

Organization Stems from the Situation

Any organized effort for curriculum development must take into account varied aspects of the working situation. Among these aspects are those of size and organizational structure. The following brief reports by individuals working in different types of administrative units illustrate how activities for improved instructional programs are conditioned by the particular kind of situation in which they originate and develop. We wish to thank Alexander Frazier, curriculum consultant at Phoenix Union High Schools and Phoenix College, Arizona, for organizing and editing this section.

HERE ARE SEVEN SITUATIONS in which there is organized curriculum development—a rural school, a small urban center, a college of education, two county systems, and two state-wide projects.

Despite widely differing elements, these situations show much in common. Problems have had to be located, working groups set up, consultant services arranged for and routed, workshops provided, results shared and evaluated, and bridges projected from today's experience into next month's and next year's.

These are real situations and so they do differ, not only in kind but in basis of experience. In several, experience in group planning has just begun. In others the program described is well-established, either as a long-term project or as a tested method of working together. Concepts of curriculum development differ as described in these reports—ideas of what the curriculum is and how groups operate and what the role of official leadership can be.

Thus readers, who also differ, may find various uses for this material. Some

may locate techniques or procedures to enlarge their own ways of working. Others may find interest in defining the problem of organization that seems unique in each situation. Still others may be concerned with testing what they may think of as the most mature concept of supervision and curriculum development against reports of practice from the field.

A RURAL SCHOOL PLANS WITH A COMMUNITY

Committee work, visitations, group discussions, the workshop, and lay conferences characterize the curriculum development begun in one self-directing rural community

This is the story of a school located in a small western Ohio town of one thousand people and serving an agricultural area of thirty-seven square miles.

We are interested as a community, not merely as a school, in improving our curriculum. Therefore, we have organized to include conferences with the community as part of our program of curriculum development.

Laying the Foundation

For three years our faculty has been laying the foundation. The first phase of our work consisted of taking a sort of inventory. We wanted to know where we were. This was accomplished by a self-evaluation of our school by a competent committee of teachers, with criteria furnished by our State Department of Education. Following evaluation came a well-planned period of teacher visitation.

The third phase of separate faculty planning has been that of round table discussions, area by area, department by department. Climaxing this local study was a county-wide workshop in which we all participated.

The present phase of our program of curriculum enrichment involves the patrons and citizens of our little community. Our people seem anxious to learn more about our educational pattern. In essence, they have asked to sit in with us and share in thinking and planning for the future.

Mobilizing the Community

Without pressure, we are seeking to mobilize the progressive thinkers of our numerous civic organizations. Working in close harmony with the Board of Education and local school executive, the PTA has planned panel discussions on the topic "Curriculum and Equipment Improvement." Representatives from service clubs, sororities, the Grange, and the American Legion have been invited to participate in these meetings.

As a result of a joint approach, our parents and teachers are agreeing that we will need to make some changes in our physical plant to make possible the desired alterations of and additions to our curriculum. With this assurance, we shall have professional educational surveys made by our State Research Committee; its recommendations will be studied and modifications will be made. A new school plant with a broadened curriculum should result.—*Herschel W. Sanders, superintendent, Jefferson Township Schools, New Paris, Ohio.*

A SMALL CITY ORGANIZES FOR INDIVIDUAL TEACHER GROWTH

Group work in separate schools and in system committees in this small urban community, in addition to group-centered workshop experiences, has led toward the personal re-thinking that makes for continuing development

For several years six small communities in Minnesota have made a sustained effort to improve the curriculum of their schools. The experience of one of these schools is described below.

Four elementary schools and a junior-senior high school house the educational facilities of this small urban center of 10,000 population, which has both manufacturing interests and a rich surrounding farm area.

Working Together Requires Time and Tools

When it was decided to engage in an extended study of its curriculum, the simple organization that sufficed for the school was found inadequate. A steering committee of two representatives from each building was selected to organize and give general direction to the project, with the committee chairman freed from certain teaching responsibilities. For the first two years the faculty met at least twice monthly—alternately as a system group and as separate elementary and secondary divisions. Sub-groups met more often.

