EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

MATERIALS FOR UNIT ON SOUTH’S BI-RACIAL PROBLEMS

Since preparation for intelligent citizenship is an essential function of education, and since the most serious problems of citizenship in the South are connected with the bi-racial situation, it seems obvious that our schools should be doing something to prepare future citizens to understand these problems and to solve them in wisdom and justice.

Educators throughout the South are convinced of this fact and recommendations to that effect have been embodied in official curriculum bulletins, teachers’ guides, and courses of study recently issued by a number of state departments of education.

Thus Georgia’s new “Program for the Improvement of Instruction” (Bulletin No. 2, May, 1937) lists as an important challenge to the schools the obligation “to develop (among white children) an honest and fair-minded attitude toward the other large racial group.” The curriculum, it says, should contain experiences adapted to that end. A similar official study recently made in Louisiana urges the schools of both races to work toward “a better understanding among all racial groups and an attitude of mutual helpfulness and appreciation.” Teachers’ manuals recently issued in Florida, Virginia, and other states, recommend the introduction of units of study on this subject.

Anticipating this demand, a group of Southern educators comprising the Conference on Education and Race Relations has sponsored the preparation of materials for such a unit, and is making them available in pamphlet form for use in classes in history, literature, civics, sociology, and music. These materials, it is announced by R. B. Eleazer, Secretary of the Conference, have been utilized already with excellent results in 250 colleges and a thousand public schools. The Conference, with headquarters in the Standard Building, Atlanta, Ga., invites all teachers who are interested to write for free samples of these materials and suggestions for their use.

EDUCATIONAL RADIO’S SCRIPT EXCHANGE

School use of radio this past fall reached an all-time high in the annals of American education, according to United States Commissioner of Education John W. Studebaker. The Commissioner based his report upon the hundreds of requests for educational radio scripts received each month from schools and colleges all over the United States by the Educational Radio Script Exchange. While many schools and colleges used our scripts for mock broadcasts over public address systems and for other intra-school purposes, Dr. Studebaker said, many others told us that they produced them over local radio stations.

The Script Exchange has been responsible for nearly 1,000 local educational broadcasts this year. Letters requesting scripts from schools, colleges, universities, CCC Camps, and civic organizations indicated that the number was doubled during the fall school term of 1937-38.
The Exchange has distributed more than 40,000 copies of 100 tested educational scripts in the United States alone. Although its primary purpose is to supply good broadcasting material to American schools, requests have been received from broadcasters all over the world. Sample copies of scripts have been sent to Alaska, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Canal Zone, Columbia, Cuba, France, England, Denmark, Newfoundland, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and the Union of South Africa. The scripts have been produced in several foreign languages outside the United States.

Exchange scripts are used for many different purposes besides broadcasting. One of their principal uses is for mock broadcasting over the public address systems of schools, colleges, and CCC camps. High school teachers say they use the scripts in connection with their history and science classes to create a greater interest among the students in their studies. College instructors use the scripts as supplementary texts in journalism and radio classes. Little Theatre and civic organizations produce the scripts as stage plays.

Attesting to the widespread use of these scripts is the fact that radio stations in 39 states and Honolulu regularly use them, with half a dozen or more stations in California, Texas, Michigan and other states. In Virginia the Harrisonburg State Teachers College has used a number of these scripts over WSVA, especially those of the three series called “Interviews with the Past,” “Answer Me This,” and “Have You Heard?” The speech department of the College forms the production unit.

“It is my belief,” said Commissioner Studebaker, “that the Educational Radio Script Exchange has done more to promote education over local radio stations than any single agency in the United States. It has rescued good radio scripts from the dusty shelves of school and radio station storerooms throughout the land and has made them available to all the people. Education needs the Script Exchange, and I am hopeful that it can continue to conserve and distribute the creative work of the nation’s educational radio script writers.”

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL TO BE PRESERVED

One of the oldest high school buildings in the country, which once housed Franklin High School, in Philadelphia, is to be thoroughly repaired and then given to the city to be operated as the Atwater Kent Foundation Museum. Here will be gathered valuable relics and historic manuscripts which have long lain in storage in the basements of Independence Hall and Philadelphia’s City Hall, or in possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The school’s curriculum at the time of its opening, April 6, 1826, gives an interesting picture of what its 304 pupils devoted their attention to. The courses offered, with the enrolment indicating the popularity of each, were as follows: English, 300; French, 153; Latin, 105; Greek, 35; Spanish, 45; German, 20; Elocution, 300; Geography, 240; Drawing, 231; “and all of them Mathematics.”

Sponsored by The Franklin Institute, the school carried on until 1832 and served as a model for the Central High School which was then established by the City of Philadelphia. The old stone building served as headquarters for the Institute for more than a century and remains a memorial to the Institute’s long service to science and industry.

THE ROAD THAT NEVER GETS THERE

If we attempt to determine the future of universities on the basis of a general political or social philosophy, we run the grave risk of crippling them for generations. Demand utility and you will have sterility. All who wish to apply a utilitarian test to the value of learning should be reminded of the famous retort of Michael Faraday. When a lady asked him, after a lecture on the then
young science of electromagnetism, "What is the use of that experiment?" he replied, "Madam, what is the use of a baby?"—President James B. Conant, of Harvard University, in the Yale Review.

