

# Curriculum Developments

Column Editor: Arthur Hoppe

## Study of Library Methods

Early this year the Ford Foundation made a grant of \$8 million to the Council on Library Services, an independent organization in Washington, D. C., for research to improve library service and procedures. Photographic and electronic techniques are being considered as aids for dealing with the mushrooming collections of research reports. Improved methods of storing and retrieving research information are also being sought.

Results already noted include improvements in testing and standardizing library materials, equipment and systems; mechanical devices for book labeling and catalogue reproduction; preservation of paper, and improved book bindings. The Council is also concerned with "cataloguing-in-source" and with the development of basic reading lists particularly for small academic libraries. In an October conference in Paris, it is hoped that a standard system of cataloguing may be accepted internationally.

## Curriculum A Major Concern

For some time the Council of Chief State School Officers has had a Study Commission working on problems of curriculum and research. Besides this, the Council has been studying the responsibilities of state departments of

education in such areas as library services, nursery school and kindergarten, and education of the gifted. Preliminary reports were presented at the 1960 meeting in Little Rock; final reports will be given at a workshop planned for October 29 to November 8, 1961, in St. Paul.

The Council sponsored publication two years ago of a *Purchase Guide*, some 43,000 copies of which have been in use in connection with National Defense Education Act projects. This year, a 64-page Supplement was developed and again 43,000 free copies were distributed to school systems throughout the nation. Both the *Purchase Guide* and the Supplement describe new materials, equipment, content and emphases in the sciences, mathematics and modern languages.

## Reward for Excellence

Many educators doubt that the best answers to educational problems rest with homogeneous grouping, and most would deny that financial success is the best evidence of desirable learning. Yet the record of last year's graduates of Benjamin Franklin High School, New Orleans, may give us pause. Thirty-seven students were granted over \$100,000 in scholarships, and declined an additional \$40,000 in awards. Of the 62 total graduates, 61 have entered college and one has joined the Ballet Russe in New York.

In 1957, Benjamin Franklin High opened to enroll only students of demonstrated exceptional academic ability.

#### New Services

Harry A. Passow; Denton J. Brooks, Jr.; and staff. *A Guide for Rating Provisions for the Gifted*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1960. 4 p. Guide and 2 p. Manual. (Minimum order 5 at 25 cents each)

Here is perhaps the first practical gauge for appraising the adequacy of a school's provision for its talented students. It is *not* designed to measure degree of giftedness or specific abilities among youngsters; rather, it is meant to be an evaluative guide against which to judge school policies and practices as these affect gifted students. From this a faculty may decide how adequate the provisions are and where they might take hold to effect further improvements. The instrument was carefully developed and provides help in dealing more effectively with talented youth in school.

Illinois ASCD. *Practical Research Projects*, 1960. 56 p. (\$1.25)<sup>1</sup>

This publication reports briefly various action research projects carried on by classroom teachers in Illinois—as activities of the State ASCD, and in support of the continuing concern for action research by the national ASCD. Fred Barnes, of the University of Illinois, has been the research consultant for these studies. The researches tend to emphasize that teachers' problems can be studied in practical ways to uncover practical solutions. Participants were led to

<sup>1</sup> Order from Mrs. Nellie J. Moline, Treasurer (1960-61) of Illinois ASCD, Court House, Bloomington, Illinois.

see that research is not necessarily the highly theoretical, complex or fearful activity it is often held to be. The seven projects reported all happen to be in the area of language arts, but there are hints of intrigue and excitement which will appeal to readers regardless of the areas of their interests. The basic research procedures and the necessary tools and resources are briefly and clearly described. The Illinois ASCD may well be proud of this tangible evidence of its earnest efforts toward curriculum improvement.

State of Nevada School Survey Committee. *Public Education in Nevada—A Further Look*. Laramie: University of Wyoming, Division of Adult Education and Community Service, 1960. 125 p. (\$1.50)

The legislature of Nevada authorized a public school survey in 1959. The

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Survey Committee engaged Dean Harlan Bryant and a professional team from the University of Wyoming to conduct the survey, with the Nevada Committee providing direction, support and review of the proposed report.

The procedures employed were thorough and comprehensive. As indicated in the foreword (p. 5) of the report, the survey team:

- (1) visited every county school system including every attendance center with the exception of a few isolated rural schools;
- (2) observed educational environment, practices, and facilities;
- (3) conferred with administrators, teachers, pupils and citizens;
- (4) collected materials pertaining to daily programs, course offerings, operational procedures, reports of studies, budget documents, annual reports, etc.; and
- (5) analyzed questionnaires and opinionnaires filled out by teachers, administrators, pupils, and citizens.

