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Contents

4 Foreword

General problems and perspectives: Educational systems and structures

8 Structure and function in education systems (G. W. Parkyn)
   The duration and content of primary education:
   13 In Africa (S. Rajaona)
   18 In Latin America (J. Blat Gimeno)
   23 In Asia (A. R. Dawood)

Specific solutions and adaptations: Some pedagogical innovations

31 The non-graded school in the United States (J. I. Goodlad)
37 The shortening of the elementary phase of schooling in the Soviet
   Union (A. Arsenyev and A. Markushevich)
43 The educational techniques of Freinet (A. Vasquez and F. Oury)
52 Community schools in the Philippines (P. T. Orata)

Items and reviews

58 International Education Year, 1970
60 Teaching about human rights
61 Proposed extension of the Associated Schools project
61 The Nairobi Conference: education, science and development
63 For rural teachers in Cameroon: a new type of training college
The authors

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Foreword

by the Director-General of Unesco

In deciding on the creation of a Unesco educational review, the General Conference has sought to put an end to an anomaly and fill a gap. To be more precise, the General Conference wanted teachers to be provided with a publication, which, being intended for Member States and educators and dealing essentially with problems confronting primary school-teachers, would enable the educational activities of Unesco to become widely known.

Since it is not possible to ensure the circulation—in an appropriate number of language editions—of a review for distribution to all teachers throughout the whole world, Prospects in Education will, in the first instance, go out to intermediary bodies that will be called upon to undertake its further distribution: National Commissions, Ministries of Education, universities, teacher-training schools, educational inspection services, educational research and documentation centres, associations and trade unions in the teaching profession. It will be their task to select, adapt, translate, reproduce and disseminate, in their respective countries, those articles in the review which seem to them best to meet the needs of the teaching personnel with whom they are in close touch. This review will depend to a very great extent on their co-operation.

As regards the subject-matter of Prospects in Education, it must obviously avoid duplicating that of the many
currently published national or international educational reviews of a theoretical nature, which are often excellent publications. For this reason, there has been a deliberate tendency to adopt a formula which will facilitate an approach to the practical problems—common to the greatest number of Member States—faced by teachers, and give information on the nature, and results, of the studies and experiments being conducted in various countries in an effort to solve these problems.

Prospects in Education will give effect to this intention by organizing an exchange of information on education, on the widest possible basis, calculated to foster those innovations which the continued reform of world-wide education systems calls for. With this sounder basis of information, governments will be able to reap the benefit of experiments already carried out elsewhere—sometimes costly failures—while the confrontation of experience will vest the thought and action of educators with that international dimension which is one of the characteristics of our times.

The Unesco educational review will be less concerned with proposing vague solutions or a doctrine with which the diversity of situations and cultures can never be brought into line, than with provoking reflection and dialogue. Never, in fact, have reflection and dialogue been more essential in the sphere of education; nor have they ever had a more universal bearing than in this critical era in which—under the triple pressures exerted by progress of the mind, development, and the challenge of youth—the systematic renovation of education appears to be called for practically everywhere in the world.
General problems and perspectives

Educational systems and structures
Structure and function in education systems

by G. W. Parkyn

Not only administrators but also classroom teachers need to have a knowledge of the structure of their own education system. Whether they simply want to be more effective teachers within an existing system, or whether they are trying to improve the system itself, they can be helped by an understanding of the way its structure influences the aims and methods of the process of education.

I

One of the most obvious differences between the education systems of different countries is to be seen in their internal structure, especially in the way in which they are divided into sections corresponding to different stages of the educational process. Between the pre-school stage of voluntary and relatively informal child-care, ending at 5, 6, 7 or even 8 years of age according to country, and the tertiary or higher education stage, beginning at 17, 18 or 19 years, comes the period of organized schooling. This period, which comprises what is usually termed primary and secondary schooling, is the one on which the fundamental educational efforts of most States are focused. In most countries in the earlier part of this period schooling is compulsory, and in all countries efforts are being made to provide the opportunity for an increasing proportion of children to stay at school longer.

It is within this period, too, that a wide variety of structural arrangements is to be found. At one end of the scale we see the simplicity of the unitary general school of ten, eleven or twelve grades, as in many socialist countries, leading directly from pre-school to higher education, and supplemented from perhaps the tenth grade onwards by specialized vocational training facilities for those pupils who do not intend to proceed to higher education. At the other end of the scale we have systems that are divided into distinctively different types of schools and even different administrative units at various stages within the period of universal education. For example, there are systems in which the basic first-level school is of relatively short duration, sometimes only four years, and is followed by a variety of vocational schools at the junior secondary level, together with general education schools that lead on to senior schools preparing students for institutions of higher education and higher technological training. Between these extremes, there are systems such as that common to West Europe where six-year primary schooling is followed by short secondary cycles for students seeking mid-level occupations and long cycles for those planning higher studies or, on the other hand, that common to North America, where six or seven years of primary schooling are followed by secondary schooling whose duration and much of whose course-content is the same for terminal students as it is for students going on to higher studies.

Faced with the variety of existing educa-
tional structures, the administrator who is intent on increasing the efficiency of his own system, or of making it more appropriate to the needs of his country, naturally asks himself such questions as the following: Is there an optimum kind of educational structure? Or do different types of structure have different effects, so that some are more suitable for certain purposes than are others? Or is the structure of a given educational system irrelevant in comparison with such factors as the content and the continuity of the curriculum, the teaching methods and materials, and the competence of the teachers employed?

Such questions are most often raised by administrators, but they are not irrelevant to the work of the classroom teacher. The objectives and achievements of any individual teacher's class are inextricably related to those of other echelons within an over-all system. Furthermore, though teachers may be oblivious to the fact that a variety of educational systems exists throughout the world, their work is nevertheless likely to be influenced by other systems. They may, for example, have to rely upon textbooks and other teaching materials prepared and produced in other countries. Their own aims and theories of education may have been developed through the reading of books written in other countries. Their effectiveness as teachers will be influenced, too, by their understanding of the relationship between their schools and the other educational facilities in their own country. Serious discrepancies between what a teacher is trying to achieve and the implicit goals for which the whole educational system was structured can result in frustration and disappointment with final results. Teachers and administrators should carefully measure the unstated or only partially-stated objectives of that segment of the system for which they are responsible in order to assess the pertinence of their work to those broad objectives. In doing this, it is helpful to contrast one's own system with other educational systems in order to more clearly perceive those essential characteristics which are sometimes blurred by force of habit or by the complexity of organizational structures.

II

The current tendency to regard education as a continuous process of development from the point of view of the growing child leads to another question: Is not this intrinsic continuity the main determiner of a teacher's work, rather than extrinsic factors like structure?

It is indeed true that the idea of continuity is fundamental in education today. Learning in general cannot readily be divided into segments appropriate to given age-groups. For example, with respect to intellectual development, it is no longer generally believed that childhood is the period for rote learning and adolescence the time to develop the powers of reasoning. It is realized that, to some degree, all of the fundamental intellectual processes operate and develop throughout a lifetime. While it may be useful to distinguish some stages of intellectual development, these stages are not so sharply delineated that the structure and organization of a school system can scientifically be based upon them. This is also true with the other general aspects of a child's development: the formation of moral character, the harmonious development of personality, the assimilation of ethical and cultural values, of social beliefs, of personal habits and manners, and so on. All of these peripheral aspects of the learning process, though they do not directly affect the details of a teacher's daily work, constitute a critical set of variables in so far as a teacher's long-term efforts are concerned.

In any case, specific short-term objectives have to be set up. Unfortunately, these objectives can seldom be stated in such a way as to settle all doubts about what activities are appropriate at any given point in the educational process.

We find it stated, for example, that one of the major objectives of the primary school
period is to help pupils 'to learn how to learn', as this is a basic pre-condition to being able to take advantage of the educational opportunities that will follow. Another traditional objective of primary education is to teach the fundamental skills of the mother tongue and of basic mathematics. Yet, in general, these are skills we continue to perfect throughout our lifetimes. To state them in general terms can certainly give direction to a teacher's efforts, but it helps little in deciding what should be done in a given year or a given day by a pupil or a class. And when, indeed, syllabuses and curricula have been worked out, leading to stated objectives over a period of years, it is the continuity of development that is most obvious, rather than any 'natural' separation into segments peculiarly appropriate to given age-groups.

This tendency can be strikingly demonstrated if we consider recent changes in the teaching of subjects that used to be regarded as the special prerogative of secondary schools. Mathematics and foreign languages provide the best examples. For decades, attempts to begin foreign languages at the primary level were hindered, not only by the practical consideration that primary-school teachers in general were not qualified to teach foreign languages, but also by the erroneous beliefs that primary-school pupils were not psychologically 'ready' for foreign languages and that a solid base of grammar in the mother tongue was indispensable for foreign language study. For similar reasons, primary schools prolonged their teaching of simple arithmetic without even beginning to impart notions of algebra or geometry.

It is now generally thought that a beginning of almost any major subject can be made at almost any age. The indispensable proviso is, of course, that the introduction of new subjects be appropriate to the attainments, experience, and maturity of the learner. It is not appropriate, in the case of a 5-year-old, to use the systematic grammatical method of starting a foreign language that might be suitable for a 15-year old.

Furthermore, it is now generally believed that most major 'subjects' can be introduced early and should be continued progressively throughout the course of a child's schooling. It is also generally felt that specialization should be delayed as long as is practicable, in order to ensure the adaptability and flexibility of the learners in the face of changing social conditions and to ensure that their choices are not blindly made. Indeed, the conception of schooling as a continuous process is replacing many arbitrary attitudes about divisions in the structure of education systems as labels like 'primary' and 'secondary' are found to have little relationship to the essential nature of the educative process.

III

At this point, doubts about the basic relevance of structure again come to mind. Could not a 'continuous curriculum' be devised whereby teachers at any level could use methods unrelated to conventional school system structures? Indeed, such disregard for predetermined structures is possible, in some cases. In most cases, however, there are various scales of selection throughout various stages of schooling and there are differences in the education and training of the teachers, in the length and nature of the courses that can be provided, and in other established arrangements which must be taken into account in the elaboration of daily classroom procedures. Let us now consider some of these, with particular reference to the 'primary' stage of schooling.

One of the major structural factors is simply the total length of the general education period seen in relation to the normal age at which schooling begins. If the total period encompassed by a given system is only four years, commencing at the age of 8, the curriculum and methods that are appropriate will differ in many ways from those appropriate in a system where nearly all children begin school at the age of 5 and remain nine or ten
years. In the latter case, subjects begun at an earlier age will require different initial methods, the systematic organization of subject-matter may be delayed, and there will be time for expansive creative activities that may have to be reduced to a minimum in the former situation. The appropriateness of teaching methods and the nature of textbooks and other learning materials will all need to be considered in the light of such factors.

A closely allied factor is the composition of the group of pupils for whom a given phase of schooling is provided. A system may, for example, provide an eight- or nine-year period of general education while requiring a compulsory period shorter than this: if there is a heavy rate of drop-out at the end of the compulsory period, the composition of classes beyond the compulsory age will change considerably. Naturally, teaching methods and materials must adapt to such shifts in average levels of aptitude, attainment and motivation.

In some systems, selective examinations at various intervals create structural divisions more explicitly than do factors such as the drop-out rate. The nature of the examinations themselves can have a strong influence upon curriculum, methods and materials, and the kind of education appropriate to the successful group. If a selective examination is devised and carried out by the schools themselves, it can readily be adapted to the aims and methods of the teachers. If, on the other hand, the examinations are external to the schools, as is the case with regionally or nationally conducted examinations, the aims and methods of the schools will tend to become adapted to the examinations, at least tacitly. The examinable subjects will tend to predominate in the school curriculum and methods of learning will be directed towards the production of good written answers to examination questions. The success of their pupils in the examinations will often be the criterion by which teachers decide how to exercise their profession.

However undesirable arbitrary divisions in a system may be, they are inevitable in certain circumstances, notably when a country does not have the economic resources to provide a long period of schooling for every child. In such cases, administrators and teachers, though they may recognize the need for drastic changes, are often better advised to devote their capacities to the existing system than to impose partial changes geared to a desired system that simply does not exist.

The circumstances that determine a given structure may not be simply financial. In fairly advanced countries, for example, there are structural divisions which can no longer be thought of as economically rational. A notable one is the common distinction between primary and secondary school teachers in terms of their respective training, status, salaries and working conditions. These differences may persist long after the extension of general education to age-groups well beyond the primary level. Such differences may, in fact, make it impossible for so-called ‘secondary-school subjects’ to be started in the primary school, for few primary school teachers will have been trained to teach these subjects. Similarly, when increased access to schooling brings into secondary-school classrooms pupils whose level of aptitude would previously have excluded them as unfit for ‘secondary-school subjects’, the existing body of secondary school teachers will not be readily able to adapt traditional materials and methods to the needs of the new group.

When practices such as the foregoing become an integral part of any given school system, they inevitably affect both the routine functioning and the potential for growth and development of that system. Major changes in the content and process of education are often hindered and restricted by structural factors, and are unlikely to succeed without corresponding structural changes.

Effective teaching requires that the curriculum, materials, and methods all be appropriate to the intrinsic objectives of whatever part of
the school system a teacher is working in. Because of the way in which the whole structure influences the function of the parts, the effective teacher needs to know something of the whole. An education system itself, moreover, needs to be appropriate to the society in which and for which it exists. Societies are not static, however, and a teacher must, at one and the same time, be efficient within the existing school system and alert to changes as they are dictated by society as a whole. To fulfil this dual role, teachers must be thoroughly familiar with the characteristic structure of their system, its intrinsic purposes and possibilities, and its very concrete effect upon both the ends and means of the process of education. One excellent way to develop such awareness is to contrast the structure of one’s own system with those utilized elsewhere.

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The duration and content of primary education in Africa

by Samuel Rajaona

The twenty-fifth of May 1961—the day of the adoption, at Addis Ababa, of an ‘Outline for a Plan for the Development of African Education’—marked the beginning of a period that has seen education in Africa and the Malagasy Republic develop in conformity with the needs and aspirations of nascent democracy. The historically important Addis Ababa Plan, drafted according to the recommendations of key African education officials, reflects a revitalized awareness of the requirements and the objectives of education throughout the young continent.

Realizing that the mere prolongation of systems inherited from the colonial era would have led ineluctably to stagnation and knowing the critical effect that education has upon economic and social development, the African leaders decided in favour of universal primary education. This decision implied both a will to provide the enormous expenditures that would be called for, and an obligation to adapt the content of education to local economic and social conditions. The improvement of content had to go hand in hand with the expansion of primary-school enrolment, the essential goal being to provide an education that would be both modern and African. Thus was born the concept of an ‘African education’ seen as ‘a strategic position in the great battle for progress’. Built upon the solid base of African cultural values, this education would also answer to the requirements of scientific and technical progress.

In spite of the Addis Ababa recommendation that primary education should be available to all African children by 1980, the expansion of primary education was not given top priority. Primary education had already undergone considerable expansion in the 1950s whereas secondary education had lagged behind to such an extent that a heavy proportion of primary-school graduates still had no access to further schooling.

With minor exceptions due to differences in levels of development and the diversity of economic systems, African countries have adopted the ideal of compulsory, free and universal primary education, in conformity with the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The following figures illustrate the degree of variance on this score: in 1961, 16 per cent of all African children of primary- or secondary-school age were actually enrolled, the range of national averages being from 2 to 60 per cent and the majority of the countries having enrolment rates of less than 20 per cent.

All things taken into account, the African countries have made appreciable strides, since the Addis Ababa Conference, in the direction of universal primary education. At a conference in Nairobi, in July 1968, African educational

1. For a report on this conference, see p. 61.
leaders took stock of the accomplishments of the past decade and concluded that it was time to readjust certain quantitative and qualitative goals pertaining to primary education. They reappraised not only the question of attaining quantitative enrolment targets, but the issue of the very essence of primary education and of the potential yield of its academic content, of its ways for preparing children for their life outside the school, and of its efforts towards economic and social development.

As far as quantitative goals are concerned, it was noted at Nairobi that, in spite of increased expenditures from national revenues as well as from international sources, many countries were still far from the enrolment goals set at Addis Ababa, mainly because of insufficient financial resources.

