

Letters to the Editor

Contributors:

Arnold B. Grobman
Paul M. Mitchum

Role of Subject Matter Groups

Boulder, Colorado
November 22, 1961

Editor

Educational Leadership

Dear Sir:

I was disappointed to find the following deficiencies in the article, "Curriculum Planning by Subject Matter Groups,"¹ in the October number of *Educational Leadership*.

1. No mention of the following curriculum activities: Physical Science Study Committee, Chemical Bond Approach, Chemical Education Materials Study, School Mathematics Study Group, Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, Commission on English or Service Center for Teachers of History, although these are major examples of curriculum planning by subject matter groups in America today.

2. As examples of subject area groups, a number of non-subject matter organizations affiliated with the National Education Association and two not so affiliated are listed. Not mentioned are such notable subject matter groups as American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Institute of Biological Sciences, American Chemical Society, American

¹ See: Paul M. Mitchum, "Curriculum Planning by Subject Matter Groups," *Educational Leadership* 19: 11-15 October 1961.

Institute of Physics, Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, and others.

3. The writer of the article introduces a passage from Hurd by saying, "Hurd is cautious in evaluating the effects of curricular studies in biology." Actually the passage referred to is an evaluation by Hurd of *past* activities and I did not understand the writer to be using the quotation in that sense. I believe Hurd is optimistic about present curricular studies in biology and, as a matter of fact, is an active participant in the BSCS. Regardless, the section quoted from Hurd was from an historical discussion and was not intended as an evaluation of the contemporary scene.

4. Most significant, the article describes virtually nothing about curriculum planning by subject matter groups.

I believe it is very important for members of ASCD to participate fully in the national curriculum developments that have been excluded from mention in the article. Basic to such participation would be accurate and up-to-date knowledge about the new projects. Although the article under review missed an opportunity to present such information, I do hope that the journal will try in other ways to overcome this deficiency as it has, on occasion, in the past.

There is a very important role that ASCD and *Educational Leadership* can

play in the new and vigorous curriculum movements. Articles that make believe that the national curriculum studies do not exist cannot, of course, contribute to that role.

Sincerely,
Arnold B. Grobman
Director
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study

A Reply

Des Moines, Iowa
December 12, 1961

Editor
Educational Leadership

Dear Sir:

I had no intention of eliciting such enthusiastic dissent as I received from Mr. Grobman's letter on "Curriculum Planning by Subject Matter Groups." I did receive one favorable letter which unfortunately was sent directly to me instead of to the editor. It was two typed pages—the first sentence of which dealt with the article and the remainder with an offer from the professor who wrote the letter to come to our school system as a consultant. This, I submit, is a much gentler approach to my inadequacies.

I get the impression that the only part of the article to which Mr. Grobman takes exception is that part which follows the title—and that's the part I worked so hard on. I must say that I don't think the article is particularly significant even in its omission. It was intended to be general in nature. At that, it took me 500 more words than the editor had at first suggested as a target.

I think descriptions of such curriculum activities as the Physical Science Study Committee, the School Mathematics

Study Group, and the Biological Science Curriculum Study are more effectively presented in separate articles like the one by Hulda Grobman on "A New Curriculum in Biological Science" in the March 1961 *Educational Leadership*, p. 360-63. Please assure Mr. Grobman that I hold the subject matter study projects in high esteem and I read their literature with interest and appreciation.

Sincerely,
Paul M. Mitchum
Director of Instruction
Des Moines Public Schools

EDITOR'S NOTE: Contributors Grobman and Mitchum are reminded of the December 1959 issue of this journal on "Projects That Will Influence Instruction." Many of the projects and organizations mentioned are (or will be) referred to in the January, February, March and April 1962 issues of *Educational Leadership*.

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