

teach their children to follow their own attitudes toward others. "I tell him he can't play with those kids down the street; I want him to play in his own group," and "I told her before she came to school that some of the children won't look like she does, but they are just as good. I don't want her to think she's better than anybody else."

Changes in the Classroom

These data made it possible to change some classroom procedures. Activities were planned in which children could assume responsibility for their own actions and see the consequences. The teacher took care to create an atmosphere in which the consequences would not be overwhelming. More opportunity was provided for children to play out and talk about situations familiar to them. The teacher tried to arrange activities in which differences

in wants, abilities, and ways of behaving would be acceptable and prized.

But gathering this information has raised some considerations in curriculum planning that the teacher had accepted but not really thought about before—questions that teachers must learn to answer more specifically than in the past. When families place a great deal of pressure upon children to "do better than I have," what must the school provide to help children learn these new behaviors? What can the school do to relieve the tension which this pressure creates? How can we help children interpret the experiences they have which puzzle them? How can we provide them with skills to handle situations in which they are insecure? These are only a few questions which now concern the teacher. Their answers seem to require testing of classroom practices over a sufficiently long period of time to see their results.

Action Research Means Cooperation—

These two articles describe an action research project carried on in Springfield, Missouri. The Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, Teachers College, Columbia University, and the Springfield public schools are collaborating on a research study investigating value formation in children. These articles demonstrate clearly that research *can* be a cooperative venture between a research institute and a school system.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF SCHOOL SUPERVISORS

D. C. Rucker, Curriculum Director, and Alice Pittman, Elementary Supervisor, Springfield, Missouri, public schools.

CLASSROOM TEACHERS do not generally consider educational research to be their function. However, they are constantly seeking to improve their teaching and in so doing are dealing

with problems which are subjects for valuable research. If research could be so planned that it challenged teachers as a practical means of dealing with their urgent problems, professional

growth of individual teachers would be furthered and significant contributions to educational progress would result. In cooperation with the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute, the school staff in Springfield, Missouri, is engaged in a kind of educational research which has certain characteristics that make participation in research a challenge to classroom teachers.

Providing the Dynamic of Group Action

One characteristic is group action. The teachers in Springfield have found a challenge in shared undertaking of research projects. Major problems of improving the educational program have been attacked on a system-wide basis. Group discussion and interaction of various groups in the school system led to the selection of a research area, viz., how children's values are formed. In every case, however, the defining, planning, and carrying out of research projects involved in the general problem have been done by smaller groups.

Usually, except in large schools, the faculty of a single school is the unit. Stimulation results from keeping the group of such size that at each step the project involves active participation by each teacher rather than delegated responsibility for action. After each member of the group has appraised present school problems to determine what he believes needs immediate attention, the group works until consensus is reached. Arriving at consensus is not easy. The group must select a problem which seems important to each member and about which each one can do something in his own situation to help in its solution. After the problem has been agreed upon, all members of

the group are involved in continuous planning at each step, in clarification of goals, in planning ways of attaining goals, in carrying out agreed-on plans of action, and in appraisal of consequences.

Intensifying the Dynamic

The dynamic effect of group action is intensified when, for specific purposes, others join a group which has a research project under way. When parents are used as a resource because their experiences or reactions can furnish data for a study, when members of the local supervisory staff or outside consultants join a group to help in formulating and appraising plans, the group frequently renews its sense of the importance of its undertaking.

Increased realization of the significance of research projects under way comes to teachers when groups whose projects have similar aspects, exchange findings on techniques or results. Increased interest comes too when a number of projects related to a problem of system-wide interest are reported to all faculty groups under arrangements which make reaction to the reports easy and profitable.

While our experience in Springfield leads to the conclusion that research carried on in cooperation with others has an appeal for many teachers, we have also come to the conclusion that cooperative planning requires time. Teachers must have time to think together if group action in research is to be made possible. The Springfield system has a group of substitute teachers, permanently employed, to release teachers for group work during the school day.

