

## Content Lesson Plans

The third level of curriculum is the lesson plans for each objective together with supportive worksheets and other student materials. Since the *how* of curriculum is debatable among teachers, this level of curriculum needs to be developed at the school, not district level—although the district may in some cases provide the necessary funds.

Through the development of learn-

ing charts, curriculum guides, and content lesson plans, the curriculum becomes legitimate because expectations have been made public. When the curriculum has structure and integrity, citizens respect and trust the public schools. ■

<sup>1</sup>Curriculum learning charts are available from the Mesa Public Schools, 549 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, Arizona 85202.

# TAKING CONTROL OF A RUDDERLESS CURRICULUM

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The grimdest possible news a ship's captain can receive is that the rudder is damaged and the ship is out of control. Like the captain of the Bismarck in World War II, many superintendents have had to face the fact that their curriculum is out of control.

Harold Hosey, superintendent of a 4,000 student district in Emporia, Kansas, moved to regain control of a rudderless curriculum when, in 1974, he recommended appointment of two curriculum coordinators who had close ties with principals and teachers. His board approved.

The Emporia district took its first hesitant steps along the road to coordination by establishing an instructional improvement committee made up of parents, teachers, and students. After a jittery start and tumultuous

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town meeting, they decided to conduct a needs assessment using the Phi Delta Kappa plan. To no one's surprise, reading and writing improvement were assigned top priority. Gaining a general education ranked second, and developing good character and self-respect ranked third out of the eighteen goals.

The easy part was over. District goals had been determined and endorsed by the board of education. The hard part was to translate the identified goals into substantive curriculum change with a group of ambivalent teachers in autonomous buildings.

Turning a deaf ear to detractors concerned about the district's plethora of committees, the two coordinators established a standing committee heavily staffed with classroom teachers. Membership consisted of a central office administrator, elementary teachers for each grade level (K-6), an elementary principal, a middle school principal, a high school principal, and department representatives from grades 7 through 12. The elementary and secondary coordinators co-chaired the group.

The Superintendent's Curriculum Council, as it was later to be called, was now ready to tackle the elusive

goal of subject area coordination. During the first meeting someone asked, "Which subject area should we study first?" Teachers and administrators unanimously answered "social studies." There was widespread belief at the time that K-12 social studies curriculum was characterized by gaps and repetition. With each school and teacher operating independently, however, nothing had been done to correct the problem.

The coordinators set out to devise a coordination model that would be compatible with contemporary teacher prerogatives. They knew that if teachers didn't feel a strong sense of ownership in the process, any resulting plan would be ignored.

Using the process English (1979) called "curriculum mapping," they asked teachers to describe in detail what they were actually teaching, then charted the results on butcher paper. Next, using that information, they prepared a new K-12 scope and sequence. When the final product was presented to district teachers on an inservice day at the beginning of a new school year, it was very well received. Many teachers and counselors displayed the charts on the walls of their classrooms.

Since then Emporia has studied and developed plans for mathematics, health, science, reading, and language arts curriculums. Each year a number of council meetings are devoted to evaluating the effectiveness of a particular scope and sequence.

## Curriculum as a Top Priority

The secret for whatever success Emporia has had lies primarily in the fact that curriculum has been given top billing in almost everything the district undertakes—budget meetings, textbook selection, and personnel hiring and assessment. Curriculum topics are publicized in the district's newsletter and press releases and appear in the agenda of many board meetings. The two curriculum coordinators are given broad responsibility and authority for ensuring that no one, from noncertified employees to the superintendent forgets that curriculum is the tool with which teachers help student learn. ■

## Reference

English, Fenwick. "Curriculum Mapping." *Educational Leadership* 37 (April 1980): 558-559.

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