

## Curriculum Planning Is an In-Service Job

C. L. CUSHMAN AND JOHN B. TAULANE

MUCH IS BEING WRITTEN and said currently about the importance of in-service education for the school personnel. On the whole this is encouraging. Who will question that effective teaching in our times requires a life time of education for the teacher!

As is always true of new educational developments, there is danger that activities designed to promote professional growth will not be integrated with other educational services so that the new and the old will reinforce rather than duplicate each other. Specifically there is danger that in-service education activities will not be meshed effectively with programs of curriculum development, or with supervisory activities.

### How the Program Began

Prior to 1938 the social studies program in the elementary schools of Philadelphia was outlined in separate courses of study in history, nature study and geography, civics, and safety. There were "official" courses of study prepared by administrative officials with the assistance of such persons as they wished to consult. At that date, however, there were already many persons who wished for a more flexible program that would encourage more individual initiative and would lessen the separateness of the various subjects.

In 1938 the Philadelphia Board of Superintendents issued a curriculum letter that was intended to mark a first step in a program of curriculum revision: "It is generally understood that one of the pressing problems before the schools of Philadelphia is a comprehensive consideration of the school curriculum. Plans for a general study of this problem will shortly be underway . . . ."

"The daily programs included in Helps for Teachers, No. 143, were prepared as suggestions. There is no reason for adherence to these specific programs where in the judgment of the teacher and principal the needs of the pupils would be better met by deviations. . . ."

"Schools are to be free to plan integrated units of work with the cooperation and au-

---

*The work that is being done to improve instruction in social studies in the elementary schools of Philadelphia illustrates a program in which there is a good deal of integration of three services—teacher education, curriculum development, and supervision. Such integration gives emphasis to the importance of working with children as a means toward in-service growth. This point of view is stressed by the authors as a major conclusion growing out of their experiences with in-service education. C. L. Cushman and John B. Taulane are both in the Curriculum Office of the Philadelphia Public Schools.*

---

thorization of the district superintendent. . . ."

The "general study of the curriculum" promised in the 1938 letter was undertaken five years later. During the intervening years, and under the freedom of this new policy, there were many changes made by individual schools and individual teachers in the social studies program. Many daily programs were made more flexible. Some teachers tried unifying instruction in the various social subjects. In some schools groups of teachers began to plan cooperatively the work to be done. Most important of all, many attempts were made to relate work done in the schools to the lives of children and their parents in out-of-school situations.

### Two Ways of Working

When in the fall of 1943 it was decided to undertake the revision of the elementary social studies, there were two general courses of action that were considered. One of these was to make an intensive formal study of social studies instruction including the nature of the social scene, the responsibility of the schools, the ways children learn, the evaluation of teaching, and other similar matters that are common to curriculum revision programs. This course of action would have led to the publication of a new bulletin that would then have been studied by all teachers and put into effect in the schools.

The alternative approach for the work in social studies was to move immediately to a



Courtesy Long Beach (Calif.) City Schools

*Working with children is part of in-service growth*

program of action in all schools. This was the approach adopted.

Many schools had already made real progress. All schools might be encouraged to try their hand at those things which some schools had found good. As this was done it would be necessary and practical to study critically these pioneering efforts. There would of course be need for the introduction of new ideas and the organization of the old and the new into a sensible total program.

The foregoing sounds involved—perhaps because like all social change it *is* involved. In essence it meant continuing to make some use of old courses of study, making considerable use of the many new ideas that progressive teachers and schools had introduced into their programs, and simultaneously bringing in many other new ideas. All of this was to the end that within a period of five or six years we might have an acceptable program for the social studies with teachers ready and able to put it into action.

Either of these approaches would have required a careful integration of in-service education, the production of curriculum materials, and supervision. If the first approach had been adopted many, or perhaps *all* teachers and principals, would first have been involved in an extensive program of study that would have required reading, writ-

ing, and discussing. This would have contributed to the production of curriculum plans and materials. Obviously it would also have contributed to growth in service. Supervisors and directors would have been brought in, and certainly they would have maintained that this was a vital part of the supervisory program.

