

In the judgment of workshoppers, the frequent attendance at meetings of the Trusteeship Council and other meetings of the United Nations at Lake Success was of greatest importance in their total experience. Talks to the workshop by Admiral Nimitz about his impending work of mediation in India, by Solomon Arnaldo, director of UNESCO in New York, and by other staff members of the United

Nations were also rated high. The experience of socializing with teachers from abroad, with people from various racial and religious backgrounds, was new to many. Finally, the fact that the workshop was housed in the same building with other workshops, which made their human and physical resources mutually available, brought many favorable comments from the workshoppers.

TOGETHER WE STUDY OUR SCHOOLS

Paul E. Johnson

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE that curriculum development is dependent mainly upon periodic revisions of courses of study. Others believe that it is dependent upon the persons who are responsible for what goes on in the schools continuously evaluating themselves and the activities comprising the life of the school. The summary that follows relates briefly what happened when students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other residents of one community attempted such an evaluation.

Discussions involving representatives of the elementary, junior, and senior high schools of Plymouth, Michigan, brought to light a common interest in a study of the total school program. The elementary schools felt the need for examining possibilities for improved services to children. The high school's interest stemmed directly from obligation as a signatory to the College Agreement.¹

¹ See *Educational Leadership*, March 1949, pp. 381-84.

In the Fall of 1948, plans were made for the participation of a steering or advance planning group in a workshop conducted at a neighboring school under the auspices of Wayne University. This group was composed of five high school teachers, four elementary teachers, one elementary school principal, and the elementary coordinator.

Highlights of this group's work during the first semester of 1948-49 included the following:

1. Agreement was reached that participation in the Plymouth Curriculum Study should include school administrators, students, and teachers, together with widespread community participation. Emphasis was given to the importance of securing the interest of all groups prior to the beginning of the study.
2. Special invitations to attend the planning sessions as guests on separate nights were issued to (a) all building principals, (b) parents and students, and (c) the superintendent of schools

and members of the Board of Education.

3. Agreement was reached that a vertical organization in group composition should be urged as a means for overcoming conflicting ideas and cultivating better rapport and cooperation between elementary and high school personnel as well as for emphasizing the concept of learning as a continuous process of growth and development of the individual.

4. It was thought important that the study be considered and called an evaluation of the present program and not necessarily a project pointed directly at change.

5. Opinionnaires were administered to parents and students in an effort to determine felt needs regarding the function of the school.

6. A joint meeting of the Advance-planning Committee with the whole staff during school time was held on December 7, 1948, to discuss the proposed workshop for Plymouth.

7. Announcement was made to the Committee by a member of the Board of Education that its suggestion had been approved and that one-half the tuition of staff members of the Plymouth Curriculum Study would be paid by the Board.

In the interim between semesters, some of the members of the Advance-planning Committee assisted in tabulating data from the opinionnaires, in organizing a list of local community organizations to be asked for representation, and in working out other details in preparation for the second-semester study. The selection of student representatives was placed in the hands of the Student Council with the

request that such representatives be chosen from vocational and general groups as well as from college-preparatory classes. Organizations outside of the school were asked to pay enrollment charges for their members.

The Plymouth Community-School Curriculum Study opened on February 9 with eighty people enrolled as full-time participants, including approximately forty-five percent of the elementary and high school staffs. Fifty-one people were either community adults, teachers, or administrators of Plymouth. Others included teachers from surrounding schools who organized separate study groups. It was planned that students and other adults would be invited in after the preliminaries of enrollment.

An initial breakdown into random groups disclosed a list of eighteen specific interest problems, subsequently grouped under selected areas of General Education. These included: Social Living, Personal Development, Basic Intellectual Skills, and Occupational Exploration and Preparation.

In ensuing meetings each of these four groups planned its approach to its particular phase of the study. Representatives of industry, local businesses, and professions were invited in to express their opinions and participate in discussions. Parents of children from pre-school age to high school and college age exchanged ideas and opinions with staff members and students.

Combined meetings of the various groups were held for specific purposes:

- To clarify the purposes of the Study

- To become acquainted with the nature and purpose of the College Agreement Program
- To evaluate effectiveness of group processes
- To establish communication of thinking through a progress evaluation by the four Plymouth groups
- To evaluate the Study and determine possible applications of the group process in daily school life.

Liaison between groups was facilitated through:

- Weekly reports of each group's discussion, given to every member of the workshop
- A Central Planning Committee which met each week before the group meetings

- Intervisitation of groups by members and resource persons.

It is difficult to evaluate the intangible outcomes of this project such as those represented by modification of classroom teaching and teacher-teacher, teacher-pupil, teacher-parent, and teacher-administrator relationships. However, recommendations and suggestions have formed the starting point for another study in which the emphasis is on implementation rather than on evaluation, although it is the belief of many that both must go on concurrently. Also, a beginning is being made on setting up a pattern for continuous evaluation at the autonomous building level with coordination through a system-wide Curriculum Council.

Youth Look at Their World

RALPH P. GALLAGHER

What do high school students consider to be the most urgent problems and issues facing them and the world today? Last spring almost one thousand seniors in Somerset County, New Jersey, came together for a day's conference to discuss these problems with representatives of various areas of American life. Ralph P. Gallagher is supervising principal of the Bound Brook, New Jersey, public schools.

THE SOMERSET COUNTY, New Jersey, Youth Forum, held last May 27th in the Bound Brook high school, brought the nine hundred high school seniors of the county together in an all-day session



North Phoenix (Ariz.) High School

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