

Front Lines in Education

Henry Harap, Editor

Learning to Live. The Project in Applied Economics has recently made an appraisal of its achievements during the past seven years which are incorporated in two publications of a summary nature. *Learn and Live* by Clara M. Olson and Norman D. Fletcher reports considerable improvement in living in communities which have produced and used printed materials pertaining to food, clothing, and shelter. *Better Living* by G. Marian Young is a compilation of practical activities suitable for classroom use by teachers who wish to help to raise the level of living of their pupils and their families. The Sloan Foundation which subsidized the project reports the adoption of a long-term program to familiarize the teacher-educating institutions of the country with the results of the experimental studies in applied economics. Harold F. Clark of Teachers College, Columbia University serves as coordinator of the project.

Citizens Councils of Connecticut. Several years of study of government and the educational system convinced us that the trend towards centralization could be stemmed only by making local initiative and responsibility function. For this reason we organized in Connecticut, back in 1938, Regional Citizens Councils, in order that the people of the state might participate in the formation of public policy and also that the talent in our state might be put to work. Twenty such regional councils have been organized and over 1200 citizens now participate. The top organization is the Connecticut Council on Education which represents the presidents of all important organizations having educational programs in the state. The problems which we discuss each year come either from requests for suggestions which we transmit

to individual members or from suggestions which we offer as a result of studies that have been completed by the professional educators. In addition to all this, we are using the talent in each of the organizations of the state to aid in the development of the educational program. For example, the League of Women Voters has completed two documents: One on "Supervision" and another on "Civic Apprenticeship." We hope to keep the schools close to the people and the people close to the schools.—Alonzo G. Grace, *Commissioner of Education*.

Children Initiate Community Improvements. The Tincum Township Improvement Association (Bucks County, Pa.) grew out of a program given by the children of the five one-room schools of the township. About seventy adults were present, including several school board members. Using information gathered from their "Community Study" unit, each child suggested some things which he thought would help to improve the schools. During the discussion that followed, improvements were suggested by parents, including the reorganization of the schools into four-grade rather than eight-grade groups, correction of unsanitary conditions of several school wells, better community recreation facilities, the employment of an itinerant art teacher to serve all the schools, and even full consolidation of the five schools into a central unit. Finally it was decided to organize "The Tincum Township Improvement Association." The association has held regular monthly meetings, rotating from school to school. The wells have been corrected, a road building program is drawn up, and the school board is working on a reorganization plan.—Genevieve Bowen, *Elementary Supervisor*.

State Directors of Elementary Education. The Executive Committee of the Association of State Directors of Elementary Education has selected six significant problems for study during the current year. The problems and committee chairmen for each are as follows: characteristics of a good elementary school, Helen Heffernan; coordination of school and community service for the twelve-month development program for elementary school children, William E. Young; programs for children below six, Jennie Campbell; techniques for stimulation of curriculum development throughout a state, Anne Hoppock; programs for the continuous professional education of teachers, Verna Walters; school housing and facilities for a desirable educational program, Julia Wetherington. R. Lee Thomas is chairman of the Association and Helen K. Mackintosh is secretary.

Maine Study Tours. Sociography is the name of a statewide study course which was offered last summer at the Gorham (Maine) State Teachers College. The course was designed to help teachers who need informational background for their classroom teaching of the industrial and social life of the State. The group made at least one trip each week. Motion-pictures were taken during the tours and copies will be available for classroom use at extra cost. Off-campus trips occupied twenty to thirty per cent of the student's time. The remainder was spent on the campus in research, pre-trip planning and surveys.

Study Camps. Announcement of a Kern County (Calif.) teachers' institute to be held on Greenhorn Mountain reminds this department that during the course of the year your reporter attended two study conferences in an outdoor setting. The Oklahoma Program for Improvement of Instruction held a conference for coordinators and participants from various counties at Heart of the Hills, located in Cherokee County not far from the Teachers College at Tahlequah. The supervisors of Alabama held their annual conference lasting a week at Camp Mack in Talledega

County at the foot of Cheaha Mountain. These conferences combine study, outdoor recreation, and social activities. The atmosphere is conducive to friendliness and cooperation. The participants have a receptive attitude and they enter into the working sessions cheerfully. They get away from routine duties; there are no distractions, and they concentrate on the business at hand. Given plenty of recreation, the members are refreshed for clear thinking and discussion. This department will be pleased to hear of other conferences of this kind and report them in this space.

Teachers Employed Twelve Months. The Glencoe (Ill.) Board of Education will employ and pay all teachers for twelve months each year and allow a month's vacation with pay. This plan not only provides extra pay but also gives the school system control of approximately six additional weeks of the teacher's time. During this period some teachers will remain in the community to serve in a combined educational and recreational program. Others will participate in local workshop activities. Still others will be engaged in the revision of curriculum materials and in editing the reports of in-service study groups. In addition to the activities that will be conducted locally provisions will be made each year for some teachers to engage in regional and foreign travel and for others to attend colleges and universities for advanced study. From year to year the activities of teachers will be varied to insure breadth and variety of individual experiences.

