plant, more staff planning is needed. Later this year a new gymnasium will be opened; a new wing for home economics will be ready; we will have an auditorium big enough to accommodate our whole student body. We need student help on the problems that arise —community help, too. But because our efforts have been recognized and our ideas tried, we are enthusiastic about solving our new problems. We know that we can work together; we believe that we do know where we are going; we believe that planning by the whole staff is basic to good school administration. We expect to review and revise our planning constantly. We know that we don't have all the answers, but we are willing, as a group, to keep trying to find answers.

Do They All Have To Agree?

JOHN HENRY MARTIN

How can curriculum improvement committees arrive at a sound operational basis that will encourage the frank expression and consideration of fundamental differences in point of view? This author suggests that such basic differences may well serve to enrich the final decisions made by such committees.

PROGRAMS of curriculum change frequently have been semireligious rituals designed to make new converts to a predetermined plan. When we learn, however, to understand better the human factors in social change, and also learn to use the newer processes of group problem solving, we shall cherish the initial disagreements among a staff as factors to be dealt with rather than as antagonisms to be sublimated, converted or squelched. But because we have not yet learned this, we have sought agreement artfully, subtly or compulsively, and we have tended to quiet disagreement at the cost of dismissing factors vital to the successful operation of a curriculum proposal. Accordingly, when a still small voice has asked, "What are we going to do about punctuation in the core curriculum?" we have tended to view such an inquiry as an anchor on progress rather than as a legitimate sub-problem to be taken into consideration as the curriculum planning proceeded. The atmosphere engendered by this kind of curriculum change will stifle vocal differences, but such repression will eventually explode like a corked and shaken bottle of soda-pop.

Curriculum committees and curriculum experts need to understand the bases from which differences of opinion stem. The need for this understanding is not sentimental but highly functional; for the differences of opinion are both symptom and statement of the real problems which a staff identifies as parts of the process of curriculum change. What are some of these sources of disagreement?

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Teachers differ in their need for submissiveness, for leadership, for prestige and for belonging. Their reactions to curriculum problems will frequently be stimulated if not controlled by their view of how the change will affect them in terms of social status with other teachers and the administration. Differences so founded may be dismissed as petty, but to do so is to risk ignoring important sources of teacher conduct. Bradford[1] has called them the "hidden agenda" of every meeting. Differences of opinion among individuals may not be caused by the item being discussed. The differences may be rooted in social competition or antagonisms arising from inferiority feelings fostered by one or more of the participants. Some differences of opinion may melt before the persuasiveness of facts, others may yield to the insights learned from disciplined analysis of the problem, but the differences of opinion caused by personal factors may not be mitigated by information or procedure.

Curriculum committees will need to work with and apply the findings of studies in group processes. To learn better procedures for working together as adults is particularly important to curriculum workers. For we are teachers of the teachers who are to help youngsters learn these skills in human relations. And until we improve our processes for working together, we shall continue to be hampered by unseen obstacles rooted in our emotions, the dynamics of our separate personalities.

- ***Teachers' techniques and competencies for classroom management and for a broad range of teaching skills vary.***

A second basis for disagreement among a staff may be found in the wide range of abilities to employ the newer teaching procedures. Many curricular efforts today imply or center an emphasis upon a need for newer techniques of teaching than those generally employed. We have learned that changing the content of courses without modifying the classroom procedures produced less than hoped-for results. The introduction of classroom libraries, committees of children, and a variety of learning situations called for under the heading of teacher-pupil planning has caused problems in classroom management and changes in the required relationships between teachers and students.

Teachers, too, are aware of a need for learning these new skills and for gaining their antecedent insights. And more frequently, teachers can sense with intuitive feeling the radical departures in teaching methods which their participation in curriculum changes will require, and these feelings are not always anticipations of pleasure. Rather, they are more apt to be reminders of inadequacy and of incapacity. Unfortunately, supervisors and other leaders have undertaken only recently to work with teachers engaged in the newer techniques of learning. To the extent that teachers are not free to express their feelings about their classroom needs resulting from curricu-

[1] Leland P. Bradford, "The Case of the Hidden Agenda," *Adult Leadership*, Vol. 1, No. 4., Sept. 1950, p. 3-7.

lum changes, to that extent the disagreements they will express will be camouflaged and otherwise labeled.

