teacher made my stay really enjoyable. The teacher-pupil ratio of 1-15 allows teachers to develop close interpersonal interactions with pupils, and they utilise teaching methods and strategies that enable them to cater for the needs of the individuals. I found that a new situation like this, you have to be very flexible as a teacher, and need to approach the situation with an open mind.

My priorities while teaching at Riverdale varied from those I normally would have in practice teaching in New South Wales. I was more concerned with finding out about the school organisation, teaching styles, pupils and surrounding community and environment rather than developing my own teaching skills. However, simply by teaching in this different situation and having to adapt to the pupils, teaching methods and school organisation I feel I have derived considerable benefit from this experience.

Evaluation submitted jointly by Leanne Wilkinson and Jill McIlroy

In a letter dated 26th May, 1983, the Superintendent of Riverdale, Dr. Claude A. Offenbacher, said, :

"Riverdale is a one school district with 220 students, 20 full-time teachers, 6 aides and other support personnel. The school is the 'hub' of a small unincorporated suburb of Portland, Oregon; a community that has long prided itself on the excellence of its school and has supported it accordingly, both fiscally and through personal involvement.

The school is a public one, but has 18 students in attendance as tuition paying students from other school districts. The students are consistently among the area's top achievers. The strengths of the school rest in the excellence and unusually large number of faculty for a school of the size, a host of full-time specialists, Outdoor Field Study trips for all of the students in both Fall (Autumn) and Spring, and a rich Curriculum."

"Riverdale school has a unique and complex organisation, Kindergarten through second grade is grouped together in a non-graded open classroom environment (Grades K-2 are known as Primary grades), and taught by core teachers, all of whom teach Math, Language Arts, Reading, Social Studies and Science. Third through



sixth grade is departmentalised, but it retains a strong core component. (These grades are known as the Middle Grades). Teaching assignments at this level include Science, Language Arts, Math and Social Studies. Seventh and eighth grades are fully departmentalised. (These grades are called Upper Grades). These grades are staffed by Science, Math, Social Studies and Language Arts specialists. Each of these three divisions is organised into a team: Primary (K-2), Middle Grades (3-6) and Upper Grades (7-8). In addition to the teachers comprising each team there are subject area specialists in French, P.E., Music, Art and Developmental Learning, who work across the three levels".

(Curriculum Policy Document,  
Riverdale Elementary School, 1983)

Because we were both at the same school and therefore had the opportunity to share many of the same experiences, we felt that a joint evaluation of the practice teaching component of the American trip was justified.

Although we were assigned to different departments within the school, we were given ample opportunity to observe other areas of school life at Riverdale. For example, we taught Physical Education across the grades and, on one occasion, 'New Games' to grades 7 and 8.

The first week we arrived in Portland we attended various field trips. Jill McIlroy went to Molalla over a three day period with grades 1 and 2, while Leanne Wilkinson attended 'Outdoor School', where emphasis was placed on environmental education. During this time we became well acquainted with our students.

We also visited the Law Courts in Portland on a Social Studies field trip (associated with Law Related education) with grades 3, 4, 5 and 6. Further, Jill McIlroy went on a Music field trip, that lasted an entire weekend, with grades 7 and 8.

The Australian students presented an 'Australian' assembly to grades 7 and 8. We showed slides of Australian capital cities, gave pupils an idea of some of the differences between the United States and Australia, and had them enact "Waltzing Matilda".

Jill had the opportunity to visit Mooberry School, in order to make general observations about another American Elementary school. She also visited the Portland E.S.D. Resource Centre. This trip resulted in her collecting useful resources, which will aid her future teaching career. Jill was impressed by the fact that money had been invested in a positive way for the education of Portland children.

One outstanding feature we noticed about our Practice Teaching experience in the United States was the positive approach teachers had in their teaching styles. Very little negative reinforcement was used. Instead, children were given praise for displaying appropriate

behaviours. Not only was positive reinforcement used with the children, but also with us, as student teachers. The teachers focussed on positive aspects of our teaching. This helped us to gain confidence in our own abilities as teachers. It also made us more willing, in fact, eager, to work on our future lessons, in order to improve them.

Teacher-student rapport was well developed. As a result children were confident, articulate and self-directed. Children are trained to be self-directed right from Kindergarten, and this is carried on through the grades. This self autonomy, in fact, is an integral part of the Integrated Day. We learnt much from the Riverdale School system; in particular we saw that the modified Integrated Day (by this we mean the introduction of timetabling) was an excellent vehicle for coping with individual differences in the classroom. As far as we could ascertain, children in the Primary and Middle Grades really enjoyed school.

Team teaching was used extensively in the Primary grades. Because of this, we were able to observe, on a first hand basis, that the keys to success within a team teaching situation are co-operation, pre-planning, flexibility in scheduling, the use of a variety of materials and learning experiences, and finally, emphasis on individualised learning. We could see that the pooling of professional and personal strengths of each of the team members offered richer opportunities to the students, and at the same time, stimulated the professional growth of the teachers. Further, the open nature of the classrooms fostered positive pupil attitudes towards school and learning.

We were able to see, also that the philosophies of Riverdale were concerned with the complete development of the child - socially, physically, academically and emotionally. More importantly, care was taken that the child achieved this development at his/her own rate, rather than at a rate imposed by unrealistic assumptions based on grade expectations. These goals were realised, because Riverdale, in its uniqueness, was able to draw upon the strengths of its Superintendent, Dr. C. A. Offenbacher (affectionately known as "Dr. O" by the children), a vital school board, an enthusiastic and dedicated faculty, and strong parental support.

It should be noted that whilst our teaching practices in Australia have been a growing period in our professional development, this overseas experience, which enabled us to put into practise those philosophies, teaching strategies and innovations we had studied in our teaching procedures courses, but hadn't been able to practise for a variety of reasons, must be the highlight of our training to date.

The transition from a familiar Australian classroom, to an unfamiliar American classroom was made easier for us because of the warmth shown to us by both the staff and pupils at Riverdale. In many instances the children had been learning about Australia in preparedness for our arrival. Because our visit was a cultural exchange, as well as a Practice Teaching experience, we were able to teach the children about various aspects of Australian life. For example, Grades K-2 did units on Australian animals and Australian Aborigines, while the Middle Grades studied Australia in general.

One outcome of our overseas practice teaching experience is that two schools, from different countries, are now corresponding. Fifth class pupils at Leonay Primary School are corresponding with fifth graders at Riverdale Elementary School.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to all those who extended their kindness and generous hospitality towards us. We benefited greatly from the experiences we gained from teaching in another country; gains that we could not have otherwise received.

The American Practice Teaching trip was an invaluable experience. It is one that should be repeated; all should be allowed the opportunity to encounter, as we did, a school system other than our own. From these experiences comes growth. Such an outcome is a necessary, indeed, intrinsic part of Education.

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Evaluation submitted by Mark Drury, Whitson Elementary School

I found my overseas teaching experiences to be very beneficial and rewarding, both professionally and personally.

My practice teaching was done in the small rural community of White Salmon, Washington. Population was approximately 1500, unemployment in the area was around 40%, divorce rate reflecting the national average of about 50%.

I had two 4th classes in the Elementary school, with about 25 pupils in each class. The community was about 25 pupils in each class. The community was almost totally made up of white Americans, no black families but a few Mexicans living in the area. In my lower 4th class, there were 3 Mexican children and one adopted black girl.

The school day started at 8.50, had a fifteen minute morning recess and one hour for lunch. In the afternoon there was a fifteen minute recess, which most teachers disliked as it interrupted the afternoon and unsettled the children. School finished at 3.20 p.m.

Like other American schools, White Salmon was run and supported by the community. The wealth and size of the community therefore had a great effect on the teachers' wages and the schools' resources. White Salmon teachers were amongst the lowest paid teachers in the state.

Teachers applying for a job apply to the individual school district, not to a state education department. All teachers, including the principal are "hired and fired" by a school board, consisting of teachers and members of the community.

Quite a few of the teachers in White Salmon were young females in their first year of teaching. Probably because White Salmon is a country area, teachers tend to stay in the district only a few years before moving away to get married.

The whole American system seems to be very much more competitive than its Australian counterpart. Many new teachers were already discussing further education to obtain their Master's degrees. Children are more oriented towards achieving good grades and are very aware of 'careers', a word that many Australian children of the same age would now know the meaning of. Setting of personal goals is seen as important, and is stressed in the schools.

The total number of staff in the elementary school was about 30, including 2 resource teachers that worked with the slower children, and a specialist Music and P.E. teacher. School resources and facilities were similar to those of the average Australian school.

It was very rare for a child to be held back to repeat a grade. This apparently is because if a teacher feels the child should repeat, not only does the parent have to agree with the decision, but also the school counsellor and finally the child. Many high school teachers were complaining about this because many of the children entering high school did not have the necessary skills to cope with the work.

Children tended to behave the same as Australian children of the same age though they did look a bit older, probably because they did not wear school uniforms.

There would be more similarities than differences when comparing classroom organisation and teaching. Generally the school seemed less structured or regimented, more like a high school where children take more responsibility for their own learning. Children are given a lot of free reading time, time for completing projects and extension activities. Teachers did not seem to "push" the children as much, and lack of time to complete programmed work did not appear to be such a major concern to the teachers as it might be in Australia.

There was a great reliance on text books. Each subject, even handwriting, had a text book from which children would work. There was very little use made of the chalkboard as an aid. Overhead projectors were limited in number and rarely used.

Discipline - Each class had its own class rules which were listed on the class wall. Also in easy view of the children was a 'discipline plan', stating the consequences for breaking a rule (daily).

1st time	.. .. .	name goes on the board
2nd time	( √ ) .. .. .	lose 10 minutes recess
3rd time	( √ √ ) .. .. .	lose 15 minutes recess/ write a paper about the problem.
4th time	( √ √ √ ) .. .. .	Go to the office - call/ write home about the problem
5th time	( √ √ √ √ ) .. .. .	Conference required with parents - school suspension

The school also had a discipline plan, which stated rewards and punishments.

If a child was caught for running in the building, disobedience, fighting etc., he was given a pink slip :

- (1) 5 minutes time out
- (2) Loss of noon recess
- (3) To Principal
- (4) Other action

If on the other hand, the child was seen doing something good, they were given a gold slip. This entitled them to special privileges such as being allowed to see a special film.

Unlike a number of Australian teachers, I have known, American teachers did not use threats or sarcastic comments towards the pupils. Though this may be only an individual teacher difference it impressed as school policy and educational philosophy.

The school was very strict on the type of language used in the classroom. So, interestingly, an Australian children's play I took to White Salmon with me, had to be censored before being given to the children. The play, The Loaded Dog, contained a line in which the publican threatens to hit his wife, this had to be omitted as did the phrase "Run like hell", which was changed to "Run like heck".

#### Evaluation submitted by Terry Hopkins, White Salmon Middle School

The overseas practice has proven to be an immensely valuable and enriching program. On a personal level, the experience allowed one to live within another culture, which, although different, is very similar to our Australian culture. Professionally it has allowed me to experience another school system which was most different in the area of administration. In this respect, the school was vastly different compared to a Primary School in the New South Wales state school system.

Basically, the following shall be observations made while on practice teaching. Comments are not intended as criticisms, but merely my impressions.

The district Administration was governed by an elected School Board with six members, one of whom is the School Superintendent who coordinates the activities of the Elementary, Middle and High Schools. The remaining members were each from the Upper Middle Class SES, well educated and mostly business people. This group hires the School Superintendent, Principals and staff. They are responsible for schools policy and can influence curriculum policy.

