

Curriculum Research

Column Editor: William M. Alexander

Contributor: Robert S. Fleming

Edited by William M. Alexander, Chairman of the ASCD Research Board, this regular column will comment on current developments and trends in curriculum research. Dr. Alexander will welcome your suggestions concerning research projects which should be treated in this column. Such correspondence should be addressed to: Dr. William M. Alexander, School of Education, University of Miami, Coral Gables 46, Florida.

Recent Developments in Curriculum Research

THE PAST school year has brought some interesting developments in the curriculum research activities of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Perhaps ASCD's emphasis in curriculum research in the past is beginning to yield returns. Doubtless, the successes of the past year reflect in part the stimulus of the persistent and extensive efforts of the Research Board, Executive Committee and others.

Among the gains realized last year was the identification of numerous research projects now under way by ASCD members over the country. These projects were reported in *An Inventory of Action Research Now Under Way* compiled by the ASCD Research Coordinator in May, 1954.

The Inventory contains approximately two hundred fifty items representing groups in all areas of the United States. These studies are being carried out by teachers, supervisors, college personnel and curriculum directors. In all cases each study represents a cooperative enterprise. Obviously these projects represent various

levels and degrees of skill in the use of research techniques. It is interesting to note, however, that they do stem from *local concerns* and that they are focused at *school improvement*. One could not be assured that each item in the Inventory meets all criteria which have been formulated for action research studies. They were reported to the Association as important and potentially significant.

An analysis of the studies and the categories into which they fall suggests marked variation in types of investigations under way. The studies have been classified as follows:

- Studies and inventories of action
- General curriculum studies
- Studies of children and youth, their needs and the implications for program planning
- Studies of "gifted" children
- Studies of citizenship education
- Studies of program planning for subject areas and grade levels
- Studies of core curriculum
- Studies of creativity
- Studies dealing with international understanding

Just Published—

**CREATIVE
RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT
FOR CHILDREN**

by Gladys E. Andrews, Ed.D.

School of Education, New York University

Written in response to continual requests for a single, direct, comprehensive book on creative rhythmic movement, this new text explains the method fully and illustrates its application to stimulate children to create their own ways of doing rather than to imitate patterns.

Completely original in approach, this method is an outgrowth of the recognition of a child's need to be active. It is based on an intimate knowledge of children, what they are like, how they grow and develop, rather than on activities or a particular skill.

All material has been tested and has been developed from actual work with children and teachers over a period of 20 years. It is designed to demonstrate the relationship of movement to music, art, language, social studies, and other school activities children need to guide their proper growth and development.

198 pp. • illustrated • 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Send for your copy today!



Studies of modern language programs
Studies of community resources and their uses in program planning
Studies of teaching and learning materials, their development and use
Studies of evaluation and its relationship to the improvement of educational programs
Studies of reporting, placement and promotion
Studies of in-service education and supervision
Studies related to parent-teacher-school relationships
Studies in teacher education
Studies of educational leadership, its characteristics and development.

It is interesting to note the number of studies being explored in each of these areas. The following areas represent those most frequently being investigated with typical examples of studies in each. Examples of "Studies of program planning for subject and grade level" are:

A study of ways of accelerating the teaching of geometry.

Development of a plan for the improvement of reading in the junior high schools.

A study of work-study skills.

A study to determine the possibility of offering practical nursing as a part of the high school curriculum.

To explore ways of planning and executing a camp experience for a fifth grade group which provides for democratic social living, conservation, health and safety.

Examples of "Studies of children and youth" are:

A study of the nature of juvenile delinquency and of the incidence of its occurrence in the Port Washington community.

A study of ways of helping teachers and parents identify and meet basic needs of children.

A study of children's social attitudes. Examples of "General curriculum studies" are:

A study of the effectiveness of a program of action research in improving the educational practices of home economics teachers.

To determine the contributions of special teachers (art, music and physical education) to the language arts program.

Examples of "Studies of in-service education" are:

A cooperative study of in-service education.

An exploration of ways of assisting "new" teachers with problems of orientation and adjustment early in the year.

Although there are more studies dealing with the elementary level than the secondary, there is a surprisingly large number of studies in the secondary field. A variety of research designs are being used and many evaluation techniques are being employed.

A Continuing Service

It is hoped that this listing of studies will facilitate and encourage cooperative activity. Also, ASCD groups doubtless will want to continue to identify curriculum projects under way and to assist groups in their research efforts.

ASCD does not have a full time Research Coordinator for the 1954-55 school year. The Research Board, Executive Committee and others will assume increasing responsibilities in assisting groups with curriculum research problems and concerns. One unique development in the research

activities of the association has been the recruitment of more than sixty consultants over the country to assist groups with research activities. This service is being given by the consultant, although the local group will make necessary arrangements for travel and living expense.

The consultants have indicated times during the year at which they can become available. All arrangements will be made through George W. Denmark, ASCD Executive Secretary. As groups experience difficulties or needs and want a consultant, they should inform the Executive Secretary of such needs. He will suggest appropriate aid if arrangements can be made.

Such a spirit of cooperative activity seems highly consistent with the philosophy of shared leadership and shared responsibility which members of the association accept. It is hoped that during the year local, state and regional ASCD groups will keep the Executive Secretary, or Chairman of the Research Board, informed as to their activities. This column may well serve as a clearinghouse and through it groups can be directed to each other. Perhaps new channels of communication can be created. Local and state research committees and teams can share much with other ASCD groups.

The current school year holds many problems, concerns, issues and needs for public education. Cooperative inquiry is an excellent medium of school improvement. Cooperative research offers an important opportunity for school improvement.

—ROBERT S. FLEMING, *professor of education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.*

Copyright © 1954 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.