Curriculum Planning in Michigan. Michigan's curriculum planning at the state level is the responsibility of the State Curriculum Planning Committee and its sixteen subcommittees. About eighty representatives of these committees met recently for two days at St. Marys' Lake Camp at Battle Creek to evaluate the work of the past year and to propose recommendations for the work of the next year. It was recommended that state communities be decentralized in order to obtain the maximum

degree of participation by local school personnel. The group strongly supported the recent trend in Michigan toward regional or area curriculum conferences and urged that they be extended next year. One emphasis which persistently recurred was active civic participation by teachers and students, in order to obtain a maximum understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship in a critical age.—Roland C. Faunce, *Chief, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

Grouping of Pupils. In the Milwaukee (Wis.) primary schools a child begins each semester where he left off in his own learning. An attempt is made to keep together children of similar chronological age and emotional and social maturity. At the end of six semesters—above the kindergarten—most children in such grouping are ready for the conventional fourth grade. No statement of grade level is made before this time. The retarded youngster may need seven or eight semesters, or more, to attain satisfactory achievement of these levels, while the accelerated child may do it in less time. If severe retardation occurs a complete individual diagnosis and adjustment is made. For social reasons the bright child is rarely accelerated more than one semester but enrichment of his experiences on his own grade level is necessary to preserve his proper social and intellectual stability in the group. With removal of grade barriers and traditional report cards, teachers are free to concentrate on the child.—Elias N. Lane, *Associate Editor of Teaching Progress.*

Pupils Face Community Problems. The Youthbuilders program of citizenship education has been functioning in Philadelphia (Pa.) since February, 1945. Sixteen teachers have been specially trained to organize and conduct this activity in Junior high schools throughout the city. Essentially the program aims to help students to face realistically existing school and community problems and to apply democratic techniques in their solution. Club members, composed of a cross-section of the individual school,

select a current problem which is disturbing society. The sponsor, by means of provocative questions, guides the children into open-minded discussions of the issues involved. Committees of pupils are chosen by club members to obtain further information whenever the group requires it. Instead of going to secondary sources, interviews are arranged with persons in the community who are authorities in the field being discussed. So far, over one hundred civic leaders have cooperated in this enterprise. After several interviews, a Youthbuilders group "bridges" from the broad problem to a specific, related need which exists in its own school or neighborhood. The rest of the term is then spent in organizing itself and the rest of the school or community to act for the improvement of the local situation.—Harry Orth, *Curriculum Office.*

Community Improvement. Working out of Oklahoma University, S. E. T. Lund will direct a long term project in the improvement of living in McIntosh County, (Okla.) The leaders in the Community have formed a coordinating committee which will plan the program. During the first phase, staff members have tried to learn to know the people of the county. Every section in the county has been visited to observe the condition of the land, and the level of living in the county. Preliminary plans for regular work in the county starting in the fall include: monthly meetings in the county court house which will be open to the general public, to analyze the various problems of the county and arrive at a decision with respect to priority; organization of sectional county working committees; initiating and carrying forward leadership training with sectional committees, and with the general county committee; an in-service teacher education program to prepare the teachers to participate in the attack on whatever problems are selected. Every effort will be made to operate the program by means of local leadership and local finance assisted by such local, state and national agencies as are available to any community.

Secondary Curriculum Development. Believing that secondary-school curriculum changes involve internal organization such as programming, scheduling of classes and advising of students, Oakland (Calif.) is attempting to stimulate and to direct curriculum revision through curriculum assistants in the junior and senior high schools. These assistants have their own fields of specialization but as a group, they serve as a general overall planning body for needed improvement in secondary education. Vertically the junior and senior high-school curriculum assistants have surveyed the possibilities of articulating instruction through junior and senior high schools. At present the teaching of science is under careful study. It is planned to survey all of the areas of the curriculum which in combination make a major contribution to the general education of the secondary students who are not intending to go to college. Through the curriculum assistants, suggested improvements are considered by the Instructional Councils within each school while citywide policy is discussed in the regularly scheduled meetings of the curriculum assistants.—Bernice Baxter, *Administrative Assistant*.

Field Services. The College of Education of the University of Florida has arranged a School Service Program to make its facilities more useful to the public schools of Florida. The staff members will be available, upon request, to attend meetings, hold conferences, and work with faculty groups and individual teachers in the schools of the state. Administrators and teachers are encouraged to request assistance in conducting studies of their problems. Professional books, pamphlets and books for courses of study, bulletins, and other materials are sent upon request from teachers and schools.

