

Front Lines in Education

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Resource-Use Education in the Southern States. Resource-use education is receiving major attention in fourteen southern states as a result of the impetus given this movement by the cooperative action of the Committee on Southern Regional Studies and Education of the American Council on Education, and the Southern States Work Conference. The Committee on Southern Regional Studies and Education, of which John E. Ivey, Jr., is executive secretary, has been active in promoting resource-use education for several years. Early in 1947 this committee joined with the Southern States Work Conference in a three-year cooperative program of resource-use education. As a result of this new cooperative venture it is expected that efforts already underway in each of the states will be intensified and that more coordination and unity will be given the program.

Representatives from the fourteen southern states gathered at Daytona Beach, Florida, in June for the Southern States Work Conference. One of the major aspects of this conference was the development of criteria or guides for measuring the adequacy and effectiveness of resource-use educational practices in the three areas of education administration, teacher education, and public school curriculum. Evaluations resulting from the use of these guides will be used in formulating specific programs for the improvement of resource-use education in each of the cooperating states. These programs will be tried out experimentally and again be evaluated and studied so that results and conclusions can be summarized at the 1949 meeting of the Southern States Work Conference.

A regional advisory committee will guide the entire study. This committee includes the chairmen and co-chairmen of committees for each of the three areas

being studied, the chairmen of state committees, and representatives of regional agencies active in education and resource development. The regional coordinator is Mr. Ivey, and W. J. McGlothlin, chief, Training and Educational Relation Staff, TVA, is associate coordinator. Incidentally, Mr. McGlothlin is also chairman of the 1948 ASCD year book on resource-use education.

Work in this field has already been underway in some of the states for several years. In Virginia, Alfred L. Wingo has served as supervisor of conservation studies in the State Department of Education. His efforts have been centered on conservation education, and under his sponsorship three publications on conservation will be published. J. B. Rutland is director of resource-use education in the State Department of Education in Texas, and a four-man committee has been appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction to serve as an advisory committee.

This committee has held workshops for various teacher groups and has participated in workshops for teachers conducted by teacher training institutions. The committee has also made available to the teachers various publications and materials useful in developing the program. The state department itself has also sponsored the publication of several bulletins for use in the schools.

One of the primary purposes of the Florida resource-use education project is the provision of instructional materials relating to Florida, its people, and its physical resources. The Florida State Department of Education has published a new text book for use in resource-use education entitled, *Florida: Wealth or Waste?*

The North Carolina resource-use education commission dates back to the Summer of 1945 when Governor Cherry ap-

pointed representatives from forty-six state agencies to be members of the commission. Richard L. Weaver serves as program director for the commission. The general purposes of the commission are:

1. Provide a facility through which North Carolina educational and research agencies may achieve coordination of their efforts in the fields of resource-use education and research translation.

2. Assist the public schools and colleges in North Carolina systematically to infuse into their instructional programs current educational materials and methods designed to develop understanding and skills in scientific resource-use in their communities, state, and region.

3. Assist non-school agencies and institutions more effectively to develop and use educational methods and media in an effort to bring about more adequate understanding and use of the total resources of the state and region.

4. Provide a facility for training leadership in resource-use education and research translation.

Plans of the commission include the following types of projects in these three areas:

1. *Teacher education:* Set up a demonstration program in six of the teacher training institutions of the state; plan summer courses and workshops for teachers; work with the institutions to improve courses offered in resource-use education.

2. *Public school program:* Select ten or twelve public schools as demonstration centers in which the commission will cooperate in the development of a resource-use program.

3. *School administration:* Study the allotment of time in the program to studies of resource-use education and administrative problems involved in carrying forth resource-use programs.

Developmental Reading Program for Secondary School Pupils. The Providence (R. I.) public schools have been carrying forward a developmental program of reading instruction which is forestalling the need for special remedial reading classes. The program has been developed by a

committee of English teachers under the direction of the supervisor of curriculum research. The program is planned to help all high school students progress toward maturity in reading, be they good or poor readers upon entrance to the secondary school. At present, this maintenance and improvement of reading ability is carried on in conjunction with English classes but the administration hopes to extend the program so that it may be carried on by teachers in all subjects.

The need for emphasizing reading in the junior and senior high schools was indicated by the results of a standardized testing program administered over a period of two years to all students entering the high school. Individual reading needs of students are ascertained upon entrance to the junior high school, and the reading program is planned in accordance with the needs revealed. Usually thirty-five minutes per week are devoted to the program in the junior high school grades, and less time than this in the senior high school. Pupils receive instructions in how to read and study in practically every subject—not in English alone. They receive direct help in reading in mathematics, social studies, and science. Not only are the pupils given skill and ability to skim, to read with speed and at the same time comprehensively, to master detail and to evaluate what they read, but also they are taught how to use the library tools such as the dictionary, encyclopedia, card catalog, magazine indices, and the like.

As a part of the instructional program in the eleventh grade the pupils are taught how to read a newspaper. Throughout the program emphasis is given to the enlargement of the students' vocabulary and to the development of a critical faculty.