These people are generally not educators, nor had any of them, except for the Superintendent, had experience in teaching. One may question their understanding of educational matters, but my impression was that it was a competent Board. One major advantage with this Board, was that they were much more readily aware of the community's needs. Pressure from the community could influence curriculum.

Teachers are employed by the Board. Salaries and other educational expenses are also paid by the Board who raise the money from community levies and State funds. White Salmon is not a rich district though many of their facilities are surprisingly good. I feel though, that this division of areas into self-governing districts means that the rich districts get the pick of the crop or the best of everything, while the poorer districts do with less. I do not fail to recognise that our own educational system is not devoid of similar inequalities nor short comings.

There did not seem to be much of a difference in teaching methods and I would say the school in which I worked was fairly traditional. An example of this was the seating arrangement. The students were seated in straight rows which were not changed - remember though, that this is a junior high and this arrangement is the norm in Australian High schools, particularly when students do not stay in the same classroom all day. One thing I did notice was the constant use of textbooks for most subjects - again this is not dissimilar to Australian High Schools.

Evaluation was constant with assignments regularly being checked. I caused some confusion when I checked my first assignment. It was a math paper and I put my  $\checkmark$  and x. One girl came up to me on the verge of tears because she had thought she had nearly everything right, yet I had marked her wrong. In this school, a  $\checkmark$  means a wrong answer, while in Australia it signifies good or correct work.

The students of White Salmon Middle School were tremendous. I had three separate classes each day and I enjoyed all three. The students were respectful and I had no trouble with management. In comparison with Australian students I find it hard to discern any real differences. Of course there are cultural differences such as the students chewing gum in class which I had to adjust to rather than forcing the students to adjust to me. But on the whole 'kids are kids'.

The college supervisor faced a number of problems. Firstly the ratio of one supervisor to thirteen students means that it was very difficult for the supervisor to supervise frequently. This problem was compounded by the fact that at White Salmon we were 70 miles away from the rest of the group.

It would be a tragedy if the White Salmon School district were left out of the districts for future student teaching programs. The whole community made us welcome and Mark and I spoke at a number of functions such as Rotary. Many of the folk could not understand how we ended up in White Salmon and we were treated like royalty. People in this small community did not know much about Australia let alone had met Australians. The Superintendent has indicated that they would look forward to the district being chosen again and that surrounding

districts had also shown interest. I really recommend that these areas be considered and not be discounted because of the distance.

One could use a string of adjectives describing how terrific the experience was, but I believe it is sufficient to say that given the opportunity, I would go again.

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Evaluation submitted by Jenny Scott, Mooberry Elementary School

Mooberry Elementary is one of eight schools in the Hillsboro District in Portland. The schools were opened at different times during the space of 40 years. The older ones are built in a traditional style (4 single, average sized classrooms on either side of a corridor) whilst the more recent ones typify modern designed schools i.e., spacious rooms with sliding partitions between classrooms for team teaching purposes. The classrooms also lead off from library and several 'commons' (tiled areas for activities such as craft, cooking or even 3 R's subjects).

A tour of the Hillsboro schools proved very interesting. I observed a variety of classroom designs, teaching programs and materials, teaching methods and pupil work. Most of what I saw was new to me although I had heard of some of the teaching methods and materials. I was surprised to see how much more motivated to learn and enthusiastic the children were. The extra workable teaching space, modern teaching equipment and methods of teaching made a marked difference to pupil learning.

Hillsboro schools were all under the authority of the same administration staff located in Barnes Elementary, the oldest school in the Hillsboro district. I could see the benefits of such a system. Each school had ready access to a wide variety of teaching resources that were plentiful and advanced. Teaching methods and ideas were exchanged between schools within the district. Teaching at a school under this system meant that I was able to gain extra knowledge concerning teaching equipment and methods. I was then able to apply some of this knowledge in the classroom and even decide on its worth.

There were approximately twenty-one classes and classrooms in Mooberry Elementary (three per grade level). The teachers within each grade level team-taught to some degree. The classrooms were designed in such a way that when the partitions adjoining the three classrooms were opened they formed one large '½-donut shaped' classroom. This set-up provided me with opportunities to teach a single class consisting of pupils with varying abilities, a single class consisting of pupils with the same level of ability and the entire grade (3 classes). These experiences were beneficial. Teaching the entire grade boosted my confidence.

Each class had P.E. and Music with specialist teachers who were employed full-time at Mooberry. My first class had one hour per week of each of these subjects. I watched these sessions in progress. The children were definitely advantaged. I was surprised to see how much children at the young age of 7 years were capable of learning.

Mooberry also had on its staff a speech therapist, Remedial Maths teacher and a Social Worker. I observed different children (some from my own class) in consultation with specialist teachers. This gave me a broader understanding of the serious problems some children have. Seeing these specialists strive and in many cases succeed with the children emphasised the strong need for such specialist teachers in all schools.

My class teacher, Kathy Popplewell was a most caring, enthusiastic teacher. I saw great value in the way she treated those in her class since they all responded well to her teaching style. She took time to talk personally with each child. Children were taught to be responsible for their actions. Bad behaviour was dealt with on a one-to-one basis privately where Kathy would sort through in logical sequence the reasons for and effects of the child's misbehaviour. Good behaviour was praised excessively allowing for the child to feel satisfied and successful. This treatment plus many other teacher acts gave confidence and pride to the children. I found many of the children generally uninhibited and outgoing. Watching Kathy teach with enthusiasm and purpose and seeing the children respond favourably changed or modified much of my teaching style.

Kathy also used her positive encouraging manner on me as a teacher. This greatly increased my confidence! Once I had this I felt I could concentrate better on developing areas of my teaching style.

I was impressed also by the large amount of teacher co-operation and concern they showed for one another and for me. This friendly attitude amongst staff members also encouraged teacher-pupil rapport.

Caring, hospitable people outside of school allowed me to perform better in the classroom.

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Evaluation submitted by Caroline Grice, Brookwood Elementary School

The period of practice teaching in the United States was a most valuable and worthwhile educational experience. I found it to be of great benefit to my professional development and I feel, I learnt more from this prac than from all my others in Australia.

The main area where I learnt most was from observing Marylou (my supervising teacher) teaching lessons. Being able to see, and experience the effect that constant positive reinforcement has on children in a classroom was great. I began to realise that the things we have been taught back at college are in actual fact very realistic and meaningful after all. I now understand that a class can be effectively motivated, encouraged and disciplined with the consistent use of positive reinforcement and contingency statements; a fact I had not appreciated before. I also attribute this constant positive atmosphere to the fact that the children I saw in the schools in America seemed to be more self confident, and far more outgoing than many of the children I have seen in our Australian schools.

Children in American classrooms appeared to be less shy and afraid of the teacher and his or her peers. This I feel is largely due to the fact that the child is constantly praised and encouraged by the teacher and therefore does not feel insecure or scared of making a mistake.

Another point I noticed during my stay at Brookwood, is that the staff are very eager and willing to share and learn from each other. This is something I have not observed on any of my other practice teaching experiences. I found it very refreshing to listen to the staff at Brookwood discuss new ideas. This very positive attitude towards their profession is also reflected in the amount of their own time they spend on additional classes designed to improve their teaching standard and strengthen their teaching style. It was very interesting to hear that many of the staff undertake special classes and areas of study during their summer vacation. This often is done through a personal desire or interest. However, university credit is given if they complete specific classes. These classes include management and control type lectures, special education classes and professional development or interest type classes.

It was also interesting to see that Kindergarten children in American schools only attend class for one half day during their first year at school. Two sessions are conducted by the teacher, a morning session from 9.15 to 11.00 and an afternoon session from 12.00 to 2.15. This eliminates the factor of children becoming tired after a whole day at school (which can be the case for Australian Kindergarten children). Important however, is the fact that American Kindergarten children did not seem to be disadvantaged by this pattern of attendance at school.

I also noted that the relationship between home and school, teacher and parent at Brookwood is a lot more relaxed, informal and friendly than I have noticed in many Australian schools. I met several of the children's parents who came up to the school to speak to Marylou, look at the classroom and have lunch with their children. This, I was told, is a common occurrence which is encouraged by the school and the individual teachers. Indeed it must be fairly common as a parent would just quietly walk into the room and the class would hardly notice anyone new in their room. This relaxed casual atmosphere builds a solid, positive relationship between the parents and the school. This is naturally healthy for the child. The child can relate more easily to his or her parents if the parent knows what is going on in the child's class.

One other thing I noticed was the use of specially trained staff for children with speech or learning problems, and also the frequent visits made to the school by the counsellor. Children with any learning or social problems are diagnosed early and are given regular help away from the classroom. This is one thing that is not common in Australian schools but it is something that I consider to be of great importance in our schools.

I noticed a few basic differences between American and Australian schools. American children have the opportunity to buy a nutritious, hot lunch whenever they want. The menu is set for all the schools in the district and parents are given a copy of the monthly menu.

Children in United States schools are not compelled to wear a school uniform and they come to school each day wearing their own choice of clothes. The school grounds are open for the children to use for play after school hours, and so the school becomes almost a community playground which appeared to help keep the children off the streets.

All school excursions and field trips are paid for by the school. A child does not have to rely on his parents or guardian for the money for a school or class outing. The school district owns its own school buses which are driven usually by mothers who are employed by the school district on a shift basis. Therefore the buses are always available to the school, and the children (especially young children) become very attached to their driver who has good control and authority over them.

To conclude, I thoroughly enjoyed this practice, and I feel that I have become a more confident and competent teacher as a result of it. The encouragement given me by Marylou was tremendous. I feel that the warmth and enthusiasm shown by the other teachers helped me to become more relaxed and which in turn helped me to improve my teaching style. I would like to thank the college and the schools in America for allowing this practice to take place. It was the most worthwhile practice I have had and I would encourage and recommend it to anyone who is currently training to become a teacher.

I can only think of two ways it could have been improved. That is, if it continues in the future then with the same number of students in the same number of schools, more than one supervisor is needed to accompany the students. Dr. Gillett had an almost impossible task, trying to see each of us, and perhaps we needed to be able to sit down after a lesson and discuss it. Time often did not allow for this and so we may have missed some of our post lesson evaluation. Also if I was to criticise my practice in any way, it would be to say that out of all the schools in the Hillsboro school district, Brookwood operated in a very similar way to many of our schools in Australia. That is, it had all closed classrooms with a single teacher for each class. Other schools in the district namely Minter Bridge and McKinney were more modern and operated on an open classroom, learning centre, team-teaching system. Working in one of these schools would probably be more educational and valuable to the student. However, I in no way disapproved of my school. I appreciated the opportunity for professional and personal growth that was provided for me.

Evaluation submitted by Tracey Hall, Minter Bridge Elementary School

I spent by 4 weeks practice teaching at Minter Bridge Elementary School, Hillsboro, Portland, Oregon. During those four weeks I spend most of my time teaching the Kindergarten classes. I say classes because the Kindergarten classes in Hillsboro are quite different to the Australian equivalent. The Kindergarten children are one year older than Australian Kindergarten children when they begin school.

Also they spend only half a day at school. Thus each Kindergarten teacher has two classes per day. The morning class runs from 8.45 am through till 11 am, then the afternoon, from 12.00 through till 2.15.

I had two Kindergarten classes to work with, each class with approximately 28 children. I believe this type of system could be used to advantage in Australia. The first year of school for the Kindergarten children in Hillsboro allows them to get accustomed to the school environment before spending the whole day at school from 1st grade on. Children of this age, also have very short attention spans, thus two to three hours a day at school is sufficient time for them. This also allows the teacher to have two classes per year.