The integration of the three types of service has been even more pronounced with the second approach. This can be explained best by describing briefly what has been done to date and what is contemplated for the years ahead. The social studies

committee for the elementary schools has come to see its work as divided into five periods of time. The emphasis in each period has been or will be on one phase of social studies teaching.

### What Has Been Done

During the first period of time the committee's emphasis was upon the relation of instruction in social studies to community living. An initial publication entitled *Our Schools and We Philadelphians* served as a guide for study and action during this period. All teachers and all schools were invited to share in a program that would enable them individually and collectively to see how the work of the school and social living in the community can be made to enrich each other. Difficulties and successes were shared through written reports and many conferences, some within individual schools, and others among neighboring and district schools. A school principal was freed from regular responsibilities to visit schools. Assisted by other supervisors, he had the job both of giving and collecting ideas.

During the second period of the program, the period in which we are at present, the emphasis of the committee is upon effective unit teaching. Teachers were invited to submit written description of units that had been developed in their classrooms. More

than five hundred responded. In some cases the units described were subject based, with little evidence of any relation to the lives of the learners. Many others, however, got right at vital matters in the lives of pupils and parents.

From the description of units that were submitted, the social studies committee prepared a tentative edition of a curriculum publication entitled *Living and Learning*. Copies of this were submitted to all schools for comment and criticism. Teachers were asked to consider such questions as the following: Did these units suggest a direction in which social studies instruction in Philadelphia should go? Had the committee succeeded in giving all teachers helpful suggestions for moving toward good teaching? Did the committee's program offer a practical means of transition from the former separate courses of study to a new fusion of subjects? These and other questions were first discussed in the schools, and then in a conference of all principals, supervisors, and some two hundred teachers from all schools.

#### What Does the Future Promise?

In the fall of 1945 a revised edition of *Living and Learning*, an "On-Our-Way" publication, will be distributed to all teachers. This will be used as a guide to study and action in the development of effective unit teaching. During the year there will be many requests for help from supervisors, principals, and members of the committee. But there will also be many invitations to "come and see what is succeeding." And this will provide a host of added ideas for later years.

The committee has tentative plans for third and fourth periods to be used in determining the scope of the instructional program and in developing a plan for the sequence of study from grade to grade. Here again the aim of the committee will be to move through conference and study from the best ideas already in effect in the schools to a plan of scope and sequence that will be both intelligent and practical.

The committee's proposed schedule provides for a fifth period to be used for the clarification of purposes or objectives, and the development of practical ways of evaluating instruction. It is of course true that no decision about instruction can properly be made without some attention to objectives.

What is proposed is that the preparation of a formal statement of objectives be postponed in the main until we have given extended consideration to what can reasonably be hoped for from a well-planned program.

If the hopes of the committee are realized this five- or six-year program will eventuate in a curriculum bulletin. By the time the bulletin is issued teachers will have become pretty familiar with most of the ideas that will be presented. Indeed, to a considerable extent it will be descriptive of the type of program that many teachers, we hope a majority, are already working out with pupils.

Our experience in the foregoing program points to certain tentative conclusions regarding in-service education that merit consideration by all who are engaged in the improvement of instruction. Attention has previously been called to the first, and most important of these conclusions. To repeat, *in a well-planned program for the improvement of instruction, education in service, supervision, and the development of curriculum materials are in the main inseparably woven together both as to time, place, and person.*

A second closely related conclusion is that *a major part of the in-service education of the teacher, or principal, or supervisor should be a direct outgrowth of the work of the classroom and school and neighborhood in which the individual is located.* Such growth in service from the regular on-going activities related to one's work will take place only to the extent that all parties concerned—teacher, principal, supervisor, and superintendent—view the activities of each classroom as experimental in nature. This makes of the classroom a laboratory in which the teacher is trying constantly to produce good social living out of the various elements that are available to her—pupils, parents, a community, resources, ideas, and ideals.

A third and final conclusion to which attention is called is that *mature and secure persons are those who consciously and openly seek personal growth in service.*

Growth in service is undoubtedly essential to all else we would achieve through education. Effective growth requires careful planning. This planning should take account of teacher attitudes toward growth in service. More important, the planning should be a coordinated part of a total program for the improvement of school service.

Copyright © 1945 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.