Maryland Emphasizes Programs in General Education. The State Department of Education in Maryland has been promoting the development of certain curriculum materials in connection with the extension upward of the general education program through twelve grades, and to a limited extent through grades thirteen and fourteen of the junior college. The Legis-

lature of 1945 made possible the development of a twelve-grade program uniformly throughout the state. In 1945, at the summer workshop sponsored by the State Department, an over-all framework for curriculum development was agreed upon. In 1946 ten resource units were developed for use in the junior high schools of the state. In 1947 the State workshop developed an administrative manual for use in adapting the program of the senior high school to changing needs, and four bulletins which report what selected teachers did throughout the state in creating a functional general education program in safety, recreation, consumer education, and conservation.

This school year the State Department of Education, working through the Division of Instruction, of which James E. Spitznas is director, expects to sponsor at least one pilot school in each of the twenty-three counties of the state where may be observed in operation some aspect of the general education program. Four of these pilot schools may be used for rather intensive experimental work in the fields of nutrition, consumer education, recreation, and conservation. By means of demonstration discussion conferences in these pilot schools, the state hopes to interpret to an increasing number of school people the kind of functional general education program which they should like to effect.

Specialized High Schools. Students of secondary education would probably find a recent publication of the New York City schools very interesting and informative. This publication is a bulletin entitled, *Specialized High Schools in New York City*, which was published by the Board of Education of the City of New York in 1946. The bulletin was prepared by a committee on specialized schools under the co-chairmanship of associate superintendents N. L. Engelhardt, Frederick Ernst, and George Pigott, Jr. The bulletin discusses at some length the place of the specialized high school in American education—a discussion which will be of special interest to students of secondary

school organization. The second section of the bulletin contains brief descriptions of the program and work of each of the sixteen specialized high schools in New York City.

Undergraduates Evaluate College Courses.

Robert Marsh, now of the Division of Social Science of the University of Illinois, has described for the department an interesting and worthwhile venture of undergraduates at Cornell University. His account follows:

"A university faculty often finds it easy to ignore the views of undergraduates, but progressive educators will realize that students may see defects in a course, a teacher, methods of instruction, or even the curriculum as a whole which the administration may overlook.

"If the student criticism of courses is to be valuable it must be systematic, just, and based upon standards which educators will accept as legitimate. A booklet entitled, *Student Guide to Courses*, published by the *Cornell Daily Sun*, student newspaper at Cornell University, Ithaca (N. Y.), is such an undertaking. Fifty lower division courses in the College of Arts and Sciences were selected for evaluation, and on the basis of returned questionnaires a reasonable sampling of opinion could be made among the students who had completed them within the previous year.

"The student could remain anonymous, but was required to give his grade in the course so that unfair criticism could be eliminated. The questions covered four areas: the instructor, the lectures, the assignments, and the examinations. Was the instructor an interesting and effective teacher? Did he like students and make an effort to understand them? Did he have something to say which made him a good lecturer? Could he conduct an effective class discussion, or did he tend to monopolize the floor for himself? Did his lectures merely repeat the text, express his own views (or foibles), or enlarge the subject and correlate it with other fields? Were his assignments valuable and worth the time it took to do them, or merely 'busy work'? Were his examinations fair and

grades just? Finally, what did the course contribute to the intellectual development of the student? Did it assist him in recognizing problems, making decisions, and taking effective action? Was he stimulated to further study and a genuine interest in the field? Could the course be improved?

"The results of the study, although difficult to generalize, are interesting. On the whole, students preferred an effective teacher to an advanced scholar who was unable to achieve a genuine meeting of minds with beginners. The bulk of criticism was directed at those whose lectures seemed poorly organized or excessively diffuse, who failed to illustrate their abstractions with applications, or whose classroom manner was weak, ineffective, drab, or pretentious. Although not all courses presented problems which students could accept as their own, any course when well taught was considered of value in one's general education. The least forgivable failure of an instructor was an inability to make his material interesting. It was assumed that if a man is devoting his life to a subject he should possess an enthusiasm for it which could be transmitted to others. 'Cute' and 'coy' devices were rejected as were obvious examples of 'talking down.' Both teachers and textbooks occasionally failed to do their job

well due to 'rambling,' 'lack of inspiration,' 'dogmatism,' 'repetition,' and simply being 'dull.'

"The Cornell editors plan to extend their study to the remaining divisions of the university. If other schools would publish guides of equal quality, a valuable commentary on the character of higher education under the G.I. Bill would be obtained."

Chicopee Plans Curriculum Improvement. Teacher-principal workshop committees of the Chicopee (Mass.) schools made intensive studies of the commercial curriculum and guidance areas during the past school year. The guidance committee proposed a comprehensive plan for guidance and counseling which is to continue from grade one through a three-year period following the termination of school attendance. The plan, according to Superintendent John Fitzpatrick, has been adopted by the school committee and a supervisor of guidance has already been appointed to implement the plan.

The commercial curriculum committee surveyed the requirements for office workers of Chicopee business firms and secured suggestions for improvement of the program. The report proposes a revision of offerings in this area so as to adapt the course to present demands.

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the committee at its open meeting. The interest and suggestions of the members will make possible a better service. The entire committee has a real desire to develop the most helpful reports possible.

The major trends in legislation seem to be in the direction of benefits in many areas. This has not come about without

effort on the part of a great many school and lay people. It will continue only if teachers and administrators continue their interest and vigilance on behalf of helpful legislation. This is a program which invites the concern and the participation of school people throughout the nation. *ASCD Legislative Committee.*

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