The lack of funding is not the only obstacle to the quantitative expansion of primary education, however. There is, throughout Africa, an incredible degree of educational wastage due to failures and drop-outs. This partially derives from socio-economic factors—such as negative social attitudes, seasonal employment demands, customs and religious systems, health factors, nomadic habits, the nature of the family unit—and partially from factors inherent in existing education systems—such as the flagrant irrelevance of content, overcrowded classrooms, or the substandard training of teachers.

Such wastage has a devastating effect upon the real duration of primary education in Africa (and would merit serious research on causes and remedies). Though universal primary education has been adopted as official policy throughout the continent, it must be admitted that the African countries, like all developing countries, are faced with the fact that, without sufficient schools and teachers, the right to education cannot be put into practice.

The will to make this right a reality has, in fact, led most African authorities to the establishment of free and compulsory primary education at the lowest grade-levels, but even the best intentions are ineffectual when buildings and equipment are lacking. Though primary education is free in most African countries, it will take many years for it to become truly compulsory—in spite of all the laws and vows describing it as such. Meanwhile, because of differing levels of budgetary potential, the duration of ‘compulsory’ education varies throughout Africa: in Congo-Brazzaville, it is ten years (from 6 to 16 years of age); in Mali, it is seven years (8 to 15 years of age); in Madagascar, it is eight years (6 to 14 years of age). Thus, even the age of initial entry and of termination varies from country to country.

Judging from these examples, it would seem that the period of compulsory education is sometimes too long in Africa. Extended periods of compulsory education unduly increase the heavy burden of national educational budgets. The use of vocational and psychological guidance services at various stages in the primary cycle might provide a means for shortening the duration of primary schooling for many children by eliminating or reducing the incidence of grade repeating. Such services should be provided at every level of the educational system in appropriate socio-economic contexts and in the vocational placement perspective. In countries where they are now utilized, such as in North Africa, guidance services have proved their worth.

Ultimately, however, decisions as to the optimum duration of primary studies must involve the transformation of traditional primary education systems. In the Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Madagascar, it has been proved that the establishment of two complementary primary school cycles—a four-year cycle followed by a two-year cycle—is entirely feasible. The initial four-year cycle is so conceived as to provide a complete elementary education: since a majority of the pupils leave school after these four years, this cycle aims to impart knowledge and attitudes that would make them
the artisans of development, farmers open to new ideas and active citizens aware of their responsibilities.

The African countries which have adopted this system have been able to cut costs considerably while offering a complete elementary education because the duration of primary schooling—for five out of every six children—has been reduced from six to four years. The most successful graduates of the first cycle, of course, go on to the second cycle. Others may go on to technical or agricultural studies until the age-limit for compulsory schooling is reached. This system is an example of the workable solutions which ‘ruralization’ offers to the problem of financing primary education in Africa and Madagascar. Perhaps it is but a half-way and transitory solution but, considering the volume of available resources, it would seem to be a practicable method to attain the goal of universal primary education in Africa.

It should be remembered that many European countries, at a certain moment in their histories, had the same problem in making primary education universal that Africa is having today. In the second half of the nineteenth century, when ‘popular’ education was gaining sway in the industrialized countries, they, too, were forced to limit its duration to four or five years. It should be recognized, then, that primary education in Africa today is at a transitory phase in its historical development, a stage that education systems must go through so long as they are tied to economic development. If access to education in highly industrialized countries now reaches upwards to include everybody who is 16 or 18 years old, this is because the level of economic development makes such a procedure mandatory. African countries, whose economies are still essentially agricultural, are a long way from that stage. Many families in Africa, in fact, do their best to circumvent compulsory education regulations—especially in rural areas where the young are needed for manual labour. That need will disappear when Africa becomes industrialized. Indeed, the history of education proves that, with *per capita* revenue growing in direct proportion to technical progress, parents are more and more inclined to extend the education of their children.

Let us now turn to the subject of the *content* of primary education in Africa. These words by the Asian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore provide a very apt suggestion as to what the ideal content of primary education might be: ‘For a tree, to be freed from the grip of the soil does not signify liberty.’ A rapid analysis of the situation leads one to the conclusion that, in many African countries, the structures and content of education still suffer from having been conceived and developed outside Africa with no real ties to the cultural traditions, urgent economic requirements or specific aspirations of African peoples.

Primary education in Africa, copied from European models, is too speculative and, consequently, tends to draw children away from the realities of their own countries. Since it is not sufficiently adapted to a specifically African psychology, it too often neglects the links between the individual and his civilization, it gives too little attention to the relationships between individuals and groups, and, worst of all, it ignores national development problems and gives young Africans no motivation to contribute their talents and energies to African social and economic progress.

During their meeting in Nairobi, African education authorities, aware of the faults just described, unanimously felt that the content of primary education would have to undergo reform in the coming years. They therefore adopted the following guidelines:

*First objective*: primary education for all children as soon as possible.

*Second objective*: national unity. The widening gap between the educated *élite* and the illiterate masses should be rapidly closed.

*Third objective*: socio-cultural integration.
Drawing its inspiration from the local environment and cultural heritage, primary education should contribute to the attachment of children to their milieu.

Fourth objective: the inclusion of primary education in socio-economic development perspectives. Education should prepare children more for a role as producers than as consumers and, to the extent that African economies are predominantly agricultural, should contribute to the development of agricultural resources throughout Africa.

All of this implies, of course, changes in the role of the primary school which must be not only to transmit knowledge, but to teach children how to improve their condition in life and transform their environment. There should be concern for the transmittal of values also, but the accent should be upon the role of preparing children to break through the confines of their milieu in order to enlarge its perspectives—as well as their own.

In short, it has become imperative that the content of primary education be revised from both the economic development point of view and from that of its better adaptation to the ways of living and the socio-cultural values of African countries. This presupposes such a reorganization of programmes as to provide each African child with enough basic learning to enable him to pursue studies at the secondary level and, simultaneously, basic instruction in subjects relevant to rural life. Such a curriculum is essential to the balanced progress of societies that are mainly agricultural—especially since primary education is terminal in most cases.

The content of primary education should be of the practical and pragmatic sort that would be appropriate to rural children likely to be involved with agricultural development. The planning and implementation of this new kind of primary education should involve not only the talents of educational officials, but those of specialists in the fields of agriculture, public health, development planning and, eventually, vernacular languages. Bookish and theoretical teaching should make way for a kind of teaching that would produce civic-minded young people, aware of development problems and anxious to know and understand the world in which they live.

The content of primary education should also lead to a better integration of African children within their respective communities and help to reduce their migration to urban areas—a migration that is not justified by the availability of employment. That kind of integration can work only if the school ceases to be a foreign body in the community. The school should help children to a better understanding of the society in which they live and should not provide a classroom atmosphere in opposition to the rules of behaviour emanating from the home environment. All too often, in fact, African children are torn between two contradictory influences: one which prevails at home and one which prevails at school. Consequently, if the school neglects traditional cultural and moral values, children finally assume two quite separate behaviour patterns: one for the school, one for the village. The school then becomes a means by which to escape local realities and to pursue self-centred ambitions which can consummate the divorce between young people and their milieu.

Though African children must open their eyes to a world far more vast than their villages, such perspective must be built upon the socio-cultural realities of their own milieu. Primary education, then, should give special attention to the study and analysis of the immediate environment in order to reduce the risk of social alienation. Regular contact with the local population and practical exercises involving social and economic problems in selected sectors of the surrounding community should be part of the school activity. Written and oral classroom exercises should deal with subjects pertinent to the host community, and the teaching of mathematics and science would profit too, from practical exercises dealing with the concrete substance of the milieu.
Finally, though overburdened curricula should be trimmed as much as possible, certain subjects—such as geography and mathematics—should include applications to local production activities and there should be some introduction to farming and handicrafts.

There still remains the question of the language of instruction: is the use of a classroom language other than the mother tongue an alienating factor? Though the use of one's mother tongue or national language in school would be desirable, other factors (the consolidation of national unity, the availability of teaching materials and teacher-training institutions, the advantages of a widely spoken language) tend to impose the use of another vehicle—French or English in particular. Schools which have introduced bilingual teaching at the primary level seem to have obtained satisfactory results. It might be quite worth while to launch a depth study of bilingual education in African countries where languages of international utility (French and English) are employed as a second language of instruction. Such a study would attempt to define the optimum age for initiating the study of a foreign language and perfect the methodology of its application, based upon the direct method with the use of audio-visual aids whenever possible.

In conclusion, it is self-evident that the revision of the content of primary education in Africa and its adaptation to socio-economic realities are tasks to be undertaken with great care and caution. The first step in such an enterprise should be an evaluation of the output of the education system existing in each country. Such an evaluation has already been made for the continent as a whole. It showed that, in spite of serious efforts towards adaptation, the over-all output at the primary level is still very inadequate: one illustration of this is the rate of primary school failure and dropout, which was estimated at 68 per cent.

Another necessary step would involve the organization of educational research which, according to experts, should try to define optimum procedures for the adaptation and the 'ruralization' which Africa knows—perhaps rather confusedly—are needed. Such procedures are currently being tried in all African educational systems in a rather dogmatic and empirical way, but, if they are to provide scientifically sound solutions, they must be accompanied by careful research. This is bound to be very costly in terms of human and financial resources, yet, in the long run, the investment is worth while—considering the savings in efficiency and the exactitude of the correlations that can thus be established between the needs and aspirations of African peoples and the education systems at their disposal.

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The duration and content of primary education in Latin America

by José Blat Gimeno

The diversity of the educational picture presented by the individual countries of Latin America is such that this survey will not pretend to set forth all the characteristics of primary education in each one. The evaluations that follow are intended only to reflect major problems and trends and may not apply with equal validity to every country in the region. Indeed, beyond the problems which characterize the whole region, each country has its own national character and differs from the others not only in its educational system but in many other aspects of its cultural, economic and social life.

The duration of primary education

In almost every country in Latin America, the period of compulsory school attendance coincides with the established duration of the primary-school cycle. In a majority of the countries in question, that period begins at age 7 and ends at age 14. It is important to distinguish, however, between statutory periods of required school attendance and the periods which actually prevail. Among the factors, common to Latin American countries, which account for enormous differences between statutory and actual classroom attendance are: the existence of many rural schools whose attendance requirements are very different from those of urban schools, the general shortage of classroom space, and the prevalence of pupils who leave school prior to the completion of the ‘compulsory’ cycle.

The rural school problem

Not all the school-age population has the opportunity to receive a complete primary education. In many countries, rural school facilities simply do not provide for attendance beyond the third or fourth year of primary education. Consequently, children in rural areas often find access to intermediate or higher education blocked or, at least, extremely difficult. Not only does this represent a tremendous injustice to those who happen to be born in rural areas, but it also deprives society of the potential intellectual contribution of a considerable sector of the population.

From the point of view of the effectiveness of the rural primary school, the results are equally unsatisfactory. A child who has received so brief a primary education attains only a modest level of development, acquiring only the basic tools of education which simply do not enable him to meet the demands of a modern society. And in not a few instances, by the time he grows up, he has lapsed into illiteracy. The waste of public money implied by this situation is considerable, especially when costly literacy and adult education campaigns are inaugurated in order to correct primary-school deficiencies.
The problem of alternating classes

Even where facilities exist for full-cycle primary education, official standards and regulations concerning time-in-class per pupil are often not maintained. One of the major causes of substandard performance here is the practice whereby children attend school in shifts with as many as four separate daily time-tables for four separate classes of pupils. This alternating use of classroom space is usually accompanied, as mentioned, by a shortening of the time spent in school by each pupil. Administrators have often resorted to this system in the hope of satisfying vast expansions of enrolment while postponing costly building programmes. These measures were first meant to be temporary, but have, in many cases, become permanent parts of the education system. In view of the expense which modification would entail, this habit would not be easy to change.

Incompleted 'compulsory' education

In the last analysis, the most significant index for measuring the real duration of primary schooling is the percentage of pupils who actually complete their primary education. In this respect, many Latin American countries are still faced with serious problems. Despite the fact that the majority of them, in their constitutions or education laws, had already made education compulsory in the nineteenth century or early in the twentieth, a high percentage of the school-age population still does not complete its primary schooling.

In 1958 it was estimated at the Conference of Latin American Ministers of Education, held at Lima, that out of a school-age population of approximately forty million, barely nineteen million were receiving a primary education. Since then the situation has improved: between 1955 and 1965—a period coinciding almost exactly with the decade covered by Unesco's Major Project on the Extension of Education in Latin America—enrolment in primary schools increased by 72 per cent. The real significance of this great increase is considerably diminished, however, by the fact that the number of children who actually completed their primary education remained less than 25 per cent.

Many of the factors which account for this low retention rate come under the heading of inadequate facilities: the critical lack of school buildings, for example, or, particularly in rural areas, an abundance of schools which are not equipped to provide more than three or four grades of primary education (note that rates of completion of primary schooling are based upon a six-year cycle whether or not six grades of schooling are in fact available to the pertinent age-group). Among the other factors responsible for the low rates of primary school completion are: shortcomings in the functioning of many schools, ill-conceived systems of grade-promotion, irregular attendance and the discrepancy between pupils' ages and their grade-levels (it is not unusual for a child to enter grade I at the age of 10 or 11, in which case it is impossible for him to cover the full primary cycle within the legal age limit). Of the six million Latin American children who discontinued their schooling in the school year 1964/65, it is estimated that some 70 per cent had not completed full-cycle studies and that nearly half of them had not even passed the first grade.

In spite of the foregoing, there are distinct signs of an over-all improvement in the situation. School statistics do, in fact, reveal a slow but certain upward trend: whereas the primary school completion-rate was 19 per cent in 1957, it was 23 per cent in 1965.

The content of primary education

The content of primary education in Latin America is too vast a subject to be analysed in depth in this brief study. It involves such
widely diverse elements as study plans and curricula, teaching methods, structural factors and the nature of teaching materials. An analysis of these diverse elements would be further complicated by the fact that levels of progress in each one vary considerably from country to country. Consequently, the comments that follow have been limited to only two aspects of Latin American primary education: study plans and curricula, and teacher training. Again, these comments must be qualified by the reminder that they are broad generalizations.

Plans and curricula

The goals assigned to Latin American education, goals which influence the general content of study plans and curricula, were defined at the regional seminar on the improvement of primary school curricula held in Peru in 1956 under Unesco auspices. These goals, reflected in curricula revisions subsequently implemented by many of the participating countries, were stated as follows:

1. To develop physical and mental health as well as certain manual skills.
2. To develop linguistic skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
3. To ensure a thorough knowledge of mathematical principles and processes—so that the commonest quantitative problems of daily life can be easily solved—and to introduce habits of logical thinking.
4. To ensure an adequate understanding and appreciation of the social environment, especially in regard to cultural traditions, social organization, development of the skills and attitudes required for work in common, the economic life of the community and the nation, and the dignity of labour.
5. To ensure an understanding of the physical world to the extent necessary for satisfactory adjustment to it; and to lay the foundations of an objective conception of the universe.
6. To develop powers of expression and aesthetic appreciation.
7. To prepare for family responsibilities, and an intelligent use of leisure time.
8. To ascertain the aptitudes and interests of the pupil and guide him towards fields of work in which his talents can be employed to the best advantage of both the individual and the society.
9. To form good habits and attitudes such as punctuality, honesty, truthfulness, tolerance, responsibility, initiative, pride in work well done, sense of honour, etc.
10. To develop the critical faculties, the power of reflection and the sense of moral responsibility.

A minimum curriculum was drawn up, based on the above-mentioned aims and covering the following subjects: language, mathematics, social and ethical education, natural sciences, artistic and manual training, health and physical education. In general, the study plans of primary schools in Latin America conform to this outline.

However, despite undeniable improvements in plans and curricula during recent years, they still suffer from drawbacks due mainly to the way in which they are prepared. In countries which have no departments of plans and programmes, formulation and revision are usually entrusted to special commissions composed of teachers, school inspectors and ministerial staff. These meet somewhat irregularly and often lack the participation of other professional and social elements—sociologists, economists, parents, teachers in other branches of education and union representatives.

