

## A District Plans for Cross-Cultural Education

IN 1958, the staff of the Palo Alto Unified School District proposed to launch a new program. This program was designed to develop more effectively an understanding of the cultures and problems of other countries of the world. It would attempt to meet the challenge of developing in youth a greater awareness of problems faced by our country in world affairs. More specifically, it would attempt to resolve, in part, the problem of vitalizing areas of the curriculum which assume responsibility for teaching about those parts of the world beyond the borders of the United States.

Extensive explorations were made with interested faculty members in the various schools at Stanford University, with citizens and with colleagues. How could the social sciences be vitalized? What could be done, through in-service education, to increase the communication skills of language teachers? How could we develop greater understanding of the cultures and problems of other countries of the world in a continuing program, K-12? How could we develop better materials for our instructional materials center? How could we involve the community in the growth process?

The program developed has four phases. The first of these was initiated in the fall of 1960, and the second is to be

instituted in the spring of 1961. Basically, the phases are as follows:

1. A lecture seminar series, during the first year, centered in world understanding, with sessions available to teachers, students, parents and other citizens and directed at wide community impact

2. A program, during the second year, of intensive preparation for the overseas experience for eight to ten teachers

3. A program, during the third year, of special travel study leaves that will involve sending a team of selected teachers to another country to live, and to learn at firsthand the culture of that country and the surrounding area

4. Phase four, lasting for several years following the overseas experience, will involve inserting the new ideas gained abroad into the Palo Alto School District curriculum.

A considerable amount of enthusiasm for the program has already developed within the district. Some 700 to 1000 citizens, students and teachers have participated in each of the six lecture-seminars held to date. Some of the topics covered were, "Economics and Technology in a World of Change," "Problems of International Communication," "Challenge of Communism," "War and Peace," and "Population Explosion." Lectures are fol-

lowed by seminars in which panels of students and teachers explore the topics with leading authorities.

Our first team, now being selected, will spend a year, commencing June 1962, at Stanford University graduate school in Tokyo. This summer (1961), they will devote full time to the study of the Japanese language in the Asiatic Language Department of Stanford University. Next school year they will meet weekly in a graduate Comparative Education Seminar at Stanford University, concentrating on an overview of Japanese society and culture. Professors in many of the disciplines at Stanford will participate in exploring the anthropology, geography, history, political science, economics, religion-philosophy, the arts and the education of the Japanese culture. A selected group of teachers, other than the team members, will have opportunity to enroll in these seminars.

The most promising aspect of the project is our sincere belief that such a program will be within the financial reach of any school district. Even with the luxuries of the program described, the budget for this project will be \$5400 in new money for the school district. The overseas travel is covered by the difference in pay between the tenured teacher and the substitute. Foundation money is sought only to cover tuition costs of a private university for the year of preparation which would be minimal with state colleges and universities. The State Congress of Parents and Teachers is being asked to make the experimental travel grants. However, local PTA's or local teachers associations and civic clubs could well undertake this final consideration.

—JACK RAND, Assistant Superintendent in Charge of Instruction, Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, California.

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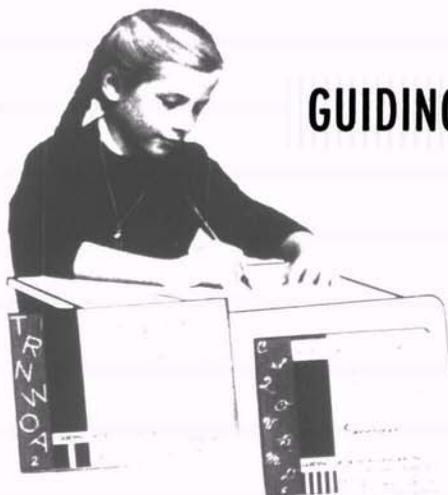
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