

Curriculum Research in the Schools

In the past, educational research has tended to remain aloof from the day-to-day activities and concerns of classroom teachers. Recently, however, increasing emphasis has been given to so-called *action research* which is "conducted in local school situations and is designed to help the people working there know whether or not what they are doing is right." While attempted applications of this point of view are of fairly recent date, John Dewey, about twenty years ago, in his *Sources of the Science of Education*, wrote convincingly of the need to involve teachers directly in research investigations:

"It seems to me that the contributions that might come from *class-room* teachers are a comparatively neglected field; or, to change the metaphor, an almost unworked mine. It is unnecessary to point out the large extent to which superintendents and principals have been drawn into the work of studying special problems and contributing material relative to them. It is hoped that the movement will not cease until all active class-room teachers, of whatever grade, are also drawn in.

"There are undoubted obstacles in the way. It is often assumed, in effect if not in words, that class-room teachers have not themselves the training which will enable them to give effective intelligent cooperation. The objection proves too much, so much so that it is almost fatal to the idea of a workable scientific content in education. For these teachers are the ones in direct contact with pupils and hence the ones through whom the results of scientific findings finally reach students. They are the channels through which the consequences of educational theory come into the lives of those at school. I suspect that if these teachers are mainly channels of reception and transmission, the conclusions of science will be badly deflected and distorted before they get into the minds of pupils. . . .

"As far as schools are concerned, it is certain that the problems which require scientific treatment arise in actual relationships with students. Consequently, it is impossible to see how there can be an adequate flow of subject-matter to set and control the problems investigators deal with, unless there is active participation on the part of those directly engaged in teaching."—Dewey, John, *The Sources of a Science of Education*. New York: Horace Liveright, 1929. pp. 46-48.

Without denying the importance of what one of our authors this month calls "fundamental research," this issue of *Educational Leadership* gives special attention to action research programs. The methods followed in the investigations reported here give promise of helping us arrive at more satisfactory solutions to some of the urgent problems facing curriculum workers.

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