Cooperative curriculum research takes many forms. Provision must be made for situational features in the selection of a problem, in its design and in the application of results to a local situation. School improvement is situational.

In this issue of the Research Column three studies are described. One deals with a research approach to supervision by studying pupil needs. The second treats an inquiry into the effectiveness of one phase of a college program, while the third shows some research activities of a state association. The appropriateness of these studies may well be considered in terms of situational factors.

ROBERT S. FLEMING

An Emotional Needs Approach to Curriculum Improvement

DURING the 1953-54 school year, a group of Tennessee supervisors initiated a cooperative program designed to help teachers develop increased skill in identifying and meeting the emotional needs of children. This project is an outgrowth of two years of intensive efforts in developing improved curriculum experiences in Tennessee's schools. As teachers have tried to relate their efforts in curriculum study to the selection and organization of learning experiences in the individual schools, several needs have become apparent to them, for example, the need for greater understanding of children, their behavior, their emotional needs, their development as individuals, and how these relate to curriculum improvement.

In order to help supervisors increase their efficiency for leadership in this area, a child study project for supervisors, sponsored by the State Department of Education and the Southern Education Foundation, was conducted at Tennessee A. & I. State University, June 15-26, 1953. This in-service education program was designed so as to focus upon the theory of emotional needs, to provide opportunities for applying the theory to the study of children's behavior as portrayed in films, and to relate these behaviors to probable unmet needs. Special attention was also given to the demonstration of techniques which could be used by supervisors with teachers in local school study groups. The supervisors then designed studies to be carried out in their local situation during the school year.

Several of these supervisors are working intensively with groups of teachers to help them facilitate curriculum improvement through an emphasis on identifying unmet emotional needs and through helping children to meet these needs.

1 Ernestine Jackson, Jefferson County; Katherine Allen Roberts, Montgomery County; Algee C. Outlaw, Haywood County; Cordelia Gwynn, Wilson County; and Tommie Briggs, Lincoln County.
Two basic ideas underlying this program are: (a) that as teachers become more aware of the behavior of individual children and the significance of their behavior in relation to emotional needs, a more favorable "social climate" for learning may be created; (b) as teachers place emphasis on meeting the emotional needs of children more effective adaptation of curriculum experiences will result.

Diagnosing Unmet Needs

In carrying out this program, the supervisors have selected small groups of teachers who are interested in the problem and who have volunteered their services. Each group meets bi-monthly for two hours of intensive study of the needs theory as developed by Louis E. Raths. This theory is presented, discussed and then related to a study of people through films, role playing and other devices to help the teachers analyze specific behaviors and see the relations between needs and behavior.

Each teacher has selected one or two children for intensive study. Pertinent data concerning the child's family background and out of school experiences have been collected. Attempts to diagnose the unmet needs have been made and teachers have outlined individual programs to help the children meet these needs.

Each teacher keeps a record of the reactions of each child to this program and also records the things she does for each child and her reactions to the child's behavior.

As the supervisors hold these in-service meetings, accurate records are made and reports, in the form of detailed descriptions or tape recordings of the happenings, are sent to the State Consultant for In-Service Education. These reports are analyzed and further suggestions about ways of working are made to the supervisors. Follow-up visits by the consultant are largely guided by these reports. (The consultant has visited each of these centers to assist the supervisor in organizing or interpreting the program). Significant ideas are also shared with other groups participating in the study.

We feel that, even at this time, evidence tends to support the basic ideas underlying this program. We hope this program will serve merely as a step in the development of a long range program of curriculum improvement.

—CHARITY M. MANCE, consultant for In-Service Education, Tennessee State Department of Education, Knoxville, Tennessee.

A College Evaluates Its Field Services

HOW shall a college improve its program of participation with public schools in bringing about desirable and lasting change in curriculum practices? Should the college be satisfied to adopt practices which are in current acceptance, or should it use the empirical methods of research to gather data upon which to base decisions? Several staff members of the College of Education, University of Florida, chose to use the latter method in formulating recommendations to the total faculty for the improvement of the College's participation in such programs.

The University of Florida offers a field course entitled, "A Group Study of Selected Problems in Special Fields."
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Fees
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For information write to: Ralph R. Fields, Director, Division of Instruction, Box 90, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York 27, New York.

As its contribution to the curriculum improvement effort of individual schools or school systems, the College of Education has provided consultative and coordinative services under the aegis of this course.

In order to guarantee the wise expenditure of its energies as well as to find ways of improving its services to the public schools of the state, the College felt it must conduct some type of evaluation aimed at measuring the effectiveness of its efforts. To supplement the continuous evaluation conducted by the College staff and local school personnel who are working together in a particular program, the writers, in 1953, made an over-all follow-up study of the effectiveness of the College's participation in the situations in which services have been provided through the field course mentioned above. Each study center was revisited for the purpose of ascertaining what changes had occurred in the programs of the schools and how the teachers felt about their part in the projects. Interviews were held with each person still on the staff who had participated in the curriculum revision experience. The technique of counting responses to predetermined questions was deliberately rejected since the purpose was to find out what the participants themselves saw as factors important or significant in the success or failure of their efforts and to obtain some measure of the intensity of feeling toward these factors.

