

THE QUALITY OF EXTENSION WORK

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ABSTRACT

Many criticisms have been made of the extension programs carried on by institutions of higher learning on the grounds that the quality of the work done by students in extension is beneath the level of academic respectability. Work done off campus in some instances may be of a questionable character, but there is no valid argument to support the conclusion that the extension method of instruction is fundamentally unsound when applied to certain subjects. Existing evidence indicates that this method of instruction, applied to non-laboratory courses, is equal if not superior to the classroom method. Supplementing the existing literature on this problem is a recent study made by the writer.

The data show clearly that students receive higher grades when studying by correspondence than when working on the campus. When the factors, instructors and courses, were constant, the difference in favor of students studying by correspondence is over one-half letter grade, and when the factors, students and departments, were constant the difference was over two-fifths of a letter grade in favor of work done by correspondence.

The quality of work done in extension classes is about the same as of that done on the campus. Here, when the factors, instructors and courses, are held constant the difference is two-tenths of a grade point in favor of studying in extension classes; when the factors, students and departments, are held constant, the difference, only one one-hundredth of a grade point, is in favor of work done on the campus.

The significance of these findings is pertinent to the training of teachers-in-service. All of us are aware that there are many teachers now at work who hold life certificates who, because of economic conditions, cannot attend formal classes. But by the extension method of study these teachers can be led to keep up to date. The extension method should also appeal to those who cannot afford to continue their studies toward the completion of a curriculum. May we arrive at the point where we measure an education for what it is worth, not by the geographical location of the student while at work.