

The Curriculum Commentator

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Teachers Help Children Achieve Better Human Relations

LEADERSHIP in American education has been concerned for many years with the problem of how to bring about better human relationships through the public schools. This continuing interest has brought about many refinements in methods used in approaching this problem. Out of the welter of local experimentation on various aspects of the total problem, several larger hypotheses have slowly evolved as to the causes of human conflict.

Changes Brought About in Schools

Last year a group of people connected with the Bureau for Intercultural Education worked on a program to test certain hypotheses. These hypotheses held that the prime causes of human conflict are: 1) unmet emotional needs, 2) uncritically accepted values, 3) unscientific thinking processes and 4) repressive group procedures.

One part of the total program was devised to assist teachers in meeting emotional needs of children. This portion of the program was effective in improving human relationships in the classroom and in bringing about important changes in the schools. The program in reality became the means of changing several schools from a "subject orientation" to a "child needs" orientation.

The program involved: 1) Helping teachers gain an understanding of the emotional needs theory; 2) Helping teachers select children for study; 3)

Helping teachers improve their analysis of behavior and of needs; 4) Helping teachers build tentative programs to help the selected children; 5) Helping teachers try out new practices; 6) Helping teachers evaluate and record changes in child behavior; 7) Helping teachers see the implications of work with a few children in the perspective of the total classroom activity.

Total Personnel Participation

One important feature of the program was that the total professional personnel of a school building became the unit for group work. The "school building unit" approach was used so that:

- Various members of the school staff could develop relationships of a type desirable and necessary in a school where emotional needs of children are a focal concern.
- Group members could help one another, give security to one another, learn from one another.
- Group commitments could be made upon ideas evolved by the group as valid. Group feelings could then become a force for continued change. New standards evolved by the group would create a demand for new school practices.
- Group members would have an opportunity to think through and change their own attitudes and practices as they saw fit. Administrative pressures for changing people with-

out regard to the deep individual convictions of those concerned could be eliminated and the group could progress at its own rate.

Teachers Assist the Child

A second important aspect of the program was that it went beyond child "study" into child "help." This feature of the work produced important and lasting effects in the lives of the teachers. Teachers came to understand children better, but even more important, teachers learned that they could be important factors in helping children make significant changes in their behavior. Results, easily observable in child behavior as a consequence of these cooperative activities, helped teachers gain new confidence in their own worth.

Materials Prepared Cooperatively

A third important aspect of the program was that many materials, found necessary for the successful forward movement of the groups, were planned and prepared specifically for this project. A booklet entitled, *An Application to Education of the Needs Theory* was written and put into print. Forms for recording background data on students; anecdotal record forms; daily log forms; and weekly summary sheets had to be devised. Testing devices were made. A whole series of movies, either locally made or adapted, was provided to meet the needs of the project.

A fourth important aspect of the program was that a full-time consultant was available to help the teachers. The consultant worked with teachers in the classroom, lunchroom, playground, halls, etc., and a cooperative problem-solving approach was utilized at all times.

The project produced excellent results with regard to behavior changes

in students. More important, however, may be the fact that several whole schools made important advances. School personnel spelled out in practice some of the implications of a needs-centered curriculum. They also came to recognize many other aspects of school life that needed to be changed if they were to conform to their new ideas. They came to see also how a problem-solving approach could be used to move their school in a desirable direction of progress and reform.

Emotional Needs

An Application to Education of the Needs Theory, Louis E. Raths, Professor of Education, New York University (available from Louis E. Raths, Box 26, Bronxville, N. Y.) describes behavior of children who may have emotional needs, and outlines the emotional needs which may cause the behavior. The booklet is designed to help the ordinary classroom teacher identify and analyze children in his classroom who may have unmet emotional needs. This is the booklet that was utilized in the program described above. Well written, in easily understood language, this booklet should be very helpful to anyone who wants to help children solve their emotional problems.

Social Class Status

Student Status and Social Class, Louis E. Raths, Professor of Education, New York University, and Stephen Abrahamson, Bureau for Intercultural Education (available from Louis E. Raths, Box 26, Bronxville, N. Y.) is a companion booklet to *Application to Education of the Needs Theory*. It is designed to help teachers who wish to make a study of their own classrooms to see if social class status is operating in a way which brings unusual rewards to some groups and unusual penalties

to others. It is a very "practical" book which outlines and describes steps which the teacher can take to get a clear understanding of the social class status system in his classroom.

