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AERA-SIG Curriculum Newsletter

American Educational Research Association

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NEWSLETTER
of the
AERA Special Interest Group on
CREATION AND UTILIZATION OF CURRICULUM KNOWLEDGE

Issue No. 8

March, 1976

Bicentennial Connection

1776 and the years that followed were good years for the growth of knowledge according to Salamon Bochner. In Eclosion and Synthesis: Perspectives on the History of Knowledge he asserts that the half century, 1776-1825 (which he calls the Age of Eclosion), played a pivotal role in the development of 20th century knowledge. It did so because it was during this time that the main organizational areas of contemporary knowledge both evolved and gained a stable identity. By contrast, he calls the present age the Age of Synthesis. This age, he maintains is more aptly characterized by synthesis because greater attention is being given to showing how various areas of knowledge can be used in conjunction with one another to better help us understand the man-universe relationship. The interesting question - what, if any, relationship does all this have to do with the creation and utilization of curriculum knowledge? One possible connection, it might help us to exchange ideas about where we are in the development of curriculum knowledge. Are we at a Pre-Eclosion, an Eclosion, a Pre-Synthesis, or a Synthesis stage of development? Any thoughts, anyone?

SIG Session at AERA Announced

We are pleased to note that this year's Symposium/Business Session is scheduled at 12:25-1:55 in the Teakwood Room (Hilton) on Thursday, April 22. The Symposium theme and participants are as follows:

- 21.24 CURRICULUM INQUIRY: THREE PERSPECTIVES ON REALIZATION OF INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTS OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS (Symposium and Business Meeting, SIG/Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge)

CHAIR
PARTICIPANTS

Donald R. Chipley, The Pennsylvania State University
Rethought Scientism: The Nature of Systems Relating to the
Technical: An Extension of the Practical. Francis P. Hunkins,
University of Washington
Notes on the Relationship Between the Language of the Practical,
The Meaning of Experience and the Methodology of Curriculum
Development. M.J. Max Van Manen, The Ontario Institute for
Studies in Education
The Literature of Curriculum Development: Toward Centralization
and Analysis. William H. Schubert, University of Illinois,
Chicago

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DISCUSSANT
BUSINESS

George Willis, University of Rhode Island
D.R. Chipley & G. Willis SIG Co-Chairpersons

National Institute Conducts National Curriculum Survey

The National Institute of Education's Curriculum Development Task Force recently conducted a survey of issues, problems, and concerns about curriculum development that are now foremost in people's mind. Views expressed by interviewees from sixty organizations of professional and lay people, as well as ideas found in nearly fifty recent documents, were summarized before NIE's National Council on Educational Research on January 15, 1976. The Council supported NIE's undertaking two kinds of activities that grew out of the survey: 1) the providing of forums and other means of broadening the discussion of the issues identified in the survey, and 2) the examining of ways of improving the manner in which curriculum development takes place.

Among conclusions drawn in the survey on which these activities are based are these: 1) the over-riding interest at the present time is in having a piece of the action at all levels of curriculum decision making, 2) the concern for involvement is accompanied by a feeling of impotence and of having limited influence, 3) the views expressed reflect contradictory perceptions and arguments about what actually goes on in schools, 4) the preferred arena for resolution of conflicting interests related to curriculum is clearly local, not federal or state, and 5) there is widespread dissatisfaction with the failure of past strategies of curriculum development in enlisting the collaboration of many groups having a stake in the enterprise.

This report and the anticipated movement of NIE into these issues in curriculum development provide an air of hope among those practitioners and researchers concerned with improving the nation's curricula. If capitalized upon, the opportunity may lead to fruitful new directions. Those wishing to obtain a copy of the Report should write Jon Schaffarzick, Program on School Capacity for Problem Solving, National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C. 20208. Feedback is welcome.