In many cases, reforms intended to lighten the load of encyclopedic knowledge go too far in the opposite direction, not taking into account the fact that a child must still acquire a minimal store of knowledge adapted to his needs and to his capacities. Moreover, primary-school programmes often tend to be encumbered by an excess of pedagogic guidelines covering activi-
ties, problems, teaching methods and objectives of every kind, leaving little room for the teacher's own initiative.

Level of teacher training

In 1965, there were about a million primary school teachers in Latin America, some 40 per cent of whom did not possess a diploma obtained from a regular teacher-training institution. This obviously has repercussions upon the effectiveness of primary education, though it would be unfair to conclude that the low quality of instruction in general is entirely the fault of unqualified teachers.

Teacher training is normally carried out in several types of institution: rural teacher-training schools, attended for four years after completion of primary schooling; teacher-training schools attended after completion of the first cycle of secondary education; teacher-training schools attended on completion of secondary education, and training at universities. Although study plans vary considerably from one country to another, the division of the time-table in teacher-training schools is approximately as follows: 25 per cent of the time is devoted to the principles or fundamentals of education; 25 per cent to instruction intended to have practical application (teaching and administrative techniques, etc.); 10 per cent actual teaching practice; 40 per cent to the cultural training of the individual. Such a time-table is altogether too theoretical. The lack of correlation between the training received by teachers and the demands made upon them by their later professional activity is blatantly illustrated by the fact that, although there are more than 100,000 one-teacher schools in Latin America, there is scarcely a single teacher-training institution which instructs teachers in the techniques required for work in such schools!

One encouraging sign of progress in teacher-training is the tendency to postpone professional training until after the completion of secondary schooling, although this is true only of four countries (Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru). On the other hand, very satisfactory efforts are being made to qualify teachers who have no diplomas and to provide in-service training. Outstanding examples are the Instituto Nacional de Capacitación in Mexico, which qualified nearly 30,000 teachers between 1945 and 1962; that of Peru which turns out some 2,000 teachers a year; that of Venezuela which completed its programme for unqualified teachers in 1965 and has since become a permanent training centre for teachers holding degrees. Brazil, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua, among others, are making important efforts in this field. Joint Unesco-Unicef teacher-training projects in Latin America are also making a significant contribution.

The special case: rural primary schools

Here, two conflicting tendencies exist. On the one hand there are those who feel that schools should continue to follow traditional lines of action; on the other hand, there are those who support much more ambitious aims such as adult education and community development. Both sides advance strong arguments. Those who defend a broadening of the functions of rural schools base their stand upon the shockingly subhuman living conditions which prevail in certain regions and believe that the school should play a vital role in the solution of problems arising from ignorance and poverty. Those who want to limit the school to its traditional activities consider that these in themselves render a very valuable service to the community and that their effectiveness should not be jeopardized by an undue proliferation of objectives. A position midway between the two points of view would seem to recommend itself, based upon the proposition that the school cannot ignore the problems of its milieu but, while seeking to serve and improve the community, should also propagate the essential and permanent goals of primary education. But this attitude should not be construed as an attempt to attach the inhabitants to the soil and prevent
migration to the towns. On the contrary, it seeks to enlarge upon the traditional role and limited scope of rural schools and to provide equal educational opportunity in town and country alike.

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The duration and content of primary education in Asia

by A. R. Dawood

Though many Asian countries have made substantial progress towards the establishment of universal primary education in the past two decades, there is still a considerable gap between planning and implementation. Bridging that gap has been particularly difficult owing to the fact that the mobilization of available resources in Asia has been constantly undermined by the acceleration of population growth in the region. In 1950, the population of all the Asian countries was 1,381 million. In 1965 it rose to 1,830 million, showing an increase of about 32.5 per cent in fifteen years. During the same period the population of Europe increased only by 13.5 per cent, from 392 million to 445 million. The rapid rate of population growth in Asian countries is the result of a high birth rate and a large reduction in the mortality rate. The high birth rate has a marked effect on the age structure of the population. Over 40 per cent of the people in Asia are under 15 years of age as compared with about 32 per cent in North America and 26 per cent in Europe. This means that, at the primary and the lower secondary levels of education, the developing Asian countries have a much heavier educational load to carry than the economically advanced nations of the West.

This survey will cover only twenty-four of the fifty-odd countries of Asia. Six of the countries chosen are in the ‘Middle East’ region of Asia (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey) and eighteen are in south and east Asia (Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Republic of Viet-Nam). Mainland China, North Korea and North Viet-Nam were excluded because of insufficient statistical material; Japan was excluded so that this brief survey might concentrate upon problems common to the developing nations of the region. The reader may also wish to note that the eighteen countries of south and east Asia are all participants in the Karachi Plan, a regional plan prepared in 1960 with Unesco assistance, for free and compulsory education of a minimum of seven years’ duration.

A look at enrolment figures

The twenty-four developing countries in the two Asian regions just described are at varying stages of economic growth, but all of them utilize the concept of educational planning as an integral part of development planning. Most of them have formulated five-year plans in education with fixed enrolment targets and precise schemes for qualitative improvement. Since 1950, the pace of educational expansion has been rapid at every level—but the pace at the primary level has been particularly remarkable.

The statutory duration of primary education
in the countries under study varies from five to eight years, with an average of just under six years. The estimated total primary-school enrolment for these twenty-four countries was about 56 million in 1955 and about 92 million in 1964. That global nine-year increase is indicative of the high priority given to the expansion of primary education in the region.

The measurement of primary-school enrolment as compared to population figures for the pertinent age-group varies considerably from country to country. Seven of the twenty-four countries (Ceylon, Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Mongolia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) have primary-school enrolment ratios of at least 90 per cent, whereas the seven lowest-ranking countries, in terms of school attendance, have enrolment ratios ranging from 13 to 49 per cent. Nearly all the countries under consideration have compulsory education laws, but, where resources do not permit the establishment of sufficient facilities, such laws obviously cannot be enforced.

Disparities in enrolment

Enrolment ratios are national averages which conceal vast differences between the educational opportunities available within any given country. For example, in Iran, only 30 per cent of the population resided in urban areas in 1962, yet those areas accounted for more than 60 per cent of Iran’s primary-school enrolment for 1962. In Malaysia and in Thailand, most of the children of primary-school age who are not attending school live in rural areas and in poor economic circumstances. In Afghanistan, a majority of the village schools do not go beyond grade III. In India, a great number of the villages in remote areas cannot provide education beyond grade IV. Similar disparities exist in other Asian countries.

In many parts of Asia a disparity exists, too, insofar as the enrolment of girls in primary schools is concerned. This is particularly true in Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Pakistan and even India. The causes of this disparity are both social and economic. Customs and traditions, as well as the employment of girls on household chores, continue to block progress in this field. There is, nonetheless, a definite trend towards increased female enrolments in primary education. In half of the countries under consideration, girls make up at least 45 per cent of total primary-school enrolment. In the Republic of Korea, Lebanon, the Philippines and Thailand, the ratio is very nearly 50 per cent.

The problem of drop-outs and wastage

Enrolment ratios do not take into account the wastage that occurs when pupils withdraw from school prior to the completion of a given cycle of education (drop-outs) or when pupils repeat the same grade because of unsatisfactory achievement. Since most repeaters ultimately become drop-outs, the extent of wastage at the primary level can be measured by drawing comparisons between the number of grade I entrants and the number of pupils completing the primary cycle in a given locality and over a given number of years.

Studies of this sort were carried out recently in south and east Asia where it was found that, for the region as a whole, barely 40 per cent of all primary-school entrants actually complete the first four years of the cycle. The highest drop-out rate occurs in the interval between the first and second years of primary-school study. While six of the countries under study showed attrition rates of 10 per cent or less during the grade I-grade II interval, a vast majority of the other countries under study showed drop-out rates varying from 30 to 66 per cent over the same critical interval. Drop-out rates are generally higher for girls than for boys and much higher in rural than in urban areas—thus increasing the disparity of educational opportunities provided within any given country.
Socio-economic factors such as poverty, the use of child labour at home and parental attitudes towards education are largely responsible for high drop-out rates. That responsibility is shared, however, with factors which originate in the education system itself: crowded classrooms, ill-adapted curricula, lack of appropriate textbooks and instructional material, ill-trained teachers and inadequate teaching and evaluation methods.

Another common cause of wastage in primary education throughout Asia is the wide separation of ages within each grade-level. The high proportion of 'over-age' pupils that prevails in many Asian schools obviously exacerbates the drop-out problem. One remedial measure tried in some Asian countries has been the adoption of automatic promotion in the beginning grades.

It is particularly unfortunate that most of the pupils who drop out do so before they have overcome the handicap of illiteracy. Such a waste of human and financial resources is a heavy burden to the developing nations. One obvious way to lighten this burden is through measures aimed at correcting the major faults in existing primary school systems. This, in turn, implies some far-reaching improvements in what is offered to school-age children—particularly insofar as the content of education is concerned.

Changes in the content of primary education

A common criticism of the curriculum of primary schools in Asian countries is that it is often ill-adapted to the needs of the child and his environment. During the last ten years, however, especially in south and east Asia, much attention has been devoted to curriculum revision. Many countries in the region have introduced changes involving the addition of new subjects or the strengthening of old ones.

The Karachi Plan for the Development of Primary Education in Asia, referred to earlier, was defined at a meeting of Asian Member States of Unesco at Karachi in 1960. After examining existing conditions, delegates recommended the following basic elements for inclusion in the primary-school curriculum: (a) language; (b) mathematics; (c) social studies; (d) ethics and religion; (e) general science and hygiene; (f) music and art; (g) crafts and home sciences; (h) physical education.

Since 1960, crafts and home sciences, art, social studies and physical education have, in fact, been introduced or re-emphasized throughout the primary schools of Asia. General science, however, is taught as an integrated subject in only a few places and still appears most frequently as part of 'nature studies' or environmental studies, or even within the context of language studies. In any case, there is a definite trend towards a more practical and less abstract type of primary education.

Deficiencies in the curriculum

Obviously, the mere inclusion of new subjects in the curriculum will not guarantee automatic success in the fulfilment of basic primary-school objectives. A great deal depends upon the relative importance accorded to different subjects. From this point of view, the learning of the first language should top the list of priorities—particularly since such a large number of children drop out and lapse into illiteracy. Unfortunately, the time spent on basic language studies is often insufficient, involving less than 20 per cent of classroom time in some cases. In the same way, social studies—critical to the development of citizenship qualities—are often allotted too little classroom time: sometimes less than 6 per cent.

The Education Commission appointed by the Government of India (1964-66) noted—and its conclusions apply to much of Asia—that much of the revision of the primary-school curriculum carried out so far has been 'of an ad hoc character—not generally preceded by careful research, not based on adequate expertise, and not
followed by such necessary supporting measures as the preparation of learning materials, the orientation of teachers, or the provision of the needed physical facilities. By and large, the primary-school curriculum is still narrowly conceived in Asia as a list of subjects to be studied rather than as a totality of the pupil’s experience planned and directed by the school. Worse yet, the curriculum is usually imposed from above and prescribed with inflexible uniformity for all the schools in a given country. Such procedures tend to cramp the freedom of creative teachers and to make experimental work almost impossible.

**Problems of teacher training and procurement**

The teacher is naturally the decisive factor in translating a revised curriculum into improved classroom practices. There is, however, not only a dearth of creative teachers at the primary level but a lack of teachers of even doubtful qualification. The rate of primary-school enrolment has, in most cases, outstripped the rate of teacher-procurement with a consequent increase in the pupil-teacher ratio. In the Republic of Korea, until a few years ago, 40 per cent of the classes included more than 70 pupils each; in the Republic of China, 20 per cent had more than 60 pupils each. Overcrowded classrooms at the primary level are indeed a common feature of most Asian cities. But large classes are due not only to teacher shortages but also to shortages of classroom space. In countries such as Cambodia, the Republic of China, Iraq, and the Republic of Korea, primary schools have adopted the shift system with as many as three or four shifts per day. The deleterious effect of a multi-shift schedule on the educational system as a whole is obvious.

In recent years, there has been increasing acceptance in Asian countries of the idea that primary-school teachers should have at least ten years of basic schooling followed by two years of professional training. Though attempts have been made almost everywhere to upgrade teaching qualifications, progress has not always been satisfactory. In most of the developing countries associated with the Karachi Plan, about one-third of the teachers at the first level in 1964 were estimated to be unqualified. In the Arab States of the Middle East the proportion of such teachers is probably higher. Almost every country has launched programmes of in-service education for improving the professional qualifications of its teaching personnel. Unfortunately, the backlog of untrained teachers is so large in many Asian States that in-service education is concerned more with the provision of short-term training facilities for such teachers than with the improvement of the professional competence of all the teachers by keeping them abreast of the latest methods and techniques in primary-school teaching.

**Textbooks and instructional materials**

When the educational and professional qualifications of teachers are not high, good textbooks and instructional materials can help to overcome deficiencies. Unfortunately, however, most of the Asian countries are noticeably lacking in the production of primary-school instructional material. In many of them, parents are expected to provide the textbooks. There are even primary schools where only the teacher has a textbook! Special agencies for textbook production have been established by many Asian governments, some of them with the assistance of Unesco or of Unicef. But the problem is of such dimensions that it cannot lend itself to easy solutions.

Though this survey has given particular emphasis to the shortcomings of primary education in Asia, the great achievements made by the continent as a whole cannot be denied. Few industrially-developed countries can boast of comparable progress within so short a time. In spite of cramped resources and overwhelming
obstacles, some of the Asian nations have compressed into a period of fifteen to twenty years a process of educational development which, in other regions of the world, took several decades. In this forward march there are some significant highlights. One of these is the 'Army of Knowledge' in Iran consisting of successive contingents of secondary-school graduates who are engaged in the heroic task of expanding primary education and banishing illiteracy in the rural areas. Another is the multi-pronged attack in India on the traditional examination system and the rapidly spreading movement, both at the primary and the secondary levels, for the acceptance by teachers of the concept of evaluation as part of a continuous process of education. There is indeed a general educational ferment in all the developing countries of the region which gives hope that, with proper research in certain uncharted areas, concerted efforts on the part of governments, and effective international guidance and assistance, the problems of primary education, stupendous as they are, can be solved within a reasonable period of time.

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Specific solutions and adaptations

Some pedagogical innovations
The foregoing articles succinctly described the major ills affecting education in the three main developing regions of the world: inefficient reactions to rapid numerical expansion, enormous attrition rates, curricula ill-adapted to socio-economic requirements, teachers ill-trained for their role, insufficient school buildings, textbooks, etc. Obviously, there is no panacea for these ills: all the tools and energies available must be sharpened and exercised in a concerted effort.

Evidently, an increased utilization—no matter how broad—of traditional procedures will not suffice: imagination, research and experimentation are indispensable. This next section contains some accounts of innovations being tried: not universal solutions, but examples of daring initiative, of ‘breakthroughs’ attempted in order to break the bounds of the physical and intellectual conditions imposed upon teachers and pupils. Admittedly, the following articles are but a scant sample of what is being accomplished along these lines. It is hoped, however, that by providing such examples, this Bulletin will help to encourage continued research and innovation.
The non-graded school in the United States

by John I. Goodlad

Is the non-graded school really feasible? In truth, such schools already exist in great number in the form of one-teacher rural schools! Indeed, the division of schools into 'grades' is but the systematization of a very pragmatic practice. Natural and spontaneous learning processes work according to levels and ranges of aptitude, not of age. Yet, differentiations according to age have the virtue of being terribly 'convenient' and they appear to be increasingly indispensable: by what other criteria might one arrive at a reasonably uniform 'management' or administration of the hordes of pupils currently in school? Mr. Goodlad's article has the merit of raising serious doubts about the efficacy of the age criterion and of defending the thesis that it can and should be rejected—even in a country whose enrolment rate is exceptionally high. For him, the rigid system of grade-separations is neither sacrosanct, nor immutable, nor valid as a pedagogical principle. To undo such an entrenched system, however, requires courageous, perseverant and imaginative teachers. As with all teaching innovations, it also needs the confidence, comprehension and active support of parents.