To begin with, the objective was twofold: to study the recent literature with emphasis upon examples of curriculum changes being effected, and to put into effect individually as teachers and as a building or school unit the adaptations of those promising practices which were thought educationally sound and locally applicable. A professional library of curriculum materials was built up, housed in the regular library of the school. Readings

and reports, panel discussions, and outside educational lectures, including in the second year a series of eight on the implications of modern psychology for the curriculum by a professor of a nearby teachers college who was paid by the faculty itself, contributed to the basic understanding of the modern curriculum movement.

In collaboration with staffs from the University an intensive survey of the school and community was made. Much of the detailed work and some of the planning for the school sections of the survey were handled by the school staff.

Changes Begin to Appear

From the very beginning, an effort was made to acquaint the community with the curriculum study. At a dinner attended by teachers, parents, and the Board of Education, the consultant presented the urgency of curriculum study. Other opportunities were arranged for faculty representatives and the consultant to present the case to the Board, as well as to PTA, service organizations, and church groups. The school reached nearly all of the parents through news items in the local and school papers.

While innovations were cautiously introduced by many teachers in these early stages, the faculty at the same time was formulating an acceptable social and educational philosophy, sound psychological principles, and objectives upon which to base a modern curriculum structure. Here and there a single textbook gave way to several reference sources, fixed seats to movable ones. Evidence of growth came on many fronts. Increased requests for library services—and these for less traditional, more varied current materials; less concern with information *per se* and more attention to the child and his problems; the development of unit instruction on a problem basis; more activities away from school; and more teacher-pupil planning in both classroom and larger school activities.

Then came the shift to the core curriculum program. Hesitatingly, cautiously, a

few desired to try the two- or three-hour period with freedom from the old subject matter restrictions implicit in the core idea. Now in the junior-senior high school eleven cores are in operation. There will be more core patterns next year. Not all of them meet the rigorous definition of the new core curriculum ideal, but they are on the way.

Workshops Expedite Planning

In the summer workshop of 1946, conducted for this and several other schools grappling with the curriculum, the staff agreed that a new pupil evaluation technique must supplant the old. This also implied, so they thought, a radical change in reporting the evaluation results to the parents. With the elementary schools ready to carry through the logic of their thinking, most of them introduced the teacher-parent conference in the first three grades, with some fourth and fifth grade teachers cooperating. Despite a certain amount of parental opposition at first, by the end of the first year nearly all parents were clamoring for this new chance to learn more about their children. Now all four elementary schools use only the teacher-parent conference as a means of reporting, and it is also finding its way into the junior and senior high school.

However, the big change that has taken place in this school system is not primarily to be found in the change of the curriculum framework or in agreed-upon new practices, but rather in the changed outlook, spirit, and method of the teachers affected.—Nelson L. Bossing, professor of education, University of Minnesota.

A SCHOOL OF EDUCATION WORKS TOWARD COMMON ENDS

A school of education, by adopting an experimental approach and working together to develop common purposes, finds the basis of agreement necessary for widening its own program and planning with other departments

If one thing could characterize the way of working by which the School of Education of the State College of Washington has been attempting to improve its teacher training program, it would be that the whole staff has agreed upon an experimental approach.

Working Together As a Department

As a staff we have tried out procedures, evaluated them, and on the basis of that, re-planned. Staff members teaching the same courses have met to discuss them, developing staff courses rather than individual courses, but with considerable flexibility.

An area in which we are also planning experimentally is an extended program of placing student teachers throughout the state. In an in-service extension program developed and recommended by the staff, a number of our staff members are now spending a week a month in the field doing in-service work in two or three centers. With individuals spending the equivalent of two months in actual school situations, the needs which teachers have in the field are brought back into the campus teacher training program.

Again, through experimentation we have become convinced that we cannot effectively develop group work with students and get personally acquainted with them in large classes. Our basic classes in introduction to the profession of teaching and educational psychology are now being held to approximately thirty-five students.

We have also been experimenting with the kinds and types of information which we obtain from students. This is resulting in gradual improvement and increased staff concern about individuals. We are going into a much more comprehensive teaching and informational program as a result.

Working With Other Departments

Cooperation with other departments on the campus has resulted in establishing broad majors in the fields of social studies, physical science, biological science, and language arts. This has been done by

working with other departments on the actual teaching needs of secondary school teachers.

