

## Creativity in Thinking, Living, Teaching

Creativity is a concept most often associated with the arts. The bold sweep of the painter's brush in vibrant color; the melodious chord sounded by the musician as he captures a delicate mood of men; the hushed, tension-packed moments produced by the actor interpreting the torment of a soul caught up in a conflict of human values—these, and the work of others skilled in one of the fine arts, suggests the frame of reference in which we usually think of creativity. It is quite natural that we should, since so frequently these media provide the channels through which men's spirits are free to contemplate and express what should and could be, as well as what is.

However, important as are the continuation and extension of creativity in the realm of the fine arts, it is our firm conviction that the concept of creativity needs application even more urgently with respect to social institutions and arrangements. It is this broader dimension of creativity which this issue of *Educational Leadership* seeks primarily to explore and extend. Several of the articles seek to identify cultural and psychological blocks to creativity, and to examine certain elements which foster creativeness. The issue concludes with a series of articles concerned with aspects of instruction and school organizational arrangements which affect the creativity of teacher and learner. The impact of classroom climate, of current increas-

ing demands upon the time of teachers, of rigid versus flexible school programs, of carefully trained teachers provided with a wide range of resources appropriate to the special needs of children—these are important aspects of our work as teachers which are here considered. Examined separately or taken together, the statements which follow suggest that the development of creative children and youth necessitates much creativity on the part of school and community leaders, particularly those responsible for the effective utilization of our human resources.

Just as this issue of *Educational Leadership* has been planned to expand our concept of creativity, so has the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development been planned with a similar purpose, although primarily utilizing face-to-face discussion instead of the printed page as its medium of communication. Centering upon the theme, "Creative Thinking, Living and Teaching," the Conference to be held in New York City, March 19-23, 1956 has as its major objective a clarification of the relationships between rich, many-sided personalities, effective patterns of living and relating oneself to others, and creative teaching and learning experiences. As the words of a currently popular song suggest for another context, "You can't have one without the other."

The thesis that creative teaching de-

pend upon creative thinking and living and is, in turn, a stimulus for these, is one which the ASCD conference planners have sought to employ earnestly as the central working rationale for this conference. As a consequence, conference participants will be attending general sessions devoted to thoughtful reappraisals of the meaning of creativity in thinking, in living, and in teaching. Large assembly meetings will be centered upon exploring creative ideas in eight major areas of educational interest. Eighteen clinics, each involving two sessions, will focus upon creative practices that improve education—some in relation to specific job problems of curriculum directors, supervisors, college professors, or other groups represented in ASCD's membership—others in relation to instructional problems of more general concern.

Conference study-discussion groups this year have been divided into four sections, each designed to emphasize a particular objective. The first section is composed of a series of groups organized around the systematic study of creative ideas in current literature. The topic for each group parallels that of a significant book of recent publication date. Persons registering for such a group are expected to read carefully, prior to the conference, the book upon which the group's discussions will be centered. This arrangement is intended to make better use of the participants' limited time together at the conference by encouraging a considerable amount of reflection upon the topic in the weeks preceding the meeting. The plan also reflects recognition of the fact that a fruitful consid-

eration of some creative ideas may necessitate a more extended opportunity for one individual to adequately present his views on the subject before general discussion is begun.

A second study-discussion group section is composed of groups organized around reporting and analyzing significant research findings. These groups will be limited to persons who have registered for them in advance of the conference and have had an opportunity to receive and study a research paper prepared by one of the resource persons in the group. The research papers have been planned to correspond with six important areas in which significant new research is under way, among them a theory of emotional needs, the developmental tasks concept, school factors relating to juvenile delinquency, and the better utilization of teacher competencies. The values, mentioned above, in the groups' getting a "head start" on their topic through the use of printed materials and the plan for the initial presentation of the ideas of one group member in more detail apply also to this section.

A third section is composed of groups organized around the sharing of creative ideas. While these groups are, in most respects, quite similar to the regular pattern with which ASCD members have become familiar, they are different in that each is directed toward the consideration of creative new approaches to an important educational problem, rather than toward a review of the current status and general practices relevant to the problem.

A fourth section will be composed of groups organized around field visits to

community resources for creative living and teaching. The local setting of this conference makes available resources that can contribute both to the personal lives of educators and to the enrichment of the curricula for which they have responsibility.

Creative ideas obviously cannot be obtained secondhand. There is no easy way of borrowing someone else's creative ventures, in educational or other social enterprises. What was fresh and imaginative and creative for one person or group in a given context all too often becomes an ill-fitting copy in another context. We cannot become creative educational leaders, or, for that matter, even adequately understand the meaning of creativity if we do not work at it. Scanning a professional journal devoted to creativity is not enough. Attending a conference with creativity as its theme is only one short, beginning step.

If we expect someone to have already culled out for us the creative from the pedestrian ideas—if we expect to find a readymade prescription for creativity—if we expect to give only enough time and energy to the conference to become familiar with the new labels and the latest fads—then this will be but one more conference in a line of too many to remember. If, instead, we recognize that hard work and a disciplined mind are essential prerequisites of creativity and that these must be translated into direct questions regarding how much we expect of ourselves and give of ourselves before and during the conference, "creative" can well be descriptive of our experience during that week, along with being a key word in the conference theme.

—GEORGE W. DENEMARK, *executive secretary, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA.*

## **ASCD TO MEET IN NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 19-23, 1956**

*Conference Theme: Creative Thinking, Living and Teaching*

*Headquarters: Hotel New Yorker*

- ▶ *General Sessions*      Developing each major aspect of the conference theme: creative thinking, creative living, creative teaching
- ▶ *Assemblies*            Centering on exploration of creative ideas in teacher education, testing, citizenship, curriculum development
- ▶ *Clinics*                 Focusing on creative practices to improve education
- ▶ *Study-discussion Groups*
  - (a) Exploring creative ideas in current literature
  - (b) Reporting and analyzing significant research findings
  - (c) Sharing creative ideas on problems facing today's schools
  - (d) Visiting school and community resources in the New York metropolitan area.

*For further information and registration write to:*

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