AN EVALUATION OF AN EVOLVING CURRICULUM

IN THE DALLAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

APPROVED:

James F. Hilt
Major Professor

J. M. Logue
Minor Professor

W. B. Blair
Director of the Department of Education

Jack Johnson
Dean of the Graduate School
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179956
Cora Lee George, B. A.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With a realization that our educational practices and procedures should not remain static if they are to keep abreast of a rapidly evolving civilization, it is felt necessary that an estimate of the situation be made and that the present status be evaluated. Such a task as this is indeed difficult to perform, because one's thinking is naturally affected and colored by being a part of the situation. The change in organization from the narrow traditional school with its isolated subject matter to integrated fields of experience requires careful study and planning by both administrators and teachers. Such an innovation cannot take place over-night, but instead it becomes an evolving process. In fact, it cannot take place at all without an understanding of its philosophy and a knowledge of the psychology of growth and learning. Through a thoughtful analysis of our present ideals and practices, the results of such efforts might point the way toward a more successful and efficient educational procedure for the ever-changing world of the future.

Statement of Problem

The problem of this study is a critical evaluation of some of the objectives and practices in the development of an
evolving curriculum in the Dallas Elementary Schools. The criteria are based on the implications found in the study of the ideals of a democracy and the psychology of human growth and learning.

Reason for Making the Study

Since administrators and teachers have worked together to write a philosophy to serve as a guide in school organization and practices and since they are now studying the psychology of child growth and development, it was believed profitable to make a study to see to what extent these factors are really educating all the children of the people. It was felt that this study will be of benefit to both administrators and teachers in the continuous study of and planning for an evolving curriculum.

Treatment of Data

The myriad publications on democratic philosophy furnished a wealth of materials for this study. Books, magazines, and first hand observation of child development furnished materials for the study of the psychology of growth and learning. Personal visits to three schools for observation and discussions with various teachers and principals furnished information for evaluation. All these were studied in determining the criteria for evaluating the schools in their present state of progress.
Limitations

This investigation is limited to the study of three Dallas Elementary Schools, which are designated as A, B, and C. These schools were chosen for their varying degrees of development in the plan for curriculum growth and development.

Plan of Organization

Chapter I contains an introduction to the study, a brief statement of the problem, a discussion of the reason for making the study, an explanation of treatment of data, the limitations of the study, and the plan of organization. Chapter II contains a discussion of the principles of democracy as they pertain to the individual and his society. Chapter III contains a discussion of the psychology of growth and learning and its influence in building a curriculum. Chapter IV is the criteria and evaluation based on the implications found in the study of philosophy and psychology in Chapters II and III. Chapter V contains the conclusions and recommendations which were reached from the data obtained.
CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY IN BUILDING A CURRICULUM IN A DEMOCRACY

The purpose of this chapter is to study the underlying principles of modern philosophy in building a curriculum. A philosophy is based on the culture of its people, and since the culture is based on democratic ideals, democracy is the source of its philosophy.

There are many definitions of philosophy. Two from leading educators are quoted. John Dewey tells us:

A philosophy of education, like any theory, has to be stated in words, in symbols. But so far as it is more than verbal it is a plan for conducting education. Like any plan it must be framed with reference to what is to be done and how it is to be done.1

L. Thomas Hopkins defines philosophy as follows: "A philosophy is a set of criticized values in life so organized as to facilitate making intelligent decisions as to policy or conduct whenever there is a choice of values."2

The teachers and administrators in the Dallas Public School wrote a philosophy of education in 1946-47. One of the essential statements in this pamphlet is that "the

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1John Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 17.

welfare of the child is the center of all our thinking, of all our endeavor; child growth is the core of our philosophy."³

All great movements have had a definite philosophy directing them. It is true, too, that each individual possesses a philosophy that points the way and seems to shape his destinies even though one is scarcely aware of the fact. One thinks of his philosophy as merely the way he looks at life's problems and this viewpoint is true. It is also a basic fact that several individuals might look at the same scenic view and yet would see different aspects. What each one appreciates in such a situation is due largely to one's philosophy. This person looks at the whole scene as evidence of God's handiwork; another sees the fertile valleys as having great possibilities for amassing wealth; to another the hills might appear as great resources for minerals.

And so it is with one's philosophy of education. While there must be in a school system an over-all philosophy in action, each teacher acquires his own and the way in which it is derived is important. "There are those whose philosophy represents merely a passive acceptance of the accumulated tradition that has developed in a local community or in a larger school system,"⁴ These traditions are handed down from generation to generation with little or no change in

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⁴Hopkins, op. cit., p. 175.
practice. Modern philosophy is formed on the democratic principle of continuous change to meet the needs and interests that arise in complex living. The source of this philosophy is derived from experience and creative thinking of its individuals. Values, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior are then appraised as they function in the experiences of everyday living.

Joseph K. Hart puts it this way:

The fundamental fact about education is that "life" is made up of experiences and that all experiences educate—in one way or another. Nothing that ever happens to us is lost.  

If democracy is to survive, our present-day philosophy must direct in formulating progressive ideas, in making continuous changes, and in evaluating experience which will benefit each individual as well as the society.

The Individual

Worth of the individual.—Faith in the worth and dignity of the individual may be regarded as the first principle of democracy. This has not always been true. The nobility of England during the early nineteenth century still showed a contempt for the lower classes by scoffing when they complained at their lot. In India, the untouchable dared not cast his shadow on those who belonged to the higher strata of society. And, in modern times this utter disregard for

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the rights of the individual is best exemplified by totalitarian governments, Germany and Italy. The leaders made little or no effort to understand the right of the common man to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

However, this dignity of man is not a new idea. Cicero believed that every man was invested with human dignity and entitled to respect as a human being. The Christian religion early taught the dignity of the individual and even the Medieval Church emphasized the worth of man and the equality of souls in the eyes of God. The Magna Carta in the thirteenth century was the beginning of freedom from tyranny. This idea of man's worth through the ages finally found a resting place on American soil where life was conceived not by cowards and weaklings, but by men of destiny, strong and fearless, who preferred to die rather than live in bondage.6

Since each individual is considered to be of essential worth, the curriculum has a great responsibility in teaching the worth of the individual to himself and society.

Stratemeyer states:

Equal men, each having opportunity to assume the rights and responsibilities that are his, is a first essential in our society. This means a curriculum designed to give to children and youth a respected and a vital part in society in keeping with their maturity and in terms of the problems and situations which they face. It means a curriculum through which children and

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youth grow to respect the unique worth of each individual including himself.\textsuperscript{7}

The second principle of democracy is equality of opportunity to all.

