

And why did you decide to enter education?

Students from U of A's largest faculty speak their minds

By LEONA GOM

Education, as any arts or science student can tell you, is at the bottom of the status hierarchy of faculties.

As one student in arts 3 put it, "You don't go into education; you flunk into it."

"People that take education are far too often ones who can't make it in any other field," said a grad student in English. "They want the status of a university education so they go into what looks easiest, what will offer them the least resistance, the least threat to their middleclass values."

But what do education students themselves say about their motives for entering the faculty?

In a random sample of 20 students interviewed, 12 said they went into education because, quite literally, they "wanted to teach."

"I had this idealistic picture of doing my humanitarian bit," was the way one student in ed 4 put it.

"I love little kids and I wanted to work with them," said a girl in ed 1.

"Some courses need to be revised or scrapped entirely. It is much more important to get a B.A. or B.Sc. first to get your subject matter down."
fourth year English major

Other reasons given were more practical.

"It's the only faculty I could get into with the marks I had," said a student in ed 1.

"I needed something practical to make money at," said an ed 3 student.

A third year transfer student from Victoria said, "I wanted some insurance for when my kids grow up and I thought teaching might be good for my mental health."

"It's the only faculty where I could go for only two years," said a girl in ed 2.

"I was dissatisfied with the way history was being taught in high school and I wanted to do some-

thing to change it," said an ed 1 history major.

"The pay is moderate, and you get two months summer holiday," an ed 4 student said.

"I love little kids and I wanted to work with them."
ed 1 student

"I met kids in education with good ideals," said a grad student who left the faculty.

"I just never thought of doing anything else," said a student in ed 3.

Asked their general opinion of the faculty, students tended to reply in one of two ways: the "Oh-boy, how-long-can-I-talk-about-it?" type, and the "Well . . . I haven't - really - thought-about-it" type. Not one of the students interviewed, however, expressed complete satisfaction with the way the faculty was set up and the ed courses required, although three said they were generally "fairly satisfied."

"I'm quite passive about it," admitted a third-year voc ed student.

"It's okay, and it's immaterial to me what others say about it," said a student in ed 2.

Only three people interviewed did not say their courses in the arts and science field were more useful to them than their education courses.

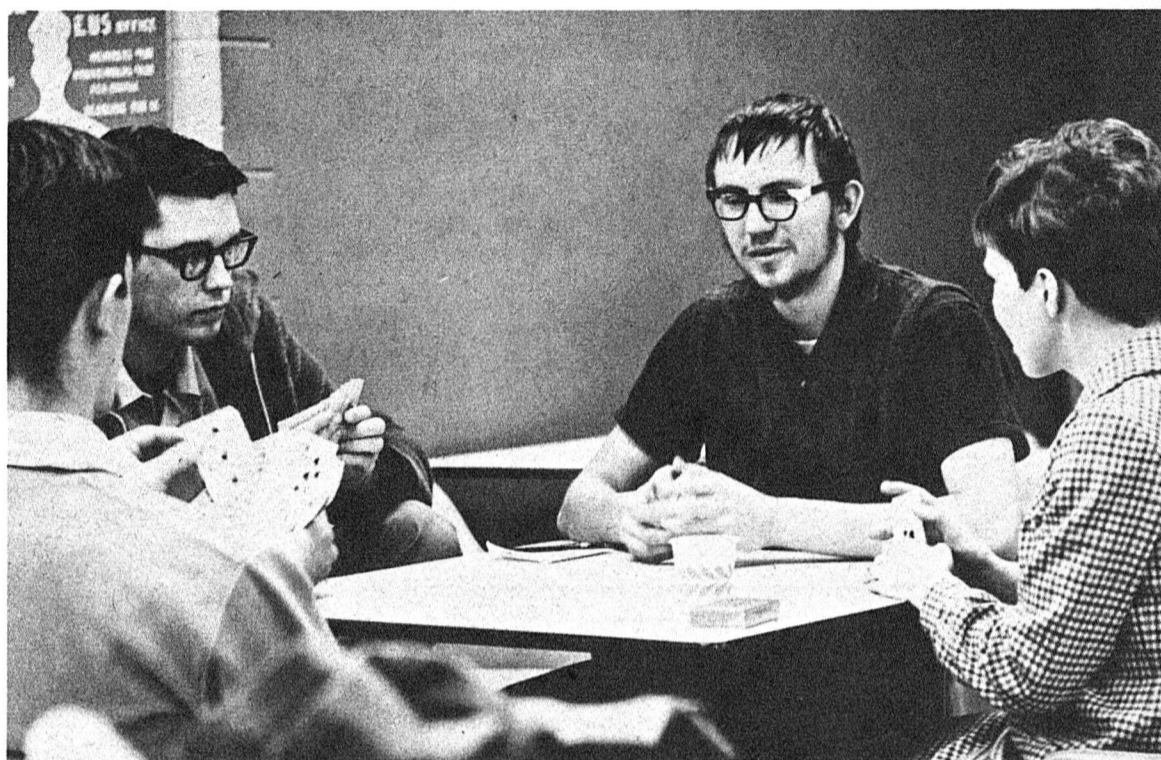
"I find most of my ed courses interesting and see a purpose for them," said an ed 1 student.