The Core Curriculum. Several inquiries have come to this desk recently concerning the core curriculum. In our reply we referred to the Alabama program under

Morrison McCall; the experimental program in Minnesota under Nelson Bossing; the Michigan program under Roland Faunce; the Denver program under Maurice Ahrens; the Philadelphia program under C. L. Cushman; the Portland, Oregon program under Paul Pinckney; the Connecticut program under Alonzo Grace; the experimental program at the University school of Ohio State University under Robert Gilchrist. We shall be glad to enlarge upon this list in later issues as we hear from our readers. We shall also be glad to report the titles of doctoral dissertations on this theme.

A New Curriculum for Teachers. The School of Education of Denver University has introduced a new undergraduate program for the education of teachers. A broad general education with freedom of choice within a prescribed pattern will extend over the entire four years and will make up three-fourths of the undergraduate program. One quarter of practical experience in the classrooms of the Denver Public Schools will be offered in each of the four years. The quarter devoted to student teaching in the senior year will be on a full-time basis and will be given fifteen hours of credit. Functional courses in psychology and education will be closely correlated with the carefully planned sequence of practical classroom experience.

Self-Survey in Florida. Growing out of a statewide study of public education, the Florida Citizens Committee on Education has requested school officials, teachers and other citizens in each county in the state to develop plans for carrying out similar comprehensive studies of education in their counties to the end that an adequate program of education may be developed in each county in the state. A guidebook has been prepared to assist lay and educational groups in planning and carrying out studies in their counties and individual schools. Edgar L. Morphet of the Florida State Department of Education serves as executive secretary of the Citizens Committee.

In Brief

¶ Community Chests and Councils encourages the participation of children in campaigns for the support of local community funds. Among other aids, it has recently issued two mimeographed bulletins on: (1) how to organize a student community chest campaign; (2) how to organize a group of student speakers. The address is 155 East 44th Street, New York 17.

¶ Houston Lucia, is the new president of the Alabama Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction. Mrs. Lucia who is supervisor of the Pike County Public Schools was elected at the last meeting which was held in connection with the camp conference at Camp Mac on the side of Cheaha Mountain, Talladega County, Alabama.

¶ For the fifth consecutive year, the summer conference on elementary school supervision was held at the University of California, Los Angeles, from July 15 to August 2, 1946. Observation of teaching was followed by a demonstration of an individual supervisory conference with the teacher and an evaluation of the supervisory guidance.

• The Colorado State College of Education has introduced a course in community participation for sophomores. The students work with groups in the social agencies of Greeley. The program is financed partially by the City Council, the School Board, and Colorado College of Education.

• New Officers of the Northwest Society for Supervision and Curriculum Development are A. D. Gullidge, Helena, Montana, president, and Don Patterson, Bremerton, Washington, secretary.

• New members of the staff of the United States Office of Education are: Roosevelt Basler, Chief of Instructional Problems, Division of Secondary Education; Glenn O. Blough, Specialist for Science and Aviation, Division of Elementary Education; Howard R. Anderson, Specialist for Social Sciences and Geography; Philip S. Johnson, Specialist for the Natural Sciences in the Division of Secondary Education.

¶ Within the last year *School Life* has published a series of lists of courses of

study. They appeared in the following issues: elementary language, February 1945; secondary language, March 1945; elementary science, June 1945; secondary science, November 1945; art, March 1946; music, June 1946.

¶ Paul R. Grim, formerly assistant professor of education at Washington University has been appointed to the newly created position of Director of Student Teaching and Assistant Professor, College of Education at the University of Minnesota.

¶ Walter H. Gaumnitz of the United States Office of Education is working on a bulletin which will include a discussion of experiments with the core type of curriculum in schools which enroll 100 pupils or fewer. He would be pleased to hear from our readers.

¶ Worth McClure, the new executive secretary of the American Association of School Administrators was a leader in curriculum development when he served as assistant superintendent of schools in Seattle some years ago.

New Curriculum Publications

Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction—*Local Participation in State-Wide Revision of the Elementary School Curriculum*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction. 1946. 127 p. Free.

San Diego City Schools—*Language For Teachers of Grades Four, Five and Six*. San Diego, California: San Diego City Schools. 1945. 124 p. Mimeographed. 30 cents.

South Carolina Department of Education—*Suggestions for the Teaching of the Language Arts in the Twelve-Year School Program*. Columbia, South Carolina: South Carolina State Department of Education. 1946. 70 p. No price has been fixed.

Sylvester, Helen—*Reading Readiness*. A Teacher's guide for the development of a first grade program. San Diego, Calif.: San Diego City Schools. 1946. 43 p. Mimeographed. 19 cents.

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