

Curriculum Research

Column Editor: C. W. Hunnicutt
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An ASCD Curriculum Research Program

FOLLOWING two years of discussion in the ASCD Research Board, the Plans and Appraisal Committee, and the Executive Committee, the Association began official exploration of a program of cooperative curriculum research this past fall. Approximately eighty representatives of school systems, colleges and universities, and other agencies interested in curriculum research participated in the Cooperative Curriculum Research Conference sponsored by the ASCD Research Board and held on the Chicago campus of Northwestern University, November 29-December 1, 1951. Since the conference proceedings, available from the Washington ASCD office, give the details of the discussions and plans, the present article is devoted to a report of possible outcomes anticipated by the Research Board.

Research Emphases in the Program of ASCD

The widespread demand for curriculum research studies and findings to give direction to curriculum improvement efforts can be satisfied at least in part through the activities of ASCD. To this end a variety of publications could ultimately be developed to help local research groups in organizing research projects, to disseminate research findings to curriculum planning groups, and to interpret curriculum research to both the profession and the lay public. Already one issue (May) of *Educational Leadership* this year is planned to deal with curriculum research, and various

other publications in this area are under consideration.

State, regional, and national ASCD conferences may also emphasize curriculum research. The 1952 convention at Boston will include a section of study groups dealing with "Fostering Curriculum Research." Data are being gathered by a New York area committee headed by Professor S. M. Corey of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation, Teachers College, Columbia University, to help these study groups build upon the work of the Research Conference and to be considered in future conference planning. These plans should make possible wider participation of ASCD members in the research program.

It is also hoped that state and regional ASCD conferences may provide for increased attention to the need for and organization of cooperative curriculum research. Another Research Conference is planned for 1952 to follow up plans made and proposals presented at the 1951 conference.

ASCD Services to State and Regional Research Projects

In general, the deliberations of the Research Conference assumed that the most fruitful curriculum research would involve the cooperation of teacher education institutions and school systems, would deal with problems of primary concern to the cooperating groups, and would be supported by the groups. At the same time, the Research Board believes assistance from

national ASCD may be helpful in stimulating, organizing, and coordinating local research projects. Hence, the Board has recommended, on the basis of Research Conference proposals, that ASCD's Executive Committee seriously consider the possibility of allocating additional staff services for aid to state and regional groups in the area of curriculum research. Such staff services, to be primarily of a consultative nature, would represent an ASCD research interest over and beyond that of the various program emphases described above.

National Cooperation in Curriculum Research

In view of the paucity of recent fundamental curriculum research there seems need for closer cooperation of the several organizations already carrying on programs more or less directly related to curriculum research. The Research Conference participants included individuals currently holding office or employed by the following such organizations in addition to ASCD: American Educational Research Association; Association for Childhood Education International; Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation; National Citizens Commission; Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; the U. S. Office of Education. In addition, many participants had been associated with various national and regional research programs and study councils. The conference also gave consideration to the need for cooperation with agencies and organizations carrying on research in educational areas other than curriculum and in fields other than education.

A program of national leadership in curriculum research should involve the cooperative efforts of all these agencies

and organizations to meet the need of American education for research data and data-securing activities. ASCD seems to be an organization combining uniquely the personnel, interests, and strengths essential to bringing about this cooperation.

A New Role for Individual Researches

Many, perhaps most, past curriculum researches have been carried forward by individual students working for advanced degrees. Although in no way deprecating these researches, the ASCD Research Board is of the opinion that they may affect curriculum planning more frequently and more directly if planned in accordance with some of the categories of needed curriculum research which might be developed in the ASCD research program. As a step in this direction, the Research Board referred to Professor Harold Shane, Northwestern University, and Chairman, ASCD Publications Board, a considerable list of needed inquiries and investigations developed in the course of the Research Conference. We proposed that the Publications Committee take some means of bringing these specific proposals to the attention of seminars and individual graduate students, *not* as ASCD-sponsored activities, but as worth-while projects to contribute to the field of curriculum research.

Summary: An Organized Curriculum Research Effort

The need for organized curriculum research was forcibly stated at the Denver ASCD convention (1949), and again at the recent Research Conference by Dean Hollis L. Caswell of Teachers College, Columbia University.¹

¹ See Hollis L. Caswell, "Research in the Curriculum," *Educational Leadership*, VII: 438-445. April 1950.

The plans developed at the Conference for further consideration and action at Boston and elsewhere, constitute an organized effort to meet this need. If the plans are successful, there should soon be many cooperative devices for disseminating and interpreting research, and a considerable number of individual research studies related to the program. The further success of

these specific efforts will depend on the quality and extent of national ASCD planning and especially on the cooperation of local school systems, colleges and universities, curriculum research workers, and the ASCD membership in general.—*William M. Alexander*, chairman, ASCD Research Board, and professor of education, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.

Letters from Abroad

Column Editor: Carleton W. Washburne
Contributor: Mme. Amélie Hamaïde

Herewith in translation is a short article by Madame Hamaïde of Belgium. Madame Hamaïde was a close co-worker with the famous Belgian psychologist and educator, Decroly, and has been the chief exponent of his methods. She is active in the new education movements in Belgium. Here she reports a summary of a seminar organized by Unesco in Bristol last July to consider the place of the plastic arts in general education. She promises a later article on some phase of educational work in Belgium.

Carleton W. Washburne

The Plastic Arts in General Education

Bristol July 7 to 27, 1951
Seminar of Practical Studies, Organized by UNESCO
Report by Mme. Hamaïde, Belgian Delegate at the Seminar.

The Importance of the Seminar

AT A TIME such as ours, when the technical progress very often changes the traditional frames of culture, the art education is more desirable and indispensable than ever.

All over the world, there is a great desire on the part of adults and children to get more favorable opportunities and more extended possibilities to devote themselves to art and learn to appreciate it.

This revolution originates from some experiences that were isolated but new, and it is necessary to refer to the Deerdy Schools in Belgium. There we

see a change in the understanding of art from the artistic education.

In children's productions you notice, more and more, the appearance of the qualities, the freshness, and the spontaneity that will enrich the personality of the child by the development of a lively imagination.

Taking into consideration the experiences and studies that will weaken the prejudices and disengage the theories, the specialists with their theories meet the educators with their practical experience, and the artists with their inspiration.

The aim pursued by this particular stage was:

- To study the theory and educational practices of the plastic art of the various childrens' groups in all the schools of different countries.

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