These opportunities must be planned in reference to the potentialities of the individual. Music lessons to an individual who is tone deaf does not constitute an opportunity. The same opportunities for different individuals cannot be regarded as equal opportunities. Each person must be regarded as a distinctive individual and opportunities provided for his particular development.

The democratic concept of equality must also guarantee to each individual, according to his achievement, an equal share in determining the purposes of social action and in planning the means of attaining these common objectives.\textsuperscript{8}

The equality of opportunity must be as much a part of a school group as of any civic or working organization. In the classroom, equality is denied when all learners are taught the same thing as in arithmetic or manual arts. The learner may not go so far if equality of opportunity is offered, but what he gets is really learned through his own experience. Therefore the school environment should provide the proper setting where learners may be taught by practice and participation the experience of living the ideals of democracy.

Freedom.--The third principle insures freedom to all individuals. Freedom carries responsibilities, since it does

\textsuperscript{7}Florence Stratemeyer and others, Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living, p. 44.

\textsuperscript{8}Arthur D. Hollingshead, Guidance in Democratic Living, p. 14.
not guarantee an absence of restraint. In the study of the "Creed of Democracy," number 15 "implies that a person becomes free and effective by exercising self-restraint rather than by having restraint imposed upon him by external authority." One does not have the right to do as one pleases, because in so doing the rights and privileges of others may be violated. Democratic freedom provides for the individual the opportunity to plan and to seek his own goals and objectives in living a wholesome life in so far as he does not interfere with other individuals or society. Furthermore, he may think critically and intelligently in respect to society's purposes and problems without being hampered by external control.

Freedom is an essential factor in the school environment. The child should have as much freedom as he is capable of using. The amount depends upon the training and experience of the individual. Mort and Vincent suggest,

It is this freedom, sparingly granted at first and gradually increased as children grow more practiced, which teaches self-discipline in behavior. Those who are continually told what to do never learn to think for themselves because they never have to. The modern school gives a youngster a chance to do some of his own thinking, to make some of his choices himself. Whether the freedom is large or small, it is the freedom to make choices which is the greatest educating influence in the setting, plus the guidance of a wise, observant teacher.10


10Paul A. Mort and William S. Vincent, A Look at Our Schools, p. 72.
The Individual and Society

A democratic society assumes the responsibility for providing equality of opportunity and freedom of action to the individual. It is likewise a duty for the individual to assume the obligations resulting from such vested rights. In defining the obligations Dewey says:

Mutual respect, mutual toleration, give and take, the pooling of experiences, is ultimately the only method by which human beings can succeed in carrying on this experiment in which we are engaged, the greatest experiment of humanity—that of living together in ways in which the life of each of us is at once more profitable in the deepest sense of the word, profitable to himself and profitable and helpful in the building up of the individuality of others.11

The responsibilities which individuals share in a society may be discussed as follows: 1. cooperation with the group in planning and solving common problems, 2. feeling of security and belonging, 3. promoting continuous man-directed change, and 4. interaction of the group.

Cooperation.—In the pursuit of happiness, cooperation of society in planning and solving common problems is a factor as important as equality and freedom. Both of these principles are integrated in cooperation, so that all focus upon the promotion of common welfare. Cooperation implies joint planning and working toward the achievement of common goals for the common good. Furthermore, those who abide by these goals, or rules, or laws have a part in making them.

Democracy insures that these common problems be solved by intelligence and reason rather than force. Hollingshead states:

Democracy involves the substitution of the spirit of cooperative service for the spirit of strife and conquests, and the choosing of the promotion of the common welfare of humanity as the end of life instead of the pursuit of wealth and power.\textsuperscript{12}

Problems may be solved by freedom of speech and press or by the electoral privilege. Though these are basic factors in popular rule, they may be abused. However, no better way has been found to give free choices to the people. By using intelligence in making choices and cooperating in united efforts, democracy cannot be threatened by force. Hopkins sums it up by saying: "The process of living is an interactive process; each individual works and shares with every other individual in sharing and evaluating the common problem."\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Security and belongingness.--}No individual can live by himself, nor can any group isolate itself. Since transportation and communication have made world citizens of us all, it becomes necessary for each individual to have a feeling of belonging and a feeling of security. In the smaller groups, family, friends, club and church affiliations are imperative. In the broader sense, all international

\textsuperscript{12}Hollingshead, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{13}Hopkins, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 106.
relationships must be harmonized that another global conflict may be prevented.

Since the classroom is a miniature world of its own, the children and youth need the same assurance of security, belonging, and self-respect. Each child needs to be loved for the personality he develops. His weaknesses may be overlooked, perhaps, at times in order to build up his self confidence. If any individual is isolated because of handicaps or peculiarities, he is made to feel "inferior and incapable among his peers, or believe that he has been unfairly and unintelligently treated."\(^{14}\)

**Change.**—Continuous change in every aspect of social life—economic, political, religious, and educational—is a normal democratic development. Democracy is an evolving process and conscious intelligent change must take place with continuous planning, evaluating, and adjusting. New truths, inventions, and scientific discoveries arise to benefit society. Such discoveries as radar, improved synthetics, jet propulsion, penicillin, and atomic energy prove that a society that was adequate in the past should be changed to meet new needs and demands in the present. Otherwise the "status quo" is unchanged, society becomes stymied, and the traditional school remains isolated from general life in the community.

Since the democratic way is the "continuous planning" way, a more inclusive and harmonious set of values must be devised for all aspects of life. These, in turn, must be used to evaluate and modify the existing culture so as to reduce and control tensions, thereby making it more usable in the present and in the future. This is a sharp contrast to the ready-made patterns of life which are given to the people by totalitarian states. . . . It is a principle "that conscious social changes should be accomplished by methods of reasonableness rather than methods of violence."15

**Interaction.**—Interaction is a word which embodies all the principles and ideals of democracy. It may be considered a symbol upon which our philosophy is built, since the core of the democratic process is the cooperative, intelligent, and continuous interaction. Interaction governs all relations among individuals and groups in their contacts with each other. This means freedom of speech and press, freedom of movement, freedom of assemblage, and freedom of inquiry.