"Although the junior ed courses could be better, you certainly need both ed courses and arts and science courses; they should complement each other," said a student in ed 4.

The other 17 people were definite in their reaction against their education courses.

"My ed courses are really a loss, but the courses in my major are a real help," said a second-year art major.

"My arts courses are the only valuable part of my education," said a B.A. student in ed 1. "My ed courses are terrible. They're



—B. S. P. Bayer photo

"I HAD THIS IDEALISTIC PICTURE OF DOING MY HUMANITARIAN BIT"
... ed students at work in the ed lounge

dull, boring, and useless, and the profs know it, too. Nobody's kidding anyone."

A fourth year student who switched into arts from education said, "It's more important to me to get background courses, which I couldn't get in education."

"Course content is dull and monotonous," said an ed 2 student. "There, courses are a complete waste of time. I'd much rather be taking courses in arts."

"A lot of ed courses are not applicable to teaching, and most of us don't see what value there is in taking them," said an ed 3 student.

"Arts and science courses are definitely more relevant," said a fourth year linguistics major.

"Ed courses are too simple," a student in ed 3 said.

"Some courses need to be revised

or scrapped entirely," said a fourth year English major. "It is much more important to get a B.A. or

"It's the only faculty I could get into with the marks I had."
ed 1 student

B.Sc. first to get your subject matter down." She added, "There is utterly no senior student I know that isn't disillusioned with education."

Most students agreed, however, that the quality of instruction in ed courses is as good as, or better than, that in the arts and science faculties.

"I have no complaint about any of my professors in education," said a third year math major. "None I've had were particularly brilliant, but most of them were trying to make a dull course interesting."

"A prof makes or breaks a course in education," said a student in ed 4.

"The faculty has some very good profs, but still they often treat us like kids," said an ed 3 student.

"Most profs try to do the best they can with the kind of material they have to deal with," said an ed 3 student.

Positive comments were also made in almost all cases about student teaching, and most suggested the time spent on practice teaching be increased.

"Student teaching was the only valuable part of my education," said a B.A. student in ed 1.

"It is something we really need," said a student in ed 4. "But we shouldn't be expected to carry an academic load besides."

"It was the most important and practical part of my training," said an ed 3 student, "but being evaluated on it sort of defeats the purpose of having it at all."

"A lot of ed courses are not applicable to teaching, and most of us don't see what value there is in taking them."
ed 3 student

"I think it should be lengthened, even to an in-training year," suggested an ed 4 English major.

"It has shock value, if nothing else," said a student in ed 4.

Conclusions? Education students, contrary to public opinion, can think, and what most of them think about their faculty is worth noting. When only three out of 20 students can say they are "satisfied," surely it is not hyperbolic to say something is certainly the matter.

And if you're getting tired of hearing the clichés about education, do something to change them.

Disillusionment

Students enter education with a fantastic amount of adolescent idealism says Dr. Charles J. Brauner

Student disillusionment with education is to be expected.

Dr. Charles J. Brauner, who is currently doing research at U of A and is co-author of "Problems in Education and Philosophy" (the text for the senior ed philosophy course), said, "Students enter education with a fantastic amount of adolescent idealism, so naive that it can't hope to survive."

"To find teaching has a limited influence will bring a certain amount of disillusionment. The pre-growing up report and post-growing up report will naturally be different."

"Until students get down to identifying what they find unsatisfactory with their professors, courses or faculty, they are sluffed off as kids. Their complaints

are so general that nothing compels that they be taken seriously," he said.

"Without a consumers' report, all the criticisms and all the defence is left in the hands of the prof whose natural inclination is not to be too severe on himself."

"The student has a conflict of interests. On the one hand, he wants to exercise his freedom and express his discontent, and on the other hand, he realizes that getting his degree and going into teaching is dependent on his going along with the administration," said Dr. Brauner.

"If students want to say what they think, they have to stand on their own two feet, and there is always the danger that someone will knock them down."

"The hippies coined it nicely: 'Trust no one over 30.' But," he added, "that's not to say no one over 30 is trustworthy."

"In a power struggle, to say we'll all be gentlemen is to sell out."

"Severe criticism is never a gentlemanly thing for the person being criticized," he said.

"Honest and objective criticism requires freedom to say fully and without restraint what those being criticized do not want said, nay, will not permit being said."

"To say it requires independence. Without that independence many worthwhile things may still be said but there will come a point where what is most important to say will be forsaken."