Our graduate programs have also been influenced by the working together of the staff in planning programs. Our staff conceives that a graduate student is educated by the whole staff, not by his major professor.—*J. Murray Lee, dean, School of Education, State College of Washington, Pullman.*

A COUNTY PROVIDES HELP IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

A variety of techniques is employed in this county to bring teachers and resources together in the joint study of the problems that have been located in the classroom

The in-service education program of Lauderdale County, Alabama, is under the direction of a central planning committee composed of twelve teachers and principals who represent different types of schools, developmental levels, and special departments. The superintendent, the supervisor, a representative from the local college, one from the state department of education, and one from county service agencies also serve as members.

All special committees are appointed and delegated responsibilities by this planning committee. Surveys needed to determine the year's direction are made by the committee. Leaders, recorders, observers, and consultants for each group study are cleared here. Emphasis is placed upon continuity in both planning and leadership development.

Problems Arise from the Classroom

Problems of study for curriculum improvement are cooperatively identified, clarified, and determined by teachers, administrators, supervisors, consultants, and lay groups. Determining the scope of the county program begins in the classroom. Teachers working with pupils recognize

problems in terms of their needs and interests and then come together in each school to pool their problems.

Some school faculties work jointly also with PTA's, while others invite in key persons from the community—ministers, parents, interested citizens, and representatives from service agencies. A few faculty groups involve in their planning additional consultants from the area colleges and from county and state departments of education.

Careful consideration of individual school problems determines the focus of the county program. The individual teacher and school faculties, therefore, have a vital part to play, as do resource people and consultants, in the identification, analysis, and selection of common problems.

Techniques Differ to Meet Needs

Techniques for the in-service program are determined in light of the needs expressed through the clarification of common county objectives. Among those in regular use are:

- annual pre-school conference
- faculty curriculum study programs
- monthly principal association meetings
- four county-wide joint curriculum study and teacher association meetings annually
- observation and visitation of schools
- eight regional professional library centers
- social recreational institute (one week) for leadership development
- social recreational activities throughout the year
- interpretation of school program through monthly teacher bulletins; local and school newspaper articles; radio programs; exhibits at community fairs, county board of education office, and pre-school conference; and classroom and school visitations.

The faculty study meetings provide for larger and smaller school staffs to work

with consultants on local problems. The special interest group personnel is determined by local school objectives and teacher choice surveys.

Consultants Work in the Groups

Both continuing and special consultants are selected by small groups and the planning committee. Opportunities are afforded teachers and administrators to get individual as well as group help from consultants during the pre-school and county-wide meetings and through informal contacts.

Consultants and resource people work as members of groups and participate in discussions, help with clarifying issues, and assist in evaluating programs.

Consultants called upon to help with over-all planning are those who work continuously with the program. Exceptions are made only when special help is needed. Evaluations made by consultants as the program develops are recorded to give direction to future planning.

Teachers Assume a Variety of Roles

Varied responsibilities are assumed by teachers in the program. Among these are:

- serving as chairman or member of planning and special committees
- serving as leader, assistant leader, or recorder of faculty and special interest groups
- planning and directing social recreational activities, exhibits, radio programs, group discussions, committee work, devotionals and music for assemblies, surveys, and evaluations
- presiding at general assemblies and principal association meetings.

The last of the year's four county meetings is given to a stock-taking. Prior to the last meeting, a survey of individual teacher and faculty evaluations has been made and studied to add insight to the results of the continuous evaluation by teachers, groups, and consultants. Plans for the following

year begin immediately before the close of the ensuing year.—*Louise Comer, supervisor of instruction, Lauderdale County Schools, Alabama.*

A COUNTY ORGANIZES TO BE PRODUCTIVE

Tying in with state curriculum study helps a county with over a thousand teachers to pursue group work on a great number of projects, with local as well as state implications

Berks County, Pennsylvania, has over one thousand teachers and, according to the census of 1940, had a population (excluding Reading) of more than 130,000. There are 105 one-teacher schools in its 864 square miles.

In 1940, Berks County began to localize its curriculum in an organized manner by inviting business representatives to meet with schoolmen—a kind of cooperation that has continued. By 1946, when the first organized program in mathematics and science was published under the new program, Berks County was ready to begin work on the development of an elementary curriculum for the county schools. Plans for this expansion were laid to get all possible help from the state program and to give local aid in every possible way in the development of that program.

