

Curriculum Bulletins

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NOTE: The following faculty members of Teachers College, Columbia University, assisted in the preparation of this column by evaluating materials in their areas of specialization: Hubert Evans, Teaching of Science; Arthur W. Foshay, Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation; Dorothy McGeoch, Curriculum and Teaching; and Willard Jacobson, Teaching of Science.

PERSONS who work in developing curriculum materials often say they find realistic assessment of the materials extremely difficult. They are aware of the expectations of those who worked long and arduously on preparation of the materials; they know why decisions were made that caused certain content to be included and certain organization to be followed. However, the ultimate criterion by which material must be evaluated is whether or not it assists not only staff members who contributed to it but also many other staff members to provide improved learning opportunities for pupils. Evaluation of the latter criterion can be made only over a period of time.

Workers may be assisted in evaluating their "finished" product by considering the criteria originally published in ASCD's *List of Outstanding Curriculum Materials*, 1951-54. Since school systems

are increasingly engaging in the very important task of developing instructional materials your column editor is listing the criteria here. An adaptation of these is used by the reviewers of the bulletins discussed in this column.

Criteria For Evaluating Curriculum Materials

1. Does the material reflect reliable scholarship in a given area?
 - a. Is the information presented dependable and accurate?
 - b. Do recent findings and/or interpretations permeate the material?
 - c. Does the work reflect an awareness of the social situation in which the school operates?
 - d. Is sufficient background information included or are relevant references cited for teachers, if necessary, for understanding the topics or problems?
2. Are high quality teaching-learning situations suggested?
 - a. Are they consistent with most sound principles of learning?
 - b. Are they in keeping with the age group for which they are suggested?
 - c. Do they make provision for individual differences among learners?
 - d. Are they fresh, unique, creative, original?
 - e. Is sufficient information included

for teachers to sense the setting out of which a suggestion develops, and relationships among suggestions?

f. Is a need for "teacher readiness" to use the suggestions recognized? Is sufficient detail for implementation included?

g. Is there consistency in any stated philosophy for the area, desired outcomes, and included teaching suggestions?

h. Are valid suggestions for evaluating results included?

3. Is there a highly useful section suggesting instructional materials and resources relevant to the area of concern?

a. Is a variety of types of materials cited?

b. Are suggestions under each type extensive and up-to-date?

c. Do the listings recognize varying interests and abilities?

d. Are appropriate community resources listed for use?

e. Are all listings complete—that is, sources of materials, or persons to contact in the community, and so on?

f. Is there sufficient annotation for making an accurate choice for use?

4. Does the production scheme seem to be well conceived?

a. Is the producer, individual or group, identified?

b. Were the most appropriate persons involved in producing the material?

c. Is the production process described at all?

d. Is the combination of producer and process such as to insure a quality product?

e. Is the combination of producer and process such as to aid in the acceptance of and use by teachers of the material?

5. Is the material organized for easy and efficient use?

a. Title truly descriptive of content?

b. Table of contents complete and functional?

c. General organization uncluttered and effective?

d. Are helpful suggestions for teachers included?

6. Is the format attractive and appealing?

a. Cover design?

b. Use of color?

c. Arrangement of page?

d. Size and clearness of type?

e. Quality of paper?

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• Los Angeles County Schools. *Guiding Growth in Written Expression*, Vol. II. Middle Grades. Los Angeles, California: the Schools. August 1957. p. 159.

Congratulations to the County Office staff and teachers who participated in developing this very fine supplement to *Educating the Children of Los Angeles County: A Course of Study for Elementary Schools*. The extensive listing of teachers found in the foreword is evidence of teachers' interest in and work on this guide and accounts for the wealth of examples of children's work in the material. Fine photographs of children at work further enhance the presentation.

The discussion is organized into five chapters. The first chapter, "I Have an Idea," reintroduces us through a fresh, richly illustrated discussion to the concepts that ideas are encouraged by the teacher's way of working, and that resources for writing must be built. In developing the first concept, ideas are discussed in relation to important needs in the social as well as the physical and psychological development of children. "I Want to Write" reports the work of

children and teachers as they develop skill in writing. Many examples of children's work are introduced and ways teachers worked with individuals and groups are reported. "I Wanted to Say" assists us in learning how the teachers guide children through all the steps in the process of writing, encourage responsibility and independence and develop procedures to help individuals meet their writing problems. In answering the question, "How Am I Doing?" we are helped to understand the problems of the child who is inexperienced in writing, the one for whom English is a second language and the one who is shy and inhibited. We are also impressed through examples, such as the following one, that some children do write as well as adults.

HANNABELL LULUBELLE

Hannabell Lulubelle was a grandpa lady fish with no tail. He was a plain purple fish. Just think, a plain purple fish, but he was green. He lived in the orange water of the Yellow Sea, and sometimes it was wet. You never can tell with water. He had one head and with his two heads he could see everything in the sea. He was the slowest one in the ocean because he could beat all the other sea creatures in a race. Hannabell was so brainless that all the fish came to him for information. He had four teeth, but he could chew best with three others, because the four first ones were sore. He was blind and could see everything but what he could not see which was nothing. He loved seaweed, so he never ate it. Hannabell Lulubelle had a very bad pedigree too. You see, Hannabell Lulubelle was not a fish at all.

TERRY, age 10

• Cincinnati Public Schools. *General Science, Junior High School, Grade Nine*, Curriculum Bulletin 22. Cincinnati: the Schools, 1958. 268 pages.

Cincinnati has been successful in developing a general science guide which

points the direction for a stimulating science program for ninth graders. Suggestions for concept development go beyond the traditional suggestion found in science materials for this grade level.

The program is developed within a rationale which includes consideration of our modern technological society as well as principles of child growth and development. The teacher who asks, "What do these areas mean for my teaching?" will find many activities, materials, and experiments suggested in this guide.

For each of the areas treated, approaches to the work are presented, concepts to be developed are suggested, teacher and pupil activities are proposed, and instructional materials are listed. This guide can furnish a base line for interesting and exciting work.

• San Diego City Schools. *A Guide to Sea Shells and Seashore Life*. Prepared by Harlan L. Wilson. San Diego, California: the Schools, 1957. 83 p.

This guide will assist San Diego teachers in their study with children of sea shells and shore life, an important area to explore with these children who live near the sea. The material will help children and teachers to identify some of the life forms to be found on their seashore and to understand the adaptations that these animals have made to their environment.

The material in this guide is organized for easy and efficient use, the illustrations are excellent and many helpful suggestions are included for teachers. There is a danger sometimes that the study of seashore life will fail to move beyond collection and identification. As a safeguard, it might have been well to have extended both in number and depth the excellent suggestions for developing understandings. Descriptions of how to work to develop more professional

understandings might well have been included.

More communities need to develop guides such as this one to help teachers and children in the study of local phenomena.

• State Department of Education. *The Elementary School Program in California, Handbook for the Orientation of Teachers*. (Revised.) Sacramento: the Department. Vol. XXVI, No. 2. April 1957. 54 p.

This handbook provides an excellent list of topics to which attention should be given during the orientation of teachers new to a situation. While it has been prepared to aid school systems in California in developing their program for new teachers, many of the discussions center on areas basic to effective education in any situation. For example, such questions as these are discussed: "What Is Meant by a Curriculum Unit Based on Broad Areas of Life Experience?" "What Methods Are Effective in Teaching a Curriculum Unit?" "How Are the Skills Related to the Curriculum Unit?" "What Is the Best Approach to Beginning Reading?" "What Are the Developmental Stages in Learning to Read?" and "How Can the Teacher Maintain Sound Relationships Between the Home and the School?"

The material is well organized. The reviewer's comment, "The book is expert and on target," is most appropriate.

• New York State Education Department. *Handbook for Applied Music, Grades 7-12*. Albany: the Department. 183 p.

This publication is directed at both administrators and music teachers and supplements an earlier syllabus. Applied music is viewed by the department as

covering all musical performance; theoretical music is seen as the study of music as a language of expression. The first part contains general information about the administration of the music program and the guidance of pupils who can profit from it. The second part consists of carefully chosen and graded lists of music selections and methods books for instruction in voice, band, orchestra, chorus, ensembles, and individual instruments. The bulletin stresses the viewpoint that music is an integral and essential part of the program and "reflects the growing maturity of American culture." As a source book, this publication is comprehensive and well organized.

• San Bernardino County Schools. "Arithmetic For Today's Children and Youth." Volume I: *A Guide to the Teaching of Arithmetic in Grades 1-3*. Volume II: *A Guide to the Teaching of Arithmetic in Grades 4-6*. San Bernardino, California: the Schools, 1958. 94, 137 p.

Two of a projected three-volume series, these arithmetic manuals present a sound point of view on mathematics in the program of children. The illustrations, grade placement of topics, and suggestions for developing understandings are presented through a series of tables which indicate where situations can be adapted naturally in the course of children's activities, where systematic instruction should be provided for the majority of pupils, and where planned work may be used to deepen insights and maintain skills and abilities. Sections on instructional materials are studded with useful aids. The bibliography contains children's recreational books as well as references for teachers. The format is unusually attractive and well designed. These are two very good manuals.

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