

Search for Direction in Education

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IN PLANNING the issues of *Educational Leadership* for the coming year, the Publications Committee had in mind several considerations. One of these related to the turmoil of the times in which we live. Another had to do with the school's responsibility to help itself and the society of which it is a part to find wise direction in a time of sharp transition and change.

We find ourselves in an era of great contrasts. We enjoy the fruits of peace, yet we are locked in a mortal and seemingly endless struggle to try to ensure the continued existence as a free nation of one small country on the other side of the globe. We have great affluence in our nation, yet at the same time there are all about us signs of utter poverty. We have a proud record of education; our schools speak continually of higher academic standards, yet we have a great and widespread revolt on the part of our youth, many of whom prefer to live as "hippies" and as irresponsible vagabonds rather than as responsible and participating citizens of our democracy.

We live in a time of great expenditures of tax money for all kinds of relief, welfare and social reform. Yet we have seen tremendous riots in our cities, sparked by irrational elements. These upheavals have resulted in untold millions of dollars in damage and in inestimable suffering and misery for the victims, as well as in great soul-searching on the part of the total society.

We are in a time of deep seeking on the part of people in education. Yet some schools seem to abdicate their responsibility for shaping education to meet the urgent needs of the day. As a result of such abdication, in at least one situation, curricular and administrative decisions, which should be the prerogative of the superintendent and the board of education, have been expressed and mandated by the court.

School budgets are at an all-time high, yet many school systems and communities are torn apart by battles over representation, and by negotiations over contract items, many of which are curricular in nature. In many of these disputes the school administration and the public, as represented by the board, have been placed in direct opposition to the teacher groups.

In a narrow sense, the schools may not have been directly involved in the trends that have resulted in the great dislocations of our time. The social and economic forces that have intensified to the point at which riots are possible and at which the needed and long-sought war on poverty seems to be foundering, may not have been the product of education or the work of the schools. Yet, do the schools not have a responsibility for shaping the course of such trends as these?

Dare the Schools?

A generation ago our schools were faced with the challenge, "Dare the schools build a new social order?" Perhaps today something of this older challenge is confronting us again. How will we as school people and as citizens answer this question?

Undoubtedly the school alone cannot construct a newer, wiser, more equitable, more just social order. Yet the school cannot and must not (even though it has in so many instances in the past) abdicate its own responsibility. The school must give leadership, counsel, guidance and support as it joins with other social forces and institutions in bringing about a social order in which the values that have made us a great and idealistic democracy can flourish.

In such a setting, there will be no willing audiences for riot-mongers, there will be no floating colonies of irresponsible "hippies" and drug addicts. Neither will there be room for unchallenged exploitation, through immersion by mass media, of whole populations in the use of products long proven harmful to young and old alike.

Rather, in such a setting, each person will take a proud and rightful place in the sun, will have hope and aspiration as constant and buoyant companions, will be clear-eyed and certain of the benevolence of his society and of his fellow man. Each will have educational advantages that will enable him to enjoy the life that is good to live and that will benefit both him and his fellow man as they work and plan and live together for the common good.

Persons with experience in curriculum development have a great responsibility in a time such as this. We can bring much needed knowledge and perspective to a consideration of school and social needs. We can point again to the sources of the curriculum and to the kind of person we seek, through education and nurture, to create. As A. W. Foshay stated in these pages in an earlier time of soul-searching:

A balance in the curriculum clearly must be maintained between what is rigorous and deep, and what is immediate and practical. We are called upon, both by the times we live in and by these new possibilities, to strike a new balance.