Many Types of Organization

The following administrative set-up gradually developed for the county-wide program:

- a central coordinating committee
- county area committees
- school district committees
- interest area committees
- county-wide conferences for inspiration and direction
- workshops, district and institutional
- individual teacher program
- “curriculum vacuum” program
- supervising principal districts.

Not all of these organizational types were to be found in each district. They were adapted to the teachers, and overlapping organization was encouraged.

In this new program, curriculum work and in-service improvement have become synonymous. The approach has been one of study and exploration. At the very beginning, in order to gain a firm professional basis for the work, 750 copies of *Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living*¹ were placed in the hands of teachers.

Teachers at work soon elected forty-two areas for curriculum study and development, ranging from the subject matter fields to visual education, grade guidance, and concern for the local environment. To date, teachers have written up and forwarded to the state department for its program 180 projects. Several of the Berks County teachers have been called to Harrisburg to consult on the state curriculum.

One Way of Working

As an example of the procedure used, we describe the development of a topic called “Improved Social Living in the Elementary School”—one of the “curriculum vacuums” brought to our attention by a visiting consultant.

Selected teachers from all types of schools and districts were asked to make their contributions to this project, with forty out of fifty responding. Their suggestions have been organized for presentation to all of the teachers through thirty group conferences held throughout the county. Meeting for a full afternoon of a regular school day, these conferences have included as few as three and as many as thirty-three teachers.

The material for discussion was published in an issue of the county school bulletin, issued ten times a year and distributed to every teacher in the county.—*Richard M. Moll, assistant county superintendent, Berks County, Pennsylvania.*

¹ Florence B. Stratemeyer, Hamden L. Forkner, Margaret G. McKim, and others. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947.

ALL STATE AGENCIES

JOIN EFFORTS

Leadership at the state level finds a way of providing service to many schools through centering interest on a common project and coordinating the available resources

Cooperation has been the key word for the way Nebraska's educators have worked together and pooled their resources and thinking so that sound programs of instruction could be developed. The State University has been active in spreading the idea that there is tremendous value in joint action, as have the State Department of Public Instruction and the leadership in the State Education Association, the other teacher education institutions, and the public schools.

Let's follow some of the steps by which the Nebraska program of educational enrichment through the use of motion pictures, as an example of one such program, passed from an idea into an action program. During the preliminary stages, the originators of the idea that a careful research study should be made of the enrichment possibilities of motion pictures, particularly in the smaller secondary schools, met frequently with representatives of practically all Nebraska's educational agencies.

State-Wide Experimentation—

Time and Money

When the proposal was finally completed, it gave sufficient promise that the Carnegie Corporation of New York was willing to support it with a one-year grant of \$15,400. Further grants of the Corporation will amount to a total of \$53,800, with grants from other groups amounting to at least an equal figure. The program has been underway two and a half years, with a year and a half yet to run.

Direction of the program is vested in an administrative committee composed of individuals representing the State Univer-

sity, the State Department of Public Instruction, and the four state teachers colleges. The program administrator, a regular member of the University staff, heads an organization with personnel located in the six publicly supported teacher education institutions.

Each of these institutions in turn gives supervisory and consultant service to the four or five secondary schools in its area in which the experimentation is being done. With representative and able leadership at the top, this provides for a constant "perkling" up of ideas from the grass roots for consideration, refinement, and use.

Workshop Means Cooperation

Through its summer program of workshop seminars, the State University has provided an ideal setting for concentrated work in many cooperative undertakings. Teachers, administrators, college staff members, state supervisors, and specialists from several departments at the university have cooperated to select films, build teacher's guides, and construct evaluative devices of various kinds.

To leave the impression that it has been easy to get so many groups to see eye to eye even on such an experimental program would not be correct. Frictions, jealousies, and other impediments to progress have cropped up; but as the representatives of the different agencies and interests have come to know each other, they have been willing to adjust their differences. They have recognized that only as all educational agencies work together can a united front be presented to achieve real state-wide progress.

Cooperation Becomes a Habit

Nor should the impression be left that the program described above is the only one involving such educational team work. The same story could be told of other cooperative achievements—the Nebraska community health program, the air-age education program, and teaching about the United Nations, to mention a few.

