

● From the Executive Secretary

The Change Models Need Rewriting

WHEN you change curriculum, what do you change, and where is it that curriculum change takes place? Is it when we change the superstructure, the words-in-motion, the environment, or the process and the experience? The consensus-seeker would say all, or everything. But a new focus is required.

Our change models put implementation at the end of a process, almost as a *fait accompli*—when implementation should be at the center of the process. Furthermore, side issues confuse us. For example, the plethora of organizational or technologically induced modifications; highly publicized esoteric research projects that are thereby assumed to be viable and generally applicable to schools; schemes for teacher and community involvement, along with political or regional reorganization plans.

Perhaps the following questions or concerns will delineate the issue. Is curriculum changed when educationist Goodlad, physicist Zacharias, analyst Conant, or Commissioner Howe says so? Or when national news service and large audience pronouncements are made? Is it changed when critics such as Goodman, sociologists Clark or Friedenburg point out its weakness? Or when researchers Coleman or Moynihan reveal conditions, and psychologists Bruner and Suppes suggest new processes? Has curriculum been changed when legislators legislate new guidelines, requirements, or specifics, or when industry packages the system, or when Flannagan lays it out in pieces and when the mass media hail the new?

Some administrators act out the fiction that curriculum change occurs when the school board says "go," and some supervisors claim that change happens when the system buys it and the house organ proclaims its institution. Some prefer to assume the change when ASCD or its professional counterparts validate its existence in publications, conferences, and special reports.

None would deny that significant progress has been made when teachers hear it and sense it, when they argue about it, purchase it from the local university consultant (or summarily decide to reject it).

It would seem that almost no one considers that the change is important by

the time it is part of in-service concerns, when it is built into behavioral statements, is in the guide and perhaps on the shelf. Interest has gone by the time pupils feel it, when the "change" appears in the classroom, when it is evidenced in the halls, on the streets, or in the home, and evaluation indicates an understanding of new insights and competencies.

But that is where we end long before the beginning; we pour on resources at a premature juncture.

A New Focus

Curricular change and educational modification are not preliminary bouts. We need to redraw the cycle, to put the behaving in the middle, and to allocate resources more appropriately. Our new focus must make the realization as intriguing as the speculation.

This new concept of reality would then proceed with a new and reinforced support system, new processes in teaching, evaluation, and supervising. Community and professional expectations would be rebuilt as materials and resources support, not just establish the change, as teachers and pupils move into the hard labor of the new product. Change is not the anticipation, however intriguing; curricular change is the occurring.

Supervisors and curriculum workers should be the first to initiate new versions of change that correct the "out of whack" models. They should be the first to insist that curriculum change is not the intellectual or professional titillation of a new idea; it is the hard fact of a redrawn force field, a reshaped interaction in the classroom, a reconstituted support, evaluation, and supervisory system. Until the new cycle is drawn and established we can expect that real curricular change is yet another dream away.

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