

FOUR COGENT POINTS

It cannot be emphasized too often that:

- no plan of administrative reorganization will make any difference in the educational program of the school unless accompanied by a well-organized, aggressive program of growth and development on the part of the school faculty
- some such program of administration

is absolutely essential if teachers and administrators who wish to make progress are to be allowed to do so

- the above proposals embody the elements necessary to reorganize a school in such a way that administration need not hamper educational advancement
- none of the proposals are new. Most of them have been made over and over again, but, as far as the author knows, they have never been brought together as an integrated plan.

Continuity of Learning through Cooperative Planning

MARIAN C. BUTLER and ROBERT C. HAMMOCK

Youth in the modern high school is hardly set on a desert island apart from all that goes on educationally, both prior to and following the four years usually spent in that institution. Yet actual practice too often seems to indicate this is at least the operational point of view if not the theoretical one. Robert C. Hammock, associate professor of education, University of Alabama, and Mrs. Marian C. Butler, assistant superintendent of the Waco, Texas, public schools, indicate some of the problems involved in providing a continuous program of education and suggest ways of solving those problems.

WHAT CAN A SCHOOL SYSTEM do to assure twelve uninterrupted, coherent years of developmental education for all its children?

Every teacher recognizes the problem of creating and holding vertical articulation. Unsolved, the problem stands squarely in the way of every plan to produce the intelligently, capably functioning individual that irrevocable duty binds our schools to produce. Solved, the problem moves aside as every worker in the school is freed of extraneous considerations to concentrate

on the part he is to play in the child's whole education. It is likely that no school system has completely solved the problem; it is true that some schools have made intelligent efforts toward its solution; it is disappointing that many schools either make little effort toward achieving satisfactory vertical articulation or have not recognized in its absence a cause of some of the frustration that practically every teacher feels.

The continuous nature of all learning demands that the years of the child in school be sequential and develop-

mental. It demands that they be coherent and unified. To provide twelve years of uninterrupted, coherent, developmental educative experiences for children, all those concerned with building the curriculum and with teaching must hold this concept of learning.

WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF FAILURE?

Evidences of failure to consider vertical articulation as a basic need are clear. In a school system which has failed in this task some of these things happen:

- ▶ The demands of the next school are accepted as possessing unassailable prestige. Teachers magnify out of proportion the important fact that children must be prepared for the next school, which sets its own demands.
- ▶ There is an abrupt change of curriculum organization and kinds of educative experiences when the point is reached where units for college entrance take over. Prescribed amounts of subject matter become predominant determiners of the curriculum as the nature of the learner becomes a determiner of decreasing influence.
- ▶ Gaps in the sequential, developmental building of concepts in various areas are noticeable, resulting from single-level planning of the curriculum.
- ▶ For the same reason wasteful repetitions occur.
- ▶ Disruptions of security occur when children move from one school into the next. These disruptions are apparent in antagonistic behavior, in bewilderment, in academic failure, in all the ways in which children demonstrate insecurity.

HOW ARE SUCH

SITUATIONS BEING PREVENTED?

How can we prevent such undesirable situations? The answer is in leadership that recognizes the transcendent im-

portance of twelve years of uninterrupted learning and development, and cooperative planning and evaluation by all the schools in a system and by all the teachers in any one school. Three groups of people concerned with teaching and learning have to work at the job, the work of the three overlapping constantly: administrative and advisory personnel, teaching personnel, and the children.

The school system of Waco, Texas, is working diligently at this task of maintaining a developmental sequence in the twelve years of the school. Its approach has been careful, solid, and unostentatious. Waco is a city of about 100,000, and has twenty-six school units. Of these units, nineteen are elementary schools, four are junior high schools, and three are senior high schools. Staffing these schools are 458 teachers, with two directors of curriculum and instruction (elementary and secondary). In addition, three "special supervisors" coordinate music, library, and cafeteria services. There is a counselor in each secondary school, three in the largest senior high school.

Administrative and Advisory Personnel Confer

Regular meetings of the superintendent with the elementary and secondary coordinators is an administrative policy. Complete cooperation in attaining one objective is thus possible. Emphasis consistently rests on the continuous nature of learning. The child's cumulative record, begun in the first grade, is passed from teacher to teacher as he progresses through the twelve years.

Principals, counselors, and teachers work together on various projects. In

November, 1948, for example, the secondary school principals decided that help was needed to do a better job of preparing junior high pupils for entrance into senior high school. A meeting was called of principals, counselors, and homeroom teachers to plan pre-promotion counseling of pupils going to senior high schools in January.

Teachers Plan for Coordination

Waco teachers are working carefully toward the whole-system planning of curriculum and continuous liaison among levels in the schools. For instance, when the junior high school reading teachers met, an elementary teacher, and a remedial reading teacher from a senior school met with them. By the time they had finished discussing methods of teaching, grouping for remedial work, selection of materials, and other pertinent topics, it was evident that all were working together on the job and that there was no break in the continuity of purpose. The same principle was being applied in the teaching of arithmetic, social studies, and English.

Sixth grade teachers meet with seventh grade teachers each semester to discuss what the pupils may be expected to know in arithmetic, grammar, and social studies; to point out individuals who need special attention for various reasons; to arrange with counselors for passing on information. Blanks are also filled in by sixth grade teachers telling what they have taught, where the class is weak, and making recommendations to the receiving teachers.

