

Curriculum Developments

Column Editor: Arthur Hoppe

A Coordinated Education Center

Frick to Schenley to Pitt! Or is it Falk to Schenley to Pitt? A new triple play combination is developing in educational circles. Frick and Falk are elementary schools, Schenley is secondary, and Pitt is, of course, the University of Pittsburgh.

These schools, all located in Pittsburgh, represent the highly synchronized combination that will demonstrate the major thesis of the Coordinated Education Center. The thesis is that closer *collaboration* among educators at the *several* levels could produce instructional programs that would minimize gaps, duplications and rigid lock steps, and thereby save students at least two years in moving from grade one through a professional school in the university.

The origin of the Coordinated Education Center was a result of the work of the (Upper Ohio Valley) Regional Commission on Educational Coordination. The C.E.C. was established last year jointly by the Pittsburgh Board of Education and the University. Major financial aid was secured from the Ford Foundation and from the Buhl Foundation of Pittsburgh, but additional help for specific projects was provided by several other agencies.

Curriculum committees involving all levels of instruction have been at work producing experimental courses in bio-

logy, English, French, mathematics, and social studies. Members of the committees have been sent to national conferences and various workshops to develop new ideas. Special attention has been given to extensive readings, team teaching, the language laboratory, teaching aids (including television), manipulative science laboratory skills, and humanistic values. Able students at all levels have already been permitted to progress in one or several subject areas at their own rates, without fixed age or time requirements. At the same time, the principal parties involved are sensitive to and guard against possible social or emotional maladjustments among the students.

The total program of C.E.C. is under direction of J. Steele Grow, Jr., with offices at the University of Pittsburgh. Other programs of similar nature are being encouraged in nearby areas. It appears that this experimentation is being pursued with a rare combination of caution and daring, in terms of planning, procedures, materials and resources. Exciting results of a somewhat preliminary nature have already been identified. Those who are much concerned about new methods and arrangements in education designed to facilitate progress of students at all levels will want to study further the work of the Coordinated Education Center.

Curriculum Planning and Development

Curriculum workers will find much use for the June 1960 issue of the *Review of Educational Research*. This number is devoted entirely to "Curriculum Planning and Development."¹ Under the chairmanship of John Goodlad, the committee preparing this volume had no intention of supplying ready answers to curriculum problems, but rather to indicate the state of affairs.

Here is an exhaustive listing of curriculum research studies which have appeared since the June 1957 issue of the journal on this same topic. The studies were organized under five main topics: (a) Curriculum: the State of the Field, (b) Forces Influencing Curriculum, (c) Components of the Curriculum, (d) Teaching, and (e) Administrative Structure and Processes in Curriculum. The careful student of curriculum will find in this issue many evidences of the urgent need for constructs and hypotheses, for experimentation and testing, for scholarly research to establish a firmer base for curriculum planning and development.

A "Spelling Laboratory"

The Science Research Associates, of Chicago, have developed a spelling "learning machine" programmed for use in the *seventh grade*. The Spelling Laboratory was designed by Don H. Parker for pupils with spelling abilities ranging from the sixth through the ninth grade. It consists of 81 Learning Wheels organized into 10 levels of difficulty, with each wheel having a different rule of spelling and 40 words. Homonyms and words which do not follow rules are in-

¹ Published by the American Educational Research Association, NEA, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. \$2.00 per copy.

cluded in two separate levels. Diagnostic and Level Check Tests enable students to spot difficulties and measure progress. As this is being written, a second spelling laboratory, for sixth graders, is being designed.

Curriculum Studies Group

Toward the close of last year, the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey, established a "Curriculum Studies Group," whose central purpose is to help educators find answers to curriculum questions. Wherever matters of content or presentation need to be tested and evaluated, this group can bring to bear the full resources of ETS. The group has been actively engaged in many projects, especially in science and mathematics, assisting with test development, research design and data analyses. Frederick Ferris, Jr., is director of the group.

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Surely one of the best things that ever happened in curriculum is the community school idea. Among other things it makes excellent provision for continuity: mainly in the nature of learning experiences as these originate in the daily community lives of learners, gain form and direction in school, remove to the community again for resources, back to the school for analysis and testing of ideas, and then to the community for final action or application. Furthermore, the community school sets no age barriers (and few of any other kind) against those who want to continue to study and learn. Drop-outs may return. Veterans of military service may return. Parents and lay people in general are welcomed back to school.

These are but two qualities of the community school. Where such conditions obtain, it must be clear that deliberate, organized learning and everyday affairs of community living are inextricably bound together into one continuous stream of life. This lends meaning and value to both learning and living.