Finding Problems in School Situations

A second challenging element for teachers in the type of research carried on in Springfield is the selection of problems which are embedded in the daily activities of each teacher and her pupils. To illustrate: one faculty is currently studying the factors related to children's ability to carry out their own plans. Obviously, teachers see this problem as one which directs energy to improving learning situations for their own groups, to working on goals they have already accepted. Furthermore, to study children's planning does not require major modifications in the school program, nor the isolating of pupils from normal school activities for research purposes.

The teacher's research activities include locating or devising instruments for gathering data about children, observing and identifying behavior, interpreting changes in pupil behavior. These research activities are seen by the teacher as refinements of her ways of operating in the on-going daily school program, not as difficult procedures added to his normal teaching responsibilities.

The selection of a problem which can be studied by research techniques, but which is also embedded in the on-going activities of the school, is a point at which a school system may well provide help for teachers. In Springfield, because a school faculty or group within a faculty is the research group, the principal is in a strategic position for leadership. He is already normally a member of the group and has detailed knowledge of the school situa-

tion in which the problem originates. Guidance in problem selection, whether by a principal or by other consultants, involves appraisal of the on-going school program to a point at which each teacher can locate some areas for improvement.

One of the strengths recognized in this type of research is that it creates a situation in which those in leadership roles guide teachers in studying their own teaching situations and in which each teacher becomes a participant in making important decisions.

Interpretation of Results

A third source of satisfaction for teachers in the type of research underway in the Springfield system is the possibility of making immediate use of results. Illustrations may be drawn from the project referred to earlier, the study of factors related to children's carrying out of their own plans. At a very early stage in its study the group, through carefully planned observation techniques, tested its hypothesis that the degree of a child's follow-through on plans was related to his participation in group planning. In the process of testing this hypothesis, teachers came upon some ideas about participation which were new to them. They discovered, for example, that a child's participation in planning might take a number of forms. This idea, actually a by-product of the study, was immediately useful to teachers in improving guidance in children's planning periods.

At a later stage in the study, the group investigated the relation of a child's feeling of belongingness to his follow-through on plans. This step resulted in the conclusion that a child's

feeling of belongingness was not an isolated factor but that it varied in different situations. Immediately teachers saw ways of helping some children achieve belongingness and, thereby, improve their follow-through on plans.

There is stimulation for teachers in research in which application of results is not suspended to sometime in the remote future. At the conclusion of a study it is not necessary to hunt for possible uses for the findings. Because each teacher participates at every step in planning a study which is related to her own situation, implications for changes in her ways of working are immediately apparent at any intermediate step or at the conclusion of the study.

Research in which teachers are invited to share in projects planned and directed by someone else—with the teacher's function that of supplying data to be interpreted by someone else—is challenging mainly to those few teachers who have an academic inter-

est in research. Obviously, in the research undertaken in Springfield, the challenge and the interest lie in the fact that the teacher's relation to the project is such that she is constantly participating in interpretation of findings that makes immediate application possible in ways that are unique to each teacher.

A Three-Point Challenge

The elements in the Springfield research program that challenge teachers are:

- ♦ group action
- ♦ embedding of the research in the on-going program of the school
- ♦ the immediate application of results.

Experience with this type of research leads to the conclusion that it is possible to carry on curriculum research that both challenges classroom teachers and provides a setting for good working relationships in an in-service program of teacher education.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF CONSULTANT AND PRINCIPAL

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A COOPERATIVE research project involving teachers in the schools of Springfield, Missouri, and members of the staff of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation has been under way long enough to make it possible to look at the problems of cooperation which have developed as the project moved forward.

Finding a Place to Start

The Springfield project began because of widespread concern of teachers and administrators that the intangible outcomes of their school program could not be discussed, measured, or reported in a satisfactory way. Knowing this, the central administration proposed to the Horace Mann-Lincoln

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