I loved working with two classes of Kindergarten children - it was a new and different experience from the Australian system and it was quite funny - teaching the same lesson twice in one day! Well any mistakes made in the first, could be identified and improved in the second!

Although spending most of my time with the Kindergarten children, I also prepared lessons for each of the other classes/grades in the school. Some classes are in teams or open classes, and some are single classes or closed - and parents decide which class their child/children will enter each year. I thoroughly loved and benefited from this system as it gave me a range of children to work with. It encouraged me to find out more about my own country, and it gave me the chance to share my country with children who knew little about it. It was incredible to hear these sort of questions asked about Australia - "Do we live in houses?", "Do we drive cars?", "Do we get married?", "Do we have television?", "Are our houses made of mud?", "Do we live in the bush?", and so on. After spending quite a lot of time with them it was great to see these children realise that although there are minor differences between Americans and Australians - we are very much the same, we speak the same language, have similar cultures etc.

My time actually spent with the children from each class, including my Kindergarten children, opened my eyes to the learning needs of children and encouraged me more in the profession I have chosen to follow.

During the four weeks in Hillsboro, the Superintendent of the Hillsboro School District took Jenny, Caroline, Val and myself around to visit the different schools. The older schools reminded me very much of the schools in Australia. The newer ones (including Minter Bridge, the newest in the District) exemplified practices which are sometimes found in schools in Australia - that is, team teaching. Minter Bridge and a couple of other schools have what it termed a "learning centre", which is the centre of the school. The classrooms lead onto this huge learning centre - some rooms are closed (1 grade only), some are open (2 or 3 grades under the supervision of 2 or 3 teachers in a team).

One aspect of each of the schools whether old, or new, that impressed me was the school lunches. The schools serve 'hot lunches' everyday to the children. There is no canteen, but the cooks bring the lunches around every day. The children either purchase their lunches at the beginning of the week, or bring their own to school each day. The

lunch menus are different each day - and are very nutritious - hot vegetables and fruit served each day.

The schools in Hillsboro are very parent-oriented, and school has a very high priority in the eyes of the community. Parents of each district are elected onto the "Board", and the School Board members are responsible for the School District's Administration. Jenny, Caroline, Val and I attended a board meeting - where the board members were interested to hear about Australian Education.

I was very encouraged by two aspects of Minter Bridge School. First was the relationships between teachers within the school. They worked very well together, and were very friendly toward one another both in and out of school - they spent quite a bit of time meeting together in each other's homes etc. I was made to feel right at home as soon as I reached the school, and it was not just because I was an "Australian Student" - it was a genuine interest in me, and a wanting to help me in any way possible.

The second aspect that really impressed me in this school was a teaching procedure used by every teacher - that of "positive reinforcement". Karen, my co-operating teacher taught me what she was taught on positive reinforcement and while with her during those four weeks we built up a very close relationship. Karen never uses negative reinforcement. She builds up every child in the classroom, and even those with behaviour problems respect her. Karen never raises her voice with any children. Her tone will change, and her voice may be more serious but she taught me that the children must be taught to be responsible for themselves and for their own actions. Karen disciplines the children in a way that does not look like discipline. Because of this there was no 'yelling' in the classroom. This approach to the management of pupils was dominant throughout the whole school.

During the four weeks in the schools, negotiations were being made for an emotionally disturbed class to use a spare classroom - beginning in their next school year. I sat in on the four meetings the staff had with those proposing the program, and it was great to see the teachers question the program in various ways, to suggest ideas and possibilities, and to see them, by the final meeting encouraged about the program, and eagerly awaiting to include it, come September.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Minter Bridge. I found the children very similar to Australian children, although perhaps a little more outgoing, and a little more mature in some ways. The teachers were very helpful, friendly, generous and encouraging, and the people I met made the trip very worthwhile and beneficial to me both as a teacher and as a person. They are very special friends.

One point I would like to make on behalf of mine and the rest of the group's supervision is this. Max saw me teach once during the four weeks, although he came to the school three times - twice to see Karen about various things. Max had to go to four different districts, with a possible four schools to visit in some districts. One of those four districts included two schools in Washington, about seventy miles from

Portland. I believe Max had too much responsibility put upon him alone. I feel that I received sufficient supervision from my co-operating teacher, and because Max saw most of us teach once, maybe twice, I feel two lecturers on our trip would have halved the responsibility put on Max. Not that he complained - he was glad to help us in any way possible. Sending two lecturers would, however, have been more beneficial for our teaching time as well as halving the other responsibilities that Max took on as our "tour" leader.

In closing I would like to say a big thank you to Max, for all he did for the group, a thank you to the college for allowing us to be the first to experience a great practice teaching and field studies time outside of our country, and a word of special thanks to the schools who hosted us. Lastly, I would like to recommend a similar trip to the other students following us in the Bachelor of Education Course - a very beneficial, and enjoyable experience, one they would not forget or regret.

Evaluation submitted by Valerie Collins, W. Verne McKinney School

This, my fifth block practice teaching assignment, was conducted in the Hillsboro District which is some twenty miles outside of the city of Portland, Oregon. It should be noted that I have had the opportunity to practice teach in schools, in four week blocks, four times, before this American practice and in my own estimation it was by far the most successful.

One could not go further without mentioning in some detail the personal relationships that were made during my stay in Hillsboro. Vince and Jan Ross were the first of my hosts while in the district. They and their four children made up a wonderful family of whom I have grown quite fond. Through their company, generosity and kindness I had a very enjoyable two weeks. The second of my hosts were the principal of my school, Ed Bettencourt and his wife Connie. They have two boys and in the two weeks that I stayed with them, we became very attached to each other. It was very sad when the time came to say good-bye to these warm people but I'm sure we will remain friends for life. Many other friendships were formed during my stay and because of the open warmth and kindness of these Oregonians, they will never be forgotten.

The three teachers with whom I worked deserve my utmost gratitude for their patience and forbearance. They were Rita Goodwin, my supervising teacher and the members of her team, Paulette Hedrick and Stuart Omdal. Their attitude towards me was so professional that I was regarded as a teacher with almost equal standing. My acceptance by the other teachers in the school was equally professional and the help I received from them all was most welcome. Because these teachers co-operate and share with each other, it was also expected



of me to do the same. Consequently the teachers and children in the Verne McKinney School had more than a little of Australia in their midst for the four weeks of my stay.

During my time at McKinney I was not only given the opportunity to teach in American schools but also to observe many educational practices that I had only read about and had not seen in action. These include such things as open plan classrooms, team teaching, and group teaching in all subject areas. These situations may be seen in Australian schools, but I have not seen them to such a high degree. Teachers themselves seem to have a very positive approach in their teaching methods. The use of positive reinforcement, behaviour modification and assertive discipline are extensive. Again, these are methods I have read about rather than seen in action. These factors and the personal relationships that were formed contributed to a successful practice teaching. For further clarification I have tried to list and comment upon as many of these as possible under headings as follows :

### School District

As stated previously the district to which I was assigned, was Hillsboro. Within this district there are eight Elementary Schools. These schools are administered by a school board which consists of a number of people elected for a term of one year. The Hillsboro District Superintendent, Mr. Alton Smedstad is in charge of running all the elementary schools in this area. A very efficient administrator, he has worked in this capacity for thirty two years. Unlike our N.S.W. schools, Kindergarten is not compulsory. Indeed some districts do not offer Kindergarten classes within their schools. Hillsboro District Elementary Schools conduct two sessions per day for five year old children. The first session runs through the morning and the second in the early afternoon, with different children attending each session on a daily basis. Each district engages its own staff of teachers. Again unlike our own education system in N.S.W., which is centralised, teachers are hired on the basis of their experience and qualifications and are accountable to the School Board. It was observed that they demanded a high standard from the teachers they hired.

### Schools

All eight schools in the district were of varying age. Their structure and layout reflected this age. The older schools, of which about half would fall into his category, were of the old style, with contained classrooms, set out along wide corridors. These classrooms had limited wall space, a problem which was later overcome in the more modern buildings. The more recent buildings are of a more modern design and incorporate many new ideas. These schools consist of one huge building that is more or less in the round. The centre of the building is a large area known as the Learning Centre. The classrooms all lead out into this area where children have access most of the time. The classrooms themselves are huge and are based on an open plan.

All of these school buildings are air conditioned and artificial lighting is provided throughout. This reduces the need for many windows and provides for huge wall space on which children's work can be displayed. Another aspect of the classrooms is the intercom system. The office can speak to any or all of the classrooms, and teachers, no matter where they are in these big open space rooms, can be heard without the need to approach an intercom device.

One of the many impressive aspects of these school buildings is that they contain a fully equipped gymnasium which is used not only during school hours but after school as well. These buildings also have a large area or room which is set aside for music. Quite often small concerts can be held in these areas. Another real advantage to the large open classrooms is that they make allowance for a large wet area where all art and craft activities can take place with little or no disruption to other activities in the main classroom area.

All schools in the Hillsboro District supply hot meals each day to the children at a relatively low cost to parents. This means that the schools set aside an area in the building for cooking facilities. This is something else we do not have in N.S.W. schools. Meals are available to teachers and parents as well as children. This is another good idea because it allows parents to join their children and their friends for lunch.

I was assigned to an open planned classroom which contained grades one, two, and three. My particular grade was third. What was most significant in this area, was the fact that children moved within the grades and the groups depending on their abilities. Therefore some children, although their home class group might be second grade, could be found, during language or math activities in a third grade group. Children moved within the grades not according to age, but according to their capabilities. It might be noted too, that the more gifted group of children in the third grade were doing work that would be expected of fifth grade.

### Teachers

My supervising teacher was Rita Goodwin. She is what is termed a master teacher as she holds a masters degree in education. She has been a practising teacher for the past thirteen years. Without her guiding help I would not have gained as much as I did from this practice. Rita was most helpful in sharing and communicating ideas that I might try in this practice and use in future teaching experiences. Her manner was quiet and positive and her rapport with the children was outstanding. In my time there I never once heard her raise her voice, yet she was always able to maintain control and attention. Her quiet approach to teaching is something I would like to aim for in my own dealings with children in the classroom.

In this open classroom situation with the movement of children through the grades, Rita had to work closely with the two other teachers in the room. The teacher co-operation was very impressive. They worked together on lessons that would be presented, pupil observation and evaluation and on activities that would involve all three grades.

The teachers in this team, together with all the teachers in the school, and from what I have observed in other schools in the district, use positive reinforcement in dealing with the children. It is something that these teachers work at constantly. For example, if a child needed to be corrected about bad behaviour it was done very quietly, teacher to child, without drawing unwanted attention from other children. When undesired behaviour continues it is brought to the attention of the principal, the school counsellor and the parents. They would try to determine the cause and try to find a solution that would change the behaviour into a more favourable one. There is a saying within the schools - "NO STUDENT WILL BE PREVENTED FROM LEARNING AND NO TEACHER WILL BE PREVENTED FROM TEACHING". With assertive discipline, parents become involved with discipline not only at home but in school.

The teaching methods employed in the school are based on the I.T.P. method. That is Instructional Teaching Procedures. All teachers work at this and I was encouraged to use this approach in my practice teaching in the school. It is very helpful when writing up lesson plans because one must set out specifically exactly what one will do : the objectives, what the children will learn, how the teacher will behave and what the children will do to show they have learned what the teacher set out to teach them. This approach is something I would like to study in much more depth.

At the W. Verne McKinney school, there was also a resource teacher, who worked in close co-operation with all teachers in the school. The school also had a specialist music teacher, a physical education instructor, a speech therapist, remedial expert and a special person trained in E.S.L. Although one or two of these particular teachers maybe found in N.S.W. schools, you would not find all of them in the same school full-time teaching.

