

Curriculum Trends in Social Studies

JOHN JAROLIMEK

Social History—Another View of the Past

Social history as a field of scholarly inquiry has fascinated historians for years, but not until recently has it found its way into the curriculums of elementary and secondary schools. Today, an increasing number of social studies teachers at all grade levels are discovering the exciting potential offered by social history.

In their typical study of history, students learn of the men and women who achieved prominence, the ones recognized as the shapers of historical events. Social history, on the other hand, involves studying the lives of ordinary people—people much like the students themselves—as they deal with the exigencies and routines that confronted them—working, playing, marrying, birthing, dying, judging and punishing criminals, educating their children. Indeed, social history covers any or all lives of everyone.

Instructional materials focusing on the social history of Western Europe and the United States from 1630 to 1980 have been developed in a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Five units for grades 10–12 are available: Work and Leisure; Family; Childhood and Youth; Crime and Law Enforcement; and Health and Medicine. For those interested in these materials or social history in the schools, contact Dr. Linda Rosenzweig, Chatham College, Woodland Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15232.

More on Scope and Sequence

At its November 1983 meeting in San Francisco, the Board of Directors of the National Council for the Social Studies approved the report of its Task Force on Scope and Sequence as a "preliminary position statement" of the National Council (scheduled for publication in the April issue of *Social Education*). Eight educators representing various philosophical orientations have been invited to comment on the report.

The program proposed by the task force calls for social studies to be included in all of the K-12 grades "every day, throughout each school year." Alternative sequences are provided for grades 6–12. In addition to the subject matter sequence, the report offers program suggestions for the sequential development of values and beliefs and for social studies-related skills.

Education for Peace

Educators for Social Responsibility is a national, nonprofit membership organization of teachers, administrators, and parents educating for a world free from the threat of nuclear destruction. The ESR has available a number of services, audiovisual materials, and print publications of interest to teachers concerned with peace education. A 1983 publication entitled *Perspectives: A Teaching Guide to Concepts of Peace* covers grades K-12 and provides specific suggestions for activities that teachers can use to explore possibilities of creating a peaceful world. Cost: \$12.95. Write

ESR, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Bringing China Closer

Increased diplomatic, cultural, economic, and personal travel ties with the People's Republic of China, along with continued emphasis on global education, have aroused a long-dormant interest in the study of China. Although there is already a fair amount of instructional material available on China, teachers should not overlook the resources from the Center for Teaching about China. Established by the US-China Peoples Friendship Association as a national clearinghouse for teaching materials, the Center offers a wide assortment of curriculum materials for all grade levels. A catalog of Center resources is available on request.

US-China Review, the bi-monthly journal of the US-China Friendship Association, is an informative publication, well worth the \$12.00 subscription price for six issues. In addition to providing teachers with authoritative articles about China, the *Review* includes information about the programs, activities, and study opportunities available through the Association. For information write to *US-China Review*, Center for Teaching about China, 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002.

John Jarolimek is Professor of Education, University of Washington, Seattle.

Curriculum Trends in Science

EDWIN P. WHITE

Instructional Materials Directory

The third edition of the *Directory of Science Education Suppliers* has just been published by the National Science

Teachers Association. The *Directory* appears free in the January issues of *Science and Children* and *The Science Teacher*. The February issue of the

Journal of College Science Teaching also carries the 68 page insert. The 1984 edition lists suppliers of equipment, supplies, services, media, textbooks,

and instructional materials. Included are several articles on ordering, reviewing, and selecting instructional materials. A special feature is the Microcomputer Software Evaluation Instrument, which can be duplicated for use in your school or district. NSTA provides a handy Reader Service Card that allows you to request additional information from the over 300 companies represented. The *NSTA Directory of Science Education Suppliers* is available for \$5.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling. Request copies from NSTA, 1742 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Research on BSCS Biology Programs

In the January issue of *The American Biology Teacher*, James Shymansky of the University of Iowa reports the findings of a "meta-analysis" of "47 measures of student performance in BSCS programs." In reviewing 25 years of research Shymansky found the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) biology programs to be the most effective of all of the new high school science programs developed in the 1960s. Revisions of the BSCS textbooks are still in use today and continue to be selected as a student text for high school biology. The study compared BSCS programs to other traditional programs by examining achievement, attitudes, process skills, and analytic skills. Overall, BSCS students outperformed the students in traditional biology classes by 24 percentile points. Specifically the student in BSCS

biology classes scored consistently well above their counterparts on all measures: attitudes toward science-88%, process skills-81%, analytic skills-77%, and achievement-72%. Students with higher IQ, ability, and socioeconomic status seemed to do even better, although all students regardless of these factors, did better than comparable students in traditional classes. BSCS teachers with more than five years of experience or a masters degree had higher student scores although again all BSCS teachers as a group showed a higher level of student achievement. The author concludes this report with a warning not to rush out to adopt BSCS programs blindly but rather examine these programs to determine the attributes that made them successful and incorporate those characteristics into existing or new programs.

Images of Science

Writers of national reports calling for increases in mathematical and scientific literacy will be supported by a recent report that 17-year-olds' science scores have declined steadily since 1973, but pleased that overall interest in science careers and activities has picked up. The Science Assessment and Research Project, supported by the National Science Foundation, released the data in *Images of Science: A Summary of Results from the 1981-82 National Assessment in Science*.

The Project, formed at the University of Minnesota to conduct periodic assess-

ment of students' knowledge and attitudes toward science, tested 18,000 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds, and compared this data to studies conducted by NAEP in 1976-77.

The study found that 17-year-old white students outscored black students by 15 percentage points. Males outscored females by 3.3, but this was less than their 1977 lead of 4.2.

For 13-year-olds, collective attitudes toward science classes, teachers, careers, and the value of science were down 2.6 percentage points. At the same time, students reported participating in more science activities, due mainly to the burgeoning use of computers in schools. Students' perceived ability to help solve science-related social problems was down 2.3. And males again outperformed females, differences increasing slightly to 3.4.

9-year-olds' scores on 30 achievement items improved 1 percentage point since 1977, notably the first positive change at any age level in four science assessments. Differences between white and black students dropped from 15 to 12.5.

Images of Science is available from the Minnesota Research and Evaluation Center, 210 Burton Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 at \$9.00 per copy.

Edwin P. White is Assistant Dean, School of Education, University of South Carolina at Spartanburg, and President of the South Carolina ASCD.

Supervision

ROBERT J. KRAJEWSKI

Helping Principals Become Instructional Leaders

School officials at Jackson (Mississippi) Municipal Separate School District are aware that while most districts expect principals to carry out the functions of an instructional leader, they fail to provide staff development programs for them. Moreover, few universities offer classroom observation, diagnosis of instructional problems, or teacher evalua-

tion in their principal certification programs. Thus, the Jackson district developed a program designed to make principals effective instructional leaders, with the ultimate aim of enhancing student achievement.

The school district expects principals to pursue a plan of personal improvement, and provides direction and training in that pursuit. District personnel identified three essential interrelated ex-

pectations for the principal as instructional leader;

- Principal and teaching staff need to know what the district considers a standard teaching performance and how to identify and objectively measure that performance (performance evaluation system).

- The instructional leader and the teaching staff need to know what the district expects to be taught in each

Copyright © 1984 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.