In her position as director of elementary education for the State of Washington, Susan M. Lacy, this month's commentator, has firsthand knowledge of many action programs in curriculum development. She reports to us on two current examples of such programs, one within a school and the other within a professional group.

**Action Programs in Washington State**

**School Project in Conservation**

Students and Teachers in East Wenatchee Junior High School recently demonstrated how a school can work together to improve its playfield and at the same time give students valuable learning experiences which cut across several subject areas. Robert Dintelman is superintendent of East Wenatchee, Washington, Public Schools, and Norbert N. Baugh is principal of the junior high school. Mr. Baugh tells the story in this way:

To begin with, one end of our playfield was narrower than the other, because of a sloping bank. We needed more playground area, so when the new bridge was built across the Columbia River, the contractor for the approaches to the new bridge, Mr. Goodfellow, was contacted. We offered him the bank of dirt if he would bring in his equipment, haul the dirt away, and cut the remaining bank to grade, so that in the future bleachers could be built on the bank. Since he needed the dirt for the fill to the approaches to the bridge and since it was a fairly short distance to the bridge, he readily took us up on the proposition. It was amazing, the amount of work that was done in such a few short weeks with Mr. Goodfellow's equipment.

The following spring some of the members of the ninth grade science class who had been studying soil conservation noticed the erosion taking place on the slope of the bank and wondered what they could do to prevent this. A planning committee was set up and, with the help of two teachers, a project was launched. Roy Jetter, Assistant Extension Agent for Douglas County, and Albert Blomdahl, USDA Soil Conservationist, were called into classrooms for their recommendations. These specialists were very much interested in the project and helped us greatly in planning what to do to correct erosion on the hill. They made five recommendations:

- In order to hold back top soil, and also to improve the appearance of the hillside, small evergreen trees should be planted.
- To add variety, Oriental arborvitae should also be planted.
- Red and creeping fescue grasses should be planted.
- A row of multiflora rose should be planted at the base of the bank.
- Washington State College should be contacted in order to work with us in supplying the plants needed.

Washington State College was contacted and arrangements were made to purchase the necessary plants. In order to determine exactly where the plants
should be located one of the mathematics classes was invited to participate in the project. The photography club took a picture of the hillside showing the profile. This picture was then blown up and an exact profile of the hill was drawn. This diagram was about eight feet in length. The mathematics class then went to work and figured mathematically the exact location of each plant. The number of trees to be ordered through Washington State College was obtained from this diagram.

When the plants arrived the science class began the work of planting the stock. The whole community, as well as the students, followed the project with very much interest. The local garden club promised to help with future landscaping.

After part of the bank had been removed we found that we had about 12,000 square feet of barren ground next to our playfield. It was brought to the attention of the Student Council that if we would seed this area we would then be able to straighten our football field and increase our play area. This matter was discussed in each of the homerooms and it was finally decided that it would cost too much money to hire the seeding of the ground. The students decided to finance the purchase of lawn seed and fertilizer necessary for the planting and to do the work themselves.

The lawn is coming up now and it will be ready for use next fall. One mathematics class that is studying scale drawings has made a scale drawing of our playfield, showing the present turf, as well as the new lawn adjoining it. They are now going to locate the football field, basketball courts, track, horseshoe areas, and so forth, on the scale drawings. After the drawing is completed it will be presented to the Student Council for future use.

**Elementary Principals Work Together**

ONE OF THE GROUPS working on curriculum problems in Washington State is the Elementary Principals Association. In October the regional directors met to consider ways in which the association could assist principals in furthering their professional growth and in providing professional leadership for curriculum improvement.

After discussion of the particular problems in each region, the following topics were listed for study:

- Theme of the national organization, "The Elementary School Library."
- Role of the principal in teacher education. (New certification standards.)
- Planning for better evaluation of the school program.
- Public relations in the classroom.
- Role of the principal in good curriculum planning.
- Improvement of building faculty meetings as curriculum planning units.
- Examination of the encroachment of special activities at each grade level.
- Building of guides for learning activities at each grade level.
- Study of the grouping and placement problem in schools.
- Development of better techniques of working together.
- Provision for the physical activities for all children.

Suggestions for next steps in organizing study sections were:

- If principals are not meeting together regularly for cooperative work, do something about it. Get as many as possible together to discuss organizational possibilities.
- Be certain that meetings evolve around interests and needs of participants. If group needs a suggestion, stress "instructional leadership."

Educational Leadership
Local groups that are already active would gladly send to the secretary information about organization, activities and minutes of meetings.

Try to get superintendents to attend your meetings, and eventually special service people and classroom teacher representatives.

Do everything you can to get something started. A beginning, no matter how insignificant, will pay dividends.

Stress informality and good fellowship so participants will feel secure in presenting their real problems.

Groups in many sections of the state which were already working on these problems have been encouraged by the planning and the realization that they have a common purpose. New study groups have been formed. Their next step in late spring will be that of determining where they are, identifying areas in which they need more help, and developing better ways of working together.—Susan M. Lacy, director of elementary education, State Department of Public Instruction, Olympia, Washington.

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Educating the Retarded Child by S. A. Kick and O. G. Johnson (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951. 434 p.). Both volumes take a comprehensive approach to the topic considered and seem certain to be widely used and accepted.

W. A. Saucier's Theory and Practice in the Elementary School (Macmillan Co., 1951. 515 p.) is out in a new edition after 10 years. It remains a highly useful general work with chapters treating each area in the elementary program: reading, arithmetic, science, etc. cetera.—Harold G. Shane, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.