### Children

I found children in this school to be very independent in their school activities, confident in their approach to school work and in their interaction with peers and teachers. Children seemed to be more motivated and self directed than I have observed so far in children at home. Self direction, it must be noted, comes from training and these children begin this training from their first days at school. Teachers in this school make very good use of peer teaching and it seems to work well.

While I was in the school all the children in grade three were working on making an animated video movie. This was quite a creative exercise. The teacher was always on hand to help but in the main, the children worked together to make the movie. They made the characters, the settings and operated the equipment with only occasional directions from the teacher. The children were so enthusiastic and motivated they often worked at this activity in their own time. This was not only a creative exercise but also one that required the children to interact and co-operate with one another towards a common goal.

Children are the same the world over but I am forced to the conclusion that we, here in Australia, sometimes underestimate the capabilities of the children we teach. The relationship that I had with the children I was teaching was marvellous. I had very few problems with the children who were very open with their affection and co-operation.

### Teaching Materials

These were many and varied and I will only comment on a few of these. The teachers taught from books that were especially prepared with lesson plans, and suggested teaching strategies. This might sound as if the lessons are stilted but this method works very well. The books they use are highly structured in their approach. For example :

- Language Areas :
- \* Teachers Handbook Guide
  - \* Children's Reading Book
  - \* Children's Workbook
  - \* Teachers copy of Workbook
  - \* Dittos (stencils) - Evaluation

The teachers handbook sets out the lesson objectives, it also contains ideas the teacher might use in giving the lesson. During the lesson children are given guided practice. When this is completed they then continue to work in their workbooks. The teacher then corrects the books the same day to make sure that the children have grasped the concepts from the lesson or used the skill that has been taught. If any children have not, then the teacher knows that some re-teaching is necessary. Finally the child is provided with dittos (stencils) and if everything is found to be correct, they can then move to the next lesson or unit of work. This system also provides for an ongoing evaluation of work and also provides immediate feedback to the child.

The books that are used in the schools are approved by the State Education Authority, along with a number of other publications in the same subject area. These are then passed on to the school districts where they are examined and assessed as to their suitability in introducing them into the classroom. This is not done hurriedly or lightly. The teachers in the schools form many committees in the different areas, to check through and evaluate their worth to the school program.

In conclusion I can look back at this practice teaching assignment as a marvellous experience and one that I would recommend to future students.

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Evaluation submitted by Ian Adamson, Metzger Elementary School

The four week period I spent at Metzger was an extremely rewarding time for me. I believe the experiences I gained in that time will benefit me in my future studies and teaching career. The staff (and pupils) were most co-operative and enthusiastic. They involved me in many school and social activities, in their own jobs and with their classes. Because of their openness, I would say that I have gained a good overall insight into the running of an American school and classroom.

Not only was I involved with one particular class (grade 6) as would happen in a 'normal' practice session, I was also given opportunities to work with and observe the roles of the many specialists attached to the school - music teacher; physical education specialist; school counsellor; learning disabilities (remedial) teacher; reading specialist. Also I sat in on committees concerned with remedial/problem children and class grading - placements. It was also possible to view and participate in classes from the Kindergarten, third and fifth grades.

With the sixth grade class, I taught a unit on Australia (naturally!), as well as lessons in language, reading, maths, social studies, spelling and P.E. I was also introduced to student centred class meetings and 'circle' discussions.

My supervising teacher, Eugene Dunn, was very co-operative and I found him to be a very constructive supervisor. He gave me a great deal of freedom with his class, which allowed me to get to know the pupils fairly well.

When comparing the two school systems, I found that the children at Metzger were given more freedom in the classroom to learn, experience and work for themselves. I believe this led to those children being more mature and confident than Australian pupils of the same grade - the Metzger students were more 'wordly'. This maturity did not however automatically lead to greater educational/learning standards or achievement. I found, for example, that the handwriting of many of the children to be very poor compared to children in schools I have been involved with before. This, I believe, can be related to the fact that the pupils do not have exercise books, for each subject, as they do in primary schools in Australia, but rather they do their work on pieces of paper which are, after evaluation, most likely lost or forgotten. The children are not given the opportunity to develop a sense of pride and achievement in their books (and writing), which is encouraged in New South Wales schools. This aspect of American education was the area which troubled me somewhat.

I found the school very well equipped with many valuable learning aids and equipment. One point that interested me was the fact that the school had its own gymnasium - which I might point out was twice the size of the gym at the Kingswood campus of Nepean College, and a large cafeteria style canteen, where the pupils were served hot, nutritious lunches everyday (at a cost of 80 cents per day).

I also noted with interest that competitive team sports were not encouraged at the elementary level. Athletics meetings (track and field) were conducted on a district and state level after school hours, but there was no organised school sport, or inter-school sport as we have in New South Wales.

The organisation of the school was fairly similar to New South Wales, although the 'district' is the more important level of administration and curriculum development, unlike here, where it is state wide. One point of school organisation I did not fully agree with was the fact the teachers specialise in one grade level. I would think our system where teachers often change grade levels helps the teacher keep his enthusiasm for the job.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the enthusiasm and hospitality of the people in Portland was overwhelming - we could not have been treated any better. I believe the experience was one I will never regret or forget and I would recommend to any person in future years to consider undertaking this project. It should also be said that the students who undertook this adventure and the College own a large debt to Dr. Gillett for the time (and money) he spent organising and running this scheme.

#### Evaluation submitted by Kathy Carwana, Byrom Elementary School

Between May 9 and June 3, 1983, I was engaged in a practice teaching session at Byrom Elementary School, Tigard Oregon. Up to date this has been the most enjoyable and worthwhile practice teaching session that I have experienced. I was assigned to a 5th-6th grade composite class under the supervision of a very competent and well respected teacher in Harrison Bryant. He made every effort to assist me in planning, organising, evaluating and developing my teaching skills. From him I learned a great many things such as methods of gaining respect from your pupils, and management and control techniques. His valuable experience in these areas was greatly beneficial.

Though I spent most of my teaching time at Byrom Elementary School in the 5th-6th composite class, I was also given time to observe almost every other classroom in the school. I spent at least one session of a day observing and participating in each of the grades. I was called upon to prepare talks on Australia and assist in teaching subjects such as P.E., Reading, Math, and Spelling in other classrooms. I found that moving from grade to grade and being asked to prepare lessons in such a situation was highly beneficial to my preparation for the 'casual' teaching I expect to encounter in 1984.

It was also interesting to see how other teachers within the school taught; their particular methods of handling different subjects and different situations allowed me to evaluate many of my own teaching skills. This is something that I have never had the opportunity to do in previous practice teaching sessions even though the college encouraged it.

This practice allowed me to observe and be a part of a mainstreamed school system, which children - 'handicapped' and 'normal' all worked together in the one environment. I was also fortunate enough to be allowed to work with the children in the school's special education program under the supervision of the very capable Mrs. Bonnie Metcalfe. Again I have never had the opportunity to do this in previous practices. I found that what I experienced at Byrom related very closely to my study in the third semester course in education, giving relevance and meaning to it.

This practice also allowed me to discover the advantages and disadvantages of an 'open area' school; that is, where the Instructional Materials Centre (Library) is the central core of the building and walls between classrooms are only partial.

I was also taken to see how other schools in the same district operated. Each school was different. I found that overall the standards of facilities in the Tigard School District to be superior to any I had experienced in Australian schools.

Max Gillett should be commended for all the effort he put into organising this more than worthwhile experience and for all the work he put into his supervision of students during our teaching. He provided me with a lot of constructive criticism which I found very beneficial in improving my teaching skills.

I believe that this practice teaching session spent in a totally different environment was worthwhile as it allowed me to observe and collect :

- \* different teaching methods
- \* different subject content
- \* resources and new ideas
- \* different classroom/school organisation
- \* additional teaching strategies

I believe that I will be able to implement some of these things in my own classroom in the future. I don't hesitate in recommending the continuation of such a program for future third year students. I can only praise its success as a great and unique experience and believe that it could only benefit me as a teacher to look at education from a much wider perspective.

Evaluation submitted by Kerry Besant, Durham Elementary School

Practice Teaching in the United States was a very rewarding experience for me. I feel I have gained knowledge and understanding about many aspects relating to the elementary education field, which I could not have otherwise gained if not for the experience itself.

Teaching and interacting with people in the United States taught me a lot about the differences between our 'language'. Before arriving in the United States, I had the idea that the only difference in the ways we talk was the accent. However, as I soon found out, there are many words which are used differently to mean different things on different occasions. As an example, while teaching I discovered that the Australian 'biscuit' is not an American biscuit, it's a 'cookie', because the American biscuit is the Australian 'scone' - all very confusing!

The people I met during my stay in Durham showed a genuine interest and concern for my activities and helped make my stay a very enjoyable one. The principal of Durham Elementary, Mr. Gayle Collum and my supervising teacher, Mr. Patrick Yoes, along with all the other teachers at the school, did a great deal for me which made me feel a part of their school. In fact, the whole time in Durham was an extremely busy and eventful one. In addition to adjusting to a new family life style and participating in the workings of the school, all other time was taken up with activities such as meeting people concerned with Tigard Public Schools District, having interviews with local newspapers, and generally interacting with the Durham community.

The first 3 days of the practice teaching session were taken up with observing the school in general and becoming familiar with the workings of the class which I was to teach during the four weeks. As well as becoming acquainted with a new and different system (regarding education and schooling) on my part, time was also spent on familiarising those concerned with the education system in New South Wales - both at the Primary (Australia)/Elementary (U.S) level and at the teacher-training level. From this grew the need for conferences between Max Gillett, Gayle Collum and Pat Yoes regarding the practice teaching session. The need for this became apparent when we realised the numerous differences between the 2 countries regarding education.

The most obvious difference which I observed pertaining to the teacher training side of education was the varying amounts of practice teaching experience between the two systems. Whereas teacher training at Nepean College of Advanced Education involves five sessions of practice teaching throughout the three year study period, student teachers in the United States have only one session of practice teaching - and this occurs in their final year of study. Obviously then, there would be a difference between what is expected from a final year student teacher at Nepean College, and that of an American student teacher because of the different degrees of experience in practice teaching.



Durham Elementary is a very small school (120 pupils) in comparison to the other schools in Tigard Public Schools District. It has one class per grade (grades one through six) and each has an average of twenty pupils. This class size is comparable to that of other schools in the same district. The idea of having only 20 pupils per class is one aspect which struck me as being quite different from the New South Wales system - where there are an average of 30 pupils per class. While teaching sixth grade at Durham I became aware of the benefit of having a smaller number of pupils in the class. It resulted, I feel, in better teacher/pupil relations. I found it much easier to "get to know" each pupil - their personalities and their strengths and weaknesses. It was also much easier to give individualised attention to pupils. Sixth grade contained 'ability groups' in mathematics and reading, and supervision of such groupings was also made easier by the small number of pupils in the class.

In the schools where I have previously spent my practice teaching sessions it is common practice to have an 'assembly' of some kind, either on a daily or weekly basis. At Durham, an assembly of the whole school was not a regular daily or weekly event. Special announcements, such as "Student of the Week Award" for each class, were made over an 'intercom' system to the whole school. The intercom system allowed for correspondence, or feedback, from the class teachers - so it was a useful asset to the school.