In the schools of traditional organization there are instances "in which interaction is on a low level, for some fear that free play of inquiry might result in new pupil purposes of eliminating homework, modifying requirements for diplomas, or indeed, demanding participation in management of the school."16 But on the other hand, "the interactive process is a way of relating an individual to his world in order that he may build his creative individuality while adding some increment to the improvement of the culture."17

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Conclusion.—The influence of philosophy in building a curriculum on democratic principles and practices is far reaching. Administrators and teachers cannot effectively guide the schools without a workable philosophy of education. Moreover, this philosophy must give direction in making changes from traditional practices to democratic principles, which will affect the lives of every boy and girl—instead of those few who can qualify for traditional academic subjects. It will serve in providing an opportunity for studying those subjects which have the greatest value and interest with regard to talents, needs, and differing abilities. Furthermore, this philosophy will guide the teacher in giving consideration to individual differences among children as they mature with their associates. The child will be encouraged to cooperate and participate with his teachers and classmates in planning, selecting, and organizing the flexible school program on the principles of democratic living. Accordingly, the building of a curriculum should be a continuous procedure based on the philosophy that it must meet social changes and individual needs. Such a philosophy will elevate the American public school to its rightful place as a cherished democratic institution. And one may conclude by saying: “The chief function of the schools is to conserve and improve the democratic way of life.”

18Hollis L. Caswell and Doak S. Campbell, Curriculum Development, p. 32.
CHAPTER III

INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN BUILDING A CURRICULUM

The purpose of this chapter is to study psychology as it relates to the growth and learning process of children and its influence in building a curriculum in an American democracy.

The total or whole growth of the individual child has become the object of the elementary curriculum. The school curriculum should make equal provisions for physical, mental, social, and emotional growth. The Texas Association of School Administrators' Goals for 1957 says:

Elementary school should recognize that all four phases of child growth and development are of equal importance. Children have potentiality for growing and developing physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. Effective participation in life requires a well-rounded individual with an integrated well-balanced personality. The ability to live a life fully, richly, and usefully in a democratic society cannot be attained by lopsided individuals. Everyone recognizes that a sound body sustained in good health is basic to all else. A good school program thus makes equal provision for and places equal importance upon all four phases of children's growth and development.1

Considering the above factors in child development, the curriculum should be organized to meet the needs, interests, and attitudes in all phases of development. This is necessary

to develop a whole personality in each individual learner. Furthermore, educators must realize that learning is an evolving process "from the cradle to the grave," and that the few years spent in the school training period are not a beginning of learning for the six year old and an ending for the graduate. Instead this is only a short period of supervision and guidance which gives each individual the opportunity for the growth and development of his inherited and environmental potentialities as an integrated whole. Therefore, it is important that the school will function during these years to train and care for all needs of children and youth in this ever-changing world.

Heredity and Environment

Growth is not only a whole process but a continuous one. The nature of this growth is largely determined by two factors—heredity and environment. These two factors cannot be separated. Each has an influence upon the other, because poor environment has been found to modify the development of hereditary characteristics, such as intelligence, personality, and educative achievements.²

Heredity.—Each individual is born a biological unit. Unitary wholeness is the characteristic of all life; any disunity is abnormal. Each child receives from its parents

²Marian E. Breckenridge and E. Lee Vincent, Child Development, p. 62.
a combination of chromosomes which its parents themselves received when they were conceived. These chromosomes, made up of genes, operate by interacting with each other.

These genes are not changed by alteration in body cells of the parent. The fact that a father may have several college degrees in itself does not affect the mental equipment of his children. A mother crippled by infantile paralysis will not necessarily produce crippled children. A child receives forty-eight chromosomes, half from each parent. The particular forty-eight chromosomes which he receives from either parent may come from either or both grandparents on that side of the family. The matched chromosomes contain a series of genes.

Because of the numerous possibilities of chromosome combinations, it is not surprising that there are such differences in individuals including a family group. One sister may have curly hair while another may have straight; one brother may be short while a sister is tall. Members of any group may have as many varying degrees of mental capacities and emotional aptitudes as there are differences in appearance.

Another prime factor in growth is the part the endocrine glands and nervous system play in regulating our lives. The potentialities of these two systems are inherited and their functional potentialities have been little changed through years of biological evolution. Both have a definite effect upon the physical, mental, and emotional development of the child. "They are one of the factors

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Ibid., pp. 57-58.
which contribute to good physical health and growth which in turn contributes wholesomeness and balance in personality."

From the biological view, training cannot develop abilities in the young that are not already made possible in the inheritance. Hopkins states that individuals inherit tendencies and potentialities of developing to a certain degree under normal conditions, and individuals can never exceed these limits. Since these limits are due to inheritance, a curriculum that imposes rigid responses without freedom of choices becomes unwholesome from which the biological organism rebels.

Environment.—Every individual is born into an environment and growth is conditioned by one's surroundings.

The human organism is not born into a vacuum. It lives from birth onward in an environment—the physical world which surrounds us all and the social group of which he is a member. From the start, the little child finds his life conditioned in many respects by the physical world which surrounds him. He is born into a family. Father, mother, possibly brothers and sisters, take him in hand, guide his early years, teach him in many ways the age-old patterns of behavior which every child has to learn. He is not a free agent because both his immediate group and his physical environment form his behavior and his character from the day of his birth.

Hereditary traits may be developed or repressed by their surroundings. Furthermore, two children in the same

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4Ibid., p. 80.

5L. Thomas Hopkins, Integration: Its Meaning and Application, p. 179.

environment may develop differently and use their environment differently. A musical environment may be stimulating to a child who is emotionally able to respond to music, while this same environment may have no influence on one who lacks these qualities. Most educators agree that "an environment of high quality is necessary for desirable growth."7 On the other hand, a superior child may develop in spite of a poor environment. Sometimes he can take and use what his environment offers him more effectively than a child with hereditary limitations in a good environment.

If the child's development is so largely influenced by his environment, then the school's artificially created environment will largely influence his growth. The school should be specially organized and properly controlled to meet actual needs. The practice of the ideals of democracy will create an atmosphere of understanding, cooperation, loyalty, and friendliness.

Therefore, the curriculum must be kept at all times within the potentialities of the child's inheritance. Also his environment helps to reveal or suppress these potentialities, but it does not confer new ones. This means that individual differences must be cared for, so that the curriculum cannot be a "set procedure." The best it can do is to

guide in caring for all needs and problems of a biological organism in its environment.

Seven Factors in the Learning Process

A thoughtful consideration of the development of a curriculum designed to meet the interests, experiences, and needs of American youth would not be complete without a study of the factors involved in the process of learning. There are seven of these factors and the writer will attempt to discuss each one of them briefly in the order named: experiencing, meaningfulness, purpose, goal, motivation, insight, and maturation. It must also be remembered that these seven factors are conditioned by one's inherited potentialities and environmental opportunities.

**Experiencing.**—Experiencing is the first factor in the process we call learning. So closely are all the factors integrated and interwoven with experiencing that one might appropriately say that this factor is the sum total of the other six. Because most experiences are colored by previous experiences—meaningfulness, purpose, goal, motivation, insight, and maturation—it is natural that this primary factor be thought of as the whole of which the other factors are a part. And this concept is supported by William H. Burton who believes that "the process of learning by doing, reacting, and undergoing is called experiencing."^8^ Also another authority

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says, "The growing child in his environment lives through experience." Furthermore, not only is learning made up of first hand experiences but the process may be developed vicariously.