Whatever the educational problem, the pattern of attack in Nebraska is always the same, with State University, State Department of Education, State Education Association, colleges, State School Board Association, state PTA, public schools, and other educational agencies joining forces to meet the situation.—*W. C. Meierhenry, assistant professor of School Administration and History, Teachers College, University of Nebraska.*

A STATE TIES GROUPS TOGETHER

Liaison committees on the local level, together with city and county workshops for the interpretation of curriculum materials, bring the benefits of large-scale planning to the individual school

The Wisconsin cooperative educational planning program is based upon this premise: curriculum planning which best meets the needs of a particular area and is most likely to be translated into classroom practice is the planning done by teachers of the area. Wisconsin teachers have not only borne the brunt of the effort expended but have also shared in the financial cost of the program through a yearly appropriation by the Wisconsin Education Association to defray committee expense.

The governing body of the program is the cooperative planning council, composed of representatives of the Wisconsin Education Association, the State Department of Public Instruction, and the teacher training institutions. Its responsibility for general organization includes selection of personnel and planning of the scope of committee work. The actual job of coordination has been placed in the hands of the curriculum guiding committee, with representatives of professional groups appointed by the planning council.

State and Local Groups Cooperate

The productive efforts of the program are the responsibility of two different

types of committees. (1) Twenty-four state-wide committees hold specific responsibility for work in both broad fields and resource areas. Members represent all areas of the state as well as all levels of education. (2) Local liaison committees have been established in each school system. Their responsibility is to plan and initiate the kind of curriculum activity which seems locally essential. They serve, too, as a general clearing house for materials sent to schools from state level committees or shared by other local committees.

A curriculum coordinator in the State Department acts under the direction of the planning council and the curriculum guiding committee. A curriculum workshop held the first two summers at the state university provided valuable assistance early in the program. Several of the state teachers colleges are now holding summer workshops.

If one indication of achievement in such a program is production, the Wisconsin program should score high. Most of its state-wide committees have produced curriculum guides of considerable merit.

Local Study More Significant

Another and far more significant indication of success is the extent and quality of local study. Under the leadership of the liaison committees, these local programs have branched out in many directions. One of their major activities has been the building of resource units. More than any other single technique, it has been felt, the building of a good resource unit encourages the adoption of newer classroom practices.

Several techniques have been used this year to stimulate use of the new curriculum materials. At a work conference of rural and city elementary supervisors early in the fall, new curriculum guides were interpreted by members of state-wide committees and the State Department.

Following this, fifteen regional conferences were held in strategic locations with

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some 1500 persons from 250 school systems participating. The attempt in these conferences was not only to present the new material but to interpret it in terms of meeting local needs. To carry this purpose further, attention is being concentrated at present upon short workshops, one or two days in duration, for city and county groups.

All Teachers To Be Involved

Judging from evaluations of the regional curriculum conferences, next year's efforts should be directed toward more curriculum workshops on the county level, involving all the teachers of each county. Such workshops are now being planned. Teams from state-wide committees and

the Department of Public Instruction will again work with participants in interpreting new materials for use in local planning.

Since there is a fine state-owned radio station in Wisconsin, next year to have a considerable FM coverage, plans are also being made to utilize it in two different ways. (1) It is hoped that regular Wisconsin school of the air programs will be based upon new sequences prepared by state-wide committees to illustrate some of the newer classroom practices advocated. (2) Beyond that, serious consideration is being given to the feasibility of planning a series of professional programs which might be used by faculty groups throughout the state as a starting point in their own local curriculum study. —Charles B. Walden, curriculum coordinator, Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin.

TEXTBOOK NEWS

TEACHING ADOLESCENTS in SECONDARY SCHOOLS

By Harry Rivlin, Queens College

CLEAR, specific, and stimulating, this is a textbook for university and college courses in the principles and methods of effective teaching in traditional and in progressive junior and senior high schools. Special emphasis is placed on the teacher's role in applying what is now known about the principles of curriculum construction, methods of teaching, and the psychology of adolescence to problems as they originate in the classroom. Many illustrations taken from real-life situations familiar to all teachers are used to demonstrate effective procedure and to show why the new teacher must not borrow other teachers' methods, but develop those suited to his own personality and abilities, the school administration, the needs of the students, and the demands of the curriculum.

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