Regarding curriculum - content and emphasis - there are a number of differences, as well as similarities, to the New South Wales education system. The two subject areas which appeared to have most emphasis placed on them were language and mathematics. This is comparable to the New South Wales system where the curriculum focuses primarily on the "3 R's" (Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic). However, differences still are apparent with the subject areas themselves. For instance, regarding language : the emphasis in Durham Elementary (and presumably the school district) was on the 'structure' rather than the 'usage' of language. In New South Wales schools the trend has moved away from concentrating on teaching the 'structure' of language as a separate entity to teaching about language through language usage.

The writing style taught at Durham, and the emphasis placed on teaching it as a subject in itself, is also quite different to New South Wales schools. There appeared to be less time set aside for teaching of writing in the schools, especially in the senior elementary grades where it presumed that pupils have already acquired sufficient writing skills - from teaching in previous grades.

One particular aspect which came to my attention also, was that the pupils at Durham did not use exercise books for their work. They do all their work on separate sheets of paper which are handed in to the teacher when completed. This seemed peculiar to me because of my past experience, both as a pupil and as a student teacher, where each pupil has a book for each subject area under study.

I also noticed that subjects such as Art, Craft, P.E., and Music were taken out of the hands of the classroom teacher and were taught by teachers who specialise in those fields. This allowed for the classroom teacher to spend more time both in the preparation and

presentation of the subject areas deemed more 'important' - such as reading and mathematics and in evaluation.

Another aspect which I observed to be different during my stay was that there was no time set aside specifically for sport. Physical Education (P.E.) has a time slot during the week, but 'sport', as such has no place in the time table. I assume it is because the pupils were obviously already involved, to a great degree, in sporting activities outside school - such as 'little league' baseball and softball. Although pupils in New South Wales schools are also involved in outside-school sports activities, it is to a lesser degree than in the United States.

From what I have observed, so far, of the New South Wales education system, 'teaching' is primarily aimed at the 'middle' of the class, with some emphasis which caters for learning remediation and slow-learner problems. It has been said, therefore, that the most disadvantaged child is the one with above average ability. Tigard Public Schools District has attempted to rectify this problem in that they have introduced a program to the schools entitled: "The Talented and Gifted Program". This program is aimed at the pupil with above-average intellectual ability, and is based on the interests of the pupil. The pupil is required to do a number of projects (the topics of which are chosen according to his interests), and goes into detail with research and experiment into his chosen field. It appeared to be successful in that the pupil is doing work of a meaningful nature to him.

Another area which the Tigard Public Schools District is concerned with is that of 'mainstreaming'. At Durham Elementary there is a blind boy who is currently in 3rd grade and has been at the school for 2 years. He participates in the 'normal' classroom activities for most of the day and is taken out for a period of time for specialised attention by a teacher trained in that field. It has had a noticeable positive effect on the boy's behaviour and his academic gain.

Teaching procedures used in the classroom in the United States seemed to be somewhat similar to that of New South Wales schools. The main difference, in general, would be that schools in the United States appeared to be more 'positive' in their approach towards discipline. With sixth grade at Durham, in particular, I observed that rewards were given to pupils for both behaviour and academic reasons - more so than I have observed on previous practice teaching sessions. The pupils responded well to the positive approach.

Regarding 'evaluation', formal testing was used as the primary means for evaluation of pupil progress and achievement. This 'testing' occurred frequently and on a regular basis and thus allowed for remediation, where necessary, while in the process of a unit of work. From my observations, from previous practice teaching sessions in New South Wales, this also occurs in New South Wales schools - but to a less significant degree.

The pupils' reaction towards me as a teacher was very rewarding. As well as teaching my allocated class, I also had opportunity to teach other grades. My experience with the other grades was directed towards talking about Australia in general. A common reaction amongst all pupils was a display of interest in Australia, and especially in the Australian accent.

As a general comment, regarding my practice teaching experience in the United States, I feel it was an extremely beneficial experience.

Evaluation submitted by Amanda Nelson, Phil Lewis School

The international practice teaching project conducted during May/June 1983 was a great success and should be continued in subsequent years. It was a very valuable, beneficial and enlightening experience from which I learned a great deal and grew both professionally and personally. Some of the significant aspects of the practice teaching I would like to reflect upon are : school administration and organisation, curriculum issues/design, teaching and evaluation procedures, pupils, teacher/pupil rapport, staff relationships and my own teaching experiences.

Schools in Portland, Oregon are controlled not by the State but by district administrators. Districts vary in size, Tigard consisting of 9 elementary schools (K-6); 2 Junior high schools (7-9) and 1 High school (10-12). The schools are generally smaller than those in New South Wales, Phil Lewis having approximately 450 students - an average sized school. The district administration consists of a superintendent, Assistant Superintendent (Curriculum), Assistant Superintendent (Personnel), Business Manager, a School Board and local school committees. The Principals from each school are also administrators who play a large role in the running of the district.

School funds required are obtained indirectly from the property taxes of the residents in that district. The district administration decides how these funds are to be used, including teacher salaries. They also control curriculum issues and Tigard District has, in fact, designed its own curriculum. I see great value in this because goals and objectives for such a curriculum are based on the needs of the particular community taking into consideration such things as socio-economic status. The administrators also make decisions about how many teachers can be employed in each school and the nature of their employment. Besides the regular grade teachers, there were teachers for special education, remedial reading, resource, English as a second language, as well as a visiting speech therapist and a music teacher. Some teachers are employed half-time. There were 2 teachers on each Kindergarten class and on one 5th grade. This seemed to work well as this capitalised on teachers strengths and weaknesses.

Staff relationships seemed to be improved because when hiring teachers, the administrators considered such things as personality and whether new teachers they would be compatible with the rest of the staff.

I was impressed with the way teachers worked together and supported one another. Teachers were not afraid to ask others for suggestions for alternative teaching methods etc., and others were more than willing to render their assistance.

Often groups of teachers got together to organise different functions and projects. For example some teachers organised and ran their own Poetry Contest where all other teachers judged the contestants.

One thing I found very interesting was the different approach to teaching taken by the Americans. Curriculum guidelines were available but the teachers were not required to prepare a program of content and learning experiences to be taught in a certain period of time. My first thought was 'how do the teachers organise and prepare what they are going to do?' Through observation it was clear that each teacher had his/her own method of doing this. In close examination of the Tigard Curriculum Guidelines I found this document to be specific and extensive, giving the teacher quite detailed guidelines - especially as to the objectives skills and knowledge to be achieved and goals for each grade. New South Wales curriculum documents don't go into as much detail as the Americans and thus necessitate teacher programs.

I was amazed at the abundance of resources available to the classroom teacher, particularly in the way of research material and textbooks. These are available in Australian schools but mainly in the library e.g., encyclopedias. In Australian schools there are generally only one or two sets in the school library. In American schools I noticed every class had its own set as well as the library. School funds also allowed each classroom or two to have audio-visual equipment at hand.

A lot of teaching was based on textbooks; all children having their own books containing lessons with content and learning activities. These were also contained in the teacher's edition which set out lesson objectives and lesson suggestions. These textbooks often had a year's work in each. The work was sequential so the children had only to work straight through the book. I liked the way the teachers for a particular grade got together and looked through many different editions of these textbooks, to see which one best suited the classes and the goals the teachers wanted to achieve for those particular classes.

I was very interested to see 'mainstreaming' in action; having studied this in one of the courses at College. I was very pleased to see that the positive aspects about mainstreaming discussed in our course were apparent in Phil Lewis school. Special education teachers were employed in every school to cater for individuals with specific learning difficulties and handicaps. I particularly liked this system as these teachers were close at hand and were trained specifically for this task. Individual programs were designed by the Special Education teacher for every child who required special education.

This task would be impossible for the classroom teacher. It was also good to see how socially well adjusted these children were. They were able to interact with the other children and to develop social skills they may not have had the opportunity to develop in a special school. The majority of teachers were very accepting of these children and were prepared to treat them as full members of their classes. These children were treated just like the others; an approach which proved successful for all the children in class.

Evaluation of children's progress was a very strong point. An extensive record of each child's academic progress was kept and a child had to complete units of work before they could move on to others. In this way children could work at their own pace and also had to have mastered certain skills or gained particular concepts before continuing. There was not much evaluation of children's social, emotional and physical development, and this information was not required on the report sent home to parents. The main concerns were the child's intellectual development and academic progress, particularly in reading, spelling, language and mathematics. A lot of this took the form of formative evaluation although the children were also required to do tests at the end of each unit of work.

Generally, I found the children in the United States to be very friendly and responsive, which made it easy for me to build up a good rapport with them. In my past practice teaching experiences in New South Wales, I have found that because I was so concerned with lesson preparation etc., I wasn't as personally interested in the children. In America I found that there wasn't as much pressure on me and I could enjoy the children more. Even so, it was difficult to devote myself totally to the children and teaching because there were so many other distractions. I enjoyed the social interactions with staff and other people I came in contact with very much and found it difficult to balance the two.

The children I taught were very well mannered and always willing to help me in any way they could. I felt very comfortable with the children. They made me feel very welcome and accepted. They were very nice children and I got to like them a lot. I miss them!

In general I found pupils to be highly self disciplined and self motivated. There wasn't a real need to 'push' them. They knew they had to do work and went ahead and did it. I think they had been trained from an early age to discipline themselves in this way. There is a difference in attitude between pupils in the United States and Australia. In Australia, there is not such an emphasis by parents and school on a College education whereas in America it seems the majority of children go to College. Perhaps it is that they aspire and are more goal oriented which is greatly influenced by the parents, peers and teachers.

Another characteristic I noticed was that the children were very confident and less inhibited than many Australian pupils. They could express themselves well in various ways - speaking, singing, reciting poetry, acting etc., and they also were not afraid to tell the teacher if they didn't understand something. The children were very supportive of one another and willing to help.

Teaching the children was very enjoyable. However, I had a bit of difficulty adjusting to the children in that their attitudes and behaviours were quite different to those observed in Australia. The children's behaviour was much easier to control because they were more self disciplined and motivated. Actual management was difficult because the pupils responded differently or not at all to what I was accustomed to. This was a good learning experience for me because I had to look for alternative strategies and try to employ them. I had to observe and learn new management skills. I found this a very beneficial situation and one which I may not have encountered if not for the international teaching project. I was forced to evaluate my philosophy of teaching, my teaching style and techniques and generally my whole approach to teaching. I feel now that I have a much broader outlook on life in general but teaching in particular, and this will greatly influence my approach to teaching in Australia.

One of the main differences between Australian and American schools is in teaching styles. Australian teachers are generally stricter and more regimented in their approach whereas the Americans have a more relaxed casual approach with which the children coped very well. One would assume that discipline would be less of a problem in a stricter environment. However, I found this not to be the case. The American children were far more self disciplined. The only problem I could foresee, with the more open casual Americans, was a loss of respect for the teachers but this was not the case at Phil Lewis School, particularly with the 4th class I was assigned to. The children showed a lot of admiration and respect and genuine liking for their teacher, Joyce Renner.

Joyce was always available to assist me and give advice which I greatly appreciated. She evaluated my lessons very honestly and realistically. She was very supportive of me and made the experience a very enjoyable one. Other teachers were also very friendly and helpful and allowed me to spend time in their classrooms. Also, I was able to see quite a few different grades which was of great value. I observed children of different ages, the work they were doing and their attitudes as well as different teaching styles. I also spent time with the Special Education and Title One instructors, and visited some of the other schools in the district. This was good as it gave me a better idea of the whole school system at work. The four schools I saw in the Tigard District - Phil Lewis, Byrom, Durham, and Metzger were all quite different in physical appearance. Byrom being an open planned school with all classrooms situated around the library (in the centre); Durham, a very small school and Metzger slightly larger than Phil Lewis.