SIG Membership - February, 1976

William Alexander
Vernon E. Anderson
Bruce G. Baron
Wilma W. Bidwell
Rolland Callaway
Donald Chipley
F. Michael Connelly
Duane H. Dillman
Harold D. Drummond
Michael F. Haines
Paul M. Halverson
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William E. Hoffman
Todd Hoover

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Carmel, California
Research for Better Schools, Philadelphia
State University of New York at Albany
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Pennsylvania State University
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Drew Postgraduate Medical School - Los Angeles
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State University of New York - Maritime
University of Georgia
University of Florida
Lehigh University
University of British Columbia
The College of Wooster (Ohio)
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| Philadelphia | |
| Wilma W. Bidwell | State University of New York at Albany |
| Rolland Callaway | University of Wisconsin - Madison |
| Donald Chipley | Pennsylvania State University |
| F. Michael Connelly | Ontario Institute for in Education |
| Duane H. Dillman | Drew Postgraduate Medical School - Los |
| Angeles | |
| Harold D. Drummond | University of New Mexico |
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| Maritime | |
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Todd Hoover

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Shake Ketefian
Paul R. Klohr
Marcella L. Kysilka
Arthur J. Lewis
Arieh Lewy
Wilma S. Longstreet
Maria T. Marcano
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Laurel Tanner
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William Van Til
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David C. Williams
George Willis
Herbert Wilson
Paul W.F. Witt
Lutian R. Wootton
Esther Zaret

Arcadia University - Nova Scotia
New York City
Ohio State University
Florida Technological University
University of Florida
Tel Aviv University
University of Michigan - Flint
University of Puerto Rico
University of California at Los Angeles
Bowling Green State University
Terre Haute, Indiana
University of Alberta
Indiana University
Teachers College, Columbia University
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Temple University
Ottawa, Canada
Indiana University
Indiana State University
Indiana State University
Eastern Kentucky University
University of Rhode Island
University of Arizona
Michigan State University
University of Georgia
Virginia Commonwealth University

An Invitation From England

Dear Colleague,

A Comparison of American and British organization for educational research and its relation to policy development and innovation suggests some interesting differences between the two countries e.g. in national priorities, expectations of research, organizational characteristics and long-range planning. Some of the differences are suggested below in the form of general statements about Britain compared to the USA and related questions about America. Your responses or additions to the questions or statements are warmly invited as part of a developing dialogue.

In Britain, there is a dislike of separating basic from applied research or either of these from development activity. This is strongly related to a large number of fundamental policy changes in education as a direct result of the influence of research findings.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Shake Ketefian | New York City |
| Paul R. Klohr | Ohio State University |
| Marcella L. Kysilka | Florida Technological University |
| Arthur J. Lewis | University of Florida |
| Arieh Lewy | Tel Aviv University |
| Wilma S. | Longstreet University of Michigan - Flint |
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| Antoinette A. Oberg | University of Alberta |
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| William H. Schubert | University of Illinois - Chicago Circle |
| Stephen Selden | University of Pennsylvania |
| Edmund C. Short | Pennsylvania State University |
| Delores Silva | Temple University |
| Helen N. Sprey | Case Western Reserve University |
| Daniel Tanner | Rutgers University |
| Laurel Tanner | Temple University |
| Peter A. Taylor | Ottawa, Canada |
| Laura E. Trout | Indiana University |
| William Van Till | Indiana State University |
| Tom C. Venable | Indiana State University |
| David C. Williams | Eastern Kentucky University |
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In Britain, there is a dislike of separating basic from applied research or either of these from development activity. This is strongly related to a large number of fundamental policy changes in education as a direct result of the influence of research findings.

1. In the USA, there appears to be an increasing emphasis on applied research as distinct from basic research. Does this give an over-emphasis on short-term and objective results in contrast to more exploratory activities?

In Britain, adoption of products of educational R&D is based on the decision of the individual teacher or, at most, with his colleagues in the school, i.e. adoption decisions are very decentralized.

2. In the USA, does the centralized basis of adoption (by a local education authority - LEA) result in efficient dissemination and implementation of innovation?

In Britain, assessment of the success of an educational innovation such as a curriculum development project is not based mainly on any measure of adoption. A new project is assumed to initiate a far wider range of changes than could be represented by a set of objectives. Innovative activities are seen as most meaningfully developing at the time and place of use with the teacher and pupils as the most creative source of innovation. Any involvement in a centrally organized innovative project is part of an ongoing process of continuous renewal - mostly at the personal rather than the institutional level.

3. In the USA, it appears that expertise from outside the classroom is thought to be the most important source of innovation. Is this your view? Is this view accepted by teachers?

