

This We Do Believe

A superintendent and a professor of education, in the preceding articles, have written about leadership responsibilities for better schools. What do some of the other leaders have to say? To illustrate the tremendous range of responsibilities and ways for assuming them, we quote briefly from other leaders.

From a Supervisor of Music

When working in a special field one asks critically, "What is the role of the specialist in developing creative leadership?" All of us, we hope, are developing leadership in whatever field we lead, but we are apt to become so concerned with our own specialities that we often neglect the overview and the important connection with life itself. The specialist is a teacher of children first, and a specialist afterward. He must see his own field subordinated as an integral part of a larger whole.

It is this interest, then, in the "larger whole" which prompted us to initiate a pilot project last winter: a study discussion program in Child Growth and Development. Participation was on a voluntary basis. The 275 engaged in the study, of whom 200 were teachers and 75 were parents, learned much from working together. Groups were organized according to the age levels to be studied and the four aspects of development were considered.

There was a wide range of leadership potentials in the groups and many latent abilities were given opportunity for growth. Best of all, the groups trained their own members and some of the finest satisfactions came through these inter-relationships for self-development.

The project received state-wide praise and commendation, mingled with

surprise and wonder that a music person should initiate the program. Too often we specialists are accused of delving deeply in a chosen field with the resulting deep, narrow view.

Naturally, we are interested in the implications of the study for the music curriculum. A frank appraisal leads us to the conclusion that the curriculum will necessarily become a more flexible one for it will consider children's needs, interests, background, and maturity. Creating leaders who share this view insures thrilling experiences with children and music.—*Cecile C. Coombs, supervisor of music, East St. Louis, Illinois.*

From a Teacher and Her Students

Generally accepted is the concept that education should develop basic and vocational skills. A recently recognized and even more important function is to develop ability to adjust to problems and get along together. Too often we fail to give children such vital learning experiences.

Let students who have had opportunities to solve problems and live democratically together in a ninth grade "core" class speak for themselves:

"School should not deal wholly with subject matter but with personality, manners, leadership, getting along with others. To me these things are more important."

"Working together, you learn to respect yourself and others."

"Every person in some way has been a leader. We gave our own opinions with confidence and respected others' opinions."

"I'm sure that in life it's more important to know how to express my opinions, be a leader, work on committees, and take part in meetings than to know verbs and pronouns."

In retrospect, an eleventh grader said about the ninth grade class:

"We were so friendly. We could talk our problems over, no matter how trivial they were. I gained poise and self-confidence. In our classes since, we have missed the friendly, informal atmosphere and the personal contact with the teacher."—

Louise Parrish, teacher of ninth grade general education, Central Junior High School, Muskegon, Michigan.

From a Supervisor of Instruction

One of the chief functions of the supervisor is that of carrying forward the curriculum program as it provides for teacher growth. She helps teachers and principals develop a basic philosophy concerning the curriculum. She has the responsibility for discovering and developing leadership among the teachers and for coordinating the work of the entire school personnel. She recognizes creative ability in teachers and encourages individual expression and participation in the development, interpretation, and implementation of the curriculum. She establishes a working atmosphere which gives teachers and principals a feeling of freedom and stimulates them to experiment with new and different techniques. At the same time she gives them guidance in making the experiment as successful as possible.

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The supervisor provides opportunities where teachers within a system may work together on common interests and problems. Together they constantly evaluate the developing curriculum and explore its strengths and weaknesses. She encourages the exchange of ideas and the pooling of resources among teachers, schools, and communities. She keeps herself informed and guides teachers in the selection and use of a wide variety of instructional materials. She knows many resources and sees that they are made available to teachers and children. She is responsible for helping teachers and principals secure the services of community agencies in the total school program. She is genuinely concerned about curriculum improvement and provides for continuous participation of teachers in cooperative curriculum development.—*Ethel Holmes, supervisor of instruction, Escambia County, Brewton, Alabama.*

Two Classroom Teachers

Creative leadership—that something in group living which cherishes the belief that group living is strengthened through the differences of its various members and thus nurtures a feeling of responsibility on the part of each individual for accepting and solving the problems of their group living—is a *must* in curriculum building if school living is to be effective in teaching children for successful living in today's world.