To alleviate the anxieties, curriculum committees will need to seek to establish consultant and supervisory assistance to work toward the piece-by-piece improvement teachers seek in their own managerial capacities in the classroom. This is a difficult task. Teachers are reluctant to discuss the problems they encounter in the classroom. Intra-staff rapport needs to be high; teachers' sense of professional security needs to be relatively firm before they will operate in groups for the purpose of helping one another improve teaching skills. Everything that fosters such security will be an asset to a developing curriculum program.

- ***Differences of opinion in regard to curriculum come from different understandings of curriculum.***

Teachers often disagree about curriculum proposals because they come to a working situation with different fragments of understanding of the nature of general education. We are all aware of the varieties of opinions currently present in any staff regarding such problems as the slow learner, the gifted, the college preparatory and the non-college student, and the poor reader. These are not a definitive list of curricular issues. Rather, they are recalled simply to illustrate the absence of definitive judgments regarding their solution. We labor in a professional jungle of notions, ideas, serious studies and half-tried projects. That teachers should differ in their opinions is but one reflection of the nature of our literature.

The need for learning mature use of the basic communicative skills is of legitimate concern to many teachers. Others wonder what is to happen to the content material of the social and physical sciences, which they believe is so necessary for understanding the current world. And unfortunately many of our past curriculum proposals or plans have seemed to ignore or slight these areas. In many cases the proponents of such plans have tended to slight the question-raisers in the staff, thus producing costly antagonisms.

In the area of general education, we can remember the arguments before World II over the need for material of greater social significance. Slum clearance, transportation, communication, world peace and labor unions were held to be of greater utility than ancient history. There were others at the time who stressed the need for curriculum material to be psychologically significant to children at their age of learning. Accordingly, we had an emphasis upon boy-girl relationships, you and your family, getting along with others, and personal finances. Implicit in both these areas of advocacy was and is the assumption that the content of the course is the important thing.

In recent years there has been an increased awareness of the importance of the methods of teaching in controlling what is learned. But among teachers generally there exists little synthesis of these areas basic to current curriculum thinking. Accordingly, the fragmentary and conflicting beliefs regarding the need for socially significant material, for psychologically pertinent study, and for methods of teaching that are in harmony with the behavior goals be-

ing sought are all present in varying degrees in teaching staffs of our schools as factors making for differences of opinion and disagreement regarding curriculum change.

As curriculum committees learn the relative validity of all these questions, the teachers who disagree, who have doubts and who ask why will be seen as the truly constructive members of the staff. But for this change in viewpoint to take place among the members of a curriculum committee, one other major area of learning must be covered. The group and the staff need to try using problem-solving techniques.

- ***The abilities of most teaching staffs to use group problem-solving techniques are limited.***

In order for teachers or committees to learn to view differences of opinion as necessary problems to be dealt with constructively on the road toward an over-all best decision, we need to begin to adapt the disciplines of science to the social problems of education. A necessary condition for curriculum change which views differences of opinions among teachers as enrichment opportunities is the development of professional standards for experimentation. The standards will not be easily accomplished, but the efforts of the "action research" advocates are the most promising activity in the field of curriculum work since World War II.

When teachers say, "What about . . . ? What are we going to do when . . . ? What happens after . . . ? How do we handle . . . ? Who is going to see that . . . ? Do we have enough . . . ? When does . . .?" they are asking questions vital to the success and progress of the curriculum endeavor. These questions so asked are not usually in experimental order. They occur rather spontaneously to meet the situation of the moment out of the background of reasons with which this article has dealt. To accept these questions, and give them the legitimate prestige they deserve, means to establish an accepted procedure for problem-solving.

Something of the following is suggested:

1. What do we seek to improve?

2. What degree of success are we having now before we change?

3. What are all the factors we can think of or find out about which bear upon the present situation?

4. What are all the alternate proposals that seem feasible?

5. For each of these can we establish probable advantages and estimated shortcomings?

6. What changes in our skills will be desirable? How can we learn these?

7. What materials will be needed? Can they be procured?

8. Can we put together an agreed-upon program to be tested for a reasonable period of time?

9. What criteria can we now establish which will measure the degree of progress made?

10. Can we forecast now, to help us make our evaluation of the test, the kinds of evidence that may become available?

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