One learns to swim, dance, skate, cook and play the piano by actually doing the act. These are illustrations of first hand experiences. The teacher of wood shop, for example, knows that experience is the best teacher if the pupil is to develop and acquire the proper skill in the use of tools in the shop. Not only does experience tell him how to use them skillfully but also when to use them. The learning process resulting from a task performed by a pupil in a shop may be partly a physical experience, but the principles mastered bring into play another factor, that of insight. Simultaneously, attitudes may be developed through the emotions, and the importance of this factor, the emotions, must not be underestimated in the process of learning. And so we discover that through a first hand experience one may be called upon to exercise several factors comprising the learning process.

Burton tells us that we may learn many things through "vicariously experiencing the direct experiences of others."  

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9 Robert Hill Lane, The Progressive Elementary School, p. 11.
10 Burton, op. cit., p. 61.
Through the medium of reading one may experience in a very definite way the writing of the Declaration of Independence. One may, through analysis and observation, experience the fall of the Alamo or the hardships endured by the early colonists. Through the use of motion pictures and dramatization, experiences affecting others can become intensely personal. Time and again have we been aware of this in the hero or villain roles in the movies where vicariously the audience is held spellbound and in reality suffers or rejoices as the scenes change on the screen. Furthermore, a child may learn at a very young age to understand and enjoy knowledge that is not first hand. A four year old may enjoy Mother Goose rhymes; a nine year old may become absorbed in wild animal stories; and a twelve year old may lose himself in reading "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."11

Meaningfulness.—If a child learns the material with which he comes in contact, it must be meaningful. This is certainly an important factor in the process of education for our youth. It has been said that:

Meaning is based on experience and that experience is meaningful in terms of previous understandings. A thing can have meaning only in terms of what the child already understands. Simple things like a simple manipulation in arithmetic, a piece of literature, or a principle of health will be nonsense material if it is not meaningful in terms of his own experiences. General principles, plans, or ideas are more easily learned and less easily forgotten because of

11Florence Stratemeyer and others, Developing a Curriculum for Modern Living, p. 63.
their meaningful content. And details have meaning only as they are seen in relation to wholes.\textsuperscript{12}

If a child shares in the planning, his experience becomes meaningful when the purpose belongs to the child. In fact, the degree of meaningfulness varies directly to the degree of participation in the planning. Stratemeyer illustrates how pupils planned a Thanksgiving Festival. It became valuable because the pupils realized that it was meaningful when they were encouraged to outline the facts, decide what materials would be needed, plan how to get them, and delegate responsibilities and duties. In contrast to this procedure, another group was given factual material in the traditional way. In the first case learning resulted because the facts were meaningful. In the second illustration the group followed instructions fulfilling the teacher's purpose. It does not follow that because a teacher sees meaning in factual material that the pupils will do likewise.\textsuperscript{13}

Very often meaningfulness is stimulated by subject matter through activity. Here is a concrete example. One class spent eight to ten weeks being Greeks. They did not merely study Greece; they were Greeks. They lived, worked, and thought as Spartans, Athenians, Corinthians, Thebans,

\textsuperscript{12}J. Murray Lee and Doris May Lee, \textit{The Child and His Curriculum}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{13}Stratemeyer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64.
and Milesians. There was no costume play acting. It was their minds that they "dressed up," and the major problems arising out of Greek life were immediately given modern American application. One question, for example, which occupied the group was why there had never been a United States of Greece, although theirs had been a Greek democracy.\(^{14}\) This unit of activity had meaning and purpose. Experiences were felt by the participants, because they shared in the planning and in the living of them. It may then be said that materials are more rapidly learned and less easily forgotten when the individual and the group see meaning in their experience.

**Need and purpose.**—Purpose is a factor which some educators consider of prime importance in the learning activity and it is influenced by a need. If this condition is to be effective, the child must be conscious of the need as it pertains to himself or the group. He will likely never have a directive purpose unless he needs to know the answer. But if on the other hand, a child sees need and purpose in solving a problem or completing an activity, he puts his whole being to the solution. Then the whole personality is unified and his growing reaches a higher development. Therefore, purpose, need, and interest are all combined in developing a wholesome personality and an integrating curriculum.\(^{15}\)

\(^{14}\) Hollis L. Caswell and Doak S. Campbell, *Curriculum Development*, pp. 54-55.

\(^{15}\) Lee and Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 94-95.
There are some effects of directive purpose and social need. (1). The child develops the habit of behaving in acceptable ways when living or working in a group by having freedom to carry out his own purposes under friendly guidance. (2). Time is spent in solving problems, carrying out activities, and learning information that is worthwhile to him. (3). He does work that he is individually capable of doing. (4). He enjoys his share in the work which leads to broader interest.

Goal.—"The goal must be present before learning activity commences." To the learner anything that arouses him or sets a problem at his growth level is a goal. It may be a slide to climb, a doll to dress, a book to read, or a problem to solve. Whatever the goal it will guide his activities, and a child will persist through difficulties and unpleasant situations if the goal seems worthwhile to achieve.

The goal must be one that the child can reach and master in a reasonable time for successful realization. This means the goal must be the child's. In reaching the goal he will react as a whole--his mind, his muscles, and his emotions. If the teacher imposes her goals upon the child, he loses the opportunity for developing his initiative and independence. Then the attaining of the goal is to please the teacher.


17Stratemeyer, op. cit., p. 51.
Often that is all he gets out of it, because a connection is lacking between the goal and his life-situations and immediate interests.

Motivation.--Motivation is a condition of learning which may be regarded as the reason for doing something. It increases the tension under which the individual learns. Tension is a dynamic force caused by purpose belonging to the individual.

Within fairly wide limits mental development and learning occur faster and with greater efficiency when the organism is behaving under increased tension. First, learning is hastened by motivation because intensified responses are faster--movements and processes, alike, occur with greater speed, under the greater tension of interest in the task, under competition, anticipation at realizing one's previous progress, desire to please somebody, and thrill of something creative.18

Motivation in a functional situation needs no reward or artificial incentive except the learning in itself. Most educators agree most heartily with Wheeler and Perkins that in most situations "if motivation can be achieved by rewarding the learner with confidence, as shown in giving him a harder task to accomplish next time, the learning process is under proper control."19

Insight.--The chief characteristic of learning by insight is that it is sudden and complete and rarely needs repetition. It involves the ability to see through things

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18 Wheeler and Perkins, op. cit., p. 418.
19 Ibid, p. 309.
and to organize thinking in relation to outcomes. Insight is primarily intellectual and does not readily come to those individuals of low intelligence who find it difficult to both acquire and associate meaningful experiences. 20

It has also been found that to learn by insight, the learner works on the basis of some theory or principle, and there is always present a definite goal. Problem-solving of children in school and of adults in the interacting democratic society is the real test of insight. It may be solving an arithmetic problem, learning to spell a word, trying to find out what makes a whistle whistle, inserting a latch inside a door, fitting the parts of a model airplane, interpreting a football play, or discovering why the democratic Greeks did not have a United States. These examples and scores of others require insight in learning. Let it be understood that whatever the learner's task is, it should not be confusing or beyond his years of growth, but it should challenge him to reorganize the situations for himself. The possibility of insight depends on his own ability and background of experience.

