

### Continuity As the Keynote

Continuous curriculum revision on a state level is now recognized as a definite necessity. All forty-four states in the present study indicated an agreement with the statement, "Curriculum construction is a continuous process." Recent activity in many states reveals adherence to this principle. While not all programs of curriculum construction result in publication of bulletins and courses of study, this is one measure of such activity. In spite of publication difficulties, several of the states continued publication of curriculum materials through the war years. Since 1945 there has been considerable evidence of renewed interest in the publication of state bulletins.

This study has revealed that improving the curriculum of the secondary schools on a state level is dependent upon leadership from the state department of education. However, it is a complicated process which should involve the participation of many persons. States are providing this leadership through including specialists within the staff of the state department. In turn, large numbers of teachers, "experts," and laymen are cooperating in carrying through the program. Consideration is being given to the importance of establishing policies for curriculum improvement and following through with specific activities in keeping with these policies. Only in this way can progress be made in improving the secondary school curriculum.

## *Oregon's In-Service Program*\_\_\_\_\_

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THE CONTINUOUS improvement of public education will depend in no small measure on an effective program of in-service training of teachers. The presence of many partly or inadequately trained teachers in classrooms makes this task doubly important. The increasing cost of, and public interest in, our educational system is focusing more attention on the schools and their products than ever before.

Opportunities for in-service professional improvement of teachers are numerous, both on the group and the individual basis. Some of the opportunities which are being utilized in Oregon are enumerated here.

### THE ROLE OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference takes its name from the verb, "to confer." It is essentially a meeting of teachers who wish to con-

fer on common problems. A two-way exchange of ideas is implied.

► **Work Conference.** As the name indicates, the work conference is an attempt to combine some of the characteristics of the workshop and the conventional educational conference. The usual work conference runs from two to four days, includes the teachers of one or more counties, and provides for both general sessions and small discussion groups. Patterns provide for one speaker who presents several phases of a common problem or several speakers on various problems, followed by a discussion period during which the teachers are divided into small groups on either a homogeneous or heterogeneous basis. Other features of the work conference sometimes include the use of consultants from institutions of higher learning; the use of demonstrations, exhibits, panels, and symposiums; and a summary period.

First introduced in this state in 1939, this type of program has developed rapidly, especially in the last three years. The State Department of Education and the county superintendents, with the cooperation of the State System of Higher Education, have provided work conferences for every secondary school teacher and many elementary school teachers in the state. Eight to ten work conferences, organized geographically, are held each year.

In planning such a conference, teachers are asked by mail to submit problems for discussion. Particularly able teachers are asked to tell how they have met certain problems and to lead the discussion. The trend is to allow seventy-five to ninety percent of the

time for discussion group meetings and the remainder for general sessions.

The work conference is gradually taking the place of the traditional institute. A survey made last year revealed that ninety-eight percent of the teachers were fully in favor of continuing the work conferences. The major values of these work conferences are: the development of local leadership, their practicability, provision for discussion of common problems, and, incidentally, opportunities for staff members of the institutions of higher learning to keep in touch with public school problems.

► **Instructional Conference.** The instructional conference places emphasis on instruction but allows time for "conferring" and discussion. It is used when the primary purpose of the conference is to present new ideas, programs, courses, or methods.

An instructional conference usually runs one to three days, with general sessions optional. A typical plan might include six to eight programs to be presented, such as new health programs, free lunch programs, standardization, or pupil evaluation. Teachers are grouped homogeneously by grade or size of school and rotate through a schedule of work periods. Specialists from the State Department or institutions of higher learning present the respective programs to the several groups. For example, an art specialist might start with the first grade teachers, then follow through with the second grade, while some other specialist would start with the second grade teachers, then follow through with the third grade group. This plan schedules the same number of

groups, programs to be presented, and specialists, thus providing perfect rotation. The specialist usually takes about half of the period to present the program with the remainder of the time for discussion.

