

Are You Doing Inquiry Along These Lines?

WCCI RESEARCH CALL

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The World Council for Curriculum and Instruction is a child of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. WCCI was not a planned child, but neither was its birth a great surprise to those who were instrumental in directing the attention of ASCD to the opportunity and prospects for international understanding in the late 1960s. Under the prodding and leadership of Alice Miel and Louise Berman, ASCD sponsored a 10-day World Conference of Educators at the Asilomar conference site in Pacific Grove, California, in March 1970. The conference was the culmination of much thought and work designed to "improve all facets of education worldwide." In her closing remarks, "Toward a World Community of Educators. Unity with Diversity," Miel said, "The organizers had nothing so ambitious in mind as a new international organization in education, although at some point, such an organization for those with special interest in curriculum and instruction might prove useful."² Within 16 months, the participants in the Asilomar conference had approved a constitution. By November 1, 1971, interim officers had met in Detroit, Michigan, setting up a regular administrative structure.

The decision to play down the nation-state identification of the population of our global community significantly affected WCCI's formation. We have constantly tried to work within the structure of a world setting, treating each member as an equal participant in the community of educators who elect to join. Thus, we are organized as a person-to-person, non-governmental, non-profit global organization for the purpose of assisting and supporting one another in the fulfillment of our professional responsibilities.

¹Alice Miel, "How It All Began," in *The World Council for Curriculum and Instruction. The Story of Its Early Years*, ed. Louise Berman, Alice Miel, and Norman V. Overly (Bloomington, Ind.: World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, 1982), p. 6

²Alice Miel, "Toward a World Community of Educators: Unity with Diversity," in *Educating the Young People of the World*, ed. Alice Miel and Louise Berman (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1970), p. 83.

The decision to use *curriculum* and *instruction* in the name was also important. As Miel pointed out in the February 1975 issue of the newsletter, *curriculum* was "used to cover the intended, planned offerings of educational institutions, . . . [and] *instruction* was used to cover the interactive process of teaching-experiencing-learning."³ Since we are a global organization, this decision created some problems because the terms do not translate uniformly into the diverse languages of the world. By defining our terms, we have tried to enhance understanding and to facilitate dialogue, leaving to those with non-English languages the task of selecting terms appropriate for local communication.

Two of the five purposes stated in our constitution pertain specially to WCCI's research mission. First, we intend to stimulate and facilitate collaboration on cross-cultural and transnational endeavors designed (1) to examine existing structures, goals, curriculums, and practices found in various educational systems and the ways these relate to world issues, (2) to conduct research into and propose solutions for existing problems, such as educational strategies capable of contributing to a more stable, peaceful world, and (3) to evaluate the research and refine solutions as necessary. Second, we intend to facilitate exchange across national borders of existing and newly created professional knowledge in the realms of both theory and practice relevant to the needs of a multicultural world community.

During the early years, much effort and energy went to exploring structures for maintaining and enhancing communication across cultural and national borders. Other than occasional newsletter reports on research activities and a limited number of reports at the triennial world conferences, little organizational effort went to encouraging and sponsoring research. Although improving cross-cultural communication continues to be a goal requiring attention, in 15 years we have matured to the point that we can direct more attention to encouraging research and development in a number of areas.

Special interest groups or networks have promoted communication and encouraged members to share research and development interests. The networks consist of about 10 members interested in a common theme. Three of the most successful networks have concentrated on peace education, early childhood education, and community development and involvement. The peace-education network recently published *Peace Education and the Task of Peace Educators*.⁴ Also, the first issue of the new WCCI journal, *WCCI Forum*, includes articles that reflect the thinking and research of members of the other two networks: "The Situation-Oriented Approach to Preschool Curriculum," by Frith; of Oertel; and "The Spirit and Action of Citizenship: Alex

³Alice Miel, "What's in a Name?" *Newsletter of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction* 6 (February 1975): 1.

⁴Terrance Carson, *Peace Education and the Task of Peace Educators* (Bloomington, Ind: World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, 1987).

