

Education and the Future

ASCD'S THEME for its 1957 Conference, "Education and the Future: Appraisal and Planning," suggests two fundamental questions for deliberation in St. Louis: (a) What criteria can be applied in *appraising* the various aspects of education today? and (b) On what tasks do we need to work in *planning* for the shape of education to come?

Teaching is a creative art with a scientific base. Solution of the complex problems facing education in the next 50 years will require the artistic application of principles and concepts rather than rule-of-thumb performance. It is the purpose of this issue of *Educational Leadership* to examine three basic aspects of education (in six articles) in terms of principles that can be applied by ASCD members as we work together in our annual conference in appraising how well we are now doing and in looking to the future.

What Should the Schools of the Future Teach?

The unique function of the teaching profession is to foster *learning*. How can we help the learner determine what he needs to learn? How can objectives be chosen that can give direction to our appraisal and planning? In other words, what should we teach?

These questions are too important to be decided in an offhand way. The continuance of our society and the happiness and effectiveness of human lives will depend upon wise choices of educational aims. Many of the vociferous outpourings

against education in recent times probably come from persons who simply do not know how people learn. There is a body of scientific knowledge concerning the learning process by which to guide curriculum and teaching in the same way that medical knowledge guides the physician. Those who believe that learning is a process of pouring knowledge into passive students have an impossible task before them. Those who would teach by the "psittacotic method"—having boys and girls give us parrot-like answers—will not foster learning. Each of the six articles in this issue of *Educational Leadership* will increase our knowledge of the unique function of our profession—to help people learn. I believe the articles should be studied by elementary, secondary and college teachers, and especially by liberal arts professors who also are employed and receive their salaries so that their students may learn.

Research in curriculum development has given us standards to apply in making wise choices of objectives for today and in planning for what to keep, add or omit in the future. It is assumed that these criteria will be applied cooperatively by the total professional staff, the learners, their parents and other lay members of the community. In brief, these criteria include (a) studies of the community and the larger society, (b) studies of the learners themselves, with special emphasis on what we know about human behavior, (c) the contributions of scholarship, (d) the role of philosophy and values in helping to make choices of

goals for the future, (e) research on the learning process, and (f) a clear definition by the learner himself, in terms of behavior and content, of what he needs to learn.

The first three articles in this issue of *Educational Leadership* are devoted to thoughtful analyses of four of these criteria—the learner and the learning process, scholarship, and philosophy and values. Throughout all the articles is seen concern for the other two criteria. In "Learning—Now and in the Future," Walter Waetjen challenges our thinking with his discussion of important principles in education that research has established. He also helps us by describing implications of these principles for future educational practice. John Ginther intrigues us with his analysis of two major routes that are discernible on the frontiers of advanced study related to education. In "Putting Scholarship to Work Today and in the Future," he recommends the development of a closer alliance with fields such as chemistry, physiology, psychology, medicine and philosophy and urges the sorting of hypotheses from tentatively warranted conclusions. "The values which emerge from an analysis of classroom teaching are the stuff of which philosophy of education is made," says Robert Brackenbury in his article, "Philosophy and Values for the Future." Seven basic principles of policy formulation are outlined in a lucid analysis of how philosophy of education can be useful in appraising and planning.

If, in place of "curriculum tinkering," we will all devote our energies to systematic study of the criteria so creatively analyzed by these three writers in appraising and planning "what to teach," the shape of education to come will be better than it now is.

How Can the Teaching-Learning Process Meet the Challenge of Our Times?

The heart of an educational program is made up of the learning experiences of the students. What they do, what they think about, how they think, what they read, what they say and write, what they feel—these are the things which determine what they learn. In the simplest sense, what the student does is what he learns. Since effective learning depends on what the student is thinking, feeling and doing, what the teacher does is significant only insofar as it influences the behavior of the student. The teacher cannot learn for the student. The teacher can, however, set the stage and shift the scenes in such a way that a good environment for learning is created. The scientific base upon which artistic applications can be made in appraising the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process includes such criteria as (a) opportunity to practice the behaviors and deal with the content the learner needs to learn, (b) satisfaction, (c) meaningfulness, (d) variety, (e) relationship to the learner's own purposes, and (f) practicability. Earl Kelley, in "The Road We Must Take," graphically illustrates implications for the learning process of the uniqueness of each human being. His plea for a complete change of direction from "lesson-centered" to "human-centered" schools is a challenge to our planning for the future.

In thinking about ways to organize learning experiences so that each learner will achieve continuity, sequence and integration of his experiences, Rita Emlaw gives a lucid account of how the findings of curriculum research have been applied to organizing an elementary school for living and learning. Her story,

"Organizing Schools for the Future," underlines the importance of action for curriculum improvement to achieve the kind of school envisioned.

Evaluation—for Today and for the Future

The analysis of "education" reported in this issue of *Educational Leadership* is based on a conceptual framework involving (a) the identification of what children and youth need to learn to live personally satisfying and socially significant lives in a constantly changing world; (b) the selection and organization of learning experiences which enable students to learn what they need to learn; and (c) careful evaluation of the program to see how effective it has been and to what extent children and youth have learned what they need to learn. In the concluding article, Fannie Shaftel sharpens our thinking about a theory of curriculum change in which

we can draw upon the lessons learned by the social scientists working with underdeveloped areas. She clarifies the concept that realization of educational objectives is an intimate process of social change that involves reorientation of teacher perspective based upon new knowledge that is carefully worked into the culture of the school and community.

Finally, how can ASCD members use this issue of their journal in their conference activities? While each of us will have his own perceptions of how it can be useful, one thing appears certain. If we will give thought to the ideas in these articles, the problems to be discussed in our study groups will have the attention of professional persons operating at their highest level—persons who are practicing their profession as a creative art with a scientific base.

—OLE SAND, *associate professor of education, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.*

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