

A Time for Reevaluation

Robert R. Leeper

EVERY editor of a journal that has attempted, through a number of years, to keep close to the cutting edge of the concerns and needs of the time, must feel a certain sense of intimidation as he attempts to introduce a new volume of the publication. Back of the first of a new year's issues move all the previous issues in ordered array. So many of the ideas, the analyses of need, the expressions of concern in these past numbers are so clearly and eloquently expressed. They seem almost to cry from the pages: "What have you done about this idea? Has this need been met?" The ideas have been treated, often well treated, yet has action resulted? Often it has not. So the editor has to look again for ways to conceptualize and to express suggested solutions to critical problems and to try again to get these viable ideas now, at last, translated into action.

Something of this feeling affects your editor as he launches the issues of a new publication year of *Educational Leadership*. His conviction is deep and earnest that the emphasis of these pages must be practical and more clearly designed to achieve action if this journal is to realize its potential as an organ dedicated to leadership in education. In order to approach this quality of practicality and action, a look at the present social scene is necessary.

We seem to be still in a time of goallessness as a nation and as a people. This state of "goal-suspension" is verifiable in many ways. Our government is in process of reevaluating our relations with other nations, and even within our own borders major changes are likely to be in the offing in governance and in priorities.

Individuals and groups within our society also are affected by this same questioning of values and goals. Evidence of this is found in every newspaper, in every broadcast, in every gathering of people. The irrational and impulsive behavior of young and old alike can be explained in no other way than that our traditional goals—as understood by the persons affected—have been questioned and, in effect, suspended. New goals, new values that attract widespread and selfless devotion have not yet been formulated.

What Are Our Priorities?

Persons in school work cannot suspend or evade their responsibility for helping to clarify and to express the priorities of the society, of the people. There is in the high calling of schooling and of education no provision for a moratorium on thought, on concern for the condition of man in the

present and in the future. The hot and burning issues of the moment must be shaped and put through the annealing process if the product is to endure and if its true colors are to show.

This year, in response to a suggestion by readers, we are not using an annual theme. This does not mean that there is to be no plan for the year. Far from it. Each issue will develop a theme-for-the-month and will include several articles written by persons asked to do so. The remaining articles in each issue will include carefully selected materials that have been contributed for our reading and possible use.

The chief characteristics of this year's published materials will be timeliness, sharpness, integrity, and insight. *Educational Leadership* is a forum for the expression of informed opinion by competent observers. Some of the statements published this year will stir up controversy; this is our direct intention. Reactions from readers are invited and urged. Only with such feedback can we judge whether we are meeting the actual needs of our audience.

Controversy in this year's issues will be featured both graphically and editorially. Topics of highly partisan materials will be announced on the front cover of the journal. Usually these materials will be presented in deliberate "pro" and "con" statements. Sometimes, however, a single piece will appear as a strongly-advocated position—with an open invitation to any reader to send in an answering statement. This is not a new device for our journal, yet we believe it will make the controversial element, which has never been absent from our pages, more visible to the person who might otherwise miss this important characteristic of the content of *Educational Leadership*.

Another feature of this year's issues is to be the use of materials that show evidence of being close to the scene of action, that exhibit some of the realities of the school situation. In a report of the recent survey of the readership of the journal, exceptionally high rating was indicated for the regular feature section, "Innovations in Education." The content of this section is selected from

among manuscripts submitted to our office without special invitation. Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of the materials chosen for this column is their practicality, their action-oriented version of something new or different or something that seems to the writer to give promise of change and improvement in an actual local school situation—often with photographs or drawings to illustrate the "innovation."

Something of this same quality of practicality or reality or usefulness will be sought out and cultivated in a larger proportion of the journal. Our materials must be, as much as possible, original, wedded to practice, based on sound philosophy, concerned with the controversial, the innovative, the promising, close to the person, the teacher, the child, the supervisor, the parent, the administrator—close to the person who is experiencing the need for help.

Issues for 1971-72

● *Intervention for What?* is the topic for October. Writers here examine in depth and breadth the whole question of intervention as it relates to the school and schooling. The power to intervene, implicit in the mission of schooling, is a grave responsibility for both the society which grants this privilege and the educator who must interpret and carry out the assignment. Together citizen and educator must look at the goals and the processes of intervention.

The focus of our writers is upon what can be done, what should be done, through education to help the person become more of a human being—a humane being—in the truest sense and in keeping with goals to which we can give our allegiance. In this context, intervention programs are perceived not as ones that necessarily help the learner succeed in traditional schooling, but that will open the doors of opportunity for him to lead a rich and fulfilling life, extending beyond the present-day curricular expectations.

