

The art coordinator helps develop a program.

Agnes E. Hallam

A Meeting of Minds and Hands

IN PLANNING an effective art program for children of the elementary grades, it is important to focus on the total picture rather than on just a part at a time. This often appears difficult, since experience proves to most art coordinators that there is no single way of achieving the goals of good art education.

In working with superintendents, principals, directors of curriculum, and teachers, we find a diversified picture of interests and knowledge. For example, the teacher may wish to emphasize the "how," the principal the "what," and the superintendent the "why," of art education. These separate questions are important, and each should be given careful consideration, but somewhere along the line we need to develop a unified approach in the art program. An attempt to do this was made during the past three years in San Diego County.

The project has a dual objective: (a) to ensure that art teaching will be significant and developmental, and (b) to develop common understandings and cooperation among all concerned with the program. The San Diego County De-

partment of Education, in cooperation with art teachers from the school districts within the County and with art consultants from San Diego State College, published an *Art Course of Study* for grades kindergarten through eight. This course of study presented in sequence the teaching objectives that should be accomplished at each grade level. Unlike a teachers guide, the publication did not describe in detail teaching methods, examples of best practices, and specific materials to be used in the classroom.

The decision to limit the course of study to a sequential outline of objectives and evaluation procedures—that is, *what* should be taught, *when* it should be taught, and *why*—was carefully made. The validity of teacher requests for specific help in *how* to teach in a given art area was fully recognized, but it was felt that there were other and better ways in which this could be done than through the *Art Course of Study*.

In-Service Workshops

One of these ways was to implement the course of study through in-service art training of teachers in a special series of workshops. These workshops were planned around the five basic art activities defined in the course of study: draw-

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ing and painting; modeling; constructing; cutting, pasting, and sculpturing; and printing and stenciling. While the different art activities were presented separately in the workshops, it was emphasized that in actual classroom practice all art experiences are carried on interdependently and are related to the total school program.

Teachers who attended regular workshops conducted at the County Office received the direct help they wanted, but there were always many who could not come to the central point where the workshops were conducted. This problem was carefully considered during the planning of the workshops implementing the course of study.

It was not possible to conduct a workshop series in each school or district in the County, so a plan was devised for each school district which wished to participate in the workshop series to select a teacher representative. This representative was chosen on the basis of his enthusiasm for the art program, his ability to assimilate ideas and use them creatively, and his skill in sharing information with other teachers. As he gained knowledge and techniques from his workshop experiences, he was to bring back to the school district all levels of art help.

Administrators were involved in this planning, helping to define needs and offering suggestions for arranging the workshops. In various ways they gave indispensable support. For example, superintendents of school districts distant from the San Diego County Department of Education offices arranged for released time for the representatives to attend the workshops. Administrative support also made possible effective follow-up within the district so that the representative could complete his job of sharing

in-service experiences with all interested teachers. This was accomplished in various ways in the different districts, including such activities as minimum day teacher workshops, student exhibits and demonstrations, instructional bulletin board displays, and school-community art exhibits and festivals.

The workshops and the sharing in the districts were so successful the first year that plans were made to continue an expanded workshop series the following year. A meeting for evaluation was held, and among the suggestions was one to increase the number of teacher representatives from one for each district to one for each school. When this was put into effect, it resulted in additional meetings. These were necessary in order to keep the groups small, since much of the success of the first year's sessions had resulted from the individual attention and encouragement received by the teachers. Additional consultants were employed to help the County art coordinator carry on the extra responsibilities of the augmented workshops.

Another added feature of the second year workshop series was the holding of district and County Office workshops for leadership experience. In these the various teacher representatives had the opportunity to plan, to organize and to conduct a workshop session. The actual experience in leading the group sharpened the skills the teachers had learned in the workshop series and built confidence in their ability to lead.

During the three years of special workshops, the County art coordinator emphasized individual abilities and skills. At the same time, she helped participating teachers to see the relatedness of all art activities and the developmental patterns described in the course of study. Since it was not possible to have an art



COURTESY OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS,
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIF.

***In-service workshops help teachers prepare themselves
to instruct in a given art area.***

supervisor in every school in the County, the program of "training of trainers" helped fill what had previously been a serious gap in the in-service program for art education. The project proved that much can be done through teacher workshops to improve teachers' skills in and understanding of art instruction. An equally important showing was in regard to administrators. It was known that, if the administrative staff is not supportive of the art program, the teachers conclude that the program is considered incidental and therefore not worthy of in-service effort comparable to that devoted to

"essential" areas of the curriculum. Involving the administrative staff as well as teachers in the planning of the workshop series demonstrated one way of keeping administrators aware of the importance of a good art program.

School and Community Cooperation

The meeting of minds and hands within the school is important. The art experiences of children, however, will be sorely limited if the wider community is not brought into our central focus. For one thing, it is imperative that the pur-

pose of art education in the school be clearly demonstrated to and for the people of the community. A few of the ways which districts in San Diego County have used to accomplish this are: PTA-sponsored "arts festivals," district or county-wide children's art exhibits, parent-teacher art workshops (see *Arts and Activities*, November 1961 issue), and talks to PTA and other community groups on the goals of art education in our schools. Such activities lead to increased interest of parents in extending their children's art experiences.

The schools could not realize the maximum possibilities of their own art programs if they did not find ways of cooperating with other agencies, such as the colleges and universities and the art galleries. In San Diego County the necessary understanding and teamwork were developed through a San Diego County Art Directors and Supervisors Group. This is a group of people who are interested in developing art experiences for all children and young people. Membership includes County and City schools art supervisors, representatives from the art education and fine arts departments of our colleges and universities, and the directors of our two local art galleries.

Boundaries between City and County,

between schools and universities and the galleries are forgotten. Instead, ideas and plans are discussed and developed for facilitating every type of opportunity that can be offered in art education. Through the coordinating efforts of the Art Directors and Supervisors Group, extension courses offered by colleges and universities are organized with complete understanding and cooperation between school districts and the institutions. Maximum benefits are realized by teachers and pupils in the weekend and summer courses offered by the art galleries because the group has worked out goals which complement those of the schools. The art galleries also offer the schools opportunities for major school exhibits to promote a better understanding and appreciation in the community at large for the art education program.

These are but a few of the ways in which the coordinating group is working to widen children's opportunities for art experiences and to deepen community understanding of the art program. Cooperation among the school districts and the other agencies devoted to enhancing the knowledge and feeling for art should, in time, produce a community sensitive to and desirous of the best possible art education for all its children.

Curriculum Materials 1962

Questions about courses of study often can be answered through examples listed in this publication. All instructional materials found in the Curriculum Bulletins display at the 17th Annual ASCD Conference are listed in this catalog.

Price: \$1.25

Available from

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

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