The non-graded school is no passing fad in the United States of America. It is included in all lists of current innovations at both primary and secondary levels of schooling. Although not yet well established, non-grading has captured the attention of educators in all sections of the country and often is a source of interest on the part of visiting educators from other lands. Adaptations of the non-graded plan are found in rural school districts, the harsh environment sectors of some major cities, and suburban school districts. It is quite likely that the non-graded school will no longer be considered an innovation by 1980 but will be, in some form, common practice in most schools of this country.

In a school that has become non-graded, there is no reference to grades 1, 5 or 9. These labels have been removed. Pupils do not pass, fail, or repeat grades. There are no grades. Pupils advance at differing rates of speed. A single pupil advances at various rates in his several subjects. In the most advanced forms of non-grading—as in the University Elementary School at UCLA (the University of California at Los Angeles)—each child's programme is individualized to the point of being virtually tailor-made. But I shall turn to these specifics in later paragraphs.

Men invent because present ways no longer suffice, because new circumstances arise and must be met, or simply because they need to express themselves. The graded school in the United States was an invention, an invention which drew heavily from European, especially German, models. In 1848, when the first truly graded school in America opened its doors in Quincy, Massachusetts, the town leaders predicted that it would set the pattern for years to come. It did, indeed!

The graded school was predicated on the assumption that the appropriate amount of learning for several years of schooling could be rather precisely predetermined, that this amount
could be divided into approximately equal pieces called grades, and that children of the same age could and would progress together from grade to grade. The last of these assumptions held up least well.

Very soon, some educators perceived and became concerned about the fact that children are vastly different in their ability to progress through a common body of subject-matter. A few began to invent new ways of organizing the school but their inventions failed to replace the graded system. The apparent simplicity of graded schools was attractive, as was their efficiency for classifying increasingly large numbers of boys and girls entering the common schools. Children were adjusted to the system rather than the system to the children. The slow frequently repeated grades; the swift occasionally skipped them. But the graded system prevailed and remained essentially unshaken down through the middle of the twentieth century.

By the 1950s, inventions in school organization were desperately needed and the climate in and around the schools was receptive to change. Research had revealed that repeating or skipping grades resolved little or nothing. Repeating simply did not remedy the learning problems of slow learners. These children continued to be slow learners—and to be more discouraged and less motivated than before. Skipping grades, on the other hand, meant missing entire segments of the curriculum. Moving at a faster or slower pace through the programme increasingly appeared to be preferable to skipping or repeating grades. But modifying the momentum for pupils according to their individual readiness to progress is not easily accomplished in a graded school.

During the 1950s, data on individual differences among students built up to the point of being one of the most compelling bodies of evidence available to guide the educational enterprise. Part of this evidence revealed, for example, that grade-levels are a misleading fiction—convenient, perhaps, but fiction none the less. In terms of real scholastic progress, a fifth-grade class contains pupils who are variously at second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades or higher for some subjects. To pretend that this is a fifth-grade class is to mislead and to do an injustice to the pupils.

During the 1950s, too, scholars in the academic disciplines became intimately involved in planning new curricula for the schools. They rejected the assumption that any academic discipline could and should be entirely transmitted to heterogeneous bodies of students as an all-inclusive package of facts. The sum of factual material available on any given subject increases so rapidly, they maintained, that covering or trying to cover even a small segment of it is futile. They proposed, instead, that the schools seek to teach what they termed the ‘structure’ of a subject—its nature and how to inquire into it and with it. As one educator put the matter, 'It is no longer possible to learn all about a subject but only what a subject is all about.' According to this view of knowledge and learning, the old assumption about cutting up a predetermined body of subject-matter into grades becomes an anachronism. A fifth-grade slice of content is as fictional as a fifth-grade class of boys and girls.

The non-graded school was not an invention of the 1950s. It had been tried before, in somewhat primitive form, but had not caught on. Perhaps the idea was not widely disseminated. Or perhaps the earlier models were not adequately developed and demonstrated. More likely, the times were not right. But the 1950s were right. The supporting knowledge was at hand. Evidence against the graded school was formidable. Dissatisfaction with the schools in general was rife. Educators needed new solutions to old problems and creative approaches to new ones. An era of innovation began, an era in which the non-graded school moved to the forefront.

The assumptions underlying non-grading are markedly different from those underlying the graded school. One set of assumptions pertains to individual differences among
learners: children of the same age differ in their initial readiness to learn; they proceed on any given learning task at differing rates of speed; some acquire sophisticated and others superficial insights into phenomena; some learn well in one field and others well in something else. A second set of assumptions pertains to knowledge: knowledge is man-made and therefore changing, rather than fixed and immutable; knowledge is structured and cumulative and not just a miscellaneous array of conclusions. A third pertains to learning: each individual's 'way of learning' is unique; one learns best what he perceives to be meaningful for him; one derives meaning from the context of one's own experience, not just from the context within which the things of learning are arranged. A fourth set of assumptions pertains to the nature of man: he develops best under conditions of trust and support, when failure is manageable and temporary rather than punishing and permanent.

In its simplest form, the non-graded school sets expectations that are as broad as the range of individual differences in a class group. Ceilings are raised for the most able and floors of attainment are lowered for the least able. The intent is to create appropriate goals and a reasonable balance of success and failure for all. This, of course, an ideal that must be tempered by the abilities of teachers to adjust to something other than a grade standard for all.

But this is just the beginning. Copies of the same textbook for the entire class do not suffice. Books need to be redistributed throughout the school or assembled in a readily accessible place so that materials widely differing in complexity are available to each class and each pupil. A series of topics to be covered by all pupils throughout the year must be replaced by fundamental concepts and processes to be learned in a variety of ways and at differing rates of speed. Members of a class sometimes work as a total group, sometimes in small groups, and sometimes as individuals. The membership of these small groups changes frequently according to the purposes to be achieved and the nature of the tasks.

At the end of the year, there is no promotion or non-promotion, passing or failing. There is, indeed, diagnosis of each child's progress (in fact, diagnosis is a frequent occurrence—virtually continuous under ideal circumstances), appraisal of strengths and weaknesses, and learning suggestions for the following year. Non-grading leads to tailor-made rather than mass-produced education.

There appear to be no limits to what creative teachers can and will do to redesign education so as to meet individual human needs once they shake loose from conventional concepts, structures, and practices. The staff of the University Elementary School at UCLA, for example, pays little attention to a child's age in placing him with a group or in assisting him with the selection of learning activities. Children of age 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 sometimes work side by side on the same or nearly the same tasks. Children of the same age frequently work on quite different learnings. Children who are gifted in mathematics frequently work on concepts normally reserved for junior or senior high school, regardless of their age. Similarly, children in the Oak Leaf School, near Pittsburgh, move individually and at their own speed through lessons selected from a large store of lessons. They select not only the lesson but also tests designed to help them determine when to move along to further lessons. A student in the Melbourne (Florida) non-graded high school may be proceeding simultaneously with a remedial-type reading programme and advanced mathematics. Non-grading is much less a new pattern to be learned than an invitation to respond pedagogically to human variability.

However, it is exceedingly difficult for one teacher in a school to respond creatively to the individual differences of a class group when the school as a whole is graded and when the other teachers are guided by graded expectations. Such a teacher is certain to impinge upon
learning tasks viewed as reserved for lower or higher grades and, as a consequence, to incur disapproval. For non-grading to secure a foothold, then, there must be a small nucleus of teachers (and, ideally, the principal) who are dissatisfied with the rigidities of grading and open to other alternatives.

The fact that the development of a non-graded school requires group effort is both an asset and a liability. It is a liability in that few school faculties know how to work productively as a planning team and, consequently, tend to shy away from what appears to be unduly demanding. Teachers are accustomed to working alone in their cell-like rooms, maintaining only rather superficial, non-collaborative relationships with peers. Team efforts are not characteristic of educational institutions. Non-grading, then, is not the kind of innovation that sweeps thousands of individual teachers along with it. Talking about it is much easier than doing it.

On the other hand, the far-reaching changes now needed in education must embrace entire schools. A little tinkering here and there will not suffice. Those of us who espouse the philosophy underlying non-grading are not talking about merely improving conventional practices: we are talking about replacing them. The non-graded school is not a better kind of graded school. It is a new kind of school with different expectations, different content, different pupil-teacher relationships, different evaluation standards. It is a school for which we have not yet developed a vocabulary, a school which necessarily is short-changed today because even to discuss it is to use graded language and hence to distort it. Such a school assumes many shapes and forms when it results from the creative planning of a staff involved with non-graded concepts. The unshackling power of the non-graded school, then, is that it requires the kind of team effort which, once it becomes self-sustaining, goes on to completely redesign the school. No less than this will suffice if schools are to overcome obsolescence.

The critical question for such a staff becomes, then: how and where do we begin? The tendency in the United States has been to begin by visiting schools which claim to be non-graded. I have several reservations about this as a beginning procedure. First, few existing models of non-grading are well developed. They need to be refined rather than copied. Second, persons who are not yet imbued with the concepts involved have no intellectual screen for appraising what they see. Third, visiting other schools too often becomes a passive tourism, a kind of detached spectator sport focused on the trivial and obvious rather than on fundamentals. Casual observation provides little or no opportunity to explore ideas in depth for their inter-relationships and implications. A school staff is better off to begin at home.

A beginning step is to acquire fundamental understanding of non-grading and related concepts. Parents should join with teachers in a study group designed to explore the nature of individual differences among pupils, the compatibility of these and the graded structure of school organization, the effects of non-promotion practices in graded schools, and the non-graded school as an alternative pattern. The group should read a great deal, discuss book reports, and look at real data. The purpose is to begin what should become a continuing inquiry. It is essential to remember that non-grading is not something to be learned in any final, complete form. It is part of a way of thinking about education; consequently, new insights and new ways of implementing these insights continue to emerge through a process of disciplined inquiry. To

1. An ample bibliography is available. See, for example, the list included as an appendix in The Nongraded Elementary School (by John I. Goodlad and Robert H. Anderson), revised edition, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1963. Also, annotated bibliographies are available from the Informational Services, IDEA Inc., PO Box 446, Melbourne, Florida (United States).
The non-graded school in the U.S.A.

repeat, this is why a search, through visitation, for some kind of complete and tangible model is frustrating and misleading.

The initial purpose of looking at real data is to confirm the abstraction that children are different. This may be achieved in many different ways. One useful and simple device is to study two children who are about to graduate from a given school, one for whom school has been a series of easy exercises and one for whom school has been a series of frustrations. Critical questions to ask are: In what ways did the graded system provide differentiated opportunities to meet the needs of these two, obviously different children? What adaptations in the programme were effected in recognition of their differences? Almost invariably, the answers are embarrassing ones. Usually, both pupils were exposed to the same learnings at approximately the same rates of speed. Both were victims of a system which did not adequately challenge one child and which demanded too much of the other.

Another useful procedure is to get some kind of comprehensive picture of an entire class on one or more criteria of performance. The criteria could be height and weight, speed of running a distance or, better, achievement on a test covering several subjects. When the results of several such measurements are placed in graph form, the spread of performance from the bottom to the top of a graded class of thirty pupils is staggering. A fifth-grade class, for example, spreads over five or more grades of attainment-level. When achievement scores for a second-grade class are compared with those from a fifth, it is seen that the upper and lower ends of the two overlap substantially. The message here is that there is no such thing as a fifth-grade class in anything other than name. To call it a graded class is to mislead and to perpetuate a myth.

A powerful implication is that both age and grade are poor criteria of what a child can or should learn. The most useful procedure I have found for impressing this upon a school staff is for several teachers to agree to take classes of pupils representing several age groups.¹ For example, each of these teachers who normally teach, successively and separately, grades 1, 2, and 3, agrees to take a mixed class of 6, 7, and 8-year-olds. Then, each does everything possible to forget that the new class is comprised of 'grades' and focuses on the fact that this is a class of children, each of whom is different. A child works at the level of his readiness. Books and other learning resources are made available irrespective of the grade for which they were intended originally. Instructional groups are set up without concern for age or grade. These teachers suddenly find themselves actually involved in and practising non-grading.

It is not necessary for all of the teachers in a school to take this crucial step together. It is highly desirable, however, for the entire staff to participate in discussions pertaining to the experiment. But the pioneering few must not be expected to have answers to all the questions which arise or to provide early evidence as to the success of what they do. And it is critical that they maintain the experiment for a year or more and make constant revisions based on experience, instead of giving up when the first difficulties are encountered. Non-grading is not an easier way of proceeding. It solves some problems but creates others. Few who really understand the concepts involved and who make a sincere effort to implement them are content, however, to return to the graded system.

Robert H. Anderson and I are finding, more and more often, that team teaching provides an effective strategy for getting into non-grading.² Of course, team teaching has merit

in its own right; going into detail would constitute another article. In its simplest form, team teaching is a plan whereby two or more teachers agree to pool their pupils for at least part of the day and to teach them collaboratively. It does not mean simply exchanging classes for one or more subjects. It becomes apparent, then, that the three teachers referred to above might begin by working as a team with the three age-groups involved. Such an arrangement provides greater flexibility for dealing effectively with individuals, small groups, or very large groups according to the purposes in view. In my judgement, a non-graded and team-taught school provides the ultimate in flexibility.

Once a school faculty and the parents participating in study groups have gone through the steps just described, visits to other schools in various stages of non-grading make sense. There are now meaningful purposes for such visitation: to find out how other groups got started, to share success and failures, to exchange specific ideas for the solution of common problems, and so on. The central purpose is to enrich the dialogue within the visiting group through reflection on the experiences of others.

One of the greatest obstacles to introducing non-grading (or any other educational innovation, for that matter) is fear of making ripples. Educators and parents often want to have the school they had before—and non-grading, too! This is impossible. A truly non-graded school is a different kind of school, not just a modification of the old. Even the old ways of talking and thinking about school no longer suffice.

Nor is a non-graded school a stable, static thing. Once teachers fully realize that schools are, after all, the products of decisions once made by men and women and that all of these decisions can be re-made, their imagination need not be confined. They and their partners in the community may start slowly and cautiously. Indeed, there is no substitute for careful study and exploratory starts. But the concepts of designing schools for individuals, of meeting individual differences, of tailor-made schooling, are powerfully compelling. The non-graded school is, more than anything else, an implementation of such concepts. The beauty and the continuing challenge of the non-graded school is that it can take on so many shapes and colours, just so long as its designers remain true to the guiding concepts.

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The shortening of the elementary phase of schooling in the Soviet Union

by A. Arsenyev and A. Markushevich

The authors of this article deal not with a demolition of the walls of the Soviet education system, but with a major rearrangement of some of its partitions. Would it be possible for the children in the elementary grades to learn as well—and more—in three school years as their predecessors had in four years? The answer was affirmative . . . thanks to the experts and the facilities of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences in Moscow. This article is of particular interest on two accounts: it shows the far-reaching benefits which education can expect from psycho-pedagogical research—a fact all too often ignored—and it provides a striking example of the ‘feed-back’ mechanism between experiment and implementation.

This article describes an important aspect of the changes being made in the U.S.S.R. with the immediate aim of expanding and raising the standard of general education. It is planned to bring the content of education into line with the requirements of scientific, technical and cultural progress and to make complete secondary education compulsory for the entire younger generation. These tasks were defined in detail by the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party and the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers in a decree, dated 10 November 1966, ‘on measures for the further improvement of the work of the general secondary school’. This decree was based upon the results of specialized research and the experience accumulated by Soviet schools over a period of many years. Since the total duration of general education was to remain unchanged—ten years in most of the Soviet Republics and eleven years in the Republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania—there were only two, interrelated, methods available for raising the level of education: a more rational selection and chronological presentation of course content, and the improvement of teaching methods. In these circumstances, it was felt that the elementary phase of general education, if reduced to three years rather than four, would make it possible to start systematic courses in the basic disciplines, taught by specialized teachers with the corresponding higher education, a year earlier; would permit the teaching of a number of important subjects earlier in subsequent grades; and would, consequently, make time available in the senior grades for the study of those aspects of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, etc., which had not previously found a place in the curricula but which constitute an indispensable part of modern learning. Naturally, we would not have decided to reduce the length of the elementary phase of general education unless we had been convinced, after thorough research, that such a step was possible and desirable in the interests of elementary education itself.

At this point, we shall provide a brief description of certain facts without which the foreign reader would not be able to appreciate the full significance of the main text.