Maturation.—The core of this entire chapter, thus far, has been the psychology of the growth and development of the child. As stated on the first page the elementary school should recognize that all four phases of growth—physical,
mental, social, and emotional—are of equal importance. Maturation is a partly physical thing which develops at its own rate, and it is partly developed by experiences and stimulations which the individual receives. Physical growth is usually gradual and continuous throughout the life of the individual. Mental, social, and emotional growth may be stunted or accelerated by the situations and experiences in the environment.

Readiness is a term used by educators to denote growth level. Learning takes place more readily and with less strain on the nervous system if the child is ready, and both first hand and vicarious experiences should be appropriate for his growth level. Therefore, it has been proved wise to start with a child where he is and build from there. One authority illustrates it this way by stating that the failure to recognize maturity level is like building a skyscraper and neglecting to put the third floor in before building the fourth.21

It may further be emphasized that growth is an evolving process, and if a child is given opportunity and guidance he will do all the things expected of him in due time. In the New Testament, one of the writers recognized this when he wrote "when I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man,

21 Lee and Lee, op. cit., p. 144.
I put away childish things." Furthermore, the facts concerning inheritance and environment prove that no two individuals are exactly alike, so it follows that readiness will be different for each one. Then it is nothing short of cruelty to demand that learners adhere to a rigid pattern in the curriculum.

Conclusion.—Because the whole child—physically, intelligently, socially, and emotionally—is directly affected by all the elements that make up the learning process, it is imperative that a curriculum be developed that will meet the needs and at the same time "tie-in" with experiences. Expressing it another way, the school will be a workshop where the whole child goes to school for the purpose of developing a unified personality and integrity of character. The curriculum must be integrated or unified, so that traditional "subject matter" barriers are broken down and life-situations substituted. This, in turn, makes possible flexibility in planning, coordinating, and directing the program of activities, which is at all times concerned with and conscious of individual differences in the group.

By incorporating the principles of democratic philosophy in Chapter II with the factors involved in the psychology of growth and learning in Chapter III, a set of criteria may be derived by which the Dallas Elementary School can be evaluated. Some of the salient implications which function to create a
school to care for all the children of all the people may be summarized in this way: a flexible program provides for continuous change in an ever-changing world. Pupil-participation and cooperation in all activities and experiences are essential to teach the worth of the individual to himself and his relation to his society. The varying degrees of individual differences among children demand that each be given an opportunity to grow and develop among his associates to his full capacity and for the best interest of the group. The individual functions as a whole, so it follows that the curriculum must be integrated in order that the child may see his relation to life as a whole process. Growth which is dynamic in its very nature is an evolving process. Also, in this process of "growing up," if motivation or tension results from pupil purpose and interest, then the future takes care of itself as he builds on the normal sequence of activities and experiences when he is ready for them. Finally, by wisely and consistently using philosophy to direct and psychology to carry out plans and organization, the school will be enabled to prepare youth to face the world with faith, courage, confidence, and happiness.
CHAPTER IV

CRITERIA AND EVALUATION OF AN
EVOLVING CURRICULUM

In the consideration of an evolving curriculum in the elementary schools of a city system, careful study should be given to the matter of evaluation. Administrators and teachers should find out if the procedure that is growing out of their thoughts and efforts is really getting the results desired. This is a challenging problem, and the teaching profession should not be satisfied with a few tangible, encouraging, and perhaps temporary outcomes. The results should furnish the impetus necessary to promote a more effective teaching-learning situation.

With this idea in mind three schools were visited. The pupils in these schools differ greatly in their cultural background and economic status, experience and ability, need and interest. A cross section of the Dallas Elementary Schools was purposely selected. Because of the recognizable difference in their backgrounds, one must keep in mind that their interests may seem far apart. A brief description of these schools may be given. School A is composed of pupils who have very little cultural background. Many of their parents belong to the unskilled laboring class. A negligible
percentage will aspire to a college education, and only a few of the pupils will finish high school. School B consists of pupils from the ambitious middle class, whose parents have a great interest in their children's welfare both in the present and the future. Consequently, every effort is made to provide greater advantages for their children than they themselves received. The pupils finish high school and a large percentage of them go to college. School C is located in a community where many parents are college trained, and where comfortable means and cultural backgrounds provide for enjoyable living conditions. Many wide experiences are enjoyed by their children outside the school through summer camps, resort trips, and cultural entertainment from civic enterprises.

However, in considering whether the curriculum is meeting the needs of and challenging the interest of all the children of all the people, it is believed necessary to set up essential criteria. Then the teaching-learning process in the schools should be examined in the light of such standards. The criteria that have been selected are:

1. Integration of subject matter.
2. Care of individual differences.
3. Flexibility of school program.
4. Pupil participation in the planning, selecting, and organizing.
5. Growth—an evolving process.

6. Motivation or tension resulting from a purpose belonging to the child.

7. Growth—dynamic, growing out of the present.

It is believed furthermore that the criteria listed are the very warp and woof of an evolving curriculum.

Integration of Subject Matter

The principle of integration pertains to the attainment of continuous, intelligent, and interactive adjusting to the processes and outcomes of education in an environment.\(^1\) The curriculum should react on the individual as a balanced, unified whole, not as pieces of learning from his many subjects. It must present life as a whole, so that the pupils may realize their relation to it. Then the pupils will make use of subject-matter as they need information for solving their immediate problems.

Observation revealed that Schools A, B, and C have correlated certain fields into one area, thus allowing longer blocks of time. The curriculum of Schools A and B consists of language arts, social studies, arithmetic, music, art, and physical education. In School C there is still further fusion, in that language arts and social studies are combined into one area called social living with a still longer block of

\(^1\)L. Thomas Hopkins, Integration: Its Meaning and Application, p. 1.
time—two and one-half hours. Here it was observed that the longer blocks of time and freedom for group work in the classes caused the pupils to learn the subject matter in social living without realizing it was being taught as such, because it was interwoven with their interests and experiences as well as their needs. This school capitalizes on the experiences of the pupils as a basis for subject matter units, while the other two schools put more stress on subject matter as such.

