

Front Lines in Education

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Developing Instructional Materials for the Third Grade. Moving from the *known*, the curriculum of the San Francisco primary grades follows the usual sequence: home, school, neighborhood—then the study of San Francisco and the Bay area in the third grade, and California in the fourth.

As to classroom materials, the third grade has been the orphan. Only the more ingenious teachers have had a teaching kit dealing with San Francisco; and it was usually made up of pamphlets, maps, and similar materials developed for adult consumption by the Chamber of Commerce and business houses with sales appeal in mind and in print. Watering down adult literature has never proved to be educationally nourishing for young children.

Last March the school began developing the materials for the study of San Francisco described here.

The materials in this integrated third grade project include:

- Six, 32-page, 9 x 10, highly illustrated booklets, printed in primary type, and written at third grade level. The titles of the books are: San Francisco Today, In and Out of San Francisco, Having Fun in San Francisco, Early San Francisco, The Neighborhoods of San Francisco, and Workers in San Francisco.

- Eight film strips, twelve photographs to a film, plus proper captions also written at third grade level. The titles of the filmstrips are: The Port of San Francisco, Neighborhoods of San Francisco, An Automobile Tour of San Francisco, Cities and Towns around San Francisco Bay, Having Fun in San Francisco, Going to Work in San Francisco, and The San Francisco Civic Center.

- A sound transcription bringing to the classroom the typical sounds heard in San Francisco such as the cable cars, the cen-

tral engine room of the cable cars, airplanes, traffic, the bells of Mission Dolores, ship bells and whistles, fog horns, the surf, seals, animals at the zoo, trucks, buses, passenger cars, the clang of the traffic signals, the one-lunger fishing boats, and trains. The public schools' own radio station has its sound truck for developing transcriptions.

- A set of thirty-five photostatic prints, 8 x 10, of early and present-day San Francisco, plastic covered, for classroom use.

The time span has been an in-service training program, involving also the cooperation of many community agencies and organizations. The idea of this program was conceived last March, 1948. The assistant superintendent's office set not-too-distant deadlines in the development of the materials, with the assumption that teachers on committees are due early returns upon their time and energy investment.

At this writing, this much has been done:

- The first booklet was off the press and in the schools last September, 1948. A second printing brings the copies to 19,000.

- The second booklet was off the press in November—19,000 copies.

- The third booklet is in press. The other three should be out by May.

- The eight filmstrips have been completed and delivered. Also the study prints.

- Transcriptions of sounds are being tried out in a few schools before the final discs are prepared.

The total cost will not exceed \$20,000, half of which was provided by the Rosenberg Foundation. A committee of teachers, with a competent principal, Mrs. Edith Cochran, as chairman, is writing the book-

lets. The assistant superintendent and two supervisors have helped. Teachers all over the city have participated by supplying cooperative stories developed on the subject in their classrooms. They have also tried out copy and materials.

Scores of public agencies and private organizations provided photographs, information, or art work. They include the City Planning Commission, the San Francisco Planning and Housing Association, departments of the city government, newspapers, banks, manufacturing concerns, Federal agencies, chambers of commerce, tourist bureaus, steamship and air lines, railroads and bus lines, etc.

An outside part-time consultant was employed for the equivalent of thirteen weeks to make contacts with other agencies for help, arranging printing contacts, etc.

A teacher's manual has been developed by the supervisors to accompany the materials. This is not a ready-made curriculum. It represents instructional aids for teachers and children who set out to study their community. Harold Spears, assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education, has directed the entire project.

A Significant Look at Functional Education. Educators interested in the improvement of our schools have been awaiting with much interest the report of the study of the Springfield, Missouri, schools. For a number of years Springfield has been regarded as one of our more forward-looking school systems, and one which has attempted to develop a more functional program for the children and youth of that community. As elsewhere, these attempts to break with traditional practices have met with some opposition in the community. The matter came to a head in November, 1947, when a parents' committee presented a protest to the board of education and another parents' group requested that an impartial survey of the school program be made. The board of education agreed to a survey, and the College of Education of the University of

Illinois was invited to make the evaluation. The report of the survey was presented to the Springfield board and patrons in November, 1948.

The report, called *A Look at Springfield Schools*, constitutes a real contribution to educational literature. The report is exceedingly heartening to parents, teachers, and educators generally who believe in an educational program better geared to the needs of boys and girls. The critics of "progressive education" find little solace in the report—they will find a great deal that should once and for all convince them that a functional educational program is not poor education.

The survey staff, in approaching this broad evaluation of a school system, first defined the earmarks of a good school. These are listed under five major headings: teaching tools of learning for purpose; practicing living in a democracy; relating the school program to real-life problems; recognizing child growth as a total process; and recognizing the fact that no two pupils are alike. The survey staff then explored the views of the superintendent and the administrative staff, the teachers, and the public in terms of their acceptance of desirable characteristics of a good school in each of these five areas. They found the staff and teachers to have a very forward-looking point of view and, most surprisingly, that parents in general really wanted a good education for their children when choices were presented to them in terms of what happens to boys and girls.

The survey staff evaluated the work of the Springfield schools in terms of these five areas. And it is here that the survey staff did a particularly significant and important job, for they not only have secured extensive objective evidence through tests but have evaluated the quality of classroom living through observation of practice and through evidence obtained from pupils and teachers.

In general, the Springfield schools emerged with flying colors. And, to what must be the dismay of traditionally minded citizens (and educators else-

where), the Springfield children measured up with the average throughout the country on standardized tests in their knowledge of facts, principles, and fundamental skills, with one exception, the language arts, but not including reading. On the other hand, pupils in the schools were superior in the general area of social living, and the Springfield schools were commended for their job in teaching democratic living and in helping pupils with their life problems. As an interesting sidelight, the survey staff was able to repeat a standardized reading test given in 1931 and the pupils in 1948 made a better showing than did their predecessors seventeen years ago.

The survey staff did feel that the school had neglected the development of understanding on the part of parents of the school and its progress, especially with reference to promotion and grading practices. Too often, criticism of newer educational developments grows out of ignorance of objectives and means to be used in achieving those objectives rather than opposition to the objectives themselves.

Copies of the surveys may be obtained from H. P. Study, Superintendent of Schools, for \$2.12.

The Changing World

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faster than our people have been able to adapt their social arrangements involved in the use of these machines. The fundamental adjustment process that is actually under way appears to be: use of the same kind of *problem-solving method* in meeting their new social problems as was employed in creating the machines that gave rise to these social problems.

If this analysis is sound, then we may expect the recent "secular" trend to go forward—in spite of those who would reverse the tide of modern man's development.

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