Schools in the U.S.S.R., after a period in the
late 1920s when they were captivated by the system of ‘all-inclusive’ education, the ‘projects method’ and other educational innovations centred upon the personal experience and immediate interests (understood in a narrow sense) of pupils, began, in the 1930s, to concentrate on courses which, within the limits of common sense and pedagogical necessity, were subordinated to the system and logic of the main fields of science. In the last twenty years or so, there have been no substantial changes in the curricula covering the first four years of a pupil’s schooling (between the ages of 7 and 11). These curricula were applied, in accordance with meticulously devised methods, by teachers having received four years of teacher training after the seventh grade (in more recent years, the eighth grade) of general education. As a rule, these all-round teachers taught all elementary school subjects: mother tongue, arithmetic, drawing, singing, physical culture, and, in the fourth grade, history and nature study as well. In the last few years, manual work has been added to these other subjects in all elementary grades.

Although elementary education did not give rise to any serious criticism for a long time, it gradually became clear, both within the schools themselves and in educational circles, that a number of problems affecting the elementary phase of schooling were still unsolved. One of these problems was the diversity of subjects taught in the fourth grade, which obliged teachers in many schools to engage in spontaneous specialization. In a given school, one teacher would take over the teaching of the mother tongue, another the arithmetic lessons, etc. All the subjects in the curriculum were thus delegated by mutual arrangement. This differentiation of teaching work produced better results. It gave the teacher an opportunity to improve his methods of teaching the chosen subject and, to a certain extent, prepared pupils for the transition, beginning in the fifth grade, to a system whereby instruction is provided exclusively by teachers having received university-level training: mathematicians, historians, geographers, biologists, etc. Nevertheless, the problem of continuity between the fourth and fifth grades continued to be one of the weak spots, mainly because fifth-grade teachers took little account of the training received by their pupils in the first four grades.

Research workers in education and psychology tried to define the weak spots in elementary school teaching methods—undue emphasis on memorization and repetitive exercises, for example—and in the selection and phasing of subjects taught. An analysis of the elementary curriculum and its application showed that the timing of prescribed work had not always been established according to its degree of difficulty and that the tempo of teaching certain subjects was too slow. Thus, for instance, the curriculum gave too much time to the study of the alphabet, lingered (up to the end of the first grade) on arithmetical operations up to twenty although these operations had already been thoroughly dealt with for numbers up to ten, etc. Consequently, there was a contradiction between the increase in the number of factors developing the child’s intellect outside the school (radio, television, cinema, printed matter, technology as encountered in and outside the home, etc.) and the decrease in the demands made on him at school, at least during the first years of study.

In 1958, the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences began a programme of research directed along three different lines. The first line of research was initiated by Professor L. V. Zankov, head of the Experimental Teaching Laboratory of the Academy’s Institute of Educational Theory and History, who sharply criticized the traditional methods of elementary education and convincingly showed that elementary schooling could and should be at a higher level of difficulty and require a faster rate of learning. Zankov and his colleagues prepared textbooks—on all elementary subjects—whose aim was to accelerate the intellectual development of pupils in the
elementary grades: they have used these textbooks for several years in experiments conducted in many schools in the Moscow region.

During the same year, the laboratory of the Academy's Institute of Psychology, directed by Professor D. B. Elkonin and his senior assistant, V. V. Davydov, began research in the learning capacity of pupils in the elementary grades. This research was based on specially devised methods for the sequential development of mental operations and concepts. The research workers attempted to explore the ability of children between 7 and 11 years of age to follow systematic courses of mathematics and grammar, and came to the conclusion that the learning capacity of children of this age was considerably higher than the level taken as a guide by the authors of the elementary grade curricula then in force. In an experiment carried out in a Moscow school and later repeated in a number of schools in the Tula and Kalinin regions, the children successfully assimilated the whole eight-year Russian language course in six years and the six-year mathematics course in four years.

Although the laboratory work by Professors Zankov and Elkonin was wide in scope and their criticism of the traditional bases of elementary education well founded, it was primarily psychological research with insufficient correlation between schooling and contemporary concepts in the corresponding disciplines (mathematics, linguistics, etc.) and insufficient guidelines for a systematic preparation of new content and new methods for elementary education, considered as an integral part of general education.

To remedy these oversights, the Academy's Institute of General and Polytechnical Education drew up new curricula based on a three-year elementary cycle, with the systematic study of Russian and mathematics to begin in the fourth grade. These curricula were tried out first of all in six urban and two rural schools in the cities of Moscow and Leningrad and in the Moscow, Smolensk and Kursk regions. The experiment was later extended to dozens of schools in Kuibyshev and Novosibirsk, the Krasnoyarsk Territory, in the Buryat and Komi Autonomous Republics and in several other regions. These experiments were supervised by Professors M. A. Melnikov, N. S. Rozhdestvensky and A. A. Lyublinskaya and their senior assistants, S. M. Zazykov, M. I. Moro and others. The purpose of this research was to reconsider the content of elementary education, taking into account recent data on the increasing learning capacities of pupils in the elementary grades, the process of transition to universal secondary education and the task of bringing the content of secondary school education into line with the requirements of scientific, technological and cultural progress by improving curricula, syllabuses, textbooks and teaching methods.

Soviet educational theory and educational psychology strongly favour the view that the learning process (i.e., the cumulative acquisition of knowledge, abilities and skills), though absolutely essential to the total education of a child, is not, by itself, sufficient. The content, organization and methods utilized should also reflect concern for special attention and particularized approaches. Traditional elementary education did not take this sufficiently into account. It exaggerated the importance of rote learning and repetitive exercises in reading, writing and arithmetic, and paid too little attention both to the pupil's own capacity for reflection and to the profound changes taking place in society and in the fields of science, technology and culture. Naturally, it would not have been possible to reduce elementary schooling to a three-year period without raising the goals of attainment for each grade, but the meaning and significance of the new curricula obviously go beyond a mere 'condensation' or redistribution of subject-matter previously taught over a four-year period. The new system of teaching the mother tongue in the elementary grades, for example, does not presuppose an accelerated memorization of rules
and definitions. It places the emphasis, instead, on sustained familiarity with literary norms and on the development of an ability to analyse linguistic phenomena, to abstract general concepts from the specific ones, and to apply what is thus learned. The total requirements in regard to reading, writing, spelling and punctuation skills remain the same as they were for the four-year primary course.

The new mathematics course, too, is geared to an early development of the ability to generalize and the basing of arithmetical skills to a greater extent than in the old course on an understanding of the general principles and laws underlying the mathematical facts being studied. In the new course, practical exercises with visual aids are used to lead children towards an understanding of basic rules (e.g., the rules governing addition and subtraction); they are then given special exercises to help them assimilate the rules and, once the rules have been assimilated, they are allowed, to a large extent, to work by themselves on related mathematical operations. The application of these rules to a large number of particular cases gives pupils a concrete understanding of the rules themselves and means that fewer repetitive exercises are required in the development of arithmetical skills. In traditional elementary mathematics, there was no such assimilation of general rules, principles and laws. This was deferred, often, until beyond the end of elementary schooling (to the fifth or sixth grade). Therefore, the acquisition of arithmetical skills depended entirely upon rote learning and had nothing to do with an understanding of the rules governing the exercise of those skills.

The accent placed upon conceptual understanding applies to all grades and to almost all sections of new elementary mathematics. This desire to increase the pupil's ability to generalize has led to the inclusion, in elementary-level mathematics, of basic notions in algebra and simple equations, as well as more instruction in geometry. The cultivation of a pupil's capacity to solve problems independently is further enhanced, in the new mathematics course, by the wide use of comparisons and contrasts, by demonstrations of similarities and differences in sets of practice problems, and by illustrations of such reciprocal relationships as that between direct and reverse operations and that between the components and the results of operations. On the basis of the three-year course in elementary mathematics, a course combining 'arithmetic and the basic principles of algebra', including negative numbers, co-ordinates, calculation by formulae, etc., will be given in grades IV and V.

To bring into play the formative and educative advantages, in the elementary grades, of familiarity with basic notions about nature and society, a wider selection of material for reading in these areas, in and out of class, has been provided. In grades II and III a special subject, 'nature study', has been introduced in order to enable children gradually to store up data acquired through observations of nature and to make generalizations on the basis of such data. Courses in manual work, physical education, music and art have all been improved.

As a result of research, new materials have been prepared and tested and will serve as a basis for the compilation of new textbooks (Russian language and mathematics) for the three-year elementary courses. Keeping in close contact with this research, the specialists concerned have also drafted and tried out new syllabuses for the following grades. As a result, new textbooks for grades IV and V and teaching aids corresponding to the new syllabuses and textbooks have also been prepared.

In 1966, on the basis of this research, the Commission on the Content of Education attached to the Praesidiums of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences submitted proposals to the government recommending, in particular, that the systematic teaching of the basic principles of the sciences should begin in the fourth grade. After wide discussion in educational and scien-
Shortening the elementary cycle in the Soviet Union

tific circles and after appropriate adjustments had been made, the new curriculum and syllabuses were approved by the Ministry of Education of the U.S.S.R.

Preparations for the transition from a four-year to a three-year period of elementary schooling began in 1966. Experiments along the above-mentioned three lines of research had already been conducted in the experimental schools of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences or by enthusiastic individual teachers at some of the regular schools. The fact that positive results were obtained, however, could have been explained by the particularly favourable conditions prevailing in the selected schools. A series of experiments involving a far more generalized trial of the new elementary programme was necessary in order to confirm its validity. The Ministry of Education therefore set a schedule for the testing of the new programme as follows:

In the school year 1966-67: application of the new elementary curricula to the first grades of all schools in three rural districts in the administrative regions of Leningrad, Vladimir and Sverdlovsk.

During the last school year, the new curricula were also applied in the second grades of these schools, and, during the 1968-69 school year, they will be applied in the third grades as well.

In the school year 1967-68: application of the new curricula to the first grades of all schools in another nine districts of the same region (R.S.S.F.R.: the Russian Soviet Socialist Federated Republic) as well as in some of the schools in other Soviet Republics. Grade II, in these same schools, will convert to the new system during the 1968-69 school year.

During the school year 1968-69: application of the new curricula to the first grades of all schools in Moscow and in one district of each administrative area of the R.S.S.F.R. In all, more than 400,000 schoolchildren will be under the new régime.

The results of these experiments are currently available only for schools in twelve districts of the R.S.S.F.R. and in a few districts of other Soviet Republics—in all, 617 schools with some 15,000 first-year and 10,000 second-year pupils. These results confirm the hypothesis that elementary schooling can be completed in three years. By the end of the 1967-68 school year, an overwhelming majority of the selected schools (97-100 per cent) had completely covered the course-content newly prescribed for grades I and II. Final examinations in the accelerated courses were successfully passed by 87 per cent of the first-grade pupils and 97 per cent of the second-grade pupils (Russian language) and by 80 per cent of first-grade pupils and 93 per cent of second-grade pupils (mathematics).

Bearing in mind that teachers were unfamiliar with the new syllabuses, it is important to note that higher indices of successful instruction were obtained in schools which had already switched to the new programme the previous year. In general, as teachers gain experience with the new syllabuses, the indices of successful instruction also rise. Furthermore, the new emphasis on the understanding of rules and concepts enables pupils to assimilate and retain knowledge, abilities and skills more readily in the following grades. In evaluating these results, the Collegium of the Ministry of Education of the R.S.S.F.R. pointed out that the new programme of elementary schooling promotes the pupil's general development as well as his greater awareness in the assimilation of knowledge and in the acquisition of abilities and skills, thus providing the right kind of preparation for subsequent systematic study in the basic principles of the sciences. This is precisely what the programme was designed to do.

In view of the generally favourable evaluation of the results obtained from the testing of the new elementary programme, the U.S.S.R. Ministry of Education decided that the first-grade classes of all schools in the U.S.S.R. should change over to the new syllabuses and textbooks in the school year 1969-70, with
second-grade and third-grade classes to be converted in the following years. Simultaneously, syllabuses and textbooks for all subjects studied in grades IV to X are being revised on a staggered one- to two-year schedule, but this falls outside the scope of the present article.

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The educational techniques of Freinet

by A. Vasquez and F. Oury

The 'techniques of Freinet' do not constitute an all-inclusive and systematized 'method' to be integrally applied. They are an open-ended series of techniques with which any teacher might renovate the substance of education by grafting it upon the particular experience and surroundings of his pupils. Therefore, the authors preferred not to present these techniques in a formally descriptive way and, consequently, the format of the article may strike the reader as being somewhat unusual.

Rather than to 'apply the Freinet techniques', the authors 'borrow from Freinet' in their own classroom work (in the suburbs of Paris) and avoid the temptation to transform Freinet's ideas into a rigid system. After all, Freinet himself constantly warned his teaching colleagues against the dangers of sclerosis! What follows, then, is not a methodic exposé, but a series of comments and questions based upon the professional experience of the authors.

For some years past, educationists have been announcing interesting discoveries. The existential human relationship between teacher and pupil has, it appears, important effects not only on the emotional balance of those concerned, but also on the transmission of knowledge. Rather to their dismay, they discover 'the profound mischievousness of any educational act', the resistance it calls forth, etc. Hence the appeal to the 'human sciences', hence the lectures and speeches on the 'educational relationship', the attitude of the teacher, 'pupil-centred' education....

These studies rarely stoop to the level of primary education. Why should so venerable an institution as the primary school feel itself involved? Surely primary-school methods have proved their worth? The returns may be absurdly low but that, of course, is due to bad working conditions, inadequate training of teachers, television or 'modern life'. The convenient myth of the 1910-type village school with its dedicated teacher exonerates us from considering the embarrassing truth. Barrack-room atmosphere? Ten-year olds conditioned to obey the whistle? Pure invention! The primary school entails no theoretical problems.

We hold a contrary view but, as teachers who have to face up every day to the realities of the ordinary school, we are not much impressed by these recent 'discoveries'. Forty years ago, Célestin Freinet was already suggesting techniques for making the educationists' dreams come true in the primary grades.

Who was Freinet?

Célestin Freinet, schoolteacher, was born in 1896 and died in 1966. To understand Freinet, it is perhaps necessary to have worked with him, to know the tiny village where he spent his childhood. After his experiences in the First World War, in which he was badly wounded, he was stifled by the classroom atmosphere in the school at Bar-sur-Loup in Provence, to which he was appointed in 1920. He went...
through the educational theories current at the time in search of ideas that could be incorporated into his miserable school. After Montaigne, Montessori and Decroly, he turned to Cousinet, Claparède, Bovet, Ferrière and the Geneva school; in Hamburg, he came in contact with the libertarian theory of education; during a visit to the U.S.S.R., he was to rediscover the potential significance of material reality and the educational function of organized co-operative work. 'We are not theorists', he wrote, 'we neither intend nor presume to put our ideas forward as totally original, independent of past efforts or of contemporary currents of thought and action.'

In 1923, the children of Bar-sur-Loup produced the first issue of a school magazine containing a selection of their 'free compositions' ('Printing re-established the unity of children’s thought and activity'). Inter-school correspondence was already being practised: the peasant children of southern Bar-sur-Loup were exchanging letters with pen-friends in Brittany. The classroom was opening to the world and its pupils were no longer isolated. The same applied to their teachers: in 1927 they held a congress, and 1928 saw the foundation of the Co-opérative de l’Enseignement Laïque which was to manufacture the printing equipment. The tools were there; the techniques, too, soon to be thought out afresh and developed by hundreds of teachers. A solution well adapted to the problems of the village school had been put forward.

In 1930 Claparède wrote: ‘When we used to talk about self-expression, the made-to-measure school or living work, we were regarded as dreamers and visionaries. Now, thanks to Freinet and his team, our dreams are coming true: a new age of education is dawning.’

An ordinary schoolteacher had challenged the ideas of the time, criticized the methods employed by the French primary school—historically the longest-established in the world—had deliberately ignored the science of psychology with its proud claim to be able at last to measure the infant mind. But was it really desirable to bring means of self-expression within the reach of proletarian children? The scandal broke out in 1933; the ‘bad teacher’ was forthwith ousted from his post and asked to resign. In 1935, he founded the little school in Vence and the Mouvement de l’École Moderne continued.