The State of Michigan in general and Flint in particular present practical illustrations of the community school idea in operation. With positive encouragement from the State Department of Public Instruction, this movement has been under way in Michigan since the 1930's. Conspicuous leadership and many school systems are involved. Much of the philosophy and many of the projects and practices developed by community schools are reported in a 21-page publication, *Developing Community Schools in Michigan*, by the Community School Committee of the Michigan Association of School Administrators.²

² Published by the State Department of Public Instruction, Lansing, Michigan.

A group of educators in Michigan developed one of the latest publications of ASCD, entitled *The Self-Contained Classroom*.³ One of the central themes of the booklet is that curricular organization of the self-contained classroom facilitates continuity in planning and in the learning experiences of youngsters. Both elementary and junior high levels receive attention in this timely work. Ideas advanced here should give pause to those who feel that highly specialized classes offer the only road to excellence.

New Bulletins

Madison Public Schools. *Language Arts, Grades Seven Through Twelve, A Guide for the Teaching of Communication Skills*. Madison, Wisconsin: the Schools, Curriculum Department. Revised 1959. 61 p. (\$2.00)

This is a remarkable bulletin, one of the best available today. Virtually every language arts teacher in Madison had a part in producing it, although the major work was done by a committee of about thirty and the writing by seven persons. It is based on sound theory and the best that could be learned from research. Short pieces of meaningful writing produced more frequently are emphasized over longer compositions. Grammar is considered as a functional facet of meaning, not as an end in itself.

The chief concern of the producers of this guide was *continuity* of growth through development of skills in communication. Although the language is succinct, the guide is comprehensive and well organized. Many different ideas and approaches, many different materials and

³ Edited by Edith Roach Snyder. Available for \$1.25 per copy. Order from ASCD, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

resources are presented to meet the needs and interests of a wide variety of students and teachers. The committee divided the essential elements of grammar and usage into groups labeled basic, average, and superior. The many devices and techniques used are extremely practical for both teachers and students. The guide should prove to be a great reservoir of help to teachers of communication.

Madison Public Schools. *Evaluating, Measuring, Improving Written Expression, Grades Six through Twelve*. Madison, Wisconsin: the Schools, Curriculum Department, 1959, 104 p. (\$3.00)¹

The grading of compositions is a task that has plagued English teachers for generations. In an effort to reduce the problem, some 500 Madison teachers col-

¹The column editor was assisted by his colleague, Dr. Ingrid Strom, in the appraisal of the English bulletins.

lected impromptu compositions from 18,000 students and graded them high, average, or low. The evaluations were based on definite standards and commonly accepted characteristics of good essays. Three important elements were weighted thus: quality of thought, 50 percent; style, 30 percent; conventions, 20 percent. Careful screening and editorial work resulted in the selections incorporated in this publication.

Themes rated high, average, and low represent the work of seventh and eighth graders, but for each of the grades nine through twelve, compositions of high, average, and low quality are included for accelerated, normal, and low ability students—making nine themes per grade. Critical evaluative statements made by the teachers appear after the close of each composition. Additional sample paragraphs are rated similarly for grades six through ten. The final section of the



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bulletin summarizes guide lines for evaluating and helping pupils improve their compositions. With these rated samples and suggestions arranged by grade, there should be much of value in this guide for every English teacher concerned with improving the writing of his students.

Shoreline School District. *Phonics, and Other Word Recognition Techniques*. Seattle, Washington: Shoreline School District No. 412, Revised 1960, 142 p.⁵

This resource bulletin for elementary grades is a revision of the first edition which appeared in 1955. The information it contains is accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date. Many appropriate background materials and references are cited.

Outlines for reading levels from one to six are described, together with explicit directions for making sounds properly, useful rules and phonics tests. An elaborate section is given over to games and techniques for developing word recognition skills.

Both theory and practice are well presented in this guide. The many suggestions for teaching activities and the conspicuous thoroughness of its preparation should enhance the value of this resource bulletin for reading specialists and for classroom teachers alike.

Los Angeles City Schools. *B8 Social Studies: an Instructional Guide*, Publication No. SC-571. Los Angeles: the Schools, Division of Instructional Services, 1959, 144 p.⁶

In clear and precise form, this guide presents three major units for eighth graders: (a) "How Free Men Govern

⁵ Dr. Leo Fay, Indiana University, assisted in the appraisal of this bulletin.

⁶ Dr. Jack Lunstrum, Indiana University, assisted in the appraisal of this bulletin.

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Themselves," (b) "The American Frontier," and (c) "Causes and Results of the Civil War."

The units in the guide are well developed, with many creative suggestions for learning experiences, enrichment activities, instructional materials and evaluation. More than that, the purposes of this study are spelled out in detail; the section on current affairs presents many practical suggestions for relating current topics to historical background; and commendable effort is made to encourage teachers to exercise intellectual freedom in the discussion of controversial issues. The whole approach stresses the development of important intellectual skills. This guide is a very attractive and highly useful contribution to the better materials now available in social studies.

—ARTHUR HOPPE, *Associate Professor of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

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