The College supervisor, Max Gillett, made a great effort to see all students and assist them as much as he could. However, this was very difficult for him as the 13 students were all at different schools with some having quite a distance between them. One supervisor is not adequate with such a large group in this situation. Max didn't get to see students as much as both he and the students would have liked due to this problem. Another problem I found which was also partly due to the same circumstances was that the school teacher and student teachers were not fully aware of what was expected of them during the practice teaching session. I think that this should be made very clear at an early stage. The teacher should be aware of

his/her role - how much observation/evaluation and assistance they are required to do and also what is expected from the student teacher. It is a very different experience from the practice teaching normally done by the student and therefore expectations for the student teacher should also be different according to the particular situation they are in. This is something I think will improve if the project is undertaken next year as people are now aware of the circumstances.

I feel that the whole project was a very valuable and worthwhile experience for many reasons. What I had studied at College became for me a reality in an American Elementary school setting. Things that I had heard in lectures which I did not think would work, such as positive reinforcement and mainstreaming, worked very well in the school I was practising in and I was assured that Phil Lewis was not an exception to the rule.

This has been a wonderful experience for me and I have developed both professionally and personally as a result. My feelings about this practice teaching I'm sure would be quite different had I not had the warmth and support of my host families and the school principal and faculty, who did everything they could to ensure my happiness while I was in their care. I will always remember them with immense gratitude and fondness and will treasure the great memories they gave me.

My biggest regret is that for varying reasons my peers who were unable to go didn't share these same experiences. I will strongly encourage students to participate in the 1984 practice teaching project to the United States, as I think it is an opportunity of a life-time.

I would also like to add that the co-ordinator of the project Max Gillett did a wonderful job and should be congratulated for making it such a great success, and enjoyable experience for all the students.

## FIELD STUDIES

All students in their final year of study in the teacher education program at Nepean College are expected to complete a compulsory field study. Generally this study is undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of Spring Semester, i.e., July. However, members of the Project team were permitted to incorporate a field studies component into their visit to America.

In this case the Field Studies component of the Project comprised visits to several major American cities and areas of natural beauty or historic significance. Hawaii and San Francisco were visited prior to arrival in Portland. Immediately after the practice teaching session, Dr. Alvin Pettine, his wife Helen and nephew Kyle hosted the group for four days in Fort Collins, Colorado. Then visits were made to New York, Washington D.C., New Orleans, Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, San Diego and Tijuana, Los Angeles and Tahiti prior to returning to Sydney, Australia. Some of the significant events of this tour are described below.

### 1. HAWAII

The group stayed in the Waikiki Surf Hotel near Waikiki Beach. On one day of the visit they rented three vehicles and set out on a tour of the main island, Oahu. This trip included a visit to historic Pearl Harbour, lunch at Sunset Beach and a visit to the Polynesian Cultural Centre. One evening was taken up with a traditional Hawaiian luau.

Luau in Honolulu



## 2. SAN FRANCISCO

While in San Francisco, students visited the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. They also toured the city, paying special attention to the downtown area, Chinatown, Fishermans Wharf and the Golden Gate Park. Two large vehicles were hired in order to allow twelve of the party to make a day trip to Yosemite National Park.

(12)

The Golden Gate

## 3. PORTLAND

Upon arrival at Portland Airport the group was met by superintendents, school principals, teachers and citizens of the four co-operating districts. The warmth with which they were greeted on that first occasion was symptomatic of the generosity and acceptance that was to be demonstrated for the duration of the visit. This generosity was evidenced by the many very special experiences provided by schools and by host families. No doubt the "Aussies" from Nepean College developed enduring friendships and associations with the people of Portland and White Salmon. These Oregonians and Washingtonians entertained their guests with a wide variety of experiences which included visits to such centres as Seattle, the Oregon Coast, Central Oregon, Mount Hood, Mount St. Helens, the Columbia and Deschutes Rivers, Salem, Eugene, the University of Oregon, and Portland State University where the group attended a class in Science Teaching Method.

Portland and Mount Hood

#### 4. FORT COLLINS

By the time the team reached Fort Collins, the numbers had grown with the addition of Christine Rud, a word process operator/typist from Nepean College, Barbara Russell, a teacher from the Emu Plains Primary School near Sydney, and Jenny Speechley, an ex-student of the College and close friend of the Pettine family. Al and Helen Pettine made their home available to the Nepean group and moved themselves into the home of Al's brother, Eric.

Kyle, Helen, Barbara, Max and Al preparing a feast  
for the gang

Eric's son, Kyle, along with Al and Helen then implemented a plan of sightseeing and social activities for the whole group. This plan included tours to the Continental Divide, Bear Lake, Estes Park, Central City, Boulder and the campuses of Colorado University and Colorado State University. Students were introduced to western dancing by Kyle and Greg and Emmy Pettine and also played some volleyball and basketball in the Colorado State University gymnasium.

All together in Fort Collins

## 5. NEW YORK

In the "Big Apple" the party resided in the theatre district and took full advantage of the facilities it had to offer. One act plays such as "Night, Mother" and musicals such as "Joseph and His Technicolor Dreamcoat", "Nine", and "42nd Street", were typical of the productions enjoyed at the time. City tours which included the Statue of Liberty, Central Park, Chinatown, the Empire State Building and most of Manhattan were taken by all students.

(16)

The Statue of Liberty

## 6. WASHINGTON D.C.

The journey from New York to Washington was taken by train rather than by air. Dr. Ted Bayer, curator of the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution met the group at the train station and later provided access to sections of the Institution. Lunch in Smithson House was a highlight. Most of the group visited the National Air and Space Museum, the National Gallery of Art and The National Museum of Man. In addition, Dr. Bayer conducted a behind-the-scenes tour of the National Museum of Natural History.

Amanda, Caroline, Chris, Barbara,  
Leanne and Jill - Enjoying the  
Smithsonian Tour

Lunch at Smithson  
House

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Leanne, Barbara, Max,  
Dr. Bayer, Jill,  
Amanda, Ian and Chris

## 7. NEW ORLEANS

A brief visit to New Orleans allowed team members to cruise the Mississippi on a traditional riverboat and tour the city on a tramcar. The French Quarter was visited for its jazz and other music as well as for its famous restaurants. Students visited Preservation Hall and other jazz centres and enjoyed the mardi gras atmosphere of the old town.

Ian, Liz, Amanda,  
Terry, Kerry and  
Leanne

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New Orleans

## 8. GRAND CANYON

The flight from New Orleans to Grand Canyon included a five hour stopover in Phoenix, Arizona. This time allowed a trip into the city where Indian artefacts, leather goods and jewellery were available for inspection and purchase. The flights over the Canyon were incredibly spectacular and most of the group took advantage of sunset and sunrise views of the Canyon. In addition, attendance at Indian ceremonial dances was common.

9. LAS VEGAS

The party resided in the downtown area rather than on the famous "Strip". However most managed to visit both areas of the city as well as spending some time relaxing in the Nevada sun.

10. SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA

The San Diego area provided opportunities to visit the famous Zoo and Sea World. An excursion into Tijuana, Mexico, in rented vehicles also was popular. Dinner on the paddle steamer Reuben E. Lee was also a highlight.

11. LOS ANGELES

Inevitably the Aussie tourists visited L.A. and Disneyland. Accommodation in Anaheim was adjacent to the Disneyland Hotel so that the fun park was accessible within easy walking distance. Long Beach and the Queen Mary, Universal Studios and the Los Angeles Music Centre and Hollywood Bowl were also visited. Several of the group rented cars and toured Beverley Hills, Hollywood, Malibu and other parts of the city.

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Ian, Leanne, Chris and Max at Disneyland

12. TAHITI

From the Hotel Tahiti the city of Papeete was within easy walking distance and the island of Moorea accessible by motor launch. Several of the party visited Moorea while others lazed away the last few days of their tour in the South Pacific sunshine.

(21)

Tracey, Caroline and Jenny  
shopping in Papeete

13. SYDNEY

The scene at Kingsford Smith Airport was one of much happiness as families, friends and loved ones were rejoined after a protracted but very eventful tour.

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Max and Liz welcomed home by Helen

THE CHARGE '83

The S.C.E.C. "Charge" was conducted by the College of Education of Central Washington University at Fort Warden, Port Townsend on May 13, 14, and 15. On the invitation of the convenor, Dr. Maggie Johnson, four of the Nepean College group attended this conference. They were Elizabeth Jones, Amanda Nelson, Terry Hopkins and Max Gillett.

The conference dealt with such matters as discipline, mainstreaming, the problems of beginning teachers, computers in the classroom, and the legal rights of teachers. In addition participants were instructed in "What we Look for in Hiring Teachers" by several district superintendents of schools.

Guest Speakers at the Charge included Dr. Sam Rust (C.W.U), Dr. Jan Reinhardtson (University of Wisconsin), Dr. Al Bergstrom (C.W.U), Dr. Gene Edgar (U.W) and Dr. Steve Morelan (W.P.S).

The Nepean visitors were made very welcome by their C.W.U. hosts, especially Dr. Johnson, Dr. Rust, Dr. Glenn Madsen and Dr. Sherrie Chrysler. Sam Rust who had spent some time working on the Fort Warden campus gave the Aussies a "cook's tour" of Port Townsend which was very much appreciated. The conference was both informative and enjoyable. The Nepean quartet expressed their appreciation by "rendering" "Come on Aussie Come On" and "Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport".

## CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in this report suggests that the initial International Practice Teaching and Field Studies Project was successful in promoting the professional, social and personal development of its members.

At the professional level, the Nepean students experienced schools which differed markedly from those they had encountered in their home areas. They each had completed three student teaching sessions prior to the visit to the U.S.A. In that new context they perceived differences in the size and administrative structure of schools, the relationships between teachers and pupils, the mutual relationships between faculty members in schools, the nature of school plants and equipment, the links between school and community, and the type of educational administration employed. They learnt very valuable lessons about the management of classroom events. They experienced and practised alternative teaching strategies which they probably would not have encountered at home. They each extracted particular professional gains from their experiences in their host schools.

At the personal level, the students were influenced by the cultural exchange inherent in the project. The report makes frequent references to a wide range of experiences enjoyed by them. They experienced family life in a different culture. They saw different landforms; some grand, some beautiful, some breathtaking. They were exposed to incredible generosity and were provided with unanticipated opportunities for special experiences. They travelled widely and experienced many of the frustrations and delights that travel can provide.

While the group relaxed in Tahiti, the final stopover, one observer remarked with some astonishment that the group was still 'united' after nine weeks of living and travelling together. Students of group dynamics could have had a marvellous time observing the events and interactions of that period. The upshot, however, was that the group which returned to Australia probably was more compact than the one which had departed some nine weeks earlier. Social development was promoted through the interpersonal interactions of the tour, the exchange of ideas emotions and values during the stopovers in Portland and Fort Collins and the very experience of rubbing shoulders with the wider world in the many centres visited.

The recommendation of the members of this first project should be heeded. They believe they were very fortunate to have had the experience and that a similar program should be offered to upcoming students of the College. Given the good graces of our American colleagues and friends the prospects for a second Project are excellent. The school districts are willing to assist and the Nepean College students are keen to participate.

Let us look to 1984 for a similar set of experiences for an even bigger team of students.

In conclusion, we at Nepean College of Advanced Education, Kingswood, Australia repeat our expressions of gratitude to all who helped make our first project a great success. We look forward to continued success in 1984.