In 1963, Freinet’s techniques, their therapeutic potentialities recognized, were officially (and anonymously) recommended in France for classes of backward or mentally retarded children, but, for a multitude of reasons, they remained astonishingly unfamiliar to French teachers.

Very wisely, Freinet soon gave up trying to gain the ear of officials, perhaps realizing intuitively that bureaucratic centralism is incapable of receiving messages from below. Can the high-ups, those who are ‘supposed to know’, listen and learn? Freinet, the Mediterranean peasant, enthusiastic and at times poetic, speaks to others like himself, expressing himself in images, parables which speak to the heart as well as to the mind. It is not surprising to find that his writings sometimes lack clarity and precision: working techniques, educational principles, philosophy of childhood, psychological hypotheses, value judgements and highly personal opinions are jumbled together and superimposed in them—as in the everyday activity of the teacher.

It would have been easy to translate this so-called ‘a-scientific’ language into more general terms had not the challenge which it represented given rise to strong resistance. Today, however, when there is general talk of the ‘need for a reform of methods’, we may find people becoming interested in the ‘tools’ and techniques which make it possible to advance from intentions to actions. When Freinet was alive, they would not listen to him. Are they now going to discover his techniques and heed what he has to say? This is possible; first words often go unheard. Repeated, adapted and distorted, Freinet is in danger of becoming ‘a
subject for study'; we may soon be reading scientific accounts of 'the Freinet method'.

We shall merely give our own testimony—the testimony of State primary-school teachers and psychologists, very different from Freinet and who, in an urban context very different from that of Bar-sur-Loup, have tried to create living, educational school environments. We should like to show what we have borrowed from Freinet in order to turn our classrooms into co-operatives where activities, initiative, language and dialogue become the essential conditions of everyday life and thus, simultaneously, an education and a therapy. In this way we hope to be of use to other educators who, in various settings, are trying to exercise the difficult profession of the schoolteacher.

The Freinet philosophy

First of all and underlying everything else, Freinet has a personal philosophy—a belief in nature and life—sometimes taking a vehement form, which leads him to condemn urban life outright, to include 'back to nature' principles in his educational theory and to apply the term 'natural' to situations which the outside observer can see to be socially, historically or geographically relative. This personal philosophy fits in well with a philosophy of education which has been called new since the beginning of the century.

Irritating as they are for the theorist eager for 'logical' explanations, Freinet's educational ideas are on the other hand intelligible to the practising teacher. It is to the practising teacher—regarded as having a certain freedom of choice and some means of action—that Freinet addresses his remarks directly, without going through the official channels.

We shall do no more than mention some of the guidelines of his educational theories.

Education must be geared to life. 'School machinery churns away without getting into gear. It is not engaged with the complex machinery of human life.' Freinet's 'educational reversal' enables education to be geared not only to the life of the child, but also to the life of the village, of the city, of the child's correspondents.

... 'scholasticism' must be avoided, i.e., 'all behaviour, all reactions, all work specific to the usual school environment'.

... 'natural' learning must be emphasized: the skills of walking and talking have been acquired by processes which, though little understood, have proved effective and to which Freinet refers as the 'natural method'. Rather than imposing new techniques of learning, Freinet would like to use these processes, these mechanisms which have already been set up, for the acquisition of writing, drawing and arithmetic.... Although there have been criticisms of the method of learning by 'trial and error' and although some of the psychological explanations seem naïve or unconvincing, the twofold need for a real emotional motivation and for situations productive of personal involvement seems hard to deny.

The idea of 'real work', common to Freinet, Makarenko and others, casts doubt on the usefulness of exercises. Children, like adults, like to make an effort if the effort has a definite meaning for them. The distant objectives sometimes proclaimed by educationists are hard for them to imagine and in any case leave them indifferent. Only immediate prospects, successes embodied in concrete physical form, interest them and encourage activity and efforts. The distinctions usually made between work and play, interest and effort, compel us to make it clear that by work Freinet means a free, sometimes hard, activity directed to a known purpose and thus comparable to that of the peasant, the artisan or the artist, but as different from an imposed task as it is from a game—generally regarded as its antidote.
Freinet himself is insistent about the need for tools and techniques: 'What I am saying has been said by others before me and said better. Our techniques have developed purely from the bottom upwards, from the actual work and life of the children in our reformed classrooms. We never tell anyone to use the free composition method but to get hold of printing equipment and then channel their education towards the activities which these tools make possible.'

**Individualized work and programmed instruction.**
To be able to manage a co-operative, it is obviously desirable to be able to count. The shared life of the group motivates the learning of the mechanisms, but it also requires 'tools' enabling each child to work at his own level, his own pace, making systematic, gradual progress. The 'Freinet classroom' has long been using card indexes and self-scoring exercise books inspired by the Dalton and Winnetka Plans. The idea of programmed instruction is there in embryo form.

**The Freinet techniques**

**The free composition**
It is true to say that each individual has a spontaneous tendency to express himself, to communicate, but is it possible to assert that the spoken and, above all, the written language are 'natural'? Is it more 'natural' to express oneself in French or in Japanese? The child, like the adult, only writes 'spontaneously' in certain situations where he has something to say and someone with whom he cannot communicate orally—hence the importance of school pen-friends and magazines, which place each child in the position of writing down his thoughts for one or more other people; he works for others (his pen-friends) and often with others (his classmates). His personal dynamism is harnessed to a social purpose not only by interpersonal relationships but also, we believe, by the fact that this dynamism is absorbed into a corporate entity, i.e., the class which, thanks to common aims, interests and activities, becomes a group. The attempts made by the child to express his thoughts in writing, using the matter that comes to hand in his environment, thus become the starting point for the learning process. In so far as children experience success with these attempts, they will tend to repeat them.

**Inter-school correspondence**
Each child writes periodically to a correspondent who quickly becomes a friend. Teachers 'pair off' children of roughly similar age, school level and interests so that some exchange is possible. The emotional aspect seems to be the predominant one here. The correspondent, being distant, both imaginary and real, can play an important psychological role. Each child can write to his pen-friend when he likes and what he likes. These letters are distributed as soon as they arrive and are often read in public, sometimes with the help of the teacher. Classes regularly exchange letters, compositions and documents. It is important that they should belong to somewhat different geographical environments. Exchange visits, enabling children to go either individually or in groups to live with their pen-friends, are the ideal complement to a year of correspondence. The material, financial and, above all, legal obstacles should not, however, be underestimated.

**The school magazine**
The originality of Freinet lay in his idea of putting printing at the service of children's free self-expression in the primary-school classroom. Thousands of different experiments finally produced a technique which can be used by any teacher. The school magazine, a collection of ten or so of the children's compositions printed on sheets 13.5 × 21 cm and stapled together, usually appears monthly. It is the image, the symbol of the class, a fact some-
times emphasized by its title (*The Jolly Elves*,
*The Fox-cubs*, *The Pussy-cats*, *The Trawl*, *The
Sailor Boys*, etc.). About one hundred copies
are run off, distributed, exchanged, or sold for
the benefit of the co-operative.

The sure knowledge that their work is going
to be read by a large number of people is a
strong incentive to children to write; they like
to see their work in print. As well as a means
of expression, the magazine can be regarded as
a manual activity: the pupil manipulates cha­
racters and symbols—the very ones which are
used for human communication and which
constitute language. The operation of ana­
lysing, breaking down an idea into letters and
then physically putting it together again in
the form of a printed text, seems to us to be a valua­
ble form of intellectual training. In combina­
tion with free composition, might not printing
put an end to the long-standing dispute be­t­
 tween global, synthetic and other methods?
Furthermore, the expression, the activity and
the success are both individual and communal,
and this fact obviously affects the relationships
between the children taking part. Lastly, the
method combats and then removes the dicho­
tomy between manual and intellectual activity,
between thought and action, fostered by the
school and society.

Method of preparation:

(a) **Encouraging expression by complete freedom
of imagination.** Each child writes what he wants
and when he wants, as best he can. The young
child who cannot write, or the inhibited child
who dares not, do at least know how to draw
or tell a story, so when compositions are being
submitted, they either talk or comment on a
drawing (they can also dictate their composi­
tion to an older pupil).

(b) **Giving this expression a social form by pre­
sentation (reading of the pupil's work in public).**
Each child submits his composition to the others
at a meeting. This event should take place
at regular intervals and have a somewhat official
character: for instance, there should be a chair­
man ensuring that each author has an opportu­
nity to speak. The text to be reproduced is
chosen by the group.

(c) **. . . and by acceptance of other people's point
of view.** Before the text is selected, there can be
a discussion on the worth of the various con­
tributions. It is important that the children
should have in mind two requirements: the
text has to please them individually but, since
it is to be published, it has to please others as
well.

(d) **The group as a whole then works on the selec­
ted text.** . . . While the choice was being
made, the child was facing judges. Now, his
classmates and his teacher have become fellow­
workers, helping him to put his ideas into shape,
to bring out certain points more clearly, and
to provide the words and syntactical forms neces­
sary for this purpose. The text also has to be
reduced to essentials, so as to fit into the limits
imposed by page make-up.

(e) **. . . which is illustrated with children's draw­
ings.** . . . reproduced by various means (alcohol
or stencil duplication, lino-cuts, aerograph
pencil, etc.).

(f) **. . . and printed with the co-operation of all.**
The setting-up of a complete text is a printer's
job which is beyond the capacities of a single
child. Thanks to the setting-stick with which
a line of type can be set up, a 5-year-old can
join in the collective task, working alone with
a model. The printing of a text requires meti­
culous work from all. The Freinet type-case
allows four type-setters to work at the same time.

(g) **The printing.** The hand-operated press
advocated by Freinet requires the work and
co-operation of three children: the inker, who
handles the roller; the printer who works the
press; a third child who arranges the printed
sheets into book form.

From the technical point of view, the output
is low: 100 to 200 sheets an hour. From the
educational point of view, this work, somewhat
repetitive, easy but requiring attention and
co-operation, enables children from 5 to 14
with varying levels of competence to participate.
The learning of the written language begins with these children's compositions, prepared or received by the group. In this sort of class, the ability to read and write becomes a necessity. However, the acquisition of this printing equipment—fairly cheap compared with the cost of the elementary readers which it replaces—nevertheless raises problems when the teacher cannot allocate funds according to his own initiative. An alcohol duplicator or a 'limographe' (small wooden duplicator which the teacher can make himself) can then be used to print the magazine.

**Fact-finding excursions**

Pen-friends ask specific questions. The everyday, the commonplace, becomes interesting—for instance, children from the Sahara are amazed by the Paris traffic. Before replying, therefore, it is necessary to investigate, to find things out. This counters the danger, implicit in unchecked free expression, that the children may stagnate, become bogged down in a childish, limited outlook; now, those who formerly 'had nothing to say' can talk about buses and camels. The communication of the results of investigation requires further collective work to be carried out. From the complexity of a factory, for example, perceived in a random way, a communicable reality has to be extracted. This involves analysing, abstracting, symbolizing, transposing, communicating. Written compositions, drawings, photographs, tape recordings can all be used; the documents, gathered together into an album, form part of the collective history of the class.

This opportunity for getting children out of their usual, sometimes very drab or even unhealthy, environment is often greatly welcomed by the teacher. In some countries, new legal definitions of the teacher's civil responsibility would help to encourage this 'extra-mural classroom'. As Decroly has already pointed out, environmental studies can serve as the starting point for scientific, historical, geographical and sociological research, leading on to new achievements (children's 'lectures', films, texts, etc.), provided that documents which can be directly used by young pupils are available. The collective preparation and the production of these documents has become a matter of general concern.

**Organization, relationships and institutions within the co-operative class**

The mere functioning of the active and co-operative class requires strict discipline (comparable with that on board a ship, according to Freinet), which, since it cannot come from outside, requires the participation of all. The needs of 'production', the variety of the forms of work, necessitate a complex and precise organization which is constantly challenged, as it should be, by the development of individuals and groups. The problems of authority and power occur in terms of the elaboration of rules applicable to all, the definition and readjustment of roles and status, whence the need for 'institutionalizing' bodies such as the co-operative council.

The co-operative council combines the functions of analysis, organization, decision, etc. It is at once the eyes, the brain and heart of the group, easing the transition to the spoken word, the control and release of new dynamic drives. What occurs in the co-operative classroom—interpersonal relations, group phenomena, institutions (and their significance in the co-operative structure) as well as the educational and therapeutic potentialities of this new environment—are, in our opinion, well worth the attention of the psychologist, the educationist and the therapist.

**Example: a day in the school life of Marc (Paris, 1966).**

We have come a long way from Bar-sur-Loup; the world has changed; primary schools in general have grown without evolving. They have become overcrowded 'barracks' in which
the problems of supervision have displaced those of education. Like mass-produced components, 'normal' children have to move smoothly up the line and the machine reacts strongly against deviation from the norm.

Marc belongs to the 50 per cent of French schoolchildren who are said to be retarded: at 13, after a long illness, good at arithmetic, bad at reading and spelling, he is regarded as 'mentally deficient' (IQ: 80), treated as abnormal and given the special instruction for the maladjusted.\footnote{Maladjusted to what? The creation of more and more classes for the re-education of 'abnormal' children without challenging the pedagogical concept of 'normal' is perhaps not the most economical solution.}

A co-operative class using Freinet techniques gives him an opportunity to work at his own level, but above all to express himself, to find a place for himself, to work in a group and to communicate—in short, to live.

9.00 a.m. Marc chats with three classmates.

9.05 a.m. Since what he was saying was not of general interest, he listens to the 'news'—local or international—delivered by well-informed classmates.

9.30 a.m. As the only big boy in a group of five young children, Marc is painfully aware of his backwardness in reading when the letters from pen-friends arrive.

10.00 a.m. His reading problem does not prevent him from being the first to solve problems involving the sale of magazines; he withdraws from the group and works on his own at the card-indexes.

11.00 a.m. As captain of the soccer team, Marc plays happily.

2.00 p.m. A story by Marc is one among several submitted for selection by his fifteen classmates; his composition is not chosen, but it obtains some votes, including that of the teacher.

2.30 p.m. Marc is a competent team leader in charge of a group of about ten printers.

4.00 p.m. Criticized in the co-operative council for having been caught playing ping-pong by the headmaster, he is ashamed; but then a method which he suggests for cleaning the printing type is accepted. The teacher did not intervene.

The teacher has nevertheless kept track of Marc's successive situations in the group; he will have an opportunity to compare his observations with those of other teachers interested in devising new teaching methods; his work thus takes on an added significance. Not the least of Freinet's achievements is to have broken down the isolation of the practising teacher and to have set going a co-operative research movement.

But enthusiasm would be out of place here: the architecture, the furnishings, the equipment available, the rules and regulations, the training of teachers, habit, all combine to impose on the 'normal' urban school a type of education going back to the days of 'Taylorism'. Evolution is unlikely. Our experience in the urban situation leads us to wonder whether the pedagogy born of Freinet, which was developed in an under-equipped rural environment, might not be more directly put to use in developing areas of the world prior to the construction of the kinds of buildings and institutions which to us constitute an obstacle.

Freinet's contribution—an answer to the problem?

Is the school magazine just another technique to help the teacher run his class in an unchanged school world, where the lack of dialogue makes human communication improbable? Freinet's techniques interest us because of the radical changes in the environment which they involve.

It is our view:

1. That the 'way' of learning to read, write and count, and the whole set of emotional, material, verbal, etc., relationships and exchanges experienced at school, will in the
long run constitute either factors making for individual and collective development or additional factors making for social alienation; and this applies, whatever the country, whatever its political system and its degree of social and economic development.

2. That any school situation will always give rise to processes of transference, sublimation, identification, etc., which, even if they pass unnoticed, constitute the key to all development and all learning; but the dual relationship rightly referred to as ‘pedagogical’, which we consider to be anti-educational and dangerous, is generally regarded, especially at primary level, as normal, necessary and inevitable.

It may seem surprising that the importation of this model of educational relationship, clearly outdated, should be considered in various countries as a satisfactory solution. In fact, the chief concern is usually school enrolment rather than educational theory, and in the face of pressure from public opinion, these problems of relationship seem abstract, difficult to delimit and, in the end, secondary. Any ‘practical solution’ will do as long as it makes it possible to go on to other, more specific problems: organization, school buildings, funds—more ‘real’ problems, clear to everyone, which monopolize attention. The politician, taking as solved a problem of whose existence he is unaware, has only to suggest a course—such and such a type of school, teacher or teaching machine—and the demand disappears for the time being; the educationist moves over to make room for the architects and the planners. It takes years for this course of action to appear, in its true guise, as costly makeshift.