However, in all three schools subject matter areas are still taught in isolation but with a definite correlation of all activities. These activities are also focused and correlated with other fields, such as, music, art, and physical education. The subject matter framework for the units are set up in advance by the teacher. The pupils cooperate in setting up goals and in planning to attain them. Habits and skills are considered tools of learning and emphasis is placed upon them. Much stress is placed upon functional meanings and social relations. Furthermore, it may be mentioned here that the elementary schools do use frequently the numerous community resources of the city in correlation with school activities. This first hand knowledge is immeasurably valuable and vital to the child in his city environment. Trips to the zoo, Art Museum, Museum of Natural History, Aquarium, City Hall, newspaper plant, Children's Symphony Orchestra concerts, Little Mexico, and factories
are invaluable experiences. And too, the extensive visual aids library of films and slides in the Central Office are used in all schools for vicarious experiencing and enjoyment.

In evaluating this criterion, it must be concluded that an integrative program which cares for pupil purpose, need, and interest is still in its infancy, but thought and study are being given to its vital place in an evolving curriculum. This can be done only by abolishing subject-matter barriers and providing an integrated curriculum with the various parts interdependent. Then the pupils can use subject matter as they need information for solving problems in their immediate present. Their experiences in using their intelligence to carry out their own purposes and needs develop each individual to his full capacity in a democratic culture.

Finally it might be added that the integrated program in the elementary schools did not reach the goals looked for. This condition is due partly to the administrative organization, partly to teacher training, and partly to inadequate building facilities.

Care of Individual Differences

Because pupils differ widely in their physical conditions, mental capacities, experience backgrounds, and personalities, a discussion of this criterion is necessary. Under the traditional curriculum, all subject matter was taught the same way without taking into account that individual differences were
in evidence then as they are apparent now. In an evolving
curriculum steps are being taken in the right direction,
and not only are these variations recognized but some defi-
nite moves are made to do something about them.

The Schools A, B, and C give thought and consideration
to three aspects in caring for individual differences. They
will be discussed and evaluated as follows: (1) grouping of
pupils, (2) teaching procedures, and (3) promoting to next
grade.

These schools group pupils according to chronological
age as much as possible regardless of whether they have grown
to the same extent in physical, mental, social, and emotional
capacities. Most individuals at various times grow with
startling suddenness which affects their behaviors and atti-
tudes during that time. However, it it believed that if a
child feels at home in his group or class and is accepted by
his classmates, he has a better chance of adjusting to his
society and of developing an integral personality. In order
to feel at home in a group, he needs to succeed in some way.
He must be accepted and given an opportunity to participate
in the activities in so far as he is able. It was also
noted that the teachers in the schools allowed the pupils to
keep themselves in the class activities; usually this group-
ing naturally led to interest grouping rather than ability
grouping. This is accepted as a good form of grouping for
working together, because it is a normal one in living and
working in a democratic society. Then, at various times the teachers regrouped the pupils temporarily for remedial work or for adjusting difficulties.

Grouping is further studied by the teachers from intelligence tests and reading readiness tests given by the Central Office. These are given periodically to all elementary children. The results are tabulated and sent to the respective schools. There is one objection to placing too much reliability on these tests, in that they are given by an outsider who knows the curriculum but not the pupils. Therefore, the teachers use the results from the tests in conjunction with their observations of pupils' growth and behavior, their home and community environments and their backgrounds of experiences. Finally to sum up the teachers' opinions, four points might be mentioned: (1) the child should not be over-age or under-age in his group; (2) for the mentally superior, additional work and experiences to challenge his abilities should be provided; (3) if a child is mentally slow, the situations should be within his ability to succeed; and (4) tests and markings should contribute to the child's adjustment rather than to tear down.

The teaching procedures in an evolving curriculum should vary from day to day and year to year, depending on the personalities of the children. The desire to learn and the feeling of need will care for many details in mastering the
material. In School A where textbook method of teaching is in evidence, the procedure is stereotype teaching and learning. School B and C provide extensive materials for varying reading levels and much more planning is done for and by the individual child. School C centers activities in Social Living Area around the child. Each has a part in each unit according to his interest, need, and ability. He may carry out his own purposeful goal with the group, individually, or in both ways. His past experiences and special talents make him an individual with something to contribute to his group. Skills in reading, writing, and spelling are taught as he needs them.

The planning for promotion to the next grade level should be given much consideration by the teacher. She must evaluate the extent to which a child has grown mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. In School A where subject matter is given paramount importance, promotion is considered from the standpoint of learning facts and acquiring skills. However, the wise teachers in this school certainly do not adhere strictly to this practice. They also carefully take into account age, maturity, social relations, and ability. School B and C rarely retain a pupil and they consider growth during the school term from many angles. If the child has made a social adjustment to his group, developed fine attitudes and work habits, and learned to solve his problems intelligently according to his ability, he is ready to go with
his group to the next grade. All schools agreed that accelerating the bright child beyond his chronological age is rarely a wise action, because his different attitudes and interests make him a misfit with children who are more mature. Retaining the mentally slow child is equally dangerous, for the humiliation of being with younger children is detrimental to his personality.

For many years schools have been talking about adapting the curriculum to individual difference. When each classroom is provided with a variety of books of varying degrees of difficulty, life experience of the child is substituted for subject matter, and flexibility is provided in the schedule, individual difference can be properly cared for at all times.

Flexibility of Program

The administrative organization of the school wields a vast influence on the flexibility of the program. This criterion is closely related to and might be considered a part of integration, since integration unites subject areas into a whole with longer blocks of time for the teaching-learning process. Flexibility of the school day provides for flexibility of movement, of procedure, of thought, of interest, of needs, and of planning. Any program that is so rigid that activities must be abruptly ended at the ringing of a bell causes confusion. This sudden "shopping off" of the class period when interest is high, and purpose is all-absorbing brings frustration. This is caused by the facts that goals
have not been reached and purposes are disturbed. Sometimes this interest can be recaptured; sometimes interests and purposes are lost completely. This is true in adult life too. The housewife does not want to be disturbed while mixing a cake, because all ingredients and equipment are right at hand, ready for use. And so it is in a classroom. However, if breaks in activities can be made at a convenient time, the program is satisfying to the participants. Thus, flexibility gives time and opportunity for proper pursuit of learning or accomplishing what has been begun under tension, and tension is relieved when goals are attained.