Curriculum committees overlap divisions of the school system. Groups of elementary and junior high teachers

meet together to discuss what shall be taught, where, and how. There are similar joint meetings between junior and senior high school committees. The Elementary Curriculum Council is composed of elementary teachers selected by their respective schools for membership on the over-all Planning Council. Because the elementary program is built around the social studies as a core, a teacher of social studies from the junior high group, one from the senior high school group, and the coordinator of secondary schools have been invited to become members of the Elementary Curriculum Council.

A wholesome indication that efforts at articulation are working may be found in the growing practice of pooling learning materials. Teachers of all areas are passing good articles and books on to each other, regardless of whether they were written for elementary or for secondary schools. Junior high arithmetic teachers are making a booklet of stated problems; one of their number will group and edit the combined offering. Using the same professional material as the elementary teachers, teachers of reading are working on a bulletin designed to improve the teaching of reading in the junior high schools of Waco.

The basis of all the work Waco has done and expects to do was a whole-system study in 1947-48 of the growth and development of children. A centrally located professional library provided the latest literature in books and periodicals for such a study. This foundation was necessary for intelligent personnel work throughout the system as well as for curriculum planning. To make practical application of what was

read, each teacher wrote detailed studies of two children of different types.

Children Get Help in Transition

Handbooks have been prepared by joint committees of principals, teachers, and pupils. They are designed to acquaint pupils and parents with the school in which they are now interested and to present opportunities offered by the next school. This phase of information has proved indispensable in bridging gaps between levels.

The receiving school invites its future pupils to be guests at an assembly program and for a tour of the building that will soon be their school home. Principals and counselors visit the contributing schools to make sure that the new pupils find the comfort of at least two familiar faces in a strange situation.

WHAT ABOUT

SCHOOL-COLLEGE RELATIONSHIPS?

For a good many children, our efforts are incomplete if not directed at fourteen or sixteen or even more years of developmental education. After all efforts within the twelve years have been made, the problem of articulation and liaison between the secondary school and the college will still remain.

The general education curriculums developed in some colleges are efforts toward the objective. In addition, many colleges give general "cultural" courses in some tool subjects for students in certain special curriculums. Many problems, however, remain, untouched by these and similar efforts in the college.

- ▶ An inflexible registrar or director of admissions who fulfills the letter of standards without regard for their spirit is a real problem.

- ▶ Another problem resides in the maintenance by many colleges of one set of entrance criteria for opening the door to the many paths that colleges provide for their students.

- ▶ In colleges there are some teachers of beginning courses who teach as though each student is to be regarded as a potential candidate for the doctorate in the subject instead of as a freshman who is ostensibly getting in the entirety of the beginning course an essential part of his general education.

- ▶ Closely related to the third problem is the failure in some instances to define purposes of courses and to select and organize curricular content of these courses in terms of the defined purposes.

- ▶ It is not unknown in some colleges for a teacher to be held inviolate in his methods of teaching, no matter how poor these methods may be. Such mistaken ideas of academic freedom result in the perpetuation of teaching in a vacuum, of teaching without resultant learning.

- ▶ False prestige is attached by some to college work. Secondary schools must gear the work of college preparatory students to the demands of the college when such an attitude is held.

- ▶ There is a regrettable tendency among some college instructors and administrators to dismiss the values of using methods of teaching based upon the psychology of learning. An impressive amount of respectable research in methods of teaching exists.

- ▶ Finally, there is an alarming disregard, by both secondary schools and colleges, of research findings in the relation of school and college, such as the work done by the Commission on the Relation of School and College of the Progressive Education Association, more familiarly known as the Eight-Year Study.

THE SOLUTION IS IN INTERCHANGE

What are the solutions of the school-college dilemma? They can be found

Educational Leadership

only in the removal of the school and of the college from the isolation and vacuum in which each works. The same cooperative planning advocated in the school will work in the college. College instructors need to define cooperatively purposes for various curriculums and for consequent curriculum planning; colleges and high schools must maintain liaison with each other—neither the college nor the high school

can be totally right as long as they do not know intimately each other's concepts, efforts, and difficulties; college administrators must recognize that education is a continuous process and strive to put that belief into practice. Just as high schools must forget false ideas of prestige when working with elementary schools, colleges must forget false ideas of prestige when working with secondary schools.

When a Class Evaluates _____

DONALD BERGER

An eleventh grade at the Horace Mann-Lincoln School, Teachers College, Columbia University, made real progress in meeting individual and group needs when they outlined objectives, arrived at decisions acceptable to all, worked toward goals, and participated in self and group evaluation. Donald Berger, who gives this account, is assistant professor of education at Northern Illinois State Teachers College, DeKalb.

WE COULDN'T abolish marks, but we did devise a cooperative method of evaluation that emphasized goals and how to reach them.

It started in the fall when the eleventh graders were planning their core classes. We were not confined by any subject matter; there was no preconceived course of study that would limit problems to explore. There was only a block of time assigned to us; forty-six students; a hopeful teacher; and the opportunity to live, work, and learn together in whatever way we chose.

In retrospect, our progress during those early weeks of planning seems to

have been steady and apparently free of obstacles. But now we are reminiscing in an atmosphere of greater security and events no longer assume their true proportions. There was no dearth of problems to solve as we began our experiment with cooperative learning. One of these, whose solution was the source of our later experiences in evaluation, was, "What objectives are we to work for as individuals and as a group?"

Since the answer would determine our purposes, focus upon general directives, and help us shape later group procedures, it was important that the

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