Then again, some teachers, confusing ‘modern teaching’ with mechanization, pass gaily from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first, from ‘chalk and talk’ to television and teaching machines. The real mistake is surely to use the modern media in the service of outdated educational ideas. The specialists are aware of the danger: audio-visual media which transmit without any possibility of feedback may lead to the worst form of teaching—that which produces a passively receptive instead of an educated pupil.

At primary-school level, it is ridiculous to hope that the image of ‘the Good Teacher’ will one day replace the tissue of relationships which can make of the classroom an educational environment. This brings us back to the problem of teacher training—what kind of teaching are they to be trained for, and how?

Freinet may yet be described to trainee-teachers as a model of modern educational theory, and free composition may become compulsory. The results are predictable: between any theory descending from Olympus and actual situations, there will always be a fatal cleft.

Ought we to be surprised if confused social demands reflect the ambiguity of any society which tries at the same time to stand still and to advance, and if the decisions adopted do not coincide with the intentions proclaimed? It is sometimes useful to identify, beneath the explicit demand, another which, though denied and repressed, continues to exist, persist and insist. . . . What are we really trying to raise up, train or manufacture? Scholars? Keen minds? Party members? Disciplined technicians? A mass of producers and of docile consumers? Or a creative nation? These are political options which presuppose the possibility of choice between several types of school. Finally, it might be asked, to what extent do some of the modern innovations (audio-visual methods, learning by playing, etc.), differ fundamentally from the traditional model?

Many of the respectable traditions of the ‘advanced’ countries, more solid than the concrete their schools are made of, stand in the way of evolution. It may, indeed, prove fortunate for the developing countries that they have not advanced . . . into the impasse in which others are struggling. The image of the passive school—children with arms folded,
listening to the teacher—has not yet become engrained in the minds of all, everywhere.

Can progress be made without demolishing the ‘barracks-school’; without burning the textbooks of intellectual passivity; without reforming, retraining or reconverting the teachers? It is not impossible that the ‘underdeveloped’ schools, making use of the work of Freinet and others, may one day serve as models to our institutions, petrified in their pride.

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Though this article is not devoted to primary education as such, it does involve an examination of the effect produced upon primary-school children and their parents, when general education is suddenly extended beyond the primary level. In this particular case, furthermore, the extension of educational opportunity was effected through the utilization of primary-school teachers, buildings and equipment.

There are two paradoxes in Philippine society, one well known, the other only recently discovered. The first is that this is a rich country with poor people. The second is that, while the Philippines rank near the top of a list of seventy-five countries in educational provision—the number of teachers per 10,000 inhabitants, enrolment ratios at various levels, and other quantitative indicators—it is near the bottom of the list in economic development, as measured by the Gross National Product. Per capita revenue in the Philippines is about U.S.$75.

These facts are appalling, yet cannot be denied. Substandard rural education is a particularly salient aspect of the over-all problem, since 75 to 80 per cent of the Philippine population live in rural areas. This study will concentrate upon one of the latest innovations utilized in dealing with this problem: the creation of community high schools in remote villages (‘barrios’).

A brief description of the barrio high-school movement

The barrio high-school movement started only five years ago, in 1964, with three schools in the town of Urdaneta, Province of Pangasinan. Recent reports show that there may be as many as 500 new barrio high schools this year. These will be in addition to nearly 1,000 in operation as of last year, when they enrolled nearly 100,000 students. These schools are supported by the villagers and operate in existing elementary schools. They make use of the facilities—rooms, library, equipment, etc.—when these are not being used by elementary classes. The principal of the elementary school serves as assistant principal in the high school and is paid 20 pesos a month in addition to his regular salary. Barrio high schools start with one or two classes and increase to four (like ‘normal’ high schools) after three or four years of operation. They are staffed by qualified teachers appointed by the Division Superintendent of Schools in the usual manner, and assisted by qualified elementary school teachers.

In Malabon, nine barrio high schools—the first to be opened in the province of Rizal—were opened this past year. Three of these already offer four years of schooling. They enrol 4,500 students, 3,000 of whom would have had to discontinue their studies had the barrio high schools not opened. In Northern Luzon, some ninety new barrio high schools are reported to be operating this year, and nearly a hundred
in Central Luzon. Recent reports have not been received from the regions of Mindanao, most of the Visayas, Bicol and elsewhere, but there are already close to two hundred new schools registered there. If this trend continues, the duration of the formal education commonly provided to the Philippine population may be extended within a generation from its current level of five years to a total of nine years.

This will be possible with little or no government support. The barrio people are willing and able to increase their earnings in order to supplement teachers’ salaries, to purchase equipment, to pay book rentals, and to pay other school expenses. As part of their vocational training, the students—boys and girls—earn some of their school expenses. In Villanueva (Pangasinan), to cite one example, the 140 students last year earned an average of 50 pesos.

Before a school is accredited by the Division Superintendent of Schools, it must meet certain criteria—qualified teachers, a balanced budget, etc. The parents and students sign an agreement that they will support and maintain the high school. While a few individual schools have met difficulties, most of them have managed very well. Many barrio high schools pay higher salaries than regular high schools. As to the quality of instruction, students from barrio schools in many provinces achieved better results than did students from regular high schools in tests prepared by the Bureau of Public Schools. Their graduates also do well in national competitions for scholarship awards. High motivation, smaller classes, and closer parental supervision are factors which tend to offset the obvious handicaps: inexperienced teachers and an inadequate supply of books and equipment.

Substantial help is given to the barrio high schools in the form of donations in money, books, materials, equipment, etc. The Asia Foundation provides a substantial grant and last year gave 500 science kits. The United States Government donated 1,000 copies of the Unesco Source Book for Science Teaching—one copy to each school—to help teachers and students to improvise science equipment at little or no extra cost. The Barrio Book Foundation, headed by Dr. Carlos P. Romulo, Secretary of Education, solicits funds with which to purchase textbooks to be sold to barrio councils at the lowest possible cost. These books are then rented to the students at the most reasonable terms. Unicef, CARE, and other international organizations give books, seeds, paper, ink, stencils, etc., to the barrio high schools. Another organization has provided a five-room building to house the Barrio High Schools and Community College Office, located in Urdaneta, Pangasinan.

The barrio high-school movement is bearing results which are beginning to be recognized. First, the barrio people are beginning to realize their power, and as a result of supporting their high schools, they are overcoming their habits and attitudes of passivity and dependence. They are beginning to assert themselves, particularly, on the question of their legal rights to educational self-improvement! In Pampanga, for example, the villagers, through their Barrio Council, collect, disburse and account for their own funds, which are treated as trust funds. When a barrio high school in Camarines Sur was closed by the Director of Public Schools, the people protested and won their case. Another encouraging sign of success is that the drop-out rate, in the elementary schools where there are barrio high schools, is reduced by 20 per cent or more. This is because, with a high school in their midst, children and parents can finally appreciate the tangible objectives of primary schooling. Third, juvenile delinquency is considerably reduced. Thanks to such positive results, the barrio school movement is leading to a widespread replacement of the inadequate six-year formal education span by a ten-year span—six elementary years supported by the government, and four high-school years supported by the people.

As with all innovations, barrio high schools
Pedro T. Orata

do have opponents. Many owners of private high schools, fearing the loss of profit, are doing everything they can to provoke the closing of those barrio high schools situated near their own schools. Some government officials, including school officials, by insisting on the validity of certain technicalities, unwittingly interfere with the progress of the barrio school movement. Some want only 'top quality' high schools, not realizing that in their effort to ensure rigid standards appropriate to the few who live in cities, they deprive millions in rural areas of their right to a high-school education. The outcome of this battle is of vital concern to those young people whose only 'fault' is having been born in the wrong place: in the barrios. Yet, barrio citizens pay taxes in support of the State-run high schools and colleges most of which are situated beyond the reach of their own children. Any widespread denial of access to secondary education by village children is bound to boomerang to the disadvantage of everyone, including the educated, the rich and the powerful.

Specific accomplishments of barrio high schools

Barrio schools are multi-purpose. They are designed to prepare young students (and out-of-school youth as well) for vocations and for higher studies. At the same time, they serve to wipe out ignorance and illiteracy, to minimize poverty, to reduce lawlessness and juvenile delinquency, and to improve health in the rural areas. They are helping significantly in achieving the goals of social and economic development in the rural areas where the majority of the Philippine people live and work. What are the facts to support these statements?

First, at a little or no expense to the government, these small barrio high schools are designed to give complete four-year high school education to the 2.5 million youths aged from 13 to 16 or 17 who live in the barrios and whose terminal schooling is, at most, the sixth grade. The four-year curriculum prescribed by the Bureau of Public Schools is strictly followed. The graduates of the barrio high schools are as well prepared to meet the requirements of college entrance as their counterparts in urban areas. There are now an estimated 150,000 enrolled in 1,500 barrio high schools, 3,500 of whom are in the fourth year. General education, if this expansion continues, will soon be available over a ten-year span throughout the Philippines.

Second, the students undertake projects to earn money to help pay their school expenses. These projects are undertaken as part of their vocational preparation. Furthermore, their parents are encouraged to improve the productivity of their farms—they agree to do this before the school is allowed to open—to enable them to pay the tuition fees of their children. As a part of their motivation for this work, their children are sometimes awarded scholastic bonus credits that reflect, to a certain degree, parental contributions. Not all parents—or even the students—fulfil their agreements, but a substantial number of them do, and their number increases every year. Thus, barrio high schools help improve the economic productivity of the barrio people.

Third, students undertake projects not only to cover their school expenses, but to help their community. Last year, there was an epidemic of hoof-and-mouth disease in Central Luzon. In Pangasinan, the problem was aggravated by the fact that the owners of tractors took unfair advantage of the situation and doubled their rental rates. There are only nine veterinarians in a province of 1.5 million inhabitants and thousands of work animals were affected by the disease. In Urdaneta, the barrio high school teachers thought of a way to deal with the critical situation. One of the veterinarians was invited to give a lecture and a series of demonstrations on the treatment of animals affected by the disease and how to isolate the few that were not sick. Each barrio sent a team of teachers, lay leaders and students to
But, they did something else. The boys and girls went to their farms and, using an unorthodox method—trampling the soil to loosen it and pulling the sod afterwards—they were able to plant a part of their lots with rice seedlings. The method did not result in as good preparation as when using a plough drawn by a ‘cara-bao’, but the crop was not entirely lost. When the animals recovered, they were put back to work with little loss in production.

The students were asked to write about this experience. In their social studies class, they discussed the different aspects of the problem created by the profiteering mentality of the tractor owners. In their science classes, they discussed the many ways of loosening soil and getting rid of weeds. All of this was typical of the way barrio school subjects are taught in functional relation to practical activities.

A fourth distinctive achievement of these community high schools is their effect in reducing the incidence of juvenile crime. In Zaragoza (in the town of Bolinao) there was cattle rustling every night of the year. Most of the 30 boys in a class of 52 high-school students were old enough to engage in this crime, and many of them had done so. But since they are now in school all day, and have to study their lessons at night, they have no time for cattle rustling. In fact, since the opening of the local high school, cattle rustling has been noticeably reduced. As the teacher pointed out, if the school were not there, only 5 of the 52 students enrolled would have been able to attend one of the regular regional high schools, the nearest of which is 15 kilometres away, on rough roads.

Fifth, as a result of the opening of barrio high schools, life in the barrios becomes less drab and restrictive. The addition of a barrio high-school library, where villagers can read the daily papers and some books, is a much appreciated innovation. Furthermore, with the incentive provided for qualified elementary-school teachers to teach one or two high-school subjects, we can expect greater interest in teaching in the barrios than before. Standards in such schools will improve accordingly.

Sixth, when elementary-school pupils know that they can finish high school in their barrio, many of them are motivated to remain rather than drop out after one or two years. And since a part of the community school idea is to encourage students and their parents to earn and save, it is expected that the economic causes of the drop-out problem will be at least partially eradicated. This is indeed happening in places where community high schools have existed for several years.

Seventh, the barrio people have discovered the virtues of local initiative and self-help methods. When it was rumoured that, as a result of the protests of private high-school owners, some of the barrio high schools in Pangasinan might be closed, the response of the barrio people was immediate and emphatic. They said: 'We will go to Malacañang (the presidential palace). We are not asking the government to establish and support the schools for us: we are establishing and supporting them ourselves. What right has the government to close these schools?' The people won their case! In two other ‘test cases’ this past year, villagers under the leadership of their barrio captains and councilmen protested against the closing of their high schools, which were reopened. This shows that the barrio people are fast learning to defend their rights.

The last in this long list of goals achieved by the barrio school movement is its extension beyond the secondary level. In Urdaneta, for example, the improvement and extension (sixteen new branches) of the community high school was so successful as to lead to the next logical step: the creation of a community college, which was opened in July 1966 with 148 first-year students. The college, like the barrio high schools, is supported by tuition fees, supplemented by funds donated by a local
fund-raising committee. Five additional community colleges have been approved this year. These colleges cater not only to qualified high-school graduates, but to adults as well—including illiterate ones—who are taught to improve their occupational techniques and attitudes and are awarded a ‘certificate of performance’.

Future prospects

It is well known that the weakest links in Philippine society as a whole are the barrios. In education, the weak link is the secondary school. These weak links are closely related; first, because most of the people live in the rural areas where the rich resources of the country remain undeveloped; and second, because the educational opportunities for people in these areas are just beginning to go beyond the primary-school level. For economic reasons, only one out of four or five village elementary-school graduates has access to the ‘regular’ high schools situated mainly in distant urban areas.

The barrio high schools are, so far, the most effective means for correcting such disparities: first, by bringing the high school to within walking distance and second, by inducing fundamental changes in parent and student attitudes, thanks to the ‘self-help’ concept. In the long run, poverty, ignorance and passivity will cease to be dominant traits in rural areas—replaced by self-reliance and self-respect.

The barrio high-school innovation in the Philippines should be applicable to other developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It could even be a very positive alternative to some expensive and often ineffective literacy and adult education campaigns.

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Items and reviews
The year 1970 has been officially designated 'International Education Year' by the United Nations. Why another special year? There have been the International Human Rights Year—just ended—the International Geophysical Year, the International Years of the Quiet Sun, International Co-operation Year, International Tourist Year to mention only a few. Why, then, International Education Year?

One of the main reasons can be found in a historic study entitled 'World Illiteracy at Mid-Century', published by Unesco in 1957. This was the most comprehensive global view of the status of education ever undertaken. The study covered 198 countries and territories. It showed that a little over 44 per cent of the world adult population over 15 years of age—then estimated at some 700 million—were totally illiterate, the great majority of them living in the developing countries. Using the higher yardstick of functional literacy—that is not merely the ability to read and write, but also to play some useful role in today's society—Unesco's survey estimated that 65 per cent of this adult population was illiterate. For good measure, it was further calculated that 250 million children were not even attending school.

This survey helped to focus world attention on the situation of education three years before the United Nations first Development Decade was launched in 1960. It led to a series of efforts in which Unesco and what was then the United Nations Special Fund and Technical Assistance Programme, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, helped States launch their own national programmes designed to close the education gap. As a result of some of these activities, between 1958 and 1965 the number of children attending primary school in Latin America increased by 10 million. Mexico alone started a major drive, creating new school rooms at the rate of ninety a week and training over 10,000 primary teachers annually.

After this survey Unesco, in collaboration with its Member States in the 'Third World', convened regional conferences of Ministers of Education at which targets for educational expansion and development were set, priorities established, problems discussed.

Subsequent conferences of these ministers, often attended also by ministers responsible for economic planning, have since examined, reassessed and, where necessary, modified the original targets. A World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy was organized by Unesco in September 1965 in Teheran.

In all its activities directed towards expanding and improving education in the new States of the world, Unesco has laid great stress on help in teacher training and educational planning. In 'Black' Africa alone, Unesco with aid from the United Nations Development Programme has assisted in setting up twenty secondary teacher-training colleges which, by 1970 should be turning out 2,000 fully qualified teachers annually.