In Britain, products of R&D are not assumed necessarily to lead to improvements. The attitude to innovation is one of scepticism and teachers feel no pressure to adopt.

4. In the USA, to what extent does the pressure to innovate detract from what the teacher is supposed to be doing? Does the pressure for constant change from the outside (e.g. change agents or curriculum specialists) detract from the development of innovative activities based on the personal interests of teachers?

In Britain, although there is increasing community involvement in schools, there is no suggestion of assessment by the public of what schools are doing. It is felt that teachers are professionally qualified to determine the curriculum and that public participation would only confirm that there is no one best way - that 'best' in any situation is dependent both on the needs and interests of the pupils and teacher and cannot be determined by casual outside observers.

5. In the USA, to what extent are developments such as voucher systems and teacher accountability seen as an extension of traditional community involvement in schools? Is the trend so strong as to prevent the development of teacher professionalism?

In Britain, all career advancement in education requires an initial experience in teaching and there is little opportunity for employment in institutions outside of schools or LEAs.

6. In the USA, does the development of teacher career opportunities outside schools or LEAs contribute to making the life of a classroom teacher more flexible or satisfying and open to innovation?

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In Britain, considerable value is placed upon clear expression with the minimal use of different words to express similar ideas. Familiar words are preferred to the unfamiliar or invented.

7. In the USA, it is felt that specialist words ('jargon') and complex sentence construction dominates educational literature? To what extent do these characteristics form barriers to communication?

Please return any comments to:

Dr. R.B. Nicodemus, The Open University
Institute of Educational Technology
Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, ENGLAND

Proposals For New Directions

The existence of the SIG in its present form has been at issue among the membership over the last few years. Thus, we have asked for proposals that might define new directions for a future focus of the SIG. We have received one proposal from Drs. Daniel and Laurel Tanner, which is presented below. Before presenting it, however, we wish again to take this opportunity to invite those who might have an idea, to write it down on a piece of paper and send it along to the editor, Dr. Don Chipley, 159 Chambers, Penn State University, University Park, PA (16802) so that we might present it for consideration along with the Tanner's proposal at the Business part of the SIG Session on April 22. As for the proposal submitted by Drs. Daniel and Laurel Tanner, it is briefly summarized in the following form:

Proposal for a change in the format and focus of the Special-Interest Group on Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge:

Beginning with the 1977 meeting of AERA, the Special-Interest Group on Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge will focus on problems and issues concerning curriculum policy -- including the affects of policy on the interpretation of curriculum research and on programs and practices in curriculum development. The Special-Interest Group will follow a new format and will be organized around a symposium, an invited speaker, and selected papers.

New Research Supports Importance of Schooling

We all know of the Coleman Report (1966) which purports to show that schooling per se is a comparatively minor variable as related to pupil achievement, and thus influenced many policy makers and legislators to question the idea of allocating increased support for educational programs. Recent research by David E. Wiley (reported in Schooling and Achievement in American Society, edited by W.H. Sewell, R.M. Hauser, and D.L. Featherstone, and published by Academic Press, 1975), however, tells a different tale. Using Coleman's own data, Wiley has found that amount of schooling, in fact, accounts for a sizeable proportion of the variance in pupil achievement. Moreover, Coleman, himself, recently has acknowledged that the essential point made in his 1966 research report is not that schooling has no effect on pupil achievement, but rather

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that schooling has an effect which needs to be studied! For curriculum researchers, then, perhaps one of the key questions is what are the effects of schooling on children when different types of curriculum approaches are used?

SIG Dues and Membership: Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge

To affiliate with the SIG on "Creation and Utilization of Curriculum Knowledge," fill in the membership blank included in this newsletter and send in your \$1.00. The new membership year begins April 22, 1976, and extends until the Annual Meeting in 1977. Membership in AERA is not a prerequisite for SIG membership. Interested graduate students are encouraged to join.

Include me as a participating member for 1976-1977

Enclosed is payment of \$1.00 to cover meeting and newsletter expense.* (Checks should be made out and sent to: Edmund Short, 141 Chambers, College of Education, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802).

I do not wish to be included in the membership of this SIG, but please place my name on the mailing list to be kept informed of its activities.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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