Taylor Community School," by Nelson L. Haggerson, Virginia Macagnoni, and Steve Ramsankar.⁵

From the beginning, WCCI has stressed personal responsibility for interacting and creating individual opportunities for research, development, and service. To assist members, WCCI publishes a membership directory every three years. The directory, *Persons as Resources*, is prepared by the secretariat and reflects the special interests of members based on their most recent self-reports included on their membership applications. The diversity of the membership—made up of instructors, principals, headmasters, supervisors, inspectors, curriculum theorists and researchers, students and parents concerned with curriculum and instruction in schools, colleges, universities, and non-school agencies of the world—is reflected in the wide variety of research interests identified. As the executive secretary, Maxine Dunfee has noted, "Through [the directory], WCCI members can find others in various parts of the world who share their special interests as well as their general common purpose."⁶ WCCI has not had to limit the particular focus of the research we would encourage, insisting only that it is in keeping with the purposes stated in the constitution.

Some members have expressed interest in investigating the treatment of their nation and culture in the textbooks of other countries—for example, the cooperative studies undertaken between the United States and Japan and the Soviet Union and the United States. Others have a more specialized interest in this topic—for example, the treatment of cultures in teaching foreign languages. Other interests are more global, encompassing bias in textbooks from various countries or comparisons of national educational policies and systems.

Some members are looking for collaborators in joint research efforts. Others are looking for people to help locate documents or resources for work already begun. The richness of *Persons as Resources* is in the great variety of topics included.

A recent compilation of interests done by Dunfee reveals members seeking cooperative involvement in work on the following topics: peace education, curriculum evaluation, sociological studies of education, cross-cultural studies of myths, training of religious educators, distance learners needs, teacher education and teaching strategies, child development and education of special children, creativity and learning styles, parental involvement, and faculty development. Although these are only a few of the core topics, each one may be broken down into more specific research interests. For example, under peace education falls the replication of peace studies done in Saskatchewan, the teaching of peaceful values through song; the development of attitudes and

⁵WCCI Forum 1 (June 1987)

⁶Maxine Dunfee, *Persons as Resources* (Bloomington, Ind.: World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, 1987), p. 5

values leading to peace, positive conflict resolution skills, models of peace-education curriculums; and the analysis of social studies curriculum plans, texts, and resources related to peace and development education.

Besides the directory, the journal, and occasional publications on selected research themes, WCCI encourages members to submit proposals for development and research projects to be funded by the organization. Funds now available total less than \$5,000 per year, but grants made with these funds are a start on a goal to help members realize some of their dreams for cross-cultural educational studies.

We hope that by the Sixth Triennial World Conference scheduled for August 5-13, 1989, in the Netherlands, members will have made significant strides in cross-cultural research in several areas already identified. Research on the conference theme, "Creative Curriculum Development and Practice," will receive special attention. Invitations and the call for papers for the conference will be sent to all members about October 15, 1987. Persons interested in WCCI and its research emphasis should write the Executive Secretary, WCCI, School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405

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Glatthorn, Allan A. *Curriculum Renewal*. Alexandria, Va. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1987. 115 pp. \$8.75.

This book provides curriculum leaders with an "operator's manual" for "doing" curriculum in the schools. Glatthorn explicates several "how to" curriculum questions, such as "How do you improve the middle school's (or some other level's) program of study?" and "How do you improve critical thinking (or some other set of skills) across the curriculum?" He provides both a descriptive and prescriptive account of practical curriculum renewal. Also included is a bibliography of information sources for a variety of subject fields in the curriculum.

-Gregory J. Nolan

Phillips, D. C. *Philosophy, Science, and Social Inquiry*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1987. 210 pp. \$14.95/\$26.50.

This overview of contemporary debates on the status of research methodologies in the social and human sciences and related applied fields such as education is readily accessible to the non-expert. The work of Kuhn, Winch, Lakatos, Feyerabend, and Popper are reviewed along with the demise of positivism and the rise of interest in hermeneutical approaches, relativism, and holism. Issues are illustrated in the research and theory on cognitive structure.

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