Planning missions of Unesco experts have visited most of the developing countries at their request, in some cases two or three times and more, to help set up education systems, create educational planning machinery geared to local needs, and organize education budgets. Other expert missions have helped plan and run literacy programmes. Assistance is currently being given to seven States for selective projects in an experimental world literacy programme—in which fifty-two other countries have already asked to participate—and nearly thirty more countries are now receiving technical aid in their literacy activities.

Some immediate results of this first gentle pressure on the panic button of a world education emergency were impressive. Between 1960 and 1965, enrollments rose by 27 per cent.
in primary, 22 per cent in secondary and by 40 per cent in higher education. Over-all enrolments for 1965 were: primary education: 304 million; secondary: 91 million; higher: 18 million, representing 74 per cent, 22 per cent and 4.4 per cent of each respective age group. Education expenditures also rose at an impressive rate.

Why then is there need for an International Education Year? Because, despite all these strides, education in both the industrialized and the developing worlds is in crisis as was fully recognized at the Conference of European Ministers of Education convened by Unesco in Vienna in 1967. One of the reasons for this is the unprecedented growth in population, especially in developing countries where orderly growth of education is so vital for economic and social expansion. This has made it hard, if not almost impossible, to build enough schools, train enough qualified teachers, produce the necessary textbooks and other material in order to keep pace with the numbers. While the percentage of the world’s totally illiterate population has declined from a little more than 44 per cent—the proportion estimated at the time of the Unesco survey over a decade ago—to a fraction over 33 per cent now, the actual number of illiterates has increased from 700 million to between 740 and 750 million and rises steadily each year.

In addition, despite encouraging school enrolment figures, the drop-out and ‘repeater’ rates have remained depressingly high. In Africa, for example, seven out of ten children still quit before completing sixth grade.

Reform and modernization in both methods and content of education have not kept up with the times. Much of the educational structure—and again this is especially the case in most of the newly independent States—remains many years behindhand, while other areas of society are taking advantage of the new technology. Other reasons for the crisis are the lack of good jobs, the information ‘explosion’ and the ‘credibility gap’ between what the young are taught in school and what society practices, all of which have created tensions, dissent, often disorder.

Some of the underlying causes of student unrest help to explain this crisis even more. Again, there is an unprecedented growth in the number of young people. Those under the age of 24 are in an absolute numerical majority today: they represent 54 per cent of the world’s population, and in Africa, Asia and Latin America 60 per cent.

Then there is the information ‘explosion’. In the scientific world alone, new ideas, or new concepts, applications and uses for old or familiar ideas are pouring forth in an endless flow. It has been calculated that all this information and material adds up to some 15 million pages of new reading matter each year, and that an economist, for instance, would now have to spend twelve hours each day just to keep up with progress in his own field.

Furthermore, the head of the family, or the average teacher, is no longer an accepted fountainhead of knowledge—unless he is a very exceptional parent or teacher. The chances are that a university student of today knows more in some disciplines than they do, and a computer can certainly store more facts. Finally, there is the ‘credibility’ or morality gap facing the student, who is urged to look deeply and honestly into, for example, the causes of war and injustice, only to graduate into a world where such problems are all too often veiled in hypocrisy or at least in dubious reasoning.

That the international community is acutely aware of the necessity of focussing world attention on this crisis in education was seen when the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 1968 unanimously adopted a resolution proclaiming 1970 ‘International Education Year’.

The idea for undertaking some world-wide concerted action had long been considered in the United Nations which had, in fact, briefed Unesco to prepare a detailed plan. In view
of the Organization's long concern over the situation and its determination to try to suggest a workable remedy, it is hardly surprising that when the International Education Year was announced, Mr. René Maheu, Director-General of Unesco, warned that: 'International Education Year must be more than a mere celebration. Its purpose should be to promote concerted action by Member States and by the international community towards four main objectives: to take stock of the present situation throughout the world; to focus attention on a number of major requirements for both the expansion and the improvement of education; to make available greater resources for education; and to strengthen international co-operation.'

The choice of 1970 for International Education Year is appropriate in that it falls at the end of the first Development Decade and on the threshold of the second. Moreover, this year, 1969, the International Labour Organisation will complete its preparation of a World Employment Plan, which will naturally direct increased attention to education and training.

Through its special preoccupation with education in the United Nations family, Unesco in collaboration with other United Nations bodies—especially ILO—and taking into account suggestions made by them, will assume primary responsibility for the preparation and execution of an international, concerted programme.

Generally speaking, the goal of the International Education Year is to foster national efforts in the training and education field so as to produce a new, dynamic approach to the development of human resources at the outset of the second Development Decade. The common role of all United Nations agencies is to 'mobilize energies and inspire initiatives in education and training'.

But the real goal of the International Education Year is to bring about changes in policies and practices in respect of education and training. Regional and international conferences held during 1970 will provide one means of defining some of the policy consequences of the International Education Year. These include the Food and Agriculture Organization's world conference on agricultural education in the summer of 1970, Unesco's International Conference on Public Education, to be held at that time and, in a more general form, the sixteenth session of Unesco's General Conference which will take place at the end of the year may be expected to address itself to a critical reappraisal of modern education, and to adopt a report for submission to the United Nations General Assembly.

The much quoted statement by H. G. Wells that human history is a 'race between education and catastrophe', well applies to the crisis today. But education can win the race if all available resources are mobilized to meet the pressing needs of a better world that all are trying to create. And this is the aim of the International Education Year.

### Teaching about human rights

Celebrations of the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1968 stimulated teachers in many parts of the world to reflect on the best means of promoting better understanding of the principles of human rights through education in school. A booklet published recently by Unesco under the title Some Suggestions on Teaching about Human Rights shows how certain teachers and schools have dealt with this problem and summarizes practical experience which may be useful to others in the organization of programmes. The principal sources of information used in the preparation of this handbook, written by Sheila Kidd, include special surveys conducted, at the suggestion of Unesco, by the World Confederation of Organizations of the
Teaching Profession and the World Federation of Teachers’ Unions as well as reports and other documents provided by educational institutions participating in Unesco’s Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understanding. Six chapters indicate the trend in teaching about human rights, the training of teachers in this domain, human rights teaching in primary and in secondary schools, special activities, documentary materials, and the last chapter gives further examples of projects. Five appendixes contain the texts of the Universal Declaration and relative international agreements as well as useful addresses and suggestions for materials.

**Proposed extension of the Associated Schools project**

Following a resolution adopted by the General Conference at its fifteenth session, plans are at present being made to extend the Associated Schools project in education for international understanding.

At the beginning of 1969, altogether 159 primary schools, 367 secondary schools and 87 teacher training establishments in 57 countries were participating in the project. Their activities are described in the Unesco booklet *International Understanding at School: An Account of Progress in Unesco’s Associated Schools Project* and in the semi-annual circular *International Understanding at School*.

The purpose of the Associated Schools project is to assist educational institutions selected by Unesco National Commissions or national educational authorities in carrying out special programmes designed to increase knowledge of world problems and international co-operation and develop better understanding of other peoples and cultures. The ultimate aim is to encourage the general development of education for international understanding in the schools of Member States through the work of the nucleus of institutions participating in the project.

Each associated school plans and carries out a programme designed to fit its needs and possibilities. In some cases, programmes include special teaching on world problems, other cultures and the work of the United Nations family, as well as related extra-curricular activities.

The Associated Schools project assumes even greater importance in the light of the resolutions of the General Conference on Unesco’s contribution to peace and to the liquidation of colonialism and racialism, and on Unesco’s role in the preparation and execution of an international concerted programme in connexion with International Education Year. It is therefore hoped that Member States now taking part in the project will extend the programme to additional primary and secondary schools and teacher-training institutions, and that those Member States which have not so far participated will nominate establishments in one or more of these categories.

**The Nairobi Conference: education, science and development**

The widespread interest in the debates which took place at the Conference on Education and Scientific and Technical Training in relation to Development in Africa, convened jointly by Unesco and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), was largely due to the context in which it was held. Following a series of meetings of African ministers of education...
and ministers responsible for economic, scientific and technological development, the conference met at Nairobi at a time when results were beginning to be made available on the first five years of operation of the Addis Ababa plan. It provided the first opportunity the ministers present had had since the Lagos Conference of discussing problems raised by the requirements of scientific and technological development in relation to strictly educational development. Participants were able to review the substance of lessons learned during ten years’ educational development in Africa.

The study of progress recorded since 1958 revealed the remarkable expansion in education at all levels which has taken place during the last decade. However, though this review showed that the targets fixed for higher education have been achieved and even exceeded, that enrolment in primary and secondary schools has increased substantially, and that there has been spectacular progress in raising the qualifications of primary-school teachers and in training secondary-school teachers, the targets fixed at Addis Ababa have not on the whole been attained. Yet a large number of African countries are now devoting a considerable proportion of their national budgets to educational development, and have reached the limit of their financial resources. How, then, can the goals of the Addis Ababa plan be maintained?

This question was studied in great detail by the conference, which pointed out that it was not a plan in the strict sense of the word but a guide, a series of objectives assigned for the whole African continent, and a methodological instrument for assessing results. In this sense, it was felt that the Addis Ababa plan had more than fulfilled its purpose, and was continuing to play a useful role in evaluating progress achieved. The ministers decided therefore to maintain the plan as a framework for reference, but they requested Unesco, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the OAU, to collect the necessary data for its revision at an appropriate time during the next five years. Some of the priorities established by the plan may indeed have to be revised. For example, while continuing to train the higher-grade staff needed for economic development, there should be greater recognition of the importance of primary education.

Another basic concept revealed in this review of results is the need for qualitative improvement. Since African countries cannot go on indefinitely increasing their budgets for education, it is essential to raise the yield of their education systems. In this connexion, the conference underlined the gravity of wastage and drop-out rates which, for the whole continent, totalled 68 per cent in primary education, from entry into school to the end of the sixth year. Low output is not only attributable to the lack of schools and the prevalence of underqualified teachers: it is also due to the fact that school systems, the content of education and curricula are not adapted to the economic and social needs of Africa nor to the cultural background of pupils.

This problem was discussed, in particular, in connexion with primary education. Since, in Africa, schooling at this level must meet the needs of essentially rural economies, the concept of rural primary education, or the ‘ruralization’ of primary schools, favoured by a number of African governments, appears to be logical. But what, exactly, is meant by ‘ruralization’? Firstly, the extension of primary education in rural areas. The conference warned against the danger of considering rural primary educa-

tion as a different kind of education, one which could become a divisive factor by providing children in rural areas with instruction of a different or inferior quality. It is obvious that teaching in rural schools must be adapted to local needs so as to become a factor of integration rather than the cause of rural exodus and social disintegration.

Though not specifically agricultural or technical, primary education should help to prepare pupils for productive jobs in an essentially rural environment. It was generally felt that primary education must be supplemented by a wide range of practical exercises which would enable pupils—especially those who leave school at an early age—to acquire skills of direct use in their eventual employment. It must also be supplemented by adult education programmes, and by technical and agricultural training. Primary schooling is thus situated within an integral educational process and reforms must go hand in hand with action for the development and improvement of living conditions in rural areas. Moreover, the conference felt that primary schooling would attain a higher output and make a greater contribution to the cultural integration of pupils if instruction were given in African languages, as far as possible.

The Nairobi Conference recommendations constitute a coherent set of goals and decisions providing guidance to governments and to Unesco for future action. Reaffirming their commitment to provide education for all, the ministers meeting in Nairobi recognized the limits of their financial resources and of the external aid which they may reasonably anticipate. This led to the conclusion that quantitative expansion depends on an improvement in output, or in the quality of education. Participants felt that the chief hope for future progress lay in a better utilization of available resources, increased co-operation among African countries, better training for teachers and—most important of all—in the reform of the content of education.

In conclusion, the conference in no way minimized the importance of external aid. It may be appropriate to quote these concluding words of the Director-General of Unesco: 'The realism and lucidity with which the African States have decided to rely mainly on their own efforts should in no way encourage non-African governments to conclude that external aid may be reduced. On the contrary, this realism shows that Africa has never been more deserving of the assistance of its friends and that the chances of this aid being utilized effectively for educational progress have never been greater.'

For rural teachers in Cameroon: a new type of training college

The need for correlation between, on the one hand, the content and the structure of primary education, and, on the other hand, economic development requirements, has already been dealt with in this issue of the bulletin. The next issue will deal with this question again, but will bring into focus its purely rural aspects. A link between those broad objectives is provided by this report which describes a pilot project whereby an entire education system is to be converted according to specific development goals.

When the Cameroon Government decided to create the ENIR\textsuperscript{1} in Yaoundé—with technical help from Unesco and financial help from Unicef and the United Nations Development Programme—three specific objectives were established: a general reform of the content and methods of primary education, in-service training for primary-school teachers and the basic train-

\textsuperscript{1} École Normale d'Instituteurs à Vocation Rurale (Rurally Oriented Primary Teacher-Training Institute).
of a new type of teacher, one who would prepare both children and adults for a better integration into the social and economic life of their village and their country.

Insofar as the reform of structure, content and methods is concerned, the guiding principle was to provide an education with a truly rural orientation. While the reform avoids the temptation to establish short-cut solutions—a primary schooling essentially different from that provided in heavily-populated areas, or geared specifically to agricultural pursuits—it does not hesitate to abandon the encyclopedic tradition (instruction based entirely upon texts and rote learning) in favour of methods conducive to the development of initiative, judgement, the ability to undertake actions based upon observation and reflection, in short, conducive to the ‘self-help’ mentality. Furthermore, the study of fundamental means of expression (French, basic set mathematics and drawing) will be rooted in the local milieu: in order to eventually improve his living conditions, the child must first understand his immediate cultural, physical, economic and social environment.

Teachers will also have to be supplied with new teaching materials adapted to their own capacities and to the needs of their pupils. For this, official instructions are much less important than are the basic tools required if the new educational objectives are to be translated into daily classroom practice. The ENIR has, for that very reason, already produced—at the first-grade level—textbooks, course outlines and lesson plans, and other individual and group teaching aids. The experimental use of this material will also lead to a better definition of the methods and the timing involved in teaching the new curricula and to a thorough testing of the over-all reform prior to its widespread application. Printed lesson plans (those for reading, writing and mathematics are already in use) give the teacher precise instructions for each lesson and are so designed as to compel him constantly to bear in mind the relationship between the objectives set forth and the means used to reach them. Lesson plans thus serve not only as a tool for teaching but as a means for training teachers themselves. Eventually, they would be less rigidly applied and would make room for individual initiative and creativity.

In-service training is imperative not only for teachers (many of whom are currently under-qualified) but for supervisors and other administrative personnel who will be the instrumentalities for the nascent reform. In-service training has three aspects: cultural promotion, training in the new curricula and methods, and the fostering of community development aptitudes and ‘know-how’. A preparatory period (1968-70) will be devoted to the provision of necessary buildings and equipment, the training of a permanent staff and the perfection of the curricula and methods to be used for in-service training. Simultaneously, a vast information campaign will be launched in order to explain—to educational administrators, teachers and the general public as well—what is meant by ‘rurally-oriented’ primary education. From 1970 to 1978, each school district will be involved in the implementation of the programme (through 3-9 week courses), and four regional in-service training centres will enrol 280 teachers quarterly while a pool of assistant instructors will replace them in their classrooms.

Finally, with a view to producing ‘a new type of teacher’, the ENIR enrols 70 secondary school graduates per year—including some 15 young women—for a three-year period of training. The ENIR curriculum is still experimental because the content of primary education is itself undergoing reform. The candidate-teachers receive training in the techniques required for community development and, also, training in the adaptations and adjustments necessary for rural teaching. About half of their schedule is thus devoted to practical exercises, with classroom lessons as a supplement.

What makes this pilot project original is, in fact, this studied intermingling of the several roles envisaged for the new kind of rural education and the delicate co-ordination required for
the phasing of its implementation throughout
the country. Authorities nevertheless believe
that the main difficulties to be overcome will
be of a psychological nature: 'if the goal of
providing a specifically rural kind of education
is to be achieved, the first step must be to effect
a veritable conversion in the minds of all those
concerned—not only the pupils, but also the
teachers themselves'.
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