Flexibility of movement in so far as it does not interfere with others is an important principle in the democratic process of living. Working in groups when feasible is an excellent way of learning cooperation in organizing and solving common problems. A "give and take" in group discussions promotes self-respect for the individual and unity of action for the group. If an individual or group sees a better way of doing a thing, then flexibility in method of procedure gives opportunity for change. This promotes a greater interest in reaching the goal and develops the pupil's ingenuity, initiative, and insight. Pupils following this procedure are learning to solve life's problems in the immediate present, and also a background of experience is developed for the solution of problems that arise in the future.
When the three schools under observation are examined under the criterion, flexibility, there is much left to be desired. Again, it should be said, the organization of the schedule influences to a great extent and, in fact, often blocks complete flexibility. Even where larger blocks of time are used, the period comes to a close—when the bell rings.

The program should be so flexible that rest periods may be provided at the discretion of the teacher at any time there are signs of restlessness or fatigue. If a learner is engrossed in some activity, for which he has a real interest, he need not be disturbed until the activity is finished or a stopping place is reached. Work is as much fun as play when objectives are realized. Furthermore, the thrill of accomplishment is not only satisfying but long-lasting. Schools A, B, and C can obtain flexibility in movements, interests, needs, and accomplishments if integration of instruction is made available to pupils and teachers.

Pupil Participation in Planning, Selecting, and Organizing

It is believed that an evolving curriculum should include the criterion, pupil participation, if it is to meet the needs of all the children of all the people. Such a program encourages pupils to participate in selecting, planning, and organizing activities. There are many advantages in
cooperative planning of teachers with pupils and pupils with pupils. In the first place, the pupil has an increased interest in the subject matter. He assumes greater responsibility for desirable learning situations. He develops creative abilities, initiative, respect for the rights and opinions of others, and meaningfulness of purpose. Such a philosophy gives the pupil a sense of security and a sense of belonging, because he rightfully assumes his share of responsibilities and learns to appreciate the dignity of work.

The pupil's planning ability and his contributions will be governed by his maturity level of learning. The teacher may use his suggestions wisely as a guide in promoting and directing experiences that are real to him. These experiences he accepts not as an imposed task, but as a novel situation to be explored, conquered, and enjoyed. Then he is ready for the next task which follows in sequence as he develops his ability to plan the direction of his own interests. He acquires wholesome ideals, fine attitudes, and strength of character through his realization of success and recognition. He also learns the real meanings of democracy by living them with his classmates.

Such a program as this places a different responsibility upon the teacher. Contrary to traditional school procedures, the teacher does not make detailed lesson plans for six weeks or six months. She does not know two months in advance what she will be teaching, because that depends on the needs and
interests of the learner. Her position is no less effective, for she is there to guide and direct problems to an ultimate solution or she may encourage pupils to overcome difficulties which for the time being appear to them insurmountable. She may also motivate discussions and stimulate thinking by the pupil. She may select certain materials and references and above all create an environment conducive to inspiration and happiness. This makes every teacher a guide and a counsellor who grows along with the pupils in all their activities.

In the elementary schools of Dallas, pupils do have a part in planning, selecting, and organizing the curriculum. Schools A and B provide freedom in setting up goals and there is some participation in planning the methods of achieving them. The extent depends on the type of curriculum set up, as well as upon the abilities of the pupils and upon their past experiences and aptitudes.

Leadership and fellowship is developed in Schools A and B through such organizations as Junior Safety Council, Fire Prevention Council, Junior Red Cross, and the school newspaper. School C adds to these organizations a Student Council. The purpose of these organizations is to improve the life of the school. Representatives are elected by democratic procedures. All plans are made and carried out by the pupils with the teacher or principal guiding and giving suggestions. Various committees are appointed by the pupils and are
changed frequently, so that more pupils will have an opportunity of expressing their opinions as they participate. The decisions are subject to the pleasure of the entire organization which delegates power. In school elections for officers, the winners assume obligations gravely and the losers learn dignity and sportsmanship in defeat. There is valuable training in both, for in a democracy it is just as essential to be a good loser as a dignified winner. Here preaching democracy is ineffective, but living it is vital and impressive. It must be mentioned that character training, emotional control, fairness, and honor are as important attitudes in a pupil's social training as an ability to solve a problem or write an essay.

In the classroom of School C the bright child may develop a unit of learning to a much greater extent than others by enriching the subject matter with his own experiences or from the experiences of others. The fields of his experiences include various outlets. He may create, direct, and explore in many directions. The mentally, physically, and socially handicapped has his place too. All children contribute something, meager though it may be. In Schools A and B subject matter is more isolated. Wise and understanding teachers provide some experiences to illustrate and stimulate interest in subject matter essentials that are required. Pupil participation has not reached a maximum due to inadequate building equipment and school organization.
Growth is an Evolving Process

From the time a child is born one is aware that the individual constantly passes through periodic changes in development. The evolution for some people occurs very gradually; in others changes appear with startling suddenness. And it must be borne in mind that this growth takes place in the whole child. The baby in the cradle as he develops physically is adjusting himself to his environment. As he reaches for the moon and for objects beyond his grasp, he is developing a sense of distance and perspective. His interests change as he learns to walk and through experience he becomes a part of what must appear to him a very rapidly changing world. As he grows older, his attention span increases. More experiences leave an indelible mark upon him and through these experiences he is able to meet new problems as they arise.

It is interesting indeed to recognize that stage of development where a child begins to realize the relationship that exists between people and things in his environment. One is surprised at times with the ways in which a child displays reasoning powers. As his physical and mental growth evolves he simultaneously changes from thinking of himself in terms of one individual to a realization that he belongs to a group. His whole social outlook on life takes on broader and broader horizons. And at this point, it should be emphasized that growth takes place throughout one’s span of life.
If education is to play the maximum role in the growth of a child, then the curriculum must be an evolving one—one that meets the needs and challenges the interests of the child as he emerges from one period of development to the next. An evolving curriculum must be flexible so that it can readily adjust to the individual ability-interests of each pupil.

A sincere effort is being made in the Dallas Elementary Schools not to require the same standards of attainment for all pupils. Certainly, the teachers are being alerted to the importance not only of recognizing that important criterion, the growth and development of the child, but they are doing something about it. Instruction begins where the child is and progresses as rapidly as his background of experience and his capabilities will permit.

Motivation or Tension Results from a Purpose Belonging to the Child

The behavior of an organism is always purposeful. The purpose must be real to the child; therefore, it must be his own, growing out of his needs. Motivation reaches a higher degree if the purpose belongs to the child. He will put his whole being into solving the problem or completing the activity if there is a need to satisfy or a goal to attain. Then the purpose to satisfy the need and to reach the goal will cause him to persist through any difficult situation to
succeed. Any tension resulting from the child's purpose makes a deep impression upon him. Some results from such tension affecting the individual may be mentioned as follows: (1) Experiencing takes the place of memorization. (2) Things experienced with a purposeful goal are more readily learned and less easily forgotten. (3) Confidence is gained, reasoning powers developed, attitudes are molded, emotions developed, creative thinking and self expression are encouraged. (4) Artificial compulsion by teacher is absent. (5) Learning satisfies the child's native curiosity through need and purposes on growth level.