What Are the Findings?
The examination of the information obtained during these unstructured interviews with more than 200 teachers in 15 different centers led to the following conclusions:
1. Compulsory participation by faculty members is undesirable.

2. A critical factor in the success of a program is the degree of common concern which teachers have for the problem studied. This common concern is not guaranteed by proximity of individuals in a building or system.

3. Most curriculum improvement efforts are initiated by administrative or supervisory personnel, often by fiat, and this is not always taken into consideration in the way the College operates in a program.

4. There is not enough involvement of representatives of the College in the early stages of planning the program. In addition these representatives are not thoroughly versed in the local situation.

5. In some cases, a more formalized course can serve school needs as well as or better than curriculum study.

6. There is no one method of conducting curriculum revision study. A danger lies in developing a stereotyped process and attempting to apply it in all situations.

7. There is evidence that the efforts of participants would be more effective if the nature of a problem and the method of problem solving were given particular attention.

8. There is a need for more consultants from the College who work with teachers in the classroom and who offer help with specific difficulties.

9. Community participation falls below that advocated in the literature.

10. Too often, the cessation of the course marks the end of curriculum revision efforts. The College must accept partial responsibility because of the lack of follow-through on its part.

The report of the study with its attendant conclusions was presented to the faculty during one of the planning sessions prior to the opening of the college year. It provoked considerable discussion.

Changes were made by the faculty in (a) the circumstances under which the College would entertain requests for assistance, (b) the method of arriving at a final decision as to whether the course would be offered, and (c) the amount and kind of participation required of the public school teachers, abolishing the compulsory participation of all staff members. In addition to these policy changes made by faculty action, staff members of the College have indicated that the findings of the study have materially affected the way in which they have worked with programs currently in progress.

While the changes that were made were important to the program, we feel that of greater importance is the fact that the project re-emphasized to the faculty that such fact-finding studies give more vigor and validity to discussion and decision making.


**Promising Practices in Indiana**

THE Indiana Association of Secondary School Principals has for several years encouraged curriculum experimentation and research. The association believes that one important way of promoting curriculum improvement is by sharing information about promising practices already in operation in some of our schools. Reports of such developments lend encouragement to professional people. They may also challenge or stimulate creative imagination.
in other communities to attempt improvements of their own.

Identifying Promising Practices

The Curriculum Committee of the Indiana Association of Secondary School Principals has conducted a series of district and state-wide meetings designed to uncover and spread better practices and effective innovations in the secondary schools. Life adjustment education was a conspicuous theme. The conferences were attended by teachers as well as by principals. Each participant had been asked earlier to describe clearly, his present project, to indicate the apparent accomplishments to date, and to make a definite commitment concerning further efforts that would be made for at least the next school year. The committee has already reported certain tentative findings to the Principals Association and at the October meeting of Indiana ASCD. A more complete description will be published this summer as a research bulletin of the School of Education of Indiana University.

Functional Physics

One of the reports concerned a class in "Functional Physics," described by Alton Scroggin, a teacher, and by Alvin W. Ahrens, then principal of the St. John Township High School at Dyer, Indiana. Their intention was to make physics more meaningful and practical for students, to help them observe and understand the principles of physics in operation in their own environment, to encourage cooperative relationships between students and community.

Theories of physics were studied first in classroom and laboratory; then trips were taken to nearby homes in various stages of construction. After the class studied sections on mechanics and heat, for example, it visited a home under construction to observe materials used and methods by which these are put together. They discussed with contractors the relative merits of different heating systems and modern methods of home insulation. In this way, the students also studied sound, light and electricity. At building sites, they observed many practical aspects of natural and artificial lighting, interior decoration, electrical systems, home appliances, utilities and sound controls.

The students became noticeably more interested in the course. Home owners, contractors and workmen were glad to cooperate. The top quarter of the class members enjoyed rich opportunities to deepen their understandings. Many new interests were stimulated. The lower quarter remained throughout the course and did satis-
factory work, because what they were studying was clearly observed in the real environment of their own neighborhoods. This was functional physics.

**Family Living**

A teacher at Hammond High School, Helen Kennedy, reported “A Family Living Unit in Ninth Grade English.” The teacher hoped the youngsters would learn to understand family relations better and improve their attitudes and behavior toward their own families. They read stories about home experiences and family problems, and analyzed their own family relationships. What they learned from the stories was matched against what they knew about themselves and their own homes. All this led to many lively discussions. Ideals of family living were spelled out, and qualities of personality required for such living were identified—for parents and children.

Eventually, the students were asked to describe whatever changes had occurred in their attitudes or behavior toward their families since the start of the unit. Various students reported that they now understood the importance of controlling one’s temper, of willingly seeking and respecting a parent’s counsel, of being more considerate at home and trying to understand other persons’ viewpoints. One youngster suggested that her mother might well read the same stories “and do some changing herself.” Most of the students showed deeper appreciation for good homes, parental trust and family harmony.

—ARTHUR HOPPE, professor of education, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana.