

selves and their contribution to continued self understanding both of learners and teachers.

These words are written under the assumption that laymen and educators want to improve the educational opportunities of children. Learners at all levels have struggled to do this under adverse conditions. The impetus must come from the interested adults. The crucial issue is in the direction and a program to support it. The movement toward mature

people through activities that help them develop integrative continuity by their life process seems to offer more fruitful possibilities for the future than regression to earlier purposes and practices. The hope is not for today but for always. The hope becomes a reality not through words, but through deeds.

—L. THOMAS HOPKINS, *emeritus professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.*

### Cooperative Action for Curriculum Improvement

ASCD members have had several reports recently on CAPCI—the organization's program adopted in Seattle last March, to focus and intensify our leadership activities for curriculum improvement. Although some aspects of the program are still in the planning stages, enough interest and activity may already be discerned to justify some predictions of possible outcomes. From our knowledge of the aspirations of those who have planned and participated in the program to date, the following "hunches" are suggested as to directions in which CAPCI may move in the next few years.

*State, regional, and local units will develop varied projects directly related to the central purpose of curriculum improvement.* The "Curriculum News" column of *Educational Leadership* and the *News Exchange* have cited many of the conferences and other activities of ASCD units this year planned in relation to CAPCI. In most cases these activities have been related to one of the three problem areas proposed for emphasis in Seattle: reaching toward a balanced curriculum, providing for individual differences, and evaluation of learning. Such comprehensive and continuing concerns

of ASCD members may be expected to stay in the forefront of the programs of ASCD units.

At the Cincinnati meeting unit presidents and other representatives will have opportunity to share their experiences of the past year and their plans for the future. We may expect increasing interest in: the organization of local ASCD units in metropolitan areas and colleges; state unit meetings of three or more days in length; action programs in state units involving cooperation with other organizations, organization of area conferences and institutes within states, stimulation and perhaps sponsorship of research, and preparation of state ASCD publications, and interchange of personnel and programs between state units.

*State, regional, and local ASCD units will also study their roles in relation to other state groups working for curriculum improvement.* In some states the ASCD group may become a sounding board, or another channel of communication, or a liaison agency, as well as an action group. The unique, cross-sectional membership of ASCD makes such functions possible and highly effective.

ASCD units may also cooperate with

other vigorous and well-established groups in carrying on action programs. Our groups may well become the most dynamic allies of state education associations, state departments of education, or state citizens' commissions in implementing educational improvement programs. In some situations ASCD units may spark the initiation of such programs.

*ASCD commissions, committees, and staff members will develop improved methods of communicating with the membership and other groups.* Much of ASCD's pioneering in publications, conferences, and institutes has been achieved through the hard, sometimes sacrificial work of its committees, commissions, and staff members. Our splendid publications and our pace-setting conference arrangements have been considered exemplary by many organizations. We may safely predict that the impetus of CAPCI will stimulate present ASCD groups to blaze new trails. New pamphlets on CAPCI-related topics are already in prospect. Unusual features in an outstanding journal may be created. Different plans for clinics will be tried out in Cincinnati. Discussions continue about an innovation in conference procedure for 1960. More national, regional, and state institutes may be expected.

The forces which have kept ASCD at work on the growing edge of organizational development cannot be clearly identified. Undoubtedly, however, the challenge of urgent, continuing needs to improve the curriculum has been potent. These growing needs may be expected to keep us creative. One guess—almost an expectation—for the future, is the development of an ASCD stockpile of case studies of curriculum improvement, especially in regard to provisions for individualization of the curriculum.

The recent survey may well be a first step towards development of recorded, perhaps even filmed, descriptions of potential value to curriculum planners.

*Curriculum individualization will be the central theme of a growing body of experimentation and research.* ASCD can take no unique responsibility for the current interest in curriculum provisions for individual children and youth. When the CAPCI Committee looked for an umbrella to cover the major curriculum concerns of 1958, "curriculum individualization" seemed the natural choice. Many recent movements—education for the gifted, stimulation for the underachiever, expansion of guidance services, child study, renewed consideration of grouping and pupil progress policies, multiple programs and tracks in the secondary schools—all these and others seemed to be only aspects of the central concern for individualization.

Curriculum development has been moving in this direction, in fact, throughout its American history. Despite lags, spurts, and reversals, the trend has clearly been from curriculum uniformity to diversity. Our organization, representing curriculum development at every level and in every type of school situation, is uniquely qualified to give leadership in this movement.

The CAPCI survey of ASCD members to identify local provisions for individual differences has yielded many interesting examples of curriculum individualization. Reports and follow-ups of this survey may be expected to assist further experimentation. The commissions and committees concerned will undoubtedly encourage and assist the development of related research projects. The two research institutes in 1958 on learning, the 1959 Yearbook, *Learning and the Teacher*, and other publications on re-

lated topics, have already given help on many concerns about the relation of the individual and the curriculum.

*The number of persons actively involved in ASCD's activities will increase.* For some years ASCD planning groups have debated whether the organization should seek substantial increase in its membership. The decision to focus our efforts on leadership in cooperative action for curriculum improvement carries with it an anticipation of involvement of more people. Curriculum improvement in the United States is a concern of a far larger number of professional persons than of those who now belong to ASCD. Granted that this one organization will never have all curriculum workers on its roster, we can certainly seek the active involvement of more of them. Active involvement generally means membership—to receive ASCD publications, to attend ASCD local, state, regional, and national meetings, to participate in the projects, and to share in the elections and business of the Association.

Already some growth of membership is occurring. The national office and state units will surely continue to canvass membership possibilities among such professional groups as: supervisors and directors of instruction; curriculum directors and coordinators; principals and superintendents; classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools who have specific interests in improving curriculum and instruction; faculties of demonstration and laboratory schools; college faculty members, especially in departments of education; graduate students in curriculum and supervision; and specialists in the teaching-learning aids.

Active ASCD involvement will mean for many persons improved skills in supervision and curriculum develop-

ment. For one thing, ASCD members may advance their knowledge and insights by reading ASCD publications and attending ASCD conferences. For another, teacher education institutions may well identify their role in CAPCI as the development of improved training programs for instructional leaders. Such programs might become central in research for curriculum improvement.

*ASCD will seek greater cooperation with other national organizations interested in curriculum improvement.* Curriculum workers are frequently perplexed by the duplicating and sometimes conflicting programs of various national organizations, and their subsidiary units, interested in curriculum and instruction. The ASCD Executive Committee, as well as the CAPCI Committee, has devoted much attention to this problem. No miracles are expected, but it is hoped that continued efforts will be rewarding. Presently these efforts are in the form of joint committees with several organizations, responsible for identifying matters of mutual interest.

Although the writer gratefully acknowledges suggestions for this editorial from other CAPCI Committee members, the foregoing statements should be regarded as merely his personal point of view regarding future ASCD leadership in cooperative action for curriculum improvement. However, if this point of view seems a bit hopeful, even wishful, it should be recalled that CAPCI originated in the hopes and wishes of many ASCD'ers that curriculum excellence might become available for *each* American child and youth.

—WILLIAM M. ALEXANDER, *professor of education, George Peabody College for Teachers; and president-elect, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.*

Copyright © 1959 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.