A teacher's responsibility in curriculum building is that of a creative leader. Creative curriculum leadership requires two attitudes:

► A curriculum is not a finished product

to be used forever because it was found to be successful at one time. A curriculum grows as a solution to daily and long-term problems which face a community—whether the community be a given group of children, an entire school, or even a national or world group. “How can we raise money for a movie projector?” is the kind of question around which curriculum grows. This was not the problem last year and it is not the problem of the community next door; yet, the same basic concepts in arithmetic, social studies, and all the rest are learned in solving the problem.

► An attitude that the important thing in teaching is not teaching end results, but *working through problems* with children. There are logical, effective ways for going about solving problems. Children do not learn these ways by memorizing other people’s solutions. They must experience all the steps in solving problems, whether the problems be social or academic. The person who puzzles through the complicated field of number relationships and then writes an arithmetic textbook for children, giving them all the rules and shortcuts for solving problems, cheats them out of the real learning that he went through in arriving at those rules and shortcuts.

If teachers assume the responsibility for, and attack the problem of, curriculum construction with a spirit of creativeness, they give to children the same attitude of creativeness, for the children have lived and experienced a way of doing things.—*Jeannette Saurborn, instructor in physical education, Elementary School; and Peggy Brogan, classroom teacher, Bronxville School, Bronxville, New York.*

A Secondary School Principal

Creative leadership is impossible to define but it can, perhaps, be analyzed by indicating some of the behavior pat-

terns shown by a person who is becoming such a leader.

The creative leader:

1. Searches continually for ideas from others that will shed light on his problem.
2. Develops confidence in his ability in those with whom he works by: giving credit for ideas and help received from others; being fair and considerate in all his dealings; being objective and impersonal in his professional differences with others; and respecting his colleagues’ rights to differing points of view and to defend those points of view.
3. Defends his point of view vigorously, but changes and adapts it as conditions require.
4. Searches continually for areas of agreement on which he and his colleagues can take unified action.
5. Encourages experimentation and recognizes that many experiments will fail.
6. Is more interested in taking the blame for his mistakes than in receiving credit for his successes.
7. Evaluates his program and his activities objectively and continuously.
8. Maintains an undisturbed disposition and a sense of humor at all times.
9. Participates willingly in disagreeable activities in which his colleagues must participate.
10. Knows all he possibly can about his field of endeavor.
11. Above all, is a living example of democracy in action.—*Paul W. Pinckney, principal, Oakland High School, Oakland, California.*

From a Superintendent

The most effective type of leadership consists of assisting people to want to do what needs to be done for boys and girls—and then helping them do it. This kind of leadership is shared by the superintendent with his entire staff. Awareness of children's needs develops through the superintendent's stimulation of individual and group research, examination and discussion of published studies, consultation with qualified persons inside and outside the system, and sharing the results of creative teaching, supervision, and administration.

Having identified what needs to be done, the staff works together to meet these needs. Here, again, the superintendent functions in keeping alive creative and scientific approaches to curricu-

lum study through providing opportunities for sharing experiences in conferences, publication of reports, and attendance by staff at conventions of professional associations.

Such free exchange of experiences and experiments reveals the talents and accomplishments of staff members and releases and directs their energies in a continuous adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of youth and of the community.

The superintendent who is interested in effective curriculum building provides full participation of staff in all policy decision and production committees and utilizes lay leadership in bringing about community understanding and acceptance of the program.—*William H. Lemmel, superintendent of schools, Baltimore, Maryland.*

TOWARD BETTER TEACHING

The 1949 yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development comes off the press in March. Price—\$3.

Toward Better Teaching deals with both the elementary and secondary school programs. From this yearbook you will get suggestions for: Fostering Security and Satisfaction, Promoting Cooperative Learning, Helping Pupils Develop Self-Direction, Fostering Creativity, Helping Pupils Develop Values, Providing Opportunities for Social Action, and Helping Pupils Evaluate Learnings.

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