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. <u>MY SUPERVISING TEACHER:</u>					
i) was available to discuss matters related to my teaching.					
ii) was very helpful in discussions about my teaching.					
iii) was a great help in the planning of lessons.					
iv) freely shared ideas on how lessons might be taught.					
v) observed my teaching regularly.					
vi) gave me adequate oral feedback on lessons observed.					
vii) gave me regular written feedback on lessons observed.					
viii) made me feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom.					
ix) was positive and supportive.					
x) clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses in my teaching.					
xi) made constructive suggestions for improvement.					
xii) clearly outlined expectations for my classroom work.					

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
xiii) observed my teaching sufficiently to form a clear impression of it.					
xiv) showed keen interest in my concerns and problems.					
xv) was very encouraging.					
xvi) demonstrated particular teaching techniques and strategies for me.					
xvii) helped me in my becoming acquainted with the pupils.					
xviii) gave me sufficient independence and responsibility within the classroom.					
xix) encouraged me to visit other teachers and classrooms.					
xx) made me feel that I was a valuable and capable teacher.					
<b>2. <u>THE SCHOOL IN WHICH I WAS PLACED:</u></b>					
i) made me feel welcome.					
ii) allowed me to visit other teachers and resource personnel within the school.					
iii) allowed me to visit other schools in the district.					
iv) treated me as the professional equal of the teachers.					

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
v) provided a variety of resources to help my future teaching.					
3. <u>THE COLLEGE SUPERVISOR:</u>					
i) visited my school regularly.					
ii) assisted me in the planning of learning experiences.					
iii) observed my teaching regularly.					
iv) discussed my teaching with me after observing lessons.					
v) presented written feedback for each observation.					
vi) discussed my progress with my supervising teacher.					
vii) was interested in my progress.					
viii) wrote a final report on my practice teaching.					
ix) worked co-operatively with my supervising teacher.					
x) provided a sound liaison between the college and the school.					

A P P E N D I X            B

The Supervising Teacher

The Supervising Teacher is responsible for the everyday supervision of the student during the practice teaching session. This teacher is expected to :

- \* consult regularly the College lecturer and the student teacher on student progress and the practice session generally;
- \* encourage the student teacher to meet and observe other teachers and school resources;
- \* assist the student teacher in lesson design and preparation;
- \* demonstrate appropriate teaching techniques and strategies;
- \* inspect the students' lesson notes and preparation and provide feedback on them;
- \* observe at least two lessons per day;
- \* analyse the observed lessons and discuss them with the student;
- \* write critical comments and recommendations on at least one lesson per day and issue these statements to the student after the observation;
- \* consult the college supervisor on the preparation of the final report for the practice;
- \* write a summary report on the appropriate form at the conclusion of the practice.

A P P E N D I X C

The School Principal

Students are under the administrative control of the School Principal during practice teaching. The Principal, therefore, accepts responsibility for :

- \* assigning students to classes;
- \* co-ordinating the practical experiences offered by the school;
- \* monitoring students' standards of punctuality, dress and attitude;
- \* providing students with instruction on school policy and such other matters as may be considered essential;
- \* ensuring that supervising teachers understand their legal responsibilities for activities involving risks to pupils. Student teachers should not be given responsibility for such activities;
- \* informing student teachers that they must observe the same hours of work as school staff and must participate actively in such events as school sport, playground duty, staff meetings (if desired);
- \* encouraging students to meet and observe teachers other than the supervising teacher, as well as school resources such as remedial programs, library etc.;
- \* understand the nature of the professional experiences program.

A P P E N D I X     D

The College Supervisor

College lecturers will be appointed to supervise students in their practice. Their principal concern is the professional development of students. They are expected to :

- \* visit the school regularly;
- \* provide an effective link between the college and the school;
- \* observe the student teaching on at least three (3) occasions during the practice session;
- \* discuss each observed lesson with the student teacher as soon as possible after the lesson;
- \* write a lesson report for each observation;
- \* consult the supervising teacher and principal/mistress or nominee concerning the student's progress;
- \* advise and assist the student on professional matters;
- \* discuss the student's teaching performance and professional development with the supervising teacher prior to writing the Final Report;
- \* consult the summary report and lesson reports provided by the supervising teacher prior to composing the final report;
- \* write the Final Report on the student's performance in the practice.

Times

## Schools

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NEPEAN  
COLLEGE

## Aussies see Americans from upside-down view

By MARGARET CERVENKA  
Of the Times

TIGARD — Americans are preoccupied with food, schools are less regimented, children are more self-confident and light switches are upside-down.

Those are a few of the impressions that four Australian student-teachers will take back home with them after a four-week stay in Tigard.

The student-teachers, who have been in the area just short of two weeks, are staying with local families while practicing teaching in local elementary schools through a program sponsored by Nepean College of Advanced Education in Sydney.

The program was instigated after an Oregon friend of the students' adviser, Max Gillett, visited Australia and "told everybody about the brilliant schools in Oregon," Gillett said.

The college sent letters to Oregon school districts inquiring whether they would be interested in visits by their student-teachers, Gillett said, and Tigard Personnel Director Bob Post was one of the first to respond.

"I thought it would be a great experience for us and everyone involved," Post explained.

A group of about 14 students made the U.S. trip, which included stops in Hawaii and San Francisco and will conclude with visits to New York and Washington, D.C. The other student-teachers were assigned to schools in White Salmon, Wash., Hillsboro and Riverdale.

The Tigard group — Kerry Besant, 20, Ian Adamson, 21, Kathy Carwana, 22, and Amanda Nelson, 20 — are all from Sydney and had never before visited the U.S. But they discovered that America is pretty much what they expected.

"We get a lot of American movies and television shows," Nelson explained.



Australian student-teachers and their adviser are front row, from left, Kerry Besant and adviser Max Gillett; back row, from left, Amanda Nelson, Kathy Carwana and Ian Adamson.

staff photo by Margaret Cervenka

"We know more about you than you do about us."

The college students are amused, however, by small differences between American and Australian life.

"Your light switches are upside down," said Besant, who noted that Australians turn switches down for "on" and up for "off."

Others have had trouble with water taps — they think they're turning them off, and the water runs harder — and most were alarmed when they first spotted the amount of water in American toilets.

"We all thought they were overflowing," Adamson said.

The student-teachers are amazed by American eating habits.

"Americans seem to eat a lot more and a lot quicker," Adamson said.

Added Besant, "There seems to be a preoccupation with food, what they're going to have next, the next meal."

Carwana and Besant aren't crazy

about the bread here — it's too sweet, and the crust too soft. And they also note that nobody here eats vegemite, a black, salty concentrated yeast extract that is a commonly-used sandwich spread in Australia.

The Australians have encountered some language differences: their tea is our dinner, petrol is gas, tomato sauce is ketchup.

Besant was a bit surprised when her

dinner hostess asked if she didn't mind sloppy joes for dinner; in Australia, sloppy joes are sweatshirts.

"We don't say 'neat,'" noted Nelson.

"We don't say 'awesome' either," Adamson added.

The student-teachers, who have been assigned to Metzger, Phil Lewis, Byrom and Durham elementary schools, have noticed some similarities and some sharp contrasts between Tigard and Australian schools.

Australian children spend about the same number of hours in school each day as their American counterparts and seem to progress in their learning at about the same level, they said.

In Australia, however, all children in both public and private schools wear uniforms to class.

Adamson said he was "shocked" to see that local schoolchildren do their lessons on loose papers that can be lost. In Australia, he explained, each child has an exercise book for each subject that is kept for the entire school year.

Australian schools tend to be more

formal and regimented, the student-teachers said. Children line up to enter a classroom and do so only after the teacher signals. They stand by their desks, waiting for the teacher to come in, and sit down only after responding to the teacher's greeting of "Good morning."

"Here, you go, 'Good morning,' and everybody just goes..." said Carwana, demonstrating her best blank stare.

Nelson noted that American students do more independent work under a teacher's supervision, a practice that the Australians said they like.

"The kids are more responsible for their own learning," Nelson said. "They're more self-motivated."

The Australians said that teacher-student relationships in Australia tend to be more distant than here: "Here, the teachers are more personal with the children," said Besant.

They have also found American children more outspoken and self-confident than the reserved Australians.

"They're game," Nelson said. "They'll come up to you and just start talking."

APPENDIX

# Hillsboro Argus

Tuesday, May 17, 1983

## Aussies get practice in U.S. classrooms

By DEBBIE MCKINNEY  
Argus Staff Writer

While students in four Hillsboro elementary schools are adjusting their ears to the Australian accent, four Australian student teachers are adjusting theirs to ours. Who sounds funnier to whom is a winless debate.

But more important than the exchange of accents is the exchange of ideas taking place over the next few weeks as Australians Jenny Scott, Valerie Collins, Caroline Grice and Tracy Hall observe and practice teaching in the American classroom.

THE WOMEN ARE PART of a group of 18 third-year student teachers coming to Oregon from the Nepean College of Advanced Education. Their supervisor at the college, Max Gillett, earned his doctorate from the University of Oregon, and arranged the four-week overseas practice teaching program. Another four were assigned to Tigard schools, and the rest are in Multnomah County schools.

The Australians, who paid their own way over here, are staying with teachers and other families. With all practicing in different schools, they should return home with a good sampling of teaching styles.

Scott is student-teaching at Mooberry in Kathy Popplewell's first-grade classroom, Collins is teaching third grade with Rita Goodwin at McKinney, Grice is teaching second grade with Mary Lou Rueck at Brookwood, and Hall is teaching kindergarten with Karen Haas at Minter Bridge.

Their backgrounds vary some, but all four have at least one thing in common—a devotion to the teaching profession.

Scott, "a true Aussie," grew up on a

dairy farm. Hall is the daughter of an Australian naval officer, and was born in England while he was stationed there. The other two were born in England as well, but immigrated to Australia with their families as very young children. For all of them, this trip to America is their first.

Arriving just last week, the student teachers already are enthused about what they've seen. More than anything else, the women's first impression of the United States centers around the children.

They seem "much more mature" than children at home, Hall noted.

ALTHOUGH HESITANT to make any generalizations, Collins added that American children "seem confident and outspoken."

This they attribute to the "positive reinforcement" teaching method in effect in Hillsboro schools.

"It's just fantastic," Collins said. Even if the students give wrong answers, the teachers compliment them on "good thinking."

"This is why the children seem more confident," Scott added. "The children are left to make their own decisions. They're not afraid to make mistakes or speak up."

Up until now, the student teachers have only read about some of the new teaching philosophies in effect in this country. As Collins put it, in Australia "everything is much slower coming."

But now they have the opportunity to see these theories in action.

"WE ARE SEEING that positive reinforcement does work," Grice said. "It's the sort of thing we've discussed in college, and have said it's nice in theory, but will never work. Now we are seeing it work."

Also, Collins said, "Teacher cooperation is fantastic. They have

worked at it for a lot longer than we have."

"They're more open with each other," Scott added.

"The schools (here) seem to be able to put a plan into action without it turning into a schmozzle," Hall said.

"You better tell them what a schmozzle is," she was reminded.

"That's a mess," Hall said, grinning.

"You might have to have a glossary of terms at the bottom of your article," Collins suggested.

The women also have noticed the

American classroom is less formal than the Australian classroom. That relative informality is no accident.

"It's a structured informality," said Hillsboro Elementary Supt. Alton Smedstad. "While kids have a right to make their own decisions, they make those decisions knowing there are well-defined expectations."

This opportunity to work inside the American education system is beneficial in many ways, the four agreed. For one thing, they said, they still are in the process of forming teaching philosophies of their own.

"It's giving us a broader view of education," Scott said. "We'll have more experiences to draw upon."

"We have to have a lot more experience before we can sit down and make philosophies," Collins said. "We've got to get out into the schools."