The survey took five months and was concerned primarily with finance, personnel, business management and curriculum.

The findings of the survey team are presented clearly with the aid of many tables and figures. Numerous specific recommendations appear at the close of each section. Since virtually everyone concerned had opportunities to participate in this study, it is almost certain that major efforts will be made to implement suggested improvements throughout the entire fabric of education in Nevada. Happily, the children will be the primary benefactors.

Not all survey reports make very stimulating reading. This one does. Not all survey reports are replete with good ideas relating to principles, procedures and presentation. This one is. Not all surveys evoke the kinds of action that represent clear improvements in the educational scene. This one surely will.

National Aviation Education Council and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction. *Teaching Guide for the Earth and Space Science Course*. Washington, D. C.: the Council, 1959. 106 p. (\$1.00)

*Citation of Honor* to Dr. Charles H. Boehm, who as Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, has made an outstanding contribution to space age education by establishing in the junior high schools of Pennsylvania, the nation's first comprehensive course of study in aerospace science—1960.

Thus reads the citation awarded by the Air Force Association. This bulletin is the basic teaching aid for that course.

This guide was written by a Pennsylvania teacher committee with the technical assistance of astronomers, geologists and oceanographers. It is organized into four main sections: (a) the Changing Earth, (b) the Earth in Space, (c) Weather and Climate, and (d) the Oceans. Each section includes many topics, understandings and suggestions for teachers. There are many references and also instructions for building helpful teaching aids.

#### New Curriculum Bulletins

Alameda (California) Unified School District. *Techniques and Procedures for Teaching Reading, Grades 1-6*. Alameda: the District, Educational Services, Department of Instruction, 1960. 83 p.

Elementary teachers will find this an excellent resource for *word analysis* in the reading process. Reading specialists would consider the title of this bulletin misleading, since other important facets of the complex activity of reading are but briefly mentioned. Nevertheless, the information is accurate, the approach

sound, the background material extensive. The guide is replete with specific suggestions and many word lists. It should be very useful in helping children learn to read.

Madison (Wisconsin) Public Schools. *Guide for Teaching Science, Kindergarten-Grade Six*. Madison: the Schools, Curriculum Department, 1960. 152 p. (\$3.00)

A large curriculum committee used ideas from about 350 classroom teachers in the preparation of this bulletin. It offers a compact course of study for seven grade levels and is organized around: (a) concepts to be developed, (b) expectancies and suggested problems, (c) suggested activities and correlated experiences and (d) resource helps. General statements of purpose, method and evaluation appear in the introduction. The sections that follow are in different colors, making an attractive and functionally useful guide. In the hands of creative teachers, the bulletin allows for a great deal of flexibility.

Los Angeles City Schools. *Instructional Guide: Mexico* (Social Studies Grade Six). Los Angeles: the Schools, Division of Instructional Services, Publication No. EC-202, 1959. 240 p.

Resourceful teachers will find in this guide much help in teaching and learning about Mexico. Authenticity and accuracy of information were assured by the cooperation of diplomatic and government agencies, both American and Mexican, particularly the Mexican Consulate General.

As indicated in the foreword, "The publication suggests learning experiences, materials and ideas which will help the teacher to plan with the children a program which will lead to an understanding and appreciation of the

people of Mexico as well as of the social, economic and cultural background of the large segment of our population which is of Mexican-American ancestry." This it does with thoroughness and with sensitivity for human factors. The bulletin is very well organized, attractively presented, and easy to use.

Colorado State Department of Education. *Kindergarten Guidebook*. Denver: the Department, Office of Instructional Services, 1960. 170 p. (\$1.25)

Many teachers and many committees worked with consultants or representatives from the United States Office of Education, the State Department of Education and state branches of the Association for Childhood Education International to produce an excellent guide for kindergarten experiences. Careful consideration was given to the nature of the child, the qualities of good teachers, the learning environment, and the daily schedule. Curriculum areas are treated comprehensively under two large divisions: the natural and social sciences and the creative arts.

This is a bulletin of high quality. The format is interesting, the organization is clear and the scholarship sound. The guide contains a variety of suggestions for experiences, procedures and resources. It should prove of great value to kindergarten teachers in Colorado and highly suggestive to those in other states.

*Note:* The column editor was assisted in the appraisal of some of the bulletins by various colleagues at Indiana University: A. L. Butler in kindergarten, Maxine Dunfee in elementary science and social studies, and Leo Fay in reading.

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

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