In doing so, we would be foolhardy indeed to follow that line of public argument which would cause us to act as if we knew nothing of child development and had no knowledge of how the school affects the society around it. If we follow our noses, and simply react to the pressures being put upon us, we will betray a whole generation of children by implying to them that a pedant is a whole man, or that only the intellectual aspect of man is worth official attention. In pursuing high intellectual goals, it is not necessary for a moment that we overlook the fact that a man, in addition to being an intellectual

creature, is also an emotional, an aesthetic, a biological, a creative, and a spiritual creature.¹

What direction do we seek in education? Do we advocate academic excellence in and of itself? How far should we push children for somebody's idea of excellence? Does it matter whether this is a sterile excellence or a participative excellence? What kind of vocational education do we seek? What kind can we afford? How immediate shall be its focus? Do we seek physical fitness as an end in itself?

Clearly the answer lies in some combination of these alternatives. In arriving at a satisfying combination of these for the young persons who throng the schools, the wisdom and patience and insight and resolve of each of us must be available under the best of circumstances if we are to succeed in our great calling of education.

Issues for 1967-68

"Search for Direction in Education" is the theme for the 1967-68 issues of *Educational Leadership*. Do schools have a responsible role in social reconstruction? This idea, once widely debated, again seems to be implicit in many current programs and proposals at local, state and national levels in the schools. Our issues in the coming year will treat the idea of social reconstruction, not only in relation to an analysis of the social structure, but also as to the direction in which schools should go—a look at social problems, political planning and innovations in education to meet the needs of our time.

- The October issue examines some of the problems and potential opportunities in relation to "Social Class and Urbanization." Some of the ways in which changes relating to social class and to urbanization directly affect the role of all persons involved in education are presented.

- "The University and Social Planning" will be the theme of the November issue. Writers will examine the role of the university and its colleges in relation to general education, to teacher education, and in interaction with social forces that tend toward "social planning" or "social engineering." Must the university be neutral or does it share a responsibility for social change and improvement?

- The December issue will have as its topic, "Federal Money and Industrial Participation." Contributors will look at the apparent growth in ways in which the allocation of large grants of money from federal sources seems to affect the interest of large industries in participating either directly or indirectly in the educational process in schools and school systems throughout the country. Members of the education profession are keenly interested in this mutual participation, since they realize that much that is creative and constructive can grow out of this cooperative relationship if the implications of this endeavor can be wisely understood and utilized.

¹ Arthur W. Foshay. "A Modest Proposal." *Educational Leadership* 18 (8): 516, 528; May 1961.

• The January issue will have as its theme, "Innovation: Purpose and Effect." Several characteristics of innovation, especially in relation to schools and to education, will be examined. What are some of the motives behind proposed innovations? How can results of such innovations be evaluated? These and other questions will be analyzed in this issue.

• In February, "Curriculum and Supervision in Social Planning" will be studied. Contributors will be concerned with the manner in which the supervisor or curriculum worker fulfills a truly educational function in relating the work of the schools to new developments in social planning and social change. How can the curriculum person best involve himself in bringing about social change and improvement of the conditions of living as well as of learning?

• The March issue of the journal will have as its overall topic, "Cross-national or International Education." Contributors to this issue will represent several national backgrounds and are chosen because of their interest in furthering international understanding through a sharing of ideas and viewpoints in education. We are especially concerned with furthering our understanding of the constructive work of instructional improvement and of curriculum development by our colleagues in other lands.

• Articles in the April issue of *Educational Leadership* examine the question, "Alternatives to Schooling?" Since the forces for change in our society are so pervasive and so continuing, can the school, as traditionally conceived in our society, be responsible for helping citizens to meet all the needs for adjustment to new vocations, new occupations and varying conditions of community and private life? Should the role of the school be expanded or can the scope of responsibility of other institutions within our society be broadened so as to cover some of the tasks traditionally performed by schools (though principally with children and young people)? What are some of these "alternatives to schooling"?

• Theme of the May issue will be, "Technology: Its Effects on Education." How can we use the technological revolution to enhance, extend and strengthen the educational process? These developments are more than promises of the future, they are with us today; and we must learn to master them and to use them for the optimum growth of all.

The 1967-68 publication year promises to be another in a long line of exciting and rewarding ventures. We invite you to join in this search for direction.

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