THE COLLEGE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPLY ROUGH WATERS

"There is the tendency in some universities to send forth their graduates unconscious of the great economic and social forces that science and technology have released.

"I hope the colleges will let every wind of our controversies blow full force upon them. I hope that instead of keeping political controversy out of academic halls it will let student life be thoroughly charged with it.

"I hope they will go farther and try to illuminate the present political controversies by showing their roots in the past, and I should like to see colleges ground their students in future issues.

"Teach them, for example, the tremendous implications in cheap electric power resources and in the deterioration of our soil. It will be a tragedy to educate our children in the 1930's to live in only the 1940's. They must travel far into the unknown.

"The world has an over-abundance of those who paddle pretty well in still water, but it cries for men who can navigate rapids. I would keep plenty of rough water ahead for individuals and for society."—Robert Jackson, Assistant United States Attorney General, before the annual convention of the Eastern Association of College Deans.

THE DOCTRINE OF EXTERNAL COMPULSIONS NOT EFFECTIVE IN ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education is destined to become within the next generation, in the opinion of Dean Ned H. Dearborn; of New York University, the most important single movement in America. At present large numbers of adults shrink from entering upon a new program of study because they remember so well the unwelcome requirements of their formal education. He cites specifically dismal classrooms made additionally depressing by a distinctive musty smell; a prim, prissy, old-maidish type of man or woman who became the self-appointed guardian of his pupils' conduct; the college professor completely absorbed in his special field of knowledge to the exclusion of his students' individual interest; and the not-always-benevolent classroom autocrat. Further, the Dean says, "such 'musts' as required reading, and reports, passages to be memorized, and problems to be solved, were specified by the instructor or his superiors without any attempt to elicit the wishes or interests of the students."

"Human beings don't particularly enjoy external compulsions unless they themselves enthusiastically agree to them as an outgrowth of their active participation in formulating the policies which result in a given set of requirements. One expression of that resistance is found in the way they shy away from being 'educated' later in life if the program smacks of compulsion. Teachers who think they can go about teaching adults as though they were boys and girls should recognize the widespread prevalence of this resistance, for compulsory methods will doom any program of adult learning from the very start."

HIGH SCHOOL NEWS PAGE IN NEWSPAPERS

The Post Office Department recently objected to the manner in which one newspaper was carrying the high school notes. The paper in question had been carrying a page in the paper devoted to high school notes with the appearance of a newspaper in itself, in that it carried a heading, "... High School News." The objection of the Post Office Department was that it gave the appearance of two individual newspapers being entered in the post office under one second-class permit. As this affects a great many newspapers in the state...
we wrote the third assistant postmaster general regarding a clarification of this ruling and received the following reply:

"Where a separate title is given such matter as in the case of that appearing in the ‘………………’ and volume and serial numbers are shown in connection therewith which are different from those of the publication itself, the effect is to give the matter the appearance of being a publication separate and independent from the second-class publication. This is objectionable. In order to prevent a question arising over whether such matter is permissible in copies of publications entered as second-class matter, the practice of giving it independent numbers should be discontinued. There would be no objection to embodying matter like that mentioned in copies of a second-class publication under a sub-title which would indicate plainly that the matter was a department or section of the publication, but in any event it should not be given independent volume and serial numbers. It is suggested that a ‘Sub-High Department’ or ‘The Warren High Section’ be adopted for the matter."—Massachusetts Press Association Bulletin.

THE TEACHER’S LETTER BOX

Dear Letter Box:

Please send me names and addresses of places where I can get some units for the primary grades. I want to teach a unit but hardly know how to begin. Can you help me?

Dear Rose F.:

The best single units available for purchase that I know of are the McCall Lesson Unit Series, Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City. They average about thirty-five cents a piece. A postcard will bring you a catalog with titles, descriptions, and prices.

You might also write W. F. Quarrie Company, 35 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, for information about Unit Teaching Materials. This is a file of units from which teachers can borrow. You must, however, agree to send in at least one report of a unit worked out in your own classroom.

Another source for units is the F. A. Compton Company, Fifth Avenue, New York City. These cost considerably more than the McCall units but each includes considerable subject matter and some carefully selected pictures for the children’s use.

Why don't you read some good books to give you background and work out your own activities? A good one to begin on is Reed and Wright, The Beginnings of the Social Sciences in the Primary Grades, Charles Scribner's Sons. Then there is Gustin and Hayes, Activities in a Public School, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. A third book, not so new but still one of the best, is Porter, The Teacher in the New School, World Book Company, Yonkers, New York.

Another thing you might do is to subscribe to Childhood Education. This magazine contains not only descriptive reports of units but stimulating articles which will guide you in the larger problem of providing a situation in which children can grow. The subscription price is $2.00 unless you form a club of ten, when it is $1.50 each. The address is 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

Dear Letter Box:

We are working hard at the New Curriculum in our school this year. We want to make sure that our children make real progress. One thing that I am trying to do is to use the arithmetic charts in Section IV of the Course of Study. But there is where I am stuck! What do the two column heads about instruction really mean? Now don't tell me, as you used to, to read the explanation. I have read page 264 of the 1937 edition most carefully and seem to understand it. That is, until I go to apply it in my classroom. So please send me along a few illustrations.

Dear Mary:

Do you remember how I always used to tell you something else? That arithmetic is not taught in the elementary school because