Locating Needs and Problems of High School Youth

Benjamin Shimberg, of the Division of Educational Reference, Purdue University, has just published a new booklet entitled, *The Development of a Needs and Problems Inventory for High School Youth*. The booklet is primarily an account of methods by which a testing instrument was made. However, it also reviews other instruments that have been used for this purpose and evolves a new needs and problems inventory.

This publication would be helpful to curricular specialists and other educators interested in finding instruments to help uncover problems common to the youth of a particular community. The booklet would be useful also to guidance personnel and teachers interested in finding an instrument which could be helpful in locating those students who may be in need of counseling.

Educating for Social Living

Social Education of Young Children in the Kindergarten-Primary Grades, The National Council for the Social Studies (a department of the NEA, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.) is an expanded revision of its previous edition. The new edition presents an excellent theoretical survey of social development. It also gives many illustrations at each grade level of these theories in action. This edition thereby effectively combines depth analysis of the problem of social education with down-to-earth illustrations of the pro-

cess at work. The grade-by-grade approach shows how the same objectives and processes are at work at different growth levels. This publication should prove very helpful to school people looking for threads which run vertically through the curriculum and unify the experiences of growing children.

Health and Child Needs

Educating for Healthful Living is a Reprint Service Bulletin of articles from the April 1950 issue of *Childhood Education* (Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington 5, D. C., \$0.50). A group of well-known educators, including Rose Lammel, Leona Baumgartner, Elsa Schneider, Ruth Cunningham, Madeline Roberts, Mary Jane Loomis, John Ramseyer, Jessie Elliff, Marjorie Eastbrooks, Charlotte Johnson, William Grone, Angelis Murphy and Marilyn Chandler, have spelled out in clear word pictures the meaning of the definition of health of the World Health Organization: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." These authors show how healthy teachers, classroom associations, sex education, health examinations and many other aspects of school living may affect beneficially the health of the child.

The booklet puts within one cover many clear statements about this multifaceted problem. It outlines how far education has moved from the time when health education was physical exercise and clean teeth.

Reading

What is Wrong With Today's Reading Instruction, Laura Zirbes, Professor of Education, Ohio State University (The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio). If you want an excellent booklet

to hand to those people who criticize modern reading programs and are hasty in pointing out the superior values of the old ways, this is it. Laura Zirbes has written a hard-hitting, clear, intelligent article on modern methods of teaching reading through meaning. She also contrasts the newer techniques with the old.

Children's Books

Children's Books for Seventy-Five Cents or Less (Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington 5, D. C., \$0.50) is an annotated listing of over 600 books carefully chosen for use by children. The books are arranged according to large interest headings such as: Books about Animals, Classics, Science, Religious Books. The books are listed also in a title index. This booklet is in fact an excellent reference tool for the busy teacher who needs reading materials for specific purposes in a hurry.

Life Adjustment

Life Adjustment Booklets (Science Research Associates, 228 Wabash Ave., Chicago 4, Ill., 48 p. each). You can now add these new life adjustment booklets to this excellent series.

How to Solve Your Problems, Robert Seashore and A. C. Van Duren, is an excellent booklet which should help the adolescent get a healthy perspective of his problems.

You and Your Health, J. Roswell Gallagher, M.D., gives help for the adolescent in understanding what is involved in keeping healthy. The booklet deals with the attitude toward healthful living and provides information about how to keep well.

What Employers Want, James C. Worthy, adds a third booklet to a useful series (*How to Get the Job* and

Your Personality and Your Job) which should help applicants for all types of positions.

Role of the Leader

Kimball Wiles has recently published a significant book in the field of supervision. The title of this publication is *Supervision For Better Schools*, The Role of the Official Leader in Program Development (Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1950. \$3.75).

Various aspects of supervision are dealt with most interestingly and perceptively in this text. Supervision as skill in leadership; as skill in human relations; as skill in group process; as skill in personnel administration; and as skill in evaluation—each function of supervision is treated with unforgettable sharpness and keen insight.

This book gives a consistent treatment of supervision as creative leadership and of education as creative living. One feels in these pages great respect for the individual, whether he be "teacher" or "supervisor." The philosophy of supervision expressed, both directly and by implication, in this book, has no vestige of the "talking down to the lowly teacher" which has been characteristic of all too many of the earlier volumes purporting to deal with "democratic" supervision.

Actual situations and examples are constantly referred to in this work, lending it authenticity and freshness. Particularly enjoyable are the pen-and-ink drawings which illustrate and dramatize the ideas expressed in the text. Perhaps the most outstanding chapter is that which deals with cooperative evaluation from the standpoint of supervision, "How Can the Work of the Supervisor be Evaluated?"

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