

INTRODUCTION

During a joint meeting of the Committee on Instructional Materials and of the Liaison Committee of the American Textbook Publishers Institute held in Chicago on June 3, 1964, publisher representatives requested a list of suggested instructional materials, enumerated by topic and grade level, to meet the needs of youth residing in large urban centers. In response, the Committee on Instructional Materials developed the following illustrative guidelines for the selection of content of such materials for use in both urban elementary and secondary schools which were accepted by official action of the Research Council, November 4, 1964. It must be emphasized, however, that these guidelines are merely possible suggestions which might be used in the preparation of instructional materials. In no way should they be regarded as a directive, nor as an overall plan for all schools, districts, and communities throughout the country. There has been no attempt to develop a basic framework or subject matter content nor to specify the grade levels at which the content should be taught. However, the suggestions have been listed in a progressive order on the basis of increasing pupil maturity for use in grade levels where they would seem most applicable.

CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTION OF CONTENT

Among the considerations in the selection of content and the approach of textbooks and instructional materials are the following:

- Need for materials depicting realistic situations in urban areas.
- Basically, textbooks and instructional materials must be concerned with the diversity of people who make up the society in urban areas, the highly mobile and transient population, the differences in social and economic status between the different groups in each community, and the changes in economic, educational, political, social and family life.
- Concern for the pluralistic nature of society in urban areas.
- Big cities, by the very nature of their complexity, represent

many different groups of people who must unite their efforts toward strengthening their community, city, state, and nation, rather than become compartmentalized into divisive cultures.

Materials of instruction should avoid emphasizing the separateness of minorities when attempting to recognize their special needs. The materials should include references to cultural and ethnic groups as they arise naturally in descriptions of the overall urban community and should indicate appreciation for their contributions and achievements without undue emphasis.

- Concern for the identification of urban young people with events and people depicted in American history.

There is a pressing national need to stimulate new thinking about imaginative ways of presenting the American past for those who are handicapped by limitations of environment and beset with the problems which arise from differences in social class or racial background.

The young person in the sprawling urban complex needs to see himself as part of ongoing American history. An awareness of the part played in history by people like himself can help him in this identification.

- Need for materials to help develop vital skills of communication.

Materials are needed which provide specific suggestions for teaching literature, reading skills, and listening skills, and which will contribute to speech improvement. There is a need to understand the characteristics of the young people who use these materials.

ORGANIZATION

The suggestions in this report express the point of view of the members of the Committee on Instructional Materials and include examples of needed instructional materials. The suggestions and examples represent possible guidelines for the content of materials and have been listed in a progressive order on the basis of increasing pupil maturity rather than by grade levels. The illustrative guidelines for the selection of content apply to Kindergarten and Grades 1-12.

SOCIAL STUDIES MATERIALS, K-12 URBAN AREAS

Contemporary and Realistic Aspects of an Urban Society and the Continual Change That Is Part of That Society

Change and mobility require that all individuals must be capable of adjustment in the society; that they learn that change is natural and that it may involve basic alterations in their lives.

- Include situations that show ways in which people live and work together in an urban community and the community services that help a community function.

• Use the problem-solving approach (as one method) to help pupils learn about the urban complex. For example, pupils may study about the way in which big cities solve the problem of providing adequate water supplies. Such an undertaking would involve finding information about:

Population density

Proper utilization of natural resources

Physical environment and water sources

Uses of water in industrial development

- Utilize contemporary situations to describe urban problems, such as population movements, population make-up, and differences in cultures.

• Point out the social problems created by the growth in the exercise of civil rights in newly integrated neighborhoods.

- Provide realistic treatment of the problems faced by the high school student when he enters the adult world in a newly integrated neighborhood.

• Describe the events leading to the passage of civil rights laws and the problems still to be faced in discrimination in housing, employment, recreation, and the use of public facilities.

- Help the pupil apply the principles of critical thinking to the choices he must make between violence and civil disobedience and the orderly legislative processes in solving the problems of discrimination.