In Schools A and B where subject matter is taught for the most part, the purpose belongs to the teacher. However, various devices, such as games, excursions, visual aids, reference materials, and community resources are used to motivate. In School C where unit teaching is used to a great extent, the purpose is the children's. There was much evidence on bulletin boards and display tables that pupils had carried out their own purpose in planning and creating. Childlike though these were, there was evidence that they had achieved on their growth level; this was perfection to the children. In an evolving curriculum where motivation results from pupil purpose, there are many diversified activities that may be utilized to care for individual differences. When all activities are unified into a whole there need be no
rewards or competition, for learning is its own reward, growing out of need, purpose, and interest.

Growth Is a Dynamic Process
Growing Out of the Present

The good life for man is one of dynamic creative living, to have maximum richness of life, maximum achievement and happiness, the whole life must be integrated and striving onward to higher goals.2

The situations which confront the child in his immediate living should be the starting place of the teaching-learning process. The teaching unit should begin with the vital problems in which the pupil is interested, so that he will react with a dynamic and creative behavior. The readiness of the individual encourages initiative and group participation. Then he will use his past experiences and the experiences that other human beings have had to direct him to new levels of experience. The curriculum cannot be fixed or static, because human growth is evolving. To take care of all the needs it must be flexible, novel, challenging, and creative. Therefore, a dynamic curriculum for dynamic growth includes all the factors which contribute to active rather than static instruction.

2The Joint Committee on Curriculum, The Changing Curriculum, p. 43.
It must not be overlooked that in each experience of the individual, some kind of learning is taking place whether to build up or tear down personality and character traits. If the school provides for the development of each pupil in harmony with his fundamental needs and best interests, he should indulge in only those experiences which develop his personality. Furthermore, the feelings that the child has about his school, teachers, and associates color his experiences throughout his life. Each child's experiences are unique and dynamic, growing out of the present. Therefore, one must consider his developmental needs first and subject matter second.

The teachers in the schools observed are striving to make school environment and techniques of the teaching-learning process suitable for the living experiences of children as they grow day by day. It was also noted that the pupils' willingness and enthusiasm to attack a problem depended to a large extent upon their readiness for the activity. This readiness does not come simultaneously for each pupil in the group. All schools recognized this fact, but School C is doing more to provide for this individual difference by using present experiences to promote growth and learning. In conclusion it may be stated that the extent to which the schools provide a flexible program, care for individual differences, encourage pupil-participation, and
provide worth-while experiences foretells the kind of citizens to expect tomorrow. The maximum attainment is still a dream, which merits much thought and study by educators in the Dallas Elementary Schools in order to reach full realization.

Summary

It was noted in the beginning that the pupils in the three schools selected for observation differed in their cultural backgrounds and economic status, experience and ability, need and interest. Yet, the extent to which each measured up in the final analysis of evaluation by the criteria selected is very nearly the same. All three fall short in providing an integrated program because each still teaches isolated subjects, though some correlation is done in related fields. Schools A and B still teach subject-matter as such, while School C uses both subject-matter and experience units. Individual differences in all schools are cared for in so far as the curriculum organization allows. Pupil planning is carried out after the framework is set up by adults. Community resources are utilized in correlating present interests of the children with subjects taught. Skills and habits are still taught to a large degree in isolation, but School C gives more attention to individual needs in subject and experience units. The teachers are studying the psychology of growth and development and are recognizing
the fact that growth is dynamic, proceeding out of the present interests, purpose, and needs of the individuals in their classwork. This evolving curriculum is still in the process of becoming what teachers and administrators are striving to achieve.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Much thought and effort has been expended on the concept of an evolving curriculum in the Dallas Elementary Schools. It is impossible for one to make such a study without benefiting immeasurably. The concept itself is thought provoking. Before recommendations are offered it seems apropos to recall some of the salient points that of necessity have only been touched upon.

1. Each teacher should have a workable philosophy which directs in formulating progressive ideas and in evaluating experiences which benefit each child as well as his group.

2. If the curriculum is developed on the basis of child growth and development, it is necessary for each teacher to have a sound knowledge of child development, learning, and behavior.

3. The child must be recognized as an entirety with physical, mental, social, and emotional aspects.

4. The elementary school curriculum must provide for the needs and stimulate the interest of all the children of all the people.

5. Integration provides opportunity for rich and varied activities in all areas of growth and learning. Subject
matter becomes functional as the child needs information for solving his immediate problems.

6. A flexible curriculum meets the needs and interests by providing experiences which are an integral part of the individual's total life.

7. Regardless of children's differences, there is value in every human being, and he should have the opportunity to achieve to the extent of his ability.

8. The school's responsibility is to provide a program of activities that recognizes individual differences in individual status and capacities.

9. The child's growth and development is a continuous process which is both evolving and dynamic in its very nature.

10. Growth must be evaluated on the learner's own potentialities rather than by arbitrary standards.

11. Learning takes place more readily and with less strain if the need and purpose belongs to the child.

12. Pupil-participation in planning, selecting, and organizing activities provides meaning for activities and increases interests in reaching the goals.

13. An evolving curriculum that strives to meet the needs of all pupils must be flexible, must be integrated, must provide for individual differences, and must encourage pupil-participation in the activities of a democratic society.

14. In the final outcome, the pupil should develop an integrated personality, the ability to use his intelligence,
and acquire a feeling of belonging, of security, and of confidence.

Recommendations

If the instruction offered to the pupils is to attain the goals set up for it, then the teachers and administrators must not become static; instead they should keep in mind constantly that they, too, can grow along with an evolving curriculum. With this thought in mind it is recommended that:

1. Each teacher set up a workable philosophy of education in her own mind.

2. Each teacher consider it essential that she understand thoroughly the growth and development of children and apply such knowledge in her classroom.

3. Each teacher capitalize on the children's interests so that their present needs can be met.

4. Each teacher make a constant effort to integrate the subjects under her supervision with a definite purpose in view, that of caring for the whole child—mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally.

5. Each teacher provide a wholesome and attractive environment conducive to happiness and democratic living.

6. The administration take steps to make available larger blocks of time for teaching a flexible and integrated curriculum.
To accomplish these ends is not an easy task. It requires intelligent planning, cooperation, and tireless effort. If teachers and administrators devote their energies to such a task, then and only then will an evolving curriculum be achieved.
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