

Curriculum Research

Column Editor: Alexander Frazier

New Horizons for Field Research

ONE OF THE major undertakings of the Research Commission of ASCD for the coming year is to investigate for their curriculum implications some newly defined centers of concern in the related disciplines. These centers have been roughly identified by the Commission as follows:

Learning and the Learner. From many fields come new concepts of what bears on, facilitates, or interferes with learning. Class cultural patterns, emotional experience, sex roles and expectations—a study of these areas is giving us many new partial understandings of the broader context of learning that needs to be considered. Bringing these together and testing them out in school situations should be productive. Related school problems: study of school leaving, discipline, failure to learn, methods of stimulating desire to learn, etc.

Culture and Personality. There is growing recognition in several fields of a need for better understanding of the impact of modern society on personality. As the demands and conditions of our increasingly complex industrial-scientific culture, with its strong tendencies toward conformity and impersonality, are studied, they are seen to come in conflict with what we think of as the essentials of human nature. To what extent are the new social developments destructive of the democratic character as we have tried to conceive it? Is our current culture promoting its own types of personality in terms that we cannot

accept? What is the role of the school? How can we bolster the rights of the individual?

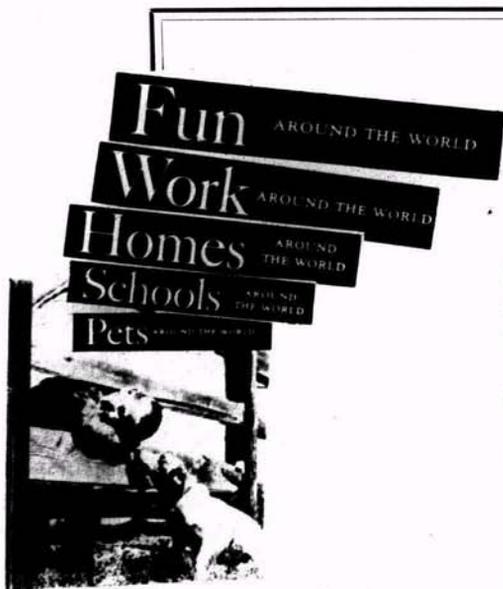
The Self-Concept. Educability depends on the self-image. The growing study of the need for development of an adequate self-concept, drawing upon many fields related to human behavior, seems to have much of importance to say to education. What kind of experiences support the child in his attempt to become a worthy person? What interferes with this attempt?

Administrative-Supervisory Structure. The bearing of certain types of school structure upon the kind of relationships needed to facilitate effective curriculum development at the local level is being studied from several viewpoints. Pulling the new findings together would help people in education broaden their understanding of the area.

Theory Building. Many developments taking place in the natural sciences seem to be relevant to the problem of shaping a more adequate system of theory building in curriculum.

New Knowledge. The rapid development of knowledge in many related sciences is providing numerous new concepts, understandings, and values. Which of these are worthy of inclusion in the curriculum of the modern school? How can we keep abreast of current thought? How are the new needs to be determined?

Members of the Research Commission believe that a review of the recent find-



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ings around these centers of concern, pointed up for their educational implications, will do much to stimulate the Association membership to look to new horizons in field research.

Consequently, this year each succeeding issue of "Curriculum Research" will contain a preliminary analysis of one of the six centers, prepared by a member, past or present, of the Research Commission.

Plans are also being made to use these statements as a basis for some sort of further "think-through," perhaps built into the Seattle conference, that would result in their fuller development. Eventually, if they warrant it, the Commission might propose the issuance of the expanded statements as an Association bulletin.

Behind our thinking lies the conviction that the ASCD membership is increasingly concerned about other

values of research than those inherent in the process. Publication of the 1957 Yearbook, *Research for Curriculum Improvement*, seems to mark a climax in the Association's long and rewarding effort at self-education in research techniques and roles. With growing frequency, there are expressions from the field that reveal personal and professional commitment to action research as a way of working—but that then ask, "Research on what? Toward what ends?"

It is this note or tone of inquiry that contributors to "Curriculum Research" will have in mind in the issues of this column that will follow.

—ALEXANDER FRAZIER, *assistant superintendent for educational services, Phoenix Union High Schools and Phoenix College District, Phoenix, Arizona; and chairman, ASCD Research Commission.*

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