The Australians leave Hillsboro June 5, and have planned an ambitious month-long tour of the United States, from the Grand Canyon to Washington, D.C. They will return to Australia, just in time for a week of final exams, July 11.



Arriving from Australia last week, student teachers Jenny Scott (left), Valerie Collins, Tracy Hall and Caroline Grice, say they are

impressed with the 'positive reinforcement' teaching methods in Hillsboro schools. (Hillsboro Argus photo by Michal Thompson)



# Australians view U.S. from school

## Exchange teachers like Oregon trees, find differences

By BRAD LaBRIE  
Staff Reporter

Oregon's bounty of trees and other vegetation was the first thing to catch the eyes of three Australian student-teachers as they stepped off the plane in Portland to spend a month at Riverdale Elementary School.

"The scenery in Oregon is breathtaking," said Jill McIoroy, who at 41 is the oldest of the three. "To me, everyday is Christmas in Oregon because of all the fir trees you have here. We only have three or four varieties of fir trees in Australia, but none of them are native.

"All our trees and most plants were brought in. It takes special care to grow them in our climate. Your rhododendrons are beautiful and they grow everywhere naturally. We have to cultivate our rhodies."

"It's hard to believe you can grow your rhodies so easily because we have only a few rhodies, and we have to really work at growing them," said Leanne Wilkinson, an Australian colleague of McIoroy's.

Plentiful trees, like those around Riverdale School, are an unusual site for an Australian, the 22-year-old said.

"If all these trees were in one place in Australia," she said, motioning in the direction of the many firs overshadowing the tiny school, "they would be in a park."

Wilkinson, McIoroy and associate Liz Jones, who is 21, had visited Riverdale for a month until Friday, which was their last day. The three Aussies were accompanied by eight other Australian student-teachers to Oregon.

The others went to other school districts in the Portland metropolitan area, including the Tigard and Hillsboro districts.

All of the students are in their second to last year of study, McIoroy said. "We are at the end of our third year," she said in her heavy south Australian dialect. "Next year we will teach a full year of school and then finish our fourth year of education the following year. We will go to school part time that year."

McIoroy, Jones and Wilkinson all attend Nepean College of Advanced Education in Kingswood, which is approximately 40 miles west of Sydney.

Visiting an Oregon school for a month is part of the college's philosophy of giving its students as much exposure and experience in actual classroom situations as possible before awarding the final diploma, McIoroy said.

The three Australians are fortunate to

have the opportunity to student-teach at Riverdale School, McIoroy said.

"It has been a marvelous experience for us," she said. "The teacher to student ratio at Riverdale, which is about one teacher for every 10 pupils, has afforded us an opportunity that would not have been available in another school district.

"Riverdale students have much more freedom than most pupils. They are able to be more expressive."

All three teachers have been giving as well as receiving. They have been fixing special Australian snacks and treats to the delight of Riverdale students and teachers. As a going away treat, the Aussies baked a cake, which was cut into squares and dipped into chocolate frosting.

McIoroy, Wilkinson and Jones all said they had not had any surprises about the United States during their stay.

"We watch a lot of American television in Australia," McIoroy said. "Because of all the exposure to American TV, we are very conscious of the United States."

But Wilkinson has found that American TV shows distort the true image of Americans.

"We see the terrible side of Americans because of shows like 'Dynasty,'" she said. "It is the wrong side. I have found Americans to be much better people than portrayed on TV."

One major contrast all three women have noticed is that American homes are much larger and the houses have more wood.

"Because wood is so scarce and expensive in Australia, only the rich have as much wood in their homes as most common American homes," Wilkinson said.

Friday the three teachers said their goodbyes to all their new friends at Riverdale and will now travel across the United States for the next month before going home.

"We will take a 'holiday' before going back," Wilkinson said.

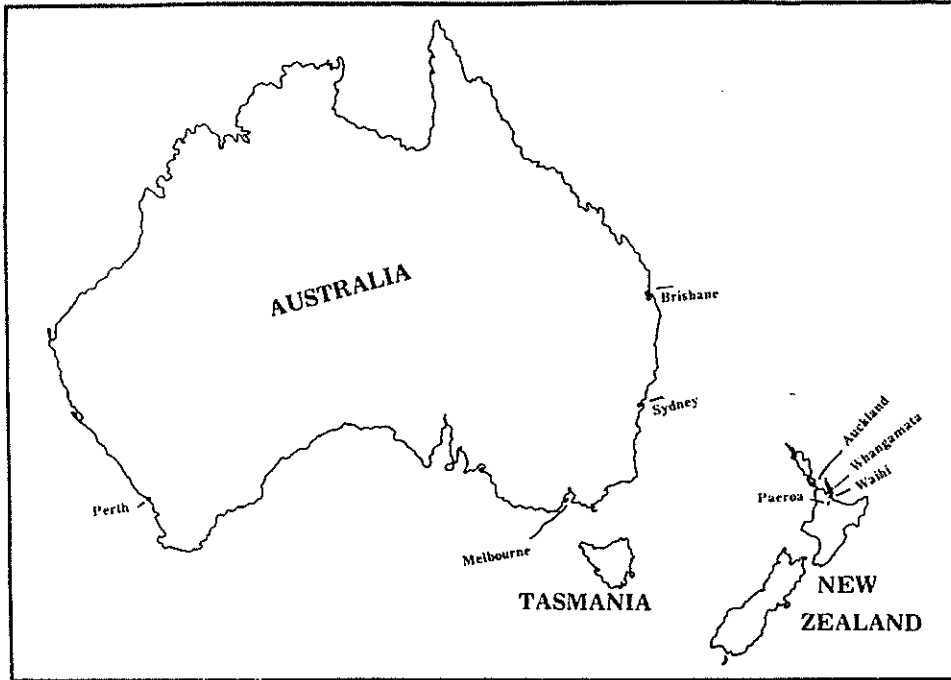
Wilkinson, McIoroy and Jones will team back up with the other eight teachers to tour American locations they have all heard about.

Stops will include Disneyland, the San Diego Zoo, the Grand Canyon, Washington, D.C., Las Vegas, New York City and even Tahiti. "We also will try to visit Tijuana for one day just to get a taste of Mexico," Wilkinson said.

But for three teachers, the memory of Riverdale will overshadow all the other clean memories they will receive



AUSTRALIAN STUDENT-TEACHERS Jill McIoroy, from left, Leanne Wilkinson and Liz Jones pause on the Riverdale Elementary School playground during a busy schedule at the school. The three teachers spent a month at the Dunthorpe school and now will travel around the country for a month before heading back to the "down under." (Staff photo by Jeff Sanders)



# For everyone:

## A learning experience

The "New World Dictionary" defines "exchange: to give and receive; interchange."

That has been the foundation for many programs over the years in the White Salmon area, such as the Rotary exchange student program and others, including the Japanese LABO youth exchange. The youths, their "new" families and the community have had the opportunity to learn much about countries and cultures from the Far East to our neighbors in Mexico. And the visitors have had that same chance to learn about the Northwest and American way of life.

Currently the community here is getting a chance to learn a little bit about two neighboring countries even further away — places which few have been able to visit, yet many find very intriguing.

Sunday members of Bethel Congregational Church got to meet their new pastor, Rev. Arthur Dickie from Paeroa, New Zealand, who has exchanged pulpits for a year with Bethel pastor Rev. Ted Holland.

As the school year draws to a close, White Salmon middle and grade schoolers are also getting a little bit extra in their regular studies. During the past month two student teachers from Australia have been working with teachers and students here. Terry Hopkins and Mark Drury, both from outlying areas near Sydney, will be here through the close of school as part of their studies toward teaching degrees.

# Australian student teachers on assignment here

Although this is their first trip out of their homeland of Australia, student teachers Terry Hopkins and Mark Drury find their impressions of this country are meeting their expectations. Of course, there have been some firsts too — just ask Mark about coconut cream pie.

"Because we get a lot of American newspapers and television, American culture is not new to us," said Terry who is working at the sixth grade level at White Salmon Middle School. "It's different in America though. Some of the kids thought maybe we'd speak a different language and some weren't sure where Australia was."

But middle school students at Whitson Elementary School, where Mark is teaching, are learning the basics and a lot more while the student teachers are gaining first-hand classroom experience.

The duo is part of a group of 13 student teachers and one adviser from Nepean College, a small school near Australia's capital, Sydney. Both are in their same year at school and plan to graduate in the coming year, after which they hope to get teaching jobs at the primary level.

In Australia, rather than being run through individual districts, the school system is organized and administered by the states. So instead of having to apply to a particular district for a job, graduates are assigned a number and must wait until their name comes up for a possible job opening. One similarity between the two countries, however, is that at this time the jobs are somewhat scarce, Terry said.

Another difference in the Australian system is that education students do one month of student teaching each semester. It was at the suggestion of one of their lecturers who attended the University of Oregon in Eugene that one of those months might be spent in the Northwest.

"How we ever got to White Salmon, though, I'm not sure," Terry said, noting the rest of the group was placed in urban and suburban settings in the Portland area.

The two specifically requested White Salmon, however, after getting a letter from Superintendent Rick Melching and Whitson Principal Kathy Larrabee in response to an inquiry from the college. Being from smaller areas, Mark and Terry decided this is where they wanted to be, and both agree — it's a beautiful and friendly area.

Mark is from Kellyville about 40 kilometers from the Emu Plains, where Terry is from. Both cities are part of Penworth, part of Sydney's "urban sprawl" which has a population of about 110,000. Sydney's population is about 3½ million. Emu Plains is right at the edge of that "sprawl" and behind that is the bush, Terry explained.

Terry is working with Tom Zuber and Tamara Dokken at the middle school. Although he said the curriculum and educational systems are quite similar, one difference he is experiencing is the concept of a "middle school." In Australia there is no middle school with primary grades running through sixth. Teachers normally have one class the whole year and teach everything from physical education to music.

"It's especially interesting for me that it's more like high school, which I'd like to do after teaching primary a few years," Terry continued. Friday Terry finished up a unit on ancient Rome. "To make it more interesting, we reenacted the ancient senate." The kids even donned sheets to look the part of toga-clad Romans.

"The kids are really interested and want to learn about Australia and more important from us as teachers," Terry said. One thing they found

"horrifying" is that students in Australia wear uniforms to school, he said. It's hard to explain, but students there were brought up that way and don't think much about it, he added.

Whitson students are also having some fun with their new student teacher who is working in the fourth grade with Gina Snyder and Dawn Smith. Right now Mark has been working with students on an Australian play.

He added the Whitson students are also interested about his country, including the way he talks. One fourth grade girl said to Mark, "I like the way you talk," while her classmate added, "I can't always understand you."

In addition to their work at school, Mark and Terry are also keeping busy in the community. They are now staying with Bill and Cleo Sheckels and have also spent time at the homes of Judge Robert Weisfield, Jerry and Lois Baker and Bob and Bobi Ashley. Weekends have also been occupied, from attending educational conferences to May Fest and Mark's whitewater trip down the Deshutes River last weekend with the Ashleys.

Of course, part of seeing the area is also trying new food, which Judge Weisfield helped by taking the two around to many of the area's eating spots. And they also found some new treats in the several days spent in Hawaii and San Francisco en route here.

Mark, who describes the food here as very sugary compared to that in Australia, said he especially enjoyed trying chocolate and coconut cream pies. "Ginger was always making coconut cream pies on 'Gulligan's Island,'" he said, adding that was the only time he'd heard of the dessert before.

The two will be working through the end of the week here and then for Mark it will be on to Los Angeles and home. Terry and the rest of the group will travel in the United States for another month before returning.



MARK DRURY, LEFT, AND TERRY HOPKINS