The Development of Annehurst School

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Annehurst School opened in September 1970. The preceding winter, the Annehurst teachers had gathered to develop their concept of an open-space school. They listed several goals:

- The program should be individualized.
- Students should have access to multilevel materials suitable for the performance level of every student.
- Teachers should be teamed to make the best use of their talents.
- A variety of materials should be located in the instructional materials center to reinforce the learning program.
- Community resources should be used in the school.

Program and curriculum development continued through the summer, with teachers using vacation time to prepare teaching packets and individualized curriculum materials. During inservice after the school opened, the teachers moved toward a less structured, more individualized, and more interdisciplinary approach to teaching.

Local colleges and universities also participated—the Ohio State University, Otterbein College, and Ohio Wesleyan University. Consultants from these schools and the State Department of Education helped those of us closely involved with Annehurst to look at the school from different perspectives, ranging from the very traditional to the very informal. We continued to discuss concepts and search for the organization and curriculum that would best meet the needs of all students.

During 1971-72, we obtained a rough draft of A School for Tomorrow (Frymier, 1973). We examined its concepts and decided that future effort should concentrate on this model. We also invited other authors to talk with us about evaluation, instruction, and staff development. And we made plans to develop a project based on the ideas of Frymier and others.

By January 1973, we had established a formal relationship with the faculty of Curriculum and Foundations at The Ohio State University to develop a climate for learning. Months of activity, during which four professors worked regularly with our teachers, led to a highly productive and healthy relationship. The professors and the teachers alike recognized that they knew different things, had different experiences, and worked in different ways.

With a little help from the experts, the teachers of Annehurst School created their own system for individualizing instruction.

Also in that year we received a Title III ESEA grant that provided personnel and other resources for developing the goals outlined by the staff. With the incorporation of area resources, community-parent volunteer programs, colleges and universities, and other education agencies, a good individualized program began to evolve. In this interaction and involvement, we saw many changes in our school. A more nurturing environment developed, along with a caring and loving atmosphere. We began to feel pride in our apparent success, reputation, and public recognition.

While the Annehurst Curriculum Classification System (Frymier, 1977) is a powerful tool, its other outcomes have been equally beneficial. The Annehurst staff has become skilled in interpersonal communication, instructional arrangements in the classroom, and in pupil evaluation. Annehurst is a growing place and it always will be.

References


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