● *Education for Pluralism* will be featured in November. Writers for this issue are invited to take a broad view of pluralism

in American society and to examine intently implications of the phenomenon for the school curriculum. Articles in this issue are not intended to present specific programs for certain subcultures. Rather they will represent varied ways in which specific communities, whether in Appalachia or the inner city, each in a unique manner, seek to further the concept and practice of pluralism. The articles will deal with general concerns that apply to the broad spectrum of educational problems that pluralism encompasses.

● *Education for Becoming* is the December theme. This idea is a familiar one to many readers of the journal. We hope in this issue, however, to develop the idea in a very fresh and realistic manner. Articles on the several aspects of the topic will be based on practical instances, case studies, or other data, in order to give strength and validity to the overall approach of enabling schools to help in the important task of personal and social fulfillment.

● *Toward New Goals for Individualization* is the theme for January. We believe that it is extremely important to reconsider this basic purpose of schooling. Schools have always had as their ostensible mission the teaching of individuals, even though often this meant "teaching" exactly the same content to all pupils at the same time. Yet the perception of what educational opportunities the school should provide for individuals changes with each generation. For example, in a stable society, where roles are well defined and expectations known, the school's responsibility for helping each individual would seem to be quite simple.

Currently, however, in a time when our society has become relatively unfrozen and relationships are changing, schools must re-examine the ways they organize and teach if they are to help each individual achieve acceptable goals within the group. Articles for the January issue should help readers understand what concerns underlie some of the new teaching arrangements and administrative organizations being tried in the schools in their persistent efforts to meet the needs of each individual.

● *Alternative Forms of Schooling* will be examined in February. Some authors today seem all too willing to "write off" the public school as we have known it, as being either ineffectual or too much wrapped up in the red tape and procedures of a bureaucratic establishment to be able to change and to adjust to the needs of the present. Many persons engaged in the actual processes of schooling today would challenge the pessimistic outlook of such writers.

Forward-looking school people are beginning to recognize that the school as we have known it—with Carnegie units, pupil ratios, the seven-period day, etc.—is fast becoming an artifact of the past. The purpose of our February issue is to look at some of the new forms of schooling that are coming into existence. What special needs do such new forms of schooling seem to meet? What are their promises for success? What are some of the problems which are encountered in the creation and conduct of such new forms of schooling?

● *Changing Conceptions of Professional Identities* will be considered in March. Many forces are at work today emphasizing the need for such an examination. The press of demands by teachers for active participation in curriculum development, in-service programs, school policy, and supervision; the expanding array of managerial tasks confronting the principal; the new conceptions of supervisory service; the growing trend of community involvement in the affairs of schooling—all underscore the need to reconsider the nature of the professional roles of school people as presently defined. Some of the possibilities and some intended as well as unintended consequences and implications of these changing conceptions of professional identities will be indicated in this issue.

● *The Broad Scope of Educational Research* will be studied in April. Through the years research has been an important tool for educational decision making, understanding of children, effective learning, systems development, teaching strategies, and the application of technology to education. Future developments in all probability will be

even more dependent upon research. This issue will discuss some of the findings of educational research and their implications for curricular inquiry.

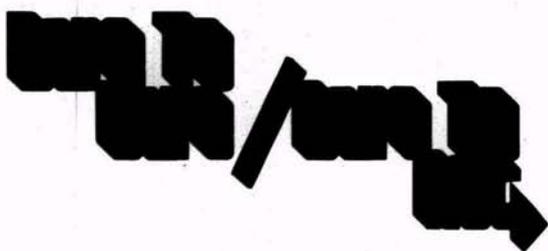
● *Community Involvement in Curriculum* is the focus for May. Demands by urban poor and by other community groups for involvement at serious levels of educational decision making are being reinforced in some instances by the federal government. An increasing number of federally-funded education programs are requiring some evidence of local involvement in educational decision making as a condition for funding.

This cumulative press for grass roots participation in educational decision making is raising some critical questions for immediate consideration. For example, when

parents and professionals work together, who decides what? Can (or should) the balance of power relationships be maintained? Is there a systematic way to clarify roles and responsibilities to enhance the contributions of both parents and professionals? These and other questions will be considered in the May issue.

These are, in brief, the plans for the "invited" portion of the 1971-72 issues. Other materials will add to the rich panoply of the monthly offerings. We are confident that this is going to be one of the "great" years for this journal and for the work of the Association.

—ROBERT R. LEEPER, Editor, *Educational Leadership*.



Racism and Education

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