This type of conference is expedient when there are definite programs to be presented in a limited amount of time. It is definitely instructional, is more formal, and does not provide for help on problems other than those related to the program being presented.

► *Orientation Conference.* This type of conference has been used prior to the opening of school with teachers usually on pay status. It may run from two days to two weeks, is organized for a single school system, and may include all of the teachers or only new staff members. Specialists from the colleges and State Department are frequently used, and arrangements may be made through the Extension Division of the State System of Higher Education for college credit.

The organization of the conference provides for both general sessions and discussion groups. Some time is devoted to acquainting new teachers with the community, its resources, and school organization. Time may also be given to the presentation and discussion of general educational problems. Most of the time usually is given to planning the year's educational program—a discussion of goals and how better to attain them.

This type of conference frequently combines the features of "opening day" and a short summer course. Teachers who have attended summer school may object to the longer orientation con-

ference which includes more than strictly "orientation" activities. Some teachers enjoy this opportunity to acquire college credits necessary for salary increments. The general success of these conferences has contributed to their increasing popularity.

► *Institutional Conference.* These conferences are sponsored by an institution or an association. They are held several times throughout the year in various sections of the state, running from one to five days. They may combine some of the features of those described above or may fall into the more conventional patterns.

At present more Oregon teachers are probably being served by conferences of one type or another than by any other type of in-service education. Teachers believe conferences to be highly effective; however, in many situations effectiveness could be increased by furnishing conferees "study materials" in advance. Such a practice would save time in the presentation of materials at the conference and allow more for discussion and interpretation.

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKSHOPS

The workshop is designed primarily to provide opportunities for productive work. It usually adds to the work conference the actual preparation of materials, involves research, and extends over a much longer period. Generally workshops run for a full term and carry college credit. Occasionally they are set up on a short-time basis.

► *School System Workshops.* A number of systems have set up workshops under the Extension Division for

one or more terms. They differ from regular extension courses in that they give special guidance to teachers working on their own problems and those of their school systems. Several secondary schools have provided workshops preliminary to the application of the evaluative criteria of the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards. Other types of problems frequently studied in workshops include improvement of basic skills, guidance, pupil evaluation, and audio-visual aids.

In addition to this type of workshop conducted during the academic year, some school systems have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the University of Oregon workshops during the summer. Any system may arrange for its entire staff to work as a unit on its own education problems and to receive regular college credit.

► **Subject Workshop.** A second type of summer workshop is planned around the problems of a particular subject area. They are offered at the institutions of higher learning or by the Extension Division in major areas. Teachers from different school systems have an opportunity to work on curriculum problems, new methods of teaching, or new materials.

Several years ago a series of subject workshops, scheduled for two or three days in a number of different centers, was organized by the State Department to reach most of the high school teachers of the state. Specialists assisted with these workshops on a circuit basis and all teachers of a particular subject in a geographical area were invited to attend. Teachers rated these workshops as being extremely profitable, although

they did not carry college credit. Administrators objected to them because of the difficulty of securing qualified substitutes for teachers.

► **Problems Workshop.** A third type of workshop is organized around the problems of members of a group. Problems to be attacked need not be announced in advance. Teachers list their various problems and are organized into committees to work on specific ones of major interest. Toward the close of the workshop the several committees report their findings so that all teachers are able to familiarize themselves with a rather wide range of ideas. This type of workshop may be held on a college or university campus or any center where there is a sufficient number of teachers to justify its organization.

The primary value of the workshop lies in the opportunity which it provides for work on immediate, practical, local problems. Inasmuch as it involves more than discussion of problems it has a greater permanent value than other types of in-service training. The workshop also appeals to many teachers because of the opportunity to earn college credit.

#### COURSES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

One of the most extensive programs for the in-service training of teachers is found in the extensive course offerings of the Extension Division of the State System of Higher Education. These courses differ from other types of in-service training mostly in that they are organized to fit a pattern of professional training rather than specific needs of any single group of teachers. For the most part, they represent repli-

cas of the courses offered on college and university campuses.

► *Extension Courses.* A number of courses are offered by the Extension Division of the State System of Higher Education, and by some of the private institutions. While most of these are offered in four or five major centers, they are available to any school system in which there is a sufficient number of interested teachers to offer the course on a paying basis. The specific course to be offered is determined by the interests and desires of the teachers of the area in which it is offered, and by the availability of the instructors.

Most courses meet once a week during an academic term. However, an innovation in practice during the past two years modifies this arrangement somewhat. A one- or two-day conference on a specific subject is offered for all teachers in an area. Following this conference teachers are given an opportunity to register for the remainder of the extension course. The conference is made available to the area at no cost, but the teachers who continue the course pay the usual registration fees and are given credit for the time spent in conference. Usually five or six specialists are available during the one or two days of the conference; one instructor then finishes the course in four or five meetings subsequent to the conference. Courses offered on this basis have included: audio-visual aids, health education, education of the handicapped children, science education, elementary art education, and social hygiene.

► *Correspondence and "Off-Hour" Courses.* The Extension Division of

the State System of Higher Education also offers a full program of correspondence courses. For the most part they are offered on an individual basis but frequently several teachers get together and take the same courses to provide for an exchange of ideas and opportunity for discussion periods. The usual lack of supervision by an instructor and the absence of discussion opportunities limit the value of these courses as aids to in-service professional growth.

Several institutions offer regular campus courses at hours convenient to full-time teachers. Obviously such courses are of value only to persons within driving distance.

#### AVAILABILITY OF CONSULTANT SERVICE

One of the most effective but perhaps least used types of in-service training available to Oregon teachers is consultant service. Such service makes available to individual teachers or groups of teachers a specialist or consultant for varying amounts of time. It is usually free to the teachers or school system and never costs more than the actual expenses of the consultant.

► *State Department Consultants.* The State Department of Education has specialists in the field of health and physical education, home economics, agriculture, vocational education, guidance, elementary education, and education of the handicapped, who are available "on call" to the extent of their time. They work with individual teachers or groups of teachers on problems relating to their respective fields.

► *State Systems of Higher Education Consultants.* The State System of

Higher Education makes available a number of consultants as part of its in-service training program. Their services include work with former student teachers, visitation of former students, follow-up of programs initiated at summer school, and promotional activities in certain subject areas. The three Colleges of Education carry on an extensive program of visitation of recent graduates. They visit graduates in their first year of teaching, and staff members go into convenient centers to permit new teachers in the area to come in for individual conferences.

Consultant service promises to be one of the most effective means of in-service training. It provides for specialized help on immediate problems on a highly individualized basis and at little cost. It is available in any section of the state to small schools as well as large.

The foregoing enumeration of in-service training opportunities is not complete, but represents most of the institutionalized types of training available to teachers in the state of Oregon. Obviously, they are supplemented by local consultant and supervisory services.

The success of any type of in-service training depends largely on the leadership which makes that training available and which conducts the training. The major problems of in-service training include motivating teachers and securing personnel and facilities for in-service training. From the foregoing discussion it should be apparent that teachers in Oregon do not lack opportunities for in-service training. The extent to which they have these opportunities depends on the action of administrators.

**Members of the Nominating Committee for 1949-50** are: Bess Goodykoontz, U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.; Susan Lacy, State Department of Public Instruction, Olympia, Wash.; R. Lee Thomas, State Department of Education, Nashville, Tenn.; Lavone Hanna, San Francisco State College, San Francisco, Calif.; J. G. Umstadd, University of Texas, Austin, Tex.; Maurice Ahrens, Public Schools, Denver, Colo.; and Gilbert Willey, Public Schools, Lincoln, Neb., *chairman*.

It will be the work of this committee to prepare for presentation to the Association membership a slate of fifteen names, from which list five persons will be selected for membership on the Board of Directors. This list will be mailed to all Association members sometime in the fall. ASCD members are